Informal Learning at Work: Examining How Managers in the Public Sector Learn Informally in

the Workplace

by

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Abstract

Some of an organization's most valuable resources are their managers since they have a core function in directing and influencing strategy, controlling resources, and monitoring employee performance (Storey, 1989). It is unclear how managers learn to become managers as well as how, when, and where their learning occurs. Utilizing case study methodology, this study explored the informal learning of supervisors and managers in the public sector. The three research questions were (a) what are managers learning informally in the workplace, (b) how are managers learning informally in the workplace, and (c) what contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning? Results of the study found that supervisors and managers learn both leadership and management competencies and that leadership competencies are important to the overall informal learning and development of supervisors and managers. Second, supervisors and managers learn predominantly from participating in specific job-related activities in the workplace (e.g. acting and seconded positions), consulting others by asking questions and requesting feedback, and solving ill-structured problems. Lastly, contextual factors in the workplace can either create opportunities for, or barriers to, learning. There are three key implications for the informal learning of supervisors and managers. First, leadership competencies in addition to manager competencies are critical to the overall learning and development of supervisors and managers. Second, learning primarily occurs informally in the workplace. Therefore, expansive workplace learning strategies must be developed and supported by the organization in order to develop a competent supervisor and manager workforce. Third, since acting and secondment positions were used as the main method for succession planning and learning within the workplace, a standardized succession planning and management process should be developed to ensure equitable access to such opportunities.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Johanna Pagonis. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Informal Learning at Work", No. 00062810, July 3, 2016.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to the women and men in corrections who are passionate about what they do and inspire the future generation of correctional officers.

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I would like to thank the following people for encouraging me and supporting me in the pursuit of my PhD:

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Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Some of an organization's most valuable resources are their managers since they have a core function in directing and influencing strategy, controlling resources, and monitoring employee performance (Storey, 1989). A failure to develop manager competence may negatively impact recruitment and retention of employees, which is also likely to be negatively associated with performance (Sheehan, 2012). The need to build managerial capacity in the Government of Alberta has been recognized as a long-standing need and key enabler of delivering Alberta Public Service's People Strategy (Alberta Public Service, 2017). The results from the 2016 Employee Engagement Survey revealed that employee confidence in managers and leadership was the top driver for employee engagement in the public service (Alberta Public Service, 2017).

It is unclear how managers learn to become managers as well as how, when and where their learning occurs. Another consideration is the role and influence of formal, non-formal and informal learning, and how this impacts a manager's ability to learn and apply knowledge and skills to the work environment. Eraut, Alderton, Cole, and Senker's (2000) research on the mid-career learning of 120 managers and professionals in engineering, business, and health care sectors found that most of the learning that occurred was informal. Learning occurred and arose out of doing the job. For instance, solving problems, improving quality and production of work, coping with change, and developing relationships with colleagues and clients. Informal learning is relevant to a variety of workplace cultures and contexts, such as the private and public sectors, hospitals, health care professions, volunteer organizations, and academic institutions. The term *informal learning* has been used more frequently in adult education due to the contrast with

formal and non-formal training (Eraut, 2004). Informal learning occurs in a wider context and setting than formal and non-formal learning and encompasses a wider scope of environments that are rarely structured with learning in mind (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990).

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of my study was to explore how managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace so that I am better able to support managerial development in the public sector. The three research questions are:

1: What are managers learning informally in the workplace?

2: How are managers learning informally in the workplace: individually, socially, or both?

3: What contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning?

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, I have defined formal learning, non-formal learning, informal learning, codified knowledge, personal knowledge, process knowledge, and tacit knowledge within the context of Eraut's theoretical framework. According to Eraut's (2000) and Marsick and Watkins' (2001) workplace learning theories, formal learning can be defined as:

- Typically classroom-based or highly structured.

- An organized learning event.

- The presence of a designated teacher or trainer.

- Learner and program outcomes.

- The award of a qualification or credit.

I will define non-formal learning as those activities which are organized but are not awarded a qualification or credit, such as professional development workshops, seminars, and conferences. Informal learning can be defined as occurring outside of a classroom, less

structured, opportunistic, and in the absence of a teacher (Eraut, 2004). Furthermore, informal learning can be sub-grouped into a typology of three categories, which are (a) implicit, (b) reactive, and (c) deliberative. Implicit learning is defined as the attainment of knowledge independent of conscious attempts to learn and in the absence of explicit knowledge about what is learned (Reber, 1993). On the opposing end of implicit learning is deliberative learning. Deliberative learning is when time is set aside for acquiring new knowledge and when there is a clear work-based goal in mind. Learning can result from this arrangement. In between implicit and deliberative learning is reactive learning. Reactive learning is explicit, but takes place almost impulsively in response to a recent and imminent situation without any time being set aside for it (Eraut, 2004).

Eraut (2004) does not use dichotomies to explain the difference between informal and formal learning; rather he explains informal learning as coming closer to the informal end than the formal end of a continuum. Imagine informal learning existing on a continuum of its own with formality on one end and informality on the other. On the informality side are implicit, unintended, and unstructured learning occurrences, such as when an individual engages in her daily work duties. In the middle of the continuum are activities such as non-formal mentoring programs and work-based learning projects. On the formal side exists coaching, which can be seen as more of a structured learning event in most organizations (Eraut, 2004).

Eraut (1994) classifies knowledge into three categories: codified knowledge, personal knowledge, and process knowledge. Codified knowledge is given status through educational programs, examinations and courses. It is subject to peer reviews, debate, and quality control by editors. Non-academic codified knowledge can be found in the form of textual material containing organization of specific information, such as records and policy manuals. Personal knowledge is what individuals bring to a situation that enables them to think and perform. It

contains knowledge of people, situations, and the 'know-how' in the form of skills and practices. Process knowledge is about knowing how to conduct various processes that contribute to professional action. It requires a complex combination of knowledge and skills and requires an individual to reflect on their knowledge of people, situations and education. Codified knowledge is by its definition explicit, whereas personal and process knowledge can either be implicit or explicit depending on the context that it occurs in.

Another important term to define is tacit knowledge. Marsick and Watkins (1990) define it as knowledge that "typically resides in the context, outside of a person's main focus of attention, and is thus a fertile ground for informal…learning" (p. 23). Eraut expands the definition further by saying it is personal knowledge that can be used uncritically due to an individual's belief that it has worked well in previous situations or that she does not have sufficient time to identify another course of action. Schön (1987) refers to this as *knowing-in-action*, which is spontaneously derived without conscious deliberation and yields an intended outcome that falls within the boundaries of routine occurrences. Another important aspect of tacit knowledge is that it is not only derived from implicit acquisition of knowledge, but from the implicit processing of knowledge as well.

Significance

The workplace context can bring new perspectives and understandings to research and theory on learning. Research into the outcomes of informal learning in the workplace is limited (Eraut, 2004) and difficult to research due to the nature of informal learning. Because the majority of informal learning is invisible, taken for granted, or not recognized as learning, it can be hard for individuals to formulate an awareness of their own learning and subsequently articulate how they learn in the workplace (Eraut, 2004). Many individuals still equate learning

with formal education and training, but much of the knowledge acquired by managers has been acquired through experience such as daily routines and procedures, problem solving, discussions with colleagues, and through moments of reflection (Eraut, 2004; Schön, 1987). Although most management development occurs through formal and non-formal training, its impact and application will depend on the extent to which it can be transferred to the workplace (Eraut, 1994). It is common for managers to be good subject matter experts in their specified field, but struggle when it comes to the leadership characteristics of being a manager (e.g. motivating and developing staff, and managing organizational resources). Most knowledge and skills acquired about the managerial role (e.g. operational accountabilities, performance management, leading staff, etc.) takes place "on the job" and therefore the ability for an individual to transfer knowledge gained from a formal training event (e.g. leadership courses) to the workplace is much more complex than commonly assumed. It is dependent on recognizing what knowledge and skills are relevant and how to apply them to new situations and contexts (Eraut, 2004). Since much of management learning is informal, semiconscious and goes largely unnoticed, it is not uncommon for a manager to lack the ability to draw from other experiences that are relevant to the task at hand. A consequence of this is not being able to control and organize one's experiential knowledge to assist in decision-making and thoughtful analysis of a situation during periods of stress (Crichton, Lauche & Flin, 2008).

How an organization selects, promotes, and develops their managers can have reverberating implications for the long-term success of an organization. As mentioned above, a failure to develop managerial competence may negatively impact recruitment and retention of employees, which is also likely to be negatively associated with performance (Sheehan, 2012). To this day, many organizations cannot articulate the benefits of supporting informal learning in the workplace because the nature of informal learning is not widely understood (Eraut, 2004,

Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Many organizations have difficulty in developing strategic and effective practices that connect informal learning with organizational practice. Therefore, further insight into informal workplace learning will support organizations in designing and implementing meaningful and purposeful ongoing supports to enhance the quality of informal learning for managers and all employees.

Philosophical Paradigm

Socio-cultural workplace learning theories are situated within the philosophical paradigm of social constructionism. Constructionism and socio-cultural learning theory hold the same assumptions and beliefs. For instance, meaning does not reside in the object or the product waiting for the learner to discover it. The individual learner constructs meaning as she engages with the world around her. Constructionism has the view that all knowledge and reality is dependent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world (Crotty, 1998). Knowledge is essentially developed, communicated, and interpreted within a social context. Furthermore, social constructionism emphasises the importance of culture in human thought and action. It holds the view that without culture humans could not function. Humans are dependent on culture to direct and influence their behaviour and organize their experiences. All reality is socially constructed and creatively produced by human beings. It is constructed and reproduced through social life (Crotty, 1998). As in social-cultural workplace learning theories, learning cannot exist independent of the social context. Workplace learning is significantly shaped by social, organizational, and cultural factors. Socio-cultural learning theories take an opposing perspective from earlier generations of workplace learning theory to describe workplace learning and performance as intertwined phenomena that reject mind body dualism related dichotomies that state the mind and body are distinct from one

another. Workplace learning and performance incorporate a range of human characteristics that are constructed in a social context, and lastly challenges traditional understandings of learning in an attempt to re-theorize it (Hager, 2011). These viewpoints represent a holistic understanding of learning that is common to socio-cultural theories.

Different theories of workplace learning have evolved over the last 20 years to encompass not only individual learning in a formal setting, but multiple layers of learning such as informal, organizational, and group learning (Hager, 2011). Behaviourism had a major influence on learning theories before the emergence of workplace learning as a focus of interest. When workplace learning began to appear in the literature, the focus was on the individual learner as the unit of analysis. Learning is seen as a product that can be viewed as a thing in which the mind becomes the container of knowledge (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Learning can exist independently of the individual learner and from the context in which it is learnt. This means that learners can easily transfer learned knowledge and skills to diverse situations and contexts, because learned content is independent of context (Hager, 2011). The next generation of workplace learning theories that began to emerge in the literature were socio-cultural theories, which were strongly influenced by sociology and anthropology (Hager, 2011). Socio-cultural theories offer alternative ways of thinking about how individuals learn by rejecting the idea of the individual as the main unit of analysis. They also challenge the idea that learning is either an individual or social manifestation. Instead they argue learning can be individual, social, or both. Learning is an on-going process of participation in a variety of activities (Hager, 2011).

Researcher Position

I come to this research as a new manager in the Alberta government. I was promoted as the manager of a newly formed unit that designs, implements, and evaluates professional

development for employees moving into supervisor and managerial positions. My unit must ensure that individuals moving into new management positions feel ready, willing, and capable of taking on the challenges of their new role.

When I acquired the position I pondered if I could really do the job. I kept wondering, how could I lead a team in developing management training if I myself was not sure what knowledge I gained, how I gained it, and what supports in my work environment facilitated my learning? Some of my learning that prepared me for this new role was informal and largely invisible, since I was not conscious of it at the time it was occurring. I lacked the awareness of my own learning and took much of it for granted. It was only when I was promoted to a manager that I began to reflect on my past experiences. Although my unit focuses mainly on manager development through non-formal training, I am aware that learning can also occur informally in the workplace.

Assumptions

My personal assumptions are based on my personal learning experiences as a manager. One personal assumption is that learning is largely informal and goes unnoticed unless I am prompted to reflect and draw on conclusions of how experiential knowledge influences practice. I also hold the assumption that learning is influenced by many factors and it is not possible to fully research and understand the phenomena of informal learning without considering the context. Knowledge and experience does not only occur within the individual but are influenced by the workplace, such as culture, norms, and business practices. The attainment of knowledge does not occur independently from the context of its acquisition, but is situated in the activity and culture in which it is developed.

A research assumption is that an emphasis on depth versus breadth is essential in examining and exploring informal learning in the workplace. The advantage to socio-cultural workplace learning theories is that they consider the context of how learning occurs (Hager, 2011). Hence, spending a considerable amount of time in the workplace of where learning ensues is critical so that a deep and insightful exploration of informal learning can occur. Although I used interviews as one data collection strategy, the largely unconscious and tacit nature of informal learning limits my ability to fully explore the phenomena. Therefore, a case study allowed me to select a specific site that gave me access to managers in an environment where informal learning occurs. A case study gave me the ability to spend time at the worksite observing and collecting field notes about the context and how it impacts learning in the workplace.

Summary

In this chapter I introduced my researcher position and personal connection to the purpose and rationale for my research interest of how managers learn informally in the workplace. I stressed that some of an organization's most valuable resources are their managers, but yet it is unclear how managers learn to become managers as well as how, when, and where their learning occurs. My dissertation addresses this gap by addressing the following research questions, which are (a) what are managers learning informally in the workplace, (b) how are managers learning informally in the workplace, and (c) what contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning? I propose that the results of this study will support organizations in designing and implementing meaningful and purposeful ongoing supports to enhance the quality of informal learning for managers and all employees.

In the next chapter I describe and analyze the philosophy, theory, and literature underlying the exploration of informal learning in the workplace for managers in the public sector. I discuss the gap in manager learning and the important role managers play in an organization's performance, before concluding with a discussion regarding the unique methodological challenges in researching informal learning in the workplace, and my approach in mitigating those challenges.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

In the previous chapter I discussed my personal connection and rationale for exploring how managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace. I discussed the nature of the research problem, my research questions, definitions, significance, and my personal and researcher assumptions.

In this chapter I describe and analyze the theory and literature underlying the exploration of informal learning in the workplace for managers in the public sector. This chapter has been divided into four sections. In the first section I present the theoretical frameworks that structured my approach to this research study. The second section focuses on the need and value of this research through a discussion regarding the gap in scholarship about manager learning. In the third section I examine the nature of informal learning in relation experiential and transfer of learning. Finally, I conclude with a discussion regarding the unique methodological challenges in researching informal learning in the workplace and my approach in mitigating those challenges.

Theoretical Frameworks

    Socio-cultural workplace learning theories.

Theories of workplace learning have evolved over the last two decades, beginning with an initial focus on individual learning strategies and formal learning that now include informal and social learning processes. Theories that are well suited to studying informal learning in the workplace are sociocultural theories (Evans & Rainbird, 2006). Socio-cultural theories offer abundant perspectives for re-examining the nature of continuing professional learning and emphasize the significance of the context and the environment for learning (Hager, 2011). They recognize that skill and knowledge are embodied and demonstrate how individuals learn through

purposeful interaction in social settings (Evans et al., 2006). Lave and Wenger (1991) were very influential in the field of socio-cultural workplace learning theory with their seminal work on situated learning and peripheral participation (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005; Hager, 2011). Learning was not only considered to exist in the minds of individuals, but also situated within workplaces that could be seen as 'communities of practice' where social learning processes occur to support novices in becoming full participants in a community.

A criticism of Lave and Wenger's theory is that it places a great deal of weight and importance on learning being situated in practice, but is largely silent about the individual's learning as she moves from novice to full participant (Fuller et al., 2005; Hager, 2011). Their theory also does not pay enough attention to the learning of experts who join an existing community and how it differs from that of novice learners (Fuller et al., 2005).

Another influential socio-cultural theory is Engeström's (2001) cultural-historical activity theory. Engeström's contribution to activity theory was his conceptualization of activity systems. Workplaces are activity systems that encompass different elements, such as workplace rules and procedures that shape participation in the activity, division of labor, and mediating tools and artefacts. In an activity system a subject may be an individual or collective system who is motivated towards the solution of a problem or purpose. The above elements are not isolated, but continually interact to deal with tensions and contradictions that help practitioners focus on the root causes of tensions and problems. Although Engeström's theory accounts for social, organizational, and cultural factors within an activity system, one might question if all learning at work occurs from contradictions and tensions within the system (Hager, 2011). The primary component that is being studied is a collective activity system that interacts with other activity systems, but to what extent is the learner the unit of analysis against the system being studied?

A range of other researchers and authors have developed theories of learning at work that

focus on the individual learner as the primary unit of analysis, but also emphasize the importance of social context, such as Eraut's (2004) theory of informal learning in the workplace. Eraut's theory focuses not only on individual learning factors but contextual factors as well. Eraut recognizes the social significance of learning and that workplace learning and performance are significantly shaped by social, organizational, cultural, and other contextual factors. Eraut's theory builds on Schön's (1987) seminal work, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, which sees workplace learning involving knowing-in-action and *reflection-in-action*. Schön rejected the dominant theory of his time, technical rationality, which endorsed the ideology of professional practice employing standards of disciplinary knowledge to analyze and solve problems in the workplace. Technical rationality assumes problems are well-formed constructs that practitioners can solve using a standard set of solutions or techniques. Just like Schön, Eraut's (2004) theory sees learning as taking place in a much wider variety of contexts than formal education or training. Eraut further argues, "managerial … performance [is] normally complex and typically involves simultaneous use of several different types of knowledge and skills, which have to be learned more holistically" (p. 248). Managers cannot simply refer to a manual to find the appropriate solution because problems can be messy and challenging and may have indeterminate resolutions. This affects a manager's ability to think and reflect in order to determine the best course of action for the problem she is trying to solve.

Eraut (2007) sees the majority of workplace learning being informal and involving a combination of learning from other people (e.g. coworkers and mentors) and learning from personal experiences acquired in the workplace. An important argument that Eraut (1994) makes is that professional knowledge cannot be explained in a manner that is detached or independent from the context in which the knowledge is acquired. Professional knowledge must be examined through the context of its attainment and its use. That is how the essential nature of knowledge

acquisition is revealed. Furthermore, different types of knowledge are integrated into professional performance in ways that are difficult to disentangle. Eraut's theory of informal learning in the workplace fits nicely within the constructionist paradigm, because it holds the epistemological belief that consciousness is intentional and that human beings in their totality are intentionally related to their world (Crotty, 1998). Hence, Eraut's (2004) socio-cultural theory of informal learning in the workplace was used as my principal theoretical framework that guided the design and analysis of my study.

In addition to using Eraut's theory to guide my data analysis, I drew inspiration from Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) theory of *primal leadership* and *emotional intelligence* as well as from Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model. The next sub-sections will provide a literature review of the theories that were used in this study.

Eraut's theory of informal learning in the workplace.

Eraut's research interests are in the professional knowledge and the enhancement of informal learning. Eraut's research focuses primarily on early career and mid-career learning in varying professions, such as accounting, nursing, and engineering. Eraut's (2007) theory comes from the findings of a longitudinal study of early career professional learning, which focused on the first three years of employment of newly qualified nurses, graduate engineers seeking chartered status and trainee chartered accountants.

Eraut (2007) examined how time and workplace pressures influence one's ability to think. Eraut developed a model that links four types of professional activity or elements of performance to amounts of thinking time. The four types of activity are:

1. Assessing people and situations, either for a brief or lengthy amount of time, and continuing to monitor the outcome.

2. Deciding what action to take, either immediately, or over a longer period of time.

3. Following a course of action and then modifying, consulting, and reassessing as needed.

4. Metacognitive processes, such as controlling one's behaviour and ongoing learning in a context of constrained time, resources, conflicting priorities, and multifaceted professional connections and interactions (Eraut, 2007, p. 259).

The activities may be combined into an integrated performance that does not follow a linear process of analysis, choice, and action. The holistic nature of performance involves thinking about how to carry out these activities, which is dependent on the performer's ability and prior learning. At times the situation calls for a rapid decision to be made, while at other times the decision is more deliberate. Thus, the model presumes that time is the variable that influences the mode of cognition and divides the time continuum into three phases, which are (a) instant, (b) rapid, and (c) deliberative. In circumstances where time is "at a premium" people rely on more intuitive approaches in order to do things more quickly (Eraut, 2007). This reinforces the research on expertise. It is not how much an experienced worker knows, but how her knowledge is organized for rapid, efficient, and effective use. Effective decision-making relies on the individual's framing and understanding of the situation and the personal knowledge of the individual (Dreyfus, 1997; Eraut, 2004). This leads us to three important questions that guided most of Eraut's research of informal learning in the workplace, which are (a) what is being learned, (b) how is it being learned, and (c) what factors affect the level and directions of learning effort? These questions present a framework for addressing learning in the workplace.

What is being learned?

Both knowledge and learning can be examined from two perspectives: the individual and the social. The individual perspective enables the researcher to explore what and how people learn as well as how they interpret what they learn. The social perspective gives consideration to the social construction of knowledge and contexts for learning. Cultural knowledge plays an

important role in most work-based practices and activities. It is acquired informally through participation in social activities and at times individuals are unaware of its influence on their behaviour (Eraut, 2004). Culture can shape an employee's attitudes and values regarding when, where, and how learning occurs. For instance, do managers support and encourage the onboarding of new employees through informal mentoring and job shadowing? The professional identity of an employee is developed and defined through the cultural work practices of an organization. Colley, James, Diment, and Tedder (2007) define this as vocational habitus. Vocational habitus has a strong influence on the values, attitudes, and beliefs an employee adopts within their work environment.

Eraut (2004) developed a typology of what is being learned in the workplace to guide his research into informal learning. The typology is broken down into eight categories: task performance, awareness and understanding, personal development, teamwork, role performance, academic knowledge and skills, decision making and problem solving and lastly, judgement. Although it is presented as a typology it can be used as a method of exploration when researching the potential aspects of learning in various contexts. Many aspects of performance are developed over a person's career through on going learning.

Eraut (2004) presents his typology as a learning trajectory. The concept of a learning trajectory provides two advantages. It describes what individuals develop over time through a series of jobs and roles and can allow individuals to plan and evaluate learning experiences from different contexts (McKee & Eraut, 2012).

How is it being learned?

Much of the research into informal learning has revealed that learning is primarily informal and occurs within the workplace. It is mostly supported by consultation, collaboration, and relationships with others and is dependent on how challenging the work is. Learning is an

integral part of our everyday work experiences and deals with situations within our natural working contexts. Hence, informal learning takes place in the normal course of daily events without a high degree of design or structure (Eraut, 2007; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Wenger, 1998).

To explain how informal learning occurs in the workplace, Eraut (2007) created a typology that categorized learning processes as either the principal purpose of the work activity or a by-product of it. The typology is broken down into three categories, which are (a) work processes with learning as a by-product, (b) learning activities located within work, and (c) learning processes at or near the workplace.

Work processes with learning as a by-product account for a high proportion of learning. An individual's success is dependent on the quality of the relationships within the workplace. Types of activities that fall under this category are, participation in-group processes, working alongside others, consultation, tackling challenging tasks, problem solving, trying things out, and refining skills. Learning activities located within work are embedded in most of the work processes just described above but are also found in short episodes, such as asking questions, locating resource people, listening and observing, learning from mistakes, giving and receiving feedback, and use of mediating artefacts. Learning processes at or near the workplace are activities whose main objective is learning. For example, being supervised, coached, mentored, shadowing, attending conferences, and short courses (Eraut, 2007).

A note of caution is that most informal learning in the workplace does not reach its full potential when there are high employee turnover rates in the workplace. This can impact how much workers learn from each other and support one another and the additional learning opportunities that are provided. Many workplaces discourage finding out about external resources and networks of new members and external organizations (Eraut, 2004). A group

climate for learning has to be created and sustained in spite of the ever-changing workplace environment. Therefore, senior leaders of organizations should play an important role in creating positive workplace learning climates that can improve the engagement of their staff (Sheehan, 2012).

Factors affecting learning in the workplace.

This final research question is based on an important paradigmatic assumption that it is difficult to draw conclusions about cause and effect that can be generalized to diverse contexts. Since Eraut's (2004) theory is grounded in socio-constructionism, rules of generalizability are not relevant. Instead, Eraut's approach has always been to search for factors impacting learning directly or indirectly in a variety of contexts. The ways in which these factors interact and emerge will differ greatly from one context to another. Eraut identified three learning factors, which are (a) challenge and value of work, (b) confidence and commitment, and (c) feedback and support. He also identified three context factors that influence learning factors: (a) allocation and structuring of work; (b) encounters and relationships with people at work; and 3) expectations of a person's role, performance, and progress. In the interviews Eraut conducted he noticed that for novice and experienced workers alike confidence was very important. Being proactive in searching for learning opportunities required confidence. Confidence arose from meeting challenges successfully. The confidence to take on new challenges depended on the extent to which workers felt supported in their efforts from the people at work.

Commitment to work is a complementary factor to confidence, which influences when and how workers interact with their colleagues and how proactive they are in taking advantage of learning opportunities. Commitment is created through social inclusion in teams and by appreciating the value of work (Eraut, 2004). Through Eraut's (2004) research the allocation and structuring of work was found to be a central factor of their respondents' ability to do the job. It

affected the challenge of work and the extent to which one could observe and work alongside a more experienced colleague who could provide feedback, support, or advice. Hence, encounters and relationships with people at work are important contextual factors that influence learning in the workplace.

Although Eraut's theoretical framework primarily guided the design and analysis of this study, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) theory of primal leadership and emotional intelligence in addition to Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model informed my thinking during the data analysis. The next section will provide a review of the theory of primal leadership and emotional intelligence, and a review of Davenport and Harding's manager model in relation to my research study.

Primal leadership and management.

According to Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) no matter what leaders set out to do their success depends on how they do it. Leaders ignite passion and inspiration by working through emotions. A leader's primal task is to drive emotions in the right direction to support her team in achieving organizational objectives. The key to make primal leadership work lies in the manager's ability in regulating her emotions as well as the emotions of others. This is referred to as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1997).

Emotional intelligence is linked to the neurological mechanisms of the brain and what scientists have begun to call the *open-loop* nature of the limbic system (Goleman et al., 2002). An example of a *closed-looped* system is the circulatory system, which is self-regulating and independent of the system of other people around us. An open-loop system depends primarily on external sources to manage itself (Goleman et al., 2002). This means that managers rely on connections with others for their own emotional stability, which has strong implications for my study since informal learning is primarily dependent on the relationships and supports a manager

receives in the workplace (Eraut, 2004, 2007). According to Eraut (2007) the amount of confidence and commitment an individual possesses is influenced by encounters and relationships with people at work. When a manager feels good she tends to be more optimistic, which in turn can enhance her ability to develop positive relationships with peers, staff, and colleagues (Goleman et al., 2002).

Managers deal with complex problems and social realities (e.g. resolving conflict in the workplace), which can cause a manger to be overwhelmed with emotions of anxiety and fear (Goleman et al., 2002). The ability for a manager to control her emotions during times of stress is crucial if she is going to inspire and motivate her team in achieving their goals as well as foster an atmosphere of collaboration and trust. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) developed four core emotional intelligence domains that are the vehicles for primal leadership. The domains are closely interlinked with a dynamic relationship among them. For instance, a manager cannot manage her emotions if she is not self-aware. If a manager's emotions are out of control, her relationships will suffer. The four domains are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The first two domains determine how well a manager can regulate her emotions. The last two domains determine how well a manager can recognize and manage the emotions of others.

Being able to manage the emotions of oneself and of others requires empathy, which includes listening and taking other people's perspectives into account. Through empathy a manager is better able to manage conflict and inspire others towards a shared vision (Goleman et al, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). If a manager's ability to learn informally is dependent on being able to work alongside others, locate resource people, receive feedback and support from others (e.g. mentors) then emotional intelligence is of theoretical and practical importance to my study because it can influence what and how a manager learns in the workplace.

Although emotional intelligence speaks to a manager's leadership competencies, a manager also requires the ability to oversee systems and processes and achieve results. I refer to these skills as managerial competencies. I define a competency as "an underlying characteristic of an employee (i.e. motive, trait, skill, aspects of one's self-image, social role, or a body of knowledge) which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job" (Rothwell, 2001, p. 77). According to Davenport and Harding (2010) the term manager has lost its allure while the term leadership has gained momentum. Management has been defined as a layer of management in an organization whose primary responsibility is to monitor resources and activities while reporting to senior management (Davenport & Harding, 2010). Notwithstanding, managers play an important role in allocating financial and human resources, achieving results, and managing employee performance. Leadership and management represent two different disciplines that are both critical for business success. Leadership and management denote different actions and different outcomes. Leadership for instance is the ability to connect and develop relationships with others (e.g. how are managers learning), while management consists of overseeing processes and implementing systems (e.g. what are managers learning) (Davenport & Harding, 2010).

Eraut's (2004) typology of what is being learned in the workplace serves as a universal learning trajectory that describes what individuals develop over time through a series of jobs and roles. Therefore, it was important for me to find literature that spoke specifically to the skills a manager must acquire. To gain a better understanding of what managers learn informally I referred to Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model which assumes managers play a role in the creation and application of knowledge. Leveraging multiple sources of learning from staff, peers, and colleagues will support a manager's development, which in turn will lead to organizational growth.

The Gap in Scholarship about Managerial Learning

Little is known about how organizations train and develop their managers. Studies on human resource management are abundant in the literature, but few have examined the way organizations develop their managers and the impact it has on their performance (Mabey, 2008). This gap is surprising given the high amount of budget dollars an organization spends on workforce development (Garavan & Heraty, 2001). Some organizations rely on informal and on-the-job development opportunities, while other organizations expect managers to acquire their qualifications through formal education. In some cases, organizations spend little time and money on management development and see it more as a reward when the fiscal climate allows for it (Mabey, 2008).

Managers have to function within situations of uncertainty and change and deal with ill-structured problems on a regular basis. Research into real life decision-making and problem solving does not rely on classical decision-making, which is based on choosing a course of action from a fixed set of known alternatives, but rather based on information that is incomplete, ambiguous, and shifting (Crichton, Lauche & Flin, 2008; Davenport & Harding, 2010; Eraut, 2004; Schön, 1987; Zsambok, 1997). Learning at work is becoming a key focus of development in the field of management and is a central concern for organizations (Marsick & Watkins, 1999, 1990; Cook, Hunsaker, & Coffey, 1997). Organizations need to create a climate for managers where continuous learning is not only supported, but is embedded in workplace culture as well (Marsick & Watkins, 1999). Managers need to appreciate the vital role they play in their own learning, but also in fostering a learning environment for their employees. Employees at any level need to strive to learn throughout their careers to improve their effectiveness and performance in the workplace (Boud & Garrick, 1999). Informal learning is an important process

organizations can learn more about so that opportunities and problems within work are creating the need for new knowledge and understanding.

Knowing how to support informal learning of managers is dependent on what managers actually do. Mintzberg (1989) shows managers have a difficult time delegating tasks, which causes them to be overburdened with obligations. This results in being overworked and conducting many tasks superficially. The resulting chaotic nature of a manager's work environment makes the job very complex and challenging, yet the very implicit and tacit characteristics of managerial work have made it difficult for researchers to explore and examine ways to improve it (Marsick, 2003). This has caused researchers to focus more on specialized functions of the organization. Notwithstanding, work and learning are still seen as separate categories that never overlap. Work is about generating an income, whereas learning is about education and occurs before entering the workforce. Training is also seen as something that might be necessary at the beginning of a new job but any other knowledge that is needed can be picked up from learning on the job or from colleagues (Boud & Garrick, 1999; Eraut, 2004). Typically, managers are expected to figure out how to do the job with very little to no guidance, which can lead to embarrassing initial consequences (Mintzberg, 2013). Just because a correctional peace officer may have mastered the skills required to do the job as a frontline worker, does not mean she is capable of managing a team of her peers with little support or guidance.

For new and existing managers alike, the philosophy of "learn as you go" becomes increasingly difficult to tolerate. There are significant organizational and cultural barriers to individual and organizational learning, such as people management systems that rely on command and control, a culture of blame where mistakes are punished by leaders within the organization, and relationships characterized by little trust and tolerance for creativity (Evans et

al., 2006). Managers are required to balance the immediate demands of the organization against the needs of their employees (Eraut 2004; Mintzberg, 2013). A manager needs to support and inspire their employees to improve and sustain employee engagement, in addition to playing a central role in the transmission of an organization's culture. This is important because when workers accept the culture it can increase their commitment in achieving the organization's objectives (Kamoche, 2000).

Many theorists support the point of view that a manager's learning is best shaped when she has a considerable amount of self-awareness regarding her strengths, limits, self-worth, capability, and disposition towards questioning her assumptions so that she may stop to reflect about what is transpiring (Beckett, 1999; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Eraut, 2004; Schön, 1987). Schön (1987) refers to this as reflection-in-action. Reflection-in-action occurs when something in the environment triggers recognition that something out of the ordinary is occurring and therefore requires special attention. Reflection is conscious because it causes people to question their assumptions of what they have always known to be true, as is the case with knowing-in-action. Reflection then gives rise to on-the-spot experimentation. A manager will try out a new action to test their new understanding of the phenomena they are observing. The importance of reflection-in-action is the immediate importance for action (Schön, 1987).

Argyris (1993) also stresses the importance that learning should be in the service of action and not simply be constructed on discovery or insight. Managers must produce action that is based on evidence of other people's point of view of the situation, which might lead to modification of a manager's implicit knowledge of which course of action to take. A manager's time at work involves an integration of thinking, feeling, communicating, and doing what occurs in a social setting (Eraut, 2004; Beckett, 1999). Deliberate awareness of what is occurring needs to be nurtured and brought to the surface of work life.

Managers are important in shaping the work environment and influencing how much autonomy employees have and how demanding their jobs are (Ellström & Ellström, 2014; Sheehan, 2012). Despite a general acceptance of the positive relationship between manager development and organizational performance, evidence supporting this claim remains weak (Ellinger, Hamlin, Beattie, Wang, & McVicar, 2011). It has been argued in the field of management that managerial expertise can be a source of strategic value in supporting organizational strategies, but the difficulty in establishing such linkages has led some to accept the value of managerial development as an "act of faith" (Kamoche, 2000). Little is known about how organizations train and develop their managers. Therefore, the findings of this research study can help organizations create a climate where continuous learning is not only supported but is embedded in workplace culture as well. Researchers and organizations should work together in creating dynamic, flexible, and inclusive character of the modern workplace and focus on how best to support informal learning that takes into consideration the dynamic and ambiguous environment that managers typically work within. Learning in the workplace should be supported in a way that is suitable to managers and their organization (Boud et al., 1999).

The Nature of Informal Learning

Although one can argue that the workforce has been changing since the industrial era (1760-1840), globalization is impacting the way organizations are sharing knowledge and competing in today's global market economy. Managers are becoming accustomed to continual and constant changes in the organization, pressure of competing stakeholder interests, changing demographics of the labor market, and unique situations to which they must respond to with limited time to think and reflect (Davenport & Harding, 2010; Schön, 1987). In such fast-moving working contexts skills and competencies need to be continuously developed for global

competitiveness. Methods for exploring learning both inside and outside of the workplace have to expand to include various processes and systems that can enhance employee performance (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Manuti, Pastore, Scardigno, Giancaspro, & Morciano, 2015). Research on informal learning in the workplace demonstrates that the majority of learning events in the workplace do not come from formal or non-formal learning instances, but are embedded as a part of normal work practices (Eraut, 2012; Wenger, 1998; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Support from colleagues and confidence in one's abilities to take on challenging tasks were some of the key factors that impacted learning in the workplace. These factors were in turn influenced by the perceived value of work and the quality of relationships at work. Many organizations have difficulty in developing strategic and effective practices that connect continuing professional development with working and organizational practices (Eraut, 2012).

The term informal learning has been used increasingly in adult education over the last few years and for several reasons (Eraut, 2004; Garrick, 1998, Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Informal learning provides a contrast to formal learning and provides a broader context within which learning occurs (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Scholars acknowledge the social significance of learning from others and introduce a wider diversity of settings than formal education or training can offer. The workplace context, although under-researched, provides new perspectives to research on learning because it encompasses a wide range of environments. A great deal of informal learning has been observed to occur in formal education settings, but research into the outcomes of informal learning is limited (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Eraut's (2007) research on workplace learning of professionals, technicians, and managers has revealed that learning in the workplace is primarily informal and involves a combination of observing others, mentoring, and learning from personal experiences. Since the workplace offers many informal learning opportunities, a goal for my research is to identify

strategies that can assist managers in understanding how to connect their learning to broader contexts and work activities (Evans & Rainbird, 2006).

Discussions regarding informal learning within the workplace have focused on how it can be enhanced to enable individuals to learn more efficiently and effectively in their day-to-day work (Garrick, 1998). Much of the focus on learning at work emphasizes techniques such as coaching, which can be categorized as deliberative learning where time is set aside with a clear work based goal in mind. Garrick (1998) argues that influential theories of informal learning have typically fallen under the umbrella of experiential learning. More notably, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, Carl Jung, and Carl Rogers were scholars who gave experience a central role in their theories of learning and development (Kolb, 2015).

Learning from experience.

Dewey (1938) is a prominent figure in learning and experience and his work has had a significant influence on the education system in the United States (Marsick & Watkins, 2001). Dewey's main principle was that experience is the best teacher. Learning is an active process of dealing with dynamic conditions and problems in the world through testing solutions and interacting with others. Of course, not all experience lends itself to learning. In fact, some experience can impede learning (Moore, 2010). A central feature of informal learning is learning from experience (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). When Eraut (2004) asks his participants to discuss their learning in the workplace they begin to talk about learning from experience (Eraut, 2004). But what constitutes experience? Does an experience consist of a single episode at one moment in time, or is it an accumulated series of episodes over a lengthy amount of time? In addition, how and when does experience contribute to learning? As previously mentioned experiential learning theory was inspired by the work of 20th century

scholars who gave experience a central role in their theories of learning and development. There are six propositions upon which experiential learning theory is built:

1. Learning is a process that isn't solely focused on outcomes. Engaging learners is important to enhance learning, which includes feedback on the effectiveness of their learning efforts.

2. Learning is relearning, meaning a process that elicits the learner's beliefs and ideas of a topic so that it can be examined, tested, and integrated with new ideas.

3. Conflict drives the learning process. Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaption to the world. When individuals are in the process of learning they transition back and forth between opposing modes of reflection, action, feeling, and thinking.

4. Learning does not only involve one aspect of human functioning, such as cognition. It must be seen as a holistic process that involves thinking, feeling, and acting.

5. Learning is a result of transactions between the individual and the environment. Piaget believed learning occurred through the balance of two dialectic processes: assimilating of new experiences into existing concepts and accommodation of existing concepts to new experiences.

6. Experiential learning theory states that social knowledge is created and recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner, which is grounded in a constructivist theory of learning. This contradicts a common educational practice where knowledge and content is transmitted from the teacher to the learner (Kolb & Kolb, 2005, p. 194).

Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience that is tested out in the experiences of the learner (Kolb, 2015). These experiences can be individual (e.g. experiencing an emotion) or environmental (e.g. experience acquired from employment). Kolb (2015) proposed that learning

is more effective when learners are actively involved in acquiring knowledge rather than being passive recipients.

Kolb (2015) developed a model termed the *experiential learning cycle*. The model consisted of four stages or modes of learning, two that are dialectically related modes of grasping experience, concrete experience (CE) and abstract conceptualization (AC), and two dialectically related modes of transforming experience, reflective observation (RO) and active experimentation (AE). Kolb's model of experiential learning cycles has not been widely accepted due to the fact that people are seen as being predisposed to learn in a certain way. People learn using different strategies that are developed according to the environment rather than it being the result of a personality trait. A concern with Kolb's theory is that when an individual is asked to refer to an experience she most likely will think of a single episode rather than discuss what they have learned from a series of incidents (Eraut, 2004).

Eraut (1994) explains experiential learning as situations in which experience occurs on the level of impressions requiring further reflection in order for it to be assimilated or accommodated into existing memory schemes. An experience may never become an experiential learning moment if learning is not the intended outcome or if the action required is too rapid for it to be reflected upon. Individuals are involved in a continuous flow of experience throughout their lives. In Schutz's (1967) classical text, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* he states that experiences become meaningful and contribute to learning when they are given attention and reflected upon. By simply paying attention to an experience it brings that experience into conscious thought so that it can be comprehended and acted upon rather than remaining at the level of an impression. Tacit knowledge may be used uncritically due to a belief system that a certain course of action has worked well in the past, or that there is little to no time to search for

an alternative solution (Eraut, 2004). This can occur when people are overworked and overburdened.

A distinguishing feature of workers who have accumulated a massive amount of knowledge through experience is not how much they know but how their knowledge is organized for rapid, efficient, and effective use (Schmidt & Boshuizen, 1993). This knowledge eventually becomes built into people's habits, procedures, decision-making, and ways of thinking. It is influenced through social processes on the conscious and semi-conscious level, such as norms, values, perspectives, and interpretations of events (Eraut, 2004).

The limitation to experiential learning is sampling. Unusual and noticeable occurrences tend to be remembered more than everyday behaviour, which can be problematic (Eraut, 2004). For example, a manager is more likely to remember and reflect on a subordinate's behaviour that is atypical than typical. Sampling can influence a manager's informal learning in the sense that her judgment, confidence, decision making, and relationship building will be swayed by those experiences. A way to mitigate the sampling issue is by becoming aware of assumptions and collecting more evidence in an effort to control bias (Eraut, 2004). As discussed in the previous section on leadership and management competencies self-awareness is important in being aware of one's strengths and limitations so that continual growth and development can occur.

Transfer of learning.

There are multitudes of ways an individual can learn informally. An individual can learn through interactions with others by seeing things from different perspectives, and she can learn from her mistakes as well as from her successes. As discussed above, informal learning takes place on a continuum of conscious awareness, and the degree of self-awareness plays a role in the clarity of learning (Eraut, 2004; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Schön, 1987). Eraut (2007) refers to this type of learning as implicit and it takes place in the normal course of day-to-day work

duties. Therefore, implicit learning can be an unintended consequence. Learning in the workplace involves engaging with others, and mastering challenging tasks and roles. A challenge for managers is transferring their learning to new and different contexts, which involves informal learning processes.

Adults transfer their learning between workplace settings in complex ways (Eraut, 2004; Evans & Rainbird, 2006). In order for codified knowledge to be converted into personal knowledge further learning and practice must occur so that it can be ready for use in a range of work contexts (Eraut, 2004). Evans and Rainbird (2006) use the analogy of the iceberg to explain this principle. Codified knowledge gained from formal education and non-formal courses is at the "tip" of the iceberg, which lies just above the surface of the water. The underlying personal knowledge and process knowledge is represented by the large mass of ice below the water's surface and is largely invisible to most. Much of this learning is tacit, minimal support is given to it, and its very existence is often denied.

Eraut (2004) concludes from his research findings that two phenomena were occurring in the transfer of learning. First, in order for codified knowledge to be used in a particular situation it had to be transformed in a manner that fit the new situation. This process involved analysis and examination of a situation until a potential course of action seemed appropriate. Second, in most situations several different types of knowledge had to be combined for problem solving to occur, yet the ways in which the knowledge was used remained mostly tacit. This led Eraut to the important conclusion that the transfer of knowledge from education (codified knowledge) to workplace settings (personal and process knowledge) is much more complex than commonly perceived. Transfer of learning involved five interrelated stages:

1. Extraction of potentially relevant knowledge from the context(s) of its acquisition and previous use.

2. Understanding the new situation, which involves informal social learning.

3. Identifying which knowledge and skills are relevant.

4. Transforming them to fit the new situation.

5. Integrating them with other knowledge and skills in order to think/act/communicate in the new situation (Eraut, 2004, p.256).

The workplace gives some attention to stage three, but takes stage two for granted (Eraut, 2004). Many organizations assume that codified knowledge gained from formal learning (e.g. university courses) is "ready to wear" and therefore do not provide support mechanisms to encourage the transfer of learning in the workplace, hence denying the very existence of stages four and five (Eraut, 2004).

Although managers learn from formal learning opportunities, the challenge for a manager is to transfer what she learned to a different context (e.g. workplace). This involves informal learning processes such as, observing others, mentoring, learning from personal experiences, and reflection (Eraut, 2007; Kolb, 2015; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Schön, 1987). When time is given for reflection, a manager will be in a better position to determine how the knowledge she gained through a university course applies to her work (Marsick & Watkins, 1990).

Methodological Challenges in Researching Informal Learning

Research studies on informal learning have focused on key lifetime events (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988), learning projects (Tough, 1971), recent changes in life or practice (Fox, Mazmanian & Putman, 1989), and situations where more knowledge or skill was needed (Slotnick, 1999). These studies focus on critical or salient episodes that highlighted learning from atypical events rather than everyday practice. That type of learning does not generate useful or meaningful data regarding implicit, reactive, and deliberative learning that occurs in everyday

practice (Eraut, 2004). In order to generate data on informal learning in normal practice, Eraut asked respondents to describe their work in a detailed manner that included ordinary aspects of work practice and to recollect activities from current and previous weeks. Eraut also wanted to know about weeks that were different and what made them different from ordinary, everyday aspects. The discussions then moved onto the type of knowledge and skill that were needed to complete the work and how these competencies were developed. Short observations of one to two days were also conducted when feasible to gain more understanding of the work setting and to initiate conversations about practice. The role of the interviewer and observer was that of an outsider who needed to have everything explained.

Researchers are faced with considerable challenges when researching informal learning in the workplace. So much of what is learned goes undetected, as is the case with implicit learning. But reactive and deliberative learning can also be difficult to recall and describe unless an unusual circumstance or a trigger occurs in order to bring the process of the incident into conscious awareness (Eraut, 2000; Kolb, 2015; Schön, 1987). To complicate things further participants are more likely to discuss learning from formal events than informal ones, because informal learning is a part of daily work duties. Informal learning events are not likely to be interpreted as learning unless the researcher can hone in on the experience in a particular and appropriate way (Eraut, 2000).

In order to depict the unique and challenging circumstances of researching informal learning in the workplace, I used case study research (Stake, 2005). Case studies are organized around issues that are complex and situated and connect daily practice in vocational habitus, which are the cultural practices of an organization (Colley et al., 2007; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). Case studies allow the researcher to focus on a specific case and retain holistic and real-

world perspectives, for example studying small group behaviour, school performance, and managerial processes.

Summary

I began this chapter by describing and analyzing the philosophy, theory, and literature underlying the exploration of informal learning in the workplace for managers in the public sector. I concluded the chapter with a discussion regarding the unique methodological challenges in researching informal learning in the workplace.

This examination led me to design a case study to explore the informal learning of managers in the workplace. In the next chapter I will describe all the elements of my research design, including the results of my pilot study, site selection, participant details, data collection methods, analysis procedures, delimitations, study limitations, and how I assessed the trustworthiness of my study.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

I begin this chapter with a description of how I designed the study to capture what managers are learning, how are they learning, and what factors affect the level and direction of learning effort. I will provide an explanation and discussion regarding the choice of methodology, the pilot study, site selection, participant details, data collection methods, analysis procedures, delimitations, study limitations, and how I assessed the trustworthiness of my research study.

Case Study Research

Case studies are a common way of doing research in a qualitative style and are useful in studying phenomena in their habitual context (Cronin, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). A case study enabled me to study and examine informal learning in the habitual setting of the participants. Case study research also aligns with the philosophical underpinnings of my research study, which are grounded in constructionism. I used Stake's (2005) criteria to guide my case study: issue choice, triangulation, experiential knowledge, contexts and activities. The criteria of issue refers to how informal learning is centered on complex issues that are situated within the daily practice of the participants. Triangulation is in regards to the redundancy of data gathering techniques in order to cross check data and interpretations. Experiential knowledge is how case study research facilitates the conveying of experiences of the participants in addition to enhancing the reader's experience with the case through the narratives of the participants. Context and activities refers to how the context influences informal learning activities.

Case studies are appropriate for qualitative methods and are suitable when dealing with interwoven complexities and issues associated with interpersonal processes that emerge in a

wider context, such as informal learning in the workplace (Cronin, 2014). Using a case study provided me an opportunity to explore and better understand the complex, multidimensional aspects of informal learning in the workplace (Anderson, Leahy, DelValle, Sherman & Tansey, 2014). Case studies have been commonly used in business, education, and workplace learning research (Colley et al., 2007; Cronin, 2014; Fuller et al., 2005; Yandell & Turvey, 2007). Case studies are an ideal methodology to use when studying the phenomena of informal learning in the workplace, because it gave me the ability to focus on the social and contextual world of the participants. According to Stake (2005) case studies pay attention to the experiential knowledge of the case and focuses on the influence of social and contextual factors. For instance, Cronin (2014) used case study research to study five students' experiences of learning in healthcare environments to explore real life contexts over the course of two years.

Another defining feature of case studies is that a case can be considered to be a bounded system, meaning the features of the case exist within a specified boundary while other features of the case exist external to that boundary. For example, it is hard to tell where a manager's learning ends and the environment begins, which creates an important methodological problem. How can I as the researcher distinguish and explain learning that is not known or recognized by the participants? Learning is influenced by social and cultural aspects rather than just individual ones and therefore should be studied in its authentic setting (Colley, et al., 2007).

Stake (2005) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple case study. Intrinsic case studies are used when a researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case because it is the particularities of the case that are of interest to the researcher. When there is less interest in the particularities of a specific case, a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon. Stake refers to this as the multiple case study. An instrumental case study is used if a particular case is examined mainly to provide

insight into an issue. Meaning, the case is of secondary interest and plays a supportive role to facilitate the understanding of something else. In order to capture learning in its authentic setting, I used an instrumental case study to explore and examine how managers in the public sector learning informally. My case study was delimited to managers within the context of a Canadian provincial government, specifically correctional centres. The informal learning of managers in the public sector was intrinsic to my case study because I wanted to better understand what, how, and the contextual factors that influence managers' learning. The context of a correctional centre was instrumental to my case in that it allowed me to closely scrutinize work processes that had informal learning embedded within them. For example, conducting debriefs after an emergency code provide an opportunity for managers and their staff to reflect on the events of the situation and discuss what worked well and what could be done differently in the future. Emergency codes and debriefs, which are a common occurrence in a correctional centre, do not commonly occur in other work place settings (e.g. office setting). Therefore, using a correctional centre as my study site facilitated my examination and subsequent understanding of how informal learning occurs in the workplace.

In order to understand the phenomena of informal learning of managers, I used purposive sampling (Stake, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The selection of my case study depended on my ability to have access to a large pool of managers so that saturation in my data collection methods was achieved. In addition, case studies of workplace learning should take place in dynamic contexts so that there are plenty of opportunities to observe informal learning occurring. That way I was able to research, observe, and understand the critical factors of informal learning as well as illustrate what was common and particular about how managers learn informally.

Human systems have a wholeness to them that requires in-depth investigation, which is a distinguishing feature of case study research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Correctional

centres are dynamic environments, which present many opportunities for learning to occur. Managers in a correctional centre must learn not only federal and provincial policies regarding the care, custody, and control of offenders, but they must also learn how to lead, guide, motivate, and supervise correctional peace officers. This provides many opportunities for problem solving and teamwork to occur within a variety of learning and contextual environments.

The design of the study received research ethics approval from both the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board and the participating correctional organization's ethics board. This included review and approval of my recruitment material (see Appendix A), interview questions (see Appendix B), letter of information (see Appendix C), and participant consent form (see Appendix D).

Pilot Study

The goal of the pilot study was to see how the participants would respond to the interview questions and to determine if any changes should be made. A total of eight semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix B) were developed to explore how learning is acquired informally through participation in social and individual activities, the types of work activity that lend to informal learning, as well as the various learning factors and context factors that impact learning. None of the interview questions were unstructured, or ambiguous to ensure specific aspects of informal learning were uncovered through the interviews. Questions were written in a way that I could get an idea of what I might have seen if I were present when the learning occurred. Three participants participated in the pilot study. Each participant was a manager in a Canadian provincial correctional centre.

Two of the interviews were done face-to-face and audio recorded. The third participant submitted her responses to the interview questions electronically. The purpose of using two

different methods (i.e. face-to-face and electronic format) was to see if there would be a difference in the quality and quantity of data collected. The face-to-face interviews averaged 1.5 hours in length. Overall, each participant provided detailed descriptions of their informal learning. I was very pleased with how fluid the conversation went for the face-to-face interviews and that participants did not require a lot of time to think before responding to the questions. This might be due to the fact that each participant was given the interview questions in advance and had an opportunity to reflect on their answers prior to the interview. This would certainly be the case with the participant who submitted her answers electronically.

Although Eraut (2000) claims that researchers are faced with considerable challenges when researching informal learning in the workplace because so much of what is learned goes undetected, the pilot study did not reveal this to be the case. One concern I had was the potential of participants discussing their formal learning experiences rather than informal ones. According to Eraut (2004) informal learning events are not likely to be interpreted as learning unless the researcher can hone in on the experience in a particular and appropriate way. Due to my concern regarding this issue the last question was included to get the participant to think of a salient learning episode that occurred in case general statements of learning were given. Over the course of the interview participants gave very detailed descriptions and examples of informal learning and therefore I began to feel the eighth question was not necessary. I asked it regardless to see what kind of answer it would generate. I was curious to find out if it would provide more insight into the participants' informal learning experiences. I am happy to report it did. Each participant gave a specific example of how informal learning occurred in the workplace. The importance of collaborating with others when learning in the workplace was a commonality that existed between all of the participants.

My initial assumption regarding the electronic submission of responses to the interview questions was that the level of detail in the electronic responses would not be as descriptive as the in-person interviews, which was exactly the case. The participant's responses were very brief and at times vague. Another limitation to submitting electronic responses to interview questions was that I was not able to ask follow-up questions to further probe when the participant made a relevant comment. Receiving the answers electronically limited how much relevant and informative data I got because of my inability to probe and ask follow-up questions. I concluded based on the findings from the pilot study that all interviews would be conducted face-to-face.

I also made slight changes to the interview questions. I discovered that questions 1 and 2 could be modified to provide better alignment with the research questions of the study. For instance, question 1 was modified to the following: (italicized words are added words to the original question) "How long have you been a *supervisor*/manager? *Tell me about all of your supervisory experience including when you first took on supervisory duties and any acting assignments as well."* I discovered the first participant had been acting in a supervisory capacity for at least ten years before being promoted to a manager. It was important for me to capture all of his relevant experiences, because it provided me with a strong context and understanding of his background. This enabled me to ask follow-up questions throughout the interview.

Question 2 was expanded to include "*why"* did you become a *supervisor*/manager? I realized that the "why" is just as important as the "how", because it provided more insight into their motivation to enter into a supervisory role. This motivation was linked with their determination in becoming a supervisor/manager and could influence their informal learning. Perhaps these participants are more motivated to collaborate and connect with others to learn and to provide learning opportunities for others? Both participants expressed the importance of verbal communication, collaboration, and teamwork as competencies required for the job.

Site Selection

As previously mentioned, my case study was bounded to provincial correctional centres due to the dynamic nature of the environment, which provided many opportunities to observe informal leaning. The participating correctional organization has over 1,500 employees and has several correctional facilities across the province that run on a 24-hour operation. I conducted my interviews and observations within three of the correctional facilities. Each centre had different units to house different types of inmates (e.g. general population and high-risk offenders). Each correctional centre housed both remanded and sentenced inmates and offenders, and each centre had an administrative wing where the managers' offices were located. Employees function within a structured hierarchy that is accountable to a correctional centre director and two executive directors who have oversight of all the correctional centres in the province. As mentioned above the participating organization has its own research ethics board from which I had to seek approval. This included review and approval of my recruitment material, interview questions, letter of information, and participant consent form.

In order to maintain the anonymity of my participants I am not able to divulge further details regarding the correctional facilities where I conducted my observations. Although each of the centres have many similar features, the uniqueness of their construction would make it easy for a reader with knowledge of correctional facilities to identify the specific centres in my study, and therefore potentially reveal who my participants were.

Participant Details

Supervisors in the study were individuals who transitioned from being a front-line worker to managing daily operations of correctional centre units and other front-line workers. Managers in the study are individuals who have transitioned from a supervisor position to a manager

position. Managers oversee centre operations and are responsible for the management of the supervisors on their shift. Supervisors and managers work varying shifts. Each shift is eight hours in length and is organized into three main shifts: morning shift, afternoon shift, and overnight shift. Although supervisors occasionally work overnight shifts, most managers work either the morning or the afternoon shift.

To recruit participants I attended a total of five manager meetings in three different sites to explain the purpose of my research, study procedures, benefits, risks, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity of participants. Although the meetings are referred to as manager meetings, supervisors were also in attendance. In total seventeen participants volunteered for the interview. Out of the seventeen participants six volunteered for observations and one volunteered to participate in journaling. The occupational backgrounds of participants were as follows:

Table 1

Description of participants in the study

Category	Manager	Supervisor
Avg. years of experience	13.7	9.6
Male	9	6
Female	1	1
Interview	10	7
Observations	3	3
Journaling	0	1

Note. Only males participated in observations and journaling activities.

In order to maintain the anonymity of my participants I am not able to divulge further details regarding their cultural backgrounds, age, or ethnicities. By sharing more information

regarding who they are, coupled with more detail regarding the correctional facilities they work in, could potentially make it easier for a reader who has experience working in corrections to identify the specific individuals in my study.

Data Collection Methods

I used three data collection methods: interviews, observations (optional), and participant journaling (optional). As I discussed above, the interview questions I developed were aligned with my three research questions. I provided each participant with the interview questions at least two days prior to the interview so they could review and reflect on their answers beforehand. This facilitated the ease and flow of the conversation between the participant and me. Each participant was interviewed once and the interviews were conducted at a time and location of the participant's choosing. All participants opted to schedule the interviews at their workplace during their working hours. Interviews were conducted in-person and were approximately 1.5 hours in duration. Interviews occurred either in the participant's office or in a meeting room the participant reserved. Each interview was audio-recorded with the permission of the participant. I took notes during the interview and conducted member-checks after each question was answered to ensure I correctly captured the participant's responses. Saturation of data occurred by the tenth interview, meaning I began to hear similar responses in the interviews. Nevertheless, I continued to collect data through interviews to increase the credibility of the data.

In addition to the interviews I also conducted observations with six of the participants. Although each participant partook in an interview, participation in observations was voluntary. Not every participant expressed comfort in being observed and therefore I made it an optional activity. Saturation of the data occurred by the third shadow shift when I began to observe similar patterns and behaviours. Albeit, I conducted three more shadow shifts to ensure my

observations were indeed objective and not influenced by participant or observer bias. My role

during the shadow shifts was to be an "observer as participant." In other words, I observed and

interacted closely enough with participants to establish trust, but I did not participate in actions

that involved actual work-related activities (Merriam, 1998). Each observation was

approximately 8 hours in duration and was conducted as a "shadow shift". Shadow shifts or

shadowing is a common work activity in correctional centres for the purpose of teaching a

novice correctional peace officer the "ropes" of the business. Since this was a common method

used by participants, I decided to use it as my method of conducting observations. Since

shadowing involved me following the participant for an entire work shift, it was well suited to

my study as a means of data collection (Newby, 2014).

Shadowing allowed me to gain a better understanding of the work milieu of the

participants, collect data on informal learning behaviours as they naturally occurred, ask

questions about things I observed that I didn't understand (e.g. software being used, general

processes when reviewing daily logs), and finally experience the work lives of the participants

through their eyes. This gave me much insight into the daily routines and interactions

participants had with their mentors, peers, supervisors, and staff.

Shadow shifts followed a similar pattern and format. Prior to the observation taking place

the scope, parameters, types of activities, and total duration of the observation were discussed

and agreed upon with the participant. On many occasions the interview was conducted before the

commencement of the shadow shift. After the interview, I followed the participants on "rounds."

Rounds are when a supervisor or manager walks around the correctional centre and visits each of

the units he or she is responsible for. The purpose of rounds is to touch base with every staff

member to see how they are doing, see if they need any support, trouble-shoot problems, and

deal with "jail issues", such as offender concerns or any other issues related to the operation of

the unit. Rounds lasted from a couple of hours to the majority of the shift, depending on the level of support required by staff. Although nearly all of the participants I observed conducted rounds, participants explained that not every supervisor or manager does so. During rounds participants voluntarily explained my role and the purpose of my research to their staff. It was not uncommon for frontline officers to engage in a conversation with me about their own informal learning, and the importance of having a relationship with their supervisor for their own growth and professional development.

Following participants during rounds gave me the opportunity to become familiar with the environment they work within. Even though each correctional centre is laid out differently, they all have common elements. For instance, each centre had an administrative and discharge unit for the admittance and release of inmates. Each centre had different units to house different types of inmates (e.g. general population and high risk offenders). Each correctional centre housed both remanded and sentenced inmates and offenders, and each centre had an administrative wing where the managers' offices were located. Many of the managers I observed shared an office with two other managers. A manager's time was spent primarily in his or her office reviewing paperwork, reports, staffing requests, checking and responding to e-mails, and preparing for meetings.

During the rounds it was not uncommon for a manager to stop and talk with frontline officers to see how they were doing and if they needed any assistance. On many occasions I felt very calm and at ease due to the relaxed nature of the manager's demeanor. There were times my sense of ease was quickly replaced with caution and apprehension whenever there was inmate movement or an emergency code called. I had the opportunity to attend two emergency codes after the incident was dealt with and scene secured. Managers are not the primary responders in an emergency code. Managers will walk to the scene so that the emergency response team has

the opportunity to respond and deal with the situation. Managers will then provide support and oversight as required (e.g. ensuring staff or inmates that require medical attention receive it and the proper paperwork is completed). It is also common that a manager will debrief the incident with their staff to reflect on what happened and if performance can be improved.

During the shadow shifts I used field notes that were hand written in a journal to capture all my observations as well as my personal interests, experiences, and assumptions that could have influenced the way I interpreted what I saw, heard, and felt. I used the acronym OC (observer comments) to differentiate my interpretations from things I actually observed. By spending time in the participant's work setting I developed a deeper, more meaningful understanding of their world and reality. It also provided me an opportunity to triangulate the participant's narrative from the interviews with multiple sources of evidence (e.g. observable behaviours, artefacts, and documents). As with social constructionism, understanding emerges out of verbal exchanges and includes symbolic symbols and events (Crotty, 1998).

The last 30 minutes of the shadow shift I invited each participant to member check my field notes. This was to ensure my observations and interpretations were tested and checked by the participant and to ensure credibility in my data collection was being met. I asked participants to use a different colour pen when making corrections to my field notes so that I could delineate their comments from my own. One participant provided more detail on a story he shared with me, while the other participant corrected an explanation of a work process I captured in my notes.

The final data collection method consisted of participant journaling, which was also voluntary. The purpose of journaling was to capture the reflections of a participant's informal learning as it occurred throughout his or her workday. Participants were encouraged to use any format they wanted to capture their journal entries (e.g. handwritten or electronic). Only one participant opted to participate in the journaling activity. The participant captured his reflections

over a two-month period using an electronic format. The journal entries consisted of entries of

his daily work activities, interactions with peers, subordinates, problem solving, decision making,

in addition to reflection of learning as it occurred.

Data Analysis

My data analysis process consisted of four cycles of coding. Before coding any of the

data, I listened to each audio recording and transcribed each interview, which gave me the

opportunity to re-familiarize myself with the participants' narratives and to develop an overall

sense of the data content and potential meanings. I then transferred my written field notes to an

electronic version to make it easier to code the data. I also maintained a reflexive journal that

captured my perceptions, thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and inspirational moments of

reflection I had based on literature I was reading and things participants said or did. Through this

process I also formulated ideas about the possibilities of the analysis in regards to coding,

development of categories, and identifying themes.

First cycle coding consisted of attribute coding (Saldaña, 2013) which was the creation of

a file management system to store all data in a retrievable manner. I also maintained a

spreadsheet to keep track of each participants' information (i.e. participant name, centre,

supervisor or manager, years of experience, date, time, and location of interviews and

observations). During this stage I also developed a coding template (see Appendix E) that

enabled me to capture all of my coding processes for the interviews, field notes, and participant

journal entries.

During second cycle coding I used holistic and in vivo coding methods (Saldaña, 2013)

for the interviews, field notes, and journal entries. Holistic coding allowed me to grasp basic

ideas in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than analyzing them line-by-line. Some of

the data I coded consisted of large passages and at times the whole page. This was a useful method in preparing my data for in vivo coding.

In vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) allowed me to attune myself to the participants' language. In vivo coding has also been termed, *verbatim coding* and *literal coding* (Saldaña, 2013). In vivo codes consisted of short phrases and words from the actual language used by the participants. As I coded the interviews, field notes, and journal entries I realized I could use similar in vivo codes, with the exception of one or two new codes being generated for each new data set. By the end of my second cycle coding I had generated 115 in vivo codes.

During third cycle coding I categorized the 115 in vivo codes using a structural coding method. Structural coding consisted of the generation of short phrases that represented a segment of data that related to one of my three research questions (Saldaña, 2013), (a) what are managers learning informally in the workplace, (b) how are managers learning in the workplace, and (c) what contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning? Through structural coding I was able to condense and categorize the 115 in vivo codes under one or more of the three research questions. This process allowed me to examine and compare commonalities and differences between each of the 115 in vivo codes to determine which ones seemed to go together and which ones did not. This process continued until saturation of categories occurred. Thus, it enabled me to categorize my in vivo codes into "families" that shared similar characteristics (Saldaña, 2013).

The fourth and final stage of my analysis consisted of grouping categories into higher level categories and themes on the basis of relationships and theoretical concepts and connections (Charmaz, 2000). The creation of coding hierarchies allowed me to further analyze the relationships between the categories by paying attention to the role and impact that individual and social processes have on informal workplace learning. From the generation of higher order

categories and themes I discovered that all of the themes and their corresponding categories are interrelated concepts. Meaning, themes and categories are not segregated concepts but work together to influence and inform what supervisors and managers are learning, how they are learning it, and the contextual factors that impact their learning.

At the beginning of my data analysis Eraut's theory did provide a frame and a lens for making sense of the data I collected. But as I progressed I discovered there was some data that could not be interpreted from Eraut's theory alone. As I progressed through my data analysis, I decided not to force the data to fit into Eraut's (2004, 2007) theoretical framework, but rather I remained open to relationships and connections that could be aligned to other theories and research. Therefore, I explored and subsequently drew inspiration from research from Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) theory of primal leadership and emotional intelligence in addition to Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model, both which informed my thinking during the data analysis.

Delimitations

There were three specific delimitations for this study. First, I selected correctional centres because they are environments that are dynamic and therefore present many opportunities for a supervisor and manager to learn and develop. A manager in a correctional centre must be knowledgeable about the various policies and legislation and train and motivate front-line officers to continually maintain the care, custody, and control of the offenders at their centre. This provides many opportunities for problem solving and teamwork to occur within a variety of learning and contextual factors. Using an instrumental case study helped me focus on real-life situations within a diverse context to directly research the phenomena of informal learning as it unfolded in the correctional centre. Although it could be argued that problem solving and

teamwork are typical of other work environments, it was important that I selected a study site that consisted of informal learning interactions that I could observe and ask questions about. For instance, I was able to observe managers interact with their staff during rounds and see how they developed relationships through casual conversation. I observed supervisors requesting feedback from more experienced managers, in addition to seeing frontline officers ask for assistance from their manager to problem solve and generate solutions.

Second, participants were selected based on their classification. Supervisors and managers hold specific classifications that differentiate supervisors from managers and managers from executive directors. I sought participants who held classifications that fell within the range of supervisor and manager, excluding executive directors. An executive director's role consists of leading organizations rather than frontline operations and personnel. Therefore, studying the informal learning of executive directors was beyond the scope of this study.

Lastly, the examination regarding the quality of performance was out of scope for this study. Meaning, this study did not research what good or effective performance for a supervisor or manager entails or consists of. Even though participants spoke of wanting to improve their competencies, data collection tools and methods were not designed to rate or provide feedback on a participant's knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Study Limitations

One limitation of my research study is that the majority of the participants were male. As was discussed in chapter three, 15 of the participants were male while only 2 were female. Gustavsson and Eriksson (2010) found that women experienced less expansiveness at work than men, including limited access to strategic networks and informal mentors. Workplace learning experiences are complicated by power dynamics, divisions of labor, and organizational culture

(Fuller et al., 2005). It would be important to research how workplace learning may differ between women and men. For instance, are women afforded the same experiential learning opportunities as men? In spite of this limitation, a strength in using correctional centres for my case study is that correctional centres are dynamic environments, which presented many opportunities for me to examine and observe informal learning in the workplace.

A second limitation is the potential for participant and researcher bias during the observations. One could argue the behaviour I observed was situationally specific. Meaning, the work and learning processes I observed could be specific to the correctional centre they occurred within. In addition, the behaviour of the participants may have been influenced by my presence. There is the likelihood that they behaved in ways that differ from what they actually do in their daily work. I also hold researcher assumptions that are based on my learning experiences as a manager. These assumptions may have influenced what I recorded in my field notes.

As I discussed in chapter three, there were four criteria of trustworthiness I adhered to in order to minimize participant and researcher bias: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I observed six participants in different correctional centres, which allowed me to triangulate the participants' narratives with my observations. I also reviewed my field notes with the participants to ensure I captured authentic interpretations of the moments I observed.

A final limitation to my study is that the findings of the study may not be applicable to other public sector organizations. Although one can argue that this is a limitation, I see it as a strength to case studies. As I mentioned above, a case study involves intensive study of a unit for the purpose of providing the researcher a deep holistic view of the phenomena under exploration. (Flyvberg, 2011). I provided a detailed description of my data collection and analysis methods. In the next chapter I provide a detailed description of the study's results and findings, so the

reader can draw their own conclusions about whether or not the results of the study can be transferred to their own context.

Trustworthiness

To ensure my research was rigorous, systematic, and transparent I adhered to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria of trustworthiness, which are (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (e) confirmability. In order to meet the criteria of credibility I conducted six shadow shifts that accumulated to approximately 45 hours of observation. During the shadow shifts I learned more about the culture while building trust with the participants. These shadow shifts also gave me the opportunity to triangulate the participants' narratives with my observations, artefacts, and objects that existed within the environment. I also asked each participant to review my field notes to ensure I captured authentic interpretations of the things I observed. In addition, I conducted member checks with each participant I interviewed by asking them to review the interview transcripts. This was to ensure I captured their words, ideas, explanations, and interpretations accurately. I also worked closely with my PhD supervisor who assisted me in considering new perspectives and challenging any biases when analyzing the data (Guba, 1981).

Transferability refers to the extent to which the particular findings of the study have applicability in other contexts or with other respondent groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to meet the criteria of transferability I provided a detailed description of my data collection and analysis techniques, in addition to providing a comprehensive account of my results and findings. This is so readers can draw their own conclusions about whether or not they can transfer the findings to their own context.

To ensure my research met the criteria of dependability, as I mentioned above, I worked closely with my PhD supervisor so that she was able to audit my method of inquiry (e.g. interview transcripts, field notes, researcher reflexive journal, coding templates) to ensure the data I collect was justified and aligned with my interpretations. Confirmability is closely linked with dependability. The chief method of confirmability was the process of the audit, which was conducted by my PhD supervisor. As I mentioned above, I kept a reflexive journal to bracket any of my assumptions and personal opinions that had the potential to influence my data collection and analysis. My journal was shared with my supervisor to ensure an extra level of accountability was achieved within the audit process.

Ethics

When conducting observations special ethical considerations had to be considered. For instance, by spending a prolonged amount of time at a correctional centre it exposed the lives and practices of participants and non-participants (e.g. frontline officers, supervisors, managers, and inmates), which had the potential to conflict with my values and beliefs that I hold as a manager and as a researcher. I proactively addressed this issue by capturing my thoughts, feelings, and interpretations in my reflexive journal. This strategy made it easier for me to bracket my assumptions and to challenge my thinking with my supervisor so that it didn't influence my data analysis. I also paid special consideration in not capturing conversations with non-participants in my field notes. It was crucial that non-participants' anonymity was maintained since they had not volunteered for the study. This was also why it was critical that participants reviewed my field notes prior to the end of every shadow shift.

To meet the ethical guidelines set out by the University of Alberta and the participating organization, I developed a letter of information (see Appendix C) that outlined the purpose of

my research and described my data collection methods. I listed all potential known risks, stressed that participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw their consent (see Appendix D) at any time throughout the process. I will also "give back" to the participating organization by sharing the results of my research with them.

Summary

In this chapter I provided a detailed explanation of how I collected and analyzed the data, in addition to explaining the methodological choices I made. In the next chapter I will present the results of my study. I will explain how the themes and categories are interrelated concepts in the sense that they are not segregated, but work together to influence and inform what supervisors and managers are learning, how they are learning informally, and the contextual factors that influence their learning.

Chapter Four: Results

Overview

The purpose of my study was to explore how managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace, and to examine the role and impact that individual and social processes have on informal workplace learning. The workplace context can bring new perspectives and understandings to research and theory on learning. Research into the outcomes of informal learning in the workplace is limited (Eraut, 2004) and difficult to research due to the nature of informal learning. To address this gap this chapter reports on the findings of the study to address the following research questions, (a) what are managers learning informally in the workplace, (b) how are managers learning informally in the workplace, and (c) what contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning?

As I detailed in chapter three, I analyzed the words, experiences, and examples of workplace learning that I collected from the interviews and field observations I conducted. From my analysis, I produced themes and categories that I then organized under each of the three research questions. Figure 1 offers a visual portrayal of what, how, and the contextual factors that influence informal learning. For a full description of the results that include themes and their corresponding categories and sub-categories please refer to Appendix F.

In the centre of the Venn diagram sits leadership competencies. Leadership competencies developed as a prominent theme under each of the three research questions. Thus, leadership competencies are not mutually exclusive concepts that correspond to only one research question, but concepts that are pertinent to the overall informal learning and development of supervisors and managers in the study. In fact, all of the themes are interrelated concepts in the sense that they are not segregated, but work together to influence and inform what supervisors and

managers are learning, how they are learning it, and the contextual factors that influence their

learning. I will now present a detailed description of each theme and category as they appear

under each of the three research questions. Pseudonyms have been used for the participants'

names.
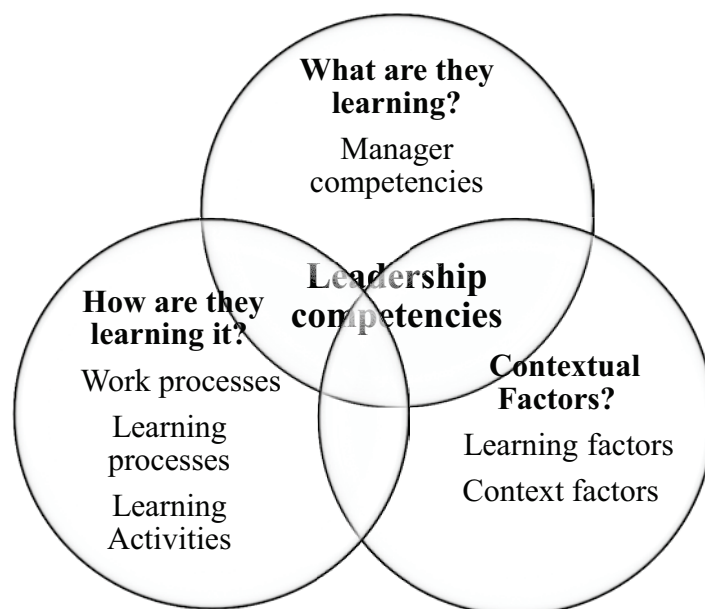
Figure 1. What, how, and the contextual factors that influence informal learning

What Are Managers Learning Informally in the Workplace?

As discussed in the previous chapter, Eraut's theory (2004, 2007) did provide a frame and

a lens for making sense of the data I collected. As I progressed through my data analysis the

themes that emerged under the first research question (a) leadership competencies and (b)

manager competencies, could not be analyzed using Eraut's theory alone. For instance,

supervisors and managers in the study made the distinction between leadership and management

as noted by Eric, "I should mention I never did say leadership, I guess I take it for granted, being

in the role it is essentially all leadership, I think it is very important…to lead to guide people, it

starts before you become an actual supervisor…it comes with confidence". Another participant compared the concept of leadership and management to static and dynamic security in a correctional facility:

> There is a difference between static and dynamic security. I relate that to management versus leadership. Management is the static side of it. Ticking your boxes, the budget, allocating resources. The dynamic part is the leadership part. You can't just be one or the other. It is like offender management, you can't just be checking the locks. You have to be out there and visible and working with [the offenders]. That is how you gain compliance and buy-in. For staff as well. I can sit here in this office all day long and not see anybody and I would never know their names or know me or approach me and provide me feedback. How can I make informed decisions if all I do is sit in my office? (Curtis)

During my data analysis I drew from Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) theory of primal leadership and emotional intelligence in addition to Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model to interpret the data. Under the theme of leadership competencies I created four categories, which are (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, and (d) relationship management. The first two categories determine how well a manager can regulate her emotions, while the last two categories determine how well a manager can recognize and manage the emotions of others.

Under the theme of manager competencies I created four categories, which are (a) systems thinking, (b) handling and controlling assets, (c) overseeing processes and implementing systems, and (d) achieving and monitoring results. I will now discuss each category in depth beginning with the first theme of leadership competencies before moving onto the second theme of manager competencies.

Leadership competencies.

Self-awareness.

Supervisors and managers expressed the importance of being aware of their strengths and limitations so they could continually develop and grow. "When I get to this situation where I run out of knowledge, I have to reboot or re-educate myself to new things. My competencies haven't changed a lot, but I have to focus on improving them" (Daniel). Curtis reiterated the importance of accurate self-assessment:

> You have to be willing to accept that you don't know everything, rely on the people that know more than you. You have to be open, willing to change and accept change, know the things you can't control like political influence and budgets, and you have to be positive. I think that is a conscious decision everyday. You have to be what you want everyone else to be. Whether you want to be that day or not.

Boyatzis and McKee (2005) refer to this as resonant leadership. Resonant leaders work hard to develop not only their own emotional intelligence (EI) but also the EI of others around them. Resonant leaders can integrate organizational priorities with the needs of their staff in order to achieve positive results. Having strong EI is not the only requirement necessary to be an effective manager. A manager also requires management competencies, such as overseeing processes and implementing strategies in order to deal with the challenges their organizations face (Davenport & Harding, 2010). What makes a manager effective is not what she knows but how she uses her knowledge. Emotions and cognitive processes are intricately linked and can drive a manager's behaviour especially during times of high stress (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Another element under the category of self-awareness is confidence as expressed by Aaron:

I still don't feel as comfortable [as an acting director as I do as a manager]. [As a

manager], I have my assistants, my supervisors, and correctional officers. [As an acting

director] you have three shifts that are coming to you for information. It's a different

feeling, it is a matter of becoming more comfortable in myself and becoming more

comfortable and the more I do it the better I will get at it. Practice and repetition that is

how I learn best.

Learning at work involves being proactive in seeking learning opportunities, which requires

confidence. Taking on new challenges and confidence are interrelated in the sense that

confidence is required to seek out new learning opportunities, but confidence is developed when

managers successfully meet challenges. The confidence to take on new challenges depends on

the extent to which managers feel supported by their colleagues (Eraut, 2004, 2007). As a

manager moves up the ranks to higher levels of management, support dwindles.

There are fewer people that you can turn to for help as you climb the ranks. More eyes

turn to you…[it is a] sheer numbers game. There are so many [correctional officers], it is

a pyramid. There are fewer supervisors, so if it is an immediate supervisor problem then

your staff turn to you. When it is a manager problem, there are so many fewer

managers…Supervisors are looking at you for when something like this happens on their

pod so they can learn how to accommodate it. When it is a [manager] problem, now your

[assistant managers] look to you, "I haven't been through this before, how do you handle

this"? And when your [manager] doesn't know then it goes to one of the three directors

and then it goes to their director. So the people you look up to there are so many fewer

each step of the way. (Eric)

This feeling of isolation has been referred to as "power stress" (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Power stress can occur when a manager has to make a decision with ambiguous or little

information in conjunction with fewer people to rely on for support. Therefore, managers need to be able to manage their own stress in order to sustain success over the length of their career. Boyatzis and McKee (2005) refer to this as *renewal*. Renewal refers to developing strategies that enable us to maintain overall health and wellness and mitigate stress in the face of unending challenges. Being a leader can be exciting but it can also be very stressful, which can lead to burnout. If leaders are not self-aware of when they are feeling burnt out, they may become trapped in a cycle of sacrifice that leads to lower emotional intelligence (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Nick discussed during the interview that he gets a lot of satisfaction from leading a team of frontline officers, but it comes with its challenges. For instance, Nick has to be able to balance the needs of the organization (e.g. reduce costs and ensure policies are being followed) with the needs of his staff (e.g. approve training requests and annual leave). Nick's method of combating power stress is to engage in activities outside of the work environment (e.g. running marathons and participating in recreational sports teams). This was a common strategy for many of the managers in the study, which leads me to the next category of self-management.

Self-management.

From self-awareness comes self-management (Goleman et al., 2002). Self-management involves being transparent and openly admitting to mistakes and faults as articulated by Bobby.

> I know this is one of the public service values, accountability. Staff have to know that you are going to be accountable for your decisions and accountability is absolutely a two way street. If I'm not willing to accept accountability and responsibility for my actions what does that say to the staff? And also, conversely, if I make a mistake I let staff know that I made a mistake. I don't see enough supervisors and managers doing that. There are a lot that do, but I don't see enough of it.

Self-management also includes the ability to exert self-control in challenging situations or high stress situations. "You have to manage yourself. That is your integrity, ethics, your personal role-modeling, and your own self-learning. You can't always rely on courses to help you out. You have to self-learn" (Rina). Phillip talked about the importance of being able to manage disturbing emotions and impulses, which he referred to as "triggers". Another participant also expressed being able to stay calm in the event of a crisis:

> The biggest one I had in my career…there were [multiple] codes that happened in the span of [a few] hours, which was unheard of. On top of the four codes, there was multiple [offenders] fighting in the hallway. Literally every two seconds I was getting called on the radio because there was another incident happening. Everyone saw me be hands-on, I was the first person there, giving direction, I wasn't sure what I was doing but I was making decisions. I thought I know what I know so let's just try and go with it. That was the craziest thing that ever happened to me in my career. I asked for feedback afterwards. People went to [my boss] and said [I] did really good. It started a good bond with the [staff], they saw I could take charge. (Emily)

Leaders have a sense of efficacy and take initiative. They take control of the situation and seize opportunities instead of waiting for them to happen. This was articulated by Phillip when he explained why he wanted to become a supervisor:

> I would take on any opportunity. I was the offender records system trainer, I was part of the field training officer program for a while, all the things I could gather and learn from, led to leadership and coaching to be able to mentor and coach others. It only made sense to continue in a supervisor role. I felt like I experienced everything I could as a frontline [officer]. (Phillip)

Initiative also involves challenging the process. Kouzes and Posner's (2007) research on leadership revealed that every single leadership case they collected involved challenging the "status-quo". None of the leaders they interviewed stated they achieved their personal best by keeping things the same. For example, leaders are willing to step outside their comfort zone to grow and improve themselves, others, and the organization. "Now that I got comfortable in [my] role, I like that I am in a position now that I can make real time changes, not just complain about it and not have the authority to actually do something about it" (Curtis). Another participant discussed the importance of being passionate about the work he did:

> You have to be passionate with what you are doing, you have to believe in what you are doing. If this is just a paycheck then you will be one of those slugs that do the bare minimum to get by. You will make sure you are following policy. (Jeff)

In addition to having initiative and passion, managers also display other characteristics such as empathy and commitment. This brings me to the next category of social awareness.

Social awareness.

The category of social awareness includes concepts such as empathy (e.g. understanding the emotions of others), organizational awareness (e.g. awareness of the guiding values and culture of the organization), and service (e.g. to others in the organization). Managers who demonstrate social awareness listen attentively and are able to grasp the other person's perspective. Supervisors and managers in the study expressed the importance of being able to blend managerial duties, such as performance management, with employee engagement strategies that included rapport building to develop trust and empathy between themselves and their employees. One participant described how he demonstrated empathy, organizational awareness, and service towards the people in his organization:

You still have to make sure that all of [your staff] are doing ok. They have whatever is needed to assist them and I make suggestions to them, "why don't you hand that off to somebody else"…you need to care. [Your staff] have the support they need to make decisions…I try to remember people's names [or] congratulations on the new baby…It is important to have those personal conversations, because I do care it isn't a façade or pretending and any good [supervisor] needs to have that and leader needs to be able to connect with the people they lead. (Greg)

Greg's account of social awareness is also an example of relationship management, which is the final category I will discuss.

Relationship management.

Relationship management is about the ability to inspire others, influence others to act, resolve conflicts, build bonds, and develop others by fostering teamwork and collaboration (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). "You want to empower your staff so that they feel competent. You don't want to do their work…but you want to show them that you trust them" (Phillip). Managers cultivate people's abilities and show sincere interest in other people's well being by taking time to provide feedback and guidance through mentoring and coaching opportunities.

The most important thing for a [supervisor] is to be a good mentor. I had really good mentors in my career and I try to model myself after those mentors. I see other supervisors that are not as successful and they do not have good mentors. They have a lot of knowledge, but they do not impart their knowledge…what also makes a good mentor is lead by example. (Rick)

Mentoring and coaching gave managers an opportunity to provide feedback to their staff. People can become exhausted, frustrated, and disenchanted and are tempted to give up. Leaders encourage through recognition and praise for a job well done so their staff can continue to be

engaged in the workplace. Kouzes and Posner (2007) refer to this as *encourage the heart*.

Recognizing contributions "can be something super simple, like and e-mail, thanks for that good

decision you made. Those little things are super important. Taking the time to give feedback was

important that was good on-going coaching and counseling" (Rina).

Leadership is about forming positive relationships, which at times can encompass

conflict. Managers who can mitigate conflict are able to understand the differing perspectives,

acknowledge feelings, and redirect energy to a shared ideal (Goleman et al., 2002).

> If I made a decision that has negatively affected a staff member and I reflect afterwards
>
> that I could've done that differently with a more positive outcome, then I will go to that
>
> staff person and say I am sorry, I could've done this better. I want staff members to say,
>
> "You know what? This guy is open to the idea that maybe he doesn't know everything".
>
> Some of the best things I learned have been from frontline staff, because they feel there is
>
> that level of respect and openness they can come and tell me. I have always told staff that
>
> if there is something you feel that I have done wrong that has negatively affected you and
>
> you don't understand why, come talk to me. I am not going to jump down your throat
>
> because you feel that I did something wrong. (Bobby)

Participants expressed a link between interpersonal skills, approachability, and inspiring others.

As I discussed earlier, during my shadow shifts I observed rounds being conducted. Rounds gave

supervisors and managers an opportunity to connect and touch base with their staff. During one

of my shadow shifts with Jacob, he expressed that even though doing rounds is in policy not

every supervisor or manager does them. Jacob explained that rounds provide opportunities to

build relationships with staff, which in turn make it easier for staff to approach their supervisors.

This was also illustrated by Zach during an interview. "Good interpersonal skills…I think most

people can be a manager but again interpersonal skills comes into your leadership. How people

actually relate to you…trust is a big thing". Developing relationships was seen as critical to being an effective manager, because it contributes to an atmosphere of comradery, respect, and cooperation. "The majority of the job is dealing with people…actually going to [your staff]. Making sure they know I am a resource for them" (Jacob).

All the participants in this study articulated the importance of possessing leadership competencies in order to motivate, engage, encourage, and support their staff in achieving organizational goals and priorities. Although, leadership competencies were critical in being an effective manager, competencies in implementing and overseeing systems, achieving results, and handling organizational assets were also fundamental. This leads me to the second theme of manager competencies.

Manager competencies.

Under the theme of manager competencies four categories emerged, (a) systems thinking, (b) handling and controlling assets, (c) overseeing processes and implementing systems, and (d) achieving and monitoring results. To develop the manager categories I drew inspiration from Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model. A discussion regarding the concept of leadership versus the practice of management and its implications on a manager's informal learning will be expanded in more detail in the discussion chapter.

Systems thinking.

Managerial responsibilities can be incorporated under the headings of strategic responsibilities and line responsibilities. Strategic responsibilities encompass systems thinking while line responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of systems and processes (Davenport & Harding, 2010; Diefenbach, 2009). Systems thinking can be defined as recognizing links between how one's work contributes to the achievement of organizational

goals. This can include the anticipation of potential risks and impacts across inter-related areas when making decisions and considering opportunities for action (Government of Alberta, 2014). Participants described systems thinking as "the ability to think outside of the box [by]… adapting and changing your line of thinking when decisions are being made or questions are being asked" (Greg).

When I asked participants if the nature of their competencies changed since they acquired them, nearly all of them said the same thing. Competencies do not change, but the way you use them does. For instance, developing relationships and establishing networks is important at any stage of a person's career, but knowing how to influence relationships and leverage networks are important when making decisions that will have an impact at the unit, centre, and provincial level.

> The higher you go the more important these networks become. Because there are so many areas in the business, not just corrections, you work in so many different areas in the community, in the centres, non-profits, police, and politicians. You have discussions on things on different areas of the building on the direction the department is going and what does that mean in the grand scheme of things, and we still do that today. (Jeff)

Emily expressed the importance of looking at the bigger picture and understanding the director's vision. "Being exposed to the way management thinks, you start buying into what they are trying to do…back on the floor I can explain why things are done that way…It's not just what you see on the unit, it affects a lot more. Definitely looking at the bigger picture and not just focused on what is in front of me".

Systems thinking is the responsibility of managers and it involves participation, empowerment, and commitment to the organization (Cook et al., 1997). Systems thinking is about synthesis and it encompasses intuition and creativity. The outcome of systems thinking is

an integrated perspective of the organization and its employees (Mintzberg, 1994). Participants conveyed that thinking about the system was important when acquiring and deploying staff throughout their centres. This leads me to the next category of handling and controlling assets.

Handling and controlling assets.

Handling and controlling assets consists of scheduling staff for regular shifts, replacing staff when someone calls in sick, and deploying staff to emergency codes. "The biggest issue is staffing. Trying to fill a shift without using overtime, but inevitable it goes to overtime. Then there are staffing issues, like this one doesn't get along with this person or that person" (Rick).

Controlling assets also consisted of time management, management of the budget, and allocation of resources such as equipment and materials needed for the daily operation of the centre. "In terms of budget and resource allocation…in my previous position and that was someone sitting with me to teach me. I needed an admin to teach me the budget, the monthly reviews" (Curtis). Jeff expressed the importance of time management. "There are so many moving parts that are in a centre…that you really need to know how to manage your time so that you don't get too focused on one issue so that other issues get neglected". In addition, Jeff conveyed "so many things that go into managing this business. There are budget things and there are laws of how we manage employees that isn't necessarily corrections based. We have to learn outside the box". Tom illustrated the diverse responsibilities of a manager that are required during an "easy-going" day versus a "demanding" day:

> You get one of two types of days. Some days are slower, so you are working on a lot of special projects and you have a lot of down time and you get out of the office and just go sit with the [staff] on the unit, see what their issues are, have friendly conversations, what they are doing on days off, you know things like that. And then there are days where it is [all hands-on deck] and I am doing [incident reports] from the start of shift to the end of

shift. I'm hunting down different individuals for different issues or organizing staff or

ambulances making sure that staff involved on [emergency] codes that are injured are

going to the hospital and getting the medical care they need, things like that.

Knowing how to handle assets required an understanding of the various systems and

processes in the centre so that assets could be used efficiently within those systems. An example

of this would be knowledge of law, policies, legislation, offender management practices, and

labour collective agreements. For many of the managers in the study this was primarily learned

informally in the workplace through others in addition to having access to job aids (e.g. policy

manuals and quick reference how to guides). Although job aids were available to each manager

they did not always provide assistance when dealing with ill-structured problems. This was

clearly illustrated above with Emily's account of responding to several emergency codes in the

span of a few minutes. During times of high stress participants did not have the luxury of time to

move through all the elements of performance (e.g. assessing, deciding, acting, and reflecting) to

guide decision making. This is a good example of Schön's (1987) knowing-in-action construct.

Actions (e.g. taking action during an emergency code) are spontaneously derived without

conscious deliberation and analysis (e.g. referring to the policy manual to determine the required

course of action).

Overseeing processes and implementing systems.

Overseeing processes and implementing systems involved knowing how to properly and

efficiently use mediating artefacts (e.g. forms, computer software, meeting agendas and minutes,

and reports), knowledge of the legal system, legislation, and provincial and centre policies. This

involved utilizing the offender records system that stores the files of every offender and inmate

in the province. The offender records system is also a repository for common forms, templates,

and warrants that staff would use to collect, review, execute, and share information about what is

going on within the centre and the inmates. A common process a manager would oversee and implement were legal processes, such as offender releases and warrant executions. These were seen as "high risk" events. "Release files as [an assistant manager] you would work in the [manager's] office so you should be learning their job and there is a large learning process there" (Bobby). Knowledge of legislation was critical when directing releases and warrant executions. "You have to learn law, I have to have a fairly high knowledge base of law, of the legal system. A big job is to interpret the law when it comes to warrants and sentences and [legal] cases that have happened years and years ago that impacts the way we execute sentences" (Eric). Todd spoke about the importance of properly handling warrants:

> As a [manager] whenever you get new admissions, you have to go down to admissions
> and discharge and look at the warrants, whatever holding document it is you have to
> make sure it is [the right] document…it has been executed, which means it has been
> signed and has a court date. Accepting…a wrongful hold is not good. You have to be able
> to read and understand the warrant, can be stressful, but you have to just learn it.

Implementing processes also involved being able to put assets to use in efficient and economical ways. For instance, managers had to use scheduling software to create time efficient processes when booking 24-hour shift rotations in order to reduce overtime costs. In order to ensure the scheduling software was properly utilized, managers were trained to use the software through a formal learning event (e.g. course) so they could provide support and on-the-job training to other managers on their shift. During one of my shadow shifts I had the opportunity to observe a manager requesting assistance from my participant, Zach, on how to use the software. I was impressed at how well Zach new how to navigate through this complex software while being able to articulate the organizational benefits and the return on investment. This example

illustrates what managers are learning and the informal processes that support their learning in the workplace.

Achieving and monitoring results.

Frequent and accurate assessment of progress is crucial in improving effectiveness and success in an organization. Managers must find ways to measure success in order to set new targets for performance in the future (Ali, et al., 2001). Participants in the study discussed the challenges in achieving and monitoring results, because it involved being able to assess situations and decide on a course of action that would create a successful outcome. Participants in the study did not always have the luxury of time when making decisions. Managers had to deal with complex, constantly changing, and hazardous situations that were characterized by incomplete information on the current state. This was articulated by Eric regarding a situation involving an inmate death:

> [It wasn't] in policy and we had to figure it out. Now that is something we always do. We had to pull files to make sure [he was here lawfully]. Little things that you don't think you need to do. So, we pulled the file and reviewed it to make sure he was here lawfully, then we had to call the director because it happened on a weekend. It is so much bigger than a I thought. Until you have done it that is your only knowledge of what you are going to do when somebody dies. So, coordinating with Alberta Health Services, who is going to call the ambulance, who is going to relay information off to them?

Daniel also discussed making mistakes and being able to learn from them so that performance and practice could be continually improved. "Making mistakes, not wanting to make the same mistakes twice. I try not to steer the ship into the rocks that would be bad for the organization. But I am ok with making mistakes. That is how I have to learn".

Being able to achieve results and monitor progress involved elements of performance:

1. Assessing a situation, which managers sometimes did alone and other times with staff and other managers.

2. Deciding what action to take, which occurred in consultation with others.

3. Following a course of action, for instance giving directions and orders during an emergency incident (e.g. death of an inmate) or when conducting an investigation.

4. Metacognitive processes to reflect on how it went. For example learning from what worked and did not (e.g. debriefing after an emergency code) (Eraut, 2004, p. 406).

These processes did not always follow a simple sequence of assessment, decision, and then action. Eric gave a descriptive real-world example of how elements of a performance can occur in a correctional centre:

Like meal service, a simple task. At the [other]…centre food came out hot and served, [inmates] didn't have to travel very far. The demographics here have changed. We have the food delivered hours before it is served in a building that has so many people come and go, counts have changed, changed drastically, so…by the time we are serving food we have varying numbers for what we require. That is a big problem, we have been trying to solve it, but we can't expect our contract workers or the kitchen people to absorb all of that change so we have to kind of meet them in the middle. It is one of those tasks that comes and lands on the manager's shoulders. Talk to people, find out what we can do, but you guys bring us the solution. That is one example of large-scale problem solving thing we have.

Although making decisions that resulted in successful results was important in developing confidence and overall manager competencies, being able to learn in the workplace was also critical for supervisor and manager development. As Eraut (2004) states, both knowledge (the what) and learning (the how) can be examined from two perspectives: the

individual and the social. The individual perspective enabled me to explore what managers are learning (manager competencies) while the social perspective gave me insight into the social construction of knowledge and the contexts for leaning (leadership competencies). To be more specific, the four domains of emotional intelligence are not mutually exclusive to what managers are learning, but pertinent to the overall informal learning and development of managers. An emotionally intelligent manager creates an environment conducive to informal learning that promotes empathy, trust building, and the formation of relationships that foster teamwork and collaboration through which informal learning occurs. In the next section I will continue the discussion of how managers are learning in the workplace by using the participants' words to illustrate the implicit, reactive, and explicit nature of learning processes that are embedded in their everyday work.

How Are Managers Learning in the Workplace?

Four themes emerged from the findings from this question which are, (a) leadership competencies, (b) work processes, (c) learning processes within work, and (d) learning activities. Appendix F consists of a complete list of categories under each theme.

As I discussed earlier, leadership competencies developed as a prominent theme under each of the three research questions. Leadership competencies are important to the overall informal learning and development of supervisors and managers in the study. Meaning, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are not only pertinent to what managers learn, but how they are learning as well. Therefore, I will discuss leadership competencies within the context of work processes, learning processes, and finally learning activities. Figure 2 shows the relationship between the four themes.
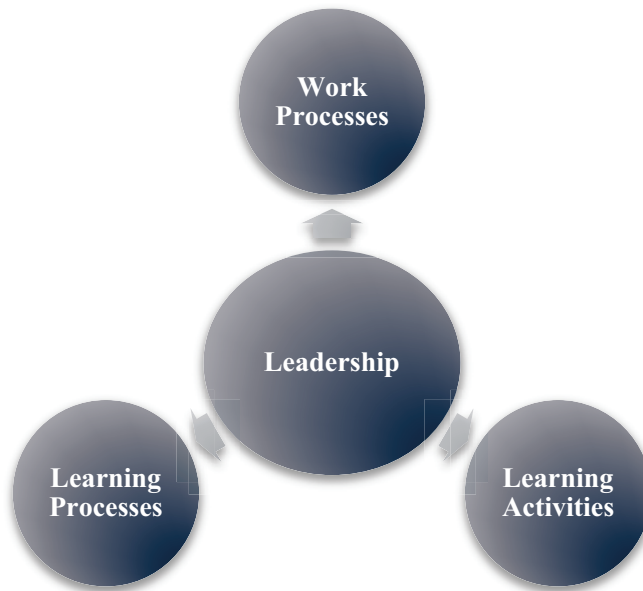
Figure 2. How are managers learning in the workplace?

The second, third, and fourth themes: work processes, learning processes within work, and learning activities were inspired by Eraut's (2007) typology of early career leaning with some minor adjustments. Eraut's typology of how learning occurs is broken down into three categories as well, (a) work processes with learning as a by-product, (b) learning activities located within work, and (c) learning processes at or near the workplace. Although I use the same terms as Eraut, I define them differently. For example, Eraut refers to learning processes as an activity whose main objective is learning. Meaning, the individual is consciously aware they are learning something. What emerged from my data analysis is that learning processes are embedded within many work activities (e.g. problem solving) and not always explicit in nature. Although learning was occurring, improving performance was the main objective, not learning.

I also define learning activities differently from Eraut. For Eraut (2007) learning activities are embedded in most work processes, whereas my data revealed learning activities were deliberate in nature. Meaning, time was put aside to participate in a learning activity. Once

again, the main objective of this type of learning was to improve performance, but the method of learning tended to be formal (e.g. courses) and occurred off the worksite.

Overall, participants' learning was gained primarily from participating in specific job-related activities in the workplace (e.g. acting and seconded positions), consulting others by asking questions and requesting feedback, and solving ill-structured problems.

Work processes: learning is implicit.

Work processes accounted for a high proportion of learning for participants in the study. Work processes included working and collaborating with others, gaining specific job-related experience in the workplace through acting and seconded positions, solving-ill structured problems, consulting others, and elements of performance (i.e. assessing, deciding, action, and reflection). Leadership competencies, such as being self-aware and managing emotions of self and others were explicitly expressed during the interviews and influenced how managers learned. For example, a self-aware manager is more likely to be honest about the gaps in their knowledge and abilities and work closely with others (e.g. mentors) to request feedback and assistance in solving ill-structured problems. Accordingly, being able to display qualities such as empathy, compassion, and genuine interest in working and developing self and others was intricately linked to all work processes.

> A lot of people shy away from this role because it isn't easy, 130 staff per shift, different personalities. But that is the benefit of the acting role. You know what you are getting into like staff conflict. Have to take control of the situation and guide it. You want to know you are doing the right thing. That kind of stuff is always in the back of your mind, if you are a good leader. (Zach)

All of the participants in the study were exposed to acting and secondment opportunities. Acting and secondments were directly related to how managers were learning in the workplace. Secondment opportunities involve "trying out" the position for a period of time before officially moving into a supervisory role. Every participant acted on an "as needed" basis in addition to secondments that lasted weeks or years. Acting and secondments also gave senior managers an opportunity to offer mentorship and to assess the competencies of an acting manager. Acting positions and secondments were the organization's main method of succession planning and were a habitual practice in every centre. Eric explained this concept in detail:

> When I started acting as a manager, it was very outside of my comfort zone, it wasn't something I have done...I was training as a releasing manager. I would look at files, I would review, I would make notes, I would identify the things I was looking for, I would write down what I saw. And this was so the existing managers could review my work and check to see that I am interpreting things properly. That was for a three-month period where they reviewed my work till the point that they got comfortable with allowing me signing authority…so once that happened I relaxed a little, it was freeing for me 'cause it was a little vote of confidence that was important to me.

Upper management recognized that many of their senior managers were going to retire, which would create a gap in the management workforce. Therefore, upper management developed a succession plan that gave officers an opportunity to take on various supervisory roles in the centre over the course of a full year.

> This year there was an informal competition for manager succession training. That was a yearlong process that started…last year. [Upper management] realized that a lot of the managers here are hitting that age where they are starting to think about retirement, so [upper management] started planning for succession planning. There were [several] of us

that were selected…They wanted us…to experience everything, you should have knowledge of everything. (Todd)

Working and collaborating with others was also important when learning how to solve ill-structured problems and working through the elements of performance. By working closely with others, participants were able to observe, listen, and learn from more experienced officers (e.g. peers, subordinates, and managers). By observing others, participants learned new practices and perspectives.

You pick these competencies up by working with other people, partnering up with more experienced people, whether they are your peers, your subordinates, the ones that have been in the business a long time. They could be your superiors who have obviously been around longer and have climbed up that rank structure. But you have to find the way to mirror your comfort level, your personality with the way other people, successful people do business in here. (Eric)

Working and collaborating with others also included processes such as asking questions and receiving feedback, which were activities that presented opportunities for reflection and hence learning. This brings me to the next theme, learning processes within work.

Learning processes within work: learning is reactive.

Learning processes within work were embedded within the many of the work activities explained above (e.g. acting and seconded positions), but the difference was the amount of conscious effort or awareness regarding the amount and quality of learning that occurred. Thus, learning can occur spontaneously in response to a recent situation. At times managers are consciously aware of their learning, while other times learning occurs only when time is set aside for reflection. For instance, asking questions and seeking feedback was done with the sole

purpose of learning how to improve one's practice. An experienced manager discussed the importance of asking questions throughout his career so he could ensure he was learning and improving his skills. "I asked a lot of questions as a frontline officer watching supervisors, but it helped tie everything together 'cause a lot of people are on their own. Some people want to learn. [When I was] a supervisor, I watched the manager and asked why do you do this or that" (Jacob). Some participants approached senior managers and ask them how they would deal with hypothetical situations about ill-structured problems. This was done with the purpose of being able to manage difficult situations, if they were ever to occur. "Asking hypotheticals. How would you deal with it? I do that on an on-going basis. I review incidents that I am not working in and I see how that was dealt with. And if there are any questions that I have…then I go and ask somebody that is more in the know about that stuff" (Bobby).

Leadership competencies (e.g. self-awareness, self-management and relationship management) were also critical in being able to ask for feedback. Participants discussed the importance of receiving honest feedback and support from mentors they trusted. "Good leaders build good leaders who want to spend their time showing you how to do things, teaching you" (Zach). Giving and receiving feedback were not only important, but also vital for most learning processes. This finding is supported by Eraut's (2004) research, which found most individuals needed short-term specific feedback and long-term strategic feedback on general progress. Consequently, learning in the workplace was dependent on the quality of relationships within one's workplace as expressed by Emily:

> Someone who is willing to impart their knowledge, teach and recognize opportunities to teach and does it in a manner that is not insulting. I see a lot of managers and supervisors who see things and just ignore it. A good mentor sees things and uses it as a teaching

moment. For example, they will see something and say maybe this wasn't the best way to handle it. What also makes a good mentor is lead by example.

Use of mediating artefacts, such as job aid manuals and personal journals was also used with the explicit purpose of learning.

When I was a frontline officer trying to become a supervisor, I would look at the people that I thought were really good at the job and I had a notebook to write down what I thought was good...Just by me writing it down it gave me the ability to say, ok, this is the road I need to take. (Curtis)

Many of the participants also expressed how participation in special projects and committees contributed to their learning. "Committee work that helps with staff development" (Derek). Participation in committees was seen as an opportunity to learn more about the other parts of the organization and to work with new people. As Rina noted, "Taking on training was a new portfolio for me. Walking around talking to the instructors, collecting data, collecting information. Trying to learn not only the data and information, but the politics".

Musters and manager meetings were also an important activity that occurred every day. Musters are meetings where a manager shares information with frontline officers about what occurred during the previous shift. Manager meetings are where managers and supervisors share information about what is occurring in the entire centre. Although learning was at times reactive during musters and manager meetings, they were important in the transmission of personal and process knowledge. Personal knowledge is what individuals bring to a situation that enables them to think and perform. It contains knowledge of people, situations, and the "know-how" in the form of skills and practices. Process knowledge is about knowing how to conduct various processes that contribute to professional action. It requires an individual to reflect on their knowledge of people, situations, and education. It was through the musters and manager

meetings that supervisors and managers learned about various centre processes and systems so they could efficiently allocate resources and put assets to use.

Learning activities: learning is deliberate.

Learning activities are deliberate actions for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills. Meaning, time is put aside for learning. This includes participating in formal and non-formal courses, which habitually occur away from the worksite. Formal courses can be defined as an organized learning event and typically classroom-based with the award of a qualification or credit (e.g. university degree). Non-formal courses are learning events that are typically organized, but are not awarded a qualification or credit (e.g. conferences and workshops). Few participants participated in formal learning events, while many others attended a wide range of non-formal learning events. Participants discussed how education is a requirement to become a manager. Even though, fewer supervisors and managers discussed attending university courses, "there is more focus on education if you want to become a manager. Now they require a university degree, which is what I am working on" (Emily).

There were occasions for participants to attend learning activities such as conferences, but these opportunities were rare and experienced by less than a quarter of the participants. More common were non-formal learning events, such as courses and workshops that were offered through the organization (e.g. leadership and manager courses). Participants reported that a small amount of their learning occurred through formal (e.g. credential is awarded) and non-formal (e.g. no credential awarded) learning events. The majority of what and how they learned occurred through work and learning processes within the workplace.

I took some courses, I haven't taken a lot of courses and I don't have a lot of education behind me, how much of this did I draw from sitting in a classroom? I would say 10%.

A little was classroom stuff. When it comes to performance and employee relations, like what you can and can't do, that is reading the [collective] agreement and consulting with human resources. Like here, when I first came here, I couldn't tell you what the policies were...so I had to read and ask questions to learn. (Curtis)

Another participant explained how receiving a certificate from a course can look good on a resume, but doesn't help with learning how to do the job:

It [the certificate] can help on the resume [and] in an interview you can explain the *transparent leader* and the types of followers and it can sound really good, but it doesn't demonstrate [that I can do the job]…the courses helped me realize what I have always done (Jacob).

Participants expressed challenges in being able to transfer knowledge gained from courses and workshops to the workplace. The ability to transfer knowledge gained from a course to the workplace is much more complex than commonly perceived (Eraut 2004). "I took various leadership courses…but it didn't exactly help me with my job…sometimes it is difficult to find aspects of those courses that correlate to the job" (Tom). One of the benefits of attending workshops and courses were "side bar conversations that were informal, but would become part of the formal part of the training" (Greg). "Side bar" conversations provided managers an opportunity to learn new things and generate new ideas from people outside of their organization. This required leadership competencies on the part of the participants. For instance, seizing opportunities to strike up conversations and develop relationships with other people to foster an environment of teamwork and collaboration.

Participants' learning was gained primarily from within the workplace, but the quality and amount of learning that occurred was dependent on the extent to which the workplace created opportunities for, or barriers to, learning. The final section of this chapter will present the

results for the third research question: What contextual workplace factors affected the informal learning of managers?

What Contextual Workplace Factors Affect Informal Learning?

As I discussed at the beginning of the chapter, all of the themes are interrelated concepts in the sense that they are not segregated, but work together to influence and inform what supervisors and managers are learning and how they are learning it. This also includes contextual factors in the workplace that either creates opportunities for, or barriers to, learning. Workplace learning researchers have recognized the importance of context and the relevance of how work is organized and distributed to the type of learning opportunities available to its employees (Engeström, 2001; Eraut, 2007; Fuller & Unwin, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Fuller and Unwin (2006) have developed a conceptual framework to categorize barriers and opportunities to learning, which they term *expansive* and *restrictive*. Their research has focused on the interaction between organizational context, workplace learning, and individual learning, which align with the three themes that emerged, (a) leadership competencies, (b) learning factors, and (c) context factors. Each theme will be discussed based on its expansive or restrictive features within the workplace setting. The theme of leadership competencies will be discussed within the context of learning and context factors. For a full list of expansive and restrictive features for learning and context factors, please refer to Appendix G and H.

Learning Factors.

Learning factors influence an individual's ability to learn within a workplace context. I drew inspiration from Eraut's (2007) informal workplace learning theory when developing the categories under this theme, which are (a) confidence and commitment, (b) feedback and support, and (c) challenge and value of work.

Being open to taking on new challenges requires confidence. Confidence is dependent on the relationships at work and the type of feedback and support one receives from others (e.g. mentors) regarding their performance. Supervisors and managers in the study reported that possessing confidence was important when seeking new learning opportunities and challenges, but their confidence was dependent on the extent to which they felt supported by their colleagues. "It comes down to self-development and career development. When I applied for supervisor's job I wanted a challenge and I enjoy leading. In management roles, it is the ability to recognize people above you and beside you. You want to be surrounded by good people" (Zach). Bobby shared a story regarding a challenge he was hesitant to take on, but changed his mind after receiving support from one of his mentors:

> The manager [told me] "you can sit on the side lines and let other people that may not be as competent or capable as you advance, and you may be ok with that". At the time I was ok with that. "However, if you are ok with that…what about the people that work with you. Are they ok with that…you have a lot of the skills sets that your coworkers don't have…you've told me that you care about them… how about working for them"? So that convinced me [to become a supervisor]. I had reflection on that and that is what made me go forward and consequently that is what I said to other people to get them involved.

The quote from Bobby nicely captures an example of an expansive workplace environment that is conducive to its employees in developing confidence and commitment to their work. Examples of expansive learning factors include, access to mentors who provide specific feedback to improve performance, forming bonds and positive relationships with people at work (e.g. relationship management), and offering peer support to staff after an emergency code. Examples of restrictive learning factors are little to no access to mentors, employees are disconnected and isolated from other peers, and there is no peer support after emergency codes.

Context factors.

I drew inspiration from Eraut's (2007) informal workplace learning theory when developing the categories under this theme, which are (a) encounters and relationships with others at work and (b) allocation and structuring of work. Context factors influence learning factors. For example, the amount of feedback and support a participant received was dependent on the relationship they had with their mentor or other experienced managers. Although all of the participants in the study had a mentor at one point in their career, mentorship was an informal occurrence. Meaning, mentorship spontaneously occurred through the forming of relationships and bonds in the workplace. This was explained by Daniel:

> During the start of my career I was teaching with a group of people. We all got together and decided to work together through interviews and competitions to try and get promoted. Over a 10 year period we have all been successful, and have developed a great sense of team work amongst each other.

Encounters and relationships with others at work are interrelated to the leadership competencies of social awareness and relationship management, which are competencies that enable supervisors and managers to cultivate relationships within the workplace. Expansive workplace environments are collaborative work environments that promote trust and inclusion through authentic interactions with others (Fuller & Unwin, 2006). Restrictive workplace environments are characterized by segregated working groups that are non-collaborative and exclude groups of employees from participating in certain activities.

Participants in the study gave examples of both expansive and restrictive workplace environments. An example of an expansive work environment was given by Eric, "You pick up these competencies by working with other people, partnering up with more experienced people…They could be your superiors who have obviously been around longer and have climbed

up that rank structure". Managers were seen as facilitators of workforce development within the organization that promoted collaboration amongst staff. An example of a restrictive work environment was given by one participant who expressed, "I never got feedback from my supervisors…[nowadays] a lot of people in acting roles…will personally come to me and ask me, 'what am I doing right and what I am doing wrong'? They want that feedback" (Aaron). This provides an example of how important it is to create expansive learning environments that include continuous feedback loops so that individuals can be aware of the gaps in their performance.

The next category is the allocation and structuring of work, which deals with how time and workplace pressures influence a supervisor and manager's ability to think and make decisions. The elements of performance (i.e. assessing a situation, deciding what action to take, following a course of action, and reflection after the action) that were discussed earlier in the chapter involves thinking about how to carry out these activities, which is dependent on the manger's ability and prior learning. At times, the situation allows for thoughtful analysis of the situation so that decision making is more deliberate, while in other circumstances the situation calls for a rapid decision to be made. Time is the variable that influences the modes of cognition, which are (a) deliberative, (b) rapid, and (c) instant. Deliberative modes of cognition occur in slower paced work environments, which make it easier to assess, think, and reflect before making a decision, as is the case with reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987). Rapid modes of cognition involve learning how to handle brief, near spontaneous occurrences (e.g. scheduling issues when staff are absent and giving feedback to staff after an incident). Finally, instant modes of cognition are categorized by routinized action or an instant response to unpredictable occurrences that require an individual to make quick and snap decisions, as is the case with knowing-in-action (Schön, 1987).

Slower paced work environments that were conducive to deliberate modes of cognition were ideal in building confidence. Therefore, the allocation and structure of work for a new supervisor and manager needed to be sufficiently challenging without it being too overwhelming. Emily discussed how experience and time were needed to be successful as a supervisor and a manger:

> You can't be rushed through. You need time in and you need knowledge of policies, procedures and operations, 'cause if you don't, you can't make proper decisions…You double-check everything that you do, that is why I align myself with a mentor 'cause they are the sounding board…now I am more confident cause I have a little bit more experience…I learned through time, repetition, through feedback.

On the opposing end of deliberative modes of cognition are instant occurrences that require an immediate response. Eric gave an example of this, "Emergency codes require a supervisor to be quick thinking and sound in [their] judgment". Supervisors and managers had to make snap decisions and be able to be confident in those decisions. At times this wasn't the case as expressed by Aaron:

> There was an incident at the [centre] we had a group of inmates that started fighting with each other and it was a large group of inmates. They called the code. I went up there. I am going to admit, I was new there, I was by myself and I did feel uncomfortable. I panicked, I ended up calling for all available staff to come there, which probably wasn't the smartest thing I did.

During those instances, it was crucial that a debrief followed so that time to reflect and learn from mistakes occurred.

> I was the first person to admit that I didn't do it all right. It was one of the better [debriefs] we had because we discussed it and I think I gained back a lot of confidence

having done that. And I never did that mistake again. It was a learning experience. It is humbling…admitting to your staff that you didn't handle things properly. We are always going to make mistakes; it is just the severity of the mistake and how you are going to control it. (Aaron)

Debriefs are a process that serve multiple functions. One function serves as a method of reflection of how to improve performance (e.g. what did we learn from the incident and how can we approach it differently next time). Another important function of a debrief is to assess the emotional well-being of others (e.g. emotional intelligence). Emergency codes are stressful occurrences that pose a high amount of risk to the officers and the inmates involved. Through a debrief a manager can display empathy and compassion for the officers that report to him or her. Debriefs provide a strong example of the dynamic relationship between each of the themes (e.g. what, how, and context).

In the middle of deliberative and instant sits rapid modes of cognition. This requires learning how to handle brief, near spontaneous occurrences. For example, when a supervisor conducts rounds on a unit. "I keep my eyes open to potential security flaw, when I am observing cells… I have to make sure that I keep my eyes open…if there is something that I see that isn't right I address it immediately" (Bobby). Ultimately, effective decision-making relies on the supervisor's and manager's framing and understanding of the situation and their personal knowledge about the situation, much like what Schön (1987) refers to as reflection-in-action.

Summary

This chapter reports on the findings of the study that address the following research questions, (a) what are managers learning informally in the workplace (b) how are managers learning it, and (c) what contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning? The results

of the study revealed that the informal learning of managers are dependent on various elements that work together to influence and inform what supervisors and managers are learning, how they are learning it, and the contextual factors that impact their learning.

In regard to what managers are learning, two themes were generated (a) leadership competencies and (b) manager competencies. Leadership competencies developed as a prominent theme under each of the three research questions. Thus, leadership competencies are pertinent to the overall informal learning and development of supervisors and managers in the study. Under the second research question, how are managers learning, three themes (in addition to leadership competencies) emerged, (a) work processes, (b) learning processes, and (c) learning activities. Lastly, the third research question, what are the contextual workplace factors that affect informal learning, two themes emerged, learning factors and context factors. For quick reference, a full description of each of the themes and their corresponding categories and sub-categories can be found in Appendix F.

In the next chapter I discuss the results in relation to leadership and management literature and workplace learning theories. I contend that my findings have key implications of how informal learning affects managerial competence and that manager development should be a key element when devising strategies to increase organizational performance.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Overview

The final chapter of this dissertation is broken down into four main sections, which are (a) key implications of the study in relation to leadership and management literature and workplace learning theories, (b) contribution to scholarly knowledge (c) recommendations for professional practice, and (d) recommendations for future research.

Some of an organization's most valuable resources are its managers and a failure to develop their competence can lead to a disengaged workforce that is overburdened. I contend that my findings have three key implications for the informal learning of supervisors and managers. First, leadership competencies in addition to manager competencies are critical to the overall learning and development of supervisors and managers. Second, the majority of learning was informal and occurred in the workplace. Therefore, expansive workplace learning strategies must be developed and supported by the organization in order to develop a competent supervisor and manager workforce. Third, since acting and secondment positions were used as the main method for succession planning and learning within the workplace, I argue that a standardized succession planning and management process should be developed to ensure equitable access to such opportunities.

Key Implications

Leadership competencies versus management competencies.

Participants in the study made the distinction between leadership and management. This is hardly a new topic in academic literature and with business practitioners (Boyatzis, 1982; Davenport & Harding, 2010; Goleman et al., 2002; Huczynski, 1993; Kotter; 2006; Toor &

Ofori, 2008). Organizations have elevated the concept of leadership at the expense of management and have created a mindset that leaders are better than managers (Davenport & Harding, 2010; Kotter, 2006). As Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) wrote for an article in the Harvard Business Review, "Nobody aspires to be a good manager anymore; everybody wants to be a great leader" (p.54). The separation of leadership and management has its consequences. Management without leadership can lead to an unengaged workforce, while leadership without management can lead to unachieved business goals. Organizations need managers to reach their objectives (Boyatzis, 1982; Davenport & Harding, 2010; Gosling & Mintzberg 2003; Toor & Ofori, 2008).

Managers are faced with multiple dilemmas. For instance, managers in the study expressed the importance of considering the larger system they worked within (e.g. systems thinking), while at the same time considering the needs of their own centre and employees. They spoke of having to be adaptable to continuous change, while needing to maintain order and consistency. Managers have to be able to think about achieving and monitoring results, while inspiring and motivating personnel to have an interest and commitment to their work (Goleman et al., 2002; Boyatzis 1982; Kotter, 2006; Toor & Ofori, 2008). The management challenges I observed, such as protecting the public from incarcerated individuals, dealing with institutional crowding in times of fiscal restraint, and overseeing the administration of drug rehabilitation and educational programming are different from other fields. Yet, at the individual supervisory level, managing in a correctional setting has many things in common with management in other workplace settings (Phillips & McConnell, 2003; Jackson, Mumford & Jobe-Armstrong, 2009). For instance, participants in the study had to monitor and control resources (e.g. budget), operational planning, mitigate staff issues (e.g. sick leave, retention, engagement, and conflict), and develop their staff though mentorship.

Some of the managers in the study discussed how some of the learning they acquired for both leadership and manager competencies were learned through formal learning activities, but a lot of it was learned informally in the workplace by observing others, working through ill-structured problems in consultation with others, and through acting and secondment opportunities.

Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) developed a framework that involves five ways in which managers interpret and deal with the world around them, which are (a) reflective mind-set (e.g. know thyself), (b) analytic mind-set (e.g. analysis of action), (c) worldly mind-set (e.g. understanding the organizational environment), (d) collaborative mind-set (e.g. working with others), and (e) action mind-set (e.g. putting it all together). When comparing the five mind-sets to the leadership competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman et al., 2002) one can see the similarities between the theoretical constructs. In order for managers to be able to balance the divergent needs of their organizations, they need to be skilled leaders and managers. Demonstrating emotional intelligence and various manager mind-sets takes time and a lot of energy.

Ultimately, supervisors and managers have a choice. They can either choose to sit isolated in their office, which may be conducive to getting reports written, or they can choose to venture beyond the walls of their office to spend time with their staff. "People trust people they know and they know people with whom they interact and share experiences with, which happens on the other side of the office door" (Davenport & Harding, 2010, p. 255).

Workplace learning is informal and dependent on context.

Learning primarily was informal, occurred in the workplace, and was dependent on the relationships and supports (e.g. mentors) participants received in the workplace. Learning

occurred and arose out of doing the job, for instance solving problems, improving quality of work, coping with change, and out of social interactions with staff, supervisors, peers and mentors. While learning did occur at an individual level, it was enhanced through the development of relationships. This reinforces workplace learning research that has shown the workplace environment can that either create opportunities for, or barriers to, learning (Eraut, 2007; Fuller & Unwin, 2006).

Fuller and Unwin's (2006) research on expansive and restrictive learning environments support my findings that supervisor and manager learning is dependent not only on an individual's level of confidence and commitment, but also on the value and challenge of work, and supports in the workplace. Learning took place in the normal course of daily work and activities without a high degree of structure, and as a result learning occurred at an implicit or at best reactive level of consciousness. Managers were not always consciously aware of their learning. Hence, strategies for facilitating manager informal workplace learning ought to formalize expansive features that enable managers to engage with new ideas, mentors, and artefacts in order to maximize learning opportunities to their fullest potential (Fuller & Unwin, 2006).

There are benefits in designing formalized workplace learning strategies. Learning is an active process of dealing with dynamic conditions and problems in the world through testing solutions and interacting with others. Of course, not all experience lends itself to learning. In fact, some experience can impede learning from occurring (Moore, 2010). A central feature of informal learning is learning from experience (Dewey, 1938; Eraut, 2004; Kolb, 2015; Marsick & Watkins, 1990). When managers are in the process of learning they transition back and forth between different modes of reflection, action, feeling, and thinking. Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience that is tested out in the experiences of the learner (Kolb, 2015;

Eraut, 2004). Experience occurs on the level of impressions requiring further reflection in order for it to be assimilated or accommodated into existing memory schemes. An experience may never become an experiential learning moment if learning is not the intended outcome or if the action required is too rapid for it to be reflected upon (Eraut, 1994; Schön, 1987).

Participants' learning was enhanced through moments of self-reflection that occurred either through journal writing or group debriefs after emergency codes. In order to be able to improve performance, supervisors and managers need to reflect on their action to think back on what they have done in order to discover how their knowing-in-action (e.g. action spontaneously derived without conscious deliberation) may have contributed to an outcome (Schön, 1987). Since supervisors and managers do not readily transfer knowledge gained from formal and non-formal learning events to the workplace, expansive workplace learning strategies must be developed in order for the development of a strong supervisor and manager workforce to occur.

A failure to develop expansive workplace learning environments may result in restrictive work environments that can become a breeding ground for people management systems that rely on command and control, low trust relationships, and little tolerance for making mistakes.

Equitable succession planning and management processes.

Acting and secondment positions were used as the main method for succession planning and contributed to a large proportion of learning within the workplace for supervisors and managers. A succession process is defined as a means of identifying critical management positions, starting at the level of a supervisor and extending to the highest levels in the organization (Rothwell, 2001). Imagine succession processes occurring along a continuum with replacement planning on one end, succession management on the other, and succession planning in the middle (Berke & Centre for Creative Leadership, 2005). Replacement planning focuses on

the identification of replacements and does not include deliberate development of identified successors. It is an "ad hoc" process that involves a senior manager or mentor guiding a person he or she believes would be a good replacement (Berke et al., 2005). In contrast, succession management is a deliberate activity by an organization to promote leadership and manager development in key positions, to retain intellectual knowledge, and to encourage individual advancement (Berke et al., 2005; Rothwell, 2001).

Most of the secondment opportunities were long-term positions and were implemented through formalized succession management processes, meaning, candidates had to apply and interview for the position. In contrast, "acting" opportunities that were short-term (e.g. backfill for someone on holiday) occurred mainly as replacement planning. A senior manager or mentor encouraged a subordinate who they had formed a relationship with to fill the position. Participants discussed how important it was to have access to short-term acting positions when applying for long-term secondment and permanent opportunities. The experiential learning that was gained from the short-term acting positions assisted supervisors and managers in gaining knowledge and confidence. It also acted as an instrument for individual enlightenment and organizational learning. It improved the participant's ability to respond to changing environmental demands. It also increased morale since there were opportunities to be promoted from within (Rothwell, 2001).

How an organization selects, promotes, and develops their managers can have reverberating implications for the long-term success of an organization. Replacement planning and succession management acted as the main "feeder" for replacing positions within the organization. Hence, classroom training and workshops were not the dominant method of learning for the participants. The emphasis was learning through on-the-job experiences. Therefore, a standardized and inclusive succession and management process should be

developed to ensure equitable practices are implemented. This will ensure secondments and acting positions are expansive and not restrictive in nature. For example, a potential candidate can apply and interview for future acting and secondment opportunities that are both short and long term in nature. Although, individuals are active agents who can select how they participate and engage in the workplace, one cannot discount the important role the organizational context plays in creating creates opportunities for, or barriers to, learning (Fuller & Unwin, 2006).

Contribution to Scholarly Knowledge

Although Eraut's (2004, 2007) theoretical framework primarily guided the design and analysis of my research study, I discovered there was data that could not be interpreted from Eraut's theory alone. Therefore, I remained open to relationships and connections that could be aligned to other theories and research. I drew inspiration from Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee's (2002) theory of primal leadership and emotional intelligence and Davenport and Harding's (2010) manager model, both of which informed my thinking during the data analysis. At the completion of my data analysis I saw an opportunity to contribute to theory by developing a theoretical framework, which I term the *workplace learning framework*. Figure 3 below offers a visual representation of how supervisors and managers learn in the workplace. My workplace learning framework is consistent with the things I heard and observed through my data collection, and provides a lens for making sense of how informal learning occurs in the workplace for managers in the public sector.

According to Anfara and Mertz (2015) a theory must contain certain criteria that must be present for a theory to be useful in the development of scholarly knowledge. It should be consistent with both the observed relations and established bodies of knowledge, provide a means of verification and revision, be predictive, and should stimulate further research in areas

that need investigation. A researcher could use my workplace learning framework as a means to explore the informal learning of managers in other business sectors to see if in fact the findings from my study also exist in other workplace settings. Recommendations for future research will be expanded on in the last section of this chapter.
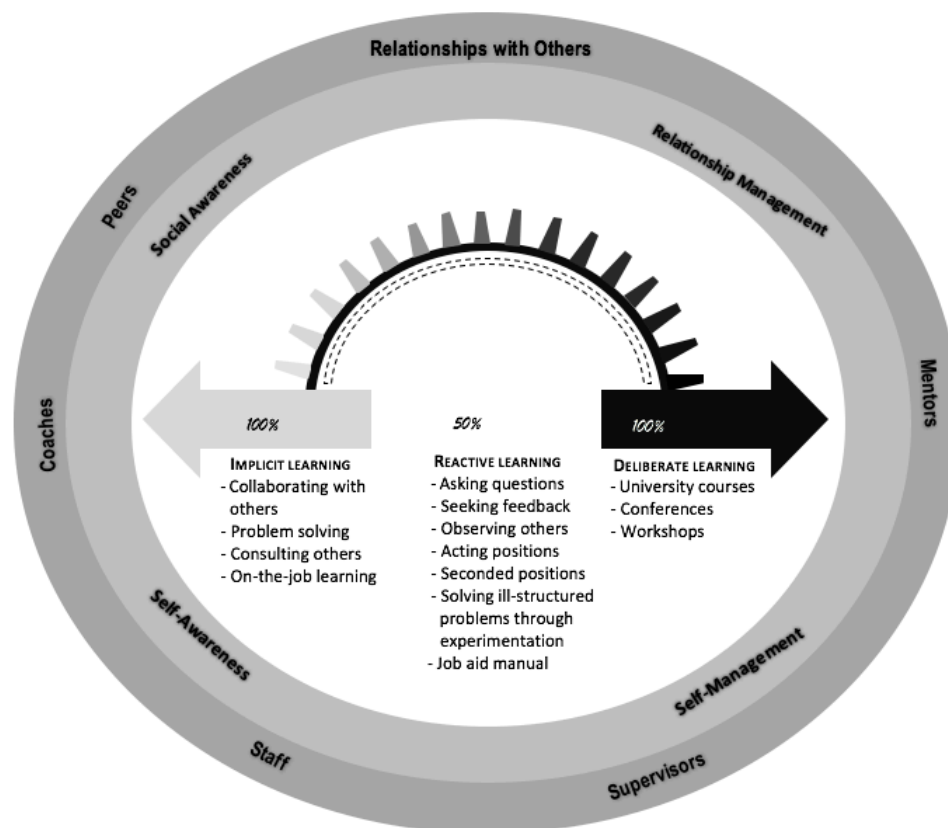
Figure 3. Workplace learning framework

In the centre of the circle sits a continuum of informal learning that ranges from implicit to explicit levels of conscious awareness. On the implicit side of the continuum encompasses work processes that include, but are not limited to collaborating with others, gaining specific job-related experience in the workplace and problem solving. Learning is an unintended and unstructured occurrence that contributes to manager's learning that is occurring at an implicit

level of consciousness. For example, a manager may be gaining new knowledge and skills through work processes they engage in habitually without being consciously aware that learning is occurring. Participants in my study gave an example of this when they spoke of consulting a peer about an issue they were encountering (e.g. employee performance). Through consultation with a peer a solution was generated (e.g. give a verbal warning and document the interaction). The manager may not be initially aware that learning took place until she has had a chance to reflect on whether or not the solution actually worked (e.g. reflection-in-action).

On the opposing end of the continuum are learning activities that are deliberate, occur on a conscious level, and are mostly outside of the immediate work environment. Examples of these types of learning activities are workshops, conferences, and university courses. In the middle of the continuum are learning processes within work that are embedded within the many work activities (e.g. acting and seconded positions), but the difference is the amount of conscious effort or awareness regarding the amount and quality of learning. At times managers are consciously aware of their learning, while other times learning occurs only when time is set aside for reflection. For instance, asking questions and seeking feedback from mentors, supervisors, and peers.

The next layer of the circle are the leadership competencies (i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) that are required to develop and sustain relationships in the workplace. Emotions and cognitive processes are intricately linked and can drive a manager's temperament and behaviour especially during times of high stress (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Being able to learn at work requires the ability to take on new challenges, which requires confidence. The confidence to take on new challenges depends on the extent to which a manager feels supported by her colleagues (Eraut, 2007). As a manager moves up the ranks to higher levels of management, support dwindles. Having strong emotional

intelligence and support from others can make it easier for a manager to balance managerial duties, such as performance management, with employee engagement strategies that develop trust and empathy between themselves and their employees.

This leads me to the outermost layer in the circle, which relates to "others" in the workplace that play a supportive role and enhance informal learning. As discussed earlier, learning in the workplace is dependent on the relationships and support a manager receives. Although learning occurred and arose out of doing the job, it was the interactions a manager had with her staff, supervisors, mentors, coaches, and peers that created opportunities for learning (Eraut, 2007; Fuller & Unwin, 2006). Hence, expansive workplace learning strategies consist of accessibility to mentors, coaches, and collaborative work environments that promote trust and inclusion through authentic interactions (Fuller & Unwin, 2006).

My workplace learning framework is a socio-cultural workplace learning theory that is situated within the philosophical paradigm of social constructionism. The manager constructs meaning as she engages with the world around her and her knowledge and reality is dependent upon her practices being constructed in and out of interactions with colleagues in her work milieu (Crotty, 1998). Her knowledge is essentially developed, communicated, and interpreted within a social context. A manager's learning cannot exist independently of her workplace environment. Her learning is significantly shaped by social, organizational, and cultural factors and is an on-going process of participation in a variety of activities (Hager, 2011).

Recommendations for Professional Practice

Many individuals still equate learning with formal education and training, but much of the knowledge acquired by supervisors and managers has been acquired through experience such as daily routines and procedures, problem solving, discussions with colleagues, and through moments of reflection. Organizations need to create a climate for supervisors and managers

where continuous learning is not only supported, but is embedded in workplace culture as well. Therefore, I recommend three strategies that if implemented will increase expansive workplace learning opportunities.

Since replacement planning and succession management was the main method for filling supervisor and manager positions within the organization, it is recommended that a standardized and inclusive succession and management process be developed to ensure equitable practices are followed. An example of this can be implementing a practice where individuals who are interested in moving into a supervisor or manager position go through a recruitment process that involves completing an application that communicates their aspiration, followed by participating in an interview. Successful candidates could then be eligible for short-term acting and long-term secondment opportunities.

The second recommendation is grounded within the concept of mentorship. The majority of learning that occurred in the workplace and was dependent on the relationships and supports (e.g. mentors) supervisors and managers received. Therefore, it is important that once an individual has been identified as a potential candidate through the succession and management process, they are assigned a mentor(s) to support their learning. Mentors should be selected based on their leadership and manager competencies, in addition to receiving some training to develop their mentorship skills (e.g. listening, coaching, developing goals, and monitoring the achievement of goals).

Once an individual has successfully gone through the succession and management process and designated a mentor, it is time to focus on how their work is allocated and structured. This brings me to my final recommendation. In order for a new supervisor and manager to successfully complete the elements of performance (i.e. assessing a situation, deciding what action to take, following a course of action, and reflection after the action) work

needs to be challenging, but not too overwhelming. Supervisors and managers need to have time to engage in thoughtful analysis of the situation with their mentor so that learning from experience is more deliberate.

Based on the results of the study, slower paced work environments were conducive to learning and ideal in building confidence. Work can be allocated in incrementally challenging duties and tasks. This is referred to as the *zone of proximal development* (Kolb, 2015). Vygotsky used this concept to explain how learning shapes the course of development. The zone of proximal development is defined as the distance between the actual developmental level of the individual and the level of potential development as determined through decision making under the guidance and/or collaboration with mentors and peers (Kolb, 2015). Therefore, the zone of proximal development becomes the vehicle in which new supervisors and managers' learning is enhanced through moments of self-reflection and debriefs with mentors. Although an examination regarding the quality of performance for a supervisor and manager is not within the boundaries of this case study, the reader can draw their own conclusions of what it takes to be a strong leader and a great manager.

Future Research

Due to the study's exploratory methodology, the results of this study present exciting opportunities for further research. I have two recommendations for future research. First, as discussed above, workplace learning experiences are complicated by power dynamics, divisions of labor, and organizational culture (Fuller et al., 2005). This presents an opportunity to conduct critical inquiry research that explores potential inequities between women and men in workplace learning. For instance, a critical study could be conducted utilizing a feminist methodology to examine the potential barriers that women experience in relation to workplace learning (e.g.

access to mentors and opportunities to participate in replacement planning and management

succession processes).

A second recommendation for further research lies in the need to explore and examine

workplace learning in public, private, and non-profit sectors. Although, research studies in

workplace learning has been conducted in those sectors, the focus was on early and mid-career

professionals. It would be interesting to conduct a study that focused on the learning of

supervisors and managers in the private, non-for profit, and other public sectors to see if in fact

the findings from my study also exist in other workplace settings. For instance, a researcher

could use my workplace learning framework as a means to explore the informal learning of

managers in the private sector.

The workplace context can bring new perspectives and understandings to research and

theory on learning. As discussed above, research into the informal learning of supervisors and

managers in the workplace is limited. I hope that other researchers will pick up the baton and

continue to conduct research in this exciting arena. An arena that requires supervisors and

managers to deal with complex, ambiguous, confusing, and messy situations that must be

resolved in a way that not only benefits the organization, but benefits the men and women who

look to their managers for leadership, inspiration, guidance, and support.

Conclusion

Managers are an important and valuable resource since much of an organization's success

lies on their shoulders. For instance, a manager's core core function is directing and influencing

strategy, controlling resources, monitoring employee performance, while also inspiring and

motivating their staff to be committed and engaged in their work. Therefore, leadership

competencies in addition to manager competencies are critical to the overall learning and

development of supervisors and managers. If a manager doesn't possess emotional intelligence how can she build relationships with mentors who can provide feedback and guidance to improve her performance. How can a manager show empathy towards her staff if she is not able to manage her own emotions? The four domains of emotional intelligence are not mutually exclusive to what managers are learning, but pertinent to the overall informal learning and development of managers. An emotionally intelligent manager creates an environment conducive to informal learning that promotes empathy, trust building, and the formation of relationships that foster teamwork and collaboration through which informal learning occurs.

Demonstrating emotional intelligence takes time and a lot of energy, therefore organizations can play a vital role in supporting the development of both leadership and manager competencies. Since learning to be a manager is primarily informal, occurs in the workplace, arises out of doing the job, and through social interactions with others, more can be done by organizations to support the design of formalized workplace learning strategies that create opportunities for learning. For example, standardized and inclusive succession and management process can be developed to ensure secondments and acting positions are expansive in nature. Work can be allocated in incrementally challenging duties and tasks so that managers can engage in thoughtful analysis of situations with their mentors to make learning from experience more deliberate.

My research findings have key implications of how informal learning affects managerial competence and that manager development should be a key element when devising strategies to increase organizational performance. Being a manager myself, I have struggled with balancing my managerial duties with my leadership responsibilities. There were times in my career I wondered if I was "doing it right". I constantly asked myself questions such as, do my staff like me, do they think I am a good leader, and do they trust me to lead them towards the successful

completion of their projects? One of the key insights I learned from conducting this research is employees do not always get to choose who their managers are. For better or worse, employees are stuck with a manager that was selected by someone else to lead them. Even though I may still harbour some insecurities as a manager, I will endeavor to lead my team in a way that if they did have a choice, they would always choose me.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Speech

Manager Morning Meeting Introductory Remarks:

Good morning everyone. Thank you for giving me a few minutes to introduce myself and to discuss my research study. My name is Johanna Pagonis and under the sponsorship of Kim Sanderson (Assistant Deputy Minister of Correctional Services Division) and Dr. Heather Kanuka (PhD Supervisor, University of Alberta), I am conducting a research study for my PhD to explore how supervisors and managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace.

Purpose
The purpose of the study is to explore how supervisors/managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace and to examine the role and impact that individual and social processes have on informal workplace learning. The three research questions are:

Research question 1: What are supervisors/managers learning informally in the workplace?

Research question 2: How are supervisors/managers learning it: individually, socially or both?

Research question 3: What contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning?

Study Procedures
- Data will be collected primarily through interviews with the potential of a second follow-up interview.
  - Interview questions will explore how learning is acquired informally through participation in social and individual activities, the types of work activity that lend to informal learning, as well as the various learning factors and context factors that impact learning.
  - Interviews will be approximately 1.5 hours in length.
  - You will be provided with the interview questions beforehand.
  - Interviews will be audio recorded.
  - You will be provided with a copy of your transcript to review and offer feedback on.
- Observation (optional):
  - The goal of observation will be to gain a meaningful understanding of your work setting, so that I may observe informal learning as it occurs naturally.
  - The scope, parameters, types of activities, and duration of the observation will be discussed and agreed upon with you prior to the observation taking place.
  - You will be provided a copy of my field notes to review and offer feedback on.
- Journaling (optional):
  - The goal of journaling is to capture your reflections of your informal learning as it occurs throughout your work day.

- o You can use any format you wish to capture your journal entries (e.g. handwritten or electronic).
- o The duration of the journaling activity will be determined by you.
- o Your journal will be returned to you at a date and mail address of your choosing.

Benefits

Your responses and participation in this research study will provide insight into informal workplace learning and will help support the design and implementation of meaningful and purposeful ongoing supports to enhance the quality of informal learning for supervisors and managers. In addition to gaining an understanding how to connect and transfer informal learning to broader contexts and work activities.

Risks

- There may be some anxiety associated with being observed. Therefore, the scope, parameters, types of activities, and duration of the observation will be discussed and agreed upon with you prior to the observation taking place and can be adjusted at any point during the observation period.
- The very nature of being observed means that other people may be aware that you are participating. While I will do her best to secure your anonymity during the observations, it is important that you are aware of the challenges of maintaining anonymity while being observed.
- There may be risks to being in this study that are not known. If I learn anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, I will tell you right away.

Voluntary Participation

- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You are also not obliged to answer any specific questions even if you have agreed to participate in the study.
- All of the information you provide will be held in strict confidence. All information collected will be compiled, so no individual will be identifiable.
- You are free to decline participation at any time during the data collection phase without penalty and can ask to have any collected data withdrawn from the data base and not included in the study.
- If you decide to withdraw your consent after the data has been collected, you may do so up to **November 30, 2016.**

Confidentiality & Anonymity

- The intended use of the research is for my PhD dissertation, including published articles/books and presentations.
- You will not be personally identified in the dissemination of the research.
- All data will be kept confidential and be accessible only to me and my PhD Supervisor, Heather Kanuka.
- Data will be kept in a secure place for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the research study.

- All electronic data will be password protected and deleted after 5 years.
- You can receive a copy of the research report once the research study is completed by requesting a copy from me.

Further Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kanuka at Hakanuka@ualberta.ca 780-4926732 or me at johanna.pagonis@gov.abc.ca 780-267-6565.
- The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

In closing, I request that you approach me outside of this meeting if you are interested in participating so that your anonymity can be maintained.

Thank you.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Rapport building and demographic questions

1. How long have you been a supervisor/manager?

2. How/why did you become a supervisor/manager?

Questions regarding the nature of their job

3. Please explain the nature of your job: recent tasks, duties, and common problems/issues you deal with.

4. Explain the competencies and/or expertise you need to do your job.

5. How did you acquire these competencies?

Questions regarding learning

6. Has the nature of the competencies changed since you acquired them?

7. How did you learn to do the job? Specifically, how, where, and when did learning take place?

If general statements regarding learning are given

8. Think of a salient/prominent/significant learning episode that occurred. Explain the episode and how/what you learned from that occurrence.

Appendix C

Letter of Information

Study Title: Informal Learning at Work: Examining how Managers in Public Sector Learn Informally in the Workplace

Research Investigator: **Supervisor (if applicable:**
A. Johanna Pagonis   Professor Heather Kanuka, PhD
Educational Policy Studies   Educational Policy Studies
7-104 Education North   5-164 Education North
University of Alberta   University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5   Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5
Pagonis@ualberta.ca   Heather.Kanuka@ualberta.ca
780-267-6565   780-493-6732

Background
Under the support of Kim Sanderson (Assistant Deputy Minister of Correctional Services Division) and Dr. Heather Kanuka (University of Alberta), Johanna Pagonis is undertaking a research study in partial fulfillment of her PhD to explore how supervisors and managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace.

From your classification, you have been identified as a staff member who is responsible for daily operations and the supervision of correctional peace officers. As such, you are being asked if you would like to volunteer to participate in an interview, possible observation and journaling of your daily work duties. Although, each participant will be asked to participate in an interview, you can choose whether or not you would like to participate in the observation and/or journaling activity.

Purpose
The purpose of the proposed study is to explore how supervisors/managers in the public sector learn informally in the workplace and to examine the role and impact that individual and social processes have on informal workplace learning. The three research questions are:

Research question 1: What are supervisors/managers learning informally in the workplace?
Research question 2: How are supervisors/managers learning it: individually, socially or both?
Research question 3: What contextual workplace factors affect their informal learning?

Study Procedures
- Data will be collected primarily through interviews with the potential of a second follow-up interview.
  - Interview questions will explore how learning is acquired informally through participation in social and individual activities, the types of work activity that lend to informal learning, as well as the various learning factors and context factors that impact learning.
  - Interviews will be approximately 1.5 hours in length.
  - You will be provided with the interview questions beforehand.
  - Interviews will be audio recorded.

- o You will be provided with a copy of your transcript to review and offer feedback on.
- Observation (optional):
  - o The goal of observation will be to gain a meaningful understanding of your work setting, so that Johanna may observe informal learning as it occurs naturally.
  - o The scope, parameters, types of activities, and duration of the observation will be discussed and agreed upon with you prior to the observation taking place.
  - o You will be provided a copy of Johanna's field notes to review and offer feedback on.
- Journaling (optional):
  - o The goal of journaling is to capture your reflections of your informal learning as it occurs throughout your work day.
  - o You can use any format you wish to capture your journal entries (e.g. handwritten or electronic).
  - o The duration of the journaling activity will be determined by you.
  - o Your journal will be returned to you at a date and mail address of your choosing.

Benefits

Your responses and participation in this research study will provide insight into informal workplace learning and will help support the design and implementation of meaningful and purposeful ongoing supports to enhance the quality of informal learning for supervisors and managers. In addition to gaining an understanding how to connect and transfer informal learning to broader contexts and work activities.

Risk

- There may be some anxiety associated with being observed. Therefore, the scope, parameters, types of activities, and duration of the observation will be discussed and agreed upon with you prior to the observation taking place and can be adjusted at any point during the observation period.
- The very nature of being observed means that other people may be aware that you are participating. While Johanna will do her best to secure your anonymity during the observations, it is important that you are aware of the challenges of maintaining anonymity while being observed.
- There may be risks to being in this study that are not known. If Johanna learns anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, she will tell you right away.

Voluntary Participation

- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You are also not obliged to answer any specific questions even if you have agreed to participate in the study.
- All of the information you provide will be held in strict confidence. All information collected will be compiled, so no individual will be identifiable.
- You are free to decline participation at any time during the data collection phase without penalty and can ask to have any collected data withdrawn from the data base and not included in the study.

- If you decide to withdraw your consent after the data has been collected, you may do so up to November 30, 2016.

Confidentiality & Anonymity
- The intended use of the research is for Johanna's PhD dissertation, including published articles/books and presentations.
- You will not be personally identified in the dissemination of the research.
- All data will be kept confidential and be accessible only to Johanna and her PhD Supervisor, Heather Kanuka.
- Data will be kept in a secure place for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the research study.
- All electronic data will be password protected and deleted after 5 years.
- You can receive a copy of the research report once the research study is completed by requesting a copy from Johanna.

Further Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kanuka at Hakanuka@ualberta.ca 780-4926732 or Johanna Pagonis at johanna.pagonis@gov.abc.ca 780-267-6565.
- The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Appendix D

Consent Form

I have read the information letter and had the nature of the research study explained. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. **I agree to participate in the interview. I will indicate my consent to participate in the observation and journaling activity below by checking the yes or no circle.** I will be given a copy of the information letter and consent form once it has been signed. I may decline to participate at any time during the data collection phase. If I decide to withdraw my consent after the data has been collected, I may do so up to November 30, 2016.

<u>Consenting Signature for Interview:</u>

Participant (printed) and Signature:

_____

Date: _____

<u>Consenting Signature for Observations:</u>   ◯ yes   ◯ no

Participant (printed) and Signature:

_____

Date: _____

<u>Consenting Signature for Journaling:</u>

I agree to participate in the journaling activity and to submit my journal to the researcher.
   ◯ yes   ◯ no

I will journal during the following time frame:

_____

My journal will be returned to me by:

_____

Return Address for journal:

_____

Participant (printed) and Signature:

_____

Date: _____

<u>Researcher Signature:</u>

Person obtaining informed consent (printed) and Signature:

_____

Date: _____

Appendix E

Coding Template

Question	Holistic	In Vivo	Category/Sub-Category
1. How long have you been a supervisor/manager? Include all positions including acting assignments.			
2. How and why did you become a supervisor/manager?			
3. Please explain the nature of your job: recent tasks, duties, and common problems/issues you deal with.			
4. Explain the competencies and/or expertise you need to do your job.			
5. How did you acquire these competencies?			
6. Has the nature of the competencies changed since you acquired them?			
7. How did you learn to do the job? Specifically, how, where, and when did learning take place?			
8. Think of a salient/prominent/significant learning episode that occurred. Explain the episode and how/what you learned from that occurrence.			
Field Notes			
Journal Entries			

Appendix F

Results of the Study
Themes and categories organized under each research question

What are managers learning informally in the workplace?	How are managers learning in the workplace?	What contextual workplace factors affect informal learning?
Leadership competencies -Self-awareness -Self-management -Social awareness -Relationship management **Manager competencies** -Systems thinking -Handling and controlling assets: e.g. acquiring and deploying staff, purchasing materials - Overseeing processes and implementing systems: e.g. putting assets to use -Achieving and monitoring results through problem-solving and experimentation	**Leadership competencies** **Work Processes (learning is implicit)** -Working and collaborating with others -Gaining specific job-related experience in the workplace (e.g. acting/seconded positions) -Solving ill-structured problems: experimentation and problem-solving, responding to codes -Consulting others -Elements of performance (assessing, deciding, action, reflection) **Learning Processes Within Work (learning is reactive)** -Asking questions and seeking feedback -Giving feedback -Acting/seconded positions -Participation in special projects/job portfolios (e.g. training, policy, staff deployment strategies) -Solving ill-structured problems: experimentation and problem-solving -Use of mediating artefacts	**Leadership competencies** **Learning Factors** -Confidence and commitment -Feedback and support -Challenge and value of work **Context Factors** -Encounters and relationships with others at work: e.g. working and collaborating with others -Allocation and structuring of work: mode of cognition e.g. deliberative, rapid, instant

(e.g. job aid manuals, offender
records system, scheduling
pro, incident reports, shift
change forms, muster)
-Participating in committees

**Learning Activities (learning
is deliberate)**
-Formal courses
-Non-formal courses e.g.
conferences and workshops

Appendix G

Learning Factors Categorized as Expansive or Restrictive

Learning Factors

Expansive	Restrictive
Access to mentors who provide feedback to improve performance	Little or no access to mentors
Participation in projects or special portfolios	Restricted participation in committees or access is granted to a few selected individuals
Participation in social activities e.g. hockey tournaments, fundraisers is inclusive to all staff	Participation in social activities is based on exclusive membership
Debriefing after an emergency code to reflect on what went well, learning from mistakes	Emergency codes are not debriefed and there is little tolerance for mistakes
Relationship Management: forming bonds and positive relationships with people at work	Employees are disconnected and isolated from one another
Offering supports to staff after an emergency code (e.g. peer support, employee and family support services)	Staff emotional and physical well-being is not considered after an emergency code

Appendix H

Context Factors Categorized as Expansive or Restrictive

Context Factors

Expansive	Restrictive
Access to acting and secondment opportunities	Little to no access to acting or secondment opportunities
Collaborative work environments that promote trust and inclusion through authentic interactions	Segregated working groups, that are non-collaborative and exclude groups of employees from participating in certain activities
Participation in committees to learn more about the organization and meet new people	Restricted participation in committees or access is granted to a few selected individuals
Succession planning – formalized secondments that expose officers to different supervisory positions to learn different manager roles and duties	Opportunity is granted to a few selected individuals instead of there being a formal succession process in place
Slower paced work environment: makes it easier to assess a situation, reflect and think about what decision you will make, what you are learning and how it applies to the situation	Hectic and high pressure work environments: do not allow for reflection and the time to learn from mistakes