JOB DEVELOPERS IN TRANSITION: A STUDY OF INFORMAL AND
NONFORMAL JOB SKILLS TRAINING OF JOB DEVELOPERS IN NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS IN ONTARIO

by

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A thesis proposal submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
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Abstract

Job Developers have complex and demanding jobs that require balancing the needs of organizations, employers, and job seekers. Job Developers must meet new employers and potential employees every day, earn their trust, and learn their needs. A common role Job Developers play is helping people find jobs and helping employers find employees. Job Developers attempt to learn what employers and job seekers need and what each can offer to match the right applicants to the right employers.

Competent Job Developers must have organization, research, marketing, selling, communication, and negotiation skills. Job development has become a high growth occupation. Because the nature of their jobs changes constantly, Job Developers must also stays updated on employment trends and labor market information. While these changes provide opportunities for practitioners to expand their roles, they also impose increased demands and challenges to build their skills and capacity to perform their jobs.

The job developer profession (also known as employment specialist) is a recently new concept in the nonprofit sector. Job Developers’ potential as advocates for the unemployed, those with disabilities, and new immigrants is fundamental in today’s competitive job market and in the context of equitable opportunity for employment.

Informal and nonformal learning are well-recognized and well-used in the job development field. Job Developers rely on informal and nonformal learning for
professional development and occupational autonomy. However, there is little empirical research on the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation. In addition, little is known about the extent to which informal and nonformal learning contribute to perceived occupational autonomy of Job Developers. In this research the nonformal and informal learning behaviour of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance will be examined.

The geographical location for this study is limited to Ontario only. The researcher used a survey questionnaire ($n = 93$) and one-on-one interviews ($n = 35$) of Job Developers to collect data about the effect that informal learning has on perceived occupational autonomy and job performance. Data were analyzed both quantitatively using descriptive statistics and qualitatively through content analysis. The conclusion finds that Job Developers indicated that informal and nonformal learning were superior to formal learning and that a variety of sources of learning were important, but there are some qualifications. First, participants who believed their workplace performance was not good indicated that informal learning was superior to formal learning. Second, participants who perceived themselves as having higher levels of workplace performance expressed a belief that they had been adequately trained and did not need additional training. For Job Developers, the results of this research can provide feedback about how programs are designed and delivered and form the basis for arguing for the value of the different types of learning (i.e., formal, nonformal, informal). The implications for educators and trainers are that they need know their learners’ motivations and whether these learners are goal-oriented, prefer more didactic training or are activity-oriented.
The theoretical implications of this study relate to Colley et al.’s (2003) continuum approach, which suggests that the boundaries between formalized, nonformalized and informalized learning experiences meld into each other, making them difficult to separate. Further, the results of this study suggest that progression through the continuum and the co-existence of the various categories of learning is a function of autonomy. Thus, here we find a theoretical contribution in terms of how the continuum across formalized, nonformalized and informalized learning is influenced by a theory of autonomy, which posits that autonomy has a distinctive relationship to learning processes and outcomes.
Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Professor Peter Sawchuk. Without his guidance and unrelenting support this thesis would not have been possible. Peter has proved that “teaching an old dog new tricks” is possible.

To the other member of my thesis committee, Professor Jack Quarter. You have been instrumental in the review and critique of this thesis. I also want to thank Professors Paul Olson and Sherida Ryan. Your advice and recommendations are greatly appreciated. Also a special thanks to Dr. Fred Schied for serving as the external examiner.

I would also like to thank the following for the many roles that you have played in this work. I apologize in advance for anyone that was missed. This includes Cindy Sinclair, Colleen Richberg, Jeffrey Jacobs, Kristine Pearson, Professor Loretta Howard, Richard Oakey, Allen Stern, Sophy Crook, Wanda Parsons, Chloe Williams, Brian Solano, Johnathan McBride, “Big” Alberino Carancino, Professor Alice Di Francesco, Kim Blakely, Frank Pelegrini, Heather Compton, Surjit Patel, Kimberly Sacramento, Professor Salvador Ortiz, Dr. Linda Jarosz, Dr. John Caruso, Richard Moss, Ingrid Rosen and Sarah MacDonald.

To Joanna Samuels and all the Job Developers who so generously gave me their time and their candor, you have my ongoing gratitude. This study would not have happened without you.

Last but not least, my sincere thanks to my wife and daughter. You’ve been there through “thick and thin” and we knew this thesis would come to fruition. This thesis is
dedicated to Francesca. I hope this will inspire you to continue learning and never give up dreaming.

May 2014 Roy Della Savia
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

A common role Job Developers play is helping people find jobs and helping employers find employees. Job Developers are often known by other occupational titles such as employment specialist, job trainer, job consultant, staffing specialist, and vocational counselor. For example, the U.S. Department of Labor (2010) titles for Job Developer include human services care specialist, rehabilitation counselor, vocational rehabilitation counselor (VCR), case manager, program coordinator, rehabilitation specialist, vocational counselor, vocational services specialist, work counselor, employment instructional associate (EIA). Vocational counselors are also called employment counselors or career counselors and they help individuals with career decisions outside of a school setting by exploring and evaluating the client's education, training, work history, interests, skills, and personality traits. They also work with individuals to develop their job-search skills and assist clients in locating and applying for jobs. Rehabilitation counselors help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, offer case management support, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. They develop individual rehabilitation programs by conferring with the client. These programs often include training to help individuals develop job skills, become employed, and provide opportunities for community integration (“Counselors,” 2010). Job Developers attempt to learn what employers and job seekers need and what each can offer to match the right applicants to the right employers (Wycoff & Klymer, 2005).
Job Developers have complex and demanding jobs that require balancing the needs of organizations, employers, and job seekers. Job Developers must meet new employers and potential employees every day, earn their trust, and learn their needs (Wycoff & Klymer, 2005). Practically speaking, Job Developers must be counselors, advocates, psychologists, diplomats, negotiators, and “tough-love” specialists. To be successful, they must balance and represent the needs of their clients and balance and represent the needs of employers.

Competent Job Developers must have organization, research, marketing, selling, communication, and negotiation skills. Job development has become a high growth occupation (Glover & Frounfelker, 2011). Because the nature of their jobs changes constantly, Job Developers must also stay updated on employment trends and labour market information. While these changes provide opportunities for practitioners to expand their roles, they also impose increased demands and challenges to build their skills and capacity to perform their jobs. The Job Developer occupation (also known as employment specialist) is a recently new concept in the nonprofit sector. Job Developers’ potential as advocates for the unemployed, those with disabilities, and new immigrants is fundamental in today’s competitive job market and in the context of equitable opportunity for employment.

Nonformal and informal learning are well-recognized and well-used in the job development field. However, there is little empirical research on the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation. Further, Job Developers are often caught in the middle of two sets of needs, those of the job seeker and those of the employer, that often conflict with each other (Ullah, 2013). The lack of
formal education and relative looseness surrounding the formal occupational definition demands that Job Developers take initiative to devise a strategy and a plan for their own work life development (Dover Training Group and Employment Management Professionals [TG-EMP], 2011).

The Job Developer’s role often requires the ability to take the initiative in areas such as contacting employers and developing job programs. Given the fluidity of the work, a significant level of occupational autonomy is necessary to perform these functions. Because the nature of the job development occupation is providing direct service, Job Developers deal with job seekers directly, often during very challenging periods in job seekers’ lives. Assisting job seekers with intellectual or developmental disabilities can be especially challenging for Job Developers (Migliore et al., 2010; Timmons & Wolfe, 2011). Job Developers rely on informal and nonformal learning for on-the-job development and occupational autonomy. Studies have examined competencies needed for Job Developers (Glover & Frounfelker, 2011; Migliore, Hall, Butterworth, & Winsor, 2010) and effective placement methods (Griffin, n.d.; Rogers, Lavin, Trana, Gantenbein, & Sharpe 2008; Wycoff & Klymer, 2005). However, little is known about the extent to which informal and nonformal learning contribute to perceived occupational autonomy of Job Developers. In this research the nonformal and informal learning behaviour of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance are examined.

As we will see in this doctoral research, for Job Developers, continuing education is not usually recognized in formal educational terms, although a formal college or university education is sometimes important in the job development occupation.
However, a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience keeps Job Developers up to date. Tacit knowledge, that is, knowledge that is taken for granted and accomplished through individuals’ modeling what others teach them, is also an essential component of effective job development. Tacit knowledge is an element of occupational autonomy, as Job Developers often must rely on themselves and others to acquire tacit knowledge. This can be achieved through job shadowing, learning from others, trial and error (learning from your own mistakes), networking, continuously reading newspapers and journals pertaining to the job market, the economy and career counseling, and learning the hiring patterns of companies and corporations. Attending trade association meetings and job fairs to learn about the latest hiring trends, employer expectations and finding out who is in charge of hiring within these organizations is also part of informal learning and frequently enhances Job Developers’ perceived occupational autonomy.

There is little available research about the relationship of these concepts to Job Developers. The geographical location for this study is limited to Ontario only. As a result, this study is considered an exploratory endeavor to discover unexpected connections between nonformal and informal learning within a very specialized and emerging and somewhat unconventional occupation to establish a starting point for future investigation. In this context, exploring Job Developers’ perceived occupational autonomy could be invaluable for Job Developers’ acquisition of knowledge that is based on their choices, preferences, and intentions and that can be applied to the real-world context.
Using a survey questionnaire and one-on-one interviews of Job Developers, the researcher collected data about many types of learning and education, but with special attention to the effect that informal learning has on perceptions of occupational autonomy and job performance. The data were analyzed both quantitatively using descriptive statistics and qualitatively through content analysis. While the statistics are descriptive and non-inferential, the results still contribute to the overall understanding of the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation and the extent to which informal and nonformal learning contribute to perceived occupational autonomy of Job Developers.

It is important to note the potential for bias in the data gathering process. Many of the respondents were former colleagues of the researcher or graduates of JVS Toronto’s Bringing Employment Specialists to Tomorrow (B.E.S.T.) program. Therefore, there is a possibility that the data gathered reflected the researcher’s values and preferences. To minimize any bias, the collection, tabulation and coding of the data were repeatedly reviewed to ensure that the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations were as objective as possible. In the sections that follow the background of the research problem, the purpose and nature of the study, the conceptual framework, the research questions, study assumptions, and definition of terms are presented.

1.2 Background of the Research Problem

1.2.1 Nature of Nonprofit Organizations

Throughout this study we will see that the nature of nonprofit organizations likely plays a significant role in shaping how the learning of Job Developers unfolds. Taking a step back to define the nature of nonprofit organizations better, it should be noted that a
nonprofit organization, also referred to as a not-for-profit organization, is a nongovernmental organization that serves its customers (Anheier, 2005). Although nonprofit organizations generate income, they do not include profit as an organizational goal as for-profit business organizations do; rather, they are mission driven and focus on helping the organization to fulfill its societal mission (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011). Nonprofit organizations also have a different tax and income distribution structure than other business organizations, and generally they are tax exempt. The role of the board of directors in a nonprofit organization is also different than boards in for-profit organizations (Powell & Steinberg, 2006). Nonprofit boards often consist of volunteers, are often larger, and often have more committees (Epstein & McFarlan, 2011).

Typically, nonprofit operations are organised into major functions of governance, programs, and central administration. The governance function of a nonprofit provides overall strategic direction, guidance and controls. More recently governance has been viewed as a function carried out by the board and top management; thus, effective governance depends on whether there is an effective working relationship between the board and top management (Powell & Steinberg, 2006).

Nonprofit programs are typically based on the overall mission and goals of the nonprofit organization. Resources (i.e., money, facilities, staff, etc.) are directed toward programs that reach each goal. Processes (how clients are counselled, how children are cared for, the disabled or elderly or those new to the country supported, etc.) for carrying out the program are developed to achieve certain outcomes for clients receiving the services, such as increased mental health or reduced child neglect (Anheier, 2005). Central administration is largely the staff that run the programs. Nonprofits generally
attempt to keep costs of central administration low in proportion to program costs (Powell & Steinberg, 2006).

In the case of Job Developers, the nature and mission of the nonprofit organization shapes the Job Developer occupation and its priorities and focus. Job development is funded by government, and placement services are offered at no cost to clients. Job Developers not only help clients connect with employers, but they also inform job seekers about eligibility for employer incentives offered by government. If the job seeker is eligible, Job Developers help them fill out the appropriate paperwork (Ullah, 2013).

This dissertation focuses on Job Developers working for a variety of nonprofit organizations throughout the province of Ontario. Many of the Job Developers who participated in this study were trained through the JVS Toronto’s Bringing Employment Specialists to Tomorrow (B.E.S.T.) program and International Professionals Learning to Access Careers and Employment (IPLACE) programs.

JVS Toronto is a nonprofit, broad-based community organization of more than 200 individuals that serves the educational and employment needs of persons of diverse backgrounds. Other nonprofit organizations in which Job Developers help the unemployed include COSTI Immigrant Services, Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), YMCA and YWCA of Greater Toronto, Learning Enrichment Foundation, CSE Consulting, Ontario Paraplegic Association, Al Green Resources Center, Centennial College, Orangeville Community Services, Career Service of Brockville, Work Initiative Network (WIN), New Directions Employment Services, Employment Action of London, Whispering Pine Employment Services, Barrie Resource Services, Woodgreen
Employment and Youth Services, Skills for Change, The Employment and Education Center of Niagara Falls, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Hearing Association, George Brown College, Miswei Biik First Nations Employment Center, Employment Services Centre of Ottawa, Trillium Community Services, Georgetown Employment Services and the City of Toronto Community Services.

1.2.2 Duties and Responsibilities of Job Developers – A Basic Profile

Available research as well as the research reported in this dissertation also tells us that Job Developers come from a variety of backgrounds that include teaching, rehabilitation, business, and human resources. For instance, Job Developers may come from marketing organizations and utilize their marketing skills in employment organizations that emphasize promoting their services and finding clients jobs. A background in human resources recruiting is a good fit preparation for work as a Job Developer. No matter the individual background, the duties and responsibilities that Job Developers across North America have in common are matching job seekers with employers. Job Developers attempt to learn what employers and job seekers need and what each can offer to match the right applicants to the right employers.

Job Developers carry out their responsibilities by (a) contacting employers, either through cold calling or from personal networks, to source jobs and to promote client placement; (b) providing clients with individual job placement assistance, including skill assessment, resume writing, interviewing, job search tools and strategies, job referrals, job development, and referrals to appropriate resources; (c) researching newspapers, the Internet, agencies, job fairs and other resources for job leads; (d) following up with employers after a placement has been made and monitoring for satisfactory performance;
and (e) keeping track of all job development activities, workshops and placements and generating regular activity and outcome reports (Sacramento County Office of Education, 2011; Workforce Development Council Snohomish County, 2011). Some successful Job Developers talk in person with their most important employers several times a week; others may never meet the employers to whom they supply employees yet are equally as successful. According to Wyckoff and Clymer (2005), conscientious Job Developers contact their most important employers in person several times a week; for others, regular contact with employers may not be necessary or desired on the part of the employer.

The views of the Sacramento County Office of Education (2011), Workforce Development Council Snohomish County (2011), and Wyckoff and Clymer (2005) were supported in this researcher’s experience as part of a research practicum observing the nature of Job Developers’ work and how Job Developers develop skills through informal learning and continuing education in nonformal instructional courses. In this earlier pilot research, the researcher “job shadowed” two Job Developers at two locations of JVS Toronto on three different dates, noted observations, and recorded the activities as they unfolded. The researcher noted that typical activities of the Job Developers observed included reviewing newspapers for the latest employment advertisements and new job market initiatives, calling employers to check if any new positions are available or if any of the openings matched with a client, cold calling employers to check if any new positions were available and to advise employers about the services offered by JVS Toronto and the benefits employers gain by using their services, and scheduling meetings with potential employers. Other activities observed were sorting through a stack of resumes, calling the clients who had sent their resumes to JVS Toronto for consideration
and assistance, arranging interview appointments for clients, interviewing clients, and making follow up telephone calls with prospective employers.

For individuals with disabilities, rehabilitation counselors help them cope with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. Rehabilitation counselors develop individual rehabilitation programs for clients with disabilities based on an evaluation of their strengths and limitations ("Counselors," 2010). This process is known as job carving (Griffin, n.d.). Griffin (n.d.) described the responsibility of job carving for Job Developers: “Job carving is the act of analyzing work duties performed in a given job and identifying specific tasks that might be assigned to an employee with severe disabilities” (p. 1). Griffin noted that part of the job carving process involves understanding the “unwritten rules” (p. 1) of the targeted organization by developing a thorough understanding of the corporate culture, employee attitudes, and the type of work that is suitable and acceptable. Job carving has become increasingly important because of the global changes in the workforce (Hafner & Owens, 2008). Technological change and outsourcing has resulted in the phasing out of more traditional jobs typically obtained by Job Developers for individuals with disabilities. As a result, Job Developers and rehabilitation counselors who assist individuals with disabilities need to reconceptualize their ideas of work and of obtaining jobs for individuals with disabilities.

Often job developers learn informally about reconceptualizations of their roles and of what constitutes effective workplace performance with respect to serving all clients by reading journals and other publications related to the Job Developer field. For instance, Migliore et al. (2010) identified the job development practices recommended in the research literature for assisting job seekers with intellectual or developmental
disabilities, which can be applied to all job seekers. These practices included (a) getting to know job seekers to optimize the job match and increasing job retention, (b) instructing employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities about how to work with supervisors and develop friendships with coworkers, (c) finding job openings by cultivating relationships with employers and the client’s family, (d) creating or negotiating new job descriptions for clients who may be difficult to place and that meet the employer’s needs, (e) reducing employers’ perceived risk of hiring by seeking job trials before the final hiring decision, and (f) maintaining contact with placements to facilitate positive employment outcomes and better retention.

Timmons and Wolfe’s (2011) study of the employment decisions of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities also has application to Job Developer practices. Timmons and Wolfe recommended that to promote job seekers’ involvement and families’ participation in the job search process, Job Developers should maximize job seeker self-determination and maximize family engagement. Maximizing job seeker self-determination occurs when Job Developers:

- Are helpers, not doers. The onus for seeking employment should be on the job seeker, not on the Job Developer. Job Developers should remain in the facilitator role, even if doing so slows down the process.
- Discuss the concept of self-determination with their clients. Some job seekers, whether or not they have disabilities, are familiar and comfortable with making choices and with self-direction, while others are not. Those who are not need to learn skills in understanding available choices, making decisions, and taking responsibility for decisions.
• Clarify expectations and consequences in terms job seekers can understand.
• Respect job seekers’ opinions and views, even if they differ from the Job Developers or seem counterintuitive. Job Developers can explain their viewpoints, but the final decision should be the job seeker’s.
• Ask for suggestions on how to improve the job seeking process and use suggestions to guide the job search.
• Allow job seekers latitude to change their mind or course of action.
• Provide opportunities for job seekers to manage funds by using personal budgets, individual training accounts, and other forms of individualized funding that provide choice and control in the employment and support process.

Maximizing family engagement is achieved when Job Developers:
• Involve job seekers’ families during the job search and placement process by meeting regularly with family members face-to-face and email and phone communication.
• Ensure that the Job Developer and the family have a mutual understanding of their roles and relationship to each other from the beginning. Family members have a strong role in networking, which can be invaluable during the job search.
• View family members as a resource because they are often most familiar with the job seeker’s skills and support needs.
• Engage family members in problem-solving when necessary.
Delegate specific tasks (e.g., transportation) to family members to increase job seeker and family engagement while decreasing the Job Developer’s caseload management level.

To successfully match clients’ skills with job requirements, Job Developers must be knowledgeable about and understand specific sectors and be knowledgeable about the labour market, industry standards, current industry trends, and openings in the various sectors. Ullah (2013) discussed how a sector-specific job development approach can help Job Developers match job seekers’ skills with appropriate employers, especially for new immigrants. Ullah pointed out that traditional job development approaches offer services to clients without focusing on occupational specifications; however, with an increased number of internationally educated immigrants to Canada who seek employment in specific sectors, Ullah advocated a sector-specific approach to job development. This approach involves skilled immigrants’ completing in-class training and work placements to link their prior education and work experience to meet the requirements to practice in their professions in Canada. Organizations such as JVS Toronto and community colleges and universities offer programs for internationally educated professionals in various sectors including engineering, finance, accounting, human resources, sales and marketing, and other fields.

Ullah (2013) proposed a two-step process to promote internationally educated job seekers to prospective employers: identify clients’ sector-specific skills and match client skills with job requirements. Ullah noted that internationally educated professionals have “hard” skills (e.g., engineering design, accounting, information technology). These skills can be identified in workshops, one-on-one counseling, mock interviews, technical
presentations, and role playing. For example, for mechanical design jobs, Job Developers need to know the level of demand for these positions, which industries are looking for designers (e.g., automotive, aerospace, manufacturing), what kinds of skills are in demand for these positions, and whether these industries are hiring.

As in nonspecific job sectors, Job Developers seeking to find sector-specific employment for clients need to develop relationships with employers, understand employers’ specific skills and experience requirements, and convey clients’ relevant experience and training clearly. For example, employers may require experience in the same industry or experience using a particular type of machine or software, and so on. After Job Developers have identified clients’ sector-specific skills and matched client skills with job requirements, they also need to develop a strategy for promoting clients to employers. Ullah (2013) recommended promoting clients as professionals, not as job seekers; therefore, the emphasis should be on professional competence, not on their backgrounds as internationally educated professionals. For example, to promote accounting professionals, the focus should be on client’s professional qualifications and the extent that they match job requirements, not that the client had a successful career in his or her home country and that he or she is now seeking a relevant job in their new home. Ullah noted that a large number of internationally educated professionals hold important positions in various Canadian organizations and are aware of the competence of internationally educated professionals and open to considering these candidates.

Focusing on clients’ relevant skills, experience and achievements means not only targeting and customizing a client’s resume, but can also means promoting the client to the employer. As noted previously, employers may want clients with experience in the
same industry, in a similar environment, and with industry-specific software or technological knowledge. Thus, if a Job Developer has, for example, a client who may be a good fit for a construction firm for a transit extension project, Job Developers can point out that the client has civil engineering project management experience and experience in railway construction projects. Employers may view the client as overqualified. Ullah (2013) suggested that overqualification can also be promoted as an additional qualification. For example, a mechanical engineer with a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering may also have a master’s degree in computational fluid dynamics, which may benefit some employers.

1.2.3 Nonformal and Informal Learning of Job Developers

Much of the information introduced to this point was meant to set the stage for an understanding of the general importance, tasks, challenges and skills that are all part of Job Developer occupational learning. And, the nature of the occupation suggests the central importance of learning that is not necessarily undertaken formally in colleges or universities. Thus, nonformal and informal learning looms large for this particular study.

Nonformal learning is learning outside of educational or training institutions, such as in the workplace or in association with social organizations and groups, and does not typically lead to obtaining a credential, such as a diploma (Rubenson, 2007), although learners may receive certificates of completion. Such learning is structured, however, and has specific learning objectives (Livingstone, 2005; Sousa & Quarter, 2003). Informal learning is intentional, self- or group-directed learning in which persons engage individually or collectively without a teacher or organized curriculum as such (Livingstone, 2005). Marsick and Volpe (1999) noted two catalysts for informal
learning: “internal or external jolts”; and, environmental scanning (p. 5). External jolts may come from job loss, job change, or a change in one’s job responsibilities as a result of changing workplace conditions. Internal jolts occur when individuals look to the future and desire to try something different. The catalyst of environmental scanning involves both individuals and the organization reassessing changes in themselves and in their industry and attempt to be proactive about change rather than reactive (Marsick & Volpe, 1999). Organizational leaders ideally anticipate and identify these changes for organizational members and initiate change proactively rather than reacting to external events (Marsick & Volpe, 1999).

Some aspects of informal learning must be noted as both characteristics and caveats. Marsick and Volpe (1999) indicate that maximizing the effectiveness of informal learning is challenging because of the unconscious nature of informal learning. Most informal learning is tacit, taken for granted and accomplished through individuals’ modeling what others teach them. Individuals often also respond to new challenges with innovations, again without paying much attention to how they have adapted to meet new needs and unable to articulate what they learned or how they learned. While individuals may say that they learned by trial and error, they often cannot describe the specific situations that led them to this conclusion. Marsick and Volpe speculated that when individuals are successful at what they do, they regularly are drawing on unconscious informal learning. Individuals who are considered experts in a particular area often cannot name what it is they do that makes them expert, even though others study what they do and look to them for guidance.
Informal learning can be considered predominantly unstructured, experiential, and noninstitutional (i.e., in the sense that learning does not take place in an established educational institution), even if the environment in which it occurs does provide a structure of a type. Informal learning takes in the regular, daily context of people performing their jobs and living their lives. Informal learning is based on people’s choices and preferences. The value of informal learning comes from its “just in time” (Marsick & Volpe, 1999, p. 4) nature and the challenges, problems, or unanticipated needs that informal learning poses. As such, informal learning cannot be fully preprogrammed; rather, it has a strong spontaneous dimension within the context of, for example, real work and the real world (Marsick & Volpe, 1999).

When informal learning takes place on the job, the organization does not directly and/or explicitly plan to determine the learning process, although the organization may help employees identify a goal for learning and the structure of work tasks provides a “curriculum” of experiences in a certain way. On the whole, the actual informal learning process is mostly left up to the individual. However, organizations need to design jobs, work practices, and work relationships to encourage employees to talk with one another and collaborate to solve problems. Specific activities by which informal workplace learning can occur include working with teams, meetings, client interactions, supervision, mentoring, shift change, peer-to-peer communication, cross-training, and site visits (Marsick & Volpe, 1999).

According to the Dover Training Group and Employment Management Professionals [TG-EMP] (2011), job development is not a natural event; rather, job development needs to be organized and needs to have a strategy. Job development
programs need to make a difference for their clients, especially those with the significant employment barriers. Importantly, a successful job development program includes ongoing improvement in the staff’s job development skills as well (DTG-EMP, 2011).

Bissonnette (2011) observed that despite the serious responsibility placed on Job Developers of bridging the gap between unemployed job seekers and available work, Job Developers themselves are typically not provided with adequate tools and guidance for becoming more competent and developing their skills. Job Developers require continuous formal and nonformal learning and training to meet the demands of a changing job market, and yet (with some minor exceptions noted below) attention to such issues remains significantly under-developed both in practice and in terms of learning research.

Job Developers come from a variety of backgrounds that include teaching, rehabilitation, business, and human resources, which suggests that Job Developers can identify their own learning needs and objectives and find and participate in learning activities that help them transition from other fields to the job development field. As Tough (1999) suggested, doing so requires these individuals to identify their own learning needs, formulate learning objectives, locate and identify appropriate resources and strategies to accomplish objectives, carry out the planned learning, and evaluate their learning. Sousa and Quarter (2003) noted that Job Developers build their skills and capacity to perform their jobs mainly from nonformal and informal learning rather than formal learning. An example is JVS Toronto’s nonformal learning program entitled International Professionals Learning to Access Careers and Employment (IPLACE), a 20-week, full-time certificate program for individuals looking to change careers and train
as Job Developers. IPLACE provides skills and tools to provide job development, employment consulting and work in the nonprofit and profit placement and recruitment industry. The curriculum includes development of employability skills, language skills, presentation skills, workplace etiquette, and workplace communication skills (IPLACE, 2009). Another example is the Job Developers Institute provided by First Work, another nonformal learning program that offers a Job Developer certification course. Topics include understanding diverse clients, preparing clients for employment, making effective client-employer matches, and maintaining effective relationships with employers (Job Developers Institute, n.d.).

Observations made during pilot research for this study began to confirm a number of key points about Job Developer training and continuing education:

- Continuing education is not necessarily formal; a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date.
- Programs such as IPLACE are excellent starting points for potential Job Developers, but a formal college education also is important in this line of work.
- Tacit knowledge is also an essential component of effective job development. This includes job shadowing, learning from others, trial and error (learning from your own mistakes), networking, continuously reading newspapers and journals pertaining to the job market, the economy and career counseling, and learning the hiring patterns of companies and corporations.
It is important to attend trade association meetings and job fairs to learn about the latest hiring trends, employer expectations and finding out who is in charge of hiring and human resources within these organizations.

Developing solid relationships and building trust with employers and prospective employers is essential.

The Job Developers have been observed to keep abreast of changes in job skill requirements and job market expectations by:

- enrolling in continuing education courses at a local community college
- taking workshops with JVS Toronto, the YWCA, and other nonprofit agencies
- networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, government agencies to obtain information that would help them perform their jobs better
- using a variety of means to learn about new marketing techniques, networking strategies, client services, human resources, job fair canvassing, career strategies, cold calling, contacting the decision makers, negotiating a job accommodation, and job market opportunities and vulnerabilities
- choosing practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry experts rather than enroll in university programs taught by professors and academics.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances and/or challenges perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. Livingstone’s (2005) definitions of nonformal and informal learning are used. Nonformal learning is “when learners opt to
acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests by using an organized curriculum” (p. 980). Informal learning is “all other forms of intentional or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or an externally-organized curriculum” (p. 981).

The Job Developer’s role often includes the ability to take the initiative in areas such as contacting employers and developing job programs. A level of occupational autonomy is necessary to perform these functions. The nature of the Job Developer occupation involves providing direct services to job seekers, many of whom may be experiencing significant life challenges. Assisting job seekers with intellectual or developmental disabilities can be especially challenging for Job Developers (Migliore et al., 2010; Timmons & Wolfe, 2011). Job Developers are often caught in the middle of two sets of needs, those of the job seeker and those of the employer, which often conflict with each other, and must often make decisions on their own about how to reconcile any differences (Ullah, 2013). Further, Job Developers may lack formal education in the field because of the relative flexibility of the formal occupational definition of Job Developer. Therefore, Job Developers must take initiative to devise a strategy and a plan for their own work life development (Dover Training Group and Employment Management Professionals [TG-EMP], 2011). In this study occupational autonomy is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. Workplace performance is defined as the extent to which Job Developers implemented the job
development practices recommended in the research literature as outlined by Migliore et al. (2010).

1.4 Overview of the Methods, Research Questions, Assumptions, and Definition of Terms

This study was a mixed methods exploratory study. In a mixed methodology approach, the researcher combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, and approaches to answer research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative data analysis can provide detailed assessment of response patterns across a larger group in the aggregate, and qualitative data analysis can provide a more in-depth understanding of responses as groups, sub-groupings and individuals.

To collect information pertinent to the purpose of the study, a review of the literature, a structured questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews were used. The research approach and method of the study drew on past and current studies, reports, and related material. Specifically, the approach developed for the study consisted of four steps:

Step 1: A review of the literature, the secondary data of the study, was conducted relevant to the important study variables. Studies and materials deemed most important and relevant to the research on nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers are included in the review. Literature sources include databases, search engines, and online libraries containing relevant books and professional journals.

Step 2: Critical elements related to nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers are identified from the literature as well as pilot research observations, and incorporated into a survey questionnaire and interview questions.
Step 3: The data were collected from an online survey questionnaire of 93 Job Developers and face-to-face interviews of 30 Job Developers. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to construct the sample. The survey questionnaire consisted of questions about length of time in position, level of education, the demographics of age and gender, and whether the respondent has had specialized Job Developer training; and 40 Likert-scaled questions related to the variables of the study, including preference for learning modalities (i.e., formal, nonformal, informal), occupational autonomy, and workplace performance. Ten open-ended questions were also asked in the semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The variables addressed in this interview schedule included preference for learning modalities (i.e., formal, nonformal, informal), occupational autonomy, and workplace performance.

Step 4: Data from the survey were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Interviews were analyzed using content analysis whereby the researcher searched for themes and patterns of similarity/difference, and sorted indicative responses into appropriate categories.

A number of research questions are posed about the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation to further understand the nonformal and informal learning practices of Job Developers:

1. To what extent is nonformal training effective and relevant in terms of how Job Developers apply newly-acquired skills in the workplace and/or with clients?

2. What criteria are used (either formally or informally) in nonformal training programs sanctioned by nonprofit service agencies to identify and validate
learning outcomes?

3. How well recognized is nonformal and informal learning by the industry job in which developers work?

4. As a core element of their occupational learning, how do Job Developers keep abreast of changes in job skill requirements and job market expectations?

5. What kind of structure describes Job Developer occupational learning and what are Job Developers’ preferences in relation to how they carry out their occupational learning?

6. In the context of the Job Developers’ work environment, what is the meaning of nonformal, informal, and formal learning?

7. What pedagogical practices characterize Job Developers’ learning?

The assumptions underlying this study is that individuals meeting the criteria for participation would be willing to participate in the study and that the patterns and themes that would emerge from the data during analysis would be consistent with the focus of the research questions. Another assumption was that all participants responded honestly to all survey items and interview questions. A final assumption is that triangulating both the survey and interview data resulted in valid and reliable data; that is, the instruments measured what they set out to measure and that bias in the data interpretation was minimized.

In the context of this study, the following terms are operationally defined in this way:

**Formal learning:** Formal learning is learning that occurs in educational or training institutions, such as schools, workplaces or community centres, and involves
structured courses and workshops that lead to obtaining a credential (Livingstone, Mirchandani, & Sawchuk, 2008).

**Informal learning:** According to Livingstone (2005), informal learning is “all other forms of intentional or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or an externally-organized curriculum” (p. 981).

**Job carving:** Griffin (n.d.) described job carving as “the act of analyzing work duties performed in a given job and identifying specific tasks that might be assigned to an employee with severe disabilities” (p. 1).

**Job Developer:** Job Developers help people find jobs by learning what both job seekers and employers need and making appropriate matches (Wyckoff & Clymer, 2005).

**Nonformal learning:** Nonformal learning occurs “when learners opt to acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests by using an organized curriculum’ (Livingstone, 2005, p. 980).

**Nonprofit organizations:** Nonprofit organizations are also referred to as not-for-profit organizations and are a nongovernmental organization that fulfill a public benefit (Anheier, 2005; Sousa & Quarter, 2003).

**Occupational autonomy:** Occupational autonomy refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments.

**Workplace performance:** Workplace performance is defined in this study as the extent to which Job Developers implemented the job development practices recommended in the research literature as outlined by Migliore et al. (2010).
1.5 Chapter Overview

In this chapter the research study was introduced. The guiding concepts, purpose and nature of the study, and research questions were presented. In Chapter 2 an in-depth review of the literature related to this research study is presented. The topics covered include an overview of formal, nonformal, and informal learning; the study’s conceptual framework, the role of Job Developers; and Job Developers’ formal and informal learning.

Chapter 3 details the methodology of the study. Included in this portion is an explanation of the settings and participants, the research instrument, and method of data collection and analysis. In Chapter 4 an analysis of the survey questionnaires and interviews is presented and the research questions are answered based on the responses and results of the data analysis. Chapter 5 provides additional discussion about the results of the data analysis in relation to the study variables. Chapter 6 concludes the research study with further interpretation of the study’s findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

In this chapter the literature pertinent to formal, nonformal, and informal learning is reviewed. Included is a discussion of the role of Job Developers and Job Developers’ formal and informal learning.

2.1 Formal, Nonformal, and Informal Learning

Livingstone (2005) provided definitions of formal, nonformal, and informal education that provide a context for clearer definitions:

When a teacher has the authority to determine that people designated as requiring knowledge effectively learn a curriculum taken from a pre-established body of knowledge, the form of learning is formal education, whether in the form of age-graded and bureaucratic modern school systems or elders initiating youths into traditional bodies of knowledge. When learners opt to acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests by using an organized curriculum, as is the case in many adult education courses and workshops, the form of learning is non-formal education or further education. When teachers or mentors take responsibility for instructing others without sustained reference to an intentionally-organized body of knowledge in more incidental and spontaneous learning situations, such as guiding them in acquiring job skills or in community development activities, the form of learning is informal education or informal training. Finally, all other forms of intentional or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or an externally-organized curriculum can be termed self-directed or collective informal learning. In the
most expansive conceptions of human learning, self-directed learning may be seen as coterminous with life experience itself. (pp. 980-981)

In informal training mentors are often responsible for helping others learn new job skills in more spontaneous or natural situations without referring to an established curriculum as such. Hunt (1986) identified characteristics of informal training or mentoring: (a) unplanned, (b) oriented to individual rather than organizational goals, (c) high interaction between mentor and learner, (d) voluntary friendship, (e) open-ended timeframe, (f) less directive, (g) subjective perceptions, and (h) more suitable for small work environments. In nonformal learning people self-direct their learning; that is, they engage in learning activities and do not rely on mentors or an established curriculum (Livingstone, 2003). Characteristically, nonformal learning is described as more present-time focused, responsive to localized needs, learner-centred, and less structured. In addition, the relationship between the learner and facilitator is assumed to be nonhierarchical (Marsick & Watkins, 1990).

Tough (1999) noted that informal learning, in which he included informal training and self-directed learning, are important for adults to function in an ever-changing environment. Livingstone (2004) concurred and stated, “‘Learning’, in the most generic sense, involves the gaining of knowledge or skill anytime and anywhere through individual and group processes. Learning occurs throughout our lives” (p. 7). Further, Livingstone (2004) pointed out that people’s informal learning activities and their formal schooling and further adult education courses throughout their lives must be considered together when talking about lifelong learning.
If we proceed from the assumption that lifelong learning is continuous learning, Livingstone (2004) suggested that Stern and Sommerlad’s (1999) concept of learning identified by Colley et al. (2003) is applicable. Stern and Sommerlad (1999) conceptualized learning as a 10-point continuum of degrees of informal and formal learning (proceeding from top to bottom), with each end having greater categorical purity. Fuller and Unwin (2001a, 2001b, 2003) and Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) supported the notion of learning as a complex and continuous endeavor because all forms of learning on the learning continuum are often present simultaneously.

Until recently, providing education and training was viewed predominantly through the lens of formal learning, which influenced how education and training are provided and people’s understandings of what learning is. Contemporary emphasis on lifelong learning has brought nonformal and informal learning more to the forefront. Nonformal learning, by definition, is learning acquired outside systems of recognized credentials such as in schools, colleges, training centres and universities. Nonformal learning is often undervalued, as it is usually not viewed as true learning nor does nonformal learning have much currency value in the labour market. Informal learning, which is the oldest form of learning, is often overlooked altogether despite its prevalence in early childhood development. However, informal contexts are important sources of learning and could be an important source of innovation for teaching and learning methods (e.g., Commission of the European Communities, 2003).

The definitions of formal, nonformal, and informal learning in the context of this project are consistent with Livingstone’s (2005) definitions. As applied to Job Developers, the definitions of nonformal and informal learning are most relevant. As we
find later in this study, there are no specific formal learning opportunities or degrees granted in job development specifically as in professions such as doctors, lawyers or teachers, which makes job development a type of semi-profession or an occupation. Job Developers are more likely to engage in nonformal learning offered by programs such as IPLACE, the Job Developers Institute, JVS Toronto’s Bringing Employment Specialists to Tomorrow (B.E.S.T.), which are structured with specific goals and objectives for developing specific job development skills. In addition, Job Developers take advantage of informal learning opportunities by networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants and government agencies. These practices support, in part, Misko’s (2008) observations that (a) informal learning is the most prevalent form of learning among employees because nearly all employees become involved in some type of informal learning, and (b) one-and-a-half times more employees participate in nonformal learning than in formal learning.

2.2 Occupational Autonomy

The concept of autonomy had been defined in the literature from several perspectives. Anderson (2014) and Crittenden (1993) viewed autonomy from the social perspective. According to Anderson, the social nature of autonomy “is a powerful element within the social practices in which statuses, entitlements, immunities, liberties, and the like are attributed, withheld, and contested” (p. 355). In other words, one is autonomous when one is permitted or obligated to do something or to refrain from doing something. Further, if individuals are viewed as competent to make their own decisions, they can legitimately insist that they be taken seriously and be free of interference to exercise their autonomy. Crittenden explained the notion of the social nature of
autonomy in terms of language. Crittenden stated that no individual is born autonomous; rather, individuals become autonomous from the social context within which they define themselves and from social interaction. These social interactions are formed through language that gives meaning to an individual’s actions and judgments. This language is based on a cultural tradition and involves a system of norms and standards that determine proper use. Individuals determine the proper use of language (i.e., following the rules for structuring thought) by interacting with those who use the same language and receiving confirmation from those with whom the interaction takes place that the communication has been understood. Thus, according to Crittenden, individuals are understood by others to be autonomous persons when they use the language properly. In other words, to be autonomous, individuals must conform to the implicit cultural norms and standards of the language used, and to know that this conformity is taking place requires a social context.

Atkins (2006) pointed out that autonomy is sometimes characterized as the opposite of socialization. This characterization, however, is based on the liberal traditional of autonomy in which free will is central, and individuals must be protected from interference by state powers. Atkins emphasized that social relations are not to be avoided; rather, autonomy means being able to enjoy productive relations with others without interference from individual, group, or state powers.

Raelene (1989) discussed autonomy in the context of management of professionals in organizations, noting the conflict between control and autonomy, which poses a dilemma for managers of maintaining control while allowing autonomy to professionals who desire to work on their own schedules and be controlled essentially by their peers. Meiksins and Watson (1989) also noted the conflict between the
professionals’ desire for autonomy and the organization’s need to maintain control of employees. This conflict his heightened when "autonomous" (p. 562) professionals wish to work according to their own standards and clash with the constraints inherent in organizational hierarchies. Raeline proposed that autonomy has three components (a) strategic or institutional autonomy, (b) administrative autonomy, and (c) operational autonomy. Strategic autonomy is the freedom to select the goals, policies, and mission of the organization. Those responsible for this level of autonomy act as liaisons between the organization and the larger society in which it functions. Administrative autonomy involves managing the activities of a unit within the organization and coordinating the unit’s tasks with other units in the organization. Individuals who exercise this type of autonomy also mediate between their respective units and the users of their products or services. They also support organizational policy by following the directions of individuals who exercise strategic autonomy. Operational autonomy is the freedom to follow through to reach established goals or solve problems on one’s own but within administrative and strategic constraints. Individuals exercising operational autonomy perform technical functions relating to a particular set of products or services, but they also relate to the strategic and administrative levels.

In the present study, occupational autonomy was defined as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. Thus, Raeline’s operations component is applicable, because, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the Job Developers in this study who perceived themselves as autonomous indicated that they exercised a degree of freedom and discretion as they performed their duties (e.g.,
matching job seekers’ skills to employer needs, relationship building, counseling) within the context of their job description. Further, the perceived degree of freedom and discretion was based on their perception of whether they were doing something useful, and confirmation of usefulness and which skills were most valuable was based on feedback from constituents. Thus, Anderson’s (2014) view of autonomy as resulting from social interaction and Crittenden’s (1993) view of the role of language in autonomy are also applicable. Job Developers’ interactions with constituents, with whom they speak the language of their field, contributed to their sense of autonomy.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on Colley, Hodkinson, and Malcolm’s (2003) findings about the dimensions of informal and nonformal learning. In their thorough and authoritative overview of other researchers’ and theorists’ classifications of formal, nonformal, and informal learning (e.g., Beckett & Hager, 2002; Eraut, 2000; Stern & Sommerlad, 1999), Colley et al. noted that in the evolution of informal and nonformal learning, the historical tendency is to present formal and informal learning as competing paradigms and to imply that formal learning is more superior to informal learning.

For instance, Eraut’s (2000, as cited in Colley et al., 2003) definition comes from his list of five features of formal learning (i.e., prescribed, organised, teacher-led, culminating in a qualification or credential, and externally specified outcomes). Eraut implies that any significant learning that does not have these features is nonformal. However, Eraut identified nonformal learning based on the extent to which such learning is tacit, reactive or deliberative and as either individual or social and either explicit or
explicit. Colley et al. noted that Eraut’s definition of nonformal learning is based on what nonformal learning is not (i.e., not formal learning). Beckett and Hager’s (2002, as cited in Colley et al., 2003) view of informal learning, contrary to the prevailing paradigm of learning that body and mind are separate and the mind is superior to the body, was that learning is holistic and organic and engages the whole person, blending intellect, emotions, values, and practical activities. Unlike Eraut (2000) and others, Beckett and Hager make no reference to nonformal learning. Stern and Sommerlad (1999, as cited in Colley et al., 2003) viewed informal learning as a continuum, ranging from formal learning consisting of programmes leading to a credential to learning consisting of spontaneous experiences and encounters in which learning is an incidental byproduct that is either conscious or unconscious.

Colley et al. (2003) identified two dimensions of learning: theoretical and political. In the theoretical dimension there are differing theoretical approaches to learning, conflicting ideas about the effectiveness of learning, and different views on the relationships between learning and knowledge. In the political dimension the literature focuses predominantly on the relationship of learning to empowerment of the underprivileged and how learning contributes to social inclusion and economic competitiveness.

Colley et al. (2003) argued that there is a tendency to restrict certain theoretical perspectives on learning to either formal or informal settings, and that in the political dimension different meanings are meanings constructed for nonformal learning that are interrelated with the theoretical dimension. Colley et al. asserted that in practice, there is no difference between informal and nonformal leaning; rather, each is interchangeable.
and neither is superior to the other. Further, the interrelationships between informal and nonformal learning can be better understood if learning is examined in the wider context in which the learning takes place, such as the workplace, the family, or the community.

The conceptual framework of this study draws on many of the materials noted in the previous chapter relating to the terms formal, nonformal and informal learning as well as the Job Developer occupational learning research. However, the analysis in this research was tied together in many ways using Colley et al.’s (2003) findings about the dimensions of formal and informal learning. Colley et al. offer one of the most comprehensive and authoritative reviews of formal, non-formal learning and informal concepts in adult learning research, and in so doing they offer a distinctive conceptualization of the relationship between these terms as well.

Understanding formal learning, nonformal learning, and informal learning in a more holistic way avoids assumptions that one form of learning is more superior to the other and makes it easier to analyze learning taking place across a variety of contexts and situations (Colley et al., 2003). Colley et al. (2003) recommended that further research was needed to examine learning as social practice and to examine informal and nonformal learning within learning contexts and variety of learning situations. In this study the learning dimensions of Job Developers, including the role of formal education, training, and informal on-the-job learning and practices are explored and are based on Colley et al.’s findings.

2.4 Job Developers’ Nonformal and Informal Learning

Previous research has argued that Job Developers build their skills and capacity to perform their jobs mainly from nonformal and informal learning as opposed to formal
learning (Sousa & Quarter, 2003). JVS Toronto, a nonprofit, community-based organization that provides a full range of employment, training and assessment services in locations throughout the greater Toronto area to help persons find meaningful employment, offers a program entitled International Professionals Learning to Access Careers and Employment (IPLACE), which is aimed at individuals looking to change careers and train as Job Developers. IPLACE is relevant to this study because, as we will see in the results of this study, IPLACE was among the nonformal learning programs cited by respondents as helpful to their acquiring skills such as sales, marketing, and communication; enhancing job performance and potential for advancement.

IPLACE is a 20-week, full-time certificate program that provides skills and tools to provide job development, employment consulting and work in the nonprofit and profit placement and recruitment industry. Among the services that are included are individual consultations to help participants achieve goals and find the right employer fit, intensive and interactive professional training to find meaningful employment, instruction by knowledgeable instructors and guest speakers within the academic and nonprofit sectors, networking and discussion or group work, and computer training (IPLACE, 2009).

IPLACE began in 2006. According to Trudi Rutherford, the manager of Training Programs for JVS, IPLACE has an 86 percent placement rate in jobs as Job Developers, employment consultants, employment specialists or job coaches. Suzanne Chojnacki, the program’s first and only facilitator, noted that graduates will be Job Developers predominantly in nonprofit organizations. The curriculum includes development of employability skills, language skills, presentation skills, workplace etiquette, and workplace communication skills. The program is based on a philosophy that participants
should not only understand the fundamentals of being a Job Developer, but that the skills they learn are life skills that can transfer to any job. According to the testimony of one student:

It’s very challenging. But little by little I have gained more confidence. When I speak, my hands don’t shake anymore. I feared to face my classmates…to face a guest speaker. Not anymore. That is a big leap for me. Last week I went through the informational interview – actually I interviewed with three Job Developers. I have to know how to help people and I have to know how to help myself, to encourage myself to move forward so I can help more people. (Sproule, 2011, para 13)

Candidates for admission to the IPLACE program must have level 8 scores on the Canadian Language Benchmark, which is very high. They are interviewed both by Chojnacki and Rutherford in a group setting. They must also complete a writing component. Chojnacki and Rutherford believe that individuals with backgrounds and experience in teaching, social services, sales and marketing, or social sciences are more disposed to finding employment in the field. Up to 15 participants are admitted per session and there are two 20-week sessions a year. Currently Chojnacki and Rutherford are developing a mentorship program for the students in the IPLACE program and would like to see the program expand to other centers across the country (Sproule, 2011).

Another example of nonformal learning available to Job Developers is the Job Developers Institute provided by First Work, the mission of which is to support local youth employment centres in Ontario, Canada. First Work recognizes the important role that Job Developers have in helping clients find meaningful employment and creating
strong partnerships with employers. The Job Developers Institute offers a Job Developer certification course, an informal training program about best practices in job development that help Job Developers understand diverse clients, prepare clients for employment, make effective client-employer matches, and maintain effective relationships with employers. The specific objectives of the program are to help Job Developers be able to:

- Describe the characteristics and skill requirements of a successful Job Developer
- Create a comprehensive employer base
- Work more effectively with diverse clients by applying strong interviewing and research skills to make appropriate referrals to employers and demonstrating
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with employers
- Increase placement results
- Improve retention rates of placements (Job Developers Institute, n.d.).

2.5 Summary

This review was concerned with nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers. Formal learning or training takes place in educational or training institutions, such as schools, workplaces or community centres, and involves structured courses and workshops that lead to obtaining a credential (Livingstone, 2005; Livingstone et al., 2008). Nonformal learning is learning that does not take place in educational or training institutions and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. However, nonformal learning is structured in terms of learning objectives, duration, and types of support (Livingstone, 2005; Sousa & Quarter, 2003). Nonformal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups, such as in youth organizations, trades unions and political parties, and through
organizations or services that complement formal systems, such as arts, music and sports classes or private tutoring to prepare for examinations (Rubenson, 2007). Informal learning is intentional or tacit learning in which persons engage either individually or collectively and do not rely on a teacher or an organized curriculum (Livingstone, 2005).

Nonformal training for Job Developers to acquire and apply new skills is effective and relevant to a significant extent. The criteria used in nonformal training programs sanctioned by nonprofit service agencies to identify and validate learning outcomes are the ability to describe the characteristics and skill requirements of a successful Job Developer, which include developing employability skills, language skills, presentation skills, workplace etiquette, and workplace communication skills; the ability to create a comprehensive employer base and develop and maintain relationships with employers; the ability to work more effectively with diverse clients by applying strong interviewing and research skills to make appropriate referrals to employers; increased placement results; and improved retention rates of placements. Nonformal and informal learning are well-recognized and well-used in the job development field.

Informal and nonformal learning is facilitated when workers have opportunities to meet new people and be exposed to new ideas. Organizations today are rapidly changing and may confuse workers. However, organizational change also may prompt workers to take a new direction and seek new challenges and new experiences that can be enhanced by informal and nonformal learning. It is important that organizations provide opportunities for informal and nonformal learning for workers. According to Livingstone (2004), learning is lifelong, and workers’ informal and nonformal learning activities that
help them acquire basic and advanced skills must be considered when talking about lifelong learning.

The main argument in the present research study is that learning and work performance activities of Job Developers are driven by informal learning. As posited by Colley et al. (2003), these terms need to be viewed holistically as part of larger learning contexts and in a variety of learning situations. In addition, learning needs to be considered in light of Stern and Sommerlad’s (1999) learning continuum as identified by Colley et al. to fully appreciate the complex, continuous, and simultaneous nature of learning. These points are further underscored and discussed in more detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In Chapter 3 the methodology of the study is described.
Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, the variables of the study, population and sampling frame, and data collection and analysis procedures are presented. Ethical procedures are also discussed.

3.1 Focus of Study

This study focuses on the nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. Nonformal and informal learning are defined according to Livingstone’s (2005) definitions discussed in Chapter 2. As Colley et al. (2003), pointed out, informal and nonformal learning can be depicted as a continuum indicating degrees of formality and informality.

Job Developers’ perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance are also explored. Occupational autonomy is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. Workplace performance is defined as the extent to which Job Developers implemented the job development practices recommended in the research literature as outlined by Migliore et al. (2010).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

In this mixed methods exploratory study data were collected from a survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and through face-to-face interviews (Appendix B) of Job Developers. The survey questionnaire and interviews provided primary data based on Job Developers’ firsthand experience. According to Creswell (2009), such data yield
more in-depth information than secondary research such as critical reviews of literature. The survey questionnaire (Appendix A) consists of three questions about length of time in position, level of education, and whether the respondent has had specialized Job Developer training and 40 Likert-scaled questions related to the variables of the study. Ten open-ended interview questions were also asked.

Data were collected online and in person between March 30, 2012 and July 31, 2012. The survey questionnaire was posted on "questionpro" during near the end of February. Ninety-three Job Developers responded to the survey questionnaire. The face-to-face interviews took approximately 30 minutes each. Thirty-five Job Developers were interviewed during the months of March, April, May, June and July.

Data from the interviews were analyzed using content analysis. The researcher searched for themes and patterns of similarity/difference and separate responses into appropriate categories based on the type of response. The researcher anticipated that the data from the survey questionnaire were analyzed statistically beyond tabulating beyond simple percentages and standard deviations. The actual analysis procedures were determined once the data were collected. While the statistics are descriptive and non-inferential, the results still contribute to the overall understanding of the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation and the extent to which informal and nonformal learning contribute to perceived occupational autonomy of Job Developers.

For the analysis of the qualitative data, no content analysis software was used. First, the researcher read and re-read the interview responses to become familiar with the content. The data were organized from the responses by question. The researcher looked
for words and keywords that appeared several times and considered that different words could mean the same thing, i.e., synonyms. The analysis consisted of more than just a word count; the context of the responses was also examined. The responses were then placed into categories. For instance, in response to question 1, “What are the top 3 traits or skills every job developer must have to excel?” the most common responses, such as focus, sales, networking, etc., and how many times they were mentioned were noted. The researcher made sure that no item was placed in more than one category. The researcher looked for patterns across categories and arrived at the themes. Instances where a word or keyword was used only once were pointed this out in the data analysis, and the researcher attempted to interpret the meaning of responses that represented only one viewpoint. The approach to coding was emergent and not a priori. In other words, categories were not established prior to the analysis; they were allowed to emerge. An example of a coded section from which the researcher analyzed the interview data appears in Appendix C.

3.3 Population and Sample

The sample sizes for this study were 93 Job Developers to respond to the survey questionnaire and of this group of 93, there were 35 respondents for the interviews. Participants were recruited through the researcher’s network of colleagues (Appendix D). Participation was strictly voluntary and no payment was made for those who participated in the online survey.

There are two types of samples in this study. The first is a purposive sample of Job Developers in the greater Toronto area only. In purposive samples the researcher seeks one or more specific predefined groups (Babbie, 2007). The second type is a
snowball sample. A snowball sample is a subset of a purposive sample. In a snowball sample the researcher identifies a sample along the way, similar to a snowball accumulating snow, and a participant is asked to suggest someone else who might be willing or appropriate for the study (Babbie, 2007). In this study snowball sampling involved those with whom the researcher has an established rapport. Once those who make up the purposive sample completed the survey or the interview, they referred their Job Developer contacts to participate in the study. Those who participated in the interview received a cash payment of $25.00. These participants could withdraw at any time without penalty, but payment was only rendered if they completed the interview.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

To ensure the ethical treatment of participants, the purpose of the research, procedures, and anticipated outcomes were explained to the participants. The researcher obtained informed consent (Appendix E) from the participants based on procedures approved by the University of Toronto Ethics Office. The researcher explained to potential participants that they did not need to participate in the study if they did not wish. There was no risk associated with this study and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants were assured that all information collected in the study will be held in the strictest confidence, and that summary information and quotations (that will not be attributed to any one participant by name) will be used for analysis. The names and the responses of the participants were not required or disclosed.

Several other research methods could have been used for this study, such as biographical, phenomenological, or ethnographic research. The biographical study is “a form of narrative study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of
another person’s life” (Creswell, 2009, p. 55). The biography method focuses on one person and significant issues in this person’s life. The researcher develops a chronology that connects different aspects of the person’s story, retells the person’s story in the study in a literary way, and reports emergent themes (Creswell, 2009).

The primary goal in a phenomenological study is to identify and understand the lived experiences (i.e., the phenomena) of the participants. Participants tell their story, and the researcher helps them to fully explore the meaning of the story (Creswell, 2009). Ethnographic research focuses on the shared values, behaviours, language, and beliefs of an entire cultural group and involves a sample population of 20 or more (Creswell, 2009).

The biography, phenomenological, and ethnographic study methods were deemed by the researcher as unsuitable for this study. Researchers who use the biography method collect data that consist of individual participant stories and the context of their lives. Thus, the biography method focuses on the unique and general features of the life of a person (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to describe one or more individuals’ experiences of a phenomenon. Data were coded into themes and analyzed to uncover the central meaning or essence of the phenomenon (Schmicking & Gallagher, 2010). Ethnography “interprets and describes cultural and social groups” (Creswell, 2007, p. 79). Mixed methodology was the best choice for this study because it was clear from the study’s purpose that there was a need for both qualitative and quantitative types of data to answer the study’s research questions. Mixed methods research allows the researchers to triangulate data and achieve greater validity and reliability of the results (Creswell, 2009).
3.5 Limitations

Several limitations existed in this study. The use of the Likert scale may have been a limitation because, as Glesne (2006) noted, participants may or may not give an accurate assessment of their beliefs, feelings, attitudes or behaviours when constrained by these types of fixed choice question systems. Fixed choice question systems inherently limit what the subject can express. Related to this, participants may answer according to what they feel the correct response should be, not how they really feel. Participants may also respond by always marking the most neutral possible answer. Thus, the data were legitimate only to the extent that participants were completely honest, as well as the degree to which they were able to link their views to the structure of the question and whether or not they were swayed by an urge to provide the “correct” rather than the more accurate response. According to Maxwell (2012), subjectivity is inevitable in any study, and researchers should consciously be aware of it during their entire study.

Another limitation may have been the sample size. The findings may not generalize to all who hold the position of Job Developer because the data collected from this study was conducted with only a selected number of Job Developers.

To mitigate these limitations and protect the validity and trustworthiness of this study, methodological triangulation was used. Methodological triangulation is the use of more than one method for gathering data. Methodological triangulation is also referred to as multimethod or mixed method research in which quantitative and qualitative research methods are combined to provide a fuller understanding of the subject under study than could be achieved using only one method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Maxwell (2012) noted that triangulation reduces the risk of bias or limitations inherent in a
particular method and allows the researcher to better assess the validity and
generalizations of explanations developed. In this study, both a quantitative, Likert-
scaled survey and qualitative open-ended questions were used to ensure reliability and
validity and trustworthiness of the findings.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this mixed methods exploratory study was to examine the nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances and/or challenges perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. In this chapter the data collected from a survey questionnaire and face-to-face interviews of Job Developers are presented and described in the course of carrying out some initial analysis.

Descriptive statistics are presented for the participants’ demographic characteristics of age, gender, years of experience as a Job Developer, level of education, professional designation(s), and extent of specialized Job Developer training. Other statistics (and some selected cross-tabulations) based on the survey as well as indicative excerpts from the interviews are also presented. For the interview data, participants responses are distinguished with the designation S1 through S35, which represents the total number of respondents interviewed. For the open-ended questions of the survey research, participant responses are distinguished with the designation R1 through R93, which represents the total number of respondents. These results form the bases for more detailed discussion of the meaning, significance and implications of the findings in Chapter 5.

4.1 Survey and Interview Results

4.1.1 Demographic and Background Characteristics in the Survey Data

A total of 124 individuals began the survey process on QuestionPro and 93 completed the survey. The 31 individuals who began but did not complete the survey were removed from the data file leaving a final sample size for the survey portion of this
study of 93. Table 4.1 contains the demographic and background characteristics of this sample. The most common age groups were 40 to 49 years old (32.3%) and 31 to 39 years old (28.0%), followed by over 50 years old (26.9%) and 25 to 30 years old (10.8%), with only 2.2% of the sample 24 years of age or younger. Most of the participants (63.4%) were female.

The most common range of years of experience as a Job Developer was 0 to 3 years (36.6%), followed by 3 to 5 years (24.7%), 5 to 8 years (17.2%), and more than 10 years (15.0%), with 6.5% having between 8 and 10 years of experience. The most common level of educational attainment was a bachelor’s degree (43.0%) followed by community college diploma (28.0%). Most of the participants (62.4%) reported having received specialized Job Developer training such as in-service workshops. Most of the participants (59.1%) did not hold a professional designation such as Certified Facility Manager (CFM), Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP), Project Management Professional International (PMPI), or Project Management Professional (PMP), with 29.0% holding one of these designations and an additional 10.8% working toward it.

A few of the respondents actually held or were working toward designations that may or may not have been related to their jobs, such as Certified Professional Accountant (CPA), Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), and real estate credentials. The question about professional designation was asked for two purposes: to see how many Job Developers are taking courses or preparing for an alternate career and to determine whether some Job Developers held other positions before their current position (i.e., if a Job Developer was a CFA or a PMP before being hired as a Job Developer).
Table 4.1

Demographic and Background Characteristics of the Survey Sample (N = 93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<td>25 to 30</td>
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<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years of Experience as a Job Developer</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>0 to 3 years</td>
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<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 but less than 5 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years but less than 8 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 8 years but less than 10 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years of service</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Community College graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post high school but did not complete 4-year degree</td>
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<td>7.5</td>
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<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table continues*
### 4.1.2 Informal and Nonformal Learning in the Survey Data

The focus of this study was on the formal, informal and nonformal learning for Job Developers and how these types of learning enhanced perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. Nonformal and informal learning have been defined according to Livingstone’s (2005) definitions.

A total of 13 survey items were related to informal and nonformal learning, and Table 4.2 contains descriptive statistics for these items. Recalling the structure of Likert style questions (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*), the items for which the participants agreed most strongly were Item 9, “I believe that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies to obtain information would help me perform my job better” \(M = 4.46, SD = .75\) and Item 7, “The best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job
experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date” \((M = 4.35, SD = .67)\). There was also a high level of agreement to Item 3, “The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions” \((M = 4.24, SD = .79)\) and Item 4, “Practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations,” \((M = 4.08, SD = .88)\).

The participants agreed less strongly with Item 8, “Formal continuing education programs (i.e., training programs that take place in educational or training institutions) are the best way to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer” \((M = 3.10, SD = 1.06)\). Thus, it appears that although the participants agreed fairly strongly that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals were best (as demonstrated by the high levels of agreement to Item 4), they also saw some value in formal continuing education programs (as demonstrated by their moderate levels of agreement to Item 8). The participants’ level of agreement was also relatively weak to Item 10, “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements” \((M = 3.28, SD = 1.09)\) and Item 6, “A formal college/university education is important for competent and skilled Job Developers” \((M = 3.36, SD = 1.16)\).

Responses to the open-ended question 1 ("Describe the kind of learning or skill improvement in which you are engaged which adds value to your profession") and question 2 ("What types of training or certifications are necessary to be an effective Job Developer?") on the survey were most pertinent to informal and nonformal learning. Illustrative responses to question 1 were:
Any learning is of value to my profession. Whether the learning is formal, informal or nonformal it definitely adds value to my professional demeanor and status. It is also imperative to learn on your own or become "self taught". Often there are many situations or tasks that become trial-and-error responses. In some case, it works out well. In others, it fails. But each lesson is a lesson learned and it becomes part of my overall experience. [R9]

I learn, improve my skills and add value to my profession on a variety of platforms. I have find value in learning through both formal and informal formats. Over the years I have taken courses, attended training, workshops, symposiums and webinars, I research information on-line and I learn through network groups and meetings. [R8]

These responses support the belief in a variety of learning modalities (i.e., formal, nonformal, informal) as indicated in the quantitative analysis. In response to question 2, participants cited specific informal programs such as JVS, Employment Ontario, and Employment Outcomes Professional II as important to their development and effectiveness.

4.1.3 Informal and Nonformal Learning in the Interview Data

Interview questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 were designed to probe further about what Job Developers believed was the best training to build their job skills, the extent to which they felt they were prepared for the responsibilities of a Job Developer, opportunities available to them for growth and advancement, and their ideal learning environment. Some of the responses to these questions reveal some consistencies with the quantitative results, while others raise further questions.

The second part of question 4 (“To what extent do you feel you were prepared to take on the responsibilities of a Job Developer?”) is discussed first because it addresses preparation for the role of Job Developer, and responses were mixed.

When I graduated [from JVS] I was fully prepared and well versed in the role of a Job Developer [such as] the appropriate way to present to a new employer.
professionalism when dealing with new employers, scenarios, mock interviews and input from current Job Developers. [S18]

When I came to my agency I came with a great deal of sales experience so that prepared me, however there is no formal training. I just had to figure ways to make placements. [S29]

The certificate training provided by JVS Toronto in conjunction with George Brown College is an excellent program. This along with my HR training has prepared me for that role of a Job Developer. [S30]

When I began this job [3 years ago], I felt much unprepared to take on the responsibilities. I thought Job Developing was simply helping clients with job searching and resume development. As I continue in this field, I learn more and more about the tasks involved and realize how little I knew when I began this job. I feel that my degree has prepared me for working with our client base. However, I feel that participating in a specific course on job development (either offered through a local college or through my organization) would have been extremely valuable. I feel it would have been beneficial for my clients as well, as they would have received higher quality services. [S9]

What we begin to see in these data that may explain the mixed nature of these responses is that those who graduated from specific Job Developer programs such as JVS enhanced their preparedness and built their confidence to assume the responsibilities of a Job Developer. Furthermore, having some prior experience in an area related to Job Development (e.g., sales training, degree in human resource management) also enhanced preparedness. It is argued here that while acquiring skills as a Job Developer may occur from nonformal learning, deepening those skills is accomplished through informal learning. Exercising autonomy in seeking out appropriate training is an important characteristic for gaining additional skills as a Job Developer. These data raise some important preliminary questions that we will follow up subsequently, such as: Which form of learning is best for Job Developers? To what extent do Job Developers’ perceptions of their workplace performance influence their beliefs about the best modes
of training? To what extent does the occupation of Job Developer itself influence the type of learning Job Developers seek?

The first part of question 4 is discussed second because the responses were based on Job Developers who had gained some experience. Question 4 asked, “What do you think is best training for becoming a Job Developer?” Participants’ responses yielded three predominant themes: Combination of formal/informal/non-formal education with continuous networking, IPLACE/BEST/JVS Toronto training program (nonformal), and learning by doing on the job (informal), with the informal theme most dominant overall.

I believe the combination of formal, informal and non-formal training best prepare the Job Developer for their role. [S9]

The best training for a Job Developer would be a combination of a Job Developer training program and a placement in a recruitment firm. [S15]

A course maybe the best training for becoming a Job Developer with the addition of a practicum. It is great to learn from a book; however, it is as important to get the hands on experience and apply what is learned. [S27]

Networking / discussion/ best practice meetings are important. [S23]

I learnt on the job from other Job Developers. [S13]

I believe that the best training for a Job Developer is observational. Have the new Job Developer follow seasoned developers for a period of around 6 weeks. This is observed in how developers work with employers, candidates and other stakeholders. This six week period is strictly observation. Followed by another 6 week period where the new Job Developer begins to take on more responsibility for the role with support for the JD team and eventually taking the role 100%. [S4]

I have not participated in college or university training. I have participated in 1-3 day workshops - it is like anything else - if the instructor is good and you are willing to learn and put forth the effort- you will get the training that is needed for this profession. But - doing the job is the best educator. [S8]
Some of the Job Developers also indicated that they were taking courses (e.g., Master of Business Administration [MBA] or CHRP) to advance into management or exit the job development field. These responses suggest that Job Developers’ views of what they believe is the best training is not necessarily closely related to previous work experience and/or level of education. Further, preferences for informal learning did not differ between Job Developers with experience and/or degrees in areas such as human resources management, communications, sales, or business administration and Job Developers who did not have such backgrounds. The responses also suggest the perception that all forms of training (formal/informal/non-formal) have a role to play. For example, one would not want to fly in a plane operated by a pilot who learned informally; rather, the more desirable situation is flying in a plane operated by a pilot with both formal and informal training. The same can be said for competent Job Developers. Individuals served by competent Job Developers most likely would prefer that these Job Developers would have honed their skills with a combination of different types of training, that is, formally, through experience, and as a result of interaction with their peers.

Where question 4 explored more general aspects of Job Developer training, question 5 focused on specific types of training and certifications: “What types of ongoing training or certifications are necessary to be an effective Job Developer? Have you participated in any of these programs? And if so, were these programs taught in a classroom by professors or academics (i.e., individuals with no professional Job Developer experience)? Or, were they shorter term workshops taught by other Job
Developer professionals or experts in job development? Which programs do you feel have been most helpful in terms of doing your job better?"

While most participants indicated that some type of training is necessary, responses to question 5 varied widely and no predominant themes emerged. Some respondents mentioned specific programs, such as workshops by Denise Bissonnette, Allen Anderson training (EOP II), IPLACE, and B.E.S.T.

I would recommend IPLACE training program. It is intensive, practical, and gives us opportunity to explore all the aspect of being a Job Developer. Learning through practicing, the six weeks placement really helped me to enhance my skills in job developing and gave me the confidence to take on the responsibilities of a Job Developer in the real world of work. [S31]

The B.E.S.T program by JVS-George Brown College...is the best for those who aspire to be JD's. [S7]

Common assessment process training, conflict resolution, job coaching training and life skills training helped me be effective in my job. All of the training was delivered through different agencies who specialize in these types of training. None of these trainers were professors/academics, rather experienced trainers within the given training in short training sessions. [S7]

The ‘classroom’ and the ‘professor’ might not be the best response. Hands-on; practical short term training is good. Networking events, communication-related workshops, labour market presentations, social media training are all useful. [S11]

Still, the sentiments expressed in relation to question 5 were mixed in a potentially significant way. Some other participants indicated that they believed drawing from their past experience and background and more informal activities such as networking with other Job Developers were more helpful:

My Human Resources Management program at Sheridan College helped me as well as my networking with recruiters and Job Developers. [S9]
It is necessary to stay current and know the labour market trends. Networking and brainstorming with other Job Developers - sharing jobs, techniques and strategies. [S23]

I don't think any specific thing is flat out necessary to be a good Job Developer. I took a 3 day course from a professional. It was good but my previous work experience in sales was infinitely more helpful. [S27]

I'm not sure, as I have no formal training outside of 1 training seminar. Again, the best part was the networking and learning from experienced JD's with real life examples. [S12]

The workshops I've attended in the past few months were useless. They only reinforce what I already know. There is no new information presented at these workshops. A degree in human resources will provide you with much more clout than a bunch of workshops on job development. [S20]

Again, the data suggest that both Job Developers with previous job experience and/or degrees in areas that are applicable to the Job Development profession (e.g., marketing, human resources management) and Job Developers without such backgrounds have no strong preference either way regarding informal learning and view all forms of training (formal/informal/nonformal) as important.

A closer look at the data reveals an important undercurrent—a possible confusion between learning and schooling, which was suggested by Colley et al. (2003)’s discussion of Stern and Sommerlad’s (1999) learning continuum. Traditionally, formal learning was viewed as the more desirable way to learn, with instructors and textbooks providing the knowledge, although passively, and grade point average the measure of that knowledge. More contemporary views of learning are that learning is an active process in which what is learned is forgotten unless it is applied to real life. For example, S20’s reference to a degree in human resources management providing “much more clout” suggests a mindset that a credential alone rather than real-world experience is important.
When approaching a prospective employer, either in person, by letter, brochure, portfolio or business card, assuming the Job Developer’s degree was indicated (i.e., B.S., B.A., M.B.A), the prospective client would be more inclined to see the Job Developer as a professional. The academic degree provides more assurance of professionalism and is also an indication that the Job Developer is continuing to learn and that formal learning is also part of the Job Developer’s repertoire.

Thus, the goal of gaining “clout” may or may not relate directly to learning outcomes as such. Ironically, most nonformal workplace training is based on formal models of learning that include a structured curriculum, testing, and certification. While the Job Developers in this study believed that all forms of training are important, these data suggest that new models of nonformal training need to be adapted. The data also support Colley et al.’s (2003) argument that all types of learning should be looked at holistically and in a variety of contexts, rather than assuming that one form of learning is more superior to the other.

These responses were echoed to a degree in the responses to the open-ended question 2 (“What types of training or certifications are necessary to be an effective Job Developer?”) on the survey. Specifically we see that the most common theme was that nonformal programs such as JVS, Employment Ontario, and Employment Outcomes Professional II were important to some Job Developers’ development and effectiveness. It is important to note that Job Developers’ responses have indicated that in general the best training involves formal, informal, and nonformal modes. However, the responses to open-ended question 2, interview questions 4 and 5, and item 12 on the survey suggest that with respect to work performance and performing their jobs better and more
effectively, Job Developers believed the best learning occurs with a combination of nonformal activities, such as workshops, seminars, and on-the-job experience; and informal activities, such as networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government.

Interview question 6 focused on opportunities for and types of learning available to Job Developers, an aspect of their learning that was not addressed in the survey. Specifically, questions 6 asked, “What kinds of opportunities are available to you to learn and advance? Are these opportunities primarily on the job in the sense that you can attend workshops on site or that you have a mentor who advises you? Or are these opportunities off site, such as I.P.L.A.C.E. or the Job Developers Institute?” Responses to question 6 revealed that about half the participants had opportunities available to them to learn and advance and, as with question 5, responses varied widely and no predominant themes emerged. As earlier, several respondents mentioned specific programs, such as workshops by Denise Bissonnette, EOP II training, and IPLACE. Others indicated a variety of other ways to learn and advance. Illustrative responses are:

I have had some informal job development training (like a workshop) in my workplace. [S29]

The only opportunities available to me are on-the-job (occasional workshops, consultation with other Job Developers and supervisors). [S22]

Post secondary courses - on site network with colleagues - on site job shadowing colleagues - on and offsite online workshop - on and off site seminars - off site and online conferences - off site. [S34]

I primarily rely on colleagues and other professionals for mentoring help. [S13]

We are offered few opportunities because of budgetary limits and distance from training. Some webinars were offered this past winter, and some staff are given the chance to attend Futures at Work workshops, but Opportunities Conference
has been taken off of the table because of cost. Our agency really struggles with keeping up to date. [S22]

There are very little opportunities that my employer is willing to actually pay out for in order for me to learn or advance. Nor do I have a mentor; in fact, the man who was developing before I even started now comes to me for advice. I feel very isolated in my role. The only connection I feel is through the ODEN network. [S16]

There are no programs available at my office mainly due to limited financial budgets. [S21]

These programs are merely short term solutions. As I mentioned before, there are no real courses that can provide one the practical experience required by novice Job Developers. The real learning takes place by doing. [S27]

The best training for job development probably is ‘on the job training’ while working and also through mentors. [S12]

Key revelations of the data include (a) Job Developers experience a number of challenges (e.g., budgetary, access to opportunities) associated with learning and advancement and linked to challenges facing the not-for-profit sector, (b) training opportunities are mainly informal (i.e., learning by doing) and occasionally nonformal, and (c) Job Developers must take initiative in seeking out ways to learn and advance. An overarching theme that emerges is frustration. The responses suggest that Job Developers are ready, willing, and able to pursue learning and advancement opportunities, but adequate training is not available.

The objective of question 7 was to elicit more general information about the most effective learning environment for Job Developers. Question 7 asked, “How would you describe your ideal learning environment? Are you more comfortable in a college or university classroom? With shorter-term workshops? Learning day-to-day on the job? Do you learn better when the learning is primarily lecture mode? Questions posed to you
and discussions with others? Attendance at conventions or conferences and sharing ideas with other professionals?”

The predominant theme in the responses to question 7 and one that supports the first part of question 4, was that Job Developers learn best with a variety of learning methods and methods in combination. For instance:

Experiential, hands-on, trial and error plus formal education like the bachelors of adult ed or the master of education. Attendance at conferences is critical. The more interactions with other frontline staff from other agencies, the more I learn. Very grassroots learning, combined with academia and competent colleagues at work, makes for solid training and learning. [S9]

I am an academic and I hold several college certifications. I learn well in well in most situations. I find hands on experience coupled with peer conferencing to be the most effective in ongoing training. [S33]

I am comfortable with all of the above, but consider most the realistic/effective [methods] in this order: 1. Learning day-to-day on the job/ Questions posed to me and discussions with others 2. Attendance at conventions or conferences and sharing ideas with other professionals 3. Shorter-term workshops 4. College or university classroom/ lecture. [S35]

Learning day to day on the job is best option but short time training program for a day or so could be a good idea. Interactive training where useful question are posed, discussions, case studies, quizzes, game play, etc. Attendance at conventions or conferences and sharing ideas with other professionals is also a good option. [S15]

Personally, I prefer a combination of in class training and on job practice. [S11]

These are the following type of learning environments, where I have been most successful in and also enjoy doing: 1.) Learning day to day on the job (best kind of learning) 2.) Sharing ideas with other professionals through conferences 3.) Group discussions with others 4.) 1-2 day training 5.) College classrooms, as they are smaller than university classrooms (I have attended both university & community college). [S9]
Moreover, the following response is notable because it shows a unique response—the respondent understands his/her own learning style and the experiences that help him/her learn best:

I am an auditory learner so I learn very well by attending lectures. I also learn on the job and informally through networking but I think I learn best, and enjoy learning the most, in a structured program. [S7]

Responses to interview question 7 were also consistent with survey items to which participants expressed strong agreement that the best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions. In this context we also saw that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are thought to be more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations.

An examination of the results of the survey responses, including the open-ended questions, and the interviews indicates that some Job Developers believed drawing from their past experience and background helped them do their jobs, but that specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better. Having said this, a significant number of others believed that informal learning activities were more helpful to developing their skills.

The results of the interview data suggest that Job Developers believe that the best training involves formal, informal, and nonformal modes. Job Developer respondents noted specific modes of training that were best for each of them, and all of these involved either formal, informal, or nonformal modes. Formal modes included college and university courses and degree programs. Informal modes included specific programs that
were intensive, practical, and directed at all aspects of becoming a Job Developer. Nonformal modes included job shadowing, networking with other Job Developers, staying abreast of job market trends through reading, and trial-and-error. However, what constitutes the best training may be a function of Job Developers’ perceptions of their own workplace performance. The results of the survey data indicated that participants who believed their workplace performance was not good indicated that informal learning was superior to formal learning. On the other hand, participants who perceived themselves as having higher levels of workplace performance expressed a belief that they had been adequately trained and did not need additional training. Thus, there is a contingent of Job Developers who see no need for additional training in any mode.

The variance in responses about what types of training are necessary raises the question of whether there is a relationship between length of time as a Job Developer and one’s views of the type of training needed. Another implication, as suggested by one of the respondents earlier, is the influence of individual learning styles on beliefs about which kinds of training are best. The results also suggest that Job Developers often must seek additional training on their own as opposed to being offered training at their work site.

Another consideration about types of training that Job Developers believe is best is the nature of the Job Developer field. Job Developers are not subject to any formal occupational regulations as are individuals in formal professional occupations such as doctors, lawyers or teachers. Thus, Job Developer is perhaps a type of semi-profession rather than a profession per se. The Job Developer occupation could be viewed as being in the middle; that is, it is not a profession per se nor is it an unskilled occupation. The
middling nature of the Job Developer occupation in fact likely makes it more open to variations in how practitioners develop. In turn, Job Developers are likely forced into independently choosing how best to invest their time in learning. Occupational autonomy, therefore, can be seen as the “selection mechanism” unique to this type of semi-professional situation. Thus, the importance of occupational autonomy is that it is uniquely required in this type of occupation. Another important point is that autonomy is a complex notion. In research autonomy is demonstrated when workers follow their own values at a moment when these values conflict with those of the organization or managers. It may also be that employees autonomously choose to follow the dictates of the organization or manager, making the autonomy of their actions difficult to discern because of the alignment with the organization or manager. However, in this study, the definition of autonomy includes balancing the needs and demands of many constituencies and not just one. In the case of Job Developers, if such occupational autonomy is allowed to flourish and properly develop, such autonomy allows them to make effective decisions regarding their own occupational development.

4.1.4 Occupational Autonomy in the Survey Data

In this study occupational autonomy was defined as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. A total of 15 survey items were related to occupational autonomy. These items were formulated on the basis of a review of the literature about general elements of occupational autonomy and literature relevant to responsibilities of Job Developers. Parker, Wall, and Jackson (1997) found not only that enhanced autonomy increased ownership of problems but also
that employees recognized a wider range of skills and knowledge as important for their roles. Employees who demonstrate job autonomy decide on their own how they do their jobs in terms of the timing, methods, procedures, and overall decision making about how to perform tasks (Parker, Axtell, & Turner, 2001).

However, occupational autonomy does not necessarily imply that Job Developers in this study are working in a completely independent manner or do not need the support of their employer or others. Rather, it is focused on their ability to recognize and complete the central components of their occupation and their perception of the extent to which they do so. We can see in all 15 items in the survey the skills and knowledge Job Developers recognize as necessary to performing their jobs. Items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8-15 relate specifically to skills that Job Developers recognize that they have (e.g., strong interviewing and research skills, placing clients with disabilities, matching clients with appropriate jobs, etc.). Items 1, 3, and 7 relate specifically to skills that Job Developers recognize are necessary but who perceive that they may need more learning in these areas. And, it was suggested from the beginning of this research that this autonomy may have a distinctive relationship to learning processes and outcomes (see sub-section 4.1.5 below).

Descriptive statistics for these items are shown in Table 4.3. The highest levels of agreement (as well as the most consistent as assessed by the standard deviations) were for Item 4, “I work effectively with diverse client groups” ($M = 4.48, SD = .77$), Item 13, “I am comfortable describing my agency and my role to prospective employers,” ($M = 4.41, SD = .70$), Item 2, “I have strong interviewing and research skills that help me make appropriate client referrals to employers,” ($M = 4.27, SD = .57$), and Item 12, “I am
comfortable contacting and meeting with prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship,” \((M = 4.22, SD = .84)\). The lowest levels of agreement were for Item 7, “I have difficulty approaching prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship about jobs,” \((M = 2.33, SD = 1.09)\), Item 3, “I have difficulty meeting the right contact person in organizations that are prospective employers,” \((M = 2.49, SD = .98)\), and Item 1, “I worry that employers are not satisfied with my job placement services,” \((M = 2.50, SD = 1.05)\).

These results indicate that the participants believed that they work effectively with different kinds of clients, that they understood their role within the agency, and that they were confident that they could make appropriate client referrals and meet with new prospective employers. The statements with which the participants demonstrated a low level of agreement were those that specified negative aspects of their performance such as having difficulty approaching prospective employers, meeting the right contact person, or worrying that employers are not satisfied with their performance. The low average levels of agreement for these statements indicate that the participants were confident that they were performing these job duties well.

4.1.5 Occupational Autonomy in the Interview Data

Interview questions 2, 8, 9, and 10 explored more fully Job Developers’ occupational autonomy. Question 2 asked, “Discuss the importance of matching the job seekers skills to the employers' needs. How do you determine which job seekers are most suited to a particular employer?” The responses to this question expanded on the responses to Item 2 on the survey questionnaire (“I make every effort to get to know my job-seeking clients to find out their interests and skills and match them to appropriate
employers”) and Item 3 (“I use a variety of job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements”) by indicating how Job Developers match job seekers with employers.

It is crucial to match the job seekers' skills to the employers' needs. As a job developer, our role is to bridge both employers and job seekers, help them to find the best match. By doing so, we are able to meet the needs of both sides, and can further develop long-term working relationship with employers. In order to determine which job seekers are most suited to a particular employer, first, I need to clarify and understand employers' needs thoroughly through effective communication. Meanwhile, I should take care of clients' needs, and be clear about their interest, strengths, skills, personal traits, barriers etc. Then take all the factors together into consideration, and finally recommend the best candidates to employers. [S22]

It is crucial to employers to find the best fit for the position. It can increase team productivity, improve job retention, reduce new recruiting and training cost, etc. The best fit means the new hire not only has the ability to do the job, but also can adapt to the team environment successfully. I will prescreen candidates based on their educational background, skills, working experience, and personal traits, etc. [S31]

Job matching is critical for long term success, and we have turned down job offers rather than put a lesser qualified candidate in the position. [S2]

Assessment skills are critical, as valuable information has to be attained from the job seeker in order to match appropriate opportunities related to their skills and interests. [S28]

“Job-ready” - meaning they're already assessed as such by counselor(s), having the right background, communication skills, clear and realistic objectives, and knowing what tools to use and how - and doing it; targeting application process to employer/opportunity specs. [S30]

Two important themes are revealed in these responses. The first theme could be called “caught in the middle.” Participant S22’s comment, “We are able to meet the needs of both sides” suggests that at times Job Developers are caught in the middle between the needs of the client and the needs of employers. Although not expressly stated, they may also be caught in the middle between the demands of their superiors and
the needs of clients and employers. On the other hand, some Job Developers with an advanced sense of their occupational identity or who are particularly self-confident may not perceive themselves as being caught in the middle and recognize, accept, and manage competing pressures. In addition, there may be other Job Developers who do not perceive themselves as being caught in the middle because they firmly and actively side with or orient to one of the sources of competing pressure over all others.

The second theme is the importance of considering the value of long-term relationships even if the price of doing so means foregoing job offers and not placing appropriate candidates in jobs in the short term. While this may be difficult for Job Developers who face bureaucratic pressures to complete tasks or meet quotas, it is a test of their competency and their level of autonomy.

An important aspect underlying these responses is that occupational autonomy was defined in this study as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities in their respective work environments. This definition does not imply that Job Developers work completely independently; rather, occupational autonomy refers to their ability to perform their chief duties (e.g., matching job seekers’ skills to employer needs, relationship building, counseling) and exercise a degree of freedom and discretion as they perform these duties within the context of their job description. Often, the perceived degree of freedom and discretion is based on whether they perceive that they are doing something useful within the scope of their jobs. And such perceived usefulness is based on feedback from constituents Job Developers serve about which skills are most valuable.
Question 8 asked, “What do you think are your strongest skills? Do you believe your skills are valued within your agency? Explain why or why not.” Responses to these questions speak to an issue that will emerge again with regards to perceptions of one’s value within the agency; who, other than Job Developers, perceive their value; and the extent to which Job Developers’ perception of their value is related to their degree of autonomy.

The predominant themes in the responses to the first part of question 8 were listening, counseling, relationship building, sales, time management, labour market understanding, marketing, research, and creative thinking and that skills were valued. Indicative responses that speak to the dominant theme in this area are as follows:

My communication and listening skills are my strongest and my agency values this skill set as mentioned by my manager/supervisor. The skills set I have mentioned has helped me attract new employers and to assess my clients with clarity. [S1]

My listening skills, storytelling skills and determination to make it work. Yes, I feel valued. Folks seek me out for input. I do think my skills are valued and I am supported by a great team that go above and beyond to help me deliver clients to employers to help me be competitive in my market. [S9]

My strongest skills are interpersonal, business research and communication and labour market understanding. I believe my skill set is highly valued as the labour market understanding and business communication tend to be lacking in this industry. [S29]

I have impeccable selling skills. Without a strong sales background you cannot be a good Job Developer. My organization values my ability to reach out to employers and "sell" clients to them. [S29]

Relationship building. This is valued because it is one of the most important skills a Job Developer can possess. [S25]

As an example of the minority response theme, this respondent did not believe his/her skills were valued:
My strongest skills include creating and building relationships, motivating people, creativity and resourcefulness. I do not believe my skills are appreciated, valued or even recognized by my agency. [S22]

It is interesting to note that with the exception of respondent S9, most of the responses suggest that the value of the skills is in the eyes of the managers of the respective agencies. Respondent S9’s comment, “Folks seek me out for input” suggests that in this Job Developer’s agency, others besides managers recognize and value certain skills. The responses have implications for both autonomy and learning. Based on the responses to previous questions, Job Developers learn in different ways, but learn predominantly informally and autonomously. It follows, then, that the value of Job Developers’ skills must go beyond what their managers alone believe is valuable; they likely must think broadly to consider what is valued by their clients, the employers with whom they work, and their colleagues as well. Autonomy (as well as skill and knowledge) is then further developed and supported by feedback from these other groups. In terms of learning, agencies need to move away from one-size-fits-all training efforts and encourage greater autonomy for Job Developers by supporting them to develop their own personal learning strategies that speak to their strength and skills, as well as multiple parties who may value their work/skill.

A notable aspect of the responses to the second part of question 8 (“Do you believe your skills are valued within your agency?”) is that while the majority of respondents indicated that they believed their skills were valued, several participants did not respond to this part of the question. Possible explanations could be that they may have been unsure whether they were valued or felt only partially valued, as one
participant indicated: “I believe my manager values them but I am not sure about the agency as a whole.”

Question 9 asked, “What do you enjoy most about being a Job Developer, i.e., when you complete a day’s work, what makes you say to yourself, ‘I’ve had a good day today?’ What do you dislike the most? i.e., when you complete a day’s work, what makes you say to yourself, ‘I never want to have a day like this again’?” The predominant themes that emerged regarding what participants like about being a Job Developer were making suitable matches between clients and employers, receiving repeat calls from employers requesting assistance, and the job’s variety, as illustrated by these responses:

What I enjoy most about my job is the impact I have on a person’s life and the end result, finding employment for them. [S12]

When someone gets a job, it is a good day. When a day goes by that there is no movement, that is a bad day. [S28]

Placing a client who was in very much need of a job, especially when they are placed same day when they meet me. I will talk to me coworkers about that experience. Also when I place a difficult client. [S13]

The most satisfying aspect of my job is when clients get good, meaningful work as a result of working with us. [S15]

I enjoy most about being a Job Developer when I helped both my clients and employers find the best match. Most satisfying is when an employer that you've had countless fruitless conversations and meetings with finally decides to try your service and the client is successful. It always leads to repeat placements and ‘word of mouth’ in the community. [S11]

What I enjoyed the most about being a Job Developer was when clients would call to give me the great news that they got a job! That always made my day! [S20]

The employer saying, "Hey, have you got any more like her/ him! [S19]
The other best part of being a Job Developer is knowing that it is like a box of chocolate - you never know what you are going to get. This made it interesting. [S30]

I love my job, the fact that 2 days are never the same. Building relationships with in the community. Helping someone's dream come true. Creating opportunities. Watching someone receive their first pay. Educating people. Inspiring possibilities. [S26]

These responses suggest that the participants’ enjoyment of their jobs is in the end values-driven in a particular set of ways; that is, their values are based primarily on helping people change their lives and on meeting the needs of others, whether they are clients or employers. In addition, these Job Developers may enjoy their jobs because they have a level of autonomy that allows them to “live their values” and use their personal characteristics on the job.

Predominant themes for dislikes included clients with a sense of entitlement or who do not follow up, too much paperwork/bureaucracy, having to meet quotas, and placing a client in job that does not meet client needs, as these responses illustrate:

The thing I dislike the most about my job is probably unruly clients who have a sense of entitlement and think I owe them something. [S5]

I get frustrated when I arrange a job to client after a lot of efforts and he/she doesn’t even go for interview or doesn’t go to work. [S13]

I dislike most about being a Job Developer when I have to meet the quotas and place a client to a job that cannot really meet his or her needs. [S22]

I absolutely love when I see a client succeed, and increase in confidence. I’m not as enthralled with the accompanying paperwork. [S30]

Worst thing - paperwork - endless paperwork and reporting. [S15]

The red tape and bureaucracy gets to me when I hear of why clients are denied the logical supports they need. [S19]
The aspects of the job that Job Developers dislike could be explained in nearly the same terms as the aspects of the job that Job Developers like; that is, the values-driven nature of both like and dislike of the job. For example, for the Job Developers who value self-reliance and a sense of responsibility, it follows that they will be frustrated with clients who believe they are entitled or owed something or who do not appear for the interview or the job. These aspects also undermine their autonomy because clients who are not diligent or who are irresponsible may call into question not only the Job Developers’ job performance but also their judgment or the degree of latitude are part and parcel of exercising autonomy. This causes a dilemma for Job Developers and possible internal conflict in the sense that they are dealing with different personalities.

Participant S22’s, S30’s, and S19’s responses above suggest that the value of seeing clients succeed and develop self-confidence is sabotaged by a bureaucracy that insists on quotas and requires excessive paperwork. Developers have no input into the establishment of quotas. Quotas are established by the provincial and federal governments as a formula for funding daily operations. Job Developers must place an expected number of clients in jobs by the end of each calendar month. If they do not meet the quota, the funds are not pulled from the organization; however, Job Developers are required to submit a report that indicates why these numbers were not met. These requirements only add to their struggle to be more autonomous and able to exercise judgment. In effect, these Job Developers are saying, “we are not machines, and the people we serve are not machines.” Such a non-bureaucratic approach to doing their job within the constraints of a bureaucracy is a paradox that may be the basis of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of their jobs.
Question 10 asked, “If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?” Predominant themes in the responses to question 10 were better marketing of services, less paperwork, and a more automated process for sourcing clients and pre-screening skills to match employer needs. Respondents stated:

Large scale marketing on the business level. Many employers fear the government and do not know about services and are fearful of scams and for-profit organizations that lie about services and fees. I would market my services to large organizations, i.e., neighbourhood business associations. [S10]

What gets in the way is the amount of paperwork and administrative tasks Employment Ontario has in place, which is a big detriment to engaging new employer connections. [S19]

Less paper work, more networking and cold calling to employers. [S15]

Get everyone up to speed with technology. All Job Developers should be using LinkedIn to the best. [S34]

Have a more automated process for sourcing clients and pre-screening skills in order to match employer needs. Would allow much more time for preparing clients to be job ready and setting employer expectation. [S30]

The responses to the open-ended question 4 on the survey (“If you could change one thing about your job what would that be?”) were consistent with responses to questions 9 and 10 and included: “Cutting the red-tape and bureaucracy, which gets in the way of success” [R19]; and “Less paperwork” [R15].

The issue of the nature of bureaucracy, its accompanying paperwork and administrative tasks and requirements, and how bureaucracy may constrict or squelch autonomy has already been discussed, but it is very prominent in the above findings. The data also reveal other considerations related to autonomy. First, better marketing of services would reach a wider range of clients and employers and facilitate greater autonomy in terms of matching clients with appropriate employers. Second, automation
of certain functions or services may present a double-edged sword with respect to autonomy. On one hand, with automation Job Developers may exercise less occupational judgement and thus have less autonomy. On the other hand, automation may free Job Developers from more mundane activities and give them more time to devote to more productive activities as identified by participant S30 (i.e., sourcing, pre-screening, and preparing clients) and more autonomy to perform in a values-driven way. Participant S30’s response relative to “setting employer expectation” also suggests that automation would contribute to Job Developers’ ability to better articulate to employers what the Job Developer expects from the relationship and in essence working in partnership with the employer.

The responses to open-ended survey question 3 (“Describe the extent to which you are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention?”) suggested what occupational autonomy for Job Developers looks like in practice.

Illustrative responses included:

I have developed a strong rapport with local outside agencies such as apprenticeship, Adult Protective Services, community living agencies, adult learning centres, etc., which has enabled me to access a variety of services, based on needs, to assist a client in reaching their goals. [R25]

I sometimes try to create a "mid point". Some call it job carving and others might call it job modification. Either way, the objective is to try to find a proper fit within an organization. Some employers are reluctant to work with me. Others are willing to modify a job specification so that a client ‘fits’ within the organization. Sometimes this strategy works well and at other times it doesn't. [R24]

An interesting observation is that there is both agreement with Item 12 on the survey, “I am comfortable contacting and meeting with prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship” and disagreement with “I have difficulty
approaching prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship about jobs.” This could suggest that Job Developers in work environments in which they feel valued or in which their supervisors encourage them to experiment and be creative about placing clients feel more empowered when contacting prospective employers with whom they have not yet established a relationship than Job Developers who do not feel valued or who work in more bureaucratically-oriented environments. Thus, the former group is able to exercise more occupational autonomy than the latter group. Another significant point is that each Job Developer has a different level of need for on-the-job autonomy. Some prefer more direction from superiors and may be uncomfortable with the level of effort or responsibilities associated with autonomy.

4.1.6 Workplace Performance in the Survey Data

Workplace performance was defined as the extent to which Job Developers implemented the job development practices recommended in the research literature as outlined by Migliore et al. (2010) earlier. There were 12 survey items related to workplace performance and descriptive statistics for these items are shown in Table 4.4. The items for which the participants agreed most strongly were Item 4, “Developing relationships with employers and prospective employers is an important aspect of being an effective Job Developer,” (\(M = 4.87, \ SD = .34\)), Item 2, “I make every effort to get to know my job-seeking clients to find out their interests and skills and match them to appropriate employers,” (\(M = 4.57, \ SD = .70\)), and Item 3, “I use a variety of job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements,” (\(M = 4.45, \ SD = .70\)). The first two of these three items were related to developing relationships with both employers (and potential employers) and with clients. The fact that these items were the
most strongly agreed to items demonstrates that the participants in this study felt strongly that such relationships are an important part of their work.

Low levels of agreement were found for Item 5, “I have difficulty describing my agency and articulating my role to prospective employers,” ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.07$), Item 11, “I help my clients find jobs by talking to their families and/or previous employers about their interests and skills,” ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.13$), and Item 10, “Reading the classified ads or internet listings is an effective way to find jobs for my clients,” ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.11$). The lower level of agreement to these items shows that the participants understood their role well because they did not have difficulty describing this role but that they also knew the parameters under which they operated in that they did not consider going beyond clients to their family members and that they did not rely on traditional classified ads to perform their job duties.

4.1.7 Workplace Performance in the Interview Data

Interview questions 1 and 3 focused on the top three traits or skills every Job Developer must have to excel, the importance of matching the job seekers skills to the employers' needs, and the extent to which Job Developers are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention to increase their work performance specifically. Thus, here we obtain some important information on how Job Developers understand the issues surrounding workplace performance, including what defines the most relevant types of performance within some key categories. In response to question 1 (“What are the top 3 traits or skills every Job Developer must have to excel (e.g., articulating your role of prospective employers, sourcing jobs, finding the right person within the organization with whom to develop a relationship, etc.? Can you describe
these in terms of the kinds of learning or skill improvement you engaged in that you could put on a resume?”), the predominant themes were sales, marketing, communications, rapport with employer, client/job matching and interpersonal skills.

Sales skills [are] the ability to create value and to move employers along to action and help them to actually make decisions. [S5]

A Job Developer must know how to market an individual and a program, must have the tenacity of a sales person to perform cold calls and follow up, follow up, follow up on leads. [S15]

[Sales is the] ability to make a professional, well prepared cold call to prospective employers; 45 sec maximum pitch introducing the program, client and benefit to the employer; anticipate and prepare responses to typical objections; ability to persuade employer to take action.[S29]

They [Job Developers] must have good marketing skills to promote the service and find clients jobs.” [S25]

[Job Developers] must have strong sales and marketing experience to find get the employer interested in you as a Job Developer and in your organization. [S6]

[Job Developers need] advanced marketing skills, cold calling or outside sales. [S10]

Marketing and selling skills are very important, as a JD is constantly attempting to find placements and convince the hiring manager to hire the prospective candidate. [S8]

Communication skills are vital. [S1]

Successful communication is critical in business. A communicator is an exceptional listener who effectively conveys information verbally and in writing. [S9]

The responses regarding rapport with employers provided an expansion to Item 4 on the survey, “Developing relationships with employers and prospective employers is an important aspect of being an effective Job Developer,” to which survey respondents indicated strong agreement. Rapport with employer was described as follows:
Building good rapport with an employer is critical. Knowing exactly what the employer expectations and needs are makes it easier to successfully match a candidate to a position. [S25]

[Job Developers must have the] ability to create effective working relationships and build rapport with potential employers and clients. [S13]

One respondent described how he/she develops rapport:

I know it's unusual to just drop by but most of my colleagues like to just email but I prefer to get out here and meet people -- I've learned so much this way. Can you tell me what you do, if you have a moment?” And then I show interest, and listen, and ask intelligent questions, and build rapport and ask to be taken to the manager, etc. This worked like a charm for me. I believe in what I'm doing, and it shows and I do have some of that chutzpah and leadership sense, so people do what I want to do. [S26]

While on its face this response suggests specific rapport-building strategies, there is also the suggestion that skills such as seeing situations from the viewpoint of others and having the self-confidence to take initiative, and possibly risks, are also important. There is also the suggestion that exercising these skills is a function of the degree of autonomy that Job Developers have in performing their jobs. In other words, they must be given the freedom to make decisions on their own that may sometimes be outside of bureaucratic policies and procedures given the fluid and contingent nature of the work itself. Responses illustrating the skill of client/job matching included:

Analytical skills, to be able to assess positions and skill-sets and know when there is a match. [S11]

Ability to successfully pre-screen and match candidates to employer staffing requirements. [S13]

Finding employment opportunities and finding the right candidate to match that opportunity to demonstrate your value to the employer. [S2]

As one respondent elaborated:

A good match is made by matching job seekers’ personality and attitudes to the business culture, (as revealed by needs assessments and familiarity built through
networking) and then helping the employer to match their 'needs' (which are usually much more plastic than employers are willing to admit) to the skill set and potential skill sets of the candidate. Matching personality to "fit" involves a lot of intuition; but in general a motivated person will fit in anywhere far better than a depressed, beaten person. So the more time we have to work on 'motivation' with clients, the easier it becomes to match them to employers. [S29]

Viewpoints and definitions of interpersonal skills varied. Respondents described interpersonal skills as:

- Being able to articulate your role, clients and organization you represent. [S3]

- Strong interpersonal and written communication skills, especially important when cold-calling & approaching potential employers, with whom there is no prior relationship with. [S35]

- Strong instinct for directing the conversation and produce outcomes that you want to see, especially when counselling and & motivating clients or influencing employers' decision to hire your client. [S11]

- The ability to relate to your co-workers, inspire others to participate, and mitigate conflict with co-workers is essential given the amount of time spent at work each day. [S29]

For a number of the respondents, we can note that sales and marketing go hand-in hand and often were synonymous. These skills, as well as the other skills of communications, rapport with employer, and client/job matching and interpersonal skills, could be viewed as part of a networking skill set in which competent Job Developers have strong people and relationship-building skills and the ability to reach out to outside sources and obtain information. Thus, Job Developers must be good networkers who communicate effectively with others and are able to quickly call on their contacts and sources.

Other themes that emerged from the responses to question 1 were labour market knowledge, negotiating, passion for helping people, and working with diverse needs.

Once you've found the employer, you need to convince her that the client is "value added" to the organization. This often requires the ability to negotiate. It
could include salary, hours, benefits and position. [S27]

Desire to help people achieve his/her vocational goals. [S29]

The ability to create relationships with clients and employers and generate trust. [S16]

Trying to get people out of their comfort zones and thinking about different paths to shared goal. [S12]

A good Job Developer cares immensely about helping others reach their goals. To do this you are a passionate person with creative flair, able to think outside the box and do whatever it takes and go wherever the job is. [S26]

[A Job Developer is a] personable professional whose strengths include cultural sensitivity and an ability to build rapport with a diverse workforce in multicultural settings. [S28]

Job Developers should be required to take training on assisting clients who have multiple barriers. For example, if a client is physically disabled the majority of Job Developers do not know what can be done to assist both the employer and job seeker in overcoming that barrier due to inadequate training. [S24]

The responses suggest that these Job Developers see creativity as important to performing their jobs effectively. It is clear that high performing Job Developers not only focus on doing well for the clients and the employers they serve, but also on improving their skills and exercising autonomy when they make decisions that have to do with how they serve their clients and employers. In doing so, they find innovative ways to optimally perform.

Responses to question 3 (“Describe the extent to which you are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention. How supportive is your supervisor? Does your supervisor recommend areas for experimentation and trying new ideas? If you have tried something new, please describe what it was and the outcomes.”) speak primarily to the level of autonomy Job Developers indicated they have
in performing their jobs. Three predominant themes emerged: Job Developers were encouraged to try new ideas and were supported by their supervisors, Job Developers were encouraged to try new ideas but supervisors remained hands off, and Job Developers were not encouraged to try new ideas and were not supported by their supervisors. Job Developers who tried new ideas and methods used social media and job trial. The following responses are examples of these themes:

I am blessed with a supervisor who believes 100% in my skills and expertise and will allow me to do what I need to in order to make the placement. My supervisor lets me lead the way. [S32]

My supervisor does not recommend areas for experimentation, but is open to allowing us to try new ideas if we initiate the process. [S21]

My supervisor is extremely dictatorial and restrictive. She is afraid of being found lacking on the 'administrative side' of things and so will sacrifice placements for policy, at the same time accepting no accountability for reduced numbers or placements. Whenever new ideas are tried and don't work, we are reprimanded because they do not "fit" with the Allen Anderson "model" that everyone was trained in, at great expense. We have quotas to meet and the targets are very specific. My supervisor follows instructions from our director. There are hardly any opportunities to experiment or try new ideas. I would like to try a few ideas which come to mind but I run the risk of being disciplined for doing so. [S22]

Because we are a government funded organization, our freedom to experiment has been slowly chipped away. When I first started, I was able to offer a one week trial, or information interviews. Now I must convince the employer to sign a lengthy contract before anything can be negotiated. [S33]

In my current organization, we are mandated by Employment Ontario, MTCU, etc. in order to meet their criteria. [S18]

We are beginning to try strategies involving social media. Our organization has Facebook and Twitter accounts, which are helpful for networking with individuals and other community organizations. [S19]

I have used LinkedIn over the last few months and been very successful with it. [S34]
New ideas are essentially using LinkedIn to the best of my ability for client placement. [S14]

I now use a job trial (usually for a week period) for suspect clients who I feel might not do well in a job placement. This process also allows the employer to see first hand the work ethic of the job seeker and whether or not the employer wants to commit beyond the one week placement. [S22]

I would have clients volunteer with an employer before being employed to make sure the job matches with their interests and goals. [S29]

A key implication that can be gleaned from nearly all responses is the influence of the extent of Job Developer perceptions and descriptions of autonomy on their observations about job performance. Job Developers who are, as one participant [S32] expressed, “blessed” with supervisors who believe in them and allow them flexibility to judge how to best perform their jobs are more likely to exercise autonomy and take initiative for tasks in the course of their job performance (including the process of worker’s arriving at definitions of the most important forms of job performance). These Job Developers are also those who tend to receive support for trying new ways to accomplish their jobs, and as such engage in certain patterns of learning that involve favoring certain types of learning over others. Another implication of the data presented so far is related to the level of job satisfaction. Respondents who indicated that they had unsupportive or indifferent supervisors and whose freedom and creativity to experiment was limited by bureaucracy are probably less likely to derive satisfaction from their jobs or to derive only minimal satisfaction.
4.2 Informal and Nonformal Learning and Occupational Autonomy in the Survey Data

In the next set of analyses, a comparison was made between informal and nonformal learning on the one hand and occupational autonomy on the other hand. Among the items related to informal and nonformal learning shown in Table 4.2, seven items were selected for the analyses in this section including Item 2, “The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer,” Item 3, “The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions,” Item 4, “Practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations,” Item 6, “A formal college/university education is important for competent and skilled Job Developers,” Item 7, “The best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date,” Item 10, “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements,” and Item 12, “I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e., learning that take place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops).” Among the occupational autonomy items shown in Table 4.3, Item 5 was selected as the purest measure of occupational autonomy available in the survey instrument: “I am confident that clients are satisfied with my job placement services” and this item was used for this comparison. This item was selected
because it makes no reference to the participants’ agency or organization but rather refers only to the services that he or she provides. This item was also selected because all of the other survey items on this section of the survey relate to very specific components of occupational autonomy whereas this item was the most general.
Table 4.2

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items Related to Nonformal and Informal Learning (N = 93)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think that enrolling in continuing education courses at a local community college is a good way to keep my job skills current.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that attending trade association meetings and job fairs is an important part of my learning.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A formal college/university education is important for competent and skilled Job Developers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table continues*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Formal continuing education programs (i.e., training programs that</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>take place in educational or training institutions) are the best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I believe that networking with employers, other Job Developers,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>career consultants, and government agencies to obtain information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would help me perform my jobs better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I need more training in job placement strategies to develop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and maintain placements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The best way to further acquire and build on skills as a Job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developer is through informal learning (i.e., learning that takes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curriculum).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e.,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning that take place in educational or training institutions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I spend time reading journals and other publications related to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Job Developer profession to stay current with best practices in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my field.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree.* Therefore, higher means are indicative of stronger levels of agreement.
Table 4.3

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items Related to Occupational Autonomy (N = 93)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I worry that employers are not satisfied with my job placement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have strong interviewing and research skills that help me</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make appropriate client referrals to employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have difficulty meeting the right contact person in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organizations that are prospective employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I work effectively with diverse client groups.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am confident that clients are satisfied with my job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>placement services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am confident that I can satisfactorily resolve employer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complaints about or problems with a client.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have difficulty approaching prospective employers with whom I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do not yet have a relationship about jobs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have successfully created a solid, comprehensive employer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>base.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can usually find jobs that match the qualifications and</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interests of the clients with whom I work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am confident that I can place my clients who have</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disabilities in competitive jobs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table continues*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I am confident explaining to employers how to make their workplaces accessible to clients with disabilities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I am comfortable contacting and meeting with prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am comfortable describing my agency and my role to prospective employers.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I create or negotiate new job descriptions with employers when I have difficulty finding jobs that match job seekers’ skills and preferences.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I am able to persuade employers to allow job seekers to complete job trials before making the final hiring decision.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Therefore, higher means are indicative of stronger levels of agreement.
Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items Related to Workplace Performance (N = 93)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have difficulty balancing the conflicting demands of job seekers and employers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I make every effort to get to know my job-seeking clients to find out their interests and skills and match them to appropriate employers.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I use a variety of job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Developing relationships with employers and prospective employers is an important aspect of being an effective Job Developer.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have difficulty describing my agency and articulating my role to prospective employers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I stay in contact with my clients after they have been hired to make sure they have transitioned successfully to the job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am confident when I have to approach unknown prospective employers about jobs for my clients.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I easily connect with the right contact person in organizations that are prospective employers.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reading the classified ads or internet listings is an effective way to find jobs for my clients.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table continues*
11. I help my clients find jobs by talking to their families and/or previous employers about their interests and skills.

12. Before recommending a prospective employee to an employer, I conduct a thorough analysis of the employer’s needs.

Note. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Therefore, higher means are indicative of stronger levels of agreement.

Chi-square tests and Spearman rank correlations were computed for each table. The chi-square tests were not statistically significant for Item 2 ($\chi^2[4] = 9.43, p = .051$); Item 3 ($\chi^2[4] = 4.65, p = .325$); Item 4 ($\chi^2[4] = 5.64, p = .227$); Item 6 ($\chi^2[4] = 2.39, p = .664$); Item 7 ($\chi^2[4] = .80, p = .938$); Item 10 ($\chi^2[4] = 5.30, p = .258$); or, Item 12 ($\chi^2[4] = 1.56, p = .817$). Spearman correlations were also run because both variables are ordinal. The Spearman correlations were not statistically significant for Item 3 ($r_s = .17, p = .118$), Item 4 ($r_s = -.09, p = .388$), Item 6 ($r_s = .11, p = .285$), Item 7 ($r_s = -.09, p = .377$), or Item 12 ($r_s = -.02, p = .865$). However, the Spearman correlations were statistically significant for Item 2 ($r_s = .28, p = .008$; see Table 4.5), and Item 10 ($r_s = -.23, p = .030$; see Table 4.6). Therefore, it was concluded that participants with higher levels of occupational autonomy tended to agree more strongly with Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 2, “The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.” Thus, the participants who felt that they were more autonomous in their occupations believed that their training was adequate in terms of preparing themselves for
their chosen careers. In addition, the participants who felt more autonomy in their occupations tended to disagree more strongly with Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 10, “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.” This indicated that the participants with more occupational autonomy did not believe that they needed more training. Taken together, these two statistically significant Spearman correlations indicated that the participants who felt more autonomous in their occupations also felt that they had been adequately trained to perform their job duties.

Table 4.5

*Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 2 Versus Occupational Autonomy (N = 91)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 2: The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2 (8.0%)</td>
<td>5 (20.0%)</td>
<td>18 (72.0%)</td>
<td>25 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (15.4%)</td>
<td>11 (84.6%)</td>
<td>13 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
<td>1 (1.9%)</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>53 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | 4 (4.4%) | 8 (8.8%) | 79 (86.8%) | 91 (100.0%) |

Notes. $\chi^2(4) = 9.43, p = .051; r_s = .28, p = .008$. Percentages sum to 100% for each row.
Table 4.6

*Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 10 Versus Occupational Autonomy (N = 91)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 10: I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>24 (100.0%)</td>
<td>24 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
<td>2 (9.5%)</td>
<td>18 (85.7%)</td>
<td>21 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3 (6.5%)</td>
<td>6 (13.0%)</td>
<td>37 (80.4%)</td>
<td>46 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4 (4.4%)</td>
<td>8 (8.8%)</td>
<td>79 (86.8%)</td>
<td>91 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes. χ²(4) = 5.30, p = .258; r_s = -.23, p = .030. Percentages sum to 100% for each row.*

4.2.1 Informal and Nonformal Learning and Occupational Autonomy in the Interview Data

Job Developers indicated a need for skills in sales, marketing, communication (including rapport with employer and interpersonal skills), and the ability to match job seekers’ skills with employers’ needs. They acquire these skills through formal, informal and nonformal means. For example, one respondent indicated that he/she developed sales skills through formal training and learned sales strategies and techniques. He/she believed that some communication skills, such as building rapport with employers, were
natural abilities. Another respondent noted that the best training for a Job Developer is the informal observational or job shadowing method. This respondent indicated that he/she learned how to match clients’ skills with employers’ needs. A number of respondents credited nonformal programs such as IPLACE, Denise Bissonette seminars, and BEST as the means by which they acquired sales, marketing, and communication skills.

The strong agreement with Item 2 on the survey (“The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer”) suggest that participants may have greater occupational autonomy because they are well-enough versed in their responsibilities to be able to choose how they work. On the other hand, disagreement with Item 10 (“I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements”) also suggests that participants may have some degree of occupational autonomy because they recognize areas in which they need to become stronger and may be free to seek additional training in those areas.

4.2.2 Informal and Nonformal Learning and Workplace Performance in the Survey Data

The final analysis was performed to compare informal and nonformal learning with workplace performance. Of the workplace performance items in Table 4.4, Item 8, “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques,” was used as the primary means of operationalizing the workplace performance variable. This is because all of the other survey items were related to one specific component of the job rather than being a general assessment. The same seven informal and nonformal
learning items used in the previous analysis with occupational autonomy were used in this section.

The chi-square tests were not statistically significant for Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 2 ($\chi^2[4] = 9.15, p = .057$), Item 3 ($\chi^2[4] = 1.76, p = .780$), Item 4 ($\chi^2[4] = 7.54, p = .110$), Item 6 ($\chi^2[4] = 1.74, p = .784$), or Item 7 ($\chi^2[4] = 1.06, p = .900$). However, the chi-square tests were statistically significant for Item 10 ($\chi^2[4] = 11.46, p = .022$), and Item 12 ($\chi^2[4] = 12.64, p = .013$). For Item 10, Table 4.7 shows that the likelihood of agreeing that “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques” was much higher for those who disagreed (96.0%) or were neutral (90.0%) that “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements” than for those who agreed with the latter statement (65.9%). Thus, participants who felt that their workplace performance was good did not feel that they needed more training in job placement strategies. Although this is not a surprising finding in one sense, it reinforces the fact that when individuals feel that they are doing well they do not feel the need for more training.

For Item 12, Table 4.8 shows that disagreeing with “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques” was more likely for those who either disagreed (100.0%) or agreed (86.3%) with “I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e., learning that take place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops)” than for those were neutral on the latter item (56.5%). This indicated
that for those who felt that their workplace performance was not good also felt that informal learning was superior to formal learning.

Table 4.7

*Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 10 Versus Workplace Performance (N = 89)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 10: I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>1 (4.0%)</td>
<td>24 (96.0%)</td>
<td>25 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (10.0%)</td>
<td>18 (90.0%)</td>
<td>20 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5 (11.4%)</td>
<td>10 (22.7%)</td>
<td>29 (65.9%)</td>
<td>44 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (5.6%)</td>
<td>13 (14.6%)</td>
<td>71 (79.8%)</td>
<td>89 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes. $\chi^2(4) = 11.46, p = .022; r_s = -.35, p < .001$. Percentages sum to 100% for each row.*
Table 4.8

*Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 12 Versus Workplace Performance (N = 87)*

Item 12. I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e., learning that take place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>13 (100.0%)</td>
<td>13 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 (13.0%)</td>
<td>7 (30.4%)</td>
<td>13 (56.5%)</td>
<td>23 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2 (3.9%)</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
<td>44 (86.3%)</td>
<td>51 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (5.7%)</td>
<td>12 (13.8%)</td>
<td>70 (80.5%)</td>
<td>87 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. \( \chi^2(4) = 12.64, p = .013; r_s = .08, p = .439 \). Percentages sum to 100% for each row.

The Spearman correlations were not statistically significant for Item 3 \( (r_s = .01, p = .918) \), Item 4 \( (r_s = .04, p = .701) \), Item 6 \( (r_s = .07, p = .531) \), Item 7 \( (r_s = -.11, p = .311) \), or Item 12 \( (r_s = .08, p = .439) \). However, the Spearman correlations were statistically significant for Item 2 \( (r_s = .29, p = .006; \text{see Table 4.9}) \), and Item 10 \( (r_s = -.23, p = .030; \text{see Table 4.10}) \). This indicated that participants with higher levels of workplace performance tended to have higher levels of agreement that “The training I received so
far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer” and lower levels of agreement that “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.” Therefore, it was concluded that participants who felt that they performed better on the job also tended to feel that they had been adequately trained and consequently that they did not need additional training. Again, this is not a surprising finding but largely reinforces the conclusions above regarding job performance and training related to Item 10.

Table 4.9

*Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 2 Versus Workplace Performance (N = 89)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace Performance: I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques.</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 2: The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3 (12.0%)</td>
<td>7 (28.0%)</td>
<td>15 (60.0%)</td>
<td>25 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
<td>11 (84.6%)</td>
<td>13 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1 (2.0%)</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
<td>45 (88.2%)</td>
<td>51 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (5.6%)</td>
<td>13 (14.6%)</td>
<td>71 (79.8%)</td>
<td>89 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. $\chi^2(4) = 9.15, p = .057; \ r_s = .29, p = .006$. Percentages sum to 100% for each row.
Table 4.10

Crosstabulation of Informal and Nonformal Learning Item 10 Versus Occupational Autonomy (N = 91)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 10: I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>24 (100.0%)</td>
<td>24 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1 (4.8%)</td>
<td>2 (9.5%)</td>
<td>18 (85.7%)</td>
<td>21 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3 (6.5%)</td>
<td>6 (13.0%)</td>
<td>37 (80.4%)</td>
<td>46 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 (4.4%)</td>
<td>8 (8.8%)</td>
<td>79 (86.8%)</td>
<td>91 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. $\chi^2(4) = 5.30, p = .258; r_s = -.23, p = .030$. Percentages sum to 100% for each row.

4.3 Supplemental Analysis of Demographic Variables

A supplemental analysis was performed to determine if the demographic variables of age, gender, length of time as a Job Developer, education, professional designations, or specialized Job Developer training were related to (a) occupational autonomy (Item 5, “I am confident that clients are satisfied with my job placement services”), (b) workplace performance (Item 8, “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques”), and (c) preference for informal learning (Item 12, “I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an -organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e.,
learning that take place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e.,
adult education courses and workshops)”.

For age, length of time as a Job Developer,
and education, Spearman correlations were computed because these are ordinal variables.
For gender, professional designations, and specialized Job Developer training, Mann-
Whitney tests were performed because these are dichotomous variables.

Table 4.11 shows the Spearman correlations related to length of time as a Job
Developer, and education. Two of the correlations were statistically significant. First,
age was positively correlated with workplace performance, \( r_s = .33, p = .001 \). Therefore,
it is concluded that older participants tended to have more positive perceptions of their
job performance. Second, length of time as a Job Developer was positively correlated
with workplace performance, \( r_s = .32, p = .002 \). This indicates that participants who had
been employed as Job Developers for a longer period of time tended to have more
positive views of their job performance.
Table 4.11

Spearman Correlations between Ordinal Demographic Variables and Measures of Occupational Autonomy, Workplace Performance, and Preference for Informal Learning
(N = 91)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Occupational Autonomy: Item 5, “I am confident that clients are satisfied with my job placement services”</th>
<th>Workplace Performance: Item 8, “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques”</th>
<th>Preference for Informal Learning: Item 12, “I think that informal learning has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning or nonformal learning”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time as a Job Developer</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mann-Whitney tests performed comparing males from females were not statistically significant for occupational autonomy, $z = -0.71, p = .481$, workplace performance, $z = -0.38, p = .705$, or preference for informal learning, $z = -1.93, p = .054$. This indicates that occupational autonomy, workplace performance, and preferences for informal learning likely did not differ between male and female participants. Similarly, there were no differences between participants with professional designations and those without in terms of occupational autonomy, $z = -0.78, p = .435$, workplace performance, $z = -0.44, p = .661$, or preference for informal learning, $z = -1.51, p = .131$. Finally, there were no differences between participants who had specialized Job Developer training and
those without in terms of occupational autonomy, $z = -0.29, p = .772$, workplace performance, $z = -0.93, p = .353$, or preference for informal learning, $z = -0.97, p = .333$.

Based on the results from the supplemental analyzes, it is concluded that there were no relationships between the dependent variables of occupational autonomy, workplace performance, or preference for informal learning and (a) education, (b) gender, (c) professional designations, or (d) specialized Job Developer training. However, there were relationships involving age and length of time as a Job Developer. Specifically, for older participants and for those who had been Job Developers for a longer period of time, scores on the workplace performance item were higher indicating a perception of better job performance.

### 4.4 Summary of Findings

In this chapter the results from the quantitative and qualitative analyzes of the survey and interview data were described and an initial interpretation was provided. The first conclusion from the analysis of the quantitative data was that the participants tended to believe that informal and nonformal learning were superior to formal learning. This conclusion is based on the following findings:

1. The participants felt that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies was helpful in performing their jobs.
2. The participants felt that a variety of sources of learning were important including workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience.
3. The participants felt that informal learning with learning involvement was important.
4. The participants appreciated nonformal learning and felt that courses taught by industry professionals rather than professors and academics were helpful to developing job skills.

5. The participants did not feel that formal continuing education programs were required to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer or that a formal education was required in their field.

There were two conclusions related to the relationship between occupational autonomy and informal and nonformal learning: (a) participants with higher levels of occupational autonomy tended to agree more strongly that “The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer” and (b) participants with higher levels of occupational autonomy tended to disagree more strongly that “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.” From the analyses addressing the relationship between workplace performance and informal and nonformal learning, the following conclusions were reached:

1. The likelihood of agreeing that “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques” was much higher for those who disagreed (96.0%) or were neutral (90.0%) about the statement that “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements” than for those who agreed with the latter statement (65.9%). Thus, participants who did not feel the need for more training believed that they were successful in employing selling and marketing techniques.
2. Disagreeing that “I am able to demonstrate and apply appropriate selling and marketing techniques.” was more likely for those who either disagreed (100.0%) or agreed (86.3%) that “I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e., learning that take place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops)” than for those were neutral on the latter item (56.5%). Therefore, it appears that the participants who did not feel that they were successfully applying selling and marketing techniques were the same participants who had strong opinions (either agreeing or disagreeing) about informal learning.

3. Participants with higher levels of workplace performance tended to have higher levels of agreement that “The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.” Not surprisingly, those who believed that they were performing well felt that their training had been adequate.

4. Participants with higher levels of workplace performance tended to have lower levels of agreement that “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.” Again, those who believed that they were performing well did not feel that they needed more training.

The primary conclusions from the qualitative analysis of the interview data were: Job Developers need skills in sales, marketing, communication (including rapport with employer and interpersonal skills), and the ability to match job seekers’ skills with employers’ needs. They acquire these skills through formal, informal and nonformal means. The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-
ended questioning, and contributions and that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations. A minority of Job Developers believed drawing from their past experience and background helped them do their jobs, but that specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better. Others believed that informal learning activities were more helpful to developing their skills.

In terms of occupational autonomy and workplace performance, the results suggest that Job Developers in work environments in which they feel valued or in which their supervisors encourage them to experiment and be creative about placing clients feel more empowered when contacting prospective employers with whom they have not yet established a relationship than Job Developers who do not feel valued or who work in more bureaucratically-oriented environments. Thus, the extent to which Job Developers’ work environments encourage autonomy may affect job performance.

In the next chapter, the results from this study are discussed in the context of past research related to the general dimensions of information and nonformal learning for Job Developers.
Chapter 5: Informal and Nonformal Learning

From the quantitative data analysis relating to the informal and nonformal dimensions of learning for Job Developers, the conclusion can be drawn that participants tended to believe that informal and nonformal learning, as I have defined them here, were more valuable than formal learning, although they still saw a role for formal learning processes. This conclusion is based on the quantitative findings from Table 4.2 that indicated that the participants felt that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies are particularly helpful in performing their jobs (Item 9), that the best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date (Item 7), that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations (Item 4), and that they thought that informal learning has helped them to perform better in their jobs than formal learning or nonformal learning (Item 12). These conclusions support Stern and Sommerlad’s (1999) concept of learning identified by Colley et al. (2003) as a 10-point continuum of degrees of informal and formal learning. Finally, the participants did not feel that formal continuing education programs were required to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer or that a formal education was required in their field.

5.1 Value Placed on Modes of Learning

While Job Developers may believe that informal and nonformal learning are more valuable than formal learning, the qualitative findings show that they believe (a) they learn in a variety of ways, including formal, informal, and nonformal; and (b) the best
learning involves formal, informal, and nonformal modes. A minority of Job Developers indicated that they were more comfortable with formal modes such as college and university courses and degree programs that applied to their jobs and are delivered in more formal ways, such as lectures. Others expressed that they learned best in specific nonformal programs, such as IPLACE, Denise Bissonette seminars, and B.E.S.T., that were intensive, practical, and directed at all aspects of becoming a Job Developer. Still others learned best through informal activities such as job shadowing, networking with other Job Developers, staying abreast of job market trends through reading, and trial-and-error. The variance in responses about the value of particular types of learning raises the question of whether there is a relationship between length of time as a Job Developer and one’s views of the type of training needed. The data suggested that there is no relationship. The value placed on particular types of training could also be a function of individual learning styles. A key factor arising from the results is regardless of the degree of value Job Developers place on nonformal and informal learning, both types of learning are well-recognized and accepted by Job Developers involved in this research, with the cautious inference (due to the only moderately sized and non-random sample) that this is likely a character of those working in the industry more broadly.

5.2 Job Developers’ Perspective of Informal and Nonformal Learning

For purposes of this study, nonformal learning was defined as “when learners opt to acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests by using an organized curriculum” (Livingstone, 2005, p. 980). Informal learning was defined as “all other forms of intentional or tacit learning in
which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or an externally-organized curriculum” (Livingstone, 2005, p. 981).

A closer examination of these definitions reveal (a) educational activities that are different from regular classroom instruction and the normal range of school activities, and (b) activities that are defined from the broader perspective of learning as opposed to the perspective of formalized education. This becomes most apparent when reviewing other observations about nonformal learning. For instance, Clover and Hall (2000) emphasized learning activities as follows:

What people like most about the nonformal learning activities was that they were friendly yet lively, challenging and informative to "make me want to learn more." Others noted that this process is allowing us to "create future possibilities together and have fun.” Another felt that it was an "effective learning approach [that] maximizes participation.” (p.29)

While not explicitly stated, the responses from the Job Developer participants in this study suggested that the chance to “create future possibilities together” which “maximizes participation” were most influential in their choice of learning modes. For example, networking with other Job Developers, learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and learners contributions were cited as the best ways to learn.

While McGivney (1999) viewed formal and informal learning as fundamentally different, the differences between formal and informal learning opportunities at work were shown by Stern and Sommerlad (1999) as a 10-point continuum that suggested degrees of informal and formal learning (proceeding from top to bottom), with each end having greater categorical purity. Researchers (e.g., Fuller & Unwin 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2001) pointed out that these types of learning are often present simultaneously in the workplace, an acknowledgement of the complexity of
learning. Every formal or organized learning situation has characteristics of informal and tacit learning, and many aspects of formal learning can be reproduced in informal situations.

Workplace autonomy may also influence learning experiences. Fuller and Unwin (2001a, 2001b, 2003) studied the similarities and differences between the learning experiences of modern apprentices in three different organizations within the UK steel industry and found differences in the learning continuum and learning patterns based on whether the environments were expansive or restrictive. In the present study, survey respondents who had higher levels of autonomy agreed with survey Item 2, “The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer” and disagreed with survey Item 10, “I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.” Thus, different patterns of learning, or different positions on the learning continuum, may be present in autonomous versus less autonomous environments. In this context we would expect that the degree of autonomy (i.e., autonomous or less autonomous) in work environments help to at least partially explain some of the variation and ambiguity in subject responses.

As we have already seen in the literature review, learning is lifelong and ranges from persons’ spontaneous responses to everyday life to participation in highly organised formal education programs (Livingstone, 2008). People’s informal learning activities and their formal schooling and further adult education courses throughout their lives must be considered together when talking about lifelong learning (Livingstone, 2004).

Building on this recollection of some core concepts and issues, the responses from the Job Developers in this study suggested that they recognized the value of lifelong
learning, whether they plan to continue as Job Developers or pursue another occupation. The preferred mode of learning may illustrate Stern and Summerlad’s (1999) continuous learning continuum. For instance, while some Job Developers believed their past experiences and backgrounds helped them do their jobs (point five on the continuum, moving toward “formal”), specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better (the last four points on continuum moving toward “formal”), Others believed that informal learning activities were more helpful to developing their skills (the first three points on the continuum beginning with “informal”).

One might surmise that Job Developers at earlier stages of their career development would look to more formal or informal programs to not only help them build job skills, but perhaps also build greater confidence and provide them with direction for future career development. Participant S9’s response is a perfect illustration:

> When I began this job [3 years ago], I felt very unprepared to take on the responsibilities. I thought Job Developing was simply helping clients with job searching and resume development. As I continue in this field, I learn more and more about the tasks involved and realize how little I knew when I began this job. I feel that my degree has prepared me for working with our client base. However, I feel that participating in a specific course on job development (either offered through a local college or through my organization) would have been extremely valuable. I feel it would have been beneficial for my clients as well, as they would have received higher quality services.

On the other hand, Job Developers at later stages of their careers may view formal or informal programs as somewhat elementary and that they have learned all they can learn from them. Thus, they may prefer the more nonformal aspects such as learning day-to-day on the job as situations arise, sharing ideas with other professionals through conferences or group discussions, and networking activities. Participants S12’s and S27’s responses best illustrate this point:
The best part was the networking and learning from experienced JD's with real life examples. [S12]

It is great to learn from a book; however, it is as important to get the hands on experience and apply what is learned. [S27]

However, the quantitative data suggest that, in general, stage of career and level of experience have no influence on Job Developers’ learning preferences; they view all forms of training (formal/informal/nonformal) as important. Thus, the responses may reflect the participants’ description of one type of learning that is equally valued among all three types rather than a specific preference. The responses may also reflect the Job Developer’s current position on the 10-point learning continuum as conceptualised by Colley et al. (2003).

Another point that must be borne in mind is the nature of the Job Developer field. As noted previously, because the practice of Job Developer is not formally regulated, a more accurate description of Job Developer may be “occupation” or “semi-profession.” This means that Job Developers have more leeway in choosing how they learn. Thus, workplace autonomy extends to learning and is uniquely required in this type of occupation.

5.3 Relationship of Nonformal and Informal Learning to Job Performance and Skill Development

The experiences of the Job Developers in this study are somewhat parallel to those of the participants in Enos, Kehrhahn, and Bell’s (2003) and Tarc, Smaller, and Antonelli’s (2006) studies. Like the participants in these earlier studies, in the present study the responses of the Job Developers indicated that they learn in a variety of ways, including formal, informal, and nonformal, and that nonformal and informal learning
were cited most frequently as most helpful to performing their jobs and in developing specific skills. Taking a moment to address these studies, in turn, helps place the findings on Job Developers in a slightly broader context.

Enos et al. (2003) studied the informal learning of managers in a large subsidiary of a Fortune 100 company and how they engaged in informal learning; the extent to which they learned core managerial skills through formal training and informal learning; their perceptions of their abilities to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes gained (transfer of learning); and their perceptions of conditions and processes within the organization that inhibited or supported their learning efforts (transfer climate). One year before their study and as part of an independent effort, human resources professionals conducted focus groups with the managerial employees of this company to identify essential core managerial skills. Twenty core skills necessary to function effectively as a manager were identified.

Eighty-four managers participated over a 4-week period. Participants were asked to rate the extent of their proficiency in each of the 20 managerial skills on a 5-point scale (1 = extremely poor proficiency, 2 = below-average proficiency, 3 = average proficiency, 4 = above-average proficiency, 5 = excellent proficiency). Extent of informal learning for each managerial skills was measured on a 4-point scale (1 = learned only from formal learning activities, 2 = learned mostly from formal learning activities, 3 = learned mostly from informal learning activities, 4 = learned only from informal learning activities). Transfer of learning (i.e., participants’ perceptions of the degree to which they applied each of the 20 core managerial skills on the job) was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = very often, 5 = always). Transfer climate was
measured with 32 items adapted from Rouiller and Goldstein’s Transfer of Training Climate instrument (1993, as cited in Enos et al., 2003).

Factor analysis of the responses yielded three factors: coworker support, supervisor support, and organizational support. Coworker support (the degree to which coworkers provided managers with support, verbal rewards, and assistance to apply learned skills to the job) was measured with 13 items. An example item is “My coworkers and I set goals to apply managerial skills” (p. 375). Supervisor support (the degree to which supervisors provided managers with support, verbal rewards, and assistance to apply learned skills to the job) was also measured with 13 items. An example item is “Immediate supervisor discusses with me ways to apply managerial skills” (p. 375). Organizational support (the degree to which managers had access to supplies, monetary rewards, and job alignment that assisted them in transfer of learning) was measured with six items. An example item is “In my workplace resources are available to help apply managerial skills” (p. 375). Participants rated each item on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = very often, and 5 = always). One open-ended question was included in the final section of the questionnaire: “Please list three specific learning activities (e.g., classroom training, interaction with coworkers) that you have used the most to learn managerial skills” (Enos et al., 2003, p. 375).

The results of the data analysis by Enos et al. showed that managers consistently reported learning the 20 core managerial skills predominantly from informal learning activities. Not only did managers report that they very often applied the core managerial skills, but they also reported higher levels of proficiency in those skills. The results of the data regarding the three transfer climate factors of coworker support, supervisor
support, and organizational support showed that managers perceived some overlap of the three types of support. Managers perceived coworker support as rarely occurring, while supervisor and organizational support occurred sometimes. Enos et al. (2003) concluded from the results that informal learning is predominantly a social process and that managers with high levels of proficiency who experience low levels of coworker, supervisor, and organizational support learn managerial skills mostly from informal learning and transfer learning more frequently. Further, where managers perceived no organizational support for transfer of learning, they made a deliberate effort to seek out and participate in informal learning activities to gain the knowledge and proficiency necessary to carry out required job tasks.

Tarc et al. (2006) research focused on how elementary and secondary school teachers engage in their own professional learning “on the job”, mainly informally. Tarc et al. noted the multiple definitions of informal learning in the literature. For their study, they used an earlier definition of Livingstone’s (1999) definition of informal learning that considers informal learning as conscious and intentional rather than tacit and incidental:

any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of institutions providing educational programs, courses or workshops. . . . Explicit informal learning is distinguished from everyday perceptions, general socialization and more tacit informal learning, by peoples’ own conscious identification of the activity as significant learning. The important criteria that distinguish explicit informal learning are the retrospective recognition of both a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired on your own initiative and also recognition of the process of acquisition (Livingstone, 1999, p. 3-4).

Tarc et al.’s (2006) study used a mixed method approach to both qualitatively and quantitatively measure the extent of teachers’ informal learning in the workplace. In 1998, eight-page questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of elementary and
secondary schoolteachers across Canada (n = 1,500) and again in 2003 (n = 2,000). Participants were asked general background and workload questions and to indicate in detail their informal learning in their workplaces, their homes and their communities in the past year; and their participation in formal learning events, including courses, workshops, conferences etc. Other questions also asked them to indicate ways in which workplace relations and government policies and programs intersected with their desire for, and engagement in, both their formal and informal learning practices.

To obtain more in-depth data, Tarc et al. (2006) identified a sampled group of 25 teachers from the 1998 survey and asked them to keep 24-hour time-diaries for two 1-week periods to record all activities and instances in which they engaged in formal or informal learning. These diaries were coded and analyzed according to responses the teachers provided on their earlier survey questionnaires. Four teacher-diarists were also interviewed at length based on information they recorded in their diaries. In 2004 and 2005, 13 teacher focus groups were conducted in several provinces across Canada to build on data already collected in the surveys about participants’ issues associated with their own learning and professional development, and the ways in which government policy and workplace relations intersected with their learning.

Survey results indicated that over 90% of all teachers indicated that they had engaged in an average of four formal courses and workshops in the previous year. Full-time teachers reported an average of formal training of about 7.5 hours weekly. In addition to work-related informal learning, respondents averaged 7 hours per week with community, household, or other related informal learning. As noted previously, Tarc et al.’s definition of informal learning was learning that is conscious and intentional. In the
survey booklet mailed to the respondents the definition of informal learning was presented as:

...learning that you do outside of any formal classes or organized programs. This includes informal learning which takes place in your home, your community and your workplace. It includes any activity, and any subject in which you gain knowledge, skill or understanding. *It can be learning you have done on your own or with other people. It can be planned or it can just happen.* (p. 7)

Despite this definition, respondents appeared to have different ideas of the meaning of informal education, even in the interviews where respondents were able to ask for clarification. Tarc et al. believed that these differing ideas were reflected in the results of the responses to the question about the number of hours teachers report for work-related informal learning, which ranged from 0 hours to 71 hours per week, and the significant number of respondents who reported less than 1 hour (12.5%). Tarc et al. speculated that there may have been a significant difference due to the seniority of the teachers, suggesting that more junior teachers are spending more time engaging in learning as part of their adjustment to their roles as teachers. A deeper look into these results also suggests that in teachers’ workplace learning, which was normally regarded as formal, some informal elements existed. Thus, the blending, and not the separation of, formal and informal learning was evident.

In Tarc et al.’s (2006) study the teacher participants consistently reported lack of time as the primary obstacle to formal and informal learning. Tarc et al. noted that this finding was consistent with Lohman’s (2000) research that showed lack of time as a predominant obstacle to informal learning. The Job Developers in this study did not cite lack of time for informal learning; rather, their focus was on learning both informally and nonformally, with some formal training. The Job Developers in this study did not cite
lack of time for informal learning; rather, their focus was on learning both informally and nonformally, with some formal training. When Job Developers described obstacles to informal learning, the most oft-cited obstacles were budget constraints, too much distance from training facilities, and lack of mentorship. The results also suggested that Job Developers often must seek additional training on their own as opposed to being offered training at their work site.

In the focus group interviews in the Tarc et al. (2006) study, most of the teachers identified talking and sharing resources with their colleagues as important to their informal learning. Upon further probing teachers also indicated that having an opportunity to observe their colleagues teaching was an important part of their learning; however, time constraints precluded this activity.

In some respects these comments are similar to those of the Job Developers in this study. The data analysis showed that Job Developers agreed most strongly with survey item 9, “I believe that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies to obtain information would help me perform my jobs better.” Informal observational and job shadowing were also mentioned in response to the interview questions. For example, in response to question 6 regarding kinds of opportunities are available to learn and advance and whether these opportunities are primarily or off site, responses included:

- Post secondary courses - on site network with colleagues - on site job shadowing colleagues - on and offsite online workshop - on and off site seminars - off site and online conferences - off site. [S34]

- I primarily rely on colleagues and other professionals for mentoring help. [S13]
Based on the responses of the Job Developers, time constraints were not as big an issue in comparison with the teachers in the Tarc et al. (2006) study.

As noted previously, informal and nonformal learning are social in nature because they both involve interaction with others for learning to occur. As Enos et al. (2003) found in their study of business organizations, informal learning is predominantly a social process. Similarly, Tarc et al. (2006) concluded from the responses of teachers predominantly in the interviews and focus groups that social relations in the school are important to promoting and sustaining productive informal learning.

Learning is also a social process among the Job Developers who participated in this study. Participants agreed most strongly survey Item 9 (“I believe that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies to obtain information would help me perform my job better”). The responses of interview participants S12, S13, and S23 illustrate the social nature of learning:

The best part was the networking and learning from experienced JDs with real life examples. [S12]

I learnt on the job from other Job Developers. [S13]

It is necessary to stay current and know the labour market trends Networking and brainstorming with other Job Developers - sharing jobs, techniques and strategies. [S23]

Tarc et al. (2006) also found in the interviews that teachers viewed administrator support for teachers’ informal learning was important. As one teacher summarized:

I think it really depends on your administrator, if your administrator is supportive...I’ve heard of administrators and I have had, they’ll come into your classroom to give you release time to go do something, I mean that’s great. And there are others that would just stay in their office and you won’t even see them in your room. . . . So it really depends, are they supportive, are they not – that’s huge. (p. 18)
Supervisor support for learning to develop skills and perform better was also an important aspect for the Job Developers in this study. This sentiment was best expressed by participant S32. In response to interview question 3 (“Describe the extent to which you are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention. How supportive is your supervisor? Does your supervisor recommend areas for experimentation and trying new ideas? If you have tried something new, please describe what it was and the outcomes.”), participant S32 stated,

I am blessed with a supervisor who believes 100% in my skills and expertise and will allow me to do what I need to in order to make the placement. My supervisor lets me lead the way.

On the other hand, the responses of Job Developer participants S22 and S33 also suggested that lack of supervisor support or bureaucracy were potential hindrances to developing job skills and increasing job performance, as well as exercising greater autonomy.

It’s impossible at my agency. We have quotas to meet and the targets are very specific. My supervisor follows instructions from our director. There are hardly any opportunities to experiment or try new ideas. I would like to try a few ideas which come to mind but I run the risk of being disciplined for doing so. [S22]

Because we are a government funded organization, our freedom to experiment has been slowly chipped away. When I first started, I was able to offer a one week trial, or information interviews. Now I must convince the employer to sign a lengthy contract before anything can be negotiated. [S33]

Thus, supervisor support appears to be an important element for Job Developers to not only improve their skills and exercise. When they are given the latitude to make decisions about how best to serve their clients and employers they are more apt to find creative ways to perform their jobs better.
5.4 Summary

Responses to both survey and interview questions revealed that Job Developers mostly did not explicitly acknowledge the social nature of informal and nonformal learning as the participants in the Enos et al. (2003) and Tarc et al. (2006) studies did. In part, this may be a reflection of the research instruments used in this study. However, implications about the social nature of informal and nonformal learning can still be drawn from the responses of the Job Developers to the survey questions and can be best summed up by this response: “The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions.” Responses to the interview questions did speak somewhat more directly to the social nature of learning: “It is necessary to stay current and know the labour market trends. Networking and brainstorming with other Job Developers - sharing jobs, techniques and strategies.” “I primarily rely on colleagues and other professionals for mentoring help.”

The quantitative data analysis revealed that the Job Developers tended to believe that informal and nonformal learning were superior to formal learning. It is important to note, however, that the Job Developers who held this belief were (a) participants who believed their workplace performance was not good and indicated that informal learning was superior to formal learning and (b) participants who perceived themselves as having higher levels of workplace performance and indicated their training was adequate and that they did not need additional training. These findings suggest that in most learning situations, formal, nonformal and informal learning elements are present and that there are no clear boundaries for the three types of learning.
In Table 4.2, several items had high levels of agreement including statements that the participants felt that networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies was particularly helpful in performing their jobs (Item 9), that the best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a Job Developer up to date (Item 7), that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations (Item 4), and that they thought that informal learning has helped them. However, according to Colley et al. (2003), informal and nonformal learning can be depicted as a continuum indicating degrees of formality and informality. Some Job Developers who had prior past experiences and backgrounds that were transferrable to the Job Developer occupation were at midpoints to endpoints on this type of continuum whereby specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better. Others believed that informal learning activities were more helpful to developing their skills and were at the top points on the continuum. It must be remembered, however, that according to Fuller and Unwin (2001a, 2001b, 2003) and Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001), that learning is complex and all types of learning are often present simultaneously in the workplace.

Colley et al. clarified that the meanings of informal and nonformal learning should not be conflated; and that, informal and nonformal learning and their interrelationship must be recognized within a specific learning context. In the Job Developer context, a question raised in the participants’ responses is: How might formal, informal and nonformal learning be integrated? There does not appear to be any one
universal pattern for integration of these modes of learning in the working environment of Job Developers.

Empirical studies of informal learning have focused on activities that persons identify for themselves as actual learning projects or deliberate learning activities outside of formal educational institutions (Livingstone, 2008). The present study expands on previous studies. The results show, based on the responses of the Job Developer participants, that they not only believe that informal and nonformal learning are helpful to them in performing their jobs, but also they have a clear idea of those activities that they believe to be significant learning activities.

In the next chapter, the study’s conclusions and recommendations for further research are discussed.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and offer a synthesis of the findings of this study. The discussion begins with a presentation of the research questions that guided the study relative to the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation and the nonformal and informal learning practices of Job Developers. In the following subsections each research question will be presented and discussed individually in light of the findings and existing literature. Implications of the study will then be presented, followed by recommendations for further research based on the results. Concluding remarks close the chapter.

6.1 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers with special attention to how these practices enhance and/or challenge perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. Recall that occupational autonomy was considered relevant in these terms because the results suggest that Job Developers in work environments in which they feel valued or in which their supervisors encourage them to experiment and be creative about placing clients feel more empowered when contacting prospective employers with whom they have not yet established a relationship. On the other hand, Job Developers who do not feel valued or who work in more bureaucratically-oriented environments do not have the same sense of empowerment or confidence when contacting prospective employers and building relationships with these employers. Thus, the extent to which Job Developers’ work environments encourage autonomy may affect job performance. Further, the nature of the Job Developer occupation in general (i.e., neither a regulated profession nor unskilled
work) may influence the latitude that Job Developers have to exercise in choosing how they learn and how much time they spend learning. Earlier it was suggested that fluid, contingent and rapidly changing work processes like job development likely have a special relationship with the need for autonomy in this way.

Several research questions were posed about the learning practices and dynamics of Job Developers and job development as an occupation to further understand the nonformal and informal learning practices of Job Developers:

1. To what extent is nonformal training effective and relevant in terms of how Job Developers apply newly-acquired skills in the workplace and/or with clients?
2. What criteria are used (either formally or informally) in nonformal training programs sanctioned by nonprofit service agencies to identify and validate learning outcomes?
3. How well recognized is nonformal and informal learning by the industry job in which developers work?
4. As a core element of their occupational learning, how do Job Developers keep abreast of changes in job skill requirements and job market expectations?
5. What kind of structure describes Job Developer occupational learning and what are Job Developers’ preferences in relation to how they carry out their occupational learning?
6. In the context of the Job Developers’ work environment, what is the meaning of nonformal, informal, and formal learning?
7. What pedagogical practices characterize Job Developers’ learning?
In the subsections that follow, the findings are summarized according to each of these research questions.

6.1.1 Effectiveness and Relevance of Nonformal Training

The data collected from the participants showed that Job Developers believed that nonformal learning was helpful to developing job skills. Participants also engaged in nonformal learning to deepen their formal and informal learning opportunities, and they indicated that all forms of learning (formal, nonformal and informal) helped them develop on the job. What this means specifically is that Job Developers effectively fit together nonformal and informal learning, which, in turn, leads to more profound forms of expertise.

This study examined Job Developers’ thoughts and feeling towards nonformal training such as IPLACE, BEST, and JVS Toronto. From their perspective, acquiring skills as a Job Developer may occur from nonformal learning, and deepening those skills occurs through informal learning; that is, Job Developers effectively fit together nonformal and informal learning, which, in turn, leads to more profound forms of expertise. Further, a part of gaining additional skills as a Job Developer requires individuals to exercise autonomy when seeking out appropriate training.

For some Job Developers, their participation in learning was motivated by the prospect of external rewards, such as a salary increase or advancement. However, some Job Developers expressed that they often felt unchallenged by the course content and that the information conveyed was not new and reinforced what they already knew. A possible explanation for this view is that most nonformal workplace training is based on formal models of learning that include a structured curriculum, testing, and certification,
suggesting that for the Job Developers who found nonformal programs ineffective, new models of nonformal training need to be adapted.

Sousa and Quarter (2003) pointed out that Job Developers obtain learning to build their skills and enhance job performance mainly from nonformal and informal learning as opposed to formal learning. The results of this study partially support this observation. In terms of work performance, the results suggested that Job Developers believed the best learning is learning that combines nonformal activities, such as workshops, seminars, and on-the-job experience; and informal activities, such as networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government.

Participants with higher levels of workplace performance and who believed they were performing effectively tended to have higher levels of agreement that they were properly trained for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer.

Three questions that concern the effectiveness and relevance of nonformal learning for experienced Job Developers who participated in this study remain unanswered to this point however: (1) What exactly are the learning needs of experienced Job Developers, (2) How are these needs best met? and (3) Should experienced Job Developers participate in more informal learning and have greater autonomy over their job-related learning to better meet their needs than Job Developers with less experience? These questions may be answered with further research and will be discussed as part of the recommendations for further research.

6.1.2 Criteria Used to Validate Learning Outcomes

Based on this study’s findings, the criteria for validating learning outcomes appears to be based on the extent to which Job Developers are able to apply their learning
to their work performance and responsibilities. These applied learning outcomes include abilities in sales, marketing, communication (including rapport with employer and interpersonal skills), and matching job seekers’ skills with employers’ needs.

One could pose the question, what comes first – learning or application of learning? A number of researchers (e.g., Livingstone, 2004; Misko, 2008; Tough, 1999) have proposed that human beings learn throughout their lives to be able to respond to changes in their environments. According to Livingstone and Pankhurst (2009a), adults in particular continuously learn so that they can perform better at their jobs. Further, learning needs arise from the everyday challenges associated with work and through interaction with clients, customers, and colleagues (Sawchuk, 2008; 2013). Thus, much of workers’ learning naturally comes from the demands of their daily work lives. In the case of the Job Developers who participated in this study, demonstrating and applying appropriate selling and marketing techniques and effectively developing and maintaining job placements were cited as important learning outcomes. And it is important to note: these activities/outcomes were primarily associated with informal learning.

If we accept that the validation of learning outcomes is based on the extent to which Job Developers are able to apply their learning to their work, we can better understand the relationship between learning, occupational autonomy and workplace performance. In this study the results suggest that Job Developers in work environments in which they feel valued or in which their supervisors encourage them to experiment and be creative about placing clients feel more empowered when contacting prospective employers with whom they have not yet established a relationship. On the other hand, Job Developers who do not feel valued or who work in more bureaucratically-oriented
environments do not have the same sense of empowerment or confidence when contacting prospective employers and building relationships with these employers. Further, responses suggest that while the value of the skills may be in the eyes of the managers of the respective agencies, others besides managers recognize and value certain skills. Thus the value of Job Developers’ skills must go beyond what their managers alone believe is valuable; they likely must think broadly to consider what is valued by their clients, the employers with whom they work, and their colleagues.

As Pankhurst (2009) noted, the dynamic nature of work involves problem solving and discretionary ability that changes the nature of the job and the person doing the job. Evidence that Pankhurst collected from eight case studies showed that workers are active and “capable of exercising initiative and judgment” (p. 308). Applying Pankhurst specifically to Job Developers, Job Developers problem solve and exercise their discretion about such matters as appropriate selling and marketing skills, effective ways to build relationships with clients and employers, and so on. In relation to their learning, Job Developers may be problem solving and exercise their discretion when deciding how to combine different types of learning effectively, and, based on their degree of occupational autonomy, they usually can exercise their capabilities in this area. One, therefore, could conclude that the extent to which Job Developers’ work environments encourage autonomy may affect job performance in terms of how Job Developers apply what they have learned.

### 6.1.3 Extent of Recognition of Nonformal and Informal Learning

If we look at the learning of Job Developers who participated in this study, it is clear that based on their responses that nonformal and informal learning are more widely
and less ambiguously recognized in comparison to formal learning. The reasons cited are that Job Developers have different backgrounds, levels of experience, and specific learning needs. As one respondent put it, formal learning may be connected to developing “more clout”; that is, Job Developers who present themselves to prospective clients as holders of degrees (e.g., B.S., B.A., M.B.A) may assume that prospective clients would be more likely to view them as professionals. Further, the fact that the Job Developer has engaged in formal learning could also indicate that he or she is continuing to learn and enhance their professional credibility. However, the connection between formal learning, developing “more clout”, and occupational learning outcomes is not entirely clear. Nonformal and informal learning seem to best help Job Developers deepen and enhance their skills. The Job Developers in this study indicated a need for both nonformal, semi-structured learning activities and collaborative and self-directed informal learning opportunities.

However, the results of this study also suggested that Job Developers may confuse learning and schooling. Although not specifically examined in this study, the reason for this confusion may be related to the extent that Job Developers are asked for their input on how their job-related learning should be structured. The question that arises is: If Job Developers have individual learning needs, should they not have input into how they learn to best meet those needs? Providers of professional learning and training cannot read the minds of Job Developers; therefore, mechanisms to enhance input from Job Developers when designing professional learning are important. Migliore et al. (2010) recommended that professional learning programs be implemented to ensure that Job Developers obtain knowledge about best practices in their field. Job Developers
may have ideas gained from personal experience on the job that they could contribute, and their input could provide the basis of professional learning programs that include a component whereby these ideas are tested.

We must bear in mind, however, that even if Job Developers have the opportunity to provide feedback about the kinds of learning best meets their needs, not all Job Developers’ needs will be met. Further, in the case of nonformal workplace training, many training programs are still based on formal models of learning designed as "one size fits all", and it is in this sense that Colley et al.'s (2003) notion of the formality/informality continuum continues to be relevant for us here because different patterns of learning, or different positions on the learning continuum, may be present in autonomous versus less autonomous environments.

Job Developers engage in informal learning on a daily basis as they perform their jobs. They receive no direct financial compensation or promotions for this type of learning, although informal learning may contribute to high compensation or advancement at some time in the future. More importantly, Job Developers participate in informal learning because they can learn what they need to learn, which suggests that having more autonomy to learn, as well as to perform their jobs, places them in a better position to adjust their learning according to the complexities and changes in their respective work environments.

6.1.4 Ways Job Developers Stay Current

The Job Developers in this study indicated that they stay current about labour market trends and other changes related to their field primarily through practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in
university programs taught by academics (i.e., non-practitioners). Participants also expressed that a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience helps keep them up to date. Thus, the findings from this study demonstrate that Job Developers stay current with both informal and nonformal learning that occurs through practice with peers.

Today’s organizations constantly change, this may be particularly true in the case of service work such as job development, and workers can become confused and need to find ways to cope and learn. The Job Developer occupation is no exception, and the informal and nonformal learning of Job Developers is enhanced when they have opportunities to meet new people and become exposed to new ideas. In addition, changes in their respective work environment may prompt Job Developers to seek their own informal and nonformal learning experiences. These workplace dynamics are consistent with Livingstone’s (2004) observation that learning is lifelong and that one’s informal learning activities must be considered when talking about lifelong learning as a process.

6.1.5 Learning Structure and Preferences

Empirical studies of informal learning have focused on activities that persons identify for themselves as actual learning projects or deliberate learning activities outside of formal educational institutions (Livingstone, 2008). The results show, based on the responses of the Job Developer participants, that on the whole they tend to have a clear idea of those activities that they believe to be significant learning activities for them. In the present study participants identified such nonformal learning activities as workshops and seminars. Specific training programs that were identified included workshops by Denise Bissonnette, Allen Anderson training (EOP II), and IPLACE. Further,
participants indicated that informal learning with learning involvement was important. Informal learning preferences included networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies.

In this study nonformal learning included planned learning activities. The findings of this study confirmed Watkins and Marsick’s (1992) observations that while formal learning in an organized classroom environment is one way to learn, formal learning is often inadequate in meeting the demands for continuous learning. Thus, through nonformally structured and semistructured learning activities, Job Developers can better understand what counts as learning and knowledge and receive feedback while at the same time developing their new skills and applying their new behaviours to (and in the course of) their actual work performance.

6.1.6 Nonformal, Informal, and Formal Learning in the Job Developer Environment

The findings of this research suggested Job Developers’ beliefs in a role for a variety of learning modalities across a continuum (i.e., nonformal, informal, formal; informality-formality), and that the Job Developers tended to believe that informal and nonformal learning were more valuable than formal learning. As we saw earlier, this does not mean that they did not see a role for formal learning processes. As outlined in Chapter 2, formal training was defined as learning or training that takes place in educational or training institutions, such as schools, workplaces or community centres, and involves structured courses and workshops that specifically lead to obtaining a credential (Livingstone et al., 2008). A minority of the Job Developers in this study indicated that they were more comfortable with formal modes such as college and
university courses and degree programs that applied to their jobs and are delivered in more formal ways, such as lectures. While the results of the supplemental analysis of demographic variables revealed no relationship between preference for informal learning and (a) education, (b) gender, (c) professional designations, or (d) specialized Job Developer training, there are relationships involving age and length of time as a Job Developer. A possible explanation is that older, more experienced workers may be more accustomed to and comfortable with formal modes of learning that are more structured as opposed to informal and nonformal learning, which is characterized by less structure. Informal learning was defined as “all other forms of intentional or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher or an externally-organized curriculum” (Livingstone, 2005, p. 981). Nonformal learning occurs “when learners opt to acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists their self-determined interests by using an organized curriculum” (Livingstone, 2005, p. 980).

Informal learning involves learner intention and includes various forms of learning from experience; for example, coaching and mentoring strategies, and networking (Livingstone, 2007; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; 2001). The survey data in this research revealed that informal learning involved Job Developers’ networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies. Through these activities Job Developers obtained information to help them perform their jobs better.

More significantly, an important characteristic for gaining additional skills as a Job Developer is exercising autonomy. Occupational autonomy was defined in this study
as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. This does not mean that Job Developers work completely independently; rather, occupational autonomy refers to their ability to perform their chief duties (e.g., matching job seekers’ skills to employer needs, relationship building, counseling) and exercise a degree of freedom and discretion as they perform these duties within the context of their job description. Autonomy is further developed by feedback from constituents served by Job Developers regarding which skills are most valuable. Such feedback, in turn, encourages greater autonomy for Job Developers to seek ways of learning, (i.e., nonformal, informal, formal) that develop their skills.

A final point to be made is Livingstone’s (2004) observation, as previously noted, that learning is lifelong, and that the extent of one’s nonformal, informal, formal learning must be considered together. With this in mind, agencies can encourage greater autonomy for Job Developers’ learning by offering opportunities for Job Developers to develop their own personal learning strategies that deepen their skills and abilities. The results of the study suggest that Job Developers engage in a type of meta-learning process whereby they decide on how different types learning can work well together as a whole. Rather than learning being rigidly compartmentalized into nonformal, informal, formal, their learning goes back and forth across the 10-point continuum described by Colley et al. (2003) and requires autonomy in their choices of which type of learning is suitable. Agencies that are bureaucratically oriented would do well to encourage autonomy of learning and provide the appropriate supports to build on the value of the work of the Job Developer both in terms of Job Developers’ perception of their own value and the
perceptions of their value and worth by those whom they serve.

6.1.7 Pedagogical Practices

The Job Developer participants in this study indicated that open-ended questioning and eliciting learner involvement and contributions from participants were desired pedagogical practices. While Job Developers identified specific areas in which they believed they needed to be competent and preferred types of learning, they did not identify specific pedagogical practices beyond lecture.

Some implications could be drawn and explanations made beginning in the first instance from Knowles’ (1980) classic theory of andragogy. Knowles proposed that adults have unique learning needs. Knowles’ theory of andragogy assumes that mature learners participate in education to satisfy an existing need. Moreover, adult learners have a wide variety of prior experience that will influence their learning. A critical element in andragogy is a learner’s earlier experience. Mature learners have a wide range of experience to which they can refer and share with their colleagues when participating in training activities. Further, adults can make their own decisions about their learning and be involved in the planning and evaluation of their learning, which are important elements of the theory of andragogy. Thus, in andragogy, the role of the instructor is not to manage the learning process but to facilitate learning and to collaborate with learners to make the subject matter meaningful (Knowles, 1980).

According to the theory of andragogy, learners need examples or simulations that resemble real-world applications. Hands-on, relevant examples are more significant and facilitate application to real-life situations when learners are on the job. This explains, in part, why Job Developers believed nonformal learning in the form of networking with
employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies were valuable to them in the performance of their jobs. However, andragogy does not address specific pedagogy in relation to Job Developers in this study. Andragogy likewise explains that even the best application of andragogical practices still likely depends on nonformal and informal modalities of learning in the end.

6.2 Implications

The findings of this study have implications for the Job Developer occupation and for educators and trainers as well. The participants indicated that in general the best training involves formal, nonformal, and informal modes to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer. For Job Developers, the results of this research can be the basis for arguing for the value of the different types of learning (i.e., formal, nonformal, informal). These arguments could possibly parallel Stern and Sommerlad’s (1999) concept of learning that was identified by Colley et al. (2003) as a 10-point continuum of degrees of informal and formal learning. However, Colley et al.’s analysis of Eraut’s (2000), and Beckett and Hager’s (2002) classifications of learning reveal some issues. The classifications or definitions of formal, nonformal and informal learning are influenced by the context within which the classifications or definitions were developed and the theoretical values held by individuals developing the classifications or definitions. For instance, Eraut is more focused on structure and defines learning in more formal terms (i.e., a prescribed framework, organised learning, the presence of a teacher, awarding of a credential or credit, and specified outcomes), whereas in Beckett and Hager’s view, learning occurs in the minds of individuals, is propositional, can be best
expressed verbally and in writing, alters minds, and can be applied to the external world. These are very different approaches to learning.

If we consider context in the relationships of formal, nonformal, informal learning as applied to Job Developers, Job Developers’ workplaces and the degree of perceived workplace autonomy may also influence their learning experiences. In the present study, respondents who had higher levels of autonomy believed they had received adequate preparation for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer. Thus, different patterns of learning, or different positions on the learning continuum, may be present in autonomous versus less autonomous environments. The emphasis here is on may, however, as Colley et al. (2003) argued that it is doubtful that an objective way of defining formal, nonformal and informal learning that would be relevant to most, if not all, contexts and purposes could be established because learning is complex; differences between learning settings cannot be categorized into two or three major types; formal, nonformal and informal elements are almost always present in any learning situation.

The study results could provide a basis for feedback from Job Developers about how programs are designed and delivered. Livingstone and Pankhurst (2009b) cited an administrative assistant in a case study, who stated, “Who better to ask than the people who are doing the jobs? They are the ones that know” (p. 314). While there are limits to this and Job Developers also require an appropriate working environment to know as much as they need to, the point remains an important one going forward.

The implications for educators and trainers are that they need to understand their audience. Most of their learners will be older adults. Educators need to know their learners’ motivations and whether these learners are goal-oriented, prefer more didactic
training or are activity-oriented. Goal-oriented learners use training and education to meet a specific objective (e.g., in the case of the participants in this study, salary increases or advancement) [Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011]. Didactic learners seek learning for its own sake (Knowles et al., 2011). Activity-oriented learners are more likely to learn better through social interaction (i.e., networking). For example, self-study programs are not likely to be appropriate for activity-oriented learners unless the programs involve some kind of social interaction (Knowles et al., 2011). Daloz (2012) suggested concrete, practical ways for educators and trainers to more effectively work with adult learners to improve their educational experience. A change in the model of learning from the more formal classroom-centric model to a model that promotes learning as an intrinsic on the part of employees could help organizations tailor training and learning opportunities to meet individual needs.

Although not specifically addressed in this study, educators and trainers also need to be aware of any barriers that face their learners. As implied in responses of some of the participants in this study, these barriers could include time, lack of supervisor support, and lack of financial resources. To help learners overcome some of these barriers, educators and trainers might consider several strategies, including (a) offering learning opportunities via asynchronous distance learning whereby learners engage in learning on their own time and at their own pace, (b) arranging opportunities for learners to meet in “learning support groups” to encourage them to continue their learning despite lack of supervisor support, and (c) provide information to prospective learners about no-or low-cost learning opportunities.

Finally, educators and trainers need to consider how to design learning programs
for lifelong learning respecting not only different learning modalities but the existence of a continuum of formality/informality. Such programs should help improve their job performance by helping them learn, for example, better ways to manage workloads, exercise initiative and develop greater autonomy in seeking resources and personal experiences that enhance performance, encourage critical thinking and build relationships. Based on the responses of the participants in this study, people engage in a type of meta-learning process whereby they decide on how different types learning can work well together as a whole.

Another way of expressing this idea can be viewed through Colley et al.’s (2003) 10-point continuum that explains how people constantly work back and forth across the continuum of formality and informality. Some of the Job Developers who had prior past experiences and backgrounds that were transferrable to the Job Developer profession were at midpoints to endpoints on the continuum whereby specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better. Others believed that informal learning activities were more helpful to developing their skills and were at the top points on the continuum.

Likewise, in andragogy, people constantly move back and forth between goal-oriented, didactic, or activity-oriented learning, depending on their learning needs in a given situation. For instance, in some situations learners will require more structured formal or nonformal learning and in others informal learning best meets their needs. This is illustrated in the quantitative data analysis relating to the informal and nonformal dimensions of learning for Job Developers, in which responses of participants showed that they tended to believe informal and nonformal learning, as defined in this study,
were more valuable than formal learning, although they still saw a role for formal learning processes. For the most part, andragogy explains that even the best application of andragogical practices still likely depends on nonformal and informal modalities of learning.

Some additional insights on the relationship between formal, informal, and nonformal learning can be gained from the results of this study from the perspective of continuum versus categories of learning. Colley et al.’s (2003) continuum approach suggest that the boundaries between formalized, informalized, and nonformalized learning experiences meld into each other, making them difficult to separate. Another way of looking at this is that Colley et al.’s continuum approach is an overarching structure containing the categories of formal, informal, and nonformal learning whereby the categories of learning “often co-exist in the same workplaces, and for the same learners” (p. 23).

Colley et al.’s (2003) approach is supported by the data in this study. Job Developers indicated that they learned in a variety of ways, including formal, informal, and nonformal, and that the best learning involves formal, informal, and nonformal modes. A minority of Job Developers indicated that they were more comfortable with formal modes such as college and university courses and degree programs that applied to their jobs and are delivered in more formal ways, such as lectures. Others expressed that they learned best in specific nonformal programs (e.g., IPLACE, Denise Bissonette seminars, B.E.S.T.) that were intensive, practical, and directed at all aspects of becoming a Job Developer. Still others learned best through informal activities such as job shadowing, networking with other Job Developers, staying abreast of job market trends
through reading, and trial-and-error. Thus, the data confirm Colley et al.’s theory but also suggest that Job Developers’ most highly informalized learning experiences are influenced by their more formalized learning experiences and vice versa.

However, the results of this study also suggest that progression through the continuum and the co-existence of the various categories of learning is a function of autonomy. The level of autonomy appears to make some types of learning experiences for Job Developers more definitive than others despite the integration of different types of learning. Thus, an expansion to the theoretical contribution of continuum theory is that continuum theory is influenced by a theory of autonomy, which posits that autonomy has a distinctive relationship to learning processes and outcomes.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research that is recommended based on the results of this study can be placed into four main categories. These categories address the population of the study, study design, examination of nonformal training programs, the scope of the study, examination of barriers to formal, informal, and nonformal learning and other suggested areas.

In this study the population examined was Job Developers in the greater Toronto area. Research on this occupation in Ontario dealing with these themes have been absent to this point, and thus at a basic level an important advance in the literature has been made. However, future research should be conducted on a broader scale, using larger sample sizes and more diverse samples from other areas in Canada and perhaps outside of Canada. Comparisons could be made among Job Developer samples with respect to their nonformal and informal learning and their perceptions of occupational autonomy and
workplace performance. In other words, examining different populations would help us more fully understand the nature of formal, informal and nonformal learning in different contexts which could include the potential impact of access to education and training opportunities (e.g. seminars, networks, programs, colleges and universities) given that the metropolitan Toronto area is a relatively rich environment in these terms. At the same time, a study of a wider, more diverse range of respondents themselves may provide greater insight and more support for the findings of the present study.

Another aspect of the population to consider is to examine the preference for and effects of formal, informal and nonformal training in more experienced, well-established Job Developers compared to recently hired or less experienced Job Developers. In the present study a significant relationship was found between preference for informal learning and age and length of time as a Job Developer. However, researchers have found that less experienced employees are more likely to seek information or training to enhance work performance (e.g., Korpelainen & Mira, 2010), which could skew the results of a study of formal, informal or nonformal learning. Further study examining Job Developers’ age and level of experience and preference for informal learning would shed more light on the relationship between age and level of experience as a Job Developer and learning and training preferences and perhaps address the problem of skewness.

Another area of exploration suggested by the results of this study is an examination of the nonformal training programs offered, such as IPLACE, BEST and JVS to learn more about the effect that training has on building and applying specific skills. The Job Developers who participated in this study identified these programs as among the best training for becoming a Job Developer, for being effective as a Job
Developer, and for acquiring necessary skills. Examining the design of these programs would provide greater explanation of why Job Developers believed these programs were the best.

Although professional development and learning activities may be encouraged in work environments, such activities are often neglected because employees’ time is absorbed with their daily responsibilities and are at the bottom of their priority lists. Nonetheless, engaging in professional development activities has benefits for both the individuals and organizations as well as clients and employers more broadly. For more experienced professionals, their participation improves their reputations as experts in their fields. Individuals new to a profession learn not only how to deepen their skills but also how to promote themselves within their respective organizations and industries. Organizations reap the benefits of professional development activities because such activities increase the perception of competitors, partners, and customers that the organization is serious, forward thinking and innovative.

Research that repeats this study in different companies, industries, professions and other areas of the world would help us understand how formal, informal and nonformal learning vary in relation to overall cultural location context, organizational culture and workplace dynamics. For instance, Enos et al. (2003) found that informal learning is predominantly a social process. For the Job Developers who participated in this study, learning is a social process, although in their responses to both survey and interview questions they did not overtly acknowledge the social nature of informal and nonformal learning as the participants in the Enos et al.’s (2003) and Tarc et al.’s (2006) studies did. Thus, examining the different social contexts of different fields could provide greater
insight into how formal, informal, and nonformal learning affects work dynamics. The type and nature of learning sought in manufacturing environments, for example, may differ significantly from those in teaching (as Enos et al. found), travel and recreation, retail and so on because the interdependence of workers and learning opportunities for those individuals differs from industry to industry. Such insight may help make professional development and learning a priority and more fully reveal the motivations for individuals to participate in such activities.

There is also a gap in the literature regarding more deeply understanding the motivations, needs and barriers to learning for Job Developers. This gap needs to be addressed through further research. Through the survey and interview processes that were used in this study, more insight into the value of formal, informal, and nonformal learning was obtained from the Job Developers who participated. While implications about barriers could be drawn from their responses, this was not a major focus of this study and warrants further exploration.

Other areas of further research suggested by the results of this study include:

1. A focus specifically on how formal, informal, and nonformal learning enhances Job Developers’ autonomy in their professional practice. Professional practice could be framed in the context of which aspects of all of these types of learning enhance autonomy.

2. The potential synergy between formal, informal, and nonformal learning related to Job Developers’ professional development. Formal elements of professional development could be defined and generalized principles of professional development put forth; however, professional development could
be considered in the context of Job Developer roles and responsibilities.

3. Exploring models of professional development that address the issue of “one size fits all” and that meet the learning and professional development needs of Job Developers with a range of skills and experience.

6.4 Limitations

This study examined the nonformal and informal learning of Job Developers and how this behaviour enhances and/or challenges perceptions of occupational autonomy and workplace performance. One of the limitations of this study was that the survey items related to autonomy addressed the extent to which individuals perceived themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities. Occupational autonomy was defined in this study as the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as self-directing in the performance of their job responsibilities as delineated in their respective work environments. However, this does not mean that Job Developers work completely independently; rather, occupational autonomy refers to their ability to perform their chief duties (e.g., matching job seekers’ skills to employer needs, relationship building, counseling) and exercise a degree of freedom and discretion as they perform these duties within the context of their job description. Autonomy is further developed by feedback from constituents served by Job Developers regarding which skills are most valuable. Such feedback, in turn, encourages greater autonomy for Job Developers to seek ways of learning, (i.e., nonformal, informal, formal) that develop their skills. The assessment of autonomy in this study therefore did not address one’s ability to work in a completely independent manner or to not need the support of their employer or
others. Future researchers may choose to define and assess autonomy in different ways that are more focused on one’s ability to work in a completely independent manner.

Another limitation may be definitional in nature and concern the level of specificity of survey and interview questions asked of participants. For example, Item 3 on the survey questionnaire (“The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions”), for which there was high agreement among participants, may have elicited different responses if “learner involvement” and “contributions” had been more fully defined and each element in the question was asked separately. Another example is interview question 5 (“Do you believe your skills are valued within your agency?”). In this case the question could have been expanded to elicit more specific information in terms of who was doing the valuing (i.e., the Job Developer’s supervisor, employers, or clients).

Another limitation to the study, already partially highlighted earlier, is the sample size. The findings may not generalize to all Job Developers in the Toronto area let alone beyond it because the data collected from this study was conducted with only a selected number of Job Developers.

While the Job Developers in this study believed that all forms of learning and training are important, the responses of participants also revealed a possible confusion between learning and schooling, which also may have posed a limitation. Traditionally views of formal learning are that formal learning is the more desirable way to learn as opposed to more contemporary views of learning that emphasizes learning as an active process in which what is learned is applied to real life. Ironically, most nonformal
workplace training is based on formal models of learning that include a structured curriculum, testing, and certification, which could account for any confusion.

Finally, Colley et al. (2003), along with Livingstone (2008), claimed that learning takes place within a broader social, economic and political context. The present study did not focus on this broader concept, which was a limitation. Learning should be examined in this broader context to better understand the interrelationships between informal and nonformal learning and the extent to which different patterns of learning, or different positions on the learning continuum, are present in autonomous versus less autonomous environments.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

This research identified the formal, informal, and nonformal professional learning of Job Developers in Ontario, Canada, and the relationship to occupational autonomy and workplace performance. Participants indicated that they engaged in a variety of professional formal learning activities that included bachelor’s and master’s degree programs; nonformal learning such as conferences and training and certification programs (i.e., IPLACE, BEST, JVS); and informal activities, such as collaboration with colleagues, networking and observation. For a number of participants the varied learning opportunities allowed them to meet their individual professional learning needs, effectively fit together learning of different types, and seek continuous learning opportunities.

A major finding of this study was that participants indicated that informal and nonformal learning were superior to formal learning and that a variety of sources of learning were important. Interestingly, they expressed that formal continuing education
programs were not necessary to further acquire and build on skills as a Job Developer or that a formal education was required in their profession. However, as Livingstone and Sawchuk (2004) pointed out, formal education may not be important for doing the job, but it still may be important for getting a chance to do the job; hence, formal learning is part of the structure of participation inherent to the learning process. Formal learning also is evidence of the political-economic nature of the learning process in that we are talking about competitive labour markets that trade in credentials.

Job Developers also expressed that nonformal learning and courses taught by industry professionals rather than professors and academics were helpful to developing job skills. Nonformal sources of learning included networking with employers, other Job Developers, career consultants, and government agencies and workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience.

In terms of learning environment, participants indicated that the best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions and that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals. While a minority of Job Developers believed drawing from their past experience and background helped them do their jobs, they indicated that specific and more formal or informal programs would help them do their jobs better.

Another major finding of this study concerned the relationship between occupational autonomy and workplace performance and informal and nonformal learning. Participants with higher levels of occupational autonomy and workplace performance believed that the training they received to prepare for the responsibilities of an effective Job Developer was sufficient, as opposed to participants with lower levels of
autonomy and workplace performance who believed they needed more training. In addition, Job Developers in work environments in which they feel valued or in which their supervisors encourage them to experiment and be creative about placing clients feel more empowered when contacting prospective employers with whom they have not yet established a relationship than Job Developers who do not feel valued or who work in more bureaucratically-oriented environments. Thus, the extent to which Job Developers’ work environments encourage autonomy may affect job performance.

Based on the results from the supplemental analyzes, there were no significant relationships between occupational autonomy, workplace performance, or preference for informal learning and (a) education, (b) gender, (c) professional designations, or (d) specialized Job Developer training. However, age and length of time as a Job Developer were related. Specifically, for older participants and for those who had been Job Developers for a longer period of time, scores on the workplace performance item were higher, indicating a perception of better job performance.

Colley et al.’s (2003) conceptual framework about the dimensions of formal and informal learning whereby learning can be depicted as falling on a continuum indicating degrees of formality and informality helped provide a more comprehensive insight into Job Developers’ learning. Specifically, the participants in this study indicated that the best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience and that practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and other academics were more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations. In other words, informal and nonformal was most useful and
helpful to them.

This study identified the learning preferences of 93 Job Developers in Ontario, Canada. The results of the study raised further questions and pointed to areas warranting further investigation. To gain a more complete understanding of the motivations and needs for learning for Job Developers, similar research needs to be conducted on a broader scale with larger and more diverse sample sizes, perhaps in other areas in Canada and outside of Canada. Broadening the sample and sample areas would yield greater insight into learning preferences of Job Developers and perhaps an even closer convergence with the findings of the present research.

Further investigation is also needed regarding the effects of formal, informal and nonformal training in more experienced, well-established Job Developers compared to recently hired or less experienced Job Developers. Nonformal training programs such as IPLACE, BEST and JVS and their effect on building and applying specific skills should also be explored. Such exploration would provide an assessment of the extent to which these programs meet the learning needs and preferences of Job Developers. The focus of this study could also be expanded to different companies, industries, professions and other areas of the world and exploration undertaken about the differences in formal, informal, and nonformal learning in organizations based organizational culture, and workplace dynamics.

With the increased focus on informal and nonformal learning in organizations, researchers have often presented informal and nonformal learning and formal training as opposing processes. Participants in this study, however, viewed all forms of training as important. As Colley et al. (2003) indicated, all three processes are complimentary and
take place on a 10-point continuum. Thus, informal, nonformal, and formal are not opposing processes, just different processes. The results of this study suggest that part of the challenge of understanding this complimentary nature is, as Fuller and Unwin (2001a, 2001b, 2003) and Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) pointed out, to recognize that all of these types of learning are often present simultaneously in the workplace, which shows that learning is a complex endeavor.
References


http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos067.htm


Fuller, A., & Unwin, L. (2001a). *From cordwainers to customer service: The changing


Perspective: Confronting the Challenges to Improving Attainment in Learning at Work, University College Northampton, 8–10 November.


Appendices

Appendix A – Survey Questionnaire

Appendix B – Open-Ended Interview Questions

Appendix C – Sample Coded Section from Interview Transcript

Appendix D – Job Developer Informal and Nonformal Learning Research Questionnaire

Appendix E – Informed Consent to Conduct An Interview
Appendix A
Survey Questionnaire

Part I: Please complete the information below.

1. Sex
   _____ Male
   _____ Female

2. Age
   _____ 18-24
   _____ 25-30
   _____ 31-39
   _____ 40-49
   _____ Over 50

3. Please indicate the length of time as a Job Developer.
   _____ 0-3 years
   _____ More than 3 but less than 5 years
   _____ More than 5 years but less than 8 years
   _____ More than 8 years but less than 10 years
   _____ More than 10 years of service

4. What is your educational level?
   _____ High school graduate
   _____ Community College graduate
   _____ Post high school but did not complete 4-year degree
   _____ Bachelor’s degree
   _____ Graduate degree
5. Do you hold a professional designation (i.e. CFM, CHRP, PMPI, PMP, etc.)?

_____ Yes

_____ No

6. Have you received specialized job developer training (i.e., short-term in-service, workshops, IPLACE, BEST, Job Developers Institute, community college courses, etc.)?

_____ Yes

_____ No

Part II: Please indicate below the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement according to the following scale:

5 = Strongly agree
4 = Agree
3 = Neutral
2 = Disagree
1 = Strongly disagree
NA – not applicable

Job Performance

1. I have difficulty balancing the conflicting demands of job seekers and employers.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |___1___     |___2___   |___3___   |___4___ |___5___       |____|
2. I make every effort to get to know my job-seeking clients to find out their interests and skills and match them to appropriate employers.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

3. I use a variety of job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

4. Developing relationships with employers and prospective employers is an important aspect of being an effective job developer.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

5. I have difficulty describing my agency and articulating my role to prospective employers.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

6. I stay in contact with my clients after they have been hired to make sure they have transitioned successfully to the job.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

7. I am confident when I have to approach unknown prospective employers about jobs for my clients.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

8. I am able to demonstrate and applying appropriate selling and marketing techniques.

   | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | N/A |
   |                  |         |        |      |               |     |
   | ___1             | ___2    | ___3   | ___4 | ___5          |     |

9. I easily connect with the right contact person in organizations that are prospective employers.
strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

10. Reading the classified ads or internet listings is an effective way to find jobs for my clients.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

11. I help my clients find jobs by talking to their families and/or previous employers about their interests and skills.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

12. Before recommending a prospective employee to an employer, I conduct a thorough analysis of the employer’s needs.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

Informal/Nonformal Learning

13. I think that enrolling in continuing education courses at a local community college is a good way to keep my job skills current.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

14. The training I received so far has prepared me for the responsibilities of an effective job developer.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

15. The best learning environment is characterized by learner involvement, open-ended questioning, and contributions.

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree N/A
___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ____

16. Practical, short, job-specific courses taught by industry professionals rather than courses offered in university programs taught by professors and
academics are more helpful to developing job skills and staying current about job market expectations.

17. I believe that attending trade association meetings and job fairs is an important part of my learning.

18. A formal college/university education is important for competent and skilled job developers.

19. The best learning occurs with a combination of workshops, seminars, lectures and on-the-job experience that keeps a job developer up to date.

20. Formal continuing education programs (i.e., training programs that take place in educational or training institutions) are the best way to further acquire and build on skills as a job developer.

21. I believe that networking with employers, other job developers, career consultants, and government agencies to obtain information would help me perform my jobs better.

22. I need more training in job placement strategies to develop and maintain placements.
23. The best way to further acquire and build on skills as a job developer is through informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum).

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24. I think that informal learning (i.e., learning that takes place without direct reliance on a teacher or an organized curriculum) has helped me perform better in my job than formal learning (i.e., learning that takes place in educational or training institutions) or nonformal learning (i.e., adult education courses and workshops).

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25. I spend time reading journals and other publications related to the job developer profession to stay current with best practices in my field.

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**Self-Efficacy**

26. I worry that employers are not satisfied with my job placement services.

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27. I have strong interviewing and research skills that help me make appropriate client referrals to employers.

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28. I have difficulty meeting the right contact person in organizations that are prospective employers.

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29. I work effectively with diverse client groups.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

30. I am confident that clients are satisfied with my job placement services.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

31. I am confident that I can satisfactorily resolve employer complaints about or problems with a client.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

32. I have difficulty approaching prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship about jobs.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

33. I have successfully created a solid, comprehensive employer base.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

34. I can usually find jobs that match the qualifications and interests of the clients with whom I work.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

35. I am confident that I can place my clients who have disabilities in competitive jobs.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___

36. I am confident explaining to employers how to make their workplaces accessible to clients with disabilities.

   strongly disagree  disagree  neutral  agree  strongly agree  N/A
   ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___
37. I am comfortable contacting and meeting with prospective employers with whom I do not yet have a relationship.

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38. I am comfortable describing my agency and my role to prospective employers.

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39. I create or negotiate new job descriptions with employers when I have difficulty finding jobs that match job seekers’ skills and preferences.

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40. I am able to persuade employers to allow job seekers to complete job trials before making the final hiring decision.

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**Open Ended Questions**

1. Describe the kind of learning or skill improvement in which you are engaged which adds value to your profession.
2. What types of training or certifications are necessary to be an effective job developer?
3. Describe the extent to which you are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention?
4. If you could change one thing about your job what would that be?

**Thank you for your participation.**
Appendix B

OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Job Performance

1. What are the top 3 traits or skills every job developer must have to excel (e.g., articulating your role of prospective employers, sourcing jobs, finding the right person within the organization with whom to develop a relationship, etc.)? Can you describe these in terms of the kinds of learning or skill improvement you engaged in that you could put on a resume?

2. Discuss the importance of matching the job seekers skills to the employers' needs. How do you determine which job seekers are most suited to a particular employer?

3. Describe the extent to which you are able to experiment and try new ideas for placing clients and for job retention. How supportive is your supervisor? Does your supervisor recommend areas for experimentation and trying new ideas? If you have tried something new, please describe what it was and the outcomes.

Informal/Nonformal Learning

4. What do you think is best training for becoming a job developer? To what extent do you feel you were prepared to take on the responsibilities of a job developer?

5. What types of ongoing training or certifications are necessary to be an effective job developer? Have you participated in any of these programs? If
so, were these programs taught in a classroom by professors or academics? Or were they shorter term workshops taught by other job developer professionals or experts in job development? Which programs do you feel have been most helpful in terms of doing your job better?

6. What kinds of opportunities are available to you to learn and advance? Are these opportunities primarily on the job in the sense that you can attend workshops on site or that you have a mentor who advises you? Or are these opportunities off site, such as I.P.L.A.C.E. or the Job Developers Institute?

7. How would you describe your ideal learning environment? Are you more comfortable in a college or university classroom? With shorter-term workshops? Learning day-to-day on the job? Do you learn better when the learning is primarily lecture mode? Questions posed to you and discussions with others? Attendance at conventions or conferences and sharing ideas with other professionals?

Self-Efficacy

8. What do you think are your strongest skills? Do you believe your skills are valued within your agency? Explain why or why not.

9. What do you enjoy most about being a job developer, i.e., when you complete a day’s work, what makes you say to yourself, “I’ve had a good day today”? What do you dislike the most? i.e., when you complete a day’s work, what makes you say to yourself, “I never want to have a day like this again”?

10. If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?
Payment Received for Participation in Research Interview

My signature and date below confirms that I have received $25.00 Cash for participating in the study conducted by Roy Della Savia.

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Appendix C

SAMPLE CODED SECTION FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The example below illustrates the organization and coding of interview responses upon which the content analysis was based. The coding was emergent and not a priori. The analysis of the data was done manually and content analysis software was not used. The researcher organized the data from the responses by question. Words and keywords that appeared several times were taken into consideration. Synonyms, different words and the context of the responses were also examined. Patterns were developed which then formulated the themes.

1. Describe the kind of learning or skill improvement in which you are engaged which adds value to your profession.

| Any learning is of value to my profession. Whether the learning is formal, informal or non formal it definitely adds value to my professional demeanor and status. It is also imperative to learn on your own or become "self taught". Often there are many situations or tasks that become trial-and-error responses. In some case, it works out well. In others, it fails. But each lesson is a lesson learned and it becomes part of my overall experience. I learn not to make the same mistake twice and in situations that have a positive outcome, the lesson takes me to the next level of confidence. |
| higher education - masters in education meeting and learning from employers |
| learning from colleagues, mentors and good supervisors who are leaders |
| keeping current with labour market trends networking with other JDs |
| The training I received through JVS is/was an important part of my development and to further that, I have received training with conflict resolution common assessment process training, job coaching, life skills training, all are important to my day to day job. |
| Trial by Fire. |
| Networking / discussions with colleagues-clients-employers Workshops / presentations |
| I am not registered in any course. |
| Job Developers Institute Presenting to fellow job developers at Workshops Involvement with Chamber of Commerce, Specific Industry Associations, Municipal Economic Development Committee's, etc. |
| Learning more about employers and how to approach them |
Appendix D

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION – UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

JOB DEVELOPER INFORMAL AND NON FORMAL LEARNING RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

September 18, 2012

Dear Job Developer,

I am inviting you to participate in a research project to study the effect of informal and non formal learning strategies of Job Developers in the non-profit service sector. This research project is not being financially supported by any agency, department or organization affiliated or associated with O.I.S.E. at the University of Toronto or the researcher.

Along with this letter is a notice of consent along with a short questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about informal and non formal learning and how this learning has impacted your performance and self-efficacy. I am asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete it on line. It should take you approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

The results of this study will be used in a dissertation for the Doctor of Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Through your participation I hope to understand the relationship between non formal and informal learning strategies and their effectiveness on job performance. I hope that the results of the survey will be beneficial to your profession.

There are no risks associated with your participation in this research study. There is no need to disclose your name, address, telephone number or any other personal identifier. Your email address will remain confidential and will be deleted at the conclusion of this project. If you decide to participate in this survey, I guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you personally. I also guarantee not to share any information that identifies you with anyone or organization outside my research group, which consists of Dr. Peter Sawchuk and myself.

I hope you will take the time to complete this on line survey. Your participation is voluntary. There is no penalty if you do not participate or if you decide to opt out during the survey. Regardless of whether you choose to participate, please let me know if you would like a summary of my findings. To receive a summary, please contact me by email at roy.dellasavia@mail.utoronto.ca.
If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me at (416) 289-5000 ext. 4570 or my supervisor, Dr. Peter Sawchuk at (416) 978-0570. This project has received approval from the University of Toronto Ethics Review Board – Protocol Reference: (28240).

Sincerely,

Roy Della Savia
Researcher
Informed Consent to Conduct An Interview

Date: September 18, 2012

Study Title: Job Developers in Transition: A study of Informal and Non formal Job Skills Training of Job Developers in Non Profit Organizations.

Principal Investigator:
Roy Della Savia
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
roy.dellasavia@mail.utoronto.ca

Faculty Supervisor:
Prof. Peter Sawchuk, Ph.D.
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
(416) 688-5550 Ext. 3935

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to examine the informal and non formal learning patterns of Job Developers in the non profit service sector. The study will also examine the affect informal and non formal learning has on work performance and self efficacy.

WHAT'S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to participate in an interview. Your name, address, telephone number or any other personal identifier is not required. You will receive a payment of $25 upon completion of the interview.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
Possible benefits of participation include determining whether informal and non formal learning is effective in generating self-efficacy and enhanced workplace performance. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All information you provide is considered confidential; your name and address will not be included or, in any other way, associated with the data collected in the study. Furthermore, because our interest is in the average responses of the entire group of participants, it is unlikely that you will be identified individually in any way in written reports of this research.
VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty. However, withdrawal from the interview will not entitle you to the $25 payment. If you choose to withdraw from the interview you will not be troubled again.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available from Roy Della Savia at roy.dellasavia@utoronto.ca.

INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Professor Peter Sawchuk at (416) 978-0570.

I sincerely thank you for your assistance in this study.

CONSENT
By signing and dating this form you have agreed to participate in this study described above. You have made this decision based on the information you have read in this Information-Consent Letter. You have had the opportunity to receive any additional details you want about the study and understand that you may ask questions in the future. You may withdraw this consent at any time. Withdrawing from the interview does not entitle you to the payment of $25.

___________________  ____________________  ___________
NAME  SIGNATURE  DATE
(Please Print)