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Managing learning in the workplace: a study of the perceptions and practice of local government managers

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ABSTRACT

In 1995 the Australian Government commissioned the report *Enterprising Nation ': renewing Australia's managers to meet the challenges of the Asia-Pacific century* (Karpin, 1995), which emphasised the change that was necessary in Australian business to remain competitive in the global and growing economy. The development of flexible organisational cultures, where managers increasingly displayed leadership and developed their staff to generate innovative cultures, was a central premise of the Karpin Report Task Force's vision. Twenty years later, this study explored the extent to which managers have moved from being 'cops to coaches' and integrated the facilitation of employee learning within their roles. Currently, there is still a lack of empirical research into the role that managers play in the learning of employees. This study asked managers to reflect on how they value their role as managers of learning and what activities they undertake to operationalise these responsibilities.

This study was developed by gathering clusters of manager and employee perceptions about their experiences of the facilitation of workplace learning. A local government context provided a revelatory and purposeful case study, as government agencies were at the fore-front of management change initiatives in the early 2000's and have been subject since to considerable and continuing change through structural re-alignment and increasing social demands.

The study began with a collection of contextual data and subsequently moved to in-depth interviews, which were used to focus on how learning is being facilitated in the workplace by managers and what roles they are taking. The study used well-established theories of workplace learning (Billett, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1999; Poell, Chivers, Van Der Krogt, & Wildemeersch, 2000; Senge, 1990; Van der Krogt, 1998) to form the instrument protocols and shape the analysis process.

A comparison of viewpoints showed the real and perceived barriers and enablers to facilitating learning in the workplace. Significant topics that emerged from the study can be categorised into four themes: understanding learning in the workplace; the extent of informal learning in the workplace; managers' intentions becoming actions; and employee engagement with learning opportunities. Following these themes, four recommendations were provided for managers to enhance their workplace operations.

Academically, the study provides a unique profile about the development of management roles in Western Australia and extends current understanding of manager learning roles within organisations from an empirical basis. Pragmatically, the study will provide organisations and managers with a role-model case study and examples of workplace cultures and actions that can have positive impacts on workplace learning.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A current challenge facing management in many workplaces is the dynamic and ever-changing environment (Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011, p. 193; Botha, Kourie, & Snyman, 2014; D. Froehlich, Segers, & Bossche, 2014; Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008). Change can be brought about through new developments in technology, global business expectations and changes to staffing (Amy, 2008) and may vary management's day to day practices. Currently, there is a shift (Amy, 2008; R. Warhurst, 2013b) for managers to a focus on facilitating the learning of employees to cope with this continuous change which is believed to be crucial for the success of an organisation (Macneil, 2001). Similarly, Russell Warhurst (2013b) asserts that organisations are increasingly facing situations of forced resource reduction to save on costs and imposed changes occur as a result. An example of this is the Western Australian (WA) Local Government sector, which, is experiencing enormous change (Dollery, Byrnes, & Crase, 2008) and has resulted in large job losses and pay cuts ("Perth's local councils to be slashed in half," 2013) ("WA Government to slash 1,200 public sector jobs," 2013).

Since 1947, Local Government Associations in WA have been affiliated with the Australian Council of Local Government Associations (now the Australian Local Government Association), which looks after local Government interests at a national level. In 1949 the Local Government Department was formed in WA to guide and help Councils and to audit their accounts ("History of WA Local Government," 2013). The national local government training environment is complex and sometimes fragmented (Artist, 2010). Sarah Artist states that, being a Local Government Manager is a unique situation, as these managers may need skills which are specific to their industry only; such as working with councillors.

The growing need for managers (including those within local government), to encourage learning in the workplace has important consequences for managers (Eraut, Alderton, Cole, & Senker, 2000; S. Gibb, 2003). Amy (2008) concluded that to be able to sustain a positive, efficient working environment and gain competitive advantage, there needs to be a focus on employees' continuously learning. This continuing up-skilling and development of employees is believed to be one of the only true sources of competitive advantage left for organisations(Ellinger, Watkins, & Bostrom, 1999).

Research into factors that enhance, or inhibit, learning suggests that the attitudes and skills of managers, play a key role in influencing the learning environment (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). It appears then, that it may be the manager's direct influences on the employees that facilitate learning and knowledge acquisition. A majority of learning in the workplace is done outside of any formal situation which an organisation may set up (Eraut, 2000; Hughes, 2004) and informal learning may often be

provided in a more jovial and fun context like that investigated by Tews, Michel and Noe (2017). Therefore, there is a need to focus on the informal developmental interventions which a manager may provide for their employees. To explore these ideas this research specifically focused on the local government context.

There is a lack of empirical research into the role that managers play in the learning of employees (Amy, 2008) and whether managers are aware of the diverse types of knowledge requirements that contributes to effective managerial practice according to Warhurst and Black (2015). Although the concept of workplace learning is well recognised (Boud & Middleton, 2003; Eraut, 2004; Marsick, 2009; R. Warhurst, 2013b) there is little work on perceptions of managers and their employees on the impact of a manager's actions on employees' learning. Warhurst (2013b, p. 54) contends "methods are required to discover a range of perspectives on managers' influences on workplace learning". This is pertinent research, as a manager may have differing opinions of their own impact on employees' learning compared to an employee. Specifically, in research by Warhurst (2013b) and Rona Beattie (2007), the factor found to influence the level to which a manager was able to develop others was their own development or lack thereof.

1.2 Research Purpose

The *Enterprising Nation: renewing Australia's managers to meet the challenges of the Asia-Pacific century* report by David Karpin (Karpin report) (1995) stated firmly that the role of a manager was changing from 'cop to coach'. The priority of managing cultures was no longer viewed as the maintenance of processes, but as the development of people. Learning was viewed as a core production, alongside the existing productions of goods and services. With this in mind, this study seeks to explore this role of managers as facilitators of learning in the workplace, two decades on. It is a role that was confirmed and discussed by several academics Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom (1999), Marsick and Watkins, (1999), Eraut (2000) and Hughes (1999), and the Karpin report revealed what impacted on Australian business.

A reality can be described as a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Potter, 1996) and this study explores both how *managers perceive* their roles and how their *employees experience* their managers' practice and learn in the workplace. Research has shown that managers facilitating employee learning in the workplace is mutually beneficial and contributes to the success of the organisation (Macneil, 2001). However, some managers and employees are not engaged with such processes and may experience limited learning or barriers that inhibit workplace learning.

The aim of this study is, through exploring manager and employee experiences, to increase the understanding of what management practices inhibit and accelerate workplace learning. Research by Megan Le Clus (2011) stated that workplace learning incorporates a variety of strategies, including both formal and informal learning. Therefore, this research touched on both formal and informal learning. This research contributes to the emerging conceptualisation and theory associated with managing workplace learning. In addition, this research provides managers with a typology of practices that can be utilised or suppressed to improve workplace learning.

The organisational reality will be different for each industry environment and hence will have different cultural values and workplace norms. The Local Government context in WA was no different and had a set of distinctive characteristics which defined their learning needs. Understanding these characteristics will provide both opportunities for more easily specified learning and, removing barriers for easier generalisation across the different internal business units.

1.3 Research Significance

It is timely to investigate how managerial roles have changed, especially over the past two decades as the vision of Karpin has become an accepted business reality. To what extent, however, have the discourses of workplace learning and especially managers as learning facilitators permeated organisational cultures? The significance of this research is that it is one of the few studies that focuses on both managers' and employees' perceptions of managers as facilitators of learning. The research identifies similarities and differences in these perceptions, but also provides further information to illustrate other enablers and barriers to employee learning. Another significant aspect of this research is the discussion surrounding the way male and female managers enact their facilitation of learning roles in their workplace.

This research focuses on the local government in Western Australia (WA) where there is little research done to date. In addition, there is limited research which relates to local government in the United Kingdom (UK) (Colley, 2012; Parry, 1999; R. Warhurst, 2013b), however, this research looks to contrast with, and build on, the ideas formed in these previously completed studies. The impact for the wider community will be more research done in Australia and particularly in WA, and this will enlarge the knowledge base in the local area on current issues and trends.

Local government organisations are also known as local councils and report constitutionally to the state/territory government that define the specific powers the local government. Each State or Territory in Australia will have many local government organisations within their jurisdiction, and these

organisations address community needs such as waste collection, public recreation facilities and town planning ("Local government," 2017).

Since the 1970's the "roles and responsibilities of local councils have evolved substantially" (Fogarty & Mugera, 2013). Specifically, since 1995 with the introduction of the Local Government Act 1995 (WA), local governments in Western Australia have the ability to perform a wider range of tasks and activities. More recently, over the past two decades there has been much scrutiny into the structures and operating efficiency of local government organisations in Australia. There is much debate over whether efficiency and economies of scale can be achieved by forced amalgamations of these organisations, or whether alternative models of co-operation are a preferred approach (Dollery et al., 2008).

The local government organisation chosen for this study was no exception to the threat of amalgamation and the continued scrutiny over efficiency and financial viability. The organisation was located in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia and was a medium size organisation with several hundred employees. Its functional areas are divided into separate sections including Leisure & Cultural Services, Governance, Marketing & Communications, Strategic & Organisational Development and Human Resource Services. Each section operates independently, but is overseen by a directorate that generates a strategic overview for, and monitors the performance of, each section.

The long term impact of this research will be that local government managers, in WA, may benefit from an in-depth look at learning in a local government organisation. Warhurst (2013b) acknowledges that there is not a strong sense of generalisability for this type of research as there are multiple perspectives, and therefore multiple realities. Hence, managers evaluating this research may be able to see similarities in their own workplace and draw conclusions from themes and key issues identified in the study. The typography of management behaviours and actions will contribute to the knowledge in the local government sector, and help managers to view their actions compared to common perceptions identified. This research contributes to the wider community by assisting organisations to employ managers who have a greater understanding of the complex environment in which they work.

1.4 Research Questions

This study has addressed the following research questions:

1. How do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning?

2. How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?

3. What are the enablers and barriers that managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?

This study collected evidence from both managers and employees within local government in WA. Over the course of the research project, the questions did not shift and were deemed as adequate.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study investigates the role managers play in orchestrating staff development and learning. The literature around organisational learning, the learning organisation and workplace learning has grown over the past decades. This review examined the different understandings of this topic and specified which of them are relevant for this research. The conclusions which were drawn from these areas are what has formed the basis for the research questions which in turn shaped the methodology used in this study.

2.2 What is organisational learning?

The learning organisation, organisational learning, and workplace learning are three of the terms commonly used to describe learning within an organisation. According to Ellinger and Wang (2011, p. 512), organisational learning is the process of acquiring, distributing, integrating, and creating information and knowledge among organisational members, while Fiol and Lyles (1985, p. 803) described organisation learning as the processes of improving actions through better knowledge and understanding. A learning organisation is an organisation where people are continually discovering how they create their reality and how it can change (Senge, 1990). Finally workplace learning is defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills as individuals attempt authentic vocational tasks supported by more skilled peers or experts (Billett, 1994, p. 11). Pamela Matthews (1999) also contends that workplace learning incorporates several aspects including adult learning theory, organisational needs and individual interests. Similarly, according to Field and Ford (1995) organisational learning has a number of essential components, one of which is where there is ongoing attention to 'learning how to learn'. A learning organisation is the actual organisation and is where workplace learning takes place. These are most commonly used as aspirational phrases, and this study will explore the reality that exists behind the rhetoric.

2.3 Benefits of organisational learning

There is an agreement that organisations have entered a knowledge-based era, where there is increasing emphasis on human capital, rather than financial and physical assets, and knowledge is recognised as a strategic asset (Marsick, Watkins, & Volpe, 1999; Pham & Swierczek, 2006). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) support the idea that the knowledge and skills of employees, are a key resource for productive workplace activity. Continuous learning and long-term knowledge creation become a sustainable source of competitive advantage (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; Macneil, 2001; Marsick et al., 1999). The creation of knowledge for organisations is in the ability to continuously learn, and Pham and

Swierczek (2006) agree, stating that organisational knowledge is critical for any organisation to be successful.

Recent literature has focussed on the role of continuous learning in helping individuals and organisations to cope with change (Amy, 2008; R. Warhurst, 2013b). Change can be brought about by the information age and changes in technology (Amy, 2008). Warhurst (2013b) argues that contemporary organisations are increasingly facing cuts and imposed changes that result from these cuts. In the workplace issues of change are "more fiercely urgent than ever" (R. Warhurst, 2013b, p. 39), and this encourages managers to put pressure on their employees to work and learn faster individually and in their teams (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Therefore, a focus may be on how to effectively encourage continuous learning for employees and their work teams.

Alice Kolb and David Kolb (2008, p. 4) stress the importance of continuous learning: "Employee learning results from synergetic transactions between a person and the environment. Such transactions must be ongoing to create enduring patterns of learning". Organisations must have appropriate structures in place to ensure that learning is an ongoing, organic process, rather than one that is reliant on one person having to drive the learning. Workplace learning involves the process of rational learning towards necessary (and an organisations desired) outcomes for both the individual and the organisation (Matthews, 1999). This whole of person development not only helps the organisation over the long term but can also be beneficial to the employee in the future.

Learning may be considered to be one of the aspects of the workplace that is increasingly becoming important for employees to maintain their employability. Because of the increasing insecurity in employment and an increase in flexible contracts that are not ongoing, employees with permanent contracts of employment are looking to enhance their skills at every opportunity (Holton, Swanson, & Naquin, 2001). However, Field (2015) does contend that this increase in employability may depend on exactly what the employee is learning. Career development is important because employees who lack job security may not know when they will need to be looking for a job. Or when individuals are looking for a job they may not be the "right" candidate for the job if they do not possess enough of the required skills. McDonald and Hite (2005) note that as employees are beginning to focus on their career development, organisations can take part in this process by linking their organisational goals with the individual aspirations of employees and relate this to the level of learning that each employee needs. However, the process or linking organisational goals and individual goals as noted by McDonald and Hite (2005) is only one part of employee development, as learning requirements of an individual are widespread and may come about from both informal and non-formal methods.

Learning can occur at many different levels in the workplace, including the individual, team or organisational level (Altman & Iles, 1998). This research focuses on learning at the individual level, which is about the interactions between the individual and their environment and the number and quality of these interactions (P.-E. Ellström, Svensson, & Aberg, 2004). This individual level of learning is what managers are directly able to influence, and through the cumulative interactions with individuals and their symbolic support within the culture, they are able to contribute to the wider development of organisational learning. Organisations store knowledge in their procedures, norms, rules, and forms (March, 1991). Therefore, the knowledge that an organisation has is built upon the knowledge that individuals and teams create over a time. It is the leaders of the organisation who have the responsibility to ensure the transfer of learning from the employees to the organisation in order to ensure business sustainability (Amy, 2008).

With regard to the benefits of organisational learning, this research is focused on how organisational learning can occur as a result of individual learning. In order to develop a learning culture and disseminate the culture of a department to the wider organisation, it is important to ensure that individual learning is managed effectively and individual are encouraged to collaborate in learning situations. The focus of this thesis is on how managers lead individual learning in a collective way, and, due to restrictions of a Masters Thesis this study was only able to look at learning during a relatively restricted and limited period of time rather than over a longer period of time which would have been necessary to investigate the progression of organisational learning.

The aim of providing individual learning for employees in organisations is ultimately to enhance the success of the organisation. However, it is important to note that organisational learning is not simply the collective total of how much learning each employee does (Fiol & Lyles, 1985). It is the responsibility of management to ensure that the knowledge gained by employees is transformed into learning for the organisation. To improve performance in a business unit, ultimately provides better outcomes for the organisation, as gaps will be covered and then the organisation can make necessary changes to any errors (Edmondson, 1999).

2.4 Typologies of learning

There are many categories of organisational learning described in the literature. According to Stephen Gibb (1997), learning starts from what the learner already knows about a particular topic and not from what a facilitator of learning knows about the topic. There is also an important distinction to be made between learning and training. Training involves the planning of distinct events and experiences that can be used to teach people how to perform specific tasks (Marsick & Volpe, 1999). In contrast, learning is understood as an ongoing lifelong process (Marsick & Volpe, 1999). Organisational learning has been

variously categorised as: on the job and off the job learning; implicit and explicit learning; incidental learning, formal learning, non-formal learning and informal learning (Doornbos, Bolhuis, & Simons, 2004). However, this researcher will focus on informal learning and non-formal learning in this study.

2.4.1 Informal Learning

Informal learning can be defined as an unplanned and implicit process with unpredictable results (Hager, 1998). Informal learning is seen as the development of the individual through interaction with others in non-routine conditions; and is based on learning from experience (Marsick & Watkins, 1999). Although this statement is broad, it highlights the importance of the interaction; and is focused on action. It is no longer about the learning specified by an educational institution but the learning gained from everyday interactions. Becker and Bish (2017) explored how learning informally through others in the workplace was conducted, especially by having an informal role model or mentor that could be a powerful way to gain knowledge from more experienced co-workers or managers. Such interactions may be purposeful but are nonetheless of great learning value. Informal learning will be the focus of this research study. In particular, the study will explore as the ways in which managers may intentionally facilitate learning via developmental interventions.

2.4.2 Non formal learning

Another type of learning that will be included in this study is non–formal learning. Unlike informal learning, non-formal learning can be structured with an outcomes based approach. It is a way of learning in which not only the content is important, but also there is a strong emphasis on practical experience (Fordham (1993, as cited in Kyndt, Dochy, & Nijs, 2009). Another key difference between informal and non-formal typologies is that a manager can create non-formal learning for their employees by creating a situation for learning, rather than leaving it to fate whether the employee will see the purpose of the learning activity. An example of this type of learning activity could be reflective learning on a past experience or engagement with others on a problem-solving or decision making process (Eraut, 2000). This learning is created by the manager in a direct and intentional way.

The differences between these two types of learning is the structured learning approach that comes with non-formal learning. Non-formal learning is often able to be planned and is more focused on the understanding of the task: for example, reviewing how a situation worked and what could be done next time. An informal situation may be where a manager randomly shows an employee and work with them to complete a one-off task. This is out of the ordinary and an action-based task which a manager provided a development opportunity for an employee. It is important to define the differences between the two types of learning to enable an appropriate typology of manager types to be created.

According to Alan Coetzer (2007), formal training is not an ideal method of learning for the small business sector, and informal learning processes are preferred for long-term success of smaller organisations. Most small business managers prefer informal management styles, including styles where they are in control and can rely on their own perceptions and evaluations (Matlay, 2000). In small businesses there is not a great need for collective learning as there are often only a small number of employees (Matlay, 2000). Although informal learning has been shown to work well in the context of small business, little has been done to investigate the use of informal learning opportunities for employees, as facilitated by their managers in large business organisations, and more specifically in Australian organisations. Research by Froehlic et al., (2014) in Austrian banks, supports the idea of future research focusing on informal learning in larger organisations. There is, however, research by Thursfield (2008) which discusses managerial learning in a large public sector organisation in the UK. Thursfield's research gives an insight into how promote and collect learning via in-house learning methods. In both studies, managers play a critical role in managing a complex mix of formal and informal development opportunities for their staff, and maintaining the simultaneous productions of work alongside these learning activities.

2.5 Managers' developmental interventions in employee learning

2.5.1 Direct Influence

The literature suggests that managers can intentionally seek to directly facilitate the learning of their staff through on-the-job training (Poell, Van Dam, & Van Den Berg, 2004), job shadowing (Eraut & Hirsch, 2010), coaching, performance appraisals (Kuvaas, 2006), secondments (Eraut, 2007) and mentoring (Billett, 2003). These are many examples of activities which may result in employees learning as a result of normal workplace structures. To facilitate learning, a manager should understand their levels of control over these situations and how they can impact the learning outcome for employees. Just as a manager can intentionally facilitate learning for their employee, a manager can directly set tasks and provide experiences for their employee to learn from. Managers can create learning opportunities in activities where normally there would be no learning goal or desired outcome, and can directly influence the learning received by the employee. The concept of managers facilitating learning may be demonstrated through the concept of a manager as a coach and/or mentor.

There is not one singular definition for coaching. Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) define coaching as improving problem work performance or improving prior levels of work performance. Similarly James Hunt and Jason Weintraub (2004) define coaching as something which can focus on the specific goals of the employee to either improve his or her current performance or prepare for future opportunities (Hunt & Weintraub, 2004).The similarity in these definitions is that coaching is about improving

performance of a specific task. In this research, managers and how they facilitate learning through improving specific tasks or attitudes of their employees is investigated.

In contrast to the concept of coaching is the similar, but different, concept of mentoring. Mentoring has been described as an intense interpersonal exchange between a senior experienced colleague and a less experienced junior colleague (Russell & Adams, 1997). Traditional forms of mentoring have been classified as either formal or informal, whereby formal mentoring is structured and organisationally supported and informal mentoring is unmanaged, unrecognised and usually unstructured (Russell & Adams, 1997). However, Noe (1993) contends that informal mentoring relationships can be just as, if not more, powerful than formal relationships. There is a difference between the concepts of mentoring and coaching being that coaching is about improving the specific behaviours whereas mentoring often has a long term outlook, is career focused and covers all aspects of the employee development, not just one item.

The concept of managers as coaches in facilitating learning is now popular (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Parsloe, 1992; Yeo, 2006). According to Yeo (2006), managers need to assume the role of coach to guide an employee generally and also in their learning. Coaching is classified as a highly learner centred approach that focuses on collaboration and discovery by the employee (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). This style of direct learning can be very strict for the employees, as it may give them specific tasks to learn and follow, and this allows managers greater control over a situation. A coach may help to direct the behaviours they want to see from the employees. Managers operate across a diverse range of roles and must continually chose what actions will best facilitate learning for very diverse staff members.

2.5.2 The work environment

It is widely recognised that an organisation's work environment has a powerful effect on both the acquisition and application of new knowledge and skills (Garvin et al., 2008; Noe & Wilk, 1993; Park, Song, Yoon, & Kim, 2014; Schein, 2010; Tannenbaum, 1997). This is the concept that the work environment can assist an employee in learning, and then encourage using that learning where a culture of support exists. Garvin et al. (2008) explored how the development of the key building blocks; a supporting learning environment, having concrete learning processes; and appropriate leadership can support a successful learning organisation. An example of this is when an employee learns a new skill external to their main place of working, but when they return to their usual work environment they never get to use that skill again and therefore the knowledge may be lost: for example, learning how to write a strategic business document or how to write business cases and never having to write them. In the literature, this is referred to as transfer of learning.

Transfer of learning as described by Perkins and Saloman (1992) describes how "learning in one context may either enhance or undermine a related performance in another context". Their theory therefore promotes the importance of learning for all contexts, and how managers providing an appropriate learning environment that ensures learning is a positive experience and enhances an employee's knowledge, will most probably drive positive transfer of learning from one setting to another. This approach underpins the importance of the concept of continuous and ongoing learning throughout working life, and the importance of understanding the effects each learning environment can have on an employee's learning. Moreover, this concept also suggests that if particular attitudes or situations can enhance learning, they should be continued, and conversely if they hinder learning, they should be discontinued. Therefore it is critical that managers are in control of an employee's workplace learning environment and indirectly seek to manage or influence that environment for the benefit of employee learning.

Boud and Middleton (2003) argue that learning in the workplace forms a large part of the learning adults undertake in their lives. Previously, this learning has focused on the formal aspects of learning rather than informal learning (Kyndt & Baert, 2013). Therefore, workplace managers have an important role to play, particularly with regard to access and facilitation of learning in the workplace over time. Managers should be able to be facilitators of learning by creating favourable workplace features for learning (R. Warhurst, 2013b, p. 40) such as the environment and the relationship between manager and employee. James D Thompson was one of the first people to recognise the importance of the organisations environment (Thompson, 1967). Malcolm Knowles (1990) also contends that for the purpose of examining its effects on individual employee learning, the work environment can be classified into the (1) physical, (2) social, and (3) organisational environments.

The physical environment may be the size and layout of a physical space which can affect the quality of learning (Knowles, 1990). Other factors to consider may be temperature, lighting and refreshments provided for employees. The social environment may be the level of peer communication and interaction within the environment and this is an important part of learning (Boud & Middleton, 2003). The state of the organisational environment can also have an effect on employee learning. For example, the structure of the organisation can be a key element of this. Large organisations may have more formalised learning processes compared to small businesses which may not have the budget or resources to provide this for their employees and therefore rely on smaller informal processes. The latter structure is thought to be more conducive to an integration of learning and work rather than the large organisation where the structure may create a more impersonal approach to learning (Senge, 1993).

2.6 Managers as facilitators of learning

This section of the literature review introduces the concept of managers as facilitators of learning and discusses the role that managers can play in the learning development of their staff. A manager facilitating learning is simply not a line manager providing work to be completed, but a more experienced colleague enabling an employee to have a learning opportunity facilitated or provided for them. Effective and efficient use of an organisation's resources is largely a manager's responsibility and therefore the continuous learning of employees is a vital task for managers. Gibb (2003) examined the evolution of line managers as developers of people in their organisation. More recently Amy (2008) explored how managers at all levels of large companies were taking on new roles, including that of facilitating learning. There is a need to implement effective human resources management to improve managerial performance in effecting learning for employees (Amy, 2008; S. Gibb, 2003).

In the context of organisational learning, Ellinger and Bostrom (2002) observe a gradual move away from a control style of management towards a more facilitative style. Christina Macneil (2001) defines a manager as a facilitator of learning when he/she takes opportunities to create a learning environment. Such managers are seen to encourage and empower learning and development in their roles as leaders (E. Ellström, Ekholm, & Ellström, 2008). Amy (2008) argues that managers take on this facilitating aspect of leadership in response to increasing competitive pressures in the workplace. In taking on the responsibility for facilitating learning, managers are exhibiting leadership characteristics such as high level communication and interpersonal skills.

Research by Serrat (2017) details learning practices that are the key to success in an organisation. Serret discusses how staff members are able to use a wide range of opportunities for individual and team-based learning and development. Individuals and teams successfully use a range of methods to harness tacit knowledge and importantly, to make that knowledge available to others. Finally, Serrat looks at how teams operate as learning communities and how the functional operations of such learning communities are driven by the culture of the organisation and by the activity and symbolic actions of managers.

Managers, as facilitators of learning, can enhance or inhibit employee learning as a complex mix of power, influence and capability flows through their interactions with staff. Research such as Lancaster and Milia (2015, p. 444) shows that the employee perception of how this is happening can guide organisations on the "important factors required to create a supportive learning environment". According to Ellinger & Bostrom (2002) the attitudes and skills of the manager may influence the learning environment in either positive or negative ways (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). To be positive facilitators of learning, managers need to be responsive and emotionally intelligent (Amy, 2008).

Managers are key to creating workplace conditions that favour employee learning (R. Warhurst, 2013b). Therefore, since managers are key to creating ongoing learning for employees and ongoing learning is key to the success of an organisation, managers who are good facilitators of learning also benefit organisational success.

Managers have an strong mediating effect on learning in the workplace (Armson & Whiteley, 2010; Kyndt et al., 2009; R. Warhurst, 2013b) and as both formal and informal learning can enhance job performance (Amy, 2008; Eraut, 2004; Park et al., 2014; Richardson & Kirkwood, 2017), managers facilitating workplace learning have the possibility of not just enhancing the performance of individual employees, but the performance outcomes of the entire departmental area.

Recent research by Becker and Bish (2017) indicated that managers overwhelmingly preferred to utilise social learning activities. These types of activities meant that their staff could have learning from, and learning with others, at the same time. This is an additional way that managers are able to support learning and provide opportunities for workplace success.

Hughes (2002) cautions that it is often not possible in the workplace for the manager to assume the role of facilitator because of an intrinsic lack of trust between managers and employees. Phillip Morgan and Nigel Allington (2002) concur that there needs to be trust between employees and managers for a developmental learning relationship to work, and where there is not, there is no significant learning. Therefore, it is important for a manager to build trust with their employees to gain the best from them. Gibb (2003) challenges the idea of whether the increasing role of managers in an employee's development is actually having a large impact on the success of the organisation. Gibb's main arguments surround the belief there will be less development for many people if line managers are made more responsible for employee development, and he focuses on the extensive barriers to learning. Also, if the managers are not skilled themselves, how are they able to appropriately train others in high-level skills?

2.7 Barriers to learning

Although there is support for managers to facilitate employee learning, there are always barriers that can inhibit this process. Stephen Billett (2003) lists factors that might inhibit the role of managers as facilitators of learning: a lack of time to understand their role; a demanding workload; pressures of the job; and insufficient opportunities because of cost and staffing issues. Other barriers to learning may include conflict between operational and developmental responsibilities, management perceptions that employees will gain little from the experience; lack of accountability; and performance monitoring (Beattie, 2007). According to Billett (2003), time constraint is the major barrier in many cases. The concept of managers having a lack of knowledge is pertinent. Management development is a large issue for human resources developers. Lastly, Hughes (2002) has suggested that employees may have

difficulty trusting their managers enough as the personal qualities of their managers contribute to an employee's overall learning. Managers may be experts in their field but not have the personal skills or knowledge to facilitate learning. In addition, Hughes also states that employees do not completely trust their managers to do the right thing by them, but anticipate that they will often focus on for what is best for the organisation instead.

2.8 Enablers to learning

The growing need for managers to encourage learning in the workplace has important implications for managers (Ellinger et al., 1999). As a facilitator of learning, a manager can play the role of mentor, coach and confidant to empower employees, and provide them with professional development and learning in their working lives (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). To enable this process high level support for manager facilitation is needed (Marsick & Watkins, 1999). Beattie acknowledges the benefits of having formal developmental policies to guide line manager involvement in employee development (Beattie, 2007). She found that the main behaviours which enabled learning were managers who empowered and challenged their employees, and who displayed the behaviours of being caring, informative and professional (2007). Additionally, this research sought to investigate whether gender impacts on managers as facilitators of learning. This research will determine whether certain behaviours that are displayed in the managers who enable learning most effectively, are specific to one gender.

2.9 Gender differences facilitating learning

Research suggests that more research is needed into whether a manager's behaviour may be influenced by his/ her gender. Early research by Kathryn Bartol and D Butterfield (1976) has shown that in different situations there are some differences in the way males and females are perceived to act by employees as a result of stereotypes. Research underway is beginning to investigate this and specifically in the form of gender differences in mentoring relationships (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Gender may therefore impact on the role of manager as a facilitator of learning. This analysis shows a gap in the research into this particular area. Amy Hurley (1996) also touches on the topic of cross-gender mentoring and the issues that can arise from this. There is little research which focuses specifically on the concept of female managers (Cortis & Cassar, 2005) as the literature leads towards women in leadership and women at senior levels of the workforce, rather than their role in facilitating learning and their own perceptions of this role. There have been no major differences identified between male and female managers' facilitative learning techniques; however, as mentioned this is probably because of the lack of empirical data. Research in the area of mentoring by Sharon Gibson (2006) often indicates complex relationships when there are cross gender mentoring roles that can impede open learning relationships.

2.10 Perceptions of employees and managers on managers as facilitators of learning

Learning is a process that is happening constantly in the workplace and many examples are found in a range of non-formal activities. It is widely recognised that learning can be achieved through the processes of engaging in everyday work tasks (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007; E. Ellström et al., 2008; R. Warhurst, 2013b). As managers are required to focus employee efforts to achieve organisational goals, managers are also required to be the ones to develop employees' skills and performance (Hughes, 2004). There is much research on managers as facilitators of learning (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; Schürmann & Beausaert, 2016; R. Warhurst, 2013b). However, this research often focuses on the identified barriers and enablers to employee learning (Falasca, 2011; Macneil, 2003).

Other research focuses on the way in which the barriers were removed by management or organisational interventions (Beattie, 2007). This study will compliment previous research, as it will take the analysis to a new level in terms of the comparison between manager beliefs and perceptions and employee beliefs and perceptions.

The concept of managers and their perceptions about themselves, is one which has been explored over the last decade with the advancement of literature on the learning organisation. The beliefs and values that managers have are what influences their behaviours and actions in the workplace (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). With managers being compelled to play a larger role in the development of their staff, it is becoming a common topic to question whether managers have the ability or willingness to act as a facilitator of learning for their employees (Ellinger et al., 1999; Eraut et al., 2000; Hughes, 2004).

Managers' perceptions of themselves as facilitator of learning and the importance of their role closely links with the culture of an organisational (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002). Current management perspectives on facilitation of learning show that the major themes of contention in the workplace surround issues with communication and organisational structures (Armson & Whiteley, 2010). Although some literature investigates managers' perceptions on employee learning, few studies specifically compare the managerial perspectives with that of their own employees. This comparison gives managers feedback on their actions and an idea of their role and whether it is continuing to be successful or not.

The review of the literature confirms that few studies focus specifically on the comparison of both management and employee perspectives of a manager's role as a facilitator of learning. As Appendix 9.1 shows, of the main body of literature only three studies show evidence of comparing managers' and employees' points of view. These were: Amy (2008), Armson and Whiteley (2010), and Beattie (2007). These studies did not specifically investigate perspectives of employees and managers compared to each other. A study by Hughes (2004)revealed that some employees in organisations even when having

learning-related difficulties, did not discuss these difficulties with their managers. The employees remained silent and did not reveal any weakness as they felt it was more important to focus on how they were perceived, rather than to be able to trust the line manager with their learning needs. However, the focus of the Hughes (2004) study was around trust, rather than a focus on what the employees believed the role of their manager was in facilitating learning.

2.11 Conclusion

There is a significant quantity of research about organisational learning, the learning organisation and workplace learning from 1990 onwards and it incorporates learning, managing, knowledge, marketing and IT perspectives (Billett, 1994; Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; Ellinger & Wang, 2011; L. Field & Ford, 1995; Pham & Swierczek, 2006; Senge, 1990). This research indicates that organisations need to compete for competitive advantage to survive and thrive within their industry (Macneil, 2001; Pham & Swierczek, 2006). To maintain this position it is critical that employees are able to continuously learn (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2008) to cope with change (Amy, 2008; R. Warhurst, 2013b) keep themselves employable (Holton et al., 2001) and contribute to organisational innovation.

It is widely agreed in the literature that workplace learning has a positive effect on organisational performance (Bierema & Eraut, 2004; Billett, 2003; Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; P.-E. Ellström et al., 2004). At the same time, such learning 'may also' make employees more employable in the future (Svensson, Bennich, & Randle, 2009), and Marsick and Watkins (1999) note that, increasingly, individuals recognise the need to undertake professional development on order to remain employable. According to Mallon and Walton (2005) employability is an important motivator for participating in learning activities. Not all learning will result in future employability, however in some circumstances, having specific skills and competencies may allow employees to acquire and retain future work for themselves (D. E. Froehlich, Beausaert, Segers, & Gerken, 2014).

While the motivation to learning at work appears to be supported from both the manager and employee perspectives there is mixed opinion about how learning should occur in the workplace. Using managers as facilitators of learning has been a growing idea over the last decade (Belling, James, & Ladkin, 2004; Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002; Ellinger et al., 1999; R. Warhurst, 2013b), although some researchers doubt whether the goal of managers as facilitators of learning is achievable (S. Gibb, 2003; Hughes, 2002).

The literature has shown that there is evidence that informal learning is beneficial in small businesses (Coetzer, 2007). Where traditionally large organisations use formal learning methods to develop employees, there is now a widely popular argument to have informal methods of learning such a coaching and mentoring to develop employees (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007; Yeo, 2006). Specifically, coaching and/or mentoring are suggested as ways to facilitate these learning habits, as these developmental

interventions are directly impacting on employees. An issue with types of interventions such as coaching however, is the lack of empirical research that demonstrates the benefits that this type of facilitation of learning can bring to an organisation (Beattie et al., 2014). The literature does show that these efforts are important because a manager's direct influence on an employees working environment can create learning opportunities from every day work experiences (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). Therefore, research is needed to determine if this is appropriate for informal learning to work in the larger organisations.

Managers' roles have been changing over the past decade as managers develop their role to facilitate staff learning and ensure a more effective use of resources. Managers are required to focus employee efforts and channel these into achieving organisational goals (Hughes, 2004). There is much debate about whether this is an efficient use of management time and whether managers have the skill, ability and willingness to take on the role of facilitator of learning (Eraut, 2004). Managers are under increasing pressure in the workplace, and research is needed to determine if there are appropriate support mechanisms to help managers to effectively take on this role, if they in fact do, or are able to.

Previous literature has rarely focused on exploring both the perceptions of managers and their employees facilitating workplace learning. Although there is evidence to support the benefits of these roles and responsibilities, studies have not explored the workplace realities of such roles. It is evident from this literature review that there is need for research that can explore and report on managers as facilitators of learning. Specifically, research is needed that goes further than collecting manager and employee perceptions tod investigate how managers are developing this role and what interventions they are making in terms of informal learning practices such as mentoring and coaching roles to develop their staff. Finally, this research builds on previous studies as the manager's qualifications will be queried and a question asked as - to what extent both the manager and the employees believe this has any impact on manager facilitation of learning.

2.12 Management theories of learning

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) draws on the work of theorists of human learning and development such as John Dewey and Kurt Lewin. Based on this work, Kolb (1984) developed a holistic model of the experiential learning process and a multilinear model of adult development. ELT can be defined as the process of knowledge being created through the transformation of experience (Kolb 1984, p41). Individuals and groups acquire knowledge through their involvement in an experience and the result is the transformation into Learning and therefore knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's (1984) ELT provides a framework for understanding and managing the way teams learn from their experience (Kayes, Kayes, & Kolb, 2005).

ELT depicts two different approaches of being able to acquire experience, through concrete experience and abstract conceptualization. The first of the two approaches - concrete experience - is about observations and reflections and being able to rely on the senses. This is about employees perceiving their surroundings and creating a reality. Over time these become the abstract concepts, which are developed through watching others, and then doing tasks without thinking the situation through. The second approach is experiential learning is reflective observation which is the employees who are thinkers, who analyse a situation to ensure it is correct. The opposing idea is where active experimentation occurs as this is where employees take action to experience what will happen if they act in a certain way or perform a task (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2008).

Experiential learning is a process of constructing knowledge, there is not one correct method to be used at all times, but for managers and employees to create a learning mode that is in response to whatever the situation may present. This means that employees may be experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting in a recursive process that is responsive to the learning situation and what is being learned (Kolb and Kolb 2003). Kolb's theory underpins this research as currently there is a focus on long term sustainability rather that short term performance, the key concepts from ELT can be used to examine management learning processes at different levels.

Organisational Learning Theory

Managers have identified organisational learning as the processes whereby shared understanding and strategies change, as a key to flexibility and competitive advantage (Senge & Sterman, 1990). According to Peter Senge (1990) "Learning organisations" are those organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning

to see the whole together." Senge (1990) states that "to be a learning organisation, there must be two conditions present at all times: 1) the ability to design the organisation to match the intended or desired outcomes, and 2) the ability to recognize when the initial direction of the organization is different from the desired outcome and follow the necessary steps to correct this mismatch.".

Activity Theory

Cultural historical Activity theory was initiated by Lev Vygotsky (1978) and further developed by Alexei Leontiev (1978). Activity theory begins with the concept of activity or an arrangement of human tasks, whereby an employee works on a subject matter/object to obtain a desired outcome. To do this, the employee will use tools which may be external, like a computer, or internal such as a plan.

Engestrom's (1999) Activity Theory, extends the idea of learning from a formal process, to a process within the organisational environment. Knowledge is a social process, not a substance, and what is known is facilitated by the place, time and [organisational] community (Engestrom et al., 1999). It is through the continuous duality of the learning and the doing that employees are able to increase their knowledge.

Activity theory has an interesting approach to the problems of learning and in particular, tacit knowledge. Activity Theory is useful as a tool in qualitative research methodologies such as case studies, as it provides a method for understanding and analysing a phenomenon, finding patterns and making inferences across interactions, describing phenomena, and presenting phenomena through a built-in language and rhetoric. Constructivism and the idea that knowledge is developed by learners through experience has been the dominant paradigm in learning theories for the past 20 years (Issroff & Scanlon, 2002).

Learning Network Theory

Learning Network Theory (LNT) is an analytical and descriptive theory that embraces the changing nature of organisations (Garvin et al., 2008). This study will use LNT as the key analytical theory, because this theory focuses on work productions and learning productions, how they are connected in the workplace and the increasing need to integrate them both. The consolidation of both output types shows the critical conflict between these two productions and proposes a typography of organisational relations (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998). Within LNT the dual tensions of learning and work produce the processes and structures of learning that are unique to each organisation, and that change and develop over time Reference.

Contained within this theory is the idea that within each organisation there are both processes and structures which mirror each other. Then, the learning processes and structure, and the work processes

and structures, are locked in a conflicting state with each other. The individual organisations sit around these completing productions and act as an arbitrator to facilitate the integration of the two.

The learning network within organisations consists of the processes whereby organisations determine the policy, program and program activities for their organisation. The result of these processes are the actual learning structures - these being the content of the learning program, the relational activities of the learning program and the climate in which they take place. Opposed in parallel to the learning network is the work network where working policy, programs and operationalisation processes are enacted to generate actual work content, working relationships and the localised workplace climate.

From the perspective of the LNT (Poell et al., 2000), individual employees are seen to create and drive various types of learning paths. This theory is relevant to this research as the question is raised over whether individuals or management are driving learning in the workplace. Poell and Van Der Krogt (2017) have recently used LNT to examine functions that traditionally fell within the broader human resources scope. Activities such as a plan for undertaking personal development and future learning needs.

Table 1 - Learning and work networks

Learning Processes	Learning Structures
Learning policy development	Learning content
Learning programme development	Learning relations
Learning programme operationalisation	Learning climate
Work Processes	**Work Structures**
Work policy development	Work content
Work programme development	Work relations
Work programme operationalisation	Work climate

Poell et al. (2005) propose that the analysis of work and learning relations indicates a broad separation of relations into four theoretical categories, liberal, vertical, horizontal and external. Each category or network can be characterised by differing relations between the learning and work networks. Example follow:

- Liberal networks - learning it is unstructured and individually driven towards personal needs and goals;
- Vertical networks - learning is centrally controlled and pre-structured, delivered in a rational and regulated fashion to defined work goals;
- Horizontal networks - organic process dominates and follows group needs and local themes in an egalitarian climate of work and learning integration; and
- External networks - the learning innovation is an external production grasped by professionals who integrate the learning with existing work processes.

These networks are then modelled by Poell et al., (2000) in a relational diagram which suggests that most organisations develop unique learning-work patterns that change over time. The patterns involve a development process that may occur along each of the three work-learning dimensions postulated in figure 5. At the core the liberal and entrepreneurial approach is developed and systematised through more vertical central planning, through external professional interjections, or through horizontal local needs servicing.

3.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a definition in abstract, theoretical terms. It refers to ideas or constructs and is linked to theories (Neuman, 2006). Therefore, this conceptual framework is based on theories about commitment, gender, learning and manager and employee perceptions surrounding these concepts. These items are depicted in Figure 1 as affects. The study collected evidence from managers and employees within local government in WA and the research questions posed for this study are:

1. How do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning?

2. How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?

3. What are the enablers and barriers that managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?

The holistic conceptual ideas of this research are expressed abstractly in Figure 1.
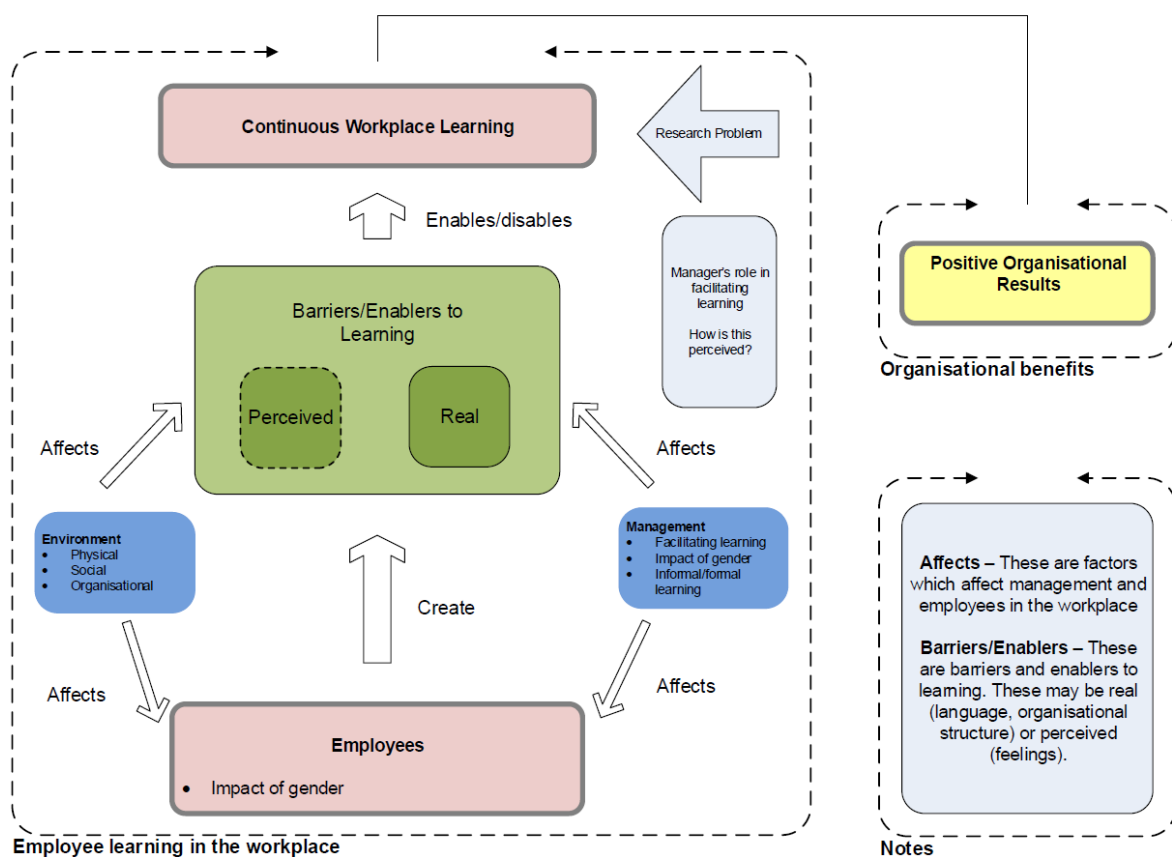
Figure 1. Original conceptual framework

The original framework diagram was based on previous research conducted into the perceptions of learning and management in the workplace. The research conducted in this study was presented in the

updated conceptual framework in Figure 2. This research was exploratory, meaning there was not a specific problem to be solved - but rather it aimed to see what the similarities and differences presented, and then key themes for the area of facilitation of learning would be found. With this in mind, the original conceptual framework was quite scant in detail. This was improved in the final version to show the extent to which the research answered questions about facilitation of learning in this local government organisation. In addition to the established ideas of the influences on continuous workplace learning, Figure 3 represents ideas realised through the analysis of interviews conducted.
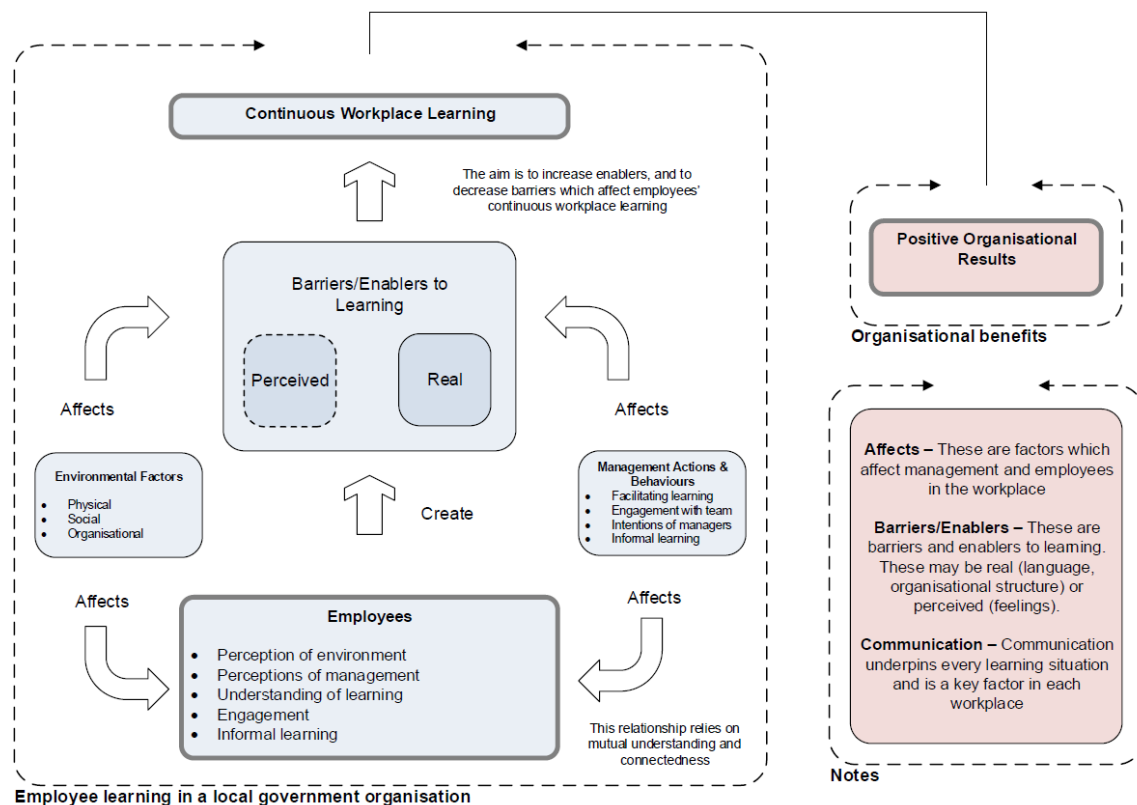
Figure 2. New conceptual Framework

The new Figure 2 shows several enhancements to the original framework:

Minor changes:

- Colours were changed to better suit the flow of the framework.
- Titles of management and environment were given more detail.
- The research question was added to the diagram.
- The label of the frame which surrounds the diagram was further clarified to better represent what the diagram showed.

Major changes:

- Impact of gender listed under 'Management and Employee', was removed, as the research showed there was little impact.
- Under management, there was informal and formal learning factors listed. Formal was removed to show there is a greater emphasis on informal learning in this context.
- 'Management Intentions' (to create learning) was added to factors affecting learning, as the managers' intentions rather than their eventual actions have a much different effect on these aspects whether intended or not.
- Under 'Employees', engagement was added as a key area for concentration by managers.
- There is an emphasis of mutual understanding, connectedness and communication between managers and employees.
- Informal learning plays a much larger role in workplace learning and development for this organisation.

A second framework was developed to give managers a guide to understand the major themes which were realised in this research. This is a framework for learning which managers in a local government organisation, could apply to their own workplace or team. Managers may be able to use this framework as a structured guide to plan goals and actions for future learning. This would also provide an avenue to have adequate feedback systems in place to follow the framework guide.

This structured approach below, related to the recommendations formed in Chapter 6.

Research Themes affect on Learning

1. Managers and Employees understanding learning opportunities in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)

- How managers understand learning so they may be facilitators of learning
- Managers understanding the possible ways to provide learning
- Employees understanding learning opportunities

2. The extent of informal learning in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)

- Direct and Indirect
- Structured and Unstructured
- Intentional and Incidental

Learning Opportunities in the Workplace

3. Managers' intentions becoming actions (How managers operationalise their roles)

- Management intentions of being a facilitator of learning
- Managers intentions versus what actually happens in the workplace

4. Employee engagement with learning opportunities (How managers operationalise their roles)

- How employees are engaged with learning in their workplace
- How managers encourage employee engagement with learning opportunities in the workplace

Notes

Many factors may impact one, or all of these themes at anytime. E.g. Environment, Organisational Structure, and personality of a manager and employee.

Learning is an individual, team and organisational activity. Learning is not limited to employees only.

Framework for key learning themes in a local government organisation

Figure 3. Framework for Themes

3.2 Research framework

The conceptual frameworks depictured in Figures 1 and 2, show that the ideas forming this author's research are that employees are influenced by managers and their workplace environments over the course of their working life. The research question being explored is: "How are managers perceived to be enacting their role as facilitators of learning?" Therefore, the focus of the framework is specifically on the perceptions of employees and managers and not on what the specific barriers and enablers to learning are.

Figure 1 was used to demonstrate to research participants how the research questions were being interpreted, and to give them an idea of what factors may be relevant for their workplace. Based on research into the area in facilitation of learning it was understood that there are many barriers and enablers to learning in the workplace. There are many aspects which would have a large effect on both managers and employees in the workplace and these were clearly identified in the conceptual framework.

Employees will develop their own opinions and form conclusions for their work abilities based on these ideas. Employees may create barriers to learning new skills in their minds or there may be actual barriers. However, it is how the employees get to this conclusion that will be the focus. This is why the research questions asked employees about their perceptions of what are their barriers to learning, and then asked the managers what they believe the barriers to learning are for employees. This meant that the research was better able to determine whether the barriers were real or perceived by employees. As this researcher progressed through the research, the framework was updated to ensure it was a current version.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The underpinning paradigm of this research is a social constructivist approach, which contends that human beings construct their own social realities and that people within a setting may construct them in quite different ways (Searle, 1995). Burr (2015) believes that there is no one definition or description of social constructivism, but that a social constructionist approach may accept one of more of the key assumptions of; a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, historical and cultural specificity, knowledge being sustained by social processes, and that knowledge and social action work in tandem. Therefore, this type of research allows for both subjective and objective forms of knowing and the researcher is part of the reality studied. This approach is applicable for this study, as it not only allowed each participant to indicate how they *see* specific situations, but also to indicate what actions and events have occurred.

Approaches to research generally take qualitative or quantitative routes. Quantitative research focuses on the collection of data and statistics to measure or test causal relationships between variables (Hussey & Hussey, 1997) and focussing on exploring *what* is happening. Qualitative research is more usually focused on the study of people and their interactions within particular environments (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2011), and it investigates *why and how* things are happening. Advocates for a qualitative approach to research contend that the qualitative approach is needed to gain an insider's view of a particular situation (Lapan et al., 2011). Moreover, it is often believed that it is best to use qualitative research where there is little known about a cultural group or setting (Morse & Richards, 2002). It is these arguments that underpin the use of a broadly qualitative approach in this study as it explores a new phenomenon with diverse organisational cultural patterns.

4.2 Research design

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of managers and employees about the facilitation of learning in the workplace. The need for this research is to inform managers in local government how they can motivate and encourage learning in employees. Therefore, this researcher employed an exploratory research design, because there has been little research that has gathered or compared manager and employee perspectives about the facilitation of workplace learning. Exploratory research is essentially discovery-oriented and is an appropriate stance for research studies where there is limited prior knowledge of the subject under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Therefore, this study was not designed to test a theory or hypothesis, but to find out information. It was driven by investigative questions, and the analysis was similarly driven by the responses of the participants.

Recent studies in similar fields by Warhurst (2013b) and Beattie (2007) used case-study methodology and interview methods. This study was based on a case-study research methodology, and the researcher has used the qualitative method of clusters of semi structured in-depth interviews to gather data from a small sample size. This study had participants from only one organisation, but would receive many different individual views and perspectives. This research is focused on informal methods of workplace facilitation and the perceptions of the respondents to these methods. However, other research has focused on formal methods of facilitation, such a Billet's (2003) research on a formal mentoring program, and Warhurst's (2013b) on managers self-reporting on their successes or failures. Liezelot Janssens et al. (Janssens, Smet, Onghena, & Kyndt, 2017) research into informal learning outcomes is another which showed how limiting it can be to have managers self-reporting on success or failure. This research has included the perceptions of both managers and employees to allow a comparison of their perspectives.

It is important that qualitative researchers understand their own opinions, feelings, and their own persuasiveness in their research, because their behaviour affects the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A researcher may unintentionally persuade a respondent to give a certain answer to a question which may impact on the research findings. During interviews, an interviewer and participant may build a rapport, but an interviewer should not put words in their mouth. To ensure the validity of protocols this study took two major approaches. The first was to ensure the protocols were based on previously utilised research protocols. Research completed in similar fields and on similar topics was reviewed to ensure that the research being undertaken here was consistent with these previous established sources. Secondly, as those approaches had to be adjusted for the context of this study they were tested on participant groups prior to the interaction with the actual research participants.

Such qualitative research approaches may utilise and range of research methodologies: case study, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology (Newman & Benz, 1998). While these are the most common methodologies for qualitative research in the social sciences (Somekh & Lewin, 2005), studies often combine or develop these approaches to fit the diverse purposes of field studies. While quantitative studies are shaped to provide a representative sample of large populations, it is often the case in qualitative research that only one subject, one case, or one unit is the focus over a period of time (Newman & Benz, 1998), to provide deeper understanding of complex relationships and patterns. A qualitative design that takes a social constructivist stance can use a range of qualitative research methods of data collection such as in-depth and open-ended interviews (Patton, 1987). This study, consisted of many diverse perceptions in the responses from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge (Patton, 1987).

This researcher has used one of the most common forms of data collection in this area - interviewing. In-depth interviews are used when the topic is sensitive and discretion is needed. In this research this was the case because the researcher required employees to give information about their line managers and from their own point of view. In-depth interviews are a research approach that focuses on in-depth study and is part of the social constructivist paradigm of social science.

As part of the interviewing techniques this researcher aimed to include a small section based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). The CIT is based on the work of Flanagan (1954) who created a means of collecting observational data on human behaviour. CIT is a direct means of questioning that asks participants to convey their personal experiences and views on specific incidents in a certain context. To be a critical incident, the incident in question must occur in a situation where the purpose of that situation is clear, and every party and observer of that situation understands the consequences (Flanagan, 1954). The incident should have a special significance and meet set criteria to define it in that way.

Over the course of this case study it proved extremely difficult for this researcher to use CIT. As Flanagan (1954) explained, all parties in the critical incident should have the same expectations of the situation. In the situations which the managers and their employees experienced often the employees were unaware that the manager was attempting to create a learning environment for them. Also, there was no way for an employee or a manager to realise the special significance that either party placed on a certain event. As the researcher was conducting confidential interviews, the participants, and therefore their perceptions of the event was different and often took on an altered meaning.

Qualitative researchers are interested in the everyday meanings people have constructed, how they generally make sense of the world, and the experiences they have in it. This was the purpose for using qualitative research for this case study; so that a picture of the organisation could be created and the experiences able to be interpreted. The certain methodology was thus chosen to encourage participants to give as much detailed narrative as possible, and therefore enable the research to create an accurate representation of the organisation, which in turn would allow the researcher to draw conclusions when making observations.

Disadvantages of this method are that the participants in qualitative research may be conscious that they are being observed (Hussey & Hussey, 1997), and so they may alter their normal behaviour to be viewed in a more positive way. This was often a clear factor in the questioning process, as some participants came ready with notes and with pre-prepared answers to the questions. Although it was useful for the participants to go back to when looking to answer questions, it appeared that the answers may have been from a textbook or a research source and were not the personal opinions of

that participant. For example, it was this researcher's judgement that when some of the managers explained their answers to the question about the extent to which they were facilitators of learning, the philosophy did not always match the examples they gave for learning.

The researcher was mindful to search for contrary evidence during the interviews and employed a variety of interview techniques to combat this. When the interview questions were tested and refined it was decided that similar questions would be asked at the start and end of the question list. This also allowed the researcher to see if the participant was trying to present themselves in a particular way across the course of the interview, whether their guard was being let down and whether the same or similar answer was being given or whether the participant was presenting conflicting information in a possible attempt to seem more in favour of the researcher.

The decision to only interview participants from one organisation was a sensible choice, in this researcher's opinion. There was saturation of information from the number of participants which participated in the study. The industry type was wise, as it is one which has not been investigated much in research in Australia. The size of the organisation was correct as this particular local government organisation was medium to large size and this meant that it was easier to make generalisations. If the organisation had been a small local government organisation or one which was currently undergoing a major restructure, or had just undergone a major restructure, there would have been effects on all employees that would have had to be taken into account.

4.3 Sampling

As an exploratory case study investigation, this research used non-probability sampling (non-random). The purpose was to secure a case study and participants that would provide revelatory data for the study. The sample did not purport to be representative of the whole local government area, but rather a small part of it. The researcher decided to use Quota Sampling, whereby the researcher chooses a purposeful sample; in this case with a mixture of participants of different ages and genders (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). Other sampling methods such as stratified, cell or theoretical sampling (Robinson, 2014) were considered, however, it was determined that quota sampling was the best fit for this research. Quota Sampling was ideal for this research as conditions were presented at the beginning of negotiations and it would not have been acceptable to go back to the organisation mid-research to change interview participants. In addition Quota Sampling was determined to be more flexible, and appropriate as the research was not fixing any particular numbers in any particular research category, but rather just having a minimum number. The sample was drawn from a small number of managers and their subordinates from within the local government industry in Perth, WA. The researcher used a 'snowball' approach using existing contacts to locate willing participant

organisations. A range of contacts was in place and the researcher choose a site that offered the greatest benefit to the study. In such situations it is inevitable that progressive organisations are more likely to open their doors to researchers and this was the case for this investigation. This benefited the study because it enabled this researcher to report the relations that underpin better practice in the industry.

This researcher originally designed the study to focus on two or three local government organisations in Western Australia. However, after investigation and consideration it was decided that only one local government organisation would be studied. It was apparent that the researcher would need to give time to each participant and to focus on the one organisation and its many sub-cultures and practices. The researcher had contacts within the industry and had the cooperation of members of a medium-to-large local government organisation.

The participants in this local government organisation were from a range of different areas within their directorates. The managers and employees were drawn from the entire organisation and therefore there was no restriction on the area that they worked within. Some participants were entirely office based, some worked out in the community, while others worked in a variety of locations with multiple stakeholders. The majority of participants however, were in a mainly office based work situation. The structure of the research was that for each cluster of the study the data collection targeted a manager who was not a senior manager, but who had at least two employees in their immediate work team. Therefore, some employees were actually more senior, or working in another management type capacity, and well as being an employee of their own manager.

It was decided that a minimum of five managers from the organisation would be selected to participate in this study, and a minimum of two subordinate employees for each manager as additional participants. This gave the researcher a minimum of 15 interviews which was necessary to obtain saturation for the data. The focus was on face-to-face interviews but in some case telephone interviews or follow-up emails or conversations were necessary.

4.4 Instruments/Technique

Interviewing is one of the major ways qualitative researchers collect research data (Chenail, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). As this research was exploratory research it was decided that a semi-structured approach would be the best instrument to use to get the most information from participants. A semi-structured interview was an appropriate instrument for gathering data and this approach constructed a picture of the broad areas of management, learning, and gender in the workplace. Structured interviews were considered but this researcher did not want to limit the personal input and

experiences the participants may be able to bring to the conversation during semi-structured interviews. The five managers selected to participate in this study, each had responsibility for managing at least two employees. Kvale (1996) claims that only 15 interviews are required to reach saturation on any given topic; however, this research had five managers and 14 employees. As this approach was constructing the reality of the organisation the saturation and redundancy were achieved by the end of the data collection and not beforehand.

Each manager and their subordinates were interviewed at least once. In-depth interviews are conversations about the meaning of people's experiences (Kvale, 1996) and in connection to this idea, the participants interviewed provided information easily, and were happy to participate in a conversation with the researcher. There were brief follow-up conversations with two of the managers who wished to provide extra information post-interview. The researcher provided interviewees with transcripts to open the possibility of additional comment, but none of the employees chose to take up this option. The unit of measurement used was the perceptions and actions of the managers, and the key factor was to analyse the differences in the perceptions between individuals and groups.

The interview structure and questions are identified in Appendix 9.6.

These questions were developed as a result of examination of similar research into this area. Firstly, Warhurst used only one research question based around the idea of "what does being a manager mean for you?" (R. Warhurst, 2013b). Based on this question, the researcher chose to lead with the question: "To what extent do you see yourself as a facilitator of learning?" for managers; and "To what extent do you see your manager as a facilitator of learning?" This researcher found inspiration for these questions were based on the same idea of what does it mean to the individual. However, the focus was on facilitation of learning. For this question it was possible that both the manager and employee could give an answer that they thought was correct rather than what they actually believe. This researcher believed it would be beneficial to the study to ask managers and employees to give specific examples that could support their argument.

Billet (2003) asked managers to identify what new tasks had recently been undertaken with success and then what additional assistance was required for employees, if any. This line of questioning produced a large amount of information and led employees to give specific examples (Billett, 2003, p. 110 & 111). Additionally, Beattie (2007) had five main research questions in her research which are reflected in this research as the barriers and enablers to learning. Finally, Amy (2008) incorporated the themes of the triggers, beliefs, behaviours, and outcomes that managers and their subordinates

believed were evident in their learning in the workplace. The questions in Appendix 9.6 were the pilot questions that were tested before taking them to the final interview participants.

There were no changes to the actual questions, except for small changes to the order and emphasis of questions. One interview was sufficient to cover all areas of questioning, as a relationship was built through the dynamics of previous contact, the interactions pre-interview and word of mouth about the interviewer from other members of the organisation. The benefit of having several contact points was to allow time to build rapport with the participants, and to encourage participants to think deeply about the topic and give them a chance to add any additional information post-interview.

This researcher recognised that as part of the process, this researcher had become an instrument in terms of the research which was being conducted. Research does not happen within a vacuumed state and the comments made by this researcher will have had an impact upon the interviewees over the course of the interviews. This researcher could see, through participant observation, that there was a change in the ideas of the organisational areas. A rapport had been developed over time and this caused managers and employees to have reactions to the interviews and to make changes to their own thoughts. This researcher is aware that she is unable to truly measure anything without interfering with the concept in some way, as the role of the researcher is to participate by observing, minimising interference and researching consciously.

4.5 Data collection

The data collection for this research can be summarised into four main stages. The first stage was gaining Organisational Relations that included the researcher speaking to several organisations and negotiating terms for the research. At this point the organisation took information from the researcher and discussed the research objectives, contribution to shaping the subsequent data collection, and provided potential participant names for the study. The second stage was Participant Relations that involved the researcher speaking with both the managers and then the employees to determine a suitable time for the interview to be conducted. The third stage was the Interview stage when the process of direct engagement with staff and the interviewing of employees took place. The process followed was the researcher sending the research questions to the participants beforehand, the actual interview then being conducted, and then any follow up by either the researcher or the participant. The final stage was Analysis, involving the researcher transcribing coding and analysing the data through a pre-structured framework and sequence of steps.

While interviews were the primary instrument, the study also used document scanning and observation. The key contacts were interviewed to gather an overview of the organisation and its

issues. A small number of documents were collected and were analysed as baseline data. Observations from the visits were used to triangulate the perceptions of managers and employees.

Participants were provided with the key questions in advance of the interviews. Interviews were face-to-face and the responses were hand-written by the researcher onto paper, and captured on a digital recorder. The participants gave their informed consent and the researcher suggested a pseudonym to preserve their anonymity. Semi-structured interviews provide a conversational, two-way dialogue that aimed to motivate the participants. The interview conversation is always underpinned by a systematic observation and data gathering theory (Kvale, 1996). Interview files were backed up and saved on a removable device to prevent loss of information.

The individual recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to the best of the researcher's ability, only removing the hesitations and the unrelated in-between talk. Following this, the recordings were copied into an electronic copy document with assistance from notes taken during the interviews, along with any documents provided to the researcher at the interview. The interviews in full were then coded into smaller sentences and finally reduced into coded key words, topics and themes. These items were then thematically analysed to form key ideas for discussion. Interviews were analysed comparatively to identify the similarities and the differences of the two member groups. The key words or phrases that were used by respondents and the comparison between both was looked at, and this was used to form an understanding of what these key ideas may mean.

This research contacted the director of the organisational area within the local government chapter. A sit down meeting was conducted where the aims and concepts of the research were discussed. Following this meeting, the director contacted the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the organisation to secure approval for this project to proceed. Approval was given and the researcher prepared an email containing information of all levels for the director to discuss with the managers in their team at the next available meeting. This email is attached in Appendix 9.7. The Director then sent an email to all staff calling for volunteers to be contacted to discuss the possibility of participating in research. This was met with interest from five managers. Following their interest in the project, the managers were then required to provide information to their own team members and have at least two willing interview participants from their respective areas.

The director provided the five managers' names to the researcher and gave permission for them to be contacted. The managers were approached by the researcher and asked whether they understood the research project and if they were committed to participate in an interview. The managers gave consent and a convenient time for them to be interviewed in a public area was chosen. A café close to the local government organisation was selected so as not to disturb the managers or employees

during the busier times. The researcher met each participant at their place of work and then walked them to the interview location. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to build a rapport with the participant by having an unstructured and more casual conversation before the interview began.

Recent research by Warhurst (2013b) was similar to this study, as it had a focus on qualitative analysis of managers as facilitators of learning and developers of employees. This researcher hoped to differ from Warhurst's research by changing the methodology. Warhurst had a photo-prompted interview with only one question, which left the interview with managers to be quite open-ended and the ideas formed to then be interpreted by the managers themselves. However, Warhurst did note in the limitation of the study that the managers were aware of the researcher's background and believed that perhaps they should say what they thought he wanted to hear rather than express their own ideas.

Reliability and validity are central issues in all measurement (Neuman, 2006). This research was reliable, as all the interviews were conducted under the same conditions. The interviewees were each given the same information and asked the same questions. However, the responses were all different, as everyone sees their situation differently. Also, having semi-structured interviews meant that there might be altered lines of questioning as demanded by the participants' responses. This research was valid which means that it actually measured what it was trying to measure. This particular study used construct validity which refers to how well an instrument or construct captures the concept it is supposed to be measuring (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). There are many issues for qualitative analysis and validity (Newman & Benz, 1998). Some of the more pertinent issues for this study were neutrality, generalisability and truth value.

Issues of neutrality in validity criteria are around how objective the data is. Issues with qualitative research are that no data collection can be entirely objective (Newman & Benz, 1998). A researcher should identify unbiased ideas that are being presented. The researcher attempted to look through the data for consistency and patterns. Multiple ideas were presented and from the point of view of the interviewee themselves. Their particular point of view did not always make their idea correct, but the researcher always aimed to respond to a question, statement or answer with a passive, neutral attitude.

The issues of generalisability are that a researcher cannot always generalise from their research. Consequently, this idea cannot entirely be true for qualitative research. Although this research cannot entirely generalise, the patterns of consistency identified and the themes conceived from the ideas meant that a certain level of generalisability was able to be achieved.

In addition, issues with truth value refer to the confidence that a research would have if the research were to be completed again and whether the research would have the same outcomes. Would all the same components be able to be measured again and used in the same way? This researcher endeavoured to combat these issues to ensure the research was as valid as possible. The benefits of using semi-structured interviews is that they have a higher validity as there is more detail. However, there may be lower reliability as the participant may drive the conversation in different directions. To add to this concept, the research participants and the researcher met at a local café which created a bustling environment for interviews. Although this allowed for rapport to be build and a casual tone of conversation, this was quite loud and perhaps a quieter location would have been better to avoid the noise and distraction at some of the interviews. This type of distraction may have cause participants to lose a train of thought, or the opposite - to jog a memory.

Finally, the interviewees were given the research questions well in advance of the interview, and the interviews were held for approximately one hour or for as long as the participant needed. This meant that the participants could think about the answers they wanted to give to the questions, which hopefully encouraged the participants to give truthful and honest answers. In such circumstance, it is likely that if the interviews were to be followed up or conducted a second time the answers would be the same, or as similar as can be, for this organisation. As this was an exploratory case study research project, the truth value would only apply to this particular group under the same circumstances.

4.6 Research Analysis

The primary data collected in this research study were the perceptions of the managers and their employees on how managers were facilitating learning in the workplace. This meant data would be in the form of words, behaviours, incidents and experiences. The first step in the analysis was the researcher listening to, and transcribing, all the interviews after they have been completed. The researcher took notes during the interview but these were not comprehensive as the interview was semi-structured and therefore more like a conversation that the interviewer still needed to be a part of and practice active listening, while simultaneously managing the interaction. The next step was the researcher examining the transcribed interview responses to identify patterns of similarities and dissimilarities in the perceptions of the two groups individually, and then subsequently in comparison to each other. This researcher used the qualitative software NVivo to store data for coding and analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe coding as the process of translating raw data into meaningful categories, and this is the task that was undertaken through sequential steps to group similar data, so the key concepts emerged from the subject responses. As this data was exploratory there were no specific outcomes to be reached, therefore the analysis was to be driven by the voices of the subjects and the issues that emerged from their responses to the questions.

4.7 Research limitations

There are limitations for every research study and this research was no different. The limitations of this project were identified as follows:

- *This researcher may not be able to access the people needed to do the research and may have to develop alternative contacts.*

    In reality this was not an issue for this researcher, as there was a satisfactory number of volunteers to participate in the research.

- *Due to time constraints this researcher may not be able to find enough people for the in-depth interviews and they may not be able to be interviewed for the required amount of time. If this does not go to the timing schedule, there may be a need to shorten or lengthen interviews or use conduct telephone interviews.*

    This was not an issue, because the light-hearted and casual nature of the conversations on most occasions meant that all participants were satisfied with the timing of the interviews.

- The interview location was sometimes loud. For future research a public location would be more than acceptable; however, it may be prudent to look for a less busy location as it would reduce the differences between interviews, stop distractions and keep the interviews consistent.

    As the study is qualitative, not quantitative, the results cannot be generalised. Only a small number of respondents will be surveyed; thus, the study will have to be prudent in the final claims made as they will be tied to a specific context.

- A large amount of data was captured and able to be analysed.

4.8 Ethical considerations

A code of ethics and other researches can provide guidance for a new researcher, but ultimately ethical conduct depends on the individual researcher (Neuman, 2006, p. 129). As a student researcher, I understand my responsibility to ensure the correct treatment of all of the people involved in my study and I followed the guidelines set out by Edith Cowan University (ECU) on the University's internet.

As this study is focused on individuals, the main ethical consideration of the project was to protect the rights of the research participants. No participant was subject to any physical harm, psychological harm or legal harm either directly or indirectly because of this research. Also, there was no disclosure of any confidential conversation that may jeopardise any participant's jobs. All participation was purely on a voluntary basis, and all participants had the right to informed consent which is about giving the potential participants information on the purpose of the research to gain their agreement to

participation (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Details of the research requirements were given to the participants to ensure their knowledge was adequate to make a voluntary decision without bias or pressure. Copies of the information letter along with my contact details was provided to the participants on several occasions. The participants had the right to withdraw from the research process at any time. The participant's minimum age limit was 18 years old, and although a formal process to determine age was not conducted, the paperwork asked employees to sign to this effect.

Data collected for research was viewed only by the researcher and her supervisors. None of the participants were identified in the documents; however, there is a master copy of the coding for participants' real names and their identification number. This information is password-protected and kept in a separate file from the information. Data will be kept for a maximum of five years after the completion of the research thesis. Data will be destroyed by deleting it from the data storage system and by the correct document destruction process for any paper-based information. The study did not commence until the ECU ethics committee approved it.

4.9 Research schedule

The schedule for this research aimed to be conducted over a 48-month period, divided into several stages. The first stage was to be completed in 18 months, with the final four stages completed in the following 28 months.

Stage 1: Finalise thesis proposal

Stage 2: Preparation (research questions and interview participants)

Stage 3: Interviews (conduct and complete semi-structured in-depth interviews)

Stage 4: Analysis of data (begin to analyse data and identify outcomes and results)

Stage 5: Write-up (prepare information and write up results to present research outcomes to the academic community)

Stage 1: Finalise thesis proposal

August 2013 –December 2013: Finalise research proposal and complete research presentation

> **January 2014 – March 2014:** Complete comments and feedback on proposal and finalise ethics submission.

Stage 2: Prepare research questions for interviews and prepare interview participants.

April 2014 – May 2014: Prepare research questions, test them on an appropriate audience and prepare participants from local government to be interviewed.

Stage 3: Interview managers and their employees.

June 2014 – August 2014: Interview managers and employees from organisation 1

Stage 4: Follow-up interviews if required, commence data analysis and begin write-up of findings

July 2014 – September 2014: Commence analysis of data (Follow-up interviews completed if required)

October 2014 – December 2014: Continue data analysis and begin write up of findings.

Stage 5: Final write up of findings and conclusions from the research and submit thesis

January 2015 – October 2016: Continue to write findings and conclusions from research.

November 2016 – December 2016: Draft and provisional review of thesis.

January 2017 – May 2017: Review and edit thesis.

5.0 FINDINGS SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from the interview participants from the chosen Western Australian local government department (Amalgamation). There were 19 interviews conducted, with five of those interviews belonging to managers and fourteen belonging to employees of those managers. Each manager had at least two employees from their department respond to the interview questions. These participants were asked 12 to 13 questions in semi-structured interviews. Following this, the interviews were transcribed and then coded.

The interview questions (Appendix 9.6) were divided into four category areas: 1. Perceptions of employees and managers as facilitators of learning; 2. The way in which managers operationalise their roles; 3. Enablers to facilitating learning in the workplace; and 4. Barriers to facilitating learning in the workplace. The findings were a condensed replication of the participant's responses from the semi-structured interviews. The aim was to present a summary of the participant responses without interpretation, as this would follow in the subsequent chapter. The findings were sorted into categories based on the research questions of; how do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning, how do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning, and what are the enablers and barriers managers face when facilitating learning?. During the course of each interview there was no set structure, and often questions were answered out of sequence or not at all, and then had to be asked late on or clarified at the end of the interview. The findings chapter is structured to demonstrate to the reader the answers to the interview questions and to present the basic information collected before the analysis phase was commenced.

In this chapter, key examples are given in quotations with a pseudonym and the employee's position in the company. Where extra or substitute words are necessary to make sense of a sentence, these words are placed in square brackets. In many cases the quotations have been selected from responses to other questions, as it moved fluidly from one to the other. This allowed the interview to flow and did not restrict the conversation. The general nature of the conversation added to the depth of the response.

Therefore, this chapter will be structured as follows: the point of view of managers and what they perceived to be correct, followed by what the employees experienced from their point of view.

5.2   Summary of findings

5.2.1 Manager and employee responses

Category One: Perceptions

Managers – To what extent do you see yourself/manager as a facilitator of learning?

The responses to this question were all positive, as this was the managers reporting on their own behaviours. Nearly all managers expressed the desire to be a facilitator of learning for their employees and described the opportunities employees were given and the role they thought they should be playing in the learning.

> *"In my business unit I give opportunities to study and to act up in senior roles. I try to meet everybody's requests. There are no constraints on learning and development." "[I provide] incidental and informal learning." (Manager, Chris)*

> *"[A] managers' role is to make sure learning happens. My style is very hands-on – on-the-job type learning but not in your face, though. Take a step back and look at the big picture. Depends on [the] person – my style is a mix of people, admin as well as technical. example. lawyer" (Manager, Jane)*

> *"My job is to make sure the people doing the hard work [employees], are as free as possible to do that work" (Manager, Hugh)*

> *"My role is to be a coach, provide experience and be professional. The staff are more than capable to do their role. I give advice, protection and support. I like to have 360-degree feedback at all levels." (Manager, Macca)*

> *"There are lots of formal processes which can get in the way. Increased learning outside of the workplace. Difficult to get funding from the organisation. Majority `of the training is informal. This is more effective." (Manager, Peter)*

> *"Leadership direction and learning culture. I wish to be a leader in the field. [I like] Experiential learning theory. [I] Realise the need to keep and grow people in a complex system of work. Showing cost benefit of learning and development." (Manager, Chris)*

Hugh was the one manager who, although he supported learning, training and development, was of the opinion that the learning should be employee driven rather than controlled by the manager, and that only if the employee wants to be developed should the manager give guidance. This was a specific distinction from other managers like Jane, who had a hands-on management style and believed it is the manager's role to make sure learning happened.

"Not for me to decide what training someone needs unless I see an opportunity. Need to fix from the inside. Need to influence from the inside People are worth waiting for. Challenge employees to make their own opportunities. Managers to guide personal development... but only if the recipient wants it. Need to groom people. Have a protégé. People need to be supported. Need to feel comfortable. We are very lucky to work in this organisation." *(Manager, Hugh)*

In relation to whether they saw themselves as facilitators of learning, managers believed they all provided opportunities, advice, protection, support, learning and development in one way or another for employees, depending on their individual styles. This shows managers did find themselves to be satisfactory facilitators of learning and prioritised the role as high on their list of workplace activities.

Managers – How important is it to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

This question was situated for managers as question number two. The reason for first asking to what extent did managers see themselves as facilitators of learning was to then allow them to question themselves on how important they believe it to be:

"Very important." (Managers, Macca, Peter, Hugh, Jane)

"Crucial. The team is paramount. Learning informal learning important. Managers and employees need to meet regularly. Open door policy. Clarification – know what is expected of you. What is the priority? Advice. Changes how the work is in the future. Look at all the angles. I use questioning as a method of learning." (Manager, Macca)

"My role as manager is to manage and be responsible for the long term career of all my staff. A manager needs to focus on the work and learn to step back. Managers need to influence the culture first and foremost." (Manager, Peter)

Once again, all managers believed the role of facilitator of learning to be a very important one and this question gave rise to the idea of specific learning types such as informal learning, which was the style of learning for most managers.

Have your perceptions changed over the last 10 years of what being a manager is about?

The premise of the Karpin Report (1995), stated that managers' roles in the workplace were about facilitating learning, and that their roles were changing to manage cultures rather than specific processes. The question encouraged managers to ask themselves whether their role had changed over the last 10 years and the implications of this idea.

"Yes, but this has not happened universally. It is how the particular manager deals with the situation. It is an evolutionary change. Greater awareness for supervisors and managers. Perceive the need to support people focus on family and friends and flexibility. It is also the physical workplace." (Manager, Chris)

"Yes, it has changed. Now it is more the manager has control taken back from HR [in] the training side of things. There are less managers who have the attitude." (Manager, Jane)

"No it is down to personality. I have never had the type of manager you couldn't work for." (Manager, Mark)

The majority of managers determined that they could see the change in the work environment over the last 10 years. However, it appeared this was not a straightforward answer, with managers admitting in their responses that it depends on the particular manager or particular type of management style an employee may interact with. Therefore, a manager's personality can have a large, and significant impact on learning.

Employees

To what extent do you see your manager as a facilitator of learning?

Employees were asked the same question as that of the managers, to what extent did they see their manager as a facilitator of learning?

"The learning is done informally but employees need to seek it out. [This] concerned me when I started I was a bit of a do or die attitude and just good luck to you. Less handholding – there was a higher expectation when you start "I really had to dig around. I was encouraged to develop process and procedure and supported by leadership. I worked largely on my own and had to take initiative." (Employee, Betsy)

"I constantly get ongoing feedback. Excellent system in our area. Regular supervisory review by the manager – [employees] get a direction and a sense of what the manager is looking for which is good. Does not get bogged down in detail. Expose me to conversations about things – expose me to thinking." (Employee, Betsy)

"The Director is emailing through all the time. Now settled in a little more to the local government industry. Manager is good – gets us to do different things all the time and expand our skill base. We get advice everyday – my learning style is to get stuck in. I am able to bounce things off my manager – almost too much sometimes." (Employee, Bill)

"[I need] right now content - informal. [I can] learn by observation. Emulate the manager as they will give me advice. How should I approach? The manager offers an opinion if they are asked. They are a good sounding board. Hope I'm not bombarding you – supportive" (Employee, Davvers)

"Over the last years – expectation has grown [for employee learning]. Why aren't you doing it? Don't do it you are open to criticism. Lucky to have our manager. Our manager is great at managing people [and] genuinely cares about managing people. Consider staff side of things. If I had a bad manager I would leave the job. I am comfortable – careful of compliancy." (Employee, Jack)

"On-the-job learning. More opportunities. Significant on the job training – sink or swim. Work a lot by myself. Had to learn quickly. Learning quickly in job is key. Figurehead manager not really a manager. Learning self-discovery – had to have self-directed learning. Structure – location would be nice to have the team on the same floor. Don't see daily operations. For example, needed specific "mapping skills" needed to lock in training. Sharing of information - needs to have a coordinated approach. One person is not a group. Need a revised structure in the team, location is a big challenge. (Employee, Jo)

"I have been LUCKY to work on projects. Supportive of work life balance – they are flexible. Be able to work from home if needed. My manager is good." (Employee, Kerry)

There was an overwhelming response to this question that showed indeed that the managers from this local government organisation were definitely performing the role of facilitators of learning. There were a few comments which suggested there was room to improve in areas such as: the structure of the environment in which the teams were currently arranged.

Is your manager a facilitator of learning?

This question was in response to the idea of "Is the manager a facilitator learning in the workplace?". This question asked employees the same question that was asked of the managers to gain a comparison of what the managers said they were achieving.

"Yes. [they are] proactive. Always encouraging employees to look for new opportunities. Pushing – empowering and following through to organise. Be supportive. Can always go knock on [their] door. [Current manager] was previously a 'cop' [type of] manager. [Now] I couldn't think of a better person. [They] will always support you. Some colleagues are reluctant to start new training as they are close to retirement or their personal circumstances might change." (Employee, John)

"Our manager is a facilitator of learning. Encourages people. [They] said we need to take responsibility for our own training, but give us a gentle nudge. Good to approach. Progress us with conferences. Learn. Proactive – puts name forward. Secondment – acting up role. Stuck on the words – guidance. Assist with hands-on learning." (Employee, Sally Anne)

"This organisation has wide variety of learning. In-house constantly on the internet. Small more formal. [Our manager] – click through emails. My manager pushes me more to do training or learning. My fault I do not do more – I am responsible [but I] put it to one side – other things take priority When I do workshops I enjoy it and come back with a renewed sense of enthusiasm. You can further yourself – with degrees etc.." (Employee, Teresa)

Options for learning from managers was described as being both formal and informal. However, the responses from employees brought up ideas of who is responsible for controlling and initiating learning and options for engaging employees (especially if they are close to retirement and don't want to learn or if they have poor time management).

How important do you think it is for Managers to be facilitators of learning??

What was the level of importance placed on managers being facilitators of learning in the workplace was the question asked after employees had had an opportunity to discuss what their managers did to encourage them to learn?

"Managers as facilitators of learning fits high up on the agenda of important things." (Employee, Bigyin)

"Very important. Rate it is so high that the team is professional and knowledgeable. Know there is grey area but try." (Employee, Bec)

"Definitely. For new people. New to industry or new to the work way. Vitally important. Been lucky to work here. [Managers are] supportive, cushion the fall for us. Impart knowledge and wisdom on others." (Employee, Davvers)

"It is an important/critical part of a manager's role. Formal side does not give [them] the opportunity to make it happen. Informal learning needs to be in conjunction. My development comes from my manager. [Their] style compensates for any gaps [they] may have." (Employee, Jack)

"Important. Learn different ways to do things is important." (Employee, Julie)

"The manager places great importance. I think it is important. If not, it creates a divide – management. He is interested in our personal development. Pointing them in the direction of a course. Doesn't tell but encourages. Managers SHOULD do this. Progress his staff – gives it the upmost thought. Trust in him. Been occasions where I've doubted me and my manager said NO. I trust you… you can do it. Has confidence in me." (Employee, Sally-Anne)

"Very important. I think the manager needs to follow through and get the employee skilled" (Employee, Teresa)

"Important – Yes absolutely. Needs to be directed from higher authorities. Realities of the job – love to see it happen. Collect information – fresh information. I tried – no response." (Employee, Tommy)

Learning in the workplace was entirely supported by all employees as being a very important part of employees working life. The majority of employees responded that the manager being a facilitator of learning in this process was also very important. Additionally, employees who had identified that their manager was not able to enact this role to its optimal level were still in agreement that a great amount of importance is placed on managers providing learning opportunities in the workplace.

Have your perceptions changed over the last 10 years?

Similarly, employees were told of the Karpin Report (1995) in brief detail and asked to give their impressions of whether they believed that the landscape of management roles had changed over time.

"Over the last 10 years there has been a significant change in management style. A fear that managers have is that the employees will take my job if they teach them too much. My manager goes above and beyond. Managers are starting to more manage people. Previously it was more their role to be in charge. My manager works with people – not employees working for them!" (Employee, Bigyin)

"For me it was changing. Quite daunting for me I was more comfortable too confident to go talk to the managers. This is what I think I can offer and ask them. My manager is always approachable." (Employee, Bec)

"Yes, changed over the last 10 years. When I was first out of university – do job then go home. I would work a standard day. The style depends on personality too." (Employee, Julie)

"Definitely more of a priority now. Coming from the top down. Informal discussion rather that direction. Collaborative. Managers are open to thoughts, ideas and suggestion coming from the team." (Employee, Kerry)

"In my previous employment it used to be that you were shown a task once and that was it you had to know it straight away. You had to do what you were told. Now there is job sharing and more opportunity to take on different tasks. Now it is all about learning. Attitude towards training has changed. Previously it was the old way with learning a new technique and no scope for learning or advancing. Now we have room to change and adapt." (Employee, John)

"This is a grey area. I know there are great managers – but have not really noticed a change. However, the learning has improved – managers are recognising the nature of the workplace is changing. Shift in workplace dynamics. Have environment to shift around in." (Employee, Betsy)

Some employees conveyed that they could see the changes in management's role over the past 10 years. However, some employees were unable to comment due to their demographics (e.g. age) or some had not had the opportunity of ever working with different managers - managers whose approach was straight, rigid and not focused on what they could do for an employee but rather what the employees simply needed to do for their working tasks.

Category Two: Operationalise - Actions

Managers

How have you demonstrated that you are a facilitator of learning?

This question asked managers to think deeper about the role of facilitator of learning and give examples to the level they enacted their role.

"As the Manager I encourage self-directed learning such as; postgraduate, undergraduate, masters or diploma level study. This culture is also driven by the CEO – [CEO] is very interested and supportive. I actively encourage employees to make themselves distinguishable from others. As a manager I attempt to leverage off the skills employees already have" (Manager, Chris)

"We provide good corporate training and a regular structure with job-specific training in the system. Development studied through university. Previously, the ability to get study assistance was a barrier, but now it is removed. Informal learning is used in this team. I explain to people the culture of the organisation and the information you don't get taught at the induction such as the political environment. I encourage interactions – we are not as siloed as other managers can be. Communication is important." (Manager, Jane)

"I don't interfere too much. The team likes each other as friends in a collegial way and are close. The team like but also respect each other. Look at advice from a different point of view – different angles from other people. I encourage emails and face to face interaction. Some employees are reluctant students and some learn on the job and get hands on experience. This organisation encourages learning and want people to widen their skill set." (Manager, Macca)

"It is engrained in people from the start to not like learning (training). Tainted by ticking boxes. Don't understand the vision of the organisation." (Manager, Peter)

"I provide opportunities for job shadowing, job crossover, conferences, seminars, front line leadership courses, trainee, internships, mentoring, formal training – University, TAFE, trainee manager and cross team collaboration." (Manager, Hugh)

All managers all easily had examples of the learning opportunities they provided their employees on a regular basis and began to develop ideas on their style of facilitation of learning.

As a Manager have you given employees opportunity?

Managers were asked in a different time of the interview what opportunities they provided for their employees in the workplace. This question was aimed to provoke thought from the interviewees around the differences between training and learning. When asked the question of what examples of learning do you provide employees managers often are drawn to the ideas of training. This question aimed to draw out the examples of informal learning opportunities which were directly or indirectly provided by the managers.

"A leader is the facilitator of many things, not just learning. We have evaluations every three months. Give opportunities to employees, which is intentional learning. Have to give incentives to keep people interested in work. For example, a Cert 3 in traineeship can grow the confidence of an employee. Give employees appropriate support mechanisms. Managers do not resolve all problems and encourage employees to think about solutions for the day to day problems." (Manager, Chris)

"Business as usual. Should be part of your role. As a manager there is not enough time for the pre-planning. Needs to be a more unique process. Managers can get informal advice from HR for this." (Manager, Jane)

"When I was an employee I had learning on the job as I went, I was ok, chances are employees will be too. They can come to me for guidance, but not everyone is like me. Some people need more guidance and help." (Manager, Peter)

The responses to this follow up question were successful in opening up a different train of thought for the managers. The researcher provided sub-questions to stimulate thought where necessary, and managers gave considered answers which provided an array of subthemes for the research.

Employees

How has your manager demonstrated that they are responsible for employee learning?

The responses to this question were mostly positive as the majority of employees expressed satisfaction in their managers' behaviour:

> *"[My] manager [is] open to providing any training and development when needed". (Employee, Bec)*

> *"My manager gives me opportunities to enhances skills and learning [through opportunities such as] secondments. [They] encourage others and share and provide knowledge and experience. They explain things in informal groups to have an understanding of others perspectives, to exchange knowledge and learn from each other." (Employee, Bigyin)*

> *"I learn by watching then I go away and do it. If I trust that person and that they are doing the job right" Employee, Davvers)*

> *"Approachable with an open-door policy. Key strength – expertise. Encourages [employees] to use the tools there are to create an opportunity. People say it but how to do it…. [It is] hard to actually do it in a meaningful way. [Manager] will think it through and welcomes opinions being cautious to look at a summary of how a job went. Identify next time improvements. [My Manager] doesn't let the job get off task." (Employee, Jack)*

> *"Both my manager and I like active experimentations. [I have] an experience, I made a mistake but learn from it and know for next time and we have an informal debrief. Manager is not a micro-manager at all. Get on with the job There if you need him. Open to suggestions and ideas. Lets the employee realise the changes that need to be done Removes the barriers. Has faith in me." (Employee, Kerry)*

In contrast to the positive actions of their managers, some employees believed there were improvements managers could make to their learning facilitation practices. A few employees expressed dissatisfaction with management techniques, training and support:

> *"…because we don't get to be managed like that" (Employee, Teresa)*

"…but don't get the opportunity. Maybe in the future there will be more scope. [We] have training available to us [employees] but we are consumed by other responsibilities" (Employee, Jo).

"Upper management doesn't provide the support across the organisation…. [There is] not enough support." (Employee, Sally-Anne)

Overall, employees appeared to be pleased with the level to which managers demonstrated they were responsible for employee learning. At a basic level just about all of the employees reported receiving emails on a regular basis with learning opportunities contained within. Several employees expressed they felt "supported", "encouraged" and "free to approach" their managers at any time. Employees showed support for mentoring programs, job shadowing and secondments which they felt showed the managers taking charge of their individual learning.

Employees – How has my manager given me opportunity?

As was the case for the managers, employees were asked at a different time in the interview what opportunities were provided for them in the workplace.

"No formal mentoring. [My manager] is an informal type of mentor. They take the time to sit down and teach me, I have one-on-one meetings every fortnight for any problems I have or things I need. We have a team meeting once every fortnight. This is a good system. (Employee, Bec)

"Exposure – I can come along to meetings sometimes to adequately cover [their] work. Gave me new opportunities. Everything helps us learn. The team share cases and team meetings outcomes. Learn from others – things around me." (Employee, Betsy)

"[My manager] protects us. Shield us. Knows what is going on. We don't know all the politics but we know that he is all over it." (Employee, Bill)

"Manager – sometimes I can go straight to CEO. Felt empowered. Local government – need approval at every stage." (Employee, Davvers)

"When my manager was on leave – I [am able to] fill in for [them]. I look after the budgets. I run the team meetings and have been there for a long time. The director there? Managing perceptions. Help with how to deal with others in the team. Educate people with how to business works. More training time – development." (Employee, Julie)

Predominantly, employees were able to recognise many opportunities both formally and informally where their managers provided them with a situation for them to learn.

"The first responsibility is for the manager to create an environment to actively learn. Actively encourage – if they understand. Higher management need to support the middle management otherwise it is hard for managers to encourage staff. Can't have disharmony amongst the workplace. Staff need to feel comfortable with their manager and comfortable to go to them. Need to create an environment where they won't often get declined." (Employee, Bigyin)

"Younger managers are more collaborative and consultative. Director – older managers are instructive and clear on the brief. Influence on management styles are social media. Can adapt – can read from more sources. Management styles are changing." (Employee, Jo)

From these thoughts, a small number of employees made determinations about how management should, in their opinion, encourage and support their staff members. In addition, these employees were able to recognise management styles of work and differences between a range of diverse demographic attributes.

Category Three: Enablers

Managers

This question asked managers to identify enablers in the workplace to learning for either themselves or their employees.

"Enablers are having access to HR information about normal training. Using Word and excel or using a chainsaw, for example, which is job specific. University degrees and conferences can help. Can start and build up. This organisation is a bit of both – Down to the area how it works out and how managers use the information. Stuck in the business and the detail." (Manager, Jane)

"Enablers are the organisation as it is open to further learning. Learning Local Government. Learning precinct. Seminars. Conferences. Further learning is a great thing. (Manager, Macca)

"Need a boss with a similar predisposition to me." (Manager, Hugh)

Managers did not identify a large range of enablers to learning in the workplace. However, a very clear response was that managers believed the local government organisation was one that supported a learning culture.

What type of learning do you provide employees?

This question was similar to a previously asked question, where managers were asked how they were a facilitator of learning and provided an example which showed this. In this question, the researcher

specifically asked managers to think about learning which is provided to employees. The researcher focussed on explaining to managers the differences between formal learning, informal learning, incidental learning and whether these types of opportunities were being provided directly or indirectly.

> *"Formal buddy system. Informal. Familiarisation system. Three months – people you work with Entry interview process. Management for performance system – most formal tool. Learning and development – other forms of learning. Job secondment, job rotation. Framework – positional role. Informal processes. Projects – project teams." (Manager, Chris)*

> *"Focus on a lot of organisational development unit. Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) Continuous improvement. Creativity innovation lets us look at process – quite strong in that area. Second leadership development day in 2009 Yanchep external facilitator. Coaching one on one session. Emotional intelligence training." (Manager, Jane)*

> *"Give the staff an opportunity to learn. Set up everything properly and reduce the risk. Communication. Managers need to be open and honest. Culture change. Culture and vision." (Manager, Peter)*

Responses to this question varied and there was a large amount of discussion between the researcher and the interviewee as to exactly what types of learning were provided for employees. All managers concluded there was learning in many facets available for employees.

Employees

Enablers

This question asked employees to identify enablers in the workplace for their own learning.

> *"Being able to talk to each other and other people in the area. It is the culture and the feeling. Not the people. If you are reluctant to talk to them it is bad. A lot of people here with a lot of experience." (Employee, Bec)*

> *"Never seen him close his door. Yes, it is high on his priority list... it is not high on my priority list. He is always seen to be doing things. Says to everyone all the time. Everyone on the team has been on a course. (Employee, Bill)*

> *"Door is always open. Encouragse us to come to him." (Employee, Davvers)*

"Enablers. Opportunities. Acting up – secondments. Up to the individual service area. HOT learning opportunities. Advertise opportunities. Would you like to have a crack? Tools – online learning." (Employee, Jack)

"Environmental. Manager making the effort to come up and see me." (Employee, Jo)

"Organisational – our director. [Performance development] is a good thing. For example, it reminds me to follow up on things mid-year." (Employee, Julie)

"Organisational structures allow learning to happen but this varies from team to team." (Employee, Kerry)

The majority of the enablers identified stemmed from the actions of the managers themselves, rather than from a specific set up from the organisation.

"The structure. Having naming processes in places. I can go to a process and work instructions. Learn yourself before having to go anywhere else. Having an understanding of each business unit. Essential for learning." (Employee, Bec)

The majority of employees were easily able to identify a range of enablers to learn in the workplace.

Employees – What type of learning is available to you?

This question was similar to a previously asked question where employees were asked how they saw their managers as facilitators of learning and gave examples which showed this. In this question the researcher specifically asked employees to think about learning which is provided to them. The researcher focussed on explaining to employees the differences between formal learning, informal learning, incidental learning and whether these types of opportunities were being provided directly or indirectly.

"Management is about nurture. Always been involved in learning. Nobody ever crossed over roles. Never going to happen. He can't do that; he is not smart enough. Ostracised from the rest of the group. Progression – ageing workforce. People need to be exposed to learning. Learning environment is important. Move around in jobs. Not just training, but on the job learning is important too. Managers need to facilitate learning without an employee knowing... that is the key!" (Employee, Bigyin)

"Secondments. Emails for conferences. Volunteers me for internal courses. HR related courses. Does not really push it. That is a good and bad thing." (Employee, Julie)

"Content with the learning I am doing. I am LUCKY to work here." (Employee, Kerry)

"Extremely. If isn't an active facilitator of learning most people won't go looking themselves. Need support from upper managers to find somewhere. I am very lucky." (Employee, John)

"Learn from others in other areas. Other local governments. Our department – yours. Cross team experience. Online – eLearning is bad. Inconvenient. Email reminders. Informal learning. Own ability to decide not forced upon them. People can shut down. Directly encouragse to come forth if I think it is good for me. Usually gets approved." (Employee, Sally-Anne)

The researcher found there was limited responses to this question as employees felt they had to a degree already answered it previously. However, with discussions around the different types of learning, some employees began to understand that learning may be in other forms and added the learning they were receiving as secondments and discussions with other areas on a regular basis to their types of learning available to them.

Category Four: Barriers

Managers

How does being a facilitator of learning fit with your other managerial responsibilities?

Managers have an ever changing and increasing workload. Therefore, this question was asked to see how managers prioritised the value of facilitating learning in the workplace.

"Informally. Informal buddy system. Normal checklist. One-on-one. Try not to overwhelm them. Let them settle. Learn systems. Open communication. On the phone or email. Person gets frustrated asking lots of questions. Bit of both manager and proviso role. Managers and employee not really a buddy. No direction – difficult structure as it is a flat structure. Works well because there is nothing lost in translation. No reporting structure" (Manager, Jane)

"As part of my leadership training to spend time with people on special projects. One on one mentoring with staff – all staff, not just the top ones. Don't upset people. My role as manager is to help them." (Manager, Peter)

"My role as a manager is an interface. I am able to provide tools, training opportunities, equipment, an environment and to remove distractions, I believe to the point where the manager is unnecessary." (Manager, Hugh)

Managers in this organisation saw facilitating learning on some level as part of their workload and not something which sat above it. The idea of one-on-one learning was an idea which was discussed regularly.

Barriers

There are always barriers to learning in any organisation, and managers expressed the specific barriers they felt in their departments.

> *"Timing - might enrol depending on the pressure on the workload. Feel the pressure – don't give yourself enough time." (Manager, Jane)*

> *"Demands of customer's political interference. Expectations of the business unit. Persuade people. Balancing act." (Manager, Macca)*

> *"Low turnover in local government. Not a lot of flexibility. In a previous role had to make it up as I went along – gave me freedom and experience. There are issues in the background going on. Leadership issues. Communication. Employees: don't like training. Don't like losing their role." (Manager, Peter)*

> *"Can't allow people to get distracted. Meetings become taken up with people feeling wounded." (Manager, Hugh)*

The responses from managers appeared to show barriers to learning on a minor scale. Managers described generic issues that would be inherent in most organisations. The majority of managers did not see any major permanent preclusion from learning.

Employees

How does being a facilitator of learning appear to fit with your manager's other responsibilities?

This question was asked to see how employees believed their managers prioritised the value of facilitating learning in the workplace.

> *"Managers definitely have time for it. At leave. Very busy – still got time to teach me. High on their priority list. I want a challenge. [It] definitely was a challenge for me to learn at the start. HR not admin then went back to admin." (Employee, Bec)*

> *"Informally. Communicated well. Comes to me with answers not questions. Not bits of information – give all the content. Communicated their own needs. Manager – makes them own it. productive conversations. My manager is good." (Employee, Betsy)*

> *"It seems like that they just find time to do things with me. Or even the people around or below me. Team meeting once a month. Don't know how to find time but they do. Running of the unit and care of staff seems to be a high priority. (Employee, John)*

"High importance. Never backs away. Out and about looking for new opportunities. He is a mentor. Actively encourages others to be a mentor. Team is better if they have training – his job is better because it means he doesn't have to micro-manage staff." (Employee, Sally-Anne)

"Proactive. I ask my manager – [manager] asks me. Convince me! Actively approaches attending training. Manager to attend the training to make sure they attend. Restore confidence – all learning together. Collective knowledge. Good for him. Environment aspect. Nothing to hide. Very approachable – get along well. Worked similar times" (Employee, Bigyin)

"Priority wise. Genuine intention and want to do it. Busy – when he gets a chance good. Time, workload expectation. Not enough attention to regular processes. (Employee, Jack)

Many employees believed their managers to have a great deal of time to put into their learning. These employees were very complimentary of their manager's skill and intention to provide learning opportunities.

"Manager tries but forgets, [manager] if you approach them they will help you but not offer it. I don't know how much is too much? Am I just being annoying? How much responsibility do I have at my current level? Big tasks meetings are set. Manager thinks they had an open door policy but they get stressed. Wait a few hours before I go in." (Employee, George)

"Not learning a lot in my workplace. 'I'm very experienced. Not enough for me to learn?" (Employee, Tommy)

"Bit more of a push. MY responsibility not my managers. If [my manager] thought, I was lacking in an area they would suggest I improve my skills. I am engrossed in day to day activities not the bigger picture. Do I really need to do this? Another day out of the office? Does not fit. don't do it." (Employee, Teresa)

"Not at this point…Low down – lots of other higher priorities." (Employee)

However, some employee responses like those above show that the managers intentions are not always able to be fulfilled. Several responses showed that although there are opportunities for learning, they are not always facilitated by the manager.

Barriers

Employees were asked in this question to detail the barriers specific to learning in the workplace. As the employees had discussed a range of 'what is learning' type questions the barriers could be wherever they felt they were and were not restricted to formal learning barriers.

"The managers are not always available because they are quite busy and out of the office a lot. [If something happens] then they taught me how to fix the situation for next time." *(Employee, Bec)*

"People didn't believe they could do it." (Employee, Bigyin)

"Yes the director is supportive and also has an open door policy. I am laid back – Go with the flow. [Manager] is assertive, decisive, strong and delegates well. Quick to address issues. I can learn from that as this is a weak point for myself." (Employee, Bill)

"The organisation is insular and the state government strategy whether this has worked when it has gone wrong? Self-review and self-criticism." (Employee, George)

"Key weaknesses – promotion. Communication put something online – make accessible. No. Haven't had proper training. Don't remember to look. Don't know online learning. NOT user friendly systems. Customer service. Communications." (Employee, Jack)

"Time and budget. Budget especially when there is staff turnover and we did not get to use all the budget." (Employee, Julie)

"Critical – when there is limited progression activity" need to be up to date. Retain staff. Keep them happy. Point of difference for the city. Encourage learning and follow through on it." (Employee, Kerry)

The majority of responses to this question were negative confirming the idea that there are many barriers to learning. However, there were a few employees who felt there was nothing stopping them from learning, or if there was it was only themselves.

"Not too many barriers, if any?" (Employee, Davvers)

"Apart from myself. TIME – yourself. Structure of the officer – major. Consideration – set up." (Employee, Teresa)

"No barriers to learning - only barrier is myself." (Employee, John)

Although the employees were identifying themselves as the barrier, this is still seen as a barrier to learning and something for managers to address.

5.2.2 Summary

The following section is a summary of the findings for both managers and employees. This summary is divided by the category of questions which were asked of each group.

Managers

Nearly all the responses to questions from the managers were short, sharp and definite. Managers were confident that they provided employees with opportunities for learning through enacting their roles as facilitators of learning. They did not see too many barriers to learning, but also could not identify where there were opportunities for them to enable learning at an in-depth level. Managers believed that the role of a manager has been changing over the past 10 years, but also determined that personality and management style played a large part in the behaviours and actions of individual managers and therefore that this affected the learning of employees.

Category One: Perceptions

Managers were asked, to report on their own management strategy and behaviours in the workplace. Nearly all managers expressed the desire to be a facilitators of learning for their employees, and described the opportunities employees were given and the part they thought they should be playing in employee learning. All the responses were of a positive nature, and managers were confident of what their role was.

The managers' ideas of what their roles involved, always supported the need for learning and development. However, managers had differing opinions on whether the learning should be employee-driven or management driven. The idea was: "Should managers play the role of coach and look to guide employees with advice, protection or support in the workplace?", or, "Should managers play the role of 'cop' and only let employees know what is the 'law' and when they are doing something wrong?"

In relation to whether they saw themselves as facilitators of learning, managers' beliefs were that they all provided employees opportunities for learning, for an experience and opportunities to improve themselves in some way. This in turn, made them facilitators of learning which they all believed to be a very important role.

The Karpin Report (1995), stated that managers' roles in the workplace should be about facilitating learning, and that their roles were changing to manage cultures rather than specific processes. In this research, several managers determined that they could see the change in the work environment over the last 10 years. Managers realised that this change was dependant on the particular manager or particular type of management style an employee may interact with.

Category Two: Operationalise

Managers easily had examples of the learning opportunities they provided their employees on a regular basis, and began to develop ideas on their own style of learning facilitation. Some managers'

spoke on behalf of the organisation and what it aims to achieve, and others spoke to how they directly encourage employees and work as part of a team.

When managers were directly asked to quantify the specific role of a facilitator of learning, they seemed to veer towards the formal learning style. University, TAFE and other formal study opportunities were some of the learning types managers stated that they provided employees.

Managers were asked to think about their role, and what other ways they directly or indirectly controlled opportunities for learning. Managers appeared to understand the importance of good communication and see the benefits of face-to-face interaction. Managers either mentioned or alluded to, the importance of culture in their role as a facilitator of learning.

The perception by this researcher, is that managers were using a combination of formal and informal learning styles to complete their role. Managers were keen to provide learning for their employees, but sometimes lacked the ability to know what their employees needed or wanted, or what enabled them to learn more successfully.

Category Three: Enablers

Managers once more seemed to be of the opinion that training and other formal learning, was the key way for employees to absorb information, and therefore did not see entirely where they could provide enablers for employee learning in the workplace.

Following the question relating to enablers for learning, there was a large amount of discussion between the researcher and the interviewees as to exactly what types of learning were provided for employees. All managers concluded there was learning in many facets available for employees.

Interestingly, when managers were asked to explain the types of learning they provided employees, there were many examples of how they were enabling learning that were not mentioned in the responses to the enablers question. For example, coaching via a one on one session requires time being set aside by the manager and also time being put aside by the employee. In both cases, good time management and prioritisation of work would enable this learning to take place more frequently and with greater quality.

Category Four: Barriers

Managers in this organisation saw facilitating learning as a key part of their day-to-day workload. Mostly, managers expressed that the learning from their part, was driven by the manager themself. Once again, managers seemed clear when discussing their managerial responsibilities and the roles they saw themselves taking.

The majority of managers identified a small number of barriers to learning in the workplace. To this researcher, these barriers appeared to be within the manager's control. An example of this is the timing and pressure of the day to day workload. Managers cannot always control workload, but their actions can be controlled to help alleviate these barriers. There was no mention of budgets or organisational mandate as barriers, but rather issues surrounding culture and style of management.

Employees

Employees in this local government organisation valued their time spent working in their individual departments. Employees thought that managers as facilitators of learning was an important role they believed managers aspired to achieve. There were countless specific examples from employees of when their managers had provided direct or indirect learning opportunities for themselves and their teams. Employees were able to identify numerous enablers and barriers to learning and took analysis to the next level by presuming the reasons for such behaviours. The employees in this organisation gave the impression they were largely satisfied in their workplace with the learning they were offered.

Category One: Perceptions

There was an overwhelming response to this question that showed indeed, a large proportion of managers from this organisation were definitely performing the role of facilitator of learning. In the conversation with the researcher, employees were able to identify many examples of how their managers positively provided learning opportunities. High numbers of employees quickly and easily showed that they had trust in their managers and their actions, and respected them professionally and personally.

Additionally, employees were able to realise the intent which their manager was showing to get them to learn. The ideas of encouragement and support were highly valued. However, this culture was not set across the board and some employees instead felt fear and lack of direction. Employees who had identified that their manager was not able to enact their role of a facilitator of learning to its optimal level, were still in agreement that a great amount of importance is placed on managers attempting to provide learning opportunities in the workplace.

Some employees conveyed that they were able to see the changes in management's role over the past 10 years. In contrast, others felt that it was dependent on individual people, managers and organisations. Demographics also played a part in identifying the change over the past two decades. Local Government has a tendency to employ people for a long period of time and they grow and move with the organisation. Employees understood the same management style does not work for everyone.

Category Two: Operationalise

Employees expressed satisfaction in their managers' behaviour of how they are responsible for employee learning. The employees had little difficulty in understanding the differences between training, learning and development. The employees on a whole were able to review their workplace and see the differences between formal opportunities to learn, the informal ones, and where and how their manager had provided this for them or not.

There were many specific actions which employees could recount where their manager demonstrated that they were responsible for employee learning such as through secondments, experiential learning, debrief and summary information and informal groups with a knowledge exchange.

However, some employees believed there were improvements managers could make to their approach to being a facilitator of learning. Employees could recognise what they wanted, but knew they were not being managed in the way that they would be able to take advantage of a learning opportunity. In direct contrast to satisfied employees, a few employees felt unsupported and that there was no time for learning as they were consumed by other responsibilities.

Overall, employees appeared to be pleased with the level to which managers demonstrated they were responsible for employee learning, but there was still room for improvement.

Category Three: Enablers

The majority of employees were easily able to identify a range of enablers to learn in the workplace. Organisational culture and management behaviours and actions were key enablers in this local government organisation. Personal opinions, scenario discussions and nurturing attitudes were just some of the many enablers employees believed helped them in their workplace.

There was a distinct difference between the enablers to learning discussed by the managers and the enablers conferred by the employees. Employees were able to see on a wider scale, and realise that there were aspects such as organisational, environmental and structural factors which can heavily influence learning in the workplace, which not all managers identified as being overly important.

Employees began to understand that learning may be in other forms rather than just formal training and that their managers were providing them with learning opportunities on a regular basis. A selection of employees expressed the fact they felt 'lucky' to work in their teams and the organisation.

Category Four: Barriers

Employees in this organisation were very astute, and recognised that managers' responsibilities are very large and that it is a busy, stressful and competitive environment in which the managers are

working. In saying this, employees readily recognised their managers' effort for facilitation of learning and how this fit with all their other managerial responsibilities.

Many employees continuously stated that their managers communicated well and seemed to find time to help their employees learn. Being proactive, knowledgeable and acting as a mentor were just some of the actions and behaviours which employees saw in their managers. When managers were not able to fit facilitation of learning into their workload, employees were also able to see the genuine intention behind their manager's efforts.

Still, employees pointed out that there are many barriers to learning in the organisation. In comparison to managers' responses to barriers to learning, time and budgets were mentioned several times by many of the employees. Additionally, support for part-time employees, teams with small numbers of employees and teams with repetitive workplace practices were specified as other barriers to learning. From a different band of thought however, there were a few employees which did not see any barriers to learning apart from themselves.

6.0 - ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The primary data used in this research was participant words and behaviours, and the unit of measurement was the manager's actions. In addition to the large amount of empirical data from the interviews, it is also evident that the review of the literature provided frameworks and knowledge for the analysis of organisational learning concepts and the perceptions of managers as facilitators of learning. Therefore, this data may be considered by some academics to be part of the primary data of this research.

In the previous Findings Chapter, basic data was presented categorised into four separate sections based on the research questions. Perceptions of employees and managers about facilitating learning in the workplace; how managers' operationalise their role as facilitators of learning; and any barriers or enablers to learning in the workplace. This researcher felt it was important to present the large amount of empirical data collected during this study, in order to provide a basis for possible future research. This data was categorised, but not analysed to show any correlation between ideas or present any contrasting themes. The Analysis and Results chapter aims to show the outcomes of the analysis of the exploratory data collected in this study.

In the analysis of the data, the researcher focused on trying to understand the managers' and employees' perceptions of how managers enact their roles as facilitators of learning in the workplace. The aim of analysis of this data was aggregate participant perceptions towards managing formal and informal learning into data categories that explored the managing intentions, actions and relationships that emerged (Basit, 2003). The analysis began by the researcher listening to and transcribing all the interviews while comparing them with the notes taken at the time of the interview. The researcher then examined the transcribed interview responses to identify patterns of similarities and dissimilarities in the perceptions of the two groups. After all the interviews were transcribed the researcher used the qualitative software NVivo to store data for coding and analysis. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe coding as the process of translating raw data into meaningful categories and this is the task that was undertaken.

The individual incidents, stories and ideas identified during the interviews and presented in the finding chapter were thematically analysed to form key ideas for discussion. The analysis used content analysis, which is a common analytical type of data analysis for qualitative research (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). This content analysis involved the identifying of the unit of measurement, the reduction of the data in categories and finally the aggregation of the data into meaningful higher themes. Secondly,

the interviews were analysed comparatively to identify the similarities and the differences of the two member groups. This comparative and content analysis helped to identify the meaningfulness of facilitation of learning for the two groups. The key words or phrases that were used by respondents and the comparison between both was looked at, and this was used to form an understanding of what these key ideas may mean.

The findings were structured in the particular format to demonstrate to the reader the primary data that was collected from the interviews. However, the Analysis and Results chapter is structured in a design that is intended to give an overall perspective of the meaning that emerged from these the basic responses to the questions asked. Generally, one particular answer to an interview question covered multiple emerging concepts, sub-themes and major themes, which were only identified once the content analysis was conducted post interview transcription. In addition to sub-themes and themes being formed from the data, there were key issues identified within the organisation. Additionally, this researcher felt it was prudent to identify what was happening in the organisation and what was not happening, including the barriers to, and enablers of learning. The purpose of this structure was to adequately inform the readers of the outcomes of this research in relation to the research questions, as well as the determination for learning in this organisation and how this relates to current research and current management theory. In short, the Findings focus on presenting an overall summary of the participant responses to the key questions asked. In contrast, the Analysis and Results section focuses on the main themes, contrasts and issues emerging from interpreting the meaning of the responses in relations to existing knowledge of managing formal and informal learning in the workplace.

This chapter explores the key concepts emerging form the data analysis and indicates how they reflect, support, extend or contest existing theoretical concepts in this area. The chapter first presents the key emerging concepts of this research, followed by exploring the barriers and enablers that the data illuminates. Then, this evidence is related to existing theory in the area and specifically to Learning Network Theory. The chapter concludes by reviewing what emerges from the study about roles and strategies that can be employed by managers to facilitate learning in the workplace and a model of these practices is presented.

6.2 Analysis of data

6.2.1 Manager and employee perceptions of key tensions in the workplace

This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how managers enact their role as facilitators of learning in the workplace. To achieve this understanding, the data identified key tensions in the

workplace. The perceptions of these key tensions from managers and employees were around; the culture of the organisation (in general and also the learning culture of the organisation), who drives learning and what type of learning is it informal/formal, direct/indirect and how do these types of learning have an impact in the workplace?

In the workplace, it is important for managers to create a culture for learning for their employees (Eldor & Harpaz, 2016) (Marsick, 2009) (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). The organisation in this research was able to achieve this culture with all the participants in the study having had a clear understanding of the values and philosophy within their organisation. This organisation's culture was identified as a learning culture and was advocated for by the senior managers. "Leadership direction and learning culture – I wish to be a leader in this field" said manager Chris. The idea that the culture of the organisation needs to be driven from the top down was prevalent and this was from the CEO down to the senior managers, middle managers, coordinators and employees. This valuing of culture appeared to be noticed by all employees at all levels with the managers attempting to have this as a driver for their team plan, as exemplified by Manager Peter "*Managers need to influence the culture first and foremost*".

The contrasting view to this idea of a learning culture was the idea this local government organisation has a 'cultural norm' of limited communication and that it was standard for managers to "not tell or explain" [things] to their employees. There appeared to be a culture of blame and talking behind people's backs. It was an "effort for me not to slip into the culture (when the manager started work at the organisation)". One manager, Peter, was trying to change this within his team by "having a 'no blame' culture – but still be accountable for decisions. Also through mentoring. "[The organisation] needs the majority thinking a similar way. Need to change the mentality [of the employees]". Managers could see the benefit of improving the culture to increase the success for their team and organisation.

Organisations are now far more aware of ways to increase their competitive advantage through the agenda of knowledge management and learning opportunities (Ellinger & Wang, 2011). Research has shown that a manager being a facilitator of learning can provide organisations with a competitive advantage as the employees tend to show more positive outcomes in terms of achievement and success individually and for the organisation. All managers and employees believed the role of Facilitator of Learning to be a very important one. This was identified as a key tension not because of a debate to whether the role of managers facilitating learning is important but because of the breakdown of processes surrounding this idea. The idea about interconnections between work

productions and learning productions and the decision of who is in charge of the degree to which employees are exposed to learning.

Research over the past decade has recognised the ability for the workplace to be a learning environment (Billett, 2004) (Clarke, 2005) (E. Ellström et al., 2008). Within this learning environment are those managers who play an important role in facilitating the learning for their employees. Managers decide: who drives learning in each team?; is the manager to be in charge of learning to facilitate the learning for employees? For example, "I give opportunities; I provide learning; I make sure opportunities happen; I provide advice; protection and support; [I] guide personal development".

Employee ability, personality and learning styles are clearly shown to affect employee learning (Poell et al., 2004). Different approaches to learning lead into different necessary approaches by managers. It was a key area of tension for employees to see whether they perceived the informal style of learning to be right for them. Managers and employees projected that, in their opinion key learning is focused on learning conversations. Managers are providing such conversations and employees are seeking them out through their manager's 'open-door' policy and the ability to bounce ideas off them, as examples.

Manager impact via informal methods of learning (Boud & Middleton, 2003; P.-E. Ellström et al., 2004; Eraut, 2000; Kyndt et al., 2009; R. Warhurst, 2013b) has been discussed in the past two decades. Following this idea of informal learning managers and employees' perceptions of what was a learning opportunity were not always congruent. This research found that there were sometimes difficulties understanding different opportunities to learn. Managers and employees needed to understand not just formal learning but informal too, and explain to employees why manager's complete actions, this is how it helps employee learning.

Identifying the leader in facilitation of learning in the workplace

From interviewing a group of managers and their employees, it was revealed in the previous Findings section that the key tensions the local government organisation presented were: culture of the organisation; who is the driver for workplace learning; and specifically what type of learning should be encouraged in the organisation for the best results? With these tensions in mind, the following section will discuss the specific relations with regards to a manager's role as a facilitator of learning.

Managers have a specific part to play when enacting their role as a facilitator of learning. Research has shown that the behaviour which a manager may exhibit or an activity which they provide for their employee will have an effect on that employee's learning (Beattie, 2007; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999, 2002). In this organisation, participants reported that support from the higher authorities was present.

Employees felt supported by the manager, director and CEO. The learning culture was also driven by the CEO, as they were "very interested and supportive".

However, when identifying who should take the lead in this learning culture there were often contradictions from the managers and the employees. Some employees were able to realise when they were having a learning experience and were able to communicate effectively with their manager to learn from this event: "*[I have] an experience, I make a mistake but learn from it and know for next time and we [manager and employee] have an informal debrief." Employee, Kerry.* An opposing view, saw some employees experienced their manager as having no drive to take the lead with guiding and mentoring their employees. Therefore, a learning experience was unable to adequately transpire, as there was a conflicting idea of what needed to happen. *"I need time to debrief which I don't have. [That] is the reality of the world." Employee, Jo*. The opportunity for a manager to provide a debrief with an employee, give them direct feedback and facilitate learning happens within the organisation. However, the responses and examples from managers and employees show that it is unclear who is responsible for controlling the learning.

It was previously mentioned that the idea of interconnections between work productions and learning productions comes from the theory of LNT (Poell et al., 2000). These interconnections need to be managed, and when they are not, it is the organisation and its employees who suffer. When it is unclear who is responsible for the creation of learning opportunities, often they will be missed as excuses are made and the moment passes. Managers facilitating learning is the idea that managers can provide the learning opportunity for their employees, which all managers in this organisation agreed with. However, some managers were of the view that while they should provide opportunities, it was up to the employee to ask for them.

In the example provided above of an employee having a debrief after making a mistake, the employee was able to sit with their manager and examine the situation and/or outcome. In another example the employee was given no time to debrief (or perceived that they had no time) and therefore the situation was not discussed and the moment passed. The issue in this situation is that there is an opportunity for the employee to learn, and perhaps also an opportunity to improve work processes, as a situation was not completed correctly. The employee might not have known they could or should ask for a debrief, however, a manager should know to resolve a situation and give future guidance. If the manager did not know, it would have been an opportunity for mutual learning by manager and employee to discuss the mistake or work out how to see the situation resolving so that the organisation can be more successful in the future.

Helen Colley (2012) puts forward the idea of 'not learning' in the workplace and the impacts this may have on the success of an organisation. In an age of increased workload, job cuts and uncertainty, who has the time or effort to focus on learning? However, when managers and employees do find the time to learn, who is in charge of learning? Who is driving the questions, the reviews and the learning opportunities? Managers should be providing opportunities for facilitating learning but are the managers and employees aware of this? During the interviews, many of the management respondents' attitude towards learning was positive, yet who decided on the learning was unclear: *"It is not for me to decide what training someone needs unless I see an opportunity"* Manager, Hugh.

Through analysis of the responses to this topic, it would appear that there appears to be no clear understanding between employees and managers in this organisation of who is responsible for driving learning. Managers are willing to facilitate learning, but they have not been able to adequately hone their skills in determining learning processes.

What is happening and what is not happening

This research focused on attaining an understanding of what was 'really' happening in the local government organisation, to achieve an understanding of where any issues, problems or successes stemmed from The way this was achieved was to have the managers answering questions from their understanding of a situation, then, have employees answer the same questions from their own point of view. The research aimed to have a perception of the reality in which managers and employees work. The specific issues that the employees of the organisation faced should be able to be generalised by having many employees from different departments each sharing their experiences. Generally, all interviewees, both managers and employees, shared common thoughts on the following examples of what is happening in their organisation and what is not regarding managers facilitating learning.

The way in which managers interact with employees has been slowly changing over the past decade. Many researchers (Amy, 2008; S. Gibb, 2003) have noted the transformation of managers from using an older styler of management to a new developmental and transformative style of management. Jorgensen (2004) discusses the idea that in both managers and their employees need to develop, improve and possibly master skills such as communication and decision making. It is no longer just managers who need to have managerial skills, but also employees, and managers now need to develop these skills in their team members.

What is happening?

While this is a local government organisation, it is no different from any other organisation that experiences barriers to learning; such as budgets for formal training and development. Nevertheless,

both managers and employees in the organisation were able to realise the benefits associated with informal learning. However, research has shown that the provision for informal learning could be better supported (Schürmann & Beausaert, 2016) although this is not a major finding in this study.

Table 2. Positive and negative aspects of learning in the organisation

Positive	Negative
• Informal and formal learning • Collaborative approach • Managers send and employees receive emails. • Get feedback	• Conflicting views between managers in the hierarchy • Siloed approach to work • Conservative organisation

In a positive sense for this organisation, there is much collaboration across the board within teams. Also, due to the support shown for informal learning techniques such as secondments to other departments or to higher positions, there was opportunity for cross-team collaboration and employees branching out to learn new skills. There were also opportunities for more learning, benchmarking and being collaborative [as one] as employee, George described.

A common and well-received approach to facilitating learning in this organisation was discovered to be the simple email. This communication method was met with a satisfied reception, as it was not too time intensive for a manager to pass on emails of importance with a note of 'For Your Information' and/or an option of a training course or conference. Also, many employees were happy with this form of communication because they felt the decision to read, learn or follow up on the information was in their power. One employee Julie also noted that the emails came ad hoc, and, because learning offered in emails were often leadership or developmental courses, were not always in the same state. Although Julie would need approval for these courses if it related to her job she could apply. It was noted by several employees however that although the emails came through, the individual employees would have to 'seek out' the development themselves.

On the other hand, Manager Jane said emails were not always the best course of communication as managers appreciated being able to have open communication with employees. Jane found it hard being on the phone or on emails and found employees gets frustrated and asking lots of questions. In either situation the key idea seemed to be communication and whatever worked for the particular employee and manager relationship. Another employee Tommy enjoyed when the managers were proactive and could see their intent was to encourage people to speak out and get involved.

Coupled with this idea of employees speaking their minds was evident, great interest from managers in receiving feedback from employees. One particular manager was very intent on receiving 360-degree feedback on their management style and given the opportunity to do a better job. Manager Chris was very intent on an informal feedback process and to be able to walk up and chat to someone.

Encouraging the confidence to "walk up to someone and say well done" or give them other feedback was a key a key example of how Chris believed he was providing learning opportunities for his employees. However, there was a call for this concept of employee feedback to be more developed and protocols developed.

In direct contrast to these positive views, there were also many negative examples of what is happening in the organisation. Some negative occurrences were mainly related to structure and processes which were set up for the organisation.

An illustration of a key issue is the conflicting views among managers in the hierarchy. The structure in this organisation is one that means there is many layers of management. Often a middle manager may give advice to a subordinate, only to have a senior manager give conflicting advice or direction. This also included senior managers giving advice and offering the concept of open-door communication as a sounding board. In this situation, a senior manager might be stepping on the toes of their middle managers or coordinators. Employee Jo noticed conflicting information for different managers' specific times, priorities and needs. This made it hard for employees to do their jobs and distracted from their ability to learn.

Further, with the organisation operating under a fairly conservative structure, the managers and employees was not able to be as creative as they could be in their formal developmental activities. All local government spending is subject to scrutiny, and often this means training is declined and lower levels of the team are not able to attend conferences or complete developmental activities. Employee George believed his manager to have ideals *[and this is different from previous managers who were] conservative and bureaucratic*". Manager Peter deemed *"Some people [in the organisation] are conservative and don't like change. [Employees have a fear of making a mistake". "The organisation is conservative. Director takes responsibility as [they are] responsible for action and accountable for mistakes"*. Peter believed the cycle needs to be broken and the organisation needs to make staff accountable. This is where not working in a siloed environment is a positive situation.

The nature of this organisation led to there being a siloed approach to work in certain areas. This idea centred on the notion of their being an inability to cross over the work to another area because it is specific to the one particular area. Employees experienced a lack of encouragement by the manager for them to work with others and to complete their singular work. Employee George noticed this siloed approach *"if all the teams all interact together we would learn a lot more". "However, we all stick to what we know."* Employee Teresa also perceived the organisation's culture to operate with a siloed approach where she felt she was *"totally cut off"*.

In contrast to these feelings by the employees, manager Jane approached the silo effect with an informal learning approach. There is an aim to explain the culture of the organisation to new employees informally; *"stuff you don't get taught at the induction like the political environment and break down the silos"*. Unfortunately, Jane and Teresa are perfect examples where there is a breakdown in communication. Both Jane and Teresa are in the same work team and have different perceptions of whether their work environment is functioning in the best way possible. One or both these situations is not actually happening in the way it is meant to transpire.

What is not happening?

In the same context of what is happening in the organisation, there is a need to look at what managers and employees believe to not be happening in the workplace both positively and negatively. Many employees believe there is no feedback in their teams as to whether the employees are doing a good or a bad job. Continuing with this idea, there is no follow up on work processes and no follow up on learning processes. Additionally, there is an issue which surrounds the learning processes in the organisation and how they are divided among employees. Observations by the researcher are given on employees and managers learning in the workplace.

Table 3. Positive and Negatives

Positive	Negative
• Follow up • Support for part timers • Don't get feedback • All employees want to learn and develop	• Managers ignore requests to learn

Follow-up is not being done with the employees after every day work or even after they undertake new projects. Although managers believed this was something they were good at, in reality employees said they knew their managers tried by they did not have time to always debrief them about the subject matter. Employee Jack described his manager as positive about follow-up from experiential type learning that they, but found it hard to really do this in a meaningful way.

Employees felt they also did not get feedback as to whether they were doing a good or a bad job. How would they know if what they are doing is satisfactory? Employee Bill believed that if he did not hear anything it just meant he was doing the right thing. Manager Chris said that he believed there needed to be a protocol statement surrounding appropriate methods for giving and receiving feedback, since this was something the organisation was not doing very well. Chris described 'feedback' as being an issue for the organisation. However, his employee Betsy believed she was getting ongoing feedback and great future direction from him. This likely shows that Chris is doing well in his area rather than there being an organisational learning process that is enforced or encouraged across the organisation.

Additionally, it might be a result of Betsy seeking out her own feedback from her manager as she believes it is her responsibility to do so. Employee John also was encouraged by his manager to watch others do their work, this was to enable discussion during reflection and feedback, if they were able to have it.

The idea of having time for reflection and feedback was an issue acknowledged by employee Kerry. Being a part-time member of the team made it hard for her to always have formal or informal discussions. Also, her ability to watch others was limited, especially if she was working from home. Something which is not being supported as well as it could be, is the learning options for part-timers, but more from the organisational point of view rather than the manager's. The organisational structures vary from team to team. So if a manager is willing to give informal debriefs and be open to suggestions this is positive, but, there are no formal learning protocols to support this.

An observation by this researcher of something not being done in this organisation is the ability for managers to encourage all employees to want to learn and develop themselves. There were many reasons and excuses for why employees were not wanting to or able to learn in the workplace; however, not all of them appeared to be valid. Some managers put training and development on a higher level than others. *"A development activity may be subject to finance and even then sometimes employees still get to do it anyway because the learning gets the priority it needs"* stated Manager Chris.

Moreover, employee Bec showed that it is the difference in managers that makes a difference to whether you have the ability to learn or not. Bec gave examples of where her manager would make the time for her. She had regular one-on-one meetings and her manager became a coach and mentor. Manager Bigyin also stated that he believed the first responsibility is for the manager to create an environment to actively learn and therefore he acted on it to actively encourage his employees and create trust in him as a manager. Employee Davvers felt the empowerment from his manager whose encouragement he believed gave him *"great pride in his work".* As there was no one way of working for each manager, it was difficult to assess what was the exact reason for engagement in learning.

On a positive note, it appeared from the responses given that no one is extremely unhappy in the organisation and that the employees all respected their managers and their attempts to facilitate learning in the organisation. No requests for learning were being ignored and employees such as George, Julie and John could see that their managers, such as Jane and Chris, were really trying to find new ways of facilitating learning for their employees.

Key issues in the organisation

Some of the most vocalised issues that came through in the data are the individual personality of the managers, the environment in which the employees work (both physical and emotional environment) and how being a facilitator of learning fits with the other responsibilities of a manager. These issues were identified as key issues by the data in NVivo, such as the frequency with which they were mentioned and the number of examples that were attributed to the larger issue.

Employee Bec thought that the personality and background of a manager made a difference to the way they enact their role as a facilitator or learning. Employee Jo offered that personality is a very important thing when deciding whether her manager had given her opportunities to learn in the workplace. Jo stated that managers need to be assertive and to proactively give suggestions, have conversations and facilitate learning. *"Managers should find a way to dialogue with others, [perhaps by] having a professional development item on the agenda for any team meetings".* Manager Macca believed that facilitating learning in the organisation was crucial and that the team is paramount. Macca aimed to look at all angles to see how to best work [into] the future.

Table 4. Key ways employees want to learn

Key ways employees want to learn
o   I want a challenge
o   I am proactive
o   I have not taken advantage of learning
o   Reasons why – children
o   Close to retirement
o   No time
o   I'm very experienced
o   Manager – if people are doing a job better manager does less

The environment in which this organisation functions was a key issue that influenced learning on a regular basis. The way that the managers ran their teams and the learning support structures they had in place suggested the level to which they supported inclusivity and learning. In one team, employees were exposed to management meetings to be able to adequately cover a manager's workload and to give the employee new opportunities. However, other employees outlined situations where they were both physically and socially excluded from team meetings and any learning opportunities. As discussed by Le Clus (2011) employees learn as part of their everyday work activities, therefore being excluded from basic team meetings restricts any chance for learning.

Employee Bigyin's beliefs are that the first responsibility is for the manager to create an environment to actively learn; for managers to actively encourage learning – if they understand how to. Bigyin

argued that higher management needed to support the middle management, otherwise it was hard for managers to encourage staff. A manager's personality could affect an organisation as [managers] can't have disharmony amongst the workplace. Staff need to feel comfortable with their manager and comfortable to get them learning. Managers need to create an environment where employees won't often get declined for any kind of learning request.

In employee Betsy's team, she believes her manager looks for opportunities to help her learn. They have a good structure and they understand the environment – [which leads Betsy] to know what the expectations are. However, Betsy debated whether all learning processes in her area were appropriate. [My manager] offers training courses – but how to measure the financial return on investment? Betsy believed it would be too hard in this environment to see how the development an employee undertakes specifically produces an outcome. This is where managers have difficulty in supporting developmental opportunities an employee may request.

Manager Hugh interpreted that *"my role as a manager is [to be] an interface"*. Hugh believed that managers should provide tools, training opportunities, equipment and the environment in which to learn. [Managers] remove distractions from learning even perhaps *"to the point where the manager is unnecessary"*. Hugh said *"Structure is important in the way that managers manage"*. Hugh distinguishes good managers from bad managers by their involvement in the environment around them. "*Some managers offer nothing, and the only time they interact with their employees is when something is wrong."* Hugh understood that for his team he needed to build trust in them and have a personal relationship.

Bigyin addressed the social environmental aspects of the organisation from his point of view

> *"[Our organisation has] nothing to hide. [managers are] very approachable and everyone gets along well". The learning environment is important. [Employees] Move around in jobs so not just training, but on the job learning is important too. Managers need to facilitate learning without an employee knowing [that it is happening] - that is the key!"*

Employee Jo stated that in a professional environment, previously she has placed the emphasis of learning solely on managers. However, in recent times she has come to realise that *"I need to take my own learning and make it my own responsibility".* However, Jo is often at a loss for how to make the transition from wanting to learn, to approaching her manager. Jo explained that she felt in the 'middle of the road'. "How do I encourage [learning]? How do we initiate conversation around this?" This communication issue within the learning environment shows that employees being assertive and

confident was key to them being able to progress their learning. Managers and employees need to come together in a professional role to be able to master the art of learning and knowledge sharing.

Employee John took on this idea of division of learning and made contact with other coordinators and shared his knowledge. John believe that informal chats were important. *"[If I] think I am having a problem, we [the team] have a brainstorming session"*. *"If no one manager is available, another is able to sit in his place"*. He acknowledges that this informal knowledge sharing is something that works well in his team. John recited that *"this is a refreshing environment compared to previous roles [he has worked in]"*. John's team had time to reflect [in the] aftermath of decisions. *"[Everyone will] Sit down and go through the situation".* Employees are encouraged at all levels to learn first. *"We want to be open and honest because no one does the job in the same way"*.

Every manager will have a different style of working and employee Tommy believed that [his manager] *"was on the right path"*. *"There is a free flow of ideas and everyone [is able to] focus on their specifics [they need to work on]"*. Granted, Tommy would still like to see more of a social aspect to the workplace to improve the social environment. The perception of the manager in this team is that their job is of significant value in their life and therefore the time is not available to focus on [the] social aspect to the workplace.

Appendix 9.12 provides examples of what opportunities in the learning environment managers provided for their employees. These examples are a combination of manager's and employee's responses. In summary, some managers did and some managers did not provide opportunities for employees to learn within their teams, according to the employees. Topics which were identified as being popular subject matters by employees were those which surrounded the direct or indirect developmental activities provided to subordinates by their managers. The principal topics were the different learning opportunities which employees were afforded; the openness of the manager, team and organisation and the environment in which people worked.

Learning opportunities which employees were presented with was a popular topic as both the managers and employees could think of, demonstrate and explain many different learning opportunities which they had in their workplace as shown in Table 31. However, there were other responses from employees which showed their managers were not able to adequately enact their role as a facilitator of learning.

The follow quotes show how employees responded when asked "How do you think your manager being a facilitator of learning fits with their other responsibilities?"

"Manager tries but forgets, if you approach them they will help you but not offer it. I don't know how much is too much? Am I just being annoying? How much responsibility do I have at my current level? Big tasks meetings are set. Manager thinks they had an open door policy but they get stressed. Wait a few hours before I go in." (Employee, George)

"Not learning a lot in my workplace. 'I'm very experienced. Not enough for me to learn" (Employee, Tommy)

"Does not at this point." (Employee, Jo)

"Bit more of a push. MY responsibility not my managers. If [my manager] thought, I was lacking in an area they would suggest I improve my skills. I am engrossed in day to day activities not the bigger picture. Do I really need to do this? Another day out of the office? Does not fit. Don't do it." (Employee, Teresa)

"Low down – lots of other higher priorities." (Employee, Jo)

The responses presented a complex dynamic as some employees within the same teams felt different situations to be happening to them.

The openness in the organisation was a popular idea with a large amount of interview respondents referring to the fact that their manager had an 'open-door policy' or that the style of the manager was also to have an *'open door policy'*. The openness of the organisation would always be clear in a local government setting, with all the budgets and activities being scrutinised as to where rate payers' money was being spent. The openness of the manager was clear, with all managers declaring their intent for their employees and employees really hearing this.

"Manager open to providing any training and development when needed. (Employee, Bec)

"Open – a lot of team meetings are held, which is good". (Employee, Bill)

"The door is always open, and [the manager] encourages us to come in". (Employee, Davvers)

"I struggle with time, but I know that [learning] is always open to me". (Employee, Julie)

"Manager is open to suggestions and ideas". (Employee, Kerry)

Once again environmental issues were a popular idea with employees and managers not always seeing the same situation in the work environment. Poell (2000) debated the degree to which work structures impact learning structures and vice-versa. To this effect, there were issues which appeared to be hidden from either managers or employees in this organisation which were a result of conflicting organisational structures. Some issues which were being concealed in the organisation were that employees and managers were not always engaged with learning. But why is this?

Employees and managers being engaged with learning is a complicated idea, as each group has a different purpose for wanting learning to occur. There were two key environmental situation examples which showed the lack of understanding and communication that was affecting the work environment.

The first example was that of employee Jo. She experienced a situation where her manager was not perceived to be a facilitator of learning. Jo experienced issues whereby training was not available to her, she was consumed by other responsibilities and she simply did not get the opportunity [to develop], but hoped maybe in the future there would be more scope. Jo's managers however believed that [their] style was very hands on for an on the job type of learning. The manager aimed to not be *'in your face'* but to *"take a step back and look at the big picture depending on the person"*. Jo's manager had structured the learning processes around an idea which was not working for the employee at all and not cohesive to learning. The setup of the environment was not correct for one party and therefore the environment had a major impact on learning.

The second example was that of Tommy, who was in a situation where the structure of his environment was also not beneficial to learning. Tommy's manager said the right things but did not act on them; *"[they] say open and honest, but they are not".* Tommy is in a situation where he feels he is required to have *'thick skin'*. Tommy's work structure is set up so that there are several layers of management. His line managers often have conflicting advice and changing views. Therefore, Tommy's environment is confusing and the structure means that he is unable to learn or seek correct advice. Tommy's work may be being corrected but there is no learning from any mistakes; there is a fear of being ridiculed and therefore he is left with no direction or support.

These two examples show that the incorrect structure of a work environment can have a tremendous impact on the learning probability of employees. There is a lack of communication and understanding on both the behalf of the employee and the manager, meaning that there is no ability to learn or for a manager to appropriately facilitate learning even if they tried.

In any workplace, there are key people who can make a vast impact on the events of that workplace, both day to day and long term. The managers are the key individuals in this organisation and have the power to make a great impact. With this belief in mind, the key relationships for this organisation were of course the relationship between the employees and their managers but more specifically the relationships between managers and their employees when there were multiple levels of middle management in their specific teams.

Managers are the key component within this case study. Employees within this organisation in, for the majority felt it was the managers' responsibility to be in control of facilitating learning in the workplace. When this was perceived to be happening, employees were easily able to express positive affirmations about how their managers assisted their learning:

> *"Every step [I am able to] work with my manager and my direct supervisor [for advice]" (Employee, Bec)*

> *"[My manager has] humility – [they] acknowledge when you know more than them. Don't be naïve – managers don't know everything – don't [want to be or can't be] the answer person all the time." (Employee, Betsy)*

> *"My manager goes above and beyond." (Employee, Bigyin)*

> *"I align with my manager more. I have the same interests." (Employee, George)*

> *"My manager will ask me things - it is about reciprocal learning." (Employee, John)*

Considering that when a manager is perceived to be in control of the learning opportunities (and this is a good thing), employees feel negative assertions when they do not have the direction and support they need from their managers.

> *"Difficult to get advice from my manager." (Employee, Jo)*

> *"My manager did not take the time to care about me. [They] need to be flexible enough to change depending on the individual they are dealing with. All about the way you approach people." (Employee, Teresa)*

These examples show that employees have negative, and somewhat emotive responses about their managers. This connection that an employee feels to their manager therefore makes the managers a key component in this research.

Following the idea that managers are a key element in the construction of learning in the workplace, if a manager's team has several layers of management – for example coordinators beneath them, this can add a layer of complexity to the situation:

> *"Coordinator had no experience [how could they help me learn?]". (Employee, John)*

> *"Coordinator is the link they are stopping me from learning. Sometimes have to bypass the coordinators. Technically meant to go through the coordinators, [but] less willing to interact with people below them possibly?". (Employee, George)*

"Sometimes [go to] supervisor and sometimes coordinator – need to define the roles and responsibilities clearly". (Employee, Jack)

There was limited support for the extra layer of management involved in the learning:

"[They] made contact with other coordinators and shared the knowledge. (John, Employee)

"[Coordinator] is an informal type of mentor". (Employee, Bec)

Whether employees found having extended management layers in their team to be a barrier or an enable to learning, it was clear that the roles needed to be defined. The structure of the team needs to be organised in a way which will set in motion the work experience necessary to enable managers to suitably facilitate learning in the workplace.

It is widely acknowledged that there are copious enablers and barriers to learning in the workplace (Armson & Whiteley, 2010; Schürmann & Beausaert, 2016; Zuzeviciute & Tereseviciene, 2010). As this research methodology was a case study it was therefore important to realise what were the enablers and barriers to learning for this organisation. In any workplace, it is also important to realise that there are not only 'real' barriers and 'real' enabler to learning but also those perceived blockages to learning and those which are perceived to benefit the employees to have greater success. If one of the parties believes a situation to be positive or negative, even if the other party does not agree with it, something needs to be resolved so that there are defined expectations.

There are many situations and actions which affect learning, as these were asked of the managers and employees. Once again, the benefit of having both the managers and employees answer these questions is the ability to see what may be considered by a manager as a benefit to learning, may not be perceived in the same way by the employee or vice-e-versa.

The main enablers and barriers to learning in this workplace were related to the following:

Table 5. Enablers and Barriers to learning

Enablers	Barriers
• Manager • Time given by manager • Predisposition of manager • Open door policy • Experience of manager • Communication by manager • People • Organisational structure (varies from team to team)	• Management time • Employee time • Budget • Structure/systems for learning • Employee reluctance

Enablers and barriers to learning

Enablers

The actual manager of the team was a clear enabler to learning in the workplace. Managers were supportive of learning ideas and opportunities through both formal and informal learning. In a formal capacity there was a half-yearly and yearly performance management system. In an informal sense there were many ways in which managers gave time for their employees to be able to learn. For example, this may have been to encourage employees to go to conferences/workshops, or to encourage the employees to come into a manager's office to discuss a problem or be a sounding board; or simply to give employees the opportunity to learn by observation and experience by participating in the learning experience.

The predisposition of a manager was a key enabler for them to be the best facilitator of learning they could be. A manager who was able to really *"make an effort"* was a factor which enabled a learning experience. One employee, Jo, stated that her manager [was] *"making the effort to come up and see me"* and this enabled her learning as the tendency of this particular manager was to not actually be a facilitator of learning to the optimal level, so Jo could see the effort they were trying to put in and this was positive. Another employee Hugh, believed he "need[ed] a boss with a similar predisposition to me" and therefore the boss needed employees with similar inclinations to their employees. Likewise, Bec, an employee encountered that [her manager had] "approached [her] to put the effort in to development for her to act in other roles. This is because the manager's predisposition was to facilitate learning for their employee and the employee predisposition was to accept this guidance.

In support of the idea of managers guiding employees, some managers used an *"open-door policy"* approach, which was a strategy that a majority of managers tried to provide for all their employees. This was clearly seen as an enabler to learning as employees felt they could trust their manager to run ideas by them that there was support from higher up and that there were no wrong questions to be asked.

- *"Open to providing any training and development when needed". (Employee, Bec)*
- *"Supportive with an open-door policy." (Employee, Bill)*
- *"Door is always open – encourage us to come in." (Employee, Davvers)*
- *"Manager tries [to have an open door policy]." (Employee, George)*
- *"Approachable, has an open-door policy." (Employee, Jack)*

These few examples above show that the managers in this organisation attempted to have an open-door policy, which was clear to their employees. At least half the employees interviewed from the majority of teams were able to see that their managers were endeavouring to provide a strategy to

facilitate learning for them and a scenario where employees would be able to learn from the manager's experience.

Furthermore, the experience of a manager was also viewed as an enabler to learning in this organisation. Employees felt that their managers had information to convey to the employees and that they trusted the information they were being given: "[My manager] i*mparts knowledge and wisdom on others" Davvers, Employee*. Employee *Bec said "[Employees] try to get the knowledge to progress. I would not stay at the job if I had a manager who kept information from me. I want that guidance and to deal with situations*." In this case the employee stated that *"if they felt their manager was not a facilitator of learning they would not stay in the place of employment."* This support the idea that managers *are actively attempting to share what they know and give that information to those around them.* Employee Bigyin sa*id "[My manager] shares and provides knowledge and experience. [I have] been at [a] meeting with him… [with] copies executives. [They] encouraged others [to make sure] people are part of the team."* This employee was clearly able to see the role in which their manager played within the organisation and the type of manager they wanted to be.

Kerry, an employee, could also see the type of manager her manager was trying to be. Kerry could see that both she and her manager "liked active experimentations". Kerry felt that "[those within her team] could make a mistake, learn from it and know for next time." There was an 'informal debrief' as the manager was not a micro-manager at all and therefore allowed employees to "get on with the job". Kerry further explained that her manager was "there if you need him and open to suggestions and ideas. [They] let the employee realise the changes that need to be done, and remove the barriers. *"[My manager] has faith in me [and we can] work together."* In support of this idea, employee Tommy explained that his manager was also able to provide an emphasis on caution though "experienced people [within the team]." The manager was facilitating learning by providing opportunities to learn through other members of the team and giving the employees opportunities to learn through each other's experiences. In Kolb's ELT (2008), Tommy sat within the quadrant of Concrete Experience. Both these employees' managers used deliberate and informal methods to encourage learning within their teams.

Macca believed his role to be that of a coach, to *"[provide] experience and [be] professional".* Another manager Chris, said he aimed to *"meet everybody's requests [for learning] through incidental and informal [methods of] learning*". In addition, Manager Bigyin stated that he believed the way he facilitated learning was by *"understanding others perspectives". "[Everyone] has different understandings and [needs different] exchanges of knowledge". [People] learn from each other and sometimes people recognise [something different] that others don't*" said Bigyin. Managers, through

their own experience, can provide this opportunity for employees and can help them learn and therefore succeed in an organisation. Therefore, this supports the idea that a manager's experiences can be an enabler to learning and subsequently enable positive achievements for an organisation.

This research is significant to discovering true enablers to learning because there was both a manager's perspective and an employee's perspective as to what their enablers to learning were. As demonstrated by the examples above, managers aimed to deliver informal learning opportunities for employees in their teams, and to provide informal demonstrations of their knowledge and experience. In turn, the employees reported through their interviews that they were receiving informal learning on regular occasions. The majority of employees also thought their managers were supportive and approachable, exactly as the managers intended their demeanour to be. The management style along with the communication method are very important to employee learning.

The communication exhibited by managers was shown through employees' responses to interview questions to enhance employees' ability to learn. Manager Jane, through informal learning methods always *"[tried to] explain to [new] people the culture of [the organisation]"*. It is the "stuff you don't get taught at the induction; the political environment and [other employees] interactions". Jane aimed for her team to "not be as siloed as other managers would be". This organisation has a 'Communication Workforce Agreement'. Managers tell employees to attend the human resources induction and that *"[employees] might hear about communication at the organisation, and the CEO is quite big on who is enrolled [at inductions] to see is reliable. [The CEO] chats to people in halls and asks they how it is going. The CEO is 'great'. [The organisation has] open communication whether it is on the phone or email."* Jane believed that "[a] person gets frustrated asking lots of questions if they don't understand [or have the communication with others]".

However, the contrast of the employee and management behaviours, individually and compared to other teams, demonstrates that the positive type of behaviour is shown to be reliant on the individual managers. Some examples of this from respondents were: *"This varies from team to team (Employee Kerry), [My manager] gives you some rope [to learn],"* (Employee Bec), *"All I want you to do is try"* (Employee Bigyin), *"[It is] up to the individual service area… would you like to have a crack?"* (Employee Jack), *"[It's] down to the area how it works out and how managers use the information"* (Manager Jane). These examples show that there is not one way of providing learning which is seamlessly applied to the entire organisation and fits cohesively between teams or with other people.

These 'other' people in the organisation, and not just the manager were also key enablers to learning in the organisation. Manager Chris realised the need to "keep and grow people [in a] complex system of work". Chris constantly asked *"What is the cost benefit of creating people who need to step up?*

What is the opportunity cost of not delivering their full capacity?". This approach leading Chris to do all he could to develop his employees to get the best out of them. Employee Bec felt supported by her manager and said the employees in her office are comfortable to book a meeting and chat to all the people. It was not always the manager who had the answer and often employees needed to have that informal debrief with each other to enhance their understanding. Another employee Betsy, recalled that at the beginning [of her work in the team], she [had] tried to stay close to people and encourage the networks and connections and develop relationships [with those people]. Betsy knew that it was the people around her who would also help her to flourish in the environment and not only her manager.

Manager Hugh supported this notion of the importance of the surrounding people, and stated that "[employees] need to be supported and feel comfortable". He said: *"Employees need softer skills as well as technical skills"*. In Hugh's experience, he believed that employees *"don't want to [have] the [kind of] manager where people say, [that] if they come out of their office, something must be wrong."* Hugh wants to be part of the environment and be able to teach from the inside rather than the outside. He also encouraged the idea to possibly "have a protégé" within the team. Hugh was certain that he was "very lucky to work in this organisation [with these people]". The employee and management responses were very clear in showing that it is all of the people in a team and not just the single manager who can make a difference to employee learning. In light of this view, a manager may want to make the effort to further develop the idea of employees learning from others and the development of as many employees and managers as possible to facilitate this learning in the whole organisation.

For large numbers of people to be developed, and for larger scale learning to take place, there needs to be an appropriate structure put in place to support this learning. The structure of this organisation not only as a whole entity, but also each team specifically was reported for the majority of employees, as a key enabler to learning and development. One employee Betsy, was pleased that she *"constantly received ongoing feedback [as there was] an excellent system in [her] area".* In addition to this response, employee Bigyin said his manager *"encourages others". "People are part of the team [and the manager of the team says] "If the opportunity came up do you think this person would like to… [participate in this learning opportunity]?"*. Bigyin believed that sometimes people did not recognise what learning they needed but his manager in his facilitation style did not separate the staff and everyone gets their say in the learning culture that is set up in the organisation. Bigyin liked the fact that his manager realised the staff were capable but could fine tune – develop [their] staff.

Employee Davvers described his belief that managers needed to tailor the message of learning for different people. *"[The same] management style does not work for everyone, [managers] need to be flexible [with their set up]".* Davvers believed that his manager *"gets the best out of the [team] as his manager "appeals to us [and] we all want to work for [them] because [they] encourage me and this give me pride in my work".* Davvers also considered the structure of his team, saying that he felt his manager set up the working arrangement so that if anything wrong the manager would "cushion the fall [for the team]". Davvers believed his manager was supportive and thought himself to *"[have been] lucky to work [here]".*

Barriers

There were clearly many enablers to learning from managers enacting their roles as facilitators of learning in this organisation. However, there were also many employees and managers who felt there were some blocks to adequately providing a culture for complete learning in this organisation. The majority of respondents shared the general idea that they were all busy in their current roles. Managers discussed the ideas of time as a general concept and whether there was enough time for themselves and indeed their teams to be able to benefit from some kind of learning. Employees also reflected on their managers' time habits, as well as their own time management, and each other's willingness to create opportunities for learning both formal and informal. A common and much debated barrier was budget opportunities and this was interconnected with the structure of the teams and the overall organisation. Further, employee reluctance to learn or to participate in learning activities was discussed from both managers and employees' perspectives.

Although many employees felt their managers gave them time to learn and develop, the notion of time was a contributor to barriers to learning for individual employees. Some expressed the idea that they had to learn in an 'on the job' fashion and it was a 'sink or swim'-type attitude. In terms of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning theory this can be an acceptable way to learn. However, this is only for those who enjoy and thrive in an intense learning environment. For those who learn well from the Active Experience quadrant of learning, being exposed to fast paced environments is a positive way to learn, however, for those on the opposite end of the spectrum in the Reflective quadrant, this 'on the job' learning is not a desired method to learn or develop new skills.

In comparison to the enabler to learning whereby employees benefited from their manager's time in the open-door policy setting, a small number of employees viewed their manager's actions from a differing point of view. Some employees viewed the time that their manager had to spare for their learning as a block. One employee recalled that *"[my] manager thinks he had an open door policy, but [really] he gets stressed." [I will] wait a few hours before I go in"* (Employee George). This is where this

type of research can show that some managers' intentions were not always able to live up to their actions. The manager in the example given, wanted to have time to devote to giving feedback and having informal debriefs, but in reality this was not an option.

Another manager Jane, with regard to her timing for learning activities, talked about both the formal and informal side to learning. Jane stated that in terms of formal training, the employees might enrol, but then this put pressure on the workload. She believed that both employees and managers *"feel the pressure [and] don't give [themselves] enough time"*. Jane believed there *"was not enough time for the pre-planning. [Learning] needs to be a more unique process [with] planning and budgets working together to decide what projects [the team] can do for their learning and developmental activities"*.

In addition to management's time for learning, there is the similar idea of the time that employees give towards their learning. Employee Julie referred to time and budget as one of the barriers she experienced with regards to learning facilitation. The budget especially was an issue when there is staff turnover. Julie explained that *"[the team] did not get to use all the budget [for training]"*. The impact that the turnover in the team had on staff reduced the time to participate in learning activities due to the training of new staff, covering the gaps in day to day work and anything extra that may arise. The employees' time was limited in addition to the already limited time of the manager. Julie stated that *"another barrier for [her] development plan is the preparation time"*. The particular and specific course for her area needs to be attended at least once a year. However, Julie could see that part-timers don't get support as their time is limited and workload cannot be stretched, therefore they would never be able to attend the course, even if there was time to plan for it. The reality of day to day working life for the business unit would not allow it.

Employee Jack described what he thought to be *"terrible"* budget issues in his business unit. *"This was definitely a barrier to learning [in my team]. It is just not realistic [to pay for any training]"*. Jack felt that *"training"* was generalised by the Human Resources department. He described a situation that when staff needed to take part in a developmental activity that was important, it needed to be planned for 18 months in advance. This researcher understood Jack to be explaining a situation where the learning processes and structures were creating a reality for this team where learning opportunities seemed out of reach. Jack explained that he believed it to create a *"bad impression"* for learning in the workplace.

Manager Macca, discussed the Human Resources budgets given to each area and the formality which goes with them. The managers want people to widen their skill set and Macca aims to provide leadership to do so within the tight budget. Manager John agreed that the budget restraints are hard. *"Our business unit covers lots of different areas. There are issues with physical location as well as the*

ability to have interaction and collaboration between teams". This researcher observed that employees and specifically managers felt that being a local government organisation, there are very high levels of accountability for budgets, and that these restricted managers when planning and offering training and learning opportunities.

However, it has been identified over the course of this research that formal training is not the only option for learning opportunities. Employee Jack noted that not enough attention was being paid in his team by managers to the regular processes for learning. For example, standing items of a weekly meeting could be improved he felt. Manager Hugh also felt the meetings could be a barrier to learning. Hugh explained that meetings could sometimes get taken in another direction by team members. He said *"[We] can't allow people to get distracted. Meetings become taken up with people feeling wounded, something needs to be done".*

Another barrier to learning concerning the structure of this organisation is that there is conflicting schools of thought around whether to follow and/or undertake organisational processes at different levels and within different teams. Jack believed that in his business unit the high-level opinion was not a positive one for following the organisational learning structures. *"There is limited communication and therefore it is a 'hard environment' to work in*" confirmed Jack.

Environment and structure is key in the workplace for learning, therefore it is a significant barrier to be addressed. Environment, structure and the ensuing systems for learning, must work in conjunction with the work structures and work processes within each business unit and the entire organisation. One employee, George, stated that it was unclear who should be consulted when it came to learning and development opportunities. *"Technically [we are] meant to go through the coordinators to approve learning or pursue [other] learning opportunities. However, [coordinators in this particular team] are less willing to interact with people below them... 'possibly'.*" The structure and the hierarchy in the team was in place but did not seem to be effective if employees were not willing or able to go through the previously set up channels. The environment was not conducive to learning if there were perceived barriers to learning coming from middle levels of management. This barrier was not reported during interviews as being realised by managers, and therefore is an issue with only certain employees seeing this barrier, making it a 'real' barrier for them even if not for managers.

The final key topic of knowledge for barriers to employee learning, is that of employees having a reluctance to learn in their workplace. Some employees believed that some of the reasons they are hesitant to participate in learning activities are:

- o *"Haven't had proper training [to understand what I should be doing]"*
- o *"Don't remember to look [for learning opportunities]"*

- *"Don't know [how to use] online learning"*
- *"The organisation does NOT have user friendly systems"*

Employee George thought that they employees in the team were *"too set in their roles. There are two types of people: those who do their job and go home and those who do their job and want more"*. George described the people in the business unit as *"dreamers"* or "opposing this mundane and frustrated". George believed there should be more learning in the workplace, along with benchmarking and collaborative possibilities: *"The different types of learning and moving to an informal style would encourage those reluctant employees to want to participate more"*.

Summary of key topics

Discussed in the narrative above, are the key topics of conversation that were derived from interviews with 14 employees, and five managers from a local government organisation in Western Australia. A summary of the ideas presented in this chapter is outlines below.

The perceptions of key tensions from managers and employees were around; the culture of the organisation and who drives the learning in the organisation. Participants felt they were able to work within this culture with all the participants having had a clear understanding of the values and philosophy around learning within their organisation.

The next key idea was that all managers and employees believed the role of a facilitator of learning to be a very important one. There was no debate as to whether the role of managers facilitating learning is important but around the understanding of the breakdown of processes surrounding this idea. The interconnections between work productions and learning productions.

Employee ability, personality and learning styles were clearly shown to affect employee learning and therefore different approaches were needed by managers to encourage learning. However, managers' and employees' perceptions of what constituted a learning opportunity were not always congruent. Employees felt supported by the manager, director and CEO but were unsure who should take the lead in this learning culture. There was no clear understanding between employees and managers in this organisation of who is responsible for driving learning.

There was much collaboration across the board within teams and there is support shown for informal learning techniques. There appeared to be a great interest from managers in receiving feedback from employees, however, some negative occurrences were mainly related to structure and processes which were set up for the organisation. Hierarchy issues and the nature of this organisation led to there being a siloed approach to work in certain areas.

Feedback and follow up were perceived by employees not be accomplished by their managers, although managers believed this was something they were good at. In reality, employees said they knew their managers tried, but felt they did not have time to always debrief. Still, as organisational structures vary from team to team, so if a manager if willing to give informal debriefs and be open to suggestions this is positive, but, there are not formal learning protocols to support this.

The way that the managers ran their teams and the learning support structures they had in place, suggested the level to which they supported inclusivity and learning. Some managers did and some managers did not provide opportunities for employees to learn within their teams. The principal issues were the different learning opportunities which employees were afforded, the openness of the manager, team and organisation and the environment in which people worked.

Once again environmental issues were a common idea employees and managers not always seeing the same situation in the work environment. There were issues which appeared to be hidden from either managers or employees in this organisation which were a result of conflicting organisational structures. Although, employees within this organisation felt in, the majority that it was the managers' responsibility to be in control of facilitating learning in the workplace.

The connection that an employee feels to their manager therefore makes the managers a key component in this research. Further, managers are a key element in the construction of learning in the workplace. If a manager's team has several layers beneath them, this can add a layer of complexity to the situation. There was limited support for the extra layer of management in the organisation being involved in the learning.

The actual manager of the team was a clear enabler to learning in the workplace as well as the predisposition and experience of that manager. Managers aimed to deliver informal learning opportunities for employees in their teams, and to provide informal demonstrations of their knowledge and experience. The majority of employees also thought their managers were supportive and approachable, their style along with the communication method being very important to employee learning. However, behaviour is shown to be reliant on the individual managers.

For large numbers of people to be developed, and larger-scale learning to take place there needs to be an appropriate structure put in place to support this learning. The structure of this organisation as an entity, but also as individual teams specifically - was reported as a key enabler to learning and development for employees. The majority of respondents shared the general idea that they were all busy in their current roles. Although many employees felt their managers gave them time to learn and

develop, this idea of time also was a contributor to barriers to learning for individual employees. Some employees viewed the time that their manager had to spare for their learning as a block.

All the factors mentioned are contributors to the final key topic of knowledge for barriers to employee learning, and that is that employees can have a reluctance to learn in their workplace. This idea is constructed from all the enablers not enacted to their optimal level and all the barriers which prevent learning and development and subsequently success for the team and overall organisation.

Connection to learning theory

Following this discussion of the data collected, the politics of what this means and how it relates to existing theory is discussed. The following paragraphs will argue how the research either contests, confirms or extends the theory or current understanding of current research on facilitation of learning in the workplace.

The foundation for this research is largely based on Learning Network theory (LNT) as a basis for the framework for learning. However, there are many linkages to smaller learning theories such as Organisational Learning theory and Experiential Learning theory to support LNT. The theory which encompasses LNT focuses on learning relations within a workplace. Therefore, LNT has a large emphasis on the growing integration of work productions and learning productions, to show the crucial conflict between those productions in the workplace. Poell and Van der Krogt show that LNT proposes a typography of such organisational relations (Poell et al., 2000) (Van der Krogt, 1998) and these were applied to this organisational case study.

As discussed in the review of the literature, LNT as used in this research's framework for learning is set out as two opposing sides. The organisation has one side which is advocating for the structure of work. This is the content, relations and climate of work done in each team and overall at the organisation. To support this side's product outputs is the working processes that are linked to the outputs, and these may be tangible documents and standard norms that exist such as policy documents, meeting times/dates and schedule of labour. These processes guide how work in the organisation is to be achieved.

Table 6 Work Structures and Work Processes

Work Structures	Work Processes
• Work content	• Work policy development
• Work relations	• Work program development
• Work climate	• Work program operationalisation

In opposition to this set of working ideal, is the structure which controls the learning in the organisation. This side of the LNT is about the content of learning along with the relations involved to learn and the learning culture or climate. This local government organisation has both opportunities for formal and informal learning and all of these would be captured here. The specific learning processes, for example, the management for performance systems, the human resources training options and policy and programs surrounding this learning would be discussed here in the learning processes aspect of this element.

Table 7 Learning Structures and Learning Processes

Learning Structures	Learning Processes
• Learning content • Learning relations • Learning climate	• Learning policy development • Learning program development • Learning program operationalisation

Contained within this theory is the idea that within each organisation there are both processes and structures which mirror each other (work and learning). Then the learning processes and structures as well as the work processes and structures become locked in a conflicting state with each other. LNT as a framework can be applied here as the researcher believes, management is in a position where on an everyday basis they represent the work processes and structures side of the model. They are those people within the organisation responsible for ensuring that the work gets done to the standard set out in the policy and procedure. The learning structures and processes can be set by many people for example the Human Resources department, upper management down to individual teams, and also by individual employees.

The reason these two sides are in conflict, is because there is no clear division of roles (for all employees in the workplace) and no clear decision as to who is in charge of organising each paradigm's ways, needs and wants and their way of thinking. This theory of learning aims to encourage all employees to work to understand and develop alternative ways of organising employee learning in relation to work. Hence, managers need to understand this theory in relation to their workplace so that they may better organise work, and organise learning and the processes and structure around the two.

The individual organisation, and teams, are consumed in these competing productions. Management needs to act as a referee to facilitate the integration of the two. For example, there was the situation described whereby a manager had learning processes around having time to devote to giving employee feedback and having informal debriefs. In interviews with employees, it was discovered that in the employees' perspectives, in their reality, this was not an option. Work productions were of a

greater need to be completed than the learning processes, and therefore, the learning was not able to take place. The work processes were valued as a more important task; therefore, the competition continues.

Poell's (2000) work on LNT divides the work and learning productions down further into four categories or networks of learning, as previously discussed. Horizontal, vertical, liberal and external are the four networks which create the basis for the idea that these networks control the individual and unique learning processes which each team develops and changes to suit them as time goes on. For this case study the liberal networks were teams where managers allowed learning to be driven towards the personal needs and goals of the employees - such as employee George having external learning paid for, which was specific for their own learning. Or employee Bec saying that the managers and coordinators above her were happy to work with her need and what was good for her. When asked the question "What would you change in your organisation if you could?", John had the specific idea to ask for "sourcing, providing and tailoring [training/learning] for me".

A differing view is the vertical network learning, which is centrally controlled and uses pre-structured types of learning. Examples of this type of learning during this research were *"HR type training where an employee could learn [Microsoft] Word or Excel and have job specific training like using a chainsaw"*. Manager Jane stated that *"[the organisation] had good corporate training, [a] regular structure with job specific training in the system supported by [a] monthly schedule"*.

Crucial in the learning network theory is the concept of self-directed learning (Poell et al., 2004). Employees who participate in this type of learning are part of an organisational learning context, which will have its own dynamics, with what and how people are willing and able to learn. In light of this notion, horizontal learning networks in LNT are organic processes which mainly follow what the group needs. The training is free and equal to all employees and the learning packages are developed bit by bit as the group goes along. This is not pre-planned learning and if focused on learning by experience. This is where the idea of informal learning is once again key to being able to provide learning for employees such as Kerry. She was able to learn from mistakes if she made them and know what to do differently next time. The learning opportunities she experiences in her team grow naturally and stem from where the wider team needs to improve.

The final theoretical type of learning in LNT is the external networks. This is not a commonly used learning practice for this organisation, as it focuses on new developments within the professions. The learning innovation *"is an external production grasped by professionals who integrate the learning with existing work processes"* (Poell et al., 2004). A new invention within the workplace would be introduced into the organisation by the professional field as they demanded it. Manager Chris

described his team, in relation to this theory: *"Senior management encourage attendance [to] professional bodies and being contributors to the bodies who are part of the industry"*. Chris believed that his organisation realised they needed to stay up to date with what the industry believes to be innovative. However, this was not a strict form of learning and even though it was able to work for his particular team, this was not relatable to all areas.

By using LNT as a framework to understand this natural competition between learning and work, management gain an extra tool to be able to adequately integrate both processes to enhance the success of their team and organisation. Understanding that the two sides will always exist and that a change needs to be made to create harmony, is the beginning of management gaining a competitive advantage. In this organisation LNT would benefit managers by further providing them with tools to complete their day to day activities. As informal learning is key for this organisation, LNT helps managers to understand that the learning environment will always be present, the learning policies and procedures will always be in place, and finally the learning content will always be there to learn. The same 'tools' are being used by managers and employees to both work and learn, meaning that by using an employee's skills more effectively both work and learning can easily take place.

As a theoretical framework, this researcher can see how LNT can easily be applied to this organisation and the benefit management could find by using this framework to organise and control learning in the workplace. LNT is useful to describe and explain how organisations shape their employee learning arrangements, both in the workplace (informally) and in formal training contexts (Poell et al., 2004). At the group and individual level, LNT could provide guidance to educate employees and improve the environment for learning.

Connection to literature

As there is a lack of research about local government organisations in the whole of Australia, including Western Australia, this researcher finds it difficult to adequately indicate whether this research confirms, extends or contests the literature. The main research that this study relates to is *"Learning in an Age of Cuts"* by Warhurst (2013b). Warhurst's research investigated manager's beliefs about learning, and their views on how they enabled learning in the workplace.

This research confirms Warhurst's (2013b) work, which demonstrates that a broader range of methodologies was reportedly used by managers in enabling staff learning than has previously been shown. Through the benefit of having semi structured in-depth interviews, a conversation was had with all 19 interview participants. Based on the evidence presented in the interviews, and the subsequent discussion and analysis of data, this researcher agrees with Warhurst in his notion that there is clearly a need for organisations to enhance managers' awareness of their beliefs about

learning. To take this a step further, there is also the need to increase employees' beliefs about learning too. Finally, there is also the need to increase employee' capabilities for stimulating non-formal learning opportunities through work practices.

Examples of researchers such as Marsick and Watkins (1999; 2003; 1999) and Garrick (1998) have led the way in deeply examining the role of informal learning in the workplace. Through the combination of their research efforts it can be determined that learning methods, specifically informal learning methods, may be; planned or unplanned, happen "just-in-time" or learned along the way, be self-directed, be experimental, or be a form of on-the-job training'. Therefore, managers for this local government organisation need to be up skilled to effectively understand and disseminate information and be able to adequately enact their role as a facilitator of learning.

Furthermore, this research extends Warhurst's work because his 2013 study reported that the research was limited to manager respondents. This study looked into the idea behind this notion and realised that to be a more in-depth case study there needed to be both managers and employees reporting on the actions of managers. Also, there needed to be actual examples of the managers' developmental intentions, and not simply what managers' said they were. That is, there needed to be examples of whether managers' developmental intentions were actually happening in the workplace from employees' perspective. Warhurst (2013b) believed that the implications for extending his research would be to look at research to determine managers' learning actions and not just their learning intentions. This researcher believed that the way to do this was to have the employees directly supervised by these managers to gather this information. Beattie (2007) contributed to the extension of Warhurst's work, as the 2007 research project had managers and employees interviewed.

Key/Major themes

Through using NVivo software, this researcher was able to gain a comprehensive list of major topics which stood out from the responses of the interviewees. There were five major topics and 14 sub-topics identified. These topics stand out for of several reasons: firstly, the frequency of the topics being used during interviews, secondly the way in which the topics or specific words were conveyed to the researcher during the interviews, and finally, comparing and contrasting larger sections of the responses to interview questions and drawing out their key meaning. The major topics and sub-topics are show below:

Table 8. Major topics and Sub-Topics of the research

Major Topics
• Environment – environment/culture/structure • Learning – informal learning and learning opportunities • Attitude- open/attitude/empower • Emotion - love/passion/fear/Luck • Communication – information and knowledge

Sub-topics	
• Passion	• Culture
• Communication	• Luck
• Love	• Knowledge
• Structure	• Informal
• Fear	• Environment
• Empower	• Opportunity
• Attitude	• Open

The first list of the sub-topics is noteworthy because of the fact that each one is an emotion. Many of the employees interviewed spoke with emotive language about how they felt working in the organisation. Some examples of this language used was: *"passion" - "my manager is passionate, she was very passionate, hard to find passionate people, [manager is] understanding and compassionate". 'Love' – "Love working here, love [the] career development, I love to [peruse self-directed learning activities]". Fear – "People [in the team] have a fear, nobody wants to come in to work in fear of their boss, I fear [I will be] ridiculed".* These are just some examples of the sentiment with which employees in this organisation worked. The emotions employees felt seemed to suggest that they were immensely emotionally involved in their workplaces, and this implied a greater relationship with either the team and/or the manager.

Other topics such as communication, knowledge, open[ness], culture and environment are significant and enduring because they all have a direct connection with each other. These topics were mentioned copious amount of times by employees and managers as well as developed from larger blocks of text which were examined. The interdependencies between these sub-topics are crucial for managers to understand to create a harmonious and trusting environment for employees to be able to learn and develop. Many responses to questions began with statements such as *"The first responsibility is for the manager to create an environment [for employees] to actively learn"* Employee Bigyin. Following on from these statements were ideas of an open policy of work, knowledge sharing and high levels of communication to enable a have a successful and positive culture for learning.

One interesting sub-topic is the idea of luck in the workplace. Some examples of luck being expressed were: *"Positive environment [I am] very lucky, been lucky to work here [my manager] is supportive, I'm lucky, [I have] only every worked with coaches not cops, lucky to work on projects, lucky to work here*

and many more." The idea of luck is that a positive thing is happening, but it is through chance that it should happen. The examples given show multiple employees feeling a sense of luck, which this researcher believes points towards the idea that the managers in this organisation are providing a good environment for work. Managers' appear to be facilitating learning without employees realising that this is the result of management strategy and style. This goes back to the plan by manager Bigyin *"Managers need to facilitate learning without an employee knowing".* Employees' were feeling positive and *"lucky"* to work at this organisation and managers can build on this.

Themes

From the development of these major topics, and sub-topics, and in comparison, to the discussion of interview questions, four major themes were developed. The key themes for this research are: 1. Understanding learning in the workplace; 2. The extent of informal learning in the workplace; 3. Manager's intentions becoming actions; and 4. Employee engagement with learning opportunities. These themes are linked to the two main research questions which are: "Are managers' facilitators of learning?" and "How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?". These themes are easily able to be linked back to these research questions due to the detailed construction of both the research questions and the structure of having in-depth interviews:

1. Managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace (Are managers facilitators of learning?)
2. The extent of informal learning in the workplace (Are managers facilitators of learning?)
3. Managers' intentions becoming actions (How do managers operationalise their roles)
4. Employee engagement with learning opportunities (How do managers operationalise their roles)

In the construction of these four themes, it should be noted that more than one of the major topics and sub-topics may have influenced, and contributed to, each overall theme. The four themes resulting from this research will be discussed further in the context of managers' beliefs, employees' point of view, and a comparison of the two.

Major Themes – management perspective

Managers

Previous research on facilitation of learning, which this research builds upon, has come from authors such as Warhurst (2013b), Colley (2012), Amy (2008), Wallo (2008), Beattie (2007), Hughes (2004) Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom (1999) and Marsick and Watkins (1999). Specifically, Ellinger et al (1999) interviewed midlevel or senior managers in learning organisations. More than a decade later Warhurst (2013b) completed a similar study with interviews of managers in a local government setting in the

UK. These studies were a key influence to understanding over the past two decades how learning is perceived and enacted in the workplace.

This section will show how the research is organised and presented for review. There will be an overview on the broad demographics of each of the managers interviewed. There will then be discussion on how managers' responses impacted on the major themes and in relation to the research questions which they related to.

There were five managers interviewed with a range of demographics:

Table 9. Manager Demographics

Gender	Approximate Age Bracket	Working for LGA for how many years
Male	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Female	41 - 50	25+ years
Male	41-55	25+ years
Male	41 - 55	Between 10 and 20 years

The range of demographics of managers, shows that there is likely to be an ability for this research to broadly generalise and give any reader the ability to see differing points of views from the management perspective. There is not a case where there are all male managers working for the organisation for 40 years and never anywhere else. The opinions and beliefs espoused by managers will show a range of differing thoughts.

There were three research questions to be investigated by this study:

1. **How do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning?**
2. **How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?**
3. **What are the enablers and barriers that managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?**

Discussion of Major Themes

1. *Managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)*

The first two themes identified relate to the research question: "Are manager's facilitators of learning?" This question was focused on exploring whether managers themselves believed that they were adequately acting in their roles as a facilitator of learning, whether they believed this to be a worthwhile role and how they believed they promoted learning and removed any barriers.

The theme of managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace was investigated through the questions that asked managers to give examples of learning

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opportunities in the workplace and to demonstrate times whereby they encouraged new projects or developmental activities for their employees. Managers were also asked how important they thought this role was and how it fit in with all their other responsibilities.

Managers were very forthcoming with examples and gave many in their interview responses, as discussed in the findings chapter and some of which are demonstrated in the table below:

Table 10. Key examples of learning provided by managers

Key examples of learning provided
• Encourage attendance for professional bodies • Leverage off the skills employees have • General communication • Email • Face-to-face [learning opportunities] • Learning on the job – experience • Trainee/intern/trainee manager • Mentoring • Cross-team collaboration

The responses to these questions led this research to the topics and sub-topics and finally to the theme of managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace. Sub-topics were: informal, opportunity, knowledge, communication and structure. Major topics were; environment, learning and communication.

The examples given in Chapter 5 and in the Table 10, were a limited and superficial response in this researcher's opinion. A semi-structured in-depth interview technique was employed for this case study, and was appropriate because, follow-up questions and discussion was required to be able to adequately inform managers of what learning opportunities really consisted of. Some managers were unaware of the enormous impact that their actions had or could have on their employees. Managers were also unaware of the smaller actions they could take to contribute to employee learning.

The understanding behind formal, informal, non-formal and incidental learning was discussed with managers to a certain degree, when deliberating over the role in which managers played in learning in the workplace. During the interviews, it was observed that the majority of managers easily accounted for basic learning methods and after a period of time and lengthy discussions they were also able to recall a deeper level of learning which they provide for their employees.

The majority of managers talked about time and how this impacted on their ability to be facilitators of learning in the workplace, or prevent employee learning in general. Manager Jane discussed the issue of time. *"Feel the pressure – don't give yourself enough time [to provide learning], there is not enough time for the pre-planning and [the organisation] we don't dedicate enough time to it".*

Manager Hugh said that he often only sees managers *"interacting when something is wrong"*. Manager Peter said "[need to] spend time with people on special projects, [give them] one on one mentoring." These types of responses show that there is not a clear understanding of how to facilitate learning as managers feel there is not enough time, no planning and can only act when there are issues.

Further, managers don't always know if they are enabling learning or if they are sending employees to training to learn and what the differences are. Although all the managers expressed that they were facilitators of learning, and that this was an important role, they appeared to not be entirely sure of this role themselves. One of the managers was well prepared for answering initial questions and gave examples such as *"my role to be a coach, [provide] experience and [be] professional. [they are] more than capable – they do their role [and] I give advice, protection and support"*. However, later on in the interview when asked about learning for a second time the manager gave formal training methods and did not mention informal learning opportunities. Manager Macca explained that *"the types of learning or training were: In-house training – [send] people on conferences and seminars, being an [organisational training organisation] member"*. It was a common mistake by managers to hear the word 'facilitate' and make the connection between what it meant as opposed to the word learning and what that conjured up.

This understanding and organisation of learning, which is part of this theme, relates to Poell's theory of learning networks. This theme relates to LNT because of the idea that the organisation produces its own processes and structures for their learning. People have their own theories and interests which influence the way they create learning processes for themselves and others around them, which over a period of time evolve into structures (Poell et al., 2000). The connection between theory and this case study is that managers may create their own learning processes which work for themselves, but possibly not for others. The structure and longevity of the organisation then means that the organisation and structure of learning will be based on the understanding (or lack of understanding) of individual managers. The result being that if managers are not satisfactory facilitators of learning, the entire system of learning will be affected conceivably with negative results.

Eraut (2004) has also discussed how managers are often not trained for this type of learning and teaching role and therefore do not have the knowledge to be adequate facilitators of learning. For example, this theme of understanding is connected to Kolb's experiential learning theory. Managers need to understand the different ways in which people learn and which learning opportunities can be structured and controlled. Appendix 9.3 shows Kolb's diagram of experiential learning and how managers and employees absorb and respond to different methods to communication in the

workplace. However, if managers are not provided with training themselves, and are not aware of theory and good practice the learning possibly will not be absorbed.

Similar research by Warhurst (2013b) had outcomes which showed that managers did employ a wide range of learning methodologies to enable learning in the UK local government context. Warhurst's research was comparable to this case study and therefore there were some contrasts which could be made between the two outcomes. This research appeared to agree and confirm Warhurst's research that managers in local government organisations do act as facilitators of learning. This extends the research in this field because it is done in the WA context. As stated previously the most recent and similar research in this area was completed several years ago in the UK so there is still more room to build on these outcomes.

The analysis of management responses confirms the first research question that in this organisation, yes, in management's opinion, managers are facilitators of learning. They actively try to be facilitators of learning and it is important to them. However, a less positive aspect of this question is the theme that managers don't always understand what learning they should be providing.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research, it appeared that the original conceptual framework did not take into account the training and understanding of management. Although the effects of managers on barriers and enables were put forward, it seemed to this researcher that it was a bigger impact on learning in the workplace than first thought. This was corrected for the final version of the conceptual framework as seen in Chapter 3.

2. *The extent of informal learning in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)*

The extent of informal learning opportunities in the workplace was investigated through the same questions asking managers to give examples of learning opportunities in the workplace and demonstrate times whereby they encouraged new projects or developmental activities for their employees. This theme differed from the first as it focused more on the aspect of informal learning rather than simply all learning. The original idea from this researcher was that it was stated for interview participants that informal learning would be a focus of this research.

Managers were prompted to give instances of informal learning opportunities as it was explained to them that past research has shown that informal learning provided by managers in the workplace can provide a competitive advantage and increase the success of an area at the individual and team level. Examples in their interview responses, were discussed in the findings chapter, and some others which are demonstrated in the table below:

Table 11. Key examples of informal learning provided by managers

Key examples of informal learning
• Informal buddy system   • Influencing actions   • Informal feedback processes – e.g. walk up and chat to someone – say well done   • Explanation of the culture   • One on one   • Informal advice [from HR]]   • Meet regularly   • Provide advice   • Provide follow up

Once more as a semi-structured in-depth interview technique was employed for this case study, it was highly apt because, there was much discussion concerning exactly what was informal learning. As can be seen from the shorter list of informal learning examples, when asked to focus on what non-formal learning managers provided for their employees there was not a large list of examples. It was observed that managers had a large range of pre-prepared answers which we process that happened over and over and although had the opportunity to be a more organic learning experience, seemed to be accepted as a normal and formal program of learning. The responses given showed that managers and employees were not entirely clear about informal learning or the extent to which it is used in the workplace.

Manager Chris discussed how he aimed to meet everybody's requests. Chris described how he employed *"Incidental and informal learning through team meetings, learning and development [some formal] with the resources"* [he had]. He believed that there was *"no constraints on learning and development [in his team]"*. Macca agreed *"informal learning [is] important, [the team] meets regularly, [has an] open door policy and [can get] clarification – know what is expected of you"*. Chris and Macca appeared more structures and looked at what is the priority? Macca specifically related how team dynamics helped the informal learning situation. Macca believed that *"[I don't] interfere too much - the team likes each other; they are friends in a collegial way"*.

Jane and Peter also described how they employed informal learning in the workplace. Jane used a "informal buddy system". She tried to work one-on-one [where possible] and tried not to overwhelm [employees]. Peter felt that most of the training in his team is informal [as] this is more effective in his opinion. Hugh confirmed this idea and stated that the role of the manager in to *"influence [employees], and this needs to [be done] from the inside"*.

Poell's (2000) LNT was able to be used pragmatically with this theme. The learning processes which LNT boasts, may be used as a framework for organisations to model from. With informal learning, a model may be needed to guide the learning. As demonstrated by all the managers, informal learning

methods are very important; however, managers need to directly control this informal learning. Employees need to be able to trust that their managers are doing the right thing for them. There needs to be the structure so that not only the employee but also the manager can always confirm that everyone is on the same path and aware of what is expected of them. As manager Jane explained, she aims to work in a one-on-one situation, therefore she may aim to provide this one on one learning structure by ensuring time is given to this activity.

Similar research by Warhurst detailed that, "non-formal learning has become essential… ordinary managers take centre stage" (2013a). This idea by Warhurst suggests that it is not just senior managers at higher levels who may design training plans which will drive learning, but middle managers and coordinators like the ones in this case study which will greatly be able to influence employee learning. Eraut et. al (2000) also identified a key area of manager impact as informal influences from the manager to the employee. Eraut gave examples such as being a role model as one area to influence others. This was the type of informal learning which managers in this organisation did not actually seem to see as opportunities to provide leadership and guidance.

Although informal learning opportunities may not have been actualised to the optimal performance level in this organisation, there were still many signs that managers were attempting to provide informal learning to employees for the benefit of their teams. In contrast to this idea, research by Hughes (2002, 2004) puts forward the notion that *"trust is a key to learning",* but, that it is not possible to learn from your supervisor unless [you can] build trust. Manager Peter understands it takes time to build trust and correspondingly, manager Hugh also understands managers need to trust [their] employees in return. Hugh talked about mentoring and that it is his responsibility even if it is not an everyday activity to teach from [the] inside out. Hugh intimated that as trust was built so to would the mentoring relationship with the employees.

Warhurst stated that in his research in the UK, "strong developmental intentions were clearly dominant in the managers' reported beliefs about their managerial role" (Warhurst, 2013). This they clearly aimed to provide learning and importantly informal learning for their employees to the best of their abilities.

The analysis of this theme against management responses confirms the research question that in this organisation, yes, in management opinion, managers are facilitators of learning through providing learning methods other than traditional formal learning avenues.

The conceptual framework developed for this research adequately showed that in the management contribution to employee learning, there was both the option for formal and informal learning

methods. Outcomes from this case study show, that within a WA local government organisational context there is a greater emphasis on informal learning in these managers' workplace.

3. Managers' intentions becoming actions (How managers operationalise their roles)

The theme of the manager's intentions becoming actions in the workplace, relates to the second research question which asks "How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?". Although this related more to employees to answer, it is still relevant to look at why this was a theme through the point of view of managers.

This theme was reached through first looking at what managers believed were their examples of intent to provide learning in their teams, and then look at what they believed their enablers for learning to be and finally address the barriers. In this case study, for this theme, managers were asked to 'self-report', therefore, they would be answering the concept of whether they thought they were doing what they said they were. This research aimed to review, the management responses from a different angle to gather a more realistic perception of the data.

This theme is an important combination of key topics and ideas because it explored managers' ability to know whether they were fulfilling their role as the facilitator of learning in the employee's perceptions. Some of the main examples are shown in a table in Appendix 9.10.

Communication, advice, explanation, coaching, feedback and other study were they key ideas identified in the management responses to what they provided employees for learning. With regard to subtopics, these responses were categorised into communication and opportunity as the main ideas. Following this, responses given by managers as to what were the enablers to learning in their workplace were shown to not be exceedingly connected to what they were aiming to do. For example, managers had key ideas around communication, but there were few examples of how the teams are set up to enable communication or enhance it. Similarly, there were examples of the formal opportunities for employees, but none showing those informal methods of learning and how they are enabled or the barriers removed.

When looking at the barriers that managers had reported in their organisation there were a great many. Attitude, culture, structure and communication were the top subtopics identified. Pressure in the workplace and timing were reported by managers several times as a barrier to learning. These barriers would impact heavily on informal learning as would communication barriers and the individual attitudes of employees. The large number of barriers and smaller number of enables might indicate a lack of action for the managers attempts to facilitate learning.

Poell's (2000) LNT once more is able to be applied to this theme for the same reason as the second theme. As LNT is a framework for competing forces, there needs to be planning around how to counteract the negative impacts and barriers to learning. In the discussion of managers being able to make their facilitation purposes a reality, there is a need to explore what structures are in place to ensure that they have the support and planning to make the learning transpire. There will always be the work processes as these are what supports the organisation and the managers and employees' jobs, however learning networks are just as important and a balance between the two needs to be found.

There is limited research in similar areas of study of managers enacting their role as facilitators of learning. However, Schurmann and Beausaert (2016) recently completed a study which aimed to explore what the drivers for informal learning are and how learning is created in the workplace. Responses from this research showed that "feedback was a driver for informal learning, as it provides insights into how [the employee] and his actions were perceived by others and he greatly learnt from this process (Schürmann & Beausaert, 2016, p. 143). This relates to the theme of managers' intentions becoming their actions as it shows that managers and employees need to be involved in the feedback processes to drive learning as well as creating a safe environment for employees to give feedback in. Similarly, Wang and Noe (2010) presented ideas of knowledge sharing and the benefits of managers creating a culture that emphasises trust, whereby managers and employees mutually trust and believe in each other.

Managers who encourage learning play a key role in employee learning (Schurmann and Beausaert ((2016). The learning in this organisation is created by the managers acting as facilitators of learning and working in a direct and intentional way. This can be seen from the evidence showing examples of ways managers aimed to complete activities to support learning within their teams. Previous research by Hughes (2002) and Morgan and Allington (2002) rebutted this idea as it is often not possible in the workplace for the manager to assume the role of facilitator because of an fundamental lack of trust between managers and employees. Therefore, it is imperative that managers act upon what they say they will do and give employees a reason to trust and believe in them. Eldor (2016) explained that managers should encourage employees to learn as well as working together with others and their manager to collaborate and be involved in the learning process. For example, manager Chris believed that managers should *"leverage of the skills [that the] other employees have".* This is showing an attempt to directly facilitate learning by setting up structures for the learning to happen within, in a collaborative manner.

The analysis of this theme against management responses provides a wealth of information from which managers can draw their own conclusions as to whether their own specific intentions can be translated into actions in their workplace. It would appear that managers in this organisation believe they have many intentions to provide a learning environment and that from the best of their knowledge they are achieving this goal. Managers appeared to feel that barriers to learning are few can be easily overcome when they are present. However, this researcher can see that the managers may not have the framework for learning and the structures correct, and therefore they are not seeing the correct barriers to learning and the impacts they are having on their employees.

With regards to the conceptual framework and how this theme is related to the ideas presented in it, there are some changes from the original model to the later version. In the latter it was realised that the greater impact managers have is on the learning framework. Although it was detailed in the original framework that managers affected employees and presented barriers and enablers to learning, it was clear after the research was completed that managers have a much greater impact on the learning process. Managers intentions impacted the employees, barriers and enablers to learning, but also manager's actions could have a much different effect on these aspects whether intended or not. Also, there was a greater impact on the environmental factors from management, which would affect how the employees learned.

4. *Employee engagement with learning opportunities (How managers operationalise their roles)*

The learning environment in which employees are expected to learn is a very important one (Jacobs & Jones, 2005 as cited in Poell et al., 2004) (Eraut, 2004). Therefore, managers are expected to work with employees to lead and inspire them to engage with learning in the workplace and developing their skills to create a competitive advantage for their team and organisation.

The theme of employee engagement in the workplace was revealed through the second questions asking employees to give examples of what learning opportunities their managers give them in the workplace and to provide examples of times when they were encouraged to try new projects or be given developmental activities. This theme was also developed by asking managers and employees to explain their barriers and enablers to learning in their organisation.

Examples in their interview responses are discussed in the findings chapter, and some of these are demonstrated in Table 32:

Table 12. Examples of employee engagement

Examples of employee positive engagement	Examples of employee negative engagement
• Widen employee skill set • Managers to guide personal development • Don't want to be the manager where people say if they come out of their office something must be wrong • Happy with HR development [opportunities] • Actively encourage to make yourself distinguishable from others • [Organisation] encourages learning • Should be part of your role • Challenge employees to make their opportunities	• Don't want the management plan – if [we] want something we ask for it. • formal training... feedback sheets indicated that people did not want to be there • Managers and employee not really a buddy • employees can[should] come in with solutions • Employees: Don't like training • Don't like losing their role • Need to have leaders on the same page as employees

Yet again, this theme is an important combination of key topics and ideas because it explored the manager's ability to know whether they are adequately engaging employees in the learning process.

Some examples of management encouraging the engagement of staff with the learning environment included the employee opinion survey which manager Chris explained was to assist management with the planning process. Manager Macca also thought about the different ways employees can come into [his office] with solutions – to encourage their own [self-directed learning and problem solving. Contrasty, manager Jane could see that when [she would complete] the training of simple tasks on the phone or email, [an employee] gets frustrated, asking lots of questions. These examples show that when there was management direction and collaboration there were positive outcomes; however, when there was limited contact both physically and emotionally the employee learning relationship suffered.

Manager Hugh supported the notion that engaging employees in the learning culture was a key task. Hugh believed that in his organisation, *"the role of the manager [facilitating learning] influences employee retention"*. If the learner is enabled to learn and grow they are likely to stay [with an organisation]. Hugh encouraged the idea that managers acting as facilitators of learning increases retention and decreases turnover, which provides a benefit for the team and the overall organisation. Hugh said he aims to "challenge employees to make their own opportunities… and I am there to guide them". Hugh's works to express his desire to involve and engage the employees in their own learning beliefs.

In an opposing opinion, manager Peter discussed the idea of employees being engaged with any learning process, and stated that *"employees don't like training. [They] don't like losing their role."* Peter explained if there were learning or training available employees in his team perceived that it would be specific to another role and means they would have to 'give up' on what they were currently doing. Peter did not want this type of learning environment and understood the important of *"Having*

leaders on the same page as employees". He felt that leadership was an issue in the organisation which was affecting the culture and the [employee] desire to be part of a learning culture. This idea is congruent with research by Field (1997) which has shown that there may be personal and cultural barriers to learning present in many organisations.

Poell's (2000) LNT once more is able to be applied to this theme for the same reason as the second them of informal learning opportunities. This is because within the LNT model lies the concept of learning processes. Within this stream of outputs there is a section which identifies the social norms and customs in the learning space as well as policies, procedures and program development. LNT focuses on the relationships within a learning context and employee engagement with learning is very much about the relationship between manager, employee and learning.

Organisations which experience organisational change on a regular basis, just like this organisation, need to be aware that employees need to have assistance to deal with and adjust to these change (Eldor & Harpaz, 2016). Eldor and Harpaz discusses that managers should pay particular attention to the learning environment in which they work so that the employee in their team are more engaged with learning.

Similar research by Hughes (1999, 2002, 2004) discuss the idea of trust in the workplace and specifically, employees trusting their line managers. Hughes, Morgan and Allington (2002) believe it is often not possible in the workplace for the manager to assume the role of facilitator in the workplace because of a fundamental lack of trust between managers and employees. Managers in this organisation believe they are providing learning and building the trust and engagement with their employees. An example of this type of learning activity could be reflective learning on a past experience or engagement with others on a problem solving or decision making process (Eraut, 2000). This learning is created by the manager in a direct and intentional way and the examples given show managers believe they are achieving this outcome.

The analysis of the responses from management in this organisation, supports the idea that managers are effectively enacting their role as a facilitator of learning. However, this is still only from the perspective of the managers as they self-report on their actions. This theme combined the sub topics of culture and environment, and the major topics of attitude, environment and learning.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research this idea is one side of an argument as to whether managers are adequately enacting their role as facilitators of learning, or not. In the original framework there was no obvious mention of how employee engagement fit into the learning context. However, as engagement of employees, by managers, for the purpose of learning

developed as a key theme, it was clear there needed to be a clear focus of this concept on the conceptual framework. Therefore, under Employees; engagement was added as a key area for concentration by managers.

Summary

The four themes were: 1. Understanding learning in the workplace; 2. The extent of informal learning in the workplace; 3. Manager's intentions becoming actions; and 4. Employee engagement with learning opportunities. All four themes were derived through analysis of management interview responses and observations, and through a holistic view, which led this researcher believed the themes to be of a positive outcome for managers.

Major Themes – Employee perspective

Research has shown (Ellinger et al., 1999), (Ellinger & Bostrom, 2002), (Marsick & Watkins, 1999), (Amy, 2008), (Beattie, 2007) that learning in the workplace with managers acting as facilitators of learning can create a competitive advantage for an organisation. Eraut (2004), Alderton, Cole and Senker (2000) describe that learning is a manager's own personal knowledge (tacit knowledge) which contributes to the success of an organisation. In saying this, Ellinger and Bostrom (2002) detailed that managers' attitudes could be a great influencer on learning. Therefore, managers' attitude can be an enabler or a barrier to learning in this an organisation.

This research used a less practised research technique by conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which, in conjunction with manager interviews, also included employee interviews with their perceptions about learning in the workplace recorded. Research by Pham and Swierczek (2006), Colley (2012), and Hughes (1999) are examples of researchers which all interviewed employees only. In Hughes's (2004) research, he interviewed new public sector employees in new job positions regularly over time. Pham and Swierczek (2006) sent out questionnaires to professionals in a construction industry, and Colley (2002) interviewed mainly employees, but also had two senior managers and two local stakeholders. As Colley's research mainly focused on employees, it is included in this category.

In this section there will be an overview of the broad demographics of each of the employees interviewed. Following this, there will be discussion on how employees' responses impacted on the major themes and in relation to the research questions which they related to. There were 14 employees interviewed, with a range of demographics:

Table 13. Employee Demographics

Gender	Approximate Age Bracket	Working for LGA for how many years
Male	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	41-55	20+ years
Female	41-55	20+ years
Female	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Female	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	41-55	Between 11 and 15 years
Female	41-55	Between 5 and 10 years
Female	21-30	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Female	31-40	Between 2 and 5 years
Male	41-55	Between 11 and 15 years
Female	21-30	Between 5 and 10 years
Female	31-40	Between 5 and 10 years

Each of the employees interviewed, were part of one of the teams of those managers who were interviewed previously. The range of demographics of these employees; gives the research validity, as there is more corroboration of the information provided and conclusions drawn from this research.

There were three research questions to be investigated by this study:

1. **How do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning?**
2. **How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?**
3. **What are the enablers and barriers that managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?**

Discussion of major themes

1. *Managers and employees' understanding learning opportunities in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)*

The first two themes identified relate to the research question: "Are manager's facilitators of learning?". In reverse to the previous section, this time the question was asked in a different way to gather employee thoughts. This question was aimed at employees and asked whether they personally thought their manager was a facilitator of learning, to what degree they were acting in their roles as facilitators of learning, whether they believed this to be a worthwhile role for the manager, and, finally how they believed learning was being promoted and had any barriers to learning, that were removed by their manager.

The theme of managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace was developed through several of the questions which asked employees to recount examples of

learning opportunities in the workplace and to demonstrate times whereby they had been encouraged to work on new projects or offered developmental activities.

Many employees found this question to be hard to answer in any in-depth level because they simply could not think of many examples of learning besides the 'obvious' examples such as the ones in Table 14.

Table 14. Examples of key learning opportunities

Examples of key learning opportunities	
• Coaching	• Encourages and explain
• On-the-job learning	• Informal groups/mixed groups
• Gives access to information	• Understanding others perspectives
• Enhances skills and learning	• Learn from each other
• Secondments	• Brainstorming together – informal discussions
• Shares and provides knowledge and experience	• Reflection time

With regards to how managers provided learning for their employees, there were lots of examples of learning in the organisation. However, the interviews consisted of the researcher having to ask more probing questions of the employees, and often having to give examples or explain situations to them to obtain more detailed responses. This researcher also had to explain to employees what some types of learning were, through management theory, diagrams and text. There were also some employees who expressed a lack of learning opportunities, as outlines in Table 15.:

Table 15. Examples of lack of learning opportunities

Examples of lack of learning opportunities
• Manager does not take responsibility [for an employee's learning] – employee has to do it
• Management style does not work for everyone
• Does not benefit me that much
• Does not fit very well – [managers are] busy and so the top managers stop them
• Formal side does not give [them] the opportunity to make it happen
• I have a fear to question [aspects of my work]

These examples of not being able to see the learning opportunities in the workplace were few, but they further fuel the idea that perhaps some employees do not see what a manager is doing for them, or perhaps some managers are not doing what they intend to do for facilitation of learning.

The responses to these questions formed the topics, sub-topics and the theme of managers' and employees' understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace. Some of the sub-topics which were identified during the analysis process that related to this theme were communication, fear, empowerment, informal learning, opportunity, open workplace, environment, culture and attitude.

These smaller sub-topics came together to form the larger key topics of which emotion, learning and communication were paramount to view in conjunction with this theme.

Nearly all the employees were very complimentary of their managers and how they felt their managers being facilitators of learning fit with all their other responsibilities. There were some contrasting views to this idea, with an employee, George, saying that *"If you approach [the manager] they will help you, but not offer it [in the first instance]".* However, as alluded to previously this may be due to communication issues or learning styles not being in line with each other.

Employee examples of how they felt about their managers attempts to be facilitators of learning varied greatly. Employee Jack said *"[My managers] style compensates for any gaps [they may have]".* Jack believed that in his team it was *"hard to actually [produce learning opportunities] in a meaningful way… everything has been done before".* Jack stated that he was unclear how learning was actually being facilitated and said it was *"difficult to proactively revisit [goals and the management performance plan]".*

During the trial interviews for this research, it was discovered that employees, more so than managers, found it hard to describe their working environment and the learning it involved with one or two questions. Also, this researcher observed a certain degree of personal feelings coming through in employees' responses. This is the reason the questions that were asked of employees were similar, but were asked at different stages of the interviews. This researcher aimed to stay neutral and not to compliment management style, or to criticise it. However, it was interesting to see employees giving a wide range of response to the questions. In addition to employees being asked to think of responses, if a negative example was given, this was sometimes contradicted in a later question. For example, one employee offered a response that there was 'not a lot' of informal learning happening in their team, and formal learning was limited and mechanical. However, later in the interview this employee gave examples of structured review, emails, ad hoc training, secondments, higher duties, conferences and internal training courses. This is believed to be another example of employees not understanding that it is the manager facilitating this learning.

The responses led towards the idea that managers are enacting their role as a facilitator of learning. However, the idea that employees do not completely understand what managers are aiming to do or why they are acting in a certain way can be an inhibitor for learning. This is why the theme of managers' and employees' understanding of learning is present because it is not just one side which is not entirely sure of what is happening but both parties.

Yet, employees used a large amount of emotive language in their responses to interview questions and often were complimentary of their managers' attitudes. *"We don't know all the politics but we know that he is all over it"* employee Bill said of his manager. When issues arise many employees were able to see where the issues stemmed from, *"I understand why there is [lack of learning opportunities], although it has not been explained to me"* employee George.

However, the communication and understanding is not always present, and this researcher could see that an option for managers is that they could have a planning day or a strategic meeting to develop some processes for their organisation. Or if managers had a new team or employee, then they would avoid some of the issues faced in their teams.

LNT (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998) is the management theory which relates to this particular theme. As LNT relates to the organised system of work for the organisation, and how it relates to and interacts with the learning networks which currently exist, this theory explores the social norms which are present for the learning processes. Although managers may espouse particular values and encourage certain ways of learning (or not), the way the learning is actually done will often be determined by the way the employees respond to the learning. Although work demands and outputs may increase, this will put pressure on the managers to uphold the processes and structures which are put in place to support learning. Henceforth, if employees feel under pressure from workload and a manager is not able to support them by providing extra time, learning and development opportunities may cease and the actual learning structure will break down.

Research by Warhurst (2013b), on which this study is based, had expectations that during tough times and budgets cuts, managers would be motivated to further define their roles as champions of workplace learning. Managers interviewed by Warhurst showed strong developmental intentions about their role and this idea is also supported by this current research in the WA context in the previous section. With regard to employee learning, managers did show the developmental intentions but this was not communicated as well as it could have been, as was shown by the several employees who experienced negative learning experiences. In addition, nearly every employee had quotes and experiences of being supported by their manager. The observation was made, that managers did not appear to be driving the learning, but rather supporting what the employees were leaning towards in terms of learning both formal and informal.

This research further supports research on informal learning by Wofford (2013), Ellinger and Watkins (1999), which shows that trying to define informal learning in the workplace is a complex process because of the nature of the type of learning. Marsick (2003) studies agree with this notion and show that it is difficult to see actual learning or learning opportunities in action in the workplace because of

the difficulty in determining actually what is informal learning. Therefore, the data presented in this research, confirms this knowledge, and adds empirical data to the WA context.

The analysis of this theme against management responses confirms the research question number one that in this organisation, yes, in the opinion of the majority of employees', managers are facilitators of learning.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research, it is a factor of not only how a manager influences and affects an employee's learning, but also how those employees react and accept that learning. This research shows that there needs to be a focus given to how employees view and receive information within a situation of learning from their managers.

2. *The extent of informal learning in the workplace (Are managers' facilitators of learning?)*

The extent of informal learning opportunities in the workplace, was investigated by asking the 14 employees interviewed the same questions that were asked of managers, to see what examples of learning opportunities in the workplace were, and how they were demonstrated. Questions such as: "To what extent do you see your manager as a facilitator of learning?" and "How does this fit with your manager's other responsibility in the workplace?" were asked.

Managers were prompted to give instances of informal learning opportunities, as it was explained that this was a focus of this research. Examples in their interview responses are discussed in the finding chapter and some of which are demonstrated in Table 16:

Table 16. Examples of informal learning - positive

Examples of informal learning - positive	
• Mentor - sit down and teach me one on one	• Informal discussions
• Role replacement	• Informal debrief
• Succession planning	• Discussion rather than direction
• Learn by observation	• Informal chats
• Secondment	• Own ability to decide not forced upon them
• On-the-job training	• Assist with hands-on learning
• Brainstorming together	

In contrast, there were some negative comments associated with informal learning in the organisation, as shown in Table 17:

Table 17. Examples of informal learning - negative

Examples of informal learning - negative
• Employees need to seek it out themselves
• Need time to debrief which I don't have
• Not a lot of informal learning

Once more, a semi-structured in-depth interview technique was employed for this case study. This was highly appropriate because there was much discussion concerning exactly what was informal learning. Employees were able to explain many forms of learning and were pushed to think of other examples of learning and styles of management learning rather than basic measures such as the management for performance system in use in the organisation. This researcher had, in hard copy form a diagram from Kolb's Experiential Learning theory which was useful to explain different learning styles to employees and give them a basis to where they like to be when they learn.

A small number of employees mentioned the idea of mentoring and even fewer mentioned coaching specifically by the role of these managers in the workplace. However, many employees appeared to explain the basic idea of these roles. Employee Bec explained how here manager "showed and guided" her through her learning. Employee Sally Anne also talked about her experiential learning with her manager. *"Even if [something] is temporary, trial it and see how is goes".* This type of learning was accepted because of the trust that employees had in their managers *"I am happy for [my manager] to give me advice because I respect him"* said employee Davvers.

However, in a negative aspect of learning some employees could see that their manager would try to informally provide them with learning opportunities but could not achieve success in it. "Priority wise. Genuine intention and want to do it. [They are] busy – when [they] gets a chance [to it is] good. Time, workload expectation. Not enough attention [to make it a] regular process" explained one employee.

Poell's (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998) LNT once more was appropriate to apply to this theme. The learning processes which LNT boasts, may be used as a framework for organisations to model from especially when it comes to informal learning. Part of the make-up of the learning-work dimensions in LNT is the horizontal approach or the ad-hoc approach to learning. As previously mentioned this type of learning is diverse in its application therefore is able to fit with many options for many employees in a team. As informal learning is a big part of learning in the workplace, managers could use LNT and the horizontal learning network structure to adequately ensure there is direct and meaningful structures to create learning for those employees who need it in the organisation.

The ideas presented by this theme is that managers had clear intentions of providing informal learning for their employees. Also under this theme, the majority of employees could see that that was the aim of their managers. Previous research by Beattie (2007)2006, Amy (2008) and Warhurst (2013b) shows the same opinion and this research supports and extends the literature in this area. This informal learning methodology is also represented in the conceptual framework within the area of how management impacts on employee learning. The WA local government organisation was consistent with the idea that informal learning is important and was well justified to be in this framework.

The analysis of this theme against management responses and also employee responses confirms the research question that in this organisation, yes, in employees' opinions, managers are facilitators of learning through providing learning methods other than traditional formal learning avenues.

3. *Managers' intentions becoming actions (How managers operationalise their roles)*

The theme of the manager's intentions becoming actions in the workplace relates to the second research question which asks "How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?" The rationale behind this as a theme stemmed from the number of nodes identifies in the qualitative analysis which had employees (mainly) commenting on their managers' intent for learning in conjunction with how they were actually facilitating leaning in their teams.

This was investigated by asking employees to give examples of what learning opportunities their managers gave them in the workplace. Also employees were asked to provide examples of times whereby they were encouraged to try new projects or be given developmental activities. This theme is in contrast to asking managers the same questions about how they facilitate learning; instead there is a different perspective on the workplace learning situation.

This theme was also contributed to, by having managers and employees explain their barriers and enablers to learning in their organisation. This was relevant in this theme because often a barrier to learning would be the reason why a manager was not able to have their plan for learning come into effect, whether they knew this was happening or not. This theme is an important combination of key topics and ideas because it explored managers' ability to know whether they were fulfilling their role as the facilitator of learning in the employee's eyes.

Just as it was with the management responses, Poell's (2000) LNT is able to be applied to this theme. Employees experience negative impacts and barriers to learning with regards to their experiences of learning in the workplace. Employees will not have control of the structures that are in place to plan for and support learning therefore managers need to provide this for their employee, and explain why they are setting up this structure. Learning networks are just as important as work networks and give that advantage to teams and organisations. Therefore, the barriers experienced by employees such as, time for learning and priority for learning, need to be looked at with regards to a framework and an appropriate method.

Some examples of what employee's experienced that gave rise to this theme were: *"Priority wise [my manager has a] genuine intention and wants to do it [provide learning]".* However, employees often experienced that their managers were *"busy"*. One employee stated that *"[their manager] when [they]*

get a chance is good, [but] time [and] workload expectation gets in the way". Employees experienced that there is not enough attention to the 'regular process' needed for learning.

Employee Bigyin described his manager as being a facilitator of learning and believed this role to fit "high up on the agenda of important things [they have to do]". Employee Bill said "We get advice everyday – my learning style is to get stuck in]. Employee Davvers saw that managers and employees need to be flexible. Davver said his team were flexible and this "appeals to us… gets the best out of the [people in his team], We all want to work for [our manager because they encourage me and this gives me pride in my work]" Employee George thought that [my manager] is good at encouraging me and giving me opportunities.

However, there was a gap between positive affirmations for managers' intentions and their actual actions. Employees believed that managers want to make a difference and managers can become disillusioned if this is not able to happen. Employees who worked with several layers of management experienced that *"[the] coordinator is the link, they are stopping [employees] from learning"*. George explained that this was the nature of the industry for local government. There are not that many opportunities [for learning] and teams often work in a siloed approach. George explained that *"if all the team interacted together we would learn a lot more, but unfortunately [they] stick to what [they] know".*

Employees Bill, Kerry, Jo and Julie also experienced dissatisfaction in their managers being able to fulfil their role as a facilitator of learning. Bill detailed that his *"[manager] works late and can't help himself; he won't let us help him".* Bill felt that this was precluding the employee learning, as they could not help their manager more or *"step up"* to learn from their manager when they are busy. Kerry believed that in her team everyone had the idea that [employees] *"do what you need to do to get your work done, but not a huge priority for [my manager] to encourage learning".* Jo agreed with this idea as she saw her manager to be consumed by other responsibility. Jo explained her manager was a *"figurehead manager not really a manager so my learning was more a self-discovery".* Finally, Julie experienced that "*more training time, and time away from the office was needed*". These example showed that these are specific behaviours of a manager and things that could be improved to develop a better working relationship with manager and employee.

Gibb (2003) discussed the impact of the increasing role of managers in an employee's development and how this has reduced the availability of time that a manager has to plan and organise employee development. This research appeared to confirm Gibb's research as many of the barriers to learning were time related. Compared to research by Warhurst (2013b) where managers did not talk about their intentions specifically this study build on Warhurst's research. In the 2013 (R. Warhurst) study

there was a single question and this left a large amount of room for manager to report on what they felt was important. This research asked managers and employees to detail their manager's intentions to gain a more accurate picture of management intentions, and subsequent actions.

To support this idea research by Keeble-Ramsay (2014) and Conway and Monks (2009) noted that there has been an absence of employees' attitudes in research (as opposed to management attitudes). This research supports Keeble Ramsay (2014) who identified that "it is difficult to ascertain whether the management approaches perceived by employees reflect the realities, or intentions, of the management team". This case study supported this idea that more research is needed, as employee perceptions of management intentions needs to be further investigated.

The analysis of this theme against employee responses promotes the idea that as well-intentioned as managers can be in the workplace there is much room for improvement. Having methods for giving and receiving feedback may give managers data on how to progress any issue their team may experience.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research this theme considers the idea of perception and reality for both managers and employees. Looking at how employees view their managers enacting their role as facilitators of learning, and, this theme adds to the volume of barriers both perceived and real, that employee will experience when learning in their workplace. The complexity of managers' intentions coupled with the employee's views of their actual actions makes it imperative that there are clear intentions and understanding between managers and all subordinates.

4. *Employee engagement with learning opportunities (How managers operationalise their roles)*

The theme of employee engagement in the workplace was realised through responses to the interview questions by managers and employees, specifically the questions which asked employees about their perceptions on how important it was for managers to be facilitators of learning and what they believed to be enablers and barriers to learning in their areas of work.

Examples of their responses, as discussed in the finding chapter and some of which are demonstrated in Table 18.

Table 18. Examples of employee engagement

Examples of employee positive engagement	Examples of employee negative engagement
• [Employees are] Typically happy • Shows an interest in what you have learned • Forward emails of things that might be of interest to me • I have the same interests and we are a similar age • Identify things that could interest me	• Not interested in change. Been there for longer. • Shame they are not interested • Interested in different things

Yet again, this theme is an important combination of key topics and ideas because it explored the manager's ability to know whether they are adequately engaging employees in the learning process.

Some examples of what employees demonstrated to be their engagement with learning in the workplace, were as a result of their manager's encouragement: *"I was encouraged to develop process and procedure and supported by leadership"* Employee Bec. Employee John said *"[My manager] was trying to find different ways to work and improve safety, this shows that [the manager] is interested in what [their] staff are doing and is proactive about making things better".* These types of activities are aimed at improving the individual as well as the group or team. However, Sally Anne gave an example whereby she observed that her manager was interested in employees' personal development: *"[They] point us in the direction of a course, doesn't tell - but encourages us".* This shows that managers have a degree of care for how the employee feels and that it is not simply about making the organisation better but the employees too.

Although there were examples from employees of positive engagement, there were also example of employees' negative feelings towards development in the workplace. Employee Teresa gave an example where the structure in her team is set in an individual type of environment. Teresa explained *"I find my job interesting, [and] the isolation doesn't worry me… but I know it worries some others".* Although Teresa could realise the effect on other staff members she explained that she felt it was not her place to give feedback to her manager.

This is an example of where structure can be very important to an organisation for learning purposes. The working and learning networks cross over and in the previous case there was a direct interference with the individual working environment and the need for team learning and collegiate learning. Poell's and Ven Der Krogt's (2000; 1998) LNT could be applied to this organisation as this theme shows that as LNT embraces the interrelated and diverse nature of workplace based learning. A local government organisation in WA has such a diverse nature and therefore can take example from where LNT has been successful. The learning processes which are made up of the social norms and customs in the organisation, need to be investigated, and time and resources put into processes in this area.

Responses in this study have revealed that learning in this organisation is being created by the manager in an intentional way for the benefit of the employees. Hughes (2002) and Morgan and Allington (2002) have discussed the inability for employees to learn from managers because of a lack of trust in their relationship. However, it appears that this research disagrees with these findings and shows instead that employees in this organisation trust their managers and the majority feel encouraged and empowered by them to learn. This research also confirms and adds to research by Schumann and Beausaert (2016) who stated *"Employees who were motivated and committed to their, learning and development were very likely to further engage in informal learning"*.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research, this theme added a whole new concept to the model. The level to which employees feel connected and engaged with their manager, team and organisation added greatly to their desire to learn and their actual learning in their workplace. Once more, the idea of whether the engagement by employees is subject to personal perceptions of the environment around them is also a factor.

Summary

The three key research questions were compared to the responses which employees gave during their interviews. When analysing the responses, and observations by the researcher conducting the interviews, there were four key themes which were realised and subsequently discussed. These were: 1. Managers' and employees' understanding of learning in the workplace; 2. The extent of informal learning in the workplace; 3. Manager's intentions becoming actions; and 4. Employee engagement in the workplace.

It seemed from the discussion and analysis that employees were satisfied with their managers acting as a facilitator of learning. However, like most learning organisations there is much room for improvement. Employees appear to be engaged, trusting and respectful of their managers, and even when giving criticism, they were objective and rational about the situations. This appeared to show a genuine and meaningful relationship between manager and employee.

Comparison of management and employee perspectives

The significant point of difference for this research is the fact that management and employee interviews will be compared for a better understanding of learning in this organisation. Previous research involving interviews with both managers and employees were Amy (2008), which is also based on Marsick and Watkins (1999), Armson and Whiteley (2010), and Beattie (2007). All these studies involved managers and employees.

These studies were all different, therefore this research adds to the knowledge base in this area of management and facilitation of learning. Armson and Whiteley's research assessed four private sector organisations, and while Beattie (2007) was research in two organisations in the voluntary sector. Both organisations used grounded theory, and both were different and therefore not comparable to the WA local government sector. However, there were elements of a case study with semi structured interviews asking about perceptions of learning that were relevant. Amy (2008) interviewed *Fortune 500* companies and used Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954). This was not the same style of interviewing and information gathering that this research employed to obtain data, but still worth comparing.

As previously mentioned, research into facilitation of learning in the literature showed that few studies focus specifically on the comparison of both management and employee perspectives of a manager's role as a facilitator of learning (Amy, 2008; Armson & Whiteley, 2010) (Beattie, 2007).

In this section there will be an overview of each theme and the comparative responses from both managers and employees from the local government organisation.

Discussion of major themes

1. *Managers and employees understanding of learning opportunities in the workplace (Are managers facilitators of learning?)*

This theme relates to the research question: *"Are manager's facilitators of learning?"* The question about whether managers were facilitators of learning and how this was demonstrated was asked of he managers, and then of their employees. Asking the managers' subordinates the same question enabled the first two research questions to be answered. How do managers think they are acting, compared to how do they operationalise their role, or in another way, how do employees perceive them to enact their role as learning facilitators?

The theme of managers' and employees' understanding what learning opportunities are and how managers can provide them in the workplace was a very complex idea. Some of the responses both parties gave are shown in comparison in Appendix 9.11.

There were several examples where managers and employees had similar responses for what they thought was learning in the workplace. For example, both parties mentioned external training, on-the-job learning opportunities and learning from others in the workplace. In contrast to these similarities, there was also a distinct difference in the responses. Managers gave many more examples of formal learning opportunities such as conferences, seminars, courses and trainee programs.

Conversely, employees showed that the learning which they saw their managers to be displaying included exchanges of knowledge, encouragement and explanation and brainstorming ideas.

This theme highlights the difference between what managers and employees appear to show as their perceptions, or even preferences, when it comes to learning in the workplace. While managers may be focused on higher-level and structured learning activities, employees appear to value more informal discussions and reflection time.

Manager Chris explained learning opportunities as follows: *"[there are] no constraints on learning and development, [learning options are] subject to finance and even then sometimes we still do it anyway. [Learning] gets the priority it needs"*. Similarly, Manager Jane said *"[it is a] managers' role to make sure learning happens".* Jane believed her style to be very hands on. Jane aimed for *"on-the-job type learning, not in your face, [I] take a step back and look at the big picture, [because it] depends on the person"*. These managers supported both formal and non-formal types of learning and were aware that learning depended on the individuals learning needs.

Manager Macca also embodied the theme of managers' understanding of learning opportunities as he aimed to have a clear understanding of the happenings in his team by conducting 360-degree feedback at all levels. Macca explained *"I give advice, protection and support [for employees' learning]"*. Macca liked critical analysis and to get his employees learning he tried to have learning options by getting employees very involved. Macca believed: *"[employees need to] explain to me why… Why are they compelled to work that way? [Employees need to] convince me as the manager why"*. All the examples shown above explained that managers each had their own management style which aimed to provide learning for employees in their own way.

Employee opinions from Bec and Bigyin, showed that employees did understand the learning opportunities that their managers intentionally provided for them. Bec *said "[my manager] is open to providing any training and development when needed"*. In addition, Bigyin said *"[employees] need to put [training] in the performance development plan and convince the manager. No budget if it is not in the development plan".* These types of response showed that some employees were proactive in putting learning in their development plans and that they were confident in their managers being able to support them with learning options when they needed it.

However, when comparing the management examples with employee responses, it was clear that employees and managers were not always of the same way of thinking. Employee Jo said *"[in my workplace] there is significant on-the-job training, [it is a] sink or swim [environment], [the priority for learning] is low down, [my manager has] lots of other higher priorities"*. Jo experienced on the job

learning as a negative experience and not as a beneficiary to learning. Jo felt her manager needed to be *"assertive, proactively give suggestions for learning and provide avenues for conversation and facilitation, rather than decisions being made on the fly"*. Management response showed that managers believe that on the job learning was helpful and that learning by experience was a positive factor, however, not all employees felt the same.

Managers also responded that their door was always open and they had good communication. Some employees experienced this, but some did not. Employee Tommy said *"[my manager] says things but does not act on them"*. However, employee Davvers said: *"[My manager] supports [the team]"*. However, this was not without some reservation as Davvers questions how he should approach the manager and how often. Davvers felt his manager was happy to give advice and he was happy to receive it, but, would his manager only offer his opinion if he is included in an email? Davvers believed it was "less so these days" to be receiving advice. For Davvers as an employee, he believes his manager is competent so he is "happy for [my manager] to give guidance, I respect him and he is a good operator. These types of responses show that it is not just the formal side of learning that can be provided, but also that employees can see the informal options for managers to provide knowledge and learning for employees.

These examples show us that managers and employees both understand that there is learning in many different forms, which managers are able to provide for employees, and employees are able to request of managers. This comparison also presents the idea, that there needs to be a clarification between managers and employees on what the structure for learning is and who is to initiate and control it. The examples which show that managers are confident in their style of facilitation are in direct contrast to where employees felt as though their manager was not performing at the desired level. The majority of responses lead towards the idea that managers are enacting their role as a facilitator of learning, but in their own specific styles, which can always be improved upon.

With regards to the specific management learning style being used by managers, the style should fit with the overall approach to learning in the workplace. Working within the idea of LNT (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998) this theory states that the workplace will have its own exact learning processes at an organisational level, team level and individual level. The learning networks which exist in this workplace are controlled by management but Poell and Van der Krogt suggests that most organisations develop unique learning work patterns that change over time. As managers and employees change, grow and develop, so too will learning processes. Management needs to be able to communicate appropriately with their employees and get the correct feedback to ensure that everyone is understanding opportunities for learning and to reduce any barriers which may occur.

Similar research by Warhurst (2013b) investigated managers as facilitators of learning by asking one research question and having managers respond to it. Warhurst found that perhaps having this one question rather than many, *"led managers to give an espoused theory of their management style, in contrast to their current theory in use management style".* This research builds on Warhurst's study by asking managers an expanded range of questions, and having the employees concurrently interviewed with managers. This methodology change, allowed for the real theory of the management style to be realised, as opposed to that espoused theory which may have previously been shown.

With regards to the conceptual framework developed for this research, there are small changes which show the emphasis of mutual understanding and communication between managers and employees. The analysis of this theme against management and employee responses confirms the research question one that in this organisation, yes, in the majority of management and employee opinions, managers do understand learning opportunities that are available in the workplace, and therefore managers are facilitators of learning.

2. *The extent of informal learning in the workplace (Are managers facilitators of learning?)*

The extent of informal learning opportunities in the workplace was investigated through the questions, asking managers and employees to give examples of learning opportunities in the workplace. Managers and employees were prompted to give instances of informal learning opportunities, as it was explained that this was a focus of this research. These are shown in Table 19.

Table 19. Examples of informal learning

Examples of informal learning by managers - Positive	Examples of informal learning by employees - Positive
• Informal buddy system • Influencing actions • Informal feedback processes – e.g. walk up and chat to someone – say well done • Explanation of the culture • One on one • Meet regularly • Provide advice • Provide follow up	• Mentor sit down and teach me one on one • Role replacement/secondment • Learn by observation • On-the-job training • Brainstorming together • Informal discussions • Informal debrief • Discussion rather than direction • Informal chats

Managers and employees had many similar responses for examples of positive displays of informal learning including; feedback, one on one meetings, informal advice and debriefs. In contrast there were some negative comments associated with informal learning in the organisation, mainly by employees, as shown in Table 20.

Table 20. Examples of informal learning

Examples of informal learning by managers - Negative	Examples of informal learning by employees - Negative
• Feedback is an issue.	• Employees need to seek it out themselves • Need time to debrief which I don't have • Not a lot of informal learning

It was identified in the previous sections that managers and employees had much discussion with this researcher over the concept of informal learning. For example, things like coaching, mentoring and role replacements can all be formal and informal. The majority of managers did not see any negative aspects linking to their provision of informal learning, but employees did have some thoughts on management actions to enhance informal opportunities.

Manager Peter stated that the majority of the training in his team was informal, as he believed this was more effective than other learning methods. Furthermore, manager Chris described the [Performance Management System] as the most formal tool in his area. Chris explained *"other forms of learning such as, Job secondment, job rotation, informal processes, projects – project teams, influencing actions and informal feedback"* were the main learning and development methods he used. Chris explained the benefits he saw to *"walking up and chat to someone, say well done"*. Chris believed this feedback method could be improved by creating a system or process around feedback.

The extent of informal learning in every team was different and managers understood different people needed different approaches. Manager Peter explained that he had to *"learn as he went along and this was acceptable for him so he believed his employees could do the same, but also could appreciate not all employees were like him".* He understood that some employees needed far more guidance and help, however, Peter saw this as a huge limitation in his management style. Peter believed that he had made many mistakes in the process of encouraging or preventing experiential learning in his workplace. Sometimes, if employees had *"no experience to learn for themselves, they had no challenges, no questions and no learning"*. Peter believed it was a matter of getting the balance right.

Manager Macca explained that in his opinion *"team is paramount, informal learning is important, and [he aims to] meet regularly [with employees] whilst having an open-door policy".* Macca believes that clarification between manager and employee is important [so] everyone can "*know what is expected of you, what is the priority, and know any changes how the work is in the future".* This researcher saw that once managers were asked the question about informal learning and were able to understand its purpose in the workplace, they had many examples of how they were as facilitators of informal learning in their individual workplaces.

Employees such as Julie and Davvers saw many examples of this learning in their workplaces. Julie said *"her manager encourages informal learning"*. Julie said *"they have [opportunities for] secondments, emails for conferences and that her manager volunteers her for internal courses"*. Julie did admit that her manager "*does not really push it [the learning] but this is a good and bad thing*". Davvers described his leaning opportunities as *"having secondments and opportunities through abstract conceptualisation"*. Davvers said he learned by watching others, then goes away and does it [himself]. *"If I trust that person that they are doing the job right, [I can] learn by observation"*. Davvers learnt by *"watching his managers and emulating [the managers] actions"*.

Bigyin, Betsy, Bec and Julie were very complimentary of their managers. Bigyin said his managers often suggested learning opportunities: *"You might enjoy it, have a go at formal training, or informal learning or role replacement [opportunities]"*. Betsy explained; *"I constantly get ongoing feedback-excellent system in our area"*. Bec also was happy with her manager, describing how she was approached with her learning, "*What else would you consider*?" Bec's manager would show and guide learning processes so that she would know for next time. Bec said she appreciated that her manager would *"stay quiet until [employees in the team] have finished talking. Let us have our turn to talk"*. Bec felt her manager was *"open to providing any training and development when needed"* and felt supported by this.

However, there was a small number of employees who experienced negative instances of where informal learning was not in practice. In particular, Tommy described how *"there was a lot of not learning in my workplace"*. I am very experienced [therefore there is] not enough for me to learn"*. In addition to this idea, Bill explained how in his workplace *"after any work events, positive or negative there was no debrief"*. He said there was no feedback and that if [an employee] does not hear anything, this means it is *"good [work]"*.

Managers are facilitators of learning through providing learning methods other than traditional formal learning avenues. Often however, it would seem that managers may not be consciously providing the informal learning and this is shown by the employees describing many different learning options that they believed their managers to be demonstrating. By applying LNT (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998) to an organisation's working situation, a framework to model against can be utilised. The combination of management and employees' responses leads to the idea that there is no structure or intentional framework at the organisational level or the team level. Informal learning should be an intentional action, planned by managers to occur. When this is not managed appropriately negative situations may occur such as the example where employees received no feedback and had no desire to learn.

From employee responses, it can be seen that employees understand what their manager is trying to do with facilitating learning. Employees also see the informality of the learning opportunities and the benefits this brings. However, with regard to the conceptual framework developed for this research, it is shown that informal learning plays a much larger role in workplace learning and development for this organisation. This reliance on informal learning may also be significant, because of the nature of the local government industry and the restricted budget this brings. Informal leaning is therefore pertinent to guide and develop employees for the success of an organisation.

3. *Managers' intentions becoming actions (How managers operationalise their roles)*

The theme of the manager's intentions becoming actions in the workplace, follows on from the idea that was highlighted by employees in the previous theme. Employees provided responses which touched upon the idea that managers had intentions to provide learning opportunities and a learning environment for their employees but for whatever reason they were not able to fulfil this intention. Both managers and employees were asked to explain what they believed to be their perceptions of barriers and enablers to learning in their organisation and this contributed to this theme significantly. Examples of this are discussed in the finding chapter, some key findings of which are shown in Appendix 7.10.

This theme of managers' intentions becoming actions came from these responses from both groups and the idea that employees had plans to implement learning, and employees were able to see from their perspective whether they were working. Managers believed they provided tools for learning, support and opportunities for employees, with barriers to learning removed where possible. There were many examples from employees showing that they agreed with managers that they were able to enact their role as facilitators of learning. However, there was a small number of comments which stated that there was *"not enough time for managers to be facilitators of learning"* and that "*[the managers] thinks [they] have an open door policy, but they do not [I] wait a few hours before I go in [to the office]." (Employee George)*

Interestingly, employees who gave the feedback noted that *"[managers] do try to make time and that they see the managers' are just "stressed"*. This presented a positive feeling in employees even though it was a non-favourable comments, and suggests to this researcher that the employees were understanding and still happy with their learning. It should be noted that these were comments where employees were noting the intentions of the managers to attempt learning. Some employees described situations where not learning was provided at all, rather than employees seeing the manager trying to make an effort and not achieving the goal.

To help form this view, managers and employees were asked to comment on what they saw to be any barriers to learning and what they believed to help the learning in the workplace. These responses are recorded in Appendix 9.12.

This theme is an important combination of key topics and ideas because of the comments by employees on whether managers were enacting their role as facilitators of learning. The comparison of the barriers and enablers that managers and employees described was also a key factor as to what supported the learning or lack of learning in teams. Planning, timing and attitudes/beliefs of employees were identified as key barriers to learning by both parties. Enablers were seen to be 'open' learning practices, culture and structure as the key idea perceived by both parties. With regards to management's views on enablers, managers saw formal learning processes to be pertinent to enabling learning.

An example of the management approach to ensuring that intentions become actions in the workplace was Manager Chris. Chris responded to interview questions with the idea that *"[Managers should provide] appropriate support mechanisms, [Managers should] chat to people, managers do not [have to] resolve of all problems but think about solutions"*. Employees Bec and Betsy supported Chris' approach. Betsy said *"I love to get on the internet and google things - I google everything [and my] workplace provides access – [which is] critical to me"*. Bec also felt supported, as her managers were not always available to help her because they were busy and out of the office. However, Bec explained *"[her manager] taught me how to fix the situation for next time".* This was clarification that Chris was achieving his facilitation of learning goal in his team.

Teresa, George and Tommy had some barriers to learning which they felt restricted their success in the workplace. Teresa reported that there was no time, *"learning looks good, but is put to the side".* George also thought that "*formal learning options [in the form of] 'day courses' don't really do that that much… less of an emphasis to focus on the training now"*. George felt that the manager *"tried but forgets [to facilitate learning]".* Tommy agreed with this concept and explained that *"[the manager] would more correct the work rather that teach about why it was wrong".*

LNT (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998) explored this idea of managers' intention to combine the resources in the workplace which are needed to support both the learning processes and the working processes in any organisation. Employee Tommy was experiencing the fallout from when the learning networks in an organisation are not effectively implemented into everyday work. Instead of managers being able to develop employees, time is spent correcting errors rather than correcting the root cause of the problem. LNT could be used for the managers' team to adequately define a framework for learning to ensure there is an appropriate time to give feedback and review work practices.

Warhurst's (2013b) research identified that a limitation of his study was that it was only able to identify the managers' intentions and not the actions which were eventually performed in the organisation. This was because it was only managers reporting on their intentions and Warhurst had no way of determining the level to which managers were enacting their roles. This is why this research builds on Warhurst's work as well as add to the empirical data for management intentions and actions in a WA local government context.

The analysis of management and employee responses against this theme of managers and whether their intentions are translated into actions, appears to indicate that for the majority of managers, when they applied themselves to be facilitators of learning, it was well received and the actions followed through. With regards to the conceptual framework, this theme worked into the idea of perception and reality for both managers and employees. This theme lends itself to the detail of barriers and enablers to learning in the workplace as well as understanding perception of managers and employees and how they differ. This was identified in the original framework and was confirmed as a key section of the framework.

4. *Employee engagement with learning opportunities (How managers operationalise their roles)*

The theme of employee engagement with learning in the workplace, came from the analysis of data from the interviews which identified a stream of responses using emotional wording and describing feelings about the desire to participate, or not in learning activities. Employee engagement in the workplace is currently a topical subject matter in management and organisational behaviour (Eldor, 2016). Employee engagement in the workplace looks into the concept of the relationship that employees and managers have with each other and their organisations (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011) (Vigoda-Gadot, Eldor, & Schohat, 2013). This research categorises engagement as having high levels of energy, motivation and increased dedication (Shirom, 2011).

Examples in managers' interview responses regarding engagement are discussed in the findings chapter, and some of these are demonstrated in Table 21.

Table 21. Examples of manager and employee engagement

Examples of manager positive engagement	Examples of employee positive engagement
• Widen employee skill set • Managers to guide personal development • Don't want to be the manager where people say if they come out of their office something must be wrong • Happy with HR Development [opportunities] • Actively encourages to make yourself distinguishable from others • [Organisation] encourages learning • Should be part of your role • Employee opinion survey • Challenges employees to make their opportunities	• [Employees are] Typically happy • [Manager] shows an interest in what you have learned • Forward emails of things that might be of interest to me • I have the same interests and we are similar age • Identifies things that could interest me • Takes time to build trust and have a shared vision. • Trusts their employees • This organisation is committed to learning. I would applaud this • Likes and respect each other • The team likes each other. Friends in a collegial way • Manager – their team mate

Managers and employees had many examples of positive engagement at an organisational level, team level and individual level. Along with the verbal examples that were given in the interview responses this researcher also noted the conversation style and used observation techniques to record the attitude and commitment which was evident in a large number of employees. The dedication that managers and employees felt to the organisation and the teams was admirable, as well as the employees often protecting and promoting their manager when they had a chance.

In contrast there were examples of negative association with colleagues, teams, managers and the organisation:

Table 22. Examples of manager and employee engagement

Examples of manager negative engagement	Examples of employee negative engagement
• Don't want the management plan – if [we] want something we ask for it. • formal training... feedback sheets indicated that people did not want to be there • Managers and employee not really a buddy • employees can[should] come in with solutions • Employees: Don't like training • Don't like losing their role • Need to have leaders on the same page as employees	• Not interested in change. Been there for longer. • Shame they are not interested • Interested in different things • totally cut off and feels like I'm working for no one • Not motivated because of the workload

These examples given by managers and employees show a lack of energy and excitement, given the *"lack of interest"* and the *"don't want"* or *"don't like"* type of comments. This theme is an important one because engagement with learning by employees is vital when creating that culture for learning. Managers identified that employees did not want to learn for a variety for reasons and employees

were astute enough to realise that they also did not want to learn for other reasons. However, as learning has shown to provide a competitive advantage for organisations and to drive organisational success, it is incumbent on managers to enact their roles as facilitators of learning and motivate employees to participate willingly in learning activities.

An example of engagement from a management perspective, was identified in Manager Hugh. He was energetic and proactive and this was noticeable both physically and in his responses during the interview. Hugh believed that *"learning was not down to the manager, but down to the employee"*. Therefore, Hugh realised that *"people need to be supported and to feel comfortable [in their workplace]"*. Hugh felt he was very lucky to work in this organisation and was dedicated to [making it succeed]. He did not want to be the manager who people never saw him. Where, if he was out of his office that employees would think something was wrong. Hugh aimed to *"teach from the inside rather than teach from the outside"*. This spirited display of commitment to learning was received well from all of his subordinates. Employee Sally Anne said Hugh *"[as a manager] pushes [staff to learn and grow] and that [his] staff don't take sick days [everyone] picks up on that"*.

Employees Bill and George had some positive points to make about how their managers provided learning and encouraged engagement with learning in their teams. Bill said his manager had an "*open door policy and he never saw him with his office door closed*". George described how [the manager] put the effort in. *"Not everyone gets this opportunity, it is about the ability [they know employees have], [employees] get bigger projects the longer that we are in the team [as a reward for effort and service]"*.

Admittedly, the level of employee engagement was not the same across all employees. Employee Julie said *"yes, her manager encourages informal learning, but not always in everyday work"*. The levels of engagement were not ideal, as a lot of Julie's work had to be done on her own. The structure impeded her engagement with learning. Employee Tommy confirmed this situation saying *"realities of the job [prevent employee engagement with learning] – [I] would love to see it happen, [I] collect information but have no response [form my manager]"*. Finally, Employee George felt *"If you approach [managers] they will help you, but will not offer it."* This led to confusion in the team and a lack of engagement with the manager, teams and learning process. Employees did not know how much to request in terms of follow up, questioning and appeals for help. George said *"I don't know how much is too much? Am I just being annoying [to the manager]?"*

In an organisation, engagement should promote skill development, learning and commitment (Shirom, 2011). As one of the four theoretical categories of the learning network within LNT (Poell et al., 2000) the liberal network of learning can be applied. This network of learning is unstructured and

individually driven towards personal needs and goals of employees (Poell et al., 2000). Similarly, in another of the learning networks, the horizontal network, this is an organic process of learning which tracks the larger group needs in a more equal learning environment. Both these networks within LNT can provide a framework for managements to support and promote employee engagement in the workplace. Subsequently, this will drive success through the competitive advantage of high-performing teams.

The analysis of the responses from management in this organisation, supports the idea that managers are effectively enacting their role as facilitators of learning. Correspondingly, responses by employees support the idea that there is engagement within most teams in this organisation; however opportunities to provide feedback could enhance management structures and actions within individual teams. This theme combined the sub-topics of culture and environment, as well as every one of the major topics of environment, learning, attitude, emotion and communication.

Research by Keeble-Ramsay et al (2014) provided evidence on the positive value of engagement in the workplace. This research confirms this idea, as teams which appear to have higher levels of engagement and satisfaction have increased positive responses and examples of engagement and learning attitude. This can be translated into the example whereby human resources factors such as reduced turnover and reduced sick days were noticed.

The importance of engagement with learning in the workplace, was not previously realised with regards to this research and therefore was not originally included as an effect on management and employees within the conceptual framework developed for this research. Therefore, this theme had added more insight for managers to effectively enact their role as a facilitator of learning in their organisations. Once more, as the level to which employees and managers engage with each other and with learning is subjective, this theme affects the perception of reality for both managers and employees under this framework.

Summary

This research provideds a point of difference for managers in WA in the local government industry, as it allows those managers to review the main ideas which are espoused by managers in this study for how they facilitate learning in the workplace. In conjunction with managers' ideas are those of their employees' and to what extent they believe their managers to facilitate learning in the workplace. Management and employee interviews were coded in NVivo, the qualitative analysis tool. The main ideas espoused by both parties as a result of this analysis are represented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Main Ideas Espoused by Managers and Employees
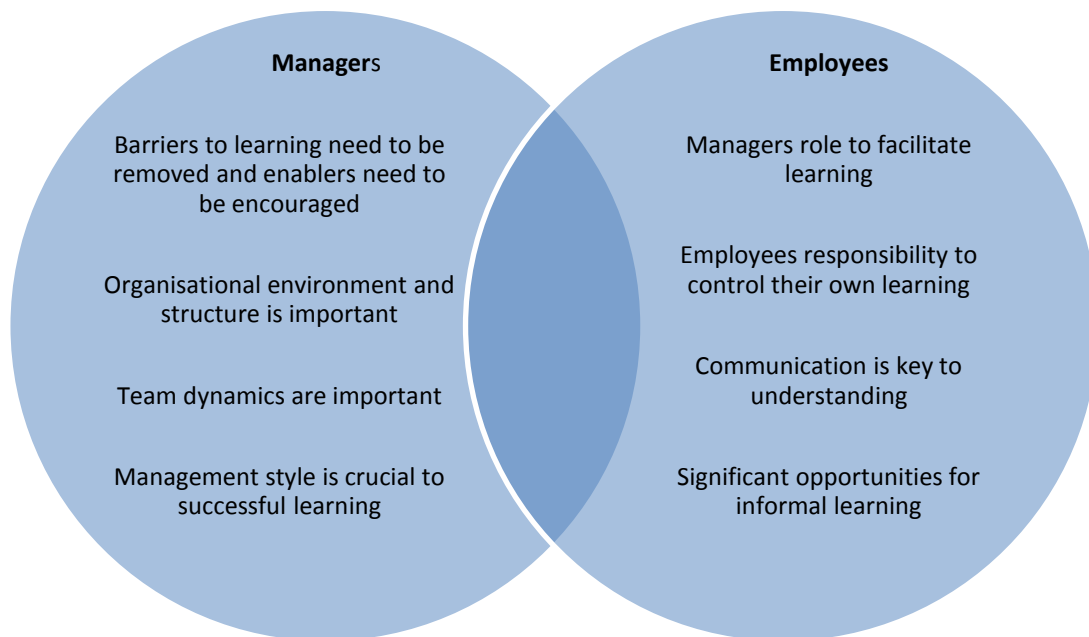
The ideas above are the combination of many different lines of thought, from many different sources. Through analysis of the data, it is believed that all four themes can be connected to the first two research questions: *"Are managers facilitators of learning?";* and *"To what extent do they enact their role in the workplace?"*. This research presents a positive outcome for managers, in the sense that they are facilitators of learning in their own view and in that of the employees they manage.

Barriers and enablers to learning

The third research question in this study, was to investigate what managers and employees perceived to be the key enablers and barriers to learning in their workplace. This question was asked to give managers in the WA local government sector, a point of reference to be able to review current structures, working processes, procedures and programs in their individual teams.

In the tables to follow show what the managers and employees believed to be the key enablers and barriers to learning:

Table 23. Manager and employee enablers to learning

Managers' enablers	Employees' enablers	Combined

• Organisational culture
   ○ open to further learning
   ○ learning driven by the CEO
• Management style
   ○ encourage learning
   ○ remove stoppages
• Learning and development evolving to a new level
	• Organisational culture
	• Management attitude
	   ○ open
	• Management actions
	• Collegial learning
		• Openness of organisation and management
		• Organisational and team culture
		• Management style
		   ○ attitude
		   ○ actions
		   ○ behaviours

As can be seen from the table above, the key enablers to learning from a management perspective were analysed, and were presented as being: organisational culture, management style and learning and development options. Similarly, employees reported that organisational culture was a key enabler to learning, along with the attitude and actions of their manager, and having people around to learn from.

When these two groups are combined, it is interesting to note that managers looked at overall styles of management that they needed to perform, while the employee reported specific actions as a result of the style. Also, managers aptly described learning and development opportunities as an enabler, which reflects the commitment of the management group to provide new and innovative options for learning. The combined information gives managers a clear look at what both parties believe to be the key enablers to learning. Therefore resources can be directed and prioritised to improving key areas to support learning.

In contrast to the enablers to learning, there were also barriers to learning which both managers and employees experienced. Although there were many responses from employees which stated that there were *"not too many"* barriers to learning, there was still for improvements which were summarised by this research. Table 24 lists the barriers experienced by managers and employees.

Table 24. Managers and employees barriers to learning

Managers' barriers	Employees' barriers	Combined
• Time • Workload pressure • Flexibility and balance • Employees ○ Attitudes towards learning • Communication	• Time • Workload pressure • Budget • Belief • Siloed approach	• Time • Workload pressure • Environment and Structure - Organisational/Team approach to work and learning processes

The key barriers described by managers were the ability to adequately facilitate learning in a changing environment, where there is little budget, little time and resistance to participate in learning from some employees. Managers believed that the key barriers to learning were about finding that balance

between time for work and time for learning. Managers felt the pressure in being a facilitator of learning, when they were suggesting opportunities for employees and trying to gain engagement for learning activities, that would fit within the team environment. Interestingly, managers did not feel budget was an issue for learning in their workplace.

Employees within this organisation reported similar barriers to learning as the managers. Employees described their barriers to learning as workload pressures and trying to create enough time to be able to get work completed and find the time to learn in the workplace. Employees also looked at the time given to them by their managers for informal learning activities and how there was not enough given managers' other responsibilities. Some employees described an organisation where they felt they were working in a siloed approach, where they were working on specific tasks which no one else would know how to complete and there was no job crossover or integration. Finally, the budget given to learning activities and the belief by employees that they would be able to peruse further learning, played a part in blocking the learning process.

The combination of the two groups of interviewees, demonstrated that the key barriers to learning for this organisation were; time, the working environment, structure of the organisation and individual teams and perceived workload pressures on managers and employees. This summation allows managers to focus on these key barriers and put in place mediation strategies to reduce their effects and promote learning in the workplace.

Influences of gender in the workplace

This research decided to look at many possible reasons why learning could be affected in the workplace. Therefore, a question was written into the semi-structured interviews which asked employees and managers about how they perceived the impact of gender to play a part on team dynamics in the workplace. There were six responses from employees and managers combined, who believed to some degree that the gender of a manager and/or employee had an impact on the way managers enacted their roles as facilitator of learning within the workplace.

It can be seen from the responses in Appendix 9.14, Table 24, that in this organisation there are many opinions which view the male and female roles as having an impact on the learning environment in this organisation. Some opinions were a broad generalisation on the role of a male or female manager, while others highlighted the perceptions they felt others around them experienced. In contrast to this opinion, there were 13 responses from employees and managers combined, who believed that the gender of a manager and/or employee had no impact on working relations within the workplace.

It can be seen from the responses that many more managers and employees did not register that gender had any effect on the management of employees and their learning in the workplace. This researcher observed that the question was received with no increased levels of concern, and often the question was quickly dismissed as having no impact on the individual or their team.

Have perceptions of the role of a manager changed over the past 10 years?

The Karpin Report (Karpin, 1995) explained that the role of a manager was changing. Both managers and employees were introduced to the Karpin Report, and asked whether over the past decade they could see a change in the management role, and subsequent behaviours. There was a widely held view from most interviewees to the affirmative point of view that, yes, over the past decade there had been a change in the role and style of managers.

Changing management roles

There were four responses from management who believed, the role of a manager has change over the past 10 years, and 11 responses from employees who also believed this to be true.

It can be seen from the key responses given in Appendix 9.13, that the overwhelming majority of managers and employees believed there had been a significant change over the past 10 years in management style and in the approach that managers take with regards to learning in the workplace. In short, Manager Jane believed that this idea is now being challenged through opportunities such as formal training for managers, which can lead them to *"do things in different ways"*.

Likewise, employees also noticed this change with common examples such as:

> *"change in management thinking"*
> *"change in attitude"*
> *"change in management style"*
> *"managers are starting to actually manage people"*
> *"progressive management styles"*
> *"discussion rather than direction"*

Employees described changes from managers in previous organisations as well as their current one. However, what employees appeared to be describing, was the relationship with their manager which was also changing. Employees talked of collaborative thinking, support and trust in their manager, as they understood that informal discussions and management remaining open to suggestions was a common behaviour in their areas.

Management roles not changing

In comparison to this progressive paradigm shift, one manager and a small number of employees were either undecided about whether there had been a change in management behaviour, or, specifically did not believe any changes had happened over the past 10 years.

It can be seen from the responses in Appendix 9.13, that the idea is not so much that there has been 'no change' over the past 10 years, but perhaps that the manager and the few employees have not been able to notice the difference. One employee, declared that it was the learning which had been improved, and it was noted that they meant "*instead of the manager who has changed".* However, this researcher would argue that management style and approach would have to have changed, to work with this new learning style. All things considered, it would seem that there has been a change in the past 10 years, from how managers previously managed to how they enacted their role as managers in the current workplace.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 The outcomes from this research

This chapter summarises the value of this research study. First, the chapter indicates how the study has responded to the original research questions. Second, the chapter then indicates how the study extends conceptual knowledge in this area. Third, the chapter directly addresses managers by providing operational strategies for practitioners that are supported by positive evidence from this study. Finally, the chapter indicates the limitations of the study and how this avenue of research might be extended in the future to further develop knowledge in this area.

Managers are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities for their employees. An organisation and its managers may replicate the information presented in this research, through the understanding of management frameworks, as well as consideration for the understanding and perceived views on roles of management in the workplace. Managers will be able to review the outcomes of this research to determine future actions they may take to improve employee learning in the workplace. Specific behaviours and actions are presented in this research that managers may wish to emulate, in order to explore possible strategies that may improve learning for their individual employees and their teams. These behaviours and actions may ensure managers are better equipped to facilitate workplace learning and this may be beneficial to improving the success of the wider organisational culture.

From this research, managers will be able to gain knowledge of what the key enablers to learning are in the WA local government workforce, and therefore be able to apply them to their own situations. Managers may see the benefits related to informal learning and see the competitive advantage gained from direct and intentional actions aimed to encourage engagement with learning in the workplace. Managers' general understanding may also be improved, with regards to barriers to learning, and can make plans to reduce these barriers' impact on employees, or where possible, remove them all together.

This researcher believes that a good framework for organising and controlling learning, mainly informal learning, in an organisation, both at the wider organisation level and also at a team level is through the use of LNT (Poell et al., 2000; Van der Krogt, 1998). This theory of learning can easily be applied to this case study, because LNT is the study of competing forces, namely work processes and learning processes within an organisation and this was also true for the organisation in this case study. An outcome of this research is that different levels of management will be able to see if this framework, or any like it, could be applied in their organisation. Managers may be able to see the benefits of learning theory and corresponding structures for learning which guide plans and actions,

for example, as shown by Senge (1990) ways to apply informal learning in the workplace, and how the organisation should provide an environment for learning.

To a lesser degree, the outcomes from this research were also to see whether the Karpin (1995) reforms have become an organisational reality in this organisation. The Karpin Task Force predicted that the emerging frontline manager by 2010 would at least have attributes such as: being either male or female (as opposed to the male-dominated past); have clear roles; be responsible for developing employee skills; have an appropriate environment; and other factors like formal training for managers, which was not investigated in this research (Karpin, 1995, p. 19). These attributes predicted by the report are true for this organisation within the context of this research. Managers and coordinators in this organisation were either male or female and there was little to no impact on the teams form this fact. The managers did have roles and were responsible for developing employee skills, however this was, as identified and area for improvement. Finally, the environment was a factor for enabling learning in the workplace and allowing managers to facilitate that learning.

6.3.2 Research questions

How do managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning?

Managers perceive their role as a facilitator of learning to be an important role, one in which they largely perform well. Managers believed that *"they are the facilitators of many things, not just learning"*, (Manager Chris). Managers understood that it is a benefit to provide learning for their team. Manager Macca said *"this gives us a competitive advantage – especially [in] local government"*. From the data provided it showed that managers aimed to directly influence the learning of their employees on a regular basis, through a range of activities and often requested feedback on their performance.

How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?

Employees perceived their managers' role as a facilitator of learning to also be a very important role. This role was done well but not always to the best of their ability. The degree to which managers were enacting their roles as facilitators of learning, could be done better by managers understanding more about varieties of learning, about their own employees wants and needs, and by having training for managers so they may better understand the impact the have upon their employees.

In addition, employees believed there should be better communication between managers and their subordinates, so that there is a clear and explicit understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party. Employees like Betsy explained that "*when I have learning needs, I make them explicit [for my manager]".* However, this was not the case in all teams, with individual managers' own personalities and management styles controlling the structure and availability of learning.

What are the enablers and barriers that managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?

The main enablers to learning were described by managers' as being organisational culture, management style and learning and development options. Similarly, employees reported that organisational culture was a key enabler to learning, along with the attitude and actions of their manager, as well as having people around to learn from.

The main barriers to learning were described by managers as being the ability to adequately facilitate learning in a changing environment, where there is little budget, little time and resistance to participate in learning from some employees. Managers believed that the key barriers to learning were about finding that balance between time for work and time for learning. Managers felt the pressure in being a facilitator of learning, where they were suggesting opportunities for employees and trying to gain engagement for learning activities, which would fit within the team environment. Employees believed barriers to learning to be workload pressures and trying to create enough time to completed work and find time to learn in the workplace. Employees also looked at the time given to them by their managers for informal learning activities, and how there was not enough time with the other responsibilities that a manager has. Some employees described an organisation where they felt they were working in a siloed approach, where they were working on specific tasks which no one else would know how to complete, and where there was no job crossover or integration. Finally, the budget allocated to learning activities and the belief by employees that they would be able to peruse further learning played a part to blocking the learning process.

What is the impact of gender in the workplace?

This research indicates that there was no major impact from the gender of a manager on being a facilitator of learning. While there were some examples of gender bias from small numbers throughout the interviews, the data indicated that this might be few, contained instances and was not a wider issue for the organisation.

Was there a change to the way managers facilitated learning in the workplace over the past 10 years?

It appeared to be the experience of managers in this organisation, that the role and responsibilities of managers was changing. The Karpin Report (1995) detailed examples of management skills and attributes such as; increased leadership skills, empowerment, encouragement of employees within a learning organisation and development of people skills. The Karpin Task Force believed moving from an old paradigm to a new paradigm of thinking, as show in Appendix 9.5 would be a challenge, but

would need to be achieved for managers to be successful. The Karpin Report used the phrase "*cop to coach"* type change in management style. Although there was not an entirely straightforward response from all managers and employees in agreement to this idea, it seemed that this was put down to individual instances where employees had always had exceptional leaders or managers and had never been managed in the 'cop' type mentality.

Theory in summary – the connection.

The key components of LNT were explained in the Literature Review, but essentially the theory explains that within each organisation there are processes and structures within a learning and a work network which are engaged with each other in the demand for priority and resources. Poell's (2000) and Ven der Krogt's (1998) LNT, was more appropriate to apply to this research, as a framework for managers to enhance learning within their team, than other theories such as; activity theory, experiential learning theory and organisational learning theory. The learning processes which LNT boasts, may be used as a framework for organisations to model from, especially when it comes to informal learning. As discussed in the review of the literature, LNT as used in this research's framework for learning is set out as two opposing sides – learning productions versus work productions.

The connection from theory to this case study, is that managers may create their own learning processes which work for themselves, but possibly not for others. For example, a policy for learning may be in place or, a manager may create an appropriate means of learning, or program of learning within their own team, but the learning environment might not be correct, and this in turn would detract from employee learning. The structure and longevity of the organisation then means that the organisation and structure of learning will be based on previous actions of the organisation or team, as well as the understanding (or lack of understanding) of individual managers. The result is that if managers are not satisfactory facilitators of learning, the entire system of learning will be affected conceivably, with negative results.

This researcher would advise that there needs to be planning around how to counteract the negative impacts and barriers to learning. In the discussion with managers, about their ability to make their facilitation purposes a reality, there was an admitted lack of feedback in the success of the learning experiences of employees. There is a need to explore what structures are in place to ensure that managers have the support and planning to make the learning transpire. There will always be the work processes, as that is what supports the organisation, and therefore the managers' and employees' jobs. However, learning networks are just as important because they coexist with the work structures and a balance between the two needs to be found.

Part of the make-up of the learning work dimensions in LNT is the horizontal approach or the ad hoc approach to learning. As previously mentioned this type of learning is diverse in its application and therefore is able to fit with many options for many employees in a team. As informal learning is a big part of learning in the workplace, managers could use LNT and the horizontal learning network structure to adequately ensure there is direct and meaningful structures to created learning for those employees in the organisation who need it.

With regards to the specific management learning style being used by managers, the style should fit with the overall approach to learning in the workplace. Working within the idea of LNT (Poell, 2000), this theory states that the workplace will have its own exact learning processes within an organisational level, team level and individual level. The learning networks which exist in this workplace are controlled by management but Poell et al (2000) suggests that most organisations develop unique learning-work patterns that change over time. As managers and employees change, grown and develop, so too will learning processes. Management needs to be able to communicate appropriately with their employees and get the correct feedback to ensure that everyone is understanding opportunities for learning and reduce any barriers which may occur.

Employee Bec gave an example of where her framework for learning was helpful *"[My managers is an] informal type of mentor. [They] take the time to sit down and teach me [with a] one on one meeting every fortnight and [for] any problems I have or things I need there is a team meeting once every fortnight – this is a good system"*. Bec could see within her team that, there were work processes and a structure in place such as the team meeting. However, a policy was set in place that there would be learning, as well as a program for learning which included direct intentions for mentoring and informal learning in an appropriate environment for learning. There was a framework which served well to help combine both the work network and the learning network in this team.

These interconnections need to be managed and reviewed often to confirm that they are still relevant and working. When processes fall away, or the interconnections break down somewhere for example, when there exists poor employee engagement with the system it is the organisation and its employees who suffer. When it is unclear who is responsible for the creation of learning opportunities, and whose responsibility it is to report this, often the informal and incidental learning opportunities will be missed, as excuses are made and the moment passes.

The ideas from LNT devised by Poell in 2000 are now more than 15 years old, and there have been radical changes in the global workforce and changes in communication abilities to enhance learning in the workplace. However, it is interesting to see that despite these changes, the battle between work and learning as explained by Poell (2000) and Kroet (1998) are still relevant today. Managers are still

battling barriers to learning such as time and pressure in the workplace (work process and structure), and learning is a key to organisational success that is shown to be highly valued by managers and employees.

6.3.3 Recommendations for managers

The aim of this research was to have recommendations for managers in the local government sector, as well as industries of similar size and structure, that would guide better facilitation of management and lead to a competitive advantage for a workplace. Therefore, the section below will give recommendations for organisations and management to be able to apply generally to their individual teams and workplaces alike.

There were copious examples of learning opportunities, which managers believed they were providing for their employees. Although the majority of employees supported the idea of managers being facilitators of learning, the examples of learning the two groups gave, were not always congruent, and the purpose and intent of the learning unclear. This researcher could see from interview responses, that the popular belief was employees were very happy to work in this organisation, in their teams and with their managers, whom they found to be dedicated to employee learning. Indeed, this was a positive outcome, however, there were indications for further improvements for this organisation based on employees and managers' assumptions, values and behaviours.

Assumptions of managers and employees were that everyone in their teams was aware of the protocols surrounding learning. Both groups had no distinctive ideas regarding roles and responsibilities of individuals, what learning was available, and at what times. In addition, managers frequently appeared to assume that all employees wanted to learn, and did not have strategies in place to engage with non-participative team members. In response to these ideas, employees had differing values as to what they saw as learning opportunities, and perceived various barriers to learning, such as budget issues, that managers did not realise.

Managers though, did in fact realise and value the importance of them enacting their roles as facilitators of learning. Employees, even if they did not want to partake in learning and development, still also highly valued managers facilitating learning. Accordingly, the values of managers and employees in this organisation, with regard to learning, were aligned with each other. The difficulty with this situation was the barriers to learning which prevented managers from carrying out the intentions they planned to complete.

The core behavioural trends over the entire organisation, were that managers reported they invested time and effort into specific, direct and intentional learning activities for employees. This idea was

matched by a number of employees, with many teams describing that they had personal and emotive relationships with their managers. These positive relationships formed bonds and trust in the managers' leadership and built sustainable learning environments. Nevertheless, the strategies managers reported were not always translated into learning outcomes, and employees were not able to define a framework for learning or a specific structure which was in place to guide and support their informal learning needs.

This researcher's recommendations for managers to assist in their supervision practices follow:

1. *Define roles and responsibilities (of managers and employees with regard to learning)*

Managers agreed they should create an environment for learning, and they should facilitate learning. However, managers did not have a concise answer when it came to who was responsible for requesting or controlling learning. Some employees reported that their managers took no responsibility for their learning, and that the employees had to "*do it all*". While other employees stated that *"I need to take my own learning and make it my own responsibility"*. This researcher believed that neither managers nor employees had a good idea of exactly what their role and their responsibility with regard to learning was. Even when one group had their own ideas, this may not have been a match for their corresponding team members' opinions.

This differing opinion was only made more distinct, a complex hierarchical structure in place. Some of the teams had many layers of management in them, such as a director, manager, coordinator and then a subordinate employee. The role of each player was not well defined in any case, any there were examples of barriers to learning being experienced because of this structure and lack of clarity. Some employees explained how they had to *'go around'* there coordinators and talk to their managers to get answers or advice. Similarly, even when both a manager and coordinator were both supportive and facilitating learning in a positive way, there were issues being experienced. One employee explained that when there was an incident, the employee sought clarification on an issue and both the manager and coordinator gave different and opposing views on what the process should be. This left the employee confused as to what were the next steps and what should be the appropriate course of action.

Based on the evidence presented in the interviews, and the subsequent discussion and analysis of data, this researcher agrees with Warhurst (2013b) in his notion that there is clearly a need for organisations to enhance managers' awareness of their beliefs about learning. Similarly, there is the need to increase employees' understanding about learning too. Once managers and employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities, it is important for them to know exactly what constitutes

learning, and what is expected of all parties. Examples from the interview responses showed that managers often appear to be facilitating learning without employees realising that they are. This is the result of management strategy and style, and which managers may not even be aware of how they are achieving positive outcomes.

A solution for managers would be to ensure that there is an organisational understanding of what a manager's role is with regards to learning. At a minimum, employees and managers within the same team, should be informed of the requirements for learning and who is making decisions controlling the frequency and amount of learning that is taking place. A suggestion could be to create a contract for learning which lays bare the clear roles and responsibilities of manager and employee.

2. Implement a framework for learning (in-conjunction with work outputs)

As a facilitator of learning, a manager must control the environment and structure of learning for their team, as they do for any working arrangements. As a theoretical framework, this researcher is can see how LNT could well benefit management, by providing a framework to organise and control learning in the workplace, with respect to the actual work being simultaneously undertaken.

From the analysis of the data, it was revealed that managers do not always have structured learning frameworks, and therefore, as most informal learning is ad hoc, managers are not seeing the same barriers to learning employees do, and the impacts they are having on their teams. The majority of managers stated they could see a change in management over the past 10 years. As there is a change in management responsibility, workload pressure and the role of learning facilitator, a manager needs to be organised to ensure all parts of their job role are being fulfilled.

A solution for managers would be to have an organisational level framework for learning, or an individual learning framework for each division or smaller team. LNT is useful to explain and guide how organisations may shape their employee learning arrangements, both informally and formally (Poell et al., 2004). At the group and individual level, LNT could provide guidance to educate employees and improve the environment for learning. In addition, this may create dedicated learning outcomes, schedules and time devoted to learning, which are widely approved and followed. However, as stated by Llandis Barratt-Pugh et al. (2011) the benefit of a framework for learning in an organisation is dependent upon the implementation and integration of the system with the employees. Management needs to not only have a framework for learning in place, but also ensure it is used and followed.

3. Feedback - managers to improve and increase communication.

The impact that managers' actions have or could have on their team members was unclear to both managers and employees. Managers were regularly unaware of the smaller actions they could take which would contribute to employee learning in a meaningful way. The communication and understanding was not always present in every team. Some employees reported a siloed working environment, either physically or metaphorically. Either way, this lack of communication meant that some employees were left to make decisions on the job, at the time, and they described at *"sink or swim mentality"*.

One manager stated that he regularly liked to have 360-degree feedback in his team to obtain accurate representation of what was 'really' happening in his team. Several other employees both in his team and others, talked of the feedback systems that they liked in their teams. Unfortunately, these feedback systems appeared to differ from manager to manager, and often there were several layers of management within teams which caused issues with who the employee should be reporting to.

Furthermore, both managers and employee expressed that there was open communication and an open-door policy, with informal chats and discussions being the main method of feedback, communication and debrief. However, there were also many examples of where work projects would get in the way and restrict a manager's or employee's time and which could impact their attitudes both to learning and in general.

This researcher could see that a potential solution for managers could be to have a planning day, or a strategic meeting, to develop some processes for their organisation with regard to feedback. Managers need to be aware of how employees feel and the problems they face on a regular basis to deal with a volatile working environment. Likewise, managers need to be mindful of what are the positives in their workplace, so that these are behaviours that can be repeated in the future and emulated by all.

4. *Reduce barriers and increase enablers (perceived or real).*

This researcher would advise that there needs to be planning and strategy around how to counteract the negative impacts and barriers to learning, and in turn support the enablers to learning in this organisation. Together with the three other recommendations from this study, this organisation would be able to drive success throughout the organisation by considering into how to most effectively make changes for maximum impact.

There was a summary created of the top examples of barriers to learning from managers and employees in this organisation. Managers should review what were their top barriers to learning across the organisation, to gain a more comprehensive perspective of what they may or may not

realise is a barrier for them. Also managers should review the top employee barriers to learning. Even if a manager does not think that for example budget is a major barrier to learning, employee perception is that it is. Therefore, managers can instantly fix this barrier to learning by explaining any issues or queries regarding budget to their teams. This is a quick and effective way to reduce a major complaint by employees.

This research aimed to determine what was, and what was not, a block to learning in the eyes of managers, employees and the comparison of both. For example, this researcher observed that the questions about gender of managers in the workplace, was received with no increased levels of concern, with the question often quickly dismissed and having no impact on the individual or their team for learning. For the wider organisation, a director could look at the combination of barriers to learning, see that time was a key factor for employees to participate in learning, and work on a strategy to combat this issue. Organisations and their senior management can look at a bigger picture and how larger decisions, such as implementing a framework for learning across larger teams, can solve many problems at one time.

Managers from other local government bodies and well as other industries would be able to reduce barriers and increase enablers to learning, by looking at the list of barriers and enablers that was captured during the interview process. This list of experiences, both positive and negative, could be applied to a general population but is once again specific to this case study.

Summary

This study has produced a composition of positive managers' types of behaviours and actions in relation to facilitating workplace learning, which can be seen in Appendix 9.15. In addition, the study also indicates those actions that appear to have the greatest utility in facilitating and managing workplace learning. The study provides a unique profile about the development of manager roles in WA and will provide organisations and managers role model case study and examples of cultures and action that can have positive impact on workplace learning.

6.4 Limitations and future research

There are limitations for this study; however, these limitations also provide an avenue for future exploration. One limitation of this research was that there was only one organisation which was investigated. This is an idea which is shared by researchers such as Le Clus (2008) who have experienced similar limitations with research containing in-depth, semi-structured interviews from only 1 workplace. To gain a larger, more comprehensive set of data, more than one organisation could take part in research, as this would benefit the comparison information for the wider local government

association sector. This would lead researchers, to determine whether issues were sector wide, or as a result of individual leaders in the organisations, and enable a higher degree of generalisability.

Secondly, the methodology review for this research presented the idea that the Critical Incident Technique should not be used for future research on this topic. With the interviews semi-structured and in-depth there was loose talking and often personal anecdotes. This did not enable for the CIT method to be used, and there were far too many interpretations and therefore examples which were not able to be matched to a manager.

Furthermore, a larger sample size could be used for this research. For the study there were five managers and each of these had to have at least two employees who worked for them interviewed. In addition to more managers there could have also been more employees interviewed. Some of the managers who this researcher spoke to had three or four employees and this was important for comparison and diversity among employees. However, interviewing more employees for each manager would have increased the responses and perhaps showed more contrasting patterns of information.

An option for future research would be to look into the questions that were asked of employees. There is also the possibility of giving the ideas or categories/subcategories of questions to the employees beforehand to stimulate ideas, but not the actual questions so that the participants cannot prepare answers. This researcher found that most of the managers, and some employees, come to the interviews with prepared information and appeared to answer the question in the 'best' way possible. These answers seemed rehearsed and sometimes, did not appear to touch on real issues or be able to see opportunities for change for their teams. The answers seemed to be aimed to look the most beneficial for the researchers.

Additionally, a path for future research may include whether the managers in the organisation had any formal or informal learning about their managing role, or indeed about managing staff development formally or informally. This type of data was not collected in this study as the focus was on employee perspectives on how managers enacted their role as a facilitator of learning. This focus led to comparisons between management intent and management action rather than a specific focus on the level of learning a manager was specifically able to provide. Researchers such as Warhurst (2011) and Haemer, Borges-Andrade and Cassiano (2017) have explored the benefits of managers who have formal learning such as a higher degree, which may help them to become a more competent manager. Haemer et al. (2017) discuss how informal learning strategies in the workplace are often associated with managers with specific and higher educational levels, and how educational level may be strong predictor of a manager's capability to use informal learning strategies.

Finally, in future research into the area of managers as facilitators of learning, smaller sections of this research could be more thoroughly investigated. Instead of asking the entire set of questions, there could be more focused research into areas such as the differences between managers' and employees' perceptions on enablers or barriers in the workplace. Also, large portions of the data discuss items such as feedback systems and review structures in the individual teams. Instead of this being a high-level comparison of informal learning systems, some of these methods could be further investigated to give managers a detailed education of learning processes and ways to improve them for organisational success.

6.5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to increase the understanding of what managing practices inhibit and accelerate workplace learning, through exploring manager and employee experiences of workplace learning. This research has contributed to the emerging conceptualisation and theory associated with managing workplace learning. In addition, this research has provided managers with a typology of practices that can be utilised or suppressed to improve workplace learning.

The stages of the research process first involved an organisation being approached to be part of the research project. A set of questions was then developed and tested to ensure the right questions were being asked of the relevant people. Following this 19 interviews were conducted over an 18-week period, which included five managers and 14 employees of those managers. Interviews were transcribed and coded, and the data then analysed to produce outcomes and recommendations for managers and implications for future research.

The previous research understanding in this domain, is that there is currently little research in the area of local government organisations, and specifically their management practices in Australia. Also, there is no research specifically in WA surrounding local government or similar entities investigating managers enacting their role as facilitators of learning. The contribution to knowledge, is that there is now a case study example which shows whether managers in local government in WA believe themselves to be facilitating learning in the workplace. This research also provided a comparison of managers' and employees' beliefs on the extent to which managers are enacting their roles as facilitators of learning in their workplaces.

This research is supported by the evidence of the responses from the 19 participants in this case study. The main impact on the research community coming through, is that for organisations and managers, there are several behaviours that can be emulated and actions that can be repeated in a workplace to improve the way managers enact their role as a facilitator of learning. This particular case study showed a typically well-functioning organisation, with highly motivated managers and reasonably

,well-engaged employees, who were reaping the benefits of participating in informal learning activities.

Managers from this case study can follow several recommendations to improve their practices:

1. *Define roles and responsibilities (of managers and employees with regards to learning)*
2. *Implement a framework for learning (in-conjunction with work outputs)*
3. *Feedback - managers to improve and increase communication*
4. *Reduce barriers and increase enablers (perceived or real)*

The benefit for academics in this research is the creation of a knowledge base from which to start the investigation into managers facilitating learning in the workplace. The benefit for managers in organisations is that there is a greater understanding of what are the barriers to workplace learning. Managers can also see what is currently working well and needs to be continued. Managers can also see that it is not always what is real to a manager 'what is a barrier?' but to see the barriers experienced from a different point of view. Finally, there appeared to be no major impact of gender on employees or managers in the organisation in relation to the facilitation of learning.

Organisations and senior management can gain ideas to enhance the structure and environment of the organisation and can take this into account when making high-level decisions. A list of actions and behaviours which managers currently convey to their employees, and which has been shown to be positive, has been developed to enable managers to emulate these positive role models.

There were various key phrases heard by this researcher, and many poignant, personal comments which were expressed by both managers and employees. One phrase which was particularly significant to summarise the findings of this study, was from Manager Peter: "Managers need to influence the culture, first and foremost. Organisations need to have leaders on the same page as employees". This concept of culture rings true for all the recommendations of this study. Having a positive culture which supports learning is important; however, having an environment in which all employees communicate, know what is expected of them and can work together towards a common goal is what creates a team - a team that is successful and can provide that much-needed competitive advantage in an industry where there is little ability to differentiate products and outputs.

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7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Literature on Managers as Facilitators of Learning

Table 25 – Key Literature on Managers as Facilitators of Learning

Research participants	Author(s)	Year of publication	Research Setting	Method(s)
Managers	Russell Warhurst	2013	Local Government authorities	Case Study – Photo prompted interviews and brief close question questionnaire
Employees	Helen Colley	2012	Public Services Government austerity policies. Youth support work	Narrative Methodology
Managers and Employees	Amy H. Amy	2008	Fortune 500 Companies	Critical incident technique, DLOQ (Marsick and Watkins)
Managers	Andreas Wallo	2008	Industrial companies going through transformations	Interviews, Observations
Managers	Rowland and Hall	2010	Range of institutions	Documentary analysis, interviews, observations
Managers and Employees	Armson and Whiteley	2010	4 Private sector organisations	Grounded theory. Semi-structured interviews, theoretical sampling. Managers and employees asked about perceptions of their own role and the other's roles in learning.
Managers and Employees	Rona S Beattie	2007	2 organisations in voluntary sector	Case Study, Grounded theory
Employees	Pham and Swierczek	2006	Design professional in construction industry	Questionnaire
Learner/workers mentors	Stephen Billet	2003	Large Manufacturing plant	Interviews, Perspectives of 8 workplace mentors
Managers	Ellinger, Watkins and Bostrom	1999	Midlevel or senior managers in learning organisations	Critical incident technique, Semi Structured interviews
Employees	Chris Hughes	2004	6 public sector employees in new job positions	Interviews. Interviewing participants regularly over a period of time.

7.2 Poell 2000 and Van der Krogt 1998 Learning Network Theory

Figure 1. Elements of Work Networks and Learning Networks
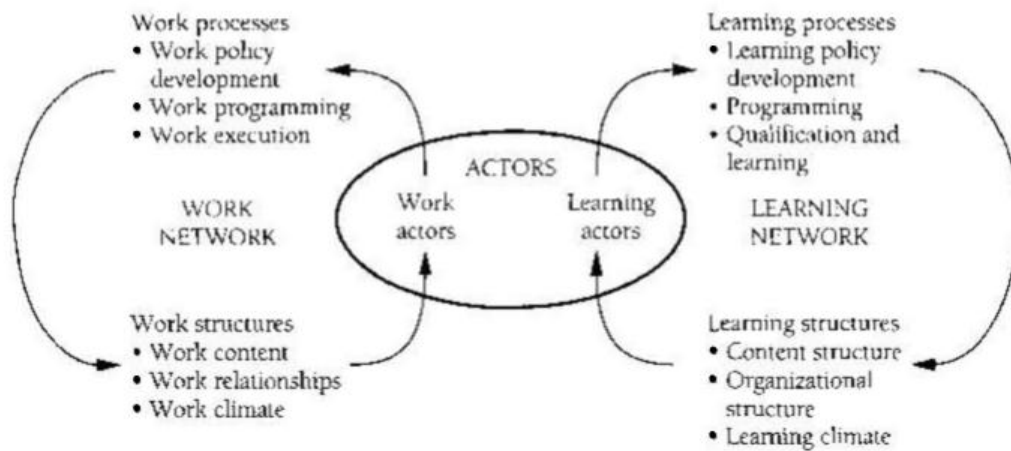
Work processes
- Work policy development
- Work programming
- Work execution

WORK NETWORK

ACTORS

Work actors   Learning actors

Work structures
- Work content
- Work relationships
- Work climate

Learning processes
- Learning policy development
- Programming
- Qualification and learning

LEARNING NETWORK

Learning structures
- Content structure
- Organizational structure
- Learning climate

Van der Krogt, F. J. (1998). "Learning network theory: The tension between learning systems and work systems in organizations." Human Resource Development Quarterly **9**(2): 157-177.

Figure 4. –Van der Krogt 1998 Learning Network Theory

Figure 1   The learning network of an organization

LEARNING PROCESSES
Development of Learning Policies
Development of Learning Programmes
Execution of Learning Programmes

LEARNING STRUCTURES
Content Structure
Organisational Structure
Learning Climate

L E A R N I N G   N E T W O R K

ACTORS
with Action Theories
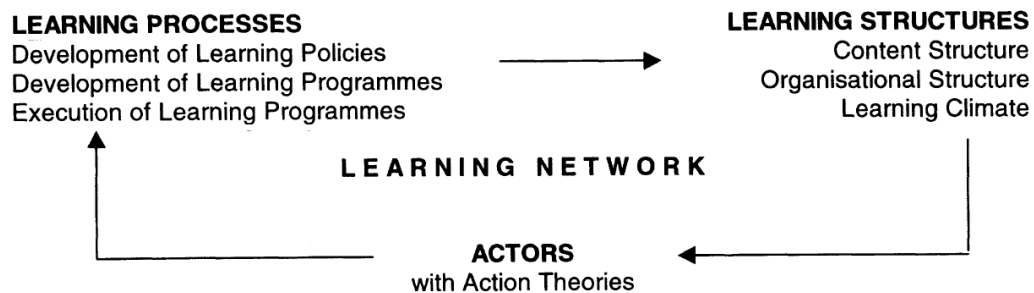
Source: Van der Krogt, 1995, 1998.

Poell, R. F., et al. (2000). "Learning-Network Theory: Organizing the Dynamic Relationships between Learning and Work." Management Learning **31**(1): 25-49.

Figure 5. – Poell 2000 Learning Network Theory

7.3 Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory 1984
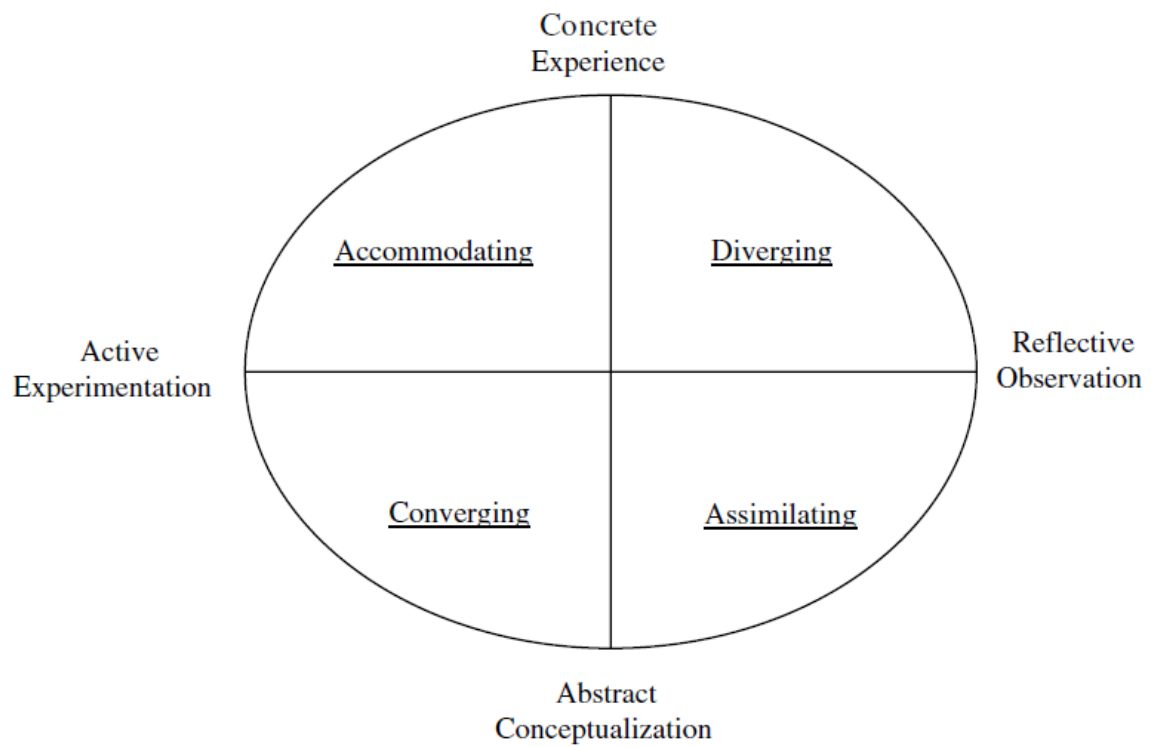
Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential Learning. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall.

Figure 6. Kolb's diagram showing different ways of understanding learning experiences

7.4 Budget

Table 26. Budget for Jenna Rogers' Thesis

There was not a large budget for this project as the main resources was the time of the researcher and to a lesser degree the time of the interview participants.

Description	Cost	Total
Catering	61.50	61.50
Printing	$500	$561.50
Editor (approx.)	$1050	$1611.50

7.5 Old and new paradigms of management thinking

Table 27. Old and new paradigms of management

New Paradigm	Old Paradigm
Organisational learning	Organisational discipline
Virtuous circles	Vicious circles
Flexible organisations	Inflexible organisations
Management leaders	Management administrators
Open communication	Distorted communication
Markets	Hierarchies
Product development driven by core competencies	Product development driven by strategic business units
Strategic learning capacities are widespread	Strategic learning occurs at the apex of the organisation
Assumptions that most employees are trustworthy	Assumption that most employees are untrustworthy
Most employees are empowered	Most employees are disempowered
Local knowledge of all employees is critical to success and creativity creates its own prerogative	Local knowledge of all employees must be disciplines by managerial prerogative

Task force research: University of Western Sydney 1995

Karpin, D. (1995). Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills.

7.6 Interview Outline

In-Depth Semi-Structured research questions

Broad key questions will be given to the employees beforehand. The sub set of questions will be kept by the researcher and brought to the interview as prompts. Once the interview questions are finalised they will be tested on an academic at Edith Cowan University, a co-worker, and then a manager from another industry. If there are any changes I will go back to ethics and have them reapproved.

An introduction will be written on the top of the question sheet to inform the interviewees once more of the purpose of this research. The interviewees will also be provided with a copy of the Interview Protocols — see Appendix 7.7.

Introduction

My name is Jenna Rogers and I am a Masters by Research student studying Management at Edith Cowan University. As part of a thesis component of my research I am interviewing managers and their subordinates in an attempt to better understand management practice.

Research has shown that managers facilitating employee learning in the workplace is a practice that is beneficial for both employees and contributes to the success of the organisation (Macneil, 2001). However, some managers and employees are not engaged with such processes and may experience limited workplace learning or managerial barriers that inhibit workplace learning. The aim of this study is through exploring manager and employee experiences of workplace learning to increase our understanding of what managing practices inhibit and accelerate workplace learning

These questions link to the broad research questions in the introduction. The researcher formed these questions as having been heavily influenced by Kolb's Experiential Theory of Learning (Kayes et al., 2005) and the work of Billet (2003), Beattie (2007), Warhurst (2013b) and Amy (2008).

The interview will precede with the following questions:

So you are happy for me to record this interview and you understand the processes surrounding this data collection?

First can you suggest a name I can use for you….a pseudonym of your choosing to ensure confidentiality?

	Broad questions	Sub questions	Sub-sub questions
	Tell me about your role here.	Gender, age, service. Manager gender – Number of employees	
	Are you engaged in any formal learning roles such a mentoring?	Are you engaged in any informal learning roles?	Did you take on these roles by choice?
	To what extent do you see yourself as a facilitator of learning?	What are some examples of the times where you have been a facilitator of learning?	
		How do you see yourself as a manager of learning?	Do you believe managing learning and facilitating learning to be different activities?
			Do you believe different genders to enact their roles differently?

Is there any ways that you have demonstrated that you are responsible for employee learning?	What part of your job facilitates learning for employees?	
How does being a facilitator of learning fit with all your other responsibilities as a manager?	Examples	
What enables you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?	Examples	
What do you believe to be the barriers for you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?	Examples	
Concrete Experience (Observations and Reflections)		
How do you provide experiences for learning in the workplace?	What new tasks have been recently undertaken in your area? Either with positive or negative results?	Was any additional assistance required for employees to learn this new task?
		Have the learners been frustrated when learning?
	What are some examples of informal methods of facilitation learning in the workplace?	Is this type of learning from internal or external providers?
	What are some examples of formal methods of facilitation learning in the workplace?	
How important do you think it is for a manager to be a facilitator of learning?	How much time a week would you say you spent in the role of a facilitator of learning?	How do you intentionally seek to provide this learning?
Reflective Observation (employees who are thinkers, who analyse a situation to ensure it is correct).		
	As a manager do you provide employees with time to reflect before they take action?	What motivates you to encourage staff reflection?
	As a manager do you provide employees with time to reflect after they act?	
Abstract Conceptualisation how perceive surroundings over time – watch others then do it		
What type of learning is available in your workplace?	What type of group learning is available to employees?	Do employees choose to partake in this group learning?
	What type of individual learning is available to employees?	Do employees choose to partake in this individual learning?
	How does your organisation support managers being facilitators of learning?	What is the balance between the amount of individual and group learning?
Has your perceptions of what being a facilitator of learning means changed over the last decade?	Do you believe your perceptions fit with that of the organisation?	
Active Experimentalisation (employees take action to experience what will happen if they act in a certain way or perform a task.)		

	How do you, as a manager give opportunity for your staff to try new opportunities?	How do you encourage innovation in the workplace?	
		Do employees every get frustrated in attempts to try new tasks?	
Interview Close Out			
	What are three things that you would change about learning in your organisation if you could?	Positive or negative.	
	Is there anything else that you would like to say?	Open question.	

Unit of analysis is the managers actions. Therefore need to have actions. Or non actions.

Research Questions

This study will address the following questions:

1. How do managers perceive their role of facilitators of learning?;
2. How do managers operationalise their role as facilitators of learning?; and
3. What are the enablers and barriers managers face when facilitating learning in the workplace?

Broad Interview Questions

1. Tell me about you role here.

2. To what extent do you see yourself as a facilitator of learning?

3. How have you demonstrated that you are responsible for employee learning?

4. How does being a facilitator of learning fit with all your other responsibilities as a manager?
5. What enables you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

6. What enables you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

7. What are barriers for you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

8. How important do you think it is for a manager to be a facilitator of learning?

9. What type of learning is available in your workplace?

10. Has your perceptions of what being a facilitator of learning means changed over the last decade?

11. How do you as a manager give opportunity for your staff to try new opportunities?

12. What are three things that you would change about learning in your organisation if you could?

13. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

Employee Questions

	Broad questions	Sub questions	Sub-sub questions
	Tell me about your role here.	Gender, age, service. Manager gender –	

	Number of employees in your team?	
Are you engaged in any formal learning roles such as being a mentee?	Are you engaged in any informal learning roles?	Did you take on these roles by choice?
To what extent do you see your manager as a facilitator of learning?	What are some examples of the times where you have seen your manager act as a facilitator of learning?	
	How do you see your manager/supervisor as a manager of learning?	Do you believe managing learning and facilitating learning to be different activities?
		Do you believe different genders to enact their roles as managers any differently?
How has your manager demonstrated that they are responsible for your learning?	What part of your job would you like to improve your learning in and how?	
How would you like to be taught outside of your every day work tasks?	Examples	
What enables you to learn in the workplace?	Examples	
What do you believe to be barriers for you to learn in the workplace?	Examples	
Concrete Experience (Observations and Reflections)		
Whatexperiences oflearning have you had in the workplace?	What new tasks have been recently undertaken in your area? Either with positive or negative results?	Was any additional assistance required for you to learn this new task?
		Have you ever been frustrated when learning?
	What are some examples of informal methods of learning in your workplace?	Is this type of learning from internal or external providers?
	What are some examples of formal methods of learning in your workplace?	
How important do you think it is for a manager to be a facilitator of learning?	How much time a week would you say your manager spent in the role of a facilitator of learning?	How does your manager intentionally seek to provide this learning for you?
Reflective Observation (employees who are thinkers, who analyse a situation to ensure it is correct).		
	Does your manager provide you with time to reflect before they take action?	What motivates you to reflect in your workplace?
	How does your manager provide you with time to reflect after you act?	
Abstract Conceptualisation how perceive surroundings over time – watch others then do it		
What type of learning is available in your workplace?	What type of group learning is available to yourself and other employees?	Do you choose to partake in this group learning?
	What type of individual learning is available to	Do you choose to partake in this individual learning?

	yourself and other employees?	
		What is the balance between the amount of individual and group learning available?
Has your perceptions of what being a learning means changed over the last decade?	Do you believe your perceptions fit with that of the organisation?	
Active Experimentalisation (employees take action to experience what will happen if they act in a certain way or perform a task.)		
How does your manager give you opportunities for you to try new opportunities?	How does your manager encourage innovation in the workplace?	
	Do you every get frustrated in attempts to try new tasks?	
Interview Close Out		
What are three things that you would change about learning in your organisation if you could?	Positive or negative.	
Is there anything else that you would like to say?	Open question.	

Unit of analysis is the managers' actions. Therefore, need to have actions. Or non-actions.

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5. What enables you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

6. What enables you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

7. What are barriers for you to be a facilitator of learning in the workplace?

8. How important do you think it is for a manager to be a facilitator of learning?

9. What type of learning is available in your workplace?

10. Has your perceptions of what being a facilitator of learning means changed over the last decade?

11. How do you as a manager give opportunity for your staff to try new opportunities?

12. What are three things that you would change about learning in your organisation if you could?

13. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

7.7 Interview Protocols

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate our research better, we would like to record our conversations today. Please sign the release form if you are comfortable with this. Data collected for research was viewable only by the researcher and her supervisors. None of the participants were identified in the documents but there is a master copy of the coding for participants' real names and their identification name. You will be asked to select a name of your choosing when you will be identified as throughout the research e.g. Jane to become Sally.

This information will be password protected and kept in a separate file to the information. Data will be kept for a maximum of five years after the completion of the research thesis. Data will be destroyed by deleting it from the data storage system and correct document destruction for any paper based information. The study will not commence until the ECU ethics committee has approved it.

We have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

You have been selected to speak with us today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about facilitation of learning in the workplace. Our research project as a whole focuses on the improvement of management in the workplace, with particular interest in understanding how managers perceive their role as facilitators of learning, how managers operationalise their role as facilitator of learning, the factors which enable the facilitation of learning and the barriers managers face in the workplace.

Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm.

Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

7.8 Timeline of Data Collection

Table 28. Details of data collection

Research participants (Pseudonym)	How data collected How	Time of collection When	Research Setting Where
Bec	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	10 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Betsy	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	10 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Bigyin	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	3 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Davver	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	2 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Bill	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	2 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Chris	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	5 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting. Follow up interview in local government office setting. Private meeting room.
George	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	14 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Hugh	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	3 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Jack	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	4 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Jo	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	24 October 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Jane	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	10 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Julie	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	2 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Kerry	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	5 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Macca	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	2 September 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Peter	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	14 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
John	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	4 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Sally-Anne	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	4 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Teresa	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	22 October 2014	Out of office – Public café setting
Tommy	Semi-Structured, In-depth Interview. Face to Face.	18 July 2014	Out of office – Public café setting

7.9 Sample Interview Transcription

Employee "Bec"

J – I am going to record this interview and I have two recording devices just in case one does not work. To make sure that I can hear both of us appropriately I will have one positioned near you and one near me. I am going to take notes, in case I cannot hear the recording as well and this will help me when I write up the interview later. I may look excited at some points or be writing furiously while taking notes, however, please do not pay any attention to this. As I mentioned I am conducting research where I do not know what the answer is specifically, so we will just talk. Please don't be nervous.

J – I would like to give you this consent form. This is what everyone needs to sign to participate in this research, so as we discussed please can you sign. Also this is a copy of my ethics form, this is my information letter, all of this is for you to keep. This is the forms which were sent out to managers which hopefully they sent on to you. This is confidential and non-one except for myself and my supervisor will know the details of what you say. Also this is the questions which I will be asking you today. I will give you an overview of everything that will be happening in this research.

B – Yes – thank you

J - Overview of research

I am researching facilitating of learning, specifically how managers are facilitating learning. We talk about managing learning, perhaps the [management performance system] so saying yes you go to training I give you permission I have signed your HR form. Facilitating learning may be more of a coaching or mentoring role which a manager may take. A manager may say to you; "do you want to work on this at home? I think you could get your head around it and understand it better in a quite environment away from the noisy tam next door."

I have done a literature review and looked into the area of management and learning, and, my research comes from the report in 1995 which was commissioned by the Australian Government called the *Karpin Report*. This was led by David Karpin and was about Leadership and Management skills in the local government sector. The Karpin Report looked at what skills managers need management need to be better and what skills they needed. The Karpin Report used the phrase that managers needed to change from being a "cop to a coach". That was almost 20 years ago now, so perhaps things have changed over the last 2 decades. This is an idea of how management could act, and how this report suggested managers should act so I would like to see if this is correct.

My research I am hoping will benefit managers in this area that there is very little to no research on local government managers, in Western Australia, and Australia nationally. In the UK there is some research done but not extensive. I am hoping that this research can give ideas, perhaps a model for managers and will also hopefully be cathartic for you to speak to me and explore management ideas. In local government we talk about communities, so at the end of this research I am hoping that I can give your organisation some thematic analysis and some ideas of how they are going with their management.

If you are happy with this is, could you please put your name and your signature on this form for me. Thank you very much I am very pleased. As I mentioned this will be kept confidential. The information will be kept for five years in a secure location and after that will be destroyed from the university records.

B – Thank you too easy.

J – Keep these questions in front of you and we are going to run through them. [Interviewer hands participant a sheet of paper with research questions on it]. Also, here are the actual research questions from my research. I am interested between the comparison between the managers and employees and what they think are the ways that managers facilitate learning. If the managers and employees think the same, it is just an interesting if they think differently. Please say whatever you want I am just interested in the comparison. How do managers see themselves as facilitators of learning? How do managers operationalise their roles as facilitator of learning, or in another way how do employees see their managers to enact their roles? This research is about barriers and enables to learning also which there has been lots of research already about enablers and barrier and I interested in the comparison. So the third question is asking how do the two groups see differently. Are the barriers and enablers real or perceived? So they example of a manger standing behind their employees to "help" them with their work. The manager thinks they are enabling learning, however, the employee finds it distracting and is therefore a barrier to learning. As we get through these questions a side thought I have is to look at gender and whether the gender of a manager has any impact on the workplace learning. I am not deciding whether males or females are better managers, but, just is there a difference.

B – Sounds good.

J - This is more of a conversation so we will go back and forth and I may ask you questions out of turn but please stop me if you have anything to add or want to come back to any questions.

J - Could you please tell me about your role here? If you feel comfortable, how long you have been here and where you were previously and how this all connects to you.

This question contained personal details about the participant and has been removed from this document.

B - I do LOVE working here, it has been very good.

J – Can I ask some of the reasons why you like working here?

B - I think the career development and the supportive team. Also knowing that they gave me the opportunity to progress. I feel loyal because they gave me my start. Also team is great. I do not live in the area and I travel very far from home to work, so my work would have to be good to make me stay. I love working for [this organisation].

J - To what extent do you see your manager as a facilitator of learning?

J – This is something I would like to show you about Experiential learning theory [researcher shows participant a document and they read it]. In terms of a manager facilitating learning it may not always be about them providing you with the learning, they might not have to sit and talk to you. Some learning we talk about concrete experience learning, so you are there, a manager says click here and you click there and you are done. Or they say click here and you say hmmm, I want to think about this analyse and reflecting so reflective practice and analysing. On the other end of analysing and reflecting is the active experimentation. Never done it before but I will jump in and give it a shot and let me know. They have abstract conceptualisation, you may just say I think there is a ribbon up the top, and I think I can click here and go down and it is done.

There are different ways that we talk about facilitating learning and all of there are ways in which your manager gives you opportunities to learn, or to give you an experience and give you an opportunity to learn, and to make mistakes for yourself. Can you do this project and make the

mistakes for yourself. So to this extent, how do you see your manager and [middle manager] facilitating these opportunities for you to learn?

B – What our manager does, if I have not dealt with something before we have to give our opinion on what we think we should or would to do and come up with any answer to the situation. This is instead of them telling us what the answer is, they give us the opportunity to try our way. We say this is our idea and what we think and this is how I would do it. Then the managers would give us pointers or say something like, what else would you consider. If we just can't get it, they of course will let us know but this is something they have wanted us to do the whole time I have been here.

J – Is this something that has been discussed before? A certain way you know that this is what you should do?

B – Yes. We talk about everything at team meetings since I have been in [this team]. You can't forget what to do as it is an engrained process. Our managers will say things like "what else would you consider"? Rather them just always giving it to us, they show and guide us so we will know for next time. It is a learning process. – so you will always know in the future. We won't need to go to the manager next time for that particular query too. The manage stays quiet until we have finished talking and does not talk over us. They let us have our turn to talk and have our say with what we think.

J – In terms of some other things that my research has looked at, I have seen that the aim of facilitating learning for employees will hopefully provide employees who can contribute to positive organisational results. The organisation wants to benefit about give employee learning opportunities. Research I have done talks that learning is beneficial and that ongoing learning make employees, more satisfied in their jobs, more efficient, make employees not want to leave and build loyalty. Those sort of things mean that there is less turn over, less recruitment, less more spent on advertising and training. It also gives organisations a competitive advantage. Research is showing that organisations have the same external environment, same political pressures in the given sector, building that competitive advantage is therefore positive.

J – For this research the point of difference is that I will look at both a management response and an employee response. So, by talking to you I would like to look at the employees' thoughts on how they are affected by management, do you have informal or formal learning, the gender impact of the employee or the manager. I would like to know about the physical environment; the physical location are you all crammed at one desk trying to complete a project; the social environment – do you feel comfortable with your employees and managers to ask questions, do they talk over you; and the organisational culture and the environment and whether you are encouraged to learning. Do you think your organisation is contributing to your learning culture?

B- Definitely, I do think they contribute to the learning culture either through training or learning on the jo. Quite a big focus for us. For example, if there is a vacancy try to promote internally from within. Perhaps get a team member acting then upskilling them to that position rather than going straight out. May be on the job learning or going to external training. There is merit and equity but the organisation had given me the opportunity to develop and learn so that when a job comes around I am prepared for it. The manager also promotes study systems. So doing a bachelor or master degree the organisation may give you study assistance. I'm not doing anything this year but maybe next year depending to the training budget.

J – But you know all about it?

B- Yes everyone in the team knows about this and has the opportunity and if they want to put it in their training in the performance management they can.

J - Career development was one of the other things you mentioned, so what are the opportunities you have for learning and career development? What type of learning is available?

B – We have just done our [management performance process] and I have listed to do training and if there are any training course which may benefit me I can go to any if I want and I have approval for those. It depends what is available and if we do go on the course it needs to be in the performance management. It is highly regarded in our team that we do external study also, so someone in our team is doing a degree at a university and this is completely supported. Lots of training and development for our staff.

J – Do you site under your [middle manager] is that the structure?

B – Yes and if I have any Issues the [middle manager] and managers are happy for me to talk to them

J – How do you think you may learning from either manager on a more informal basis? So not going to a course but if you may be having an issue with XY or Z. What types of learning are available to you?

B – My manager is happy for me to come talk to them, but wants me to go to the [middle manager] first. The [top] manager wants us to go through the channels. If I need advice or help, unless it was something urgent I would go to the [middle manager]. Also we have other levels of management within the team, and these people are able to help us and give us advice as the manager and middle manager are very busy people. These other management levels will talk between each other and if they do not know or are not sure they will escalate an issue. For example, the [middle manager] we can go to if none of us have not dealt with an issue before.

J – So you have different genders in your senior managers in this team, are you able to tell me if there are any differences that you see in the way in which the different genders enact their role as facilitators of learning? This is your perception it is not whether this is right or wrong just what you think.

B – There is a difference in the way in which they work. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The female is quite process focussed I would say more than the male manager. The male manager appears to be more flexible than the female manager. They work well together though so I think it is good having both. If there is a difference in opinion both managers will sit down together and figure it out to see what will work well in our team. Each manager gives their opinion and then they come to a consensus.

J – Based on my understanding this is a female dominated areas is this correct?

B – Yes. Small number of males in the team.

J – Do you think that you are finding that the focus on processes is female based? Or personality?

B – I think it is personality, background and personal experience perhaps maybe not particularly male and female. They have worked together before this organisation. I think that perhaps specific backgrounds where managers come from affect their personality and therefore their management style more than their gender. They are both good to work for.

B – Does this answer your question? Is this all you needed?

J – It does, however, I was wondering if you had any other thoughts on some of the perceptions that you have around what the managers do, and whether any of the differences are based on their gender?

B – No nothing based on their gender it is just their natural personality. They are not trying to act in a particular way they just have worked in those ways and therefore give me learning opportunities because of their background.

J - Are you engaged in any formal learning roles? Like mentoring or anything?

B – No I am not involved in any formal mentoring roles outside or inside the organisation. However, the [middle manager] is an informal type of mentor to me. I get a lot of information from her. She takes the time to sit down with me and go through everything and teach me, we have one on one meetings every fortnight to discuss anything that they have or any questions or problems I have, or things I need and [they] can give pointers on advice on what I can do better.

J – As a bit of a background some of the research I have done says that employees cannot learn from their managers because they cannot build the trust in their mangers? That you can't learn appropriately because your manager or supervisor is only doing what is best for the organisation, not for you. How would you respond to this idea?

B – It is definitely the fact that she does take the time to help me learn, and I do trust her.

J – When you give responses like this, for me it challenges this research and gives new ideas that if informal learning is undertaken that managers can build trust and give learning opportunities for their employees.

B – Our team also has a meeting once every fortnight to come together and discuss what they are working on and any information they can provide. I think this is a good system

J – How do you think being a facilitator of learning fit with the manager's other responsibilities?

B - Managers definitely have time for it because they would rather career development [for current employees] rather than getting someone new on, so for example they trained me up in [another team] so when they had someone going on maternity leave I could fill in for them when I was doing [other work] so instead of getting an external person to come in, they took the time to teach me the fill that process back to front. They had the time for me even though they were incredibly busy themselves they still made time for me to actually learn rather than getting someone in with experience they make it a priority for the employees. For example if I was just doing my [normal] work I probably wouldn't be there because I wanted a challenge and I'm happy now and have been enjoying it since my recruitment because I have that challenge.

B - Definitely was a challenge for me to learn at the start but a good challenge. I was getting bored in my other role. IT was nice that the [middle manager] took the time to go through that with me.

J - Do you think there is anything which specifically enables you to learn in your workplace? I know you have mentioned the structure of the team which your manager, middle manager and other team leaders, is there anything else at all?

B – Yes definitely the structure, but also having the processes in place. The naming processes in place mean that I don't have to go to the managers all the time because I can go to the work instructions. Instead of going to anyone actually so I can get on an idea of anything I could be working on and get the assistance with. So you can try to learn by yourself before having to go anywhere else.

B - Having an understanding of each business unit especially with the other team I came from, when I'm working in [the new team] I have to have an understanding of what some of the roles are so that's looking at your descriptions and talking to supervisors, that way I have a better understanding and it reflects in the office when there is a question about something irrelevant to my [work] process. That

way I'm able to help out with more work in the office. Having the processes and work instruction in place is essential for learning I think.

B - Being able to talk to each other and other people in other areas about anything you may not have an understanding of, being able to go talk to them and feeling that you are all quite welcome to talk to them is great. It is the culture and the feeling. A lot of people here with a lot of experience and knowledge so it is good to have informal mentors and help.

J - In the opposite of enablers to learning, do you have any specific barrier to learning that you have experienced?

B – Barriers could potentially be, if my manager or the [middle manager] is not there and something critical happens or if I have never dealt with something before. Our managers are out of the office quite a lot and are not always available because they are quite busy or in meetings. This is where the other team leaders may not know really the answers. This is the only barrier.

B - For example something went wrong 5 minutes before a [meeting] luckily the manager was there because i have never dealt with that type of situation before and if they hadn't of been there i may have not been able to deal with it at all. So they taught me to fix the situation for next time. However, when discussing it later the two people above me handled the same situation differently. So we came together and had a meeting to discuss when they are both out of the office how I would deal with this problem if it came up again. I booked a meeting to get information from the managers and to make them both aware of the situation and find out what are we going to do.

B – That is the thing that the employees in our office are comfortable to book a meeting and chat to people. My manager will often do scenario type questions and these are helpful for me to learn. What would you do in this circumstance? They will let you think about it and then we will come back to them with some examples.

J – This is the type of reflective learning I talked about earlier where you are learning by being able to sit down and reflect and think about the situation and then come back to clarify and continue your learning.

B – Yes it definitely furthered my learning these type of questions. My managers have a wealth of knowledge so it is good to learn form them.

J - 8. How important do you think it is for your manager to be the facilitator of learning, with regard to whether your manager is dictating your learning, or you are asking for the learning?

J – For example for your manager to come to you and to give you scenario questions. Some managers may think they are the manager and it is their job to manage employees and not to be a coach or a mentor. Whereas, some employees think that they don't want their manager to be in charge of their learning at all. Where do you sit on that?

B- I think it's important for managers to be more hands on with their employees. I don't like a hands-off approach when they say "I'm too busy, I'm a manager I'm not dealing with this, I'll give it to someone else to deal with". I think is good for employees to interact with the seniors and managers because they have the knowledge and I think it's good for the development of the employees try to get the knowledge from the higher up staff to progress. So, I think it is important for managers, like my manger to give me scenarios to see what I would do and having that interaction because if I had a manager that said "you deal with other people don't come and talk to me, I don't want to know anything" I probably would not stay at the job if I had a manager who kept information from me. I

want that guidance and to deal with situations rather than say not my job. So yes if I had a manager like that I probably would not stay.

J - Do you think that the role of a manager has been changing over the past decade? In terms of the learning that you are receiving at all?

B - I have worked for the same people the whole time. For me it was me as an employee changing. Quite daunting for me at the start. I was more comfortable to, and more confident to go talk to other colleagues. But as I become more comfortable and confident I know am more comfortable with managers. I often think, this is what I think I can ask for and go and ask them. In a [previous role] I reported straight to the manager. The [middle manager] came to me and asked me to report to [them] directly. They fought with the manager to get me, because, they approached me because they wanted to teach me and guide me and since then have put the effort in to development of me, and pushed me to act in other roles. There has been massive change but I am happy. My manager has always been approachable.

J – This is an interesting observation that you are the one who was changing over time.

J – Is there anything you would change about the organisation that you would change if you could?

For me personally my role is very specific, sometimes I feel pigeon-holed. Instead of focusing on one particular area I would lie to be able to get experience in different area and their generic skills. In the future it is easier to get a job if you have more generic skills rather than ones specific only for this job. I want to be challenged more. Not as challenging as I was when I was on other duties

JB – the problem is that I don't necessarily have the time to be challenged. I am so busy with my role

J – I am going to add this to the barriers question.

B – Yes I think it is. The barriers I experience are definitely time. I want to learn more, but because we are busy I am not always at my desk and therefore not able to learn. But I like to have other duties whenever I can and I like it to be busy, so it is hard.

J - Is there anything else that you would like to add? IS there anything that you thought that I would ask but didn't?

B – No thank you, you have done a really good job.

J – Thank you. You have given me great information and you have given me lots to think about.

J – I will take this away from here and write up the transcript of this interview, but while this is happening if there is anything you are thinking about later, or if you think you have forgotten anything please contact me, send me an email and let me know.

End of Interview

7.10 Managers and Employees intentions and actions for learning

Table 29. Examples of where managers believed that they achieved their learning intentions and examples of managers' beliefs on enablers and barriers to learning

Examples of managers explaining intentions and actions aligning	Examples of employees explaining intentions and actions aligning
• Explain to people the culture of the COJ • Stuff you don't get taught at the induction • I give advice, protection and support • I like to have 360-degree feedback • Discuss – Robust – open conversations • Provide tools, training opportunities, equipment, environment • [Managers should] actively encourage to make yourself distinguishable from others • Managers role to make sure learning happens • Challenge employees to make their own opportunities • My job is to make sure the people doing the hard work are as free as possible to do that work	• I would not stay at the job if I had a manager who kept information from me • I am able to bounce things off [my manager] • Everyone gets their say • Good atmosphere to work in. • Manager makes the effort to come and see me • What do you need to do to get your dream job? • Travel very far from home to work so my work would have to be good to make me stay • I make [my learning needs] explicit. • does not make you feel bad about making mistakes • Not enough time for managers to be facilitators of learning but they do try to make time • Manager thinks he had an open door policy but he gets stressed. Wait a few hours before i go in

Table 30 A. Examples of where employees believed managers achieved their learning intentions and examples of employees' beliefs on enablers and barriers to learning

Examples of employees explaining intentions and actions aligning	Examples of employees explaining enablers	Examples of employees explaining barriers
• I would not stay at the job if I had a manager who kept information from me • I am able to bounce things off [my manager] • Everyone gets their say • Good atmosphere to work in. • Manager thinks he had an open door policy but he gets stressed. Wait a few hours before i go in • Manager makes the effort to come and see me • What do you need to do to get your dream job?	• Always being 'open' • Manager appears to be doing things • Having processes in place • Being able to talk to each other and other people in the area • Culture • Would you like to have a crack? • Formal performance management – to control the informal learning	• Not enough time for managers ot be facilitators of learning but they do try to make time • People have a fear they are not smart enough to learn • People didn't believe they could do it • Organisation is insular • Not that many opportunities • Siloed approach

Table 30 B. Comparison of Managers' and employees' beliefs on how managers make learning intentions into actions and the enablers and barriers to learning

Examples of managers explaining intentions and actions aligning	Examples of managers explaining enablers	Examples of managers explaining barriers

• Opportunities to study
• Act up into senior roles
• Self-directed learning. Post-grad/undergrad or masters/Diploma level
• Explain to people the culture of the COJ
• Stuff you don't get taught at the induction
• Communication
• HR induction
• Coach, experience and professionals
• I give advice, protection and support
• I like to have 360 degree feedback
• Discuss – Robust – open conversations
• On the job training
• Structure
• Provide tools, training opportunities, equipment, environment
• Job shadowing
• Conferences/seminars
• Mentoring/intern/trainee
• Formal training – Uni/TAFE
• Cross team collaboration
	• Driven by the CEO
	   o Interested
	   o Supportive
	   o Encourage attendance
	• Having access to HR information normal training e.g. Word/Excel
	• Can start and build up
	• Down to the area how it works out and how managers use the information
	• Organisation is open to further learning
	• Learning precinct
	• Seminars/Conferences
	• Values: of a manager – build it in the team
	• Not just ticking boxes – look at what you are doing.
	• Need a boss with a similar predisposition to me
	• Help remove stoppages
		• Reduce the number of pigeon holed staff members
		• Learning and development evolve to a new level
		• Job family – learning and development more interchangeable
		• Job rotation
		• Executive and risk
		• Confidential, risk integrity
		• Timing
		• Pressure on the workload.
		• Feel the pressure – don't give yourself enough time
		• Planning and timing
		• Good at business
		• Not enough training
		• More focus
		• Service centre – demands of customers - political interference
		• Expectations of the business unit
		• Persuade people
		• Balancing act
		• Low turnover in local government
		• Not a lot of flexibility
		• There are issues in the background going on.
		• Leadership issues.
		• Communication.
		• Employees: Don't like training
		• Can't allow people to get distracted

7.11 Comparison of Managers' and employees' examples of learning opportunities in their workplace

Table 31. Comparisons between managers' and employees' of examples of learning in the workplace

Examples of learning managers	Examples of learning employees
• [Encouragement to complete] post graduate, undergraduate or masters level study • Formal training – University, TAFE • Encourage attendance for professional bodies • Leverage off the skills employees have • Corporate training • Job specific training in the system • Study assistance • HR induction • General communication • Email • Face to face [learning opportunities] • Learning on the job – experience • Job shadowing/Job crossover • Conferences/Seminars • Front line leadership courses • Trainee/Intern/Trainee manager • Mentoring • Cross team collaboration	• External training • Learn from each other • Team meetings • emails • Coaching • Promote within – acting then up-skilling • On the job learning • Give access to information • Enhances skills and learning • Secondments • Shares and provides knowledge and experience • Been discussed at a meeting with him • Encourages and explain • Informal groups/mixed groups • Understanding others perspectives • Different understanding • Exchange knowledge • Don't separate staff • Brainstorming together – informal discussions • Reflection time

7.12 Enablers and barriers to learning in the workplace

Table 32. Examples of Managers' and employees' enablers and barriers to learning in the workplace

Examples of managers' enablers	Examples of employees' enablers	Examples of managers' barriers	Examples of employees' barriers
• Organisation is open to further learning • Learning driven by the CEO • Having access to HR information normal training e.g. Word/Excel • Learning precinct • Seminars/Conferences • Not just ticking boxes – look at what you are doing. • Help remove stoppages • Reduce the number of pigeon holed staff members • Learning and development evolve to a new level • Job family – learning and development more interchangeable • Job rotation	• Always being 'open' • Manager appears to be doing things • Having processes in place • Being able to talk to each other and other people in the area • Culture • Manager ask – "Would you like to have a crack?" • Formal performance management – to control the informal learning	• Timing • Pressure on the workload. • Planning and timing • Not enough training • More focus • Service centre – demands of customers - political interference • Expectations of the business unit • Balancing act • Low turnover in local government • Not a lot of flexibility • Leadership issues. • Communication. • Employees: Don't like training • Can't allow people to get distracted	• Not enough time for managers to be facilitators of learning but they do try to make time • People have a fear they are not smart enough to learn • People didn't believe they could do it • Organisation is insular • Not that many opportunities • Siloed approach

7.13 Examples of Managers' learning opportunities

Table 33. Examples of managers' opportunities provided for employees

Title	Title	Title
Emails	Mentoring	Learning from experience
Google things	Coaching discussions	Periodic Review of work
encourage the networks and connections and develop relationships	Encouragement to join professional bodies	Regular supervisory review
secondments	Formal training	Get direction
Attend meetings	Workshops/information sessions	Group sessions
debrief	Encourage social media	Listen to others
Team meetings	Track changes	Bounce 'things' off manager/sounding board
Socialise outside of work	Conferences/courses	Volunteer work
Create a good atmosphere	Meetings – Weekly/monthly	Trainee Manager
Job shadowing	Internship	Cross team collaboration
Job crossover	University/TAFE	Remove barriers to learning
Open door policy	Goal setting	communication
Opportunity for learning self-discovery	On the job training/hands on learning	Personal support
External personal support	Be proactive	Performance management

7.14 Perceptions of managers as facilitators of learning and if they are changing over the years

Table 34 A. Managers Perspectives

Manager	Employee
• Yes, it had changed • Now it is more the manager had control taken back from HR the training side of things. There is less managers who have it • Local government managers' association very bloaky and a higher age group. • The perception of local government managers is that they are predominantly start working in the company and there for long term and don't know how to change • University cause people to have different ideas • [This organisation] is a very bureaucratic organisation have to do things in different ways • It is a shock coming into the organisation	• Significant change in management style/thinking/personality/attitudes • Fear that managers have that the employees will take my job is not there • Do it a certain extent. My manager goes above and beyond. • Managers have the belief - "If you leave who will do your job?" • Management style development - Quite progressive • Previously I have placed the emphasis of managers – I need to take my own learning and make it my own responsibility. • Old manager was the cop type of manager • [Our manager] trust out team that we know what we are doing. • Definitely more of a priority now • Informal discussion rather that direction - Collaborative • Managers are open to team thoughts, ideas and suggestions • Now all about learning – actively facilitate • The organisation supports facilitating learning from the top down • Feels like they are encouraging us to learn

Table 34 B. Employee perspective

Manager	Employee
• Manager [individual] personality • Never had the type of manager you couldn't work for	• Necessary direction and control • Learning improved – recognising the nature of workplace is changing. Shift in workplace dynamics • External drivers – better management and leadership training • I'm lucky. Only every worked with coached not cops. • Need to tailor the message for different people • Management style does not work for everyone • Need to be flexible • Gets the best out of the [team] - we all want to work for him • Encourage me and this give me pride in my work.

7.15 Influences of gender in the workplace

Belief that the gender of a manager had an impact on the way managers enacted their roles as facilitator of learning within the workplace.

Table 35. Manager and employee responses to the impact of gender in the workplace

Manager	Employee
• Yes, there is a difference • In the [specific] role it was a mixture • It was a very "bloaky" environment • Man was the technical things and the soft skills were women. The corporate organisational requirements and reporting etc. • Male managers were no good [in the specific area] • Females seem to have a broader expertise • Females seem to be broad manage and leadership – not specific to 1 area.	• "Men are lovely; females are aloof" • "boys club" • "Females have a better all-around perspective" • "Shopping v Pub" • "Could be friends but not for the culture" • "Women being judged on how they look nice people" • "Male employees [are] more accepted to a female manager" • "Females tend to be focussed on processes" • "females may get attached" • "Male manager focused more on flexibility"

Belief that the gender of a manager had no impact on working relations within the workplace.

Table 36. Manager and employee responses to the impact of gender in the workplace

Manager	Employee
• No differences • Emotional intelligence • The social culture is changing • Strengths and weaknesses not a large disparity – not as it used to be • The fact is – [there are] more male managers than female managers • Evidenced based decisions • Not a great disparity • Women all respected. Down the chain. • Interaction not really • Lots of female in my area.	• "I let me work speak for me" • "No discernible differences" • "Does not register" • "Gender is irrelevant" • "Personalities not gender" • "Important to have a blend" • "Manager does not treat people differently" • "Not really – do what we do the best" • "Get the best candidate for the job" • "Industry not the gender"

7.16 Typography of Management Behaviours and Actions

Key Management Behaviour and Actions

The behaviours and actions below are those which have been identified by the researcher that should be employed to better suit the learning and work structures of the organisation.

Table 37. Typology of Behaviours

Management Behaviours	
• Take responsibility • Having a positive attitude • Have a strategy for learning • Supportive • Proactive in their approach to learning • Protective in approach to management • Be clear • Show interest in employees • Give time for being a facilitator of learning • Be consistent • Decisive • Prioritising	• Approachable • Respectful • Empower employees • Encourage employees • Trustworthy • Honest/Genuine • Good time management • Have regular processes • Support Reciprocal learning • Supports collegiate learning • Genuine and meaningful relationship between management and employees • Role model – Allowing employee to learn by watching the behaviours of their manager

Table 38. Typology of Actions

Management Actions

• Delegate well
• Follow up on actions/issues
• Share knowledge
• Have a strategy for learning
• Engage with learning processes
• Communicate expectations
• Quick to address issues
• Have reciprocal learning
• Clarify roles
• Clarify responsibilities
• Learn from mistakes
• Have an open-door policy
• Support employees in decision making
• Protect employees – stop the fear they will get in trouble
• Allocate appropriate budget where needed
• Challenge employees to learn
• Have an appropriate structure for employees to work in
    ○ Have appropriate work structures
    ○ Have appropriate learning structures

These behaviours and actions work in conjunction with the management typography to give managers a guide to being an efficient and effective manager as well as enacting their role as facilitator of learning.