

Managers as Facilitators of Learning,  
Informal Workplace Learning, and the  
Learning Organization: A Research Agenda

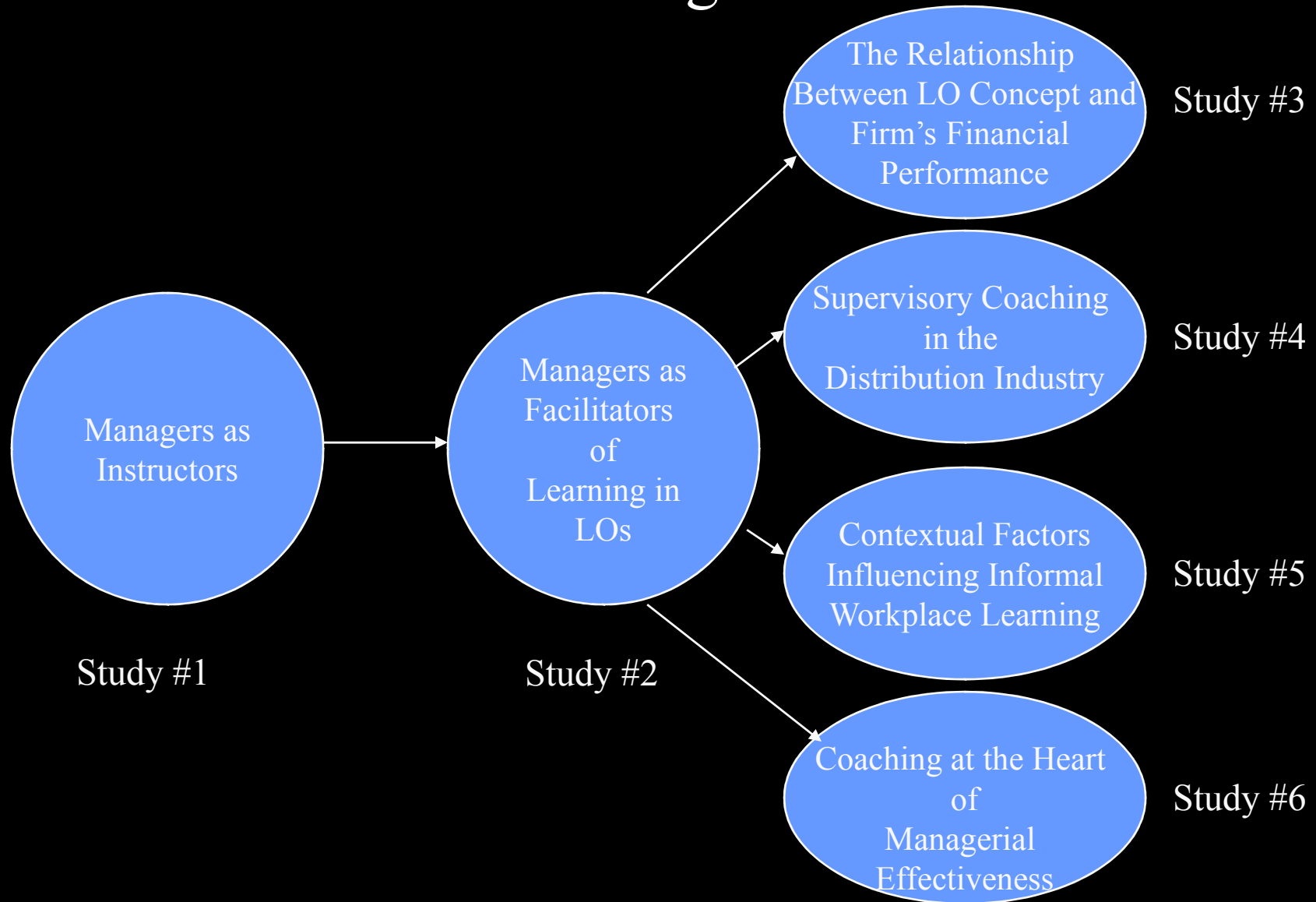
University of Texas at Tyler  
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# Overview of Research Agenda



# Study #1: “Managers as Instructors”

- Ford Design Institute Research Grant
  - Survey design to examine large-scale cascaded training strategy
    - *HRDQ (1999)*
  - Qualitative design: 5 managers and 5 program participants (employees of managers serving as instructors) [served as inspiration for dissertation]
    - *Management Learning (1999)*

## Study #2: “Managers as Facilitators of Learning in Learning Organizations”

- Dissertation – Recipient of the AHRD *Malcolm S. Knowles Dissertation of the Year Award* (1998)
- Qualitative design:
  - 12 nominated “exemplary facilitators of learning” in 4 learning organizations
  - Interviews using the Critical Incident Technique

## Study #2: “Managers as Facilitators of Learning in Learning Organizations”

### – Key Findings:

- 13 behavior sets that define the role of managers as facilitators of learning (or managerial coach)
- Core beliefs associated with the role of managers as facilitators of learning
- Catalysts and outcomes when managers served as facilitators of learning

# Study #2: “Managers as Facilitators of Learning in Learning Organizations”

- Publications from Study #2:
  - “Overview of Study”
    - *HRDQ (1999)*
    - *HRDQ Rejoinder (2000)*
  - “Behaviors” [informs Supervisory Coaching Study]
    - *Journal of Management Development (1999)*
  - “Beliefs” [informs Contextual Factors Study]
    - *Management Learning (2002)*
  - “Triggers & Outcomes”
    - *Performance Improvement Quarterly (2003)*
  - “External Dissertations”
    - At least 3 external dissertations have extended this original work

## Study #3: “The Relationship Between the Learning Organization Concept and Firms’ Financial Performance”

- Funded by The Pennsylvania State University – Harrisburg Research Council Grant
- Survey design and collection of secondary data to examine relationship between the learning organization concept [*DLOQ*] and firms’ financial performance [ROA, ROI, Tobin’s q and MVA]

# Study #3: “The Relationship Between the Learning Organization Concept and Firms’ Financial Performance”

- Key findings: seven dimensions of *DLOQ* explained 10% of the variance in financial performance
- Recipient of the *Ten Best Papers from the 2000 AHRD Conference Proceedings Award*
- Publications from Study #3:
  - *HRDQ (2002)*
  - *Journal of Business Logistics (2002)*
  - *Advances in Developing Human Resources (2003)*

## Study #4: “Supervisory Coaching, Employee Satisfaction, and Warehouse Employee Performance: A Dyadic Perspective in the Distribution Industry”

- Survey design within 18 distribution centers with 438 employees and 67 supervisors as respondents
- “Behavior set” findings from Study #2 used to develop manager and employee coaching constructs

# Study #4: “Supervisory Coaching, Employee Satisfaction, and Warehouse Employee Performance: A Dyadic Perspective in the Distribution Industry”

- Key findings:
  - 44% of the variance in employees’ perceptions of job satisfaction can be attributed to coaching even when low to moderate levels of coaching are exhibited by supervisors
  - 11% of the variance in supervisors’ perceptions of their employees’ performance can be attributed to coaching behavior

# Study #4: “Supervisory Coaching, Employee Satisfaction, and Warehouse Employee Performance: A Dyadic Perspective in the Distribution Industry”

- Publications from Study #4:
  - *HRDQ (2003)*
    - Recipient of the 2003 *Richard A. Swanson Research Excellence Award*
  - *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management (2005)*

## Study #5: “Exploring the Contextual Factors that Shape Employees’ Informal Learning and Employees’ Facilitation of Informal Learning in the Workplace”

- The Cyril O. Houle Scholars in Adult & Continuing Education Program Fellowship – Kellogg Foundation
- Qualitative case study of a consumer-focused manufacturer

## Study #5: “Exploring the Contextual Factors that Shape Employees’ Informal Learning and Employees’ Facilitation of Informal Learning in the Workplace”

- Stratified purposeful sample of nominated employees considered to be “exemplary facilitators of learning and committed lifelong learners” [senior/mid & lower levels]
- In-depth interviews using the Critical Incident Technique, document analysis, observation, metaphors, “imaginary photography”

## Study #5: “Exploring the Contextual Factors that Shape Employees’ Informal Learning and Employees’ Facilitation of Informal Learning in the Workplace”

- Key Findings: Positive Factors:
  - Learning-committed leadership and management
  - An internal culture committed to learning
  - Work tools and resources
  - People who form webs of relationships for learning

# Study #5: “Exploring the Contextual Factors that Shape Employees’ Informal Learning and Employees’ Facilitation of Informal Learning in the Workplace”

- Key Findings: Negative Factors:
  - Leadership and management not committed to learning
  - Internal culture of entitlement
  - Lack of work tools and resources
  - People who disrupt webs of relationships for learning
  - Structural inhibitors
  - Lack of time
  - Too much change too fast
  - Not learning from learning

# Study #5: “Exploring the Contextual Factors that Shape Employees’ Informal Learning and Employees’ Facilitation of Informal Learning in the Workplace”

- Publications from Study #5:
  - *HRDQ (2005)*
    - Recipient of the 2005 Richard A. Swanson Research Excellence Award
  - *Book Chapter contribution in “Global Issues and Adult Education: Perspectives from Latin America, Southern Africa, and the United States (2006)*
  - *Journal of Workplace Learning (2007)*

## Study #6: “Coaching at the Heart of Managerial Effectiveness”

- Cross-cultural comparison with findings from Beattie (2002) and Hamlin (2004)
- Key Findings: Significant overlap exists between effective managerial coaching behaviors and managerial effectiveness behaviors
- Recipient of the *Ten Best Papers from the 2005 AHRD Conference Proceedings Award*
- Publications from Study #6:
  - *HRDI (2006)*
  - *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy (2007)*

The Relationship  
Between LO Concept and  
Firm's Financial  
Performance

Study #3



Supervisory Coaching  
in the  
Distribution Industry

Study #4



Frontline Employee  
Development  
in the  
Distribution Industry

Study #7



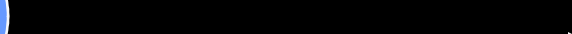
Contextual Factors  
Influencing Informal  
Workplace Learning

Study #5



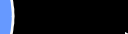
Coaching at the Heart  
of  
Managerial  
Effectiveness

Study #6



Ineffective  
Managerial  
Coaching Behaviors

Study #8

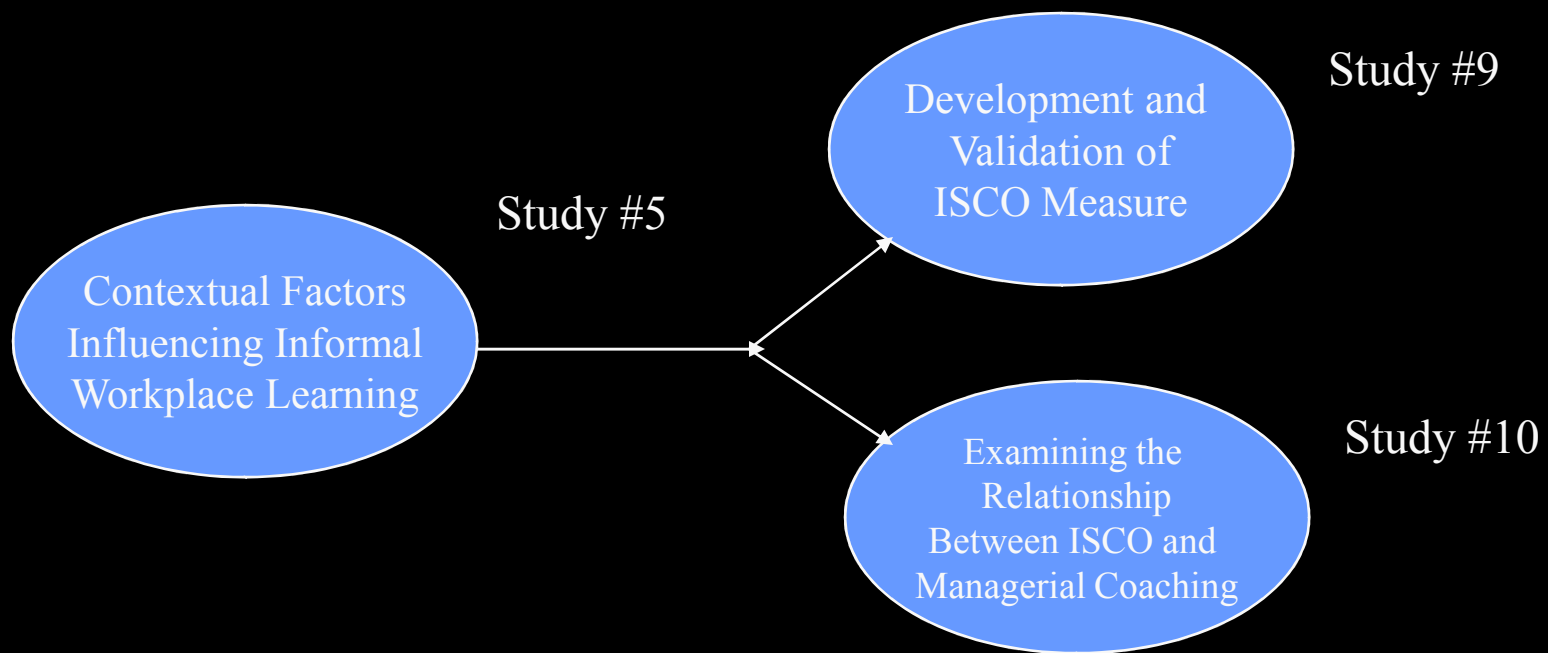


## Study #7: “Frontline Employee Development in the Distribution Industry”

- Purpose of our study: To test the relationship between empowerment and frontline service employee performance and to examine the influences of formal and informal developmental interventions on that relationship
- Key Findings: Counter-intuitive
- Publications from Study #7
  - *HRDQ (2007)*

## Study #8: “Ineffective Managerial Coaching Behaviors”

- Cross-cultural comparison with findings from Beattie (2002) and Hamlin (2004)
- Key Findings: Significant overlap exists between ineffective managerial coaching behaviors and managerial effectiveness behaviors
- Publications from Study #8:
  - *Journal of European Industrial Training (Accepted for publication)*



## Study #9: “Development and Validation of ISCO Measure”

- Purpose of our study: Social capital within organizations has become an important topic of research in the field of HRD, yet limited instruments exist so we drew upon and operationalized Cohen and Prusak’s conceptualization resulting in the development and validation of “Investments in Social Capital in Organizations” measure
- Publications:
  - Manuscript Under Review at *Human Relations*

Study #10: “Examining the Relationship Between ISCO, Managerial Coaching, and Outcome Variables”

- We are in the process of developing a number of research propositions that suggest that managerial coaching is the mechanism through which ISCO is translated into organizational outcomes
- Our writing plan: UFHRD proceeding and then subsequent refereed publication

## Other Related Research and Writing Projects

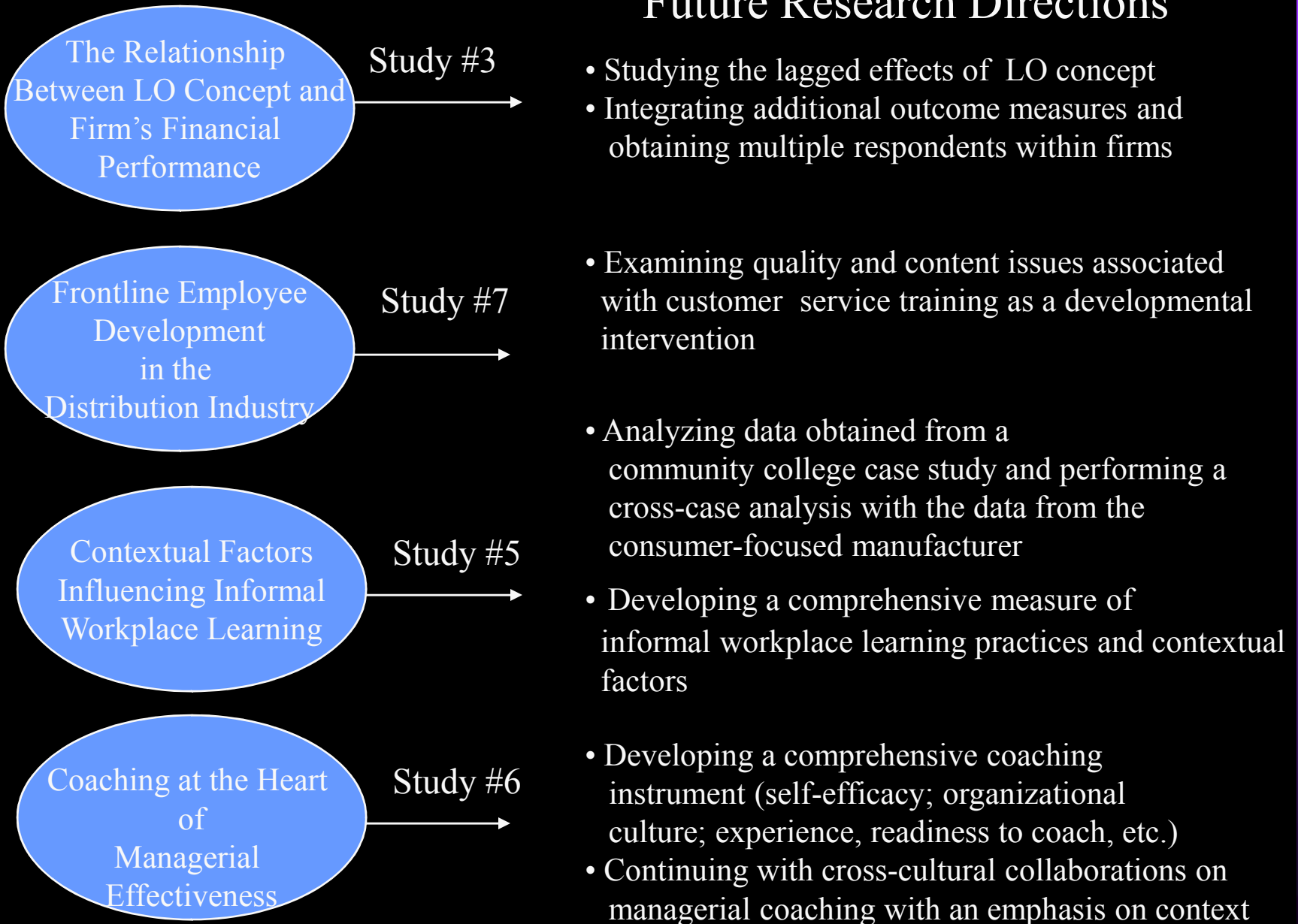
Collaboration with doctoral advisees on research that examines: the relationship between organizational learning and firm financial performance in the Korean context; the relationship between entrepreneurial opportunity recognition, organizational learning, and innovation performance in the Taiwanese context; past experiences and frames of reference in informal learning; learning culture within community colleges; and, ethics and leadership as some illustrative examples

Collaboration with doctoral seminar participants that has resulted in two forthcoming book chapters: *Experiential Learning and Management Education* and an *HRD Textbook* to be published in Poland

## Continued...

- Invited Book Chapters on Coaching for ISPI and the Sage Handbook of Coaching
- Invited Book Chapter on the Qualities of Good Writing
- Book on Managerial Coaching

## Future Research Directions



## In Summary...

I hope that this presentation has demonstrated my commitment to extending the scholarly literatures through my research agenda and my sincere interest in developing future scholars and practitioners for the field....BUT I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the importance of other research-related responsibilities and activities

# My Continued Contributions to the Human Resource Development Field

- Dedication to providing service to academic and professional communities through my voluntary efforts
  - AHRD- Board Member (2006 – 2009)
  - Editorial Boards (*HRDI, International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*) [Consulting Editor for *AEQ*]
  - Series Co-Editor for AMA sponsored and funded book series: *AMA Innovations in Adult Learning: Theory into Practice*
  - New position as *Reviews Editor for New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*
  - Reviewer for Refereed Journals
  - Chair of the College of Education Research Committee (\$200,000 funds awarded in support of faculty and student research)
  - Chair of the HRE Department HRD Search Committee

Thank you for your kind attention and  
this wonderful invitation to join you  
as part of your  
Fall 2007 Colloquium Series!