

RWL 2009

Symposium abstracts

Integrating workplace learning and institutional learning

'Consequential transition' in internships

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Internships (short periods of work while undertaking study) are a popular activity for many university students and are often a university student's first experience of the world of work. Therefore, student experience in internships may well provide an insight into how (or if) university prepares graduates for the world of work, and what higher education might provide to enhance or complement a student's education in preparation for the workforce. Internships may also be viewed within the 'employability agenda' for higher education, whereby the development of transferable skills supposedly prepares university graduates for an effortless transition to the 21st century workplace.

In this paper, the experiences of undergraduates in summer internships are examined, with a focus on the 'consequential transitions' (Beach, 1999) experienced by the students as they move from academia to internship and back again. Their learning in the new context of the workplace is linked in some ways to their experiences of learning in academia yet is also completely fresh. The developing relationship between the students and their internship environment provides an opportunity for the students, over time, to find patterns, create recognition, and perhaps discover a new sense of identity.

A Scholarship of Practice: conversations of learning between university and workplace

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This paper explores how universities might be able to add value to work based learners. To do so I use a narrative study undertaken during a 30 month research and development project working with managers and engineers in new product development at Premier Engineering, a large and world respected manufacturer of sophisticated engineering products. Over this period, I tell the story of how I learned to work for the first time as a researcher-consultant within a manufacturing and functional sector that was entirely new to me. I tell the story in the first person for it is a story of how I have made sense of the learning I did over that period. I identify three domains of attention from this process of narrative sensemaking (Ramsey, 2005): an engagement with ideas, a practice of inquiry and sensitivity to moment by moment relating.

Vitally important to the learning story, are two factors: first that my learning-in-practice was undertaken in amidst the moment by moment, social creation of that practice. This was not learning done in some practice of detached reflection and generalisation. Secondly, I argue that my learning, or scholarship of practice, was a scholarship of attention rather than a process of knowing. In this way it contrasts interestingly with understandings of an epistemology of practice (e.g. Cook and Brown, 2003). We are offered here learning-in-practice as a conversation, with ideas - anticipations of outcomes rather than causal theories -speaking with inquiry generated evidence and study participants to construct a social learning-in-practice. The paper then focuses on two of the domains of attention, an engagement with ideas and a practice of enquiry, to explore a pedagogy of productive inquiry (Dewey, 1938) by which higher education institutions may be able to support students involved in practice centred learning. I suggest that there are four steps involved in such a pedagogy: the recognition of a learning need, an interrogation and selection of academic and other ideas, a productive inquiry during which the selected ideas are used to transform the learning situation before, finally a conversation is set up between the learner, ideas that (s)he has engaged with and evidence from the productive inquiry.

The paper concludes with a discussion of how such a pedagogy of productive inquiry will challenge many current university educational practices of syllabus, disciplinary knowledge, calendar and accreditation demanding new award structures and

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Becoming a teacher in the learning and skills sector in England: the inter-related influences of workplace, course and individual dispositions

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The learning and skills sector (LSS) in England comprises further education colleges, community learning, work based training and other adult settings. Most LSS teachers enter the sector as a second career and undertake initial teacher education (ITE) on a part-time in-service basis. Connections between workplace learning theory and LSS trainee development have only recently begun to be explored (Lucas 2007).

The aim is to illuminate the factors that promote and inhibit LSS trainees' conceptual and practice development. A socio-cultural perspective on professional learning where the social and the individual are understood to be complexly inter-related is adopted. It extends Billett's (2001) theoretical framework of co-participation by supplementing the dual bases of workplace affordances for learning and how individuals elect to engage with a third base, the affordances of the trainee's ITE programme.

Workplace learning literature, including Fuller and Unwin (2004) and Eraut (2004), studies of early career professional learning, school teacher learning and LSS trainees' experiences are drawn on to identify the range of workplace, initial teacher education (ITE) programme and personal factors that may impinge on LSS trainees conceptual and practice development.

The paper draws on data from six longitudinal case studies of LSS trainees during their first year of an in-service ITE programme, comprising interviews, observations of teaching, and documentary analysis of observation reports and coursework. The most important affordances for learning reported by trainees were teaching observations, a range of teaching experience, and participation in communities of practice with learners. Trainees' beliefs, dispositions, prior knowledge, skills and experience, confidence and sense of self-efficacy influenced their engagement with workplace and course affordances and constraints. The nature of a trainee's workplace, and their location within it, could significantly impede development.

A conceptual model of the factors affecting trainee development is proposed and the key features of an expansive workplace learning environment for trainees drawn out. The implications for LSS teacher educators, trainees and employers, including issues of integrating course and workplace learning are considered.

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Combining work and formal adult learning in Europe – Towards a new typology

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In the European Union (EU25; 2003), 6.6 million adults (25-64) combine work and formal adult learning (i.e. learning leading to a qualification). Which substantially distinct types of combination do we find? Which roles do participation in formal adult learning play in the individual life course? What is the significance of formal adult learning within enterprises training policies and HRD strategies? Existing typologies of adult learners and their motivations do not adequately explore the various subgroups of individuals engaged in formal learning while working and provide little help to understand employer support or non-support for learning.

Addressing questions related to formal adult learning systematically is the aim of the ongoing 6th FRP project LLL2010. Within this project, 90 case studies in SMEs in 12 European countries have been conducted. The cases studies describe the relation between employees participating in formal adult education of different kinds, respectively his or her workplace, the employer organisation, its aims, economic strategies and applied policies of workplace learning and Human Resource Development. 130 employees participating in formal education have been interviewed and their reasons for and assessment of their engagement described against the background of their workplace, their employer organisation and their chosen educational programs.

Based on this empirical material, we develop a typology of constellations or combinations (not necessarily integrations) of formal adult education and work. Theoretically, we build on a life course and life circle approach. We show how the typology helps to understand the social patterns of participation in formal adult education with regard to age groups, educational attainment and the overall characteristics of the workplaces of the participants. Further, we discuss if and how the typology helps to understand and predict the range of reasonable behaviour of enterprises, which may support, – even initiate – or impede participation in formal settings. In the outlook, we explore the consequences of our approach for the provision of formal adult education. Moreover, we question the impact of countries systems of providing formal adult education on the available possibilities, to combine working and learning fruitfully for both, the individual employee and the enterprise.

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Easing the transition into the workplace

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"I'm already familiar with the hospital, I don't need to learn about the paperwork, I don't need to learn about how the shift runs and, like what time the shifts start and finish, when the breaks are, how to do certain procedures, whether you need one nurse for a procedure or you need two" Amy.

Amy was a participant in a longitudinal Australian Research Council Linkage project examining workplace learning in nursing. This project explored how the social practices of a clinical placement partnership, between a university and healthcare organisation, afford participation in the workplace for undergraduate student nurses. This model, where second and third year students return to the partner healthcare organisation for all clinical placements, was introduced to enhance recruitment and retention into the organisation's Graduate Nurse Program.

Method: A series of one-on-one audio-taped interviews were conducted with novice nurses (n=28) over two years and thematically analysed using a grounded theory ethnographic approach, facilitated by NVivo (version 8). Data from the final interview pertaining to how prepared the participants felt for their transition into their professional role in the workplace are presented here.

Findings: Three key themes were identified. The first theme, 'organisational familiarity', revolved around graduates' knowledge of the healthcare organisation gained during their clinical placements, ranging from policies and procedures to ward layout. The second theme, 'continuity', centred on the ongoing relationship participants' developed with their preceptors by working with them repeatedly during their placements, as well as the continuity associated with returning to the same healthcare facility for multiple placements. The final theme, 'familiar faces', reflected the sense of belongingness that graduates' experienced in the workplace when they were greeted by staff they had met or worked with during a clinical placement as a student.

Discussion: Previous research on graduates' transition into the workplace has identified that it is an extremely stressful time. This partnership placement model appears to reduce the degree of stress and anxiety as the novice becomes familiar with the organisation. Being known by staff appeared to be an important aspect in generating a sense of belongingness for this group of novices. Participants articulated that their clinical experiences over the two years generated a sense of work readiness and minimised the time required for orientation to the healthcare organisation.

How and where to learn about how to develop and work with nanotechnologies?

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Is it meaningful to ask the question how we can improve transformation of learning between learning environments when the content of work is developing cutting edge technologies like nanotechnologies where learning primarily seems to take place in experimental work in cross disciplinary teams at work place level? Or might these experimental circumstances to an even higher degree as mainstream work make it necessary to ensure that general knowledge from initial and continuing vocational education comes to work.

This paper will try to answer these questions by discussing how co-shaping of new nanotech applications takes place: Chemical engineers, laboratory technicians, PhD students from technical universities are co-shaping new products together with technicians from potential customers in a highly developed kind of co-configuration work (Engeström 2005, 2007). And the paper will discuss how – in the case of laboratory technicians – this co-shaping and co-learning on the one hand builds on traditional basic chemistry from public vocational education and training, and how this co-shaping on the other hand has to overcome learned routines like the strict observance of regular work patterns which the institutionalized curricula for laboratory technicians are very much focussing on.

The paper will discuss how existing vocational education programmes can contribute with relevant learning already at this early stage of nanotech applications; which shortcomings there are in these programmes, and how it is possible to build on learning from these programmes in the experimental work and learning in new, upcoming development oriented enterprises.

Also learning of work environment issues will be addressed with regard to how and what can be learned on site and what should be learned in public VET-programmes: How to learn to cope with the high degree of uncertainty regarding health and safety aspects of nanotechnologies?

The paper builds on a study funded by the Danish Department of Education (Clematide et al. 2009)

Methodologically the study has its point of departure in an overview over products containing or building on nanotechnologies like paint, coating of surfaces, cosmetics and so on. By tracing the different links in the product chain – development, production, sales, use by professionals and individual users – the study identifies different occupations that are actually working with or are expected to work with nanotechnological products and -processes. In enterprises representing the different links in the chain, work and learning practices have been pinpointed through qualitative interviews with managers and employees. As mentioned above this paper will mainly focus on the first link in the chain, the development of new nanotech applications.

Mastering Learning: Linking the Academy and the Workplace

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"Learning is the process of individuals constructing and transforming experience into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and the senses." (Jarvis, 2002:2)

Research and writing on workplace learning has tended to focus on learning in various workplaces, with the learning occurring in the specific workplace as a key focus. This paper considers workplace learning in the context of higher education focusing on postgraduate masters programs, involving working adult students and their learning strategies. These mature learners come back to university for advanced degrees with expectations that what they learn will enhance not only their self-understanding, but also the work practices they engage in on the job. A key question for both the students and the course constructors is: "How is what is being learned in the classroom, connected with organisational and workplace learning?"

Postgraduate programs have been challenged by employers and society to be more relevant to the participants in their work and life spaces. There has been recent development of cross disciplinary and workplace learning focused programs, especially in the United Kingdom. This paper reports on research undertaken in an Australian university, on the links between study in Masters programs and workplace learning. The research contributes to efforts to enhance postgraduate curriculum renewal and to explore more relevant work-learning related approaches.

Research on the transfer of learning between the academy and the workplace is increasingly of interest to researchers and practitioners internationally.
(Mackeracher, 2004, jarvis, 2006 Eraut, 2004, Russ- Eft, 2002)

Perceptions of the workplace by new teachers

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This paper is an outcome from a set of studies trying to better understand the experiences of beginning teachers. The data set consisted of 8 new teachers over their first three years and 9 student teachers. In each case data was collected by in-depth semi-structured interview supplemented in 9 cases by network map representations. We are interested in the relationship between individuals and their workplace in terms of their agency as part of a participatory process (Wenger 1998) situated, and therefore inextricably dependent on interactions, within the range of workplaces in which beginning teachers find themselves. Agency is taken to mean in this paper as the 'ability to exert control over one's life' (Biesta et al, 2008). We looked to consider the significance of formal versus informal sources of support and the relationship between these and the individual teacher's personal networks.

This paper used a framework of workplace perception along a continuum from being restrictive to expansive as learning environments as developed by Evans and colleagues (Evans, Hodgkinson et al. 2006). This allowed us to analyse individuals' perceptions of the schools they passed time in as beginning teachers in terms of how support was used whilst also revealing the individuals use of support. From this a matrix of the relationship between individual and workplace, as perceived by the beginning teacher, was proposed. Their perceptions were largely of working in expansive environments whilst indicating where expectations of sources of support were lacking. Faculty support was cited regularly by both training and in post teachers. External support, such as this, teachers could take from school to school. As expected from other research (Beijard, Korthagen et al. 2007) informal aspects to support including development of in and beyond school social aspects to relationship building were being drawn upon.

We show that by asking teachers about their support they can reveal what resources they already hold, their expectations for the workplace and their attitudes to using support available. Explicit discourse about their existing personal networks and the potential of them could lead to greater empowerment by beginning teachers in having their needs met. Use of the matrix presented could also help to identify where such discussions would be most needed.

Keywords: teacher development, workplace perceptions, social networks

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Professional Expertise, Integration and Lifelong Learning

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My concern is with the dynamics within and between content, delivery and infrastructural components (Hoskin & Anderson-Gough, adapted from Silver) of programmes of professional workplace learning. I use the current education and training systems within Chartered Accountancy in the UK as an illustration which both points to solutions to, and in turn raises further, problematic issues for successful learning. How might such an integrative framework for the ACA qualification be operationalised across higher education and the workplace? There is no one type of organization which constitutes the "educational institution". There are different types of Accountancy practice, supported by respective professional institutes. The elite end of this field of knowledge enjoys in turn a peculiar relation to Accounting in higher education. To respond to this challenge requires enquiry into the ways in which workplace expertise may draw upon, and reconfigure, disciplinary knowledge. We might look first for integration at the level of content, for instance raising the profile of ethics in the formal curriculum. Depending upon how we do this, we might anticipate certain challenges to this project then from the system of delivery. In turn, we would find infrastructural obstacles to trying to make the system of delivery more integrative. Part of this is due to the field being transdisciplinary in the way emphasised by Gibbons et al., in that the Mode 2 knowledge component is very strong, with at the same time the profession owning the knowledge in important ways and keeping the Academy at arm's length. The development of professional judgement goes beyond "social practice" and requires expertise that transcends a disciplinary specialism to become more adaptive, i.e. transdisciplinary in a further, richer and more integrative sense. It might appear that greater linkages across content, delivery and infrastructure between higher education and the profession would contribute to acceptable frameworks of lifelong learning. However, this is not as straightforward a solution as it may sound, as I shall explain through multiple interpretations of the training programme in this context.

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Self-regulated learning in the workplace: Enhancing knowledge flow between novices and experts

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Traditional models of SRL are premised on the assumption that behaviour is determined by individual goals, with limited influence from others or the environment. This view contradicts the interactional nature of the workplace, where work and learning are shaped by complex interdependencies with others (Billett, 2001). Granted, social cognitive theories of SRL (Zimmerman, 2006) recognise the role of social context in learning, but its impact is often assumed to be inferior to individually-based components. SRL processes in the workplace are not well understood; research in SRL tends to be conducted in laboratory settings, among disconnected individuals, so the impact of social interactions is overlooked. There is a gap in understanding of the interplay between the individual and the collective in SRL. A central aspect of linking the individual and the collective in SRL is an understanding of how knowledge flows in the workplace. Theories of practice argue that tacit knowledge is socially created and shared within communities of experts therefore it can be acquired only through social immersion in groups who possess this knowledge (Collins et al, 2007). Knowledge flow is constrained by social structures underpinning workplaces. To understand how knowledge flow influences SRL it is useful to compare learning practices of novices and experts. The study analyses SRL practices in online communities of practice in a global company, comparing the individual and collective activities of novices and experts. Methodology involves a questionnaire (n=548) and interviews (n=20). Early findings are that SRL is a highly collaborative process structured by and deeply integrated with work tasks. Experts draw heavily upon their personal networks rather than the online community for diagnosing and attaining their learning goals. Workplace SRL is not a delineated process of discrete stages of planning, implementation and reflection upon learning goals. Instead, planning and implementation were found to be closely intertwined, contradicting findings from previous studies (Zimmerman, 2006). Experts did not appear to engage in systematic self-reflection, because their learning was driven by task demands, with limited opportunities for self-reflection. Where the opportunity existed, it was closely linked to the immediate task, rather than being focused on learning per se. The full findings will extend our understanding of SRL in the workplace and will inform the development of processes that can improve knowledge flow and learning within organisations. Billett, S. (2001). *Learning in the workplace*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin. Collins, H., & Evans, R. (2007). *Rethinking expertise*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Zimmerman, B. (2006). *Development and adaptation of expertise*. In Ericsson et al (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert development* (pp. 705-722). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

The educational worth of integrating work experiences in higher education

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Across advanced industrial economies, higher education programs are increasingly becoming occupationally-specific and universities being seen as providing 'higher vocational education'. Accompanying these changes are expectations that graduates will enjoy smooth transitions into professional practice (DIUS 2008). Consequently, there is a growing emphasis on providing higher education students with access to and engagement in professional practice and for these to be effectively integrated within higher education programs. However, it is necessary to be clear about the educational worth and purposes of these arrangements, and understand how through what kinds of curriculum and pedagogic processes should particular kinds of educational purposes be realised. This includes understanding more about how higher education students' experiences in both university and practice settings should be best organised and integrated. This paper discusses the worth of these educational purposes and bases for realising the effective integration of these work experience. The case is structured as follows. Firstly, consideration is given to the two distinct meanings of the concept of vocations: as an occupation and a personal trajectory (Dewey 1916). It then proceeds to identify the importance of understanding the kinds of knowledge that needs to be learnt for individuals to identify and realise their vocations. This does not imply that all education has to be occupationally-specific. However, where it is, this knowledge includes the domain-specific conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge associated with occupations and the development of the capacities to use that knowledge effectively and strategically in particular practice settings. Consequently, more than the canonical knowledge of the occupation, there is a need to understand how this knowledge is required to be enacted for effective performance in the settings where students experience and learn through practice. This includes individuals' capacities to be strategic, adaptive and to innovate. Yet, the construction of rich conceptual, procedural and dispositional knowledge is not the sole province of experiences provided in educational institutions. These kinds of knowledge can be learnt through experiences in practice settings and through authentic experiences. Each of these settings has its own particular attributes and, when integrated, the learning experiences are most likely to be generative of robust and critical legacies. Also, beyond the experiences provided and encountered in these two settings, and through which individuals are invited to learn, is the important role that individuals play as active and directed meaning makers. The paper concludes with suggestions about how these integrations might best come together (Billett 2009).

The impossible dream: institutional and workplace perspectives on learning responsibility

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One of the most significant differences between institutional and workplace learning for professionals is the responsibility invested in novice workers, such as new teachers or doctors. But learning responsibility is a particular challenge: on the one hand, institutions teaching novice professionals are often criticised for failing to prepare them for responsibility and decision-making in the workplace; on the other, certain responsibilities are inscribed in the professionals themselves, no matter how new they are to the position (newly qualified doctors writing a prescription, newly qualified teachers taking a class). In this paper we focus on responsibility itself to consider how institutional and workplace learning might be integrated.

To date, much professional learning, certainly in medicine, has taken the view that learning is understood as skills, values and attributes (either already possessed or needing to be acquired) which are located in the individual. Thus individual doctors need to be filled up with knowledge and skills so that they are 'oven ready and self basting' (Atkins, 1999) and are able to perform immediately in the workplace. This is the basis for both specific workplace training and institutional learning. However, our research observations, and current theoretical understandings about workplace learning, demonstrate that organisational practices, activity and cultures are fundamental to becoming and being a doctor. Responsibility is a good example - as an aspect of doctors' work, responsibility is organisational and relational, and therefore not located in individuals. This is most explicit in highly specialised, well functioning teams where individual roles are clear but responsibility is distributed. For the novice professionals, understanding networks of responsibility in practice is a significant part of learning to be a professional. To this extent workplace and institutional learning cannot be integrated because responsibility is located and distributed in practice.

The paper is based on an empirical study of doctors' learning responsibility, but it has significance for other professional groups moving from higher education to practice. We will consider how institutional learning prepares doctors for the new levels of responsibility they have to assume and how the workplace accommodates these new doctors in relation to these new responsibilities. Therefore, if workplace and institutional learning are to be better integrated there needs to be greater recognition that they are differentiated by where learning is located and the relational nature of that learning and practice. We will conclude by examining implications for integrating workplace and institutional learning.

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Workplace doctorates, the UK Experience

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Professional doctorate programs have proliferated and grown quickly in the UK and continue to do so. Doctorates that are based directly on individual professional experience have been found to have significant relevance to senior professionals who seek doctoral level qualification but who do not seek to become academics or researchers. The doctorate in professional studies (DProf sometimes called Prof D) illustrates this kind of approach to doctoral education which is different than one focused on research training. It is aimed at developing professionals to the highest level of academic ability within their own contexts through building on generic high level abilities, and making a significant contribution to practice acknowledged as such by peers in the same field. A UK Council for Graduate Education report shows that "the case for using the title DProf is well illustrated (2005 p37) and records growing numbers of DProf programmes in the UK (pp95-99).

This paper draws upon on-going research (Stephenson et al 2006, Costley and Stephenson 2008) into the experiences of DProf candidates with their strong linking of professional practice and their study to inform the future development and delivery of the professional doctorate. The paper illustrates how the DProf or Prof D in th UK develops the practice of people at work without 'borrowing' from subject-based curricula but focuses on giving individual practitioners the opportunity to develop and demonstrate doctoral level learning in their professional/ personal context.

It was found that the award sometimes uses a learning agreement to plan study that embraces progress to date, current professional initiatives, proposed impact in the candidates' fields and longer term development (Glasgow Caledonian University 2007). The award is firmly located in the paradigm of work-based learning which is often crosses disciplines and is frequently found outside disciplinary knowledge, thus constucting itself in a particular position in relation to knowledge hierarchies.

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