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Symposium abstracts

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"A fine line to walk": Emphases and transformations in researching learning, work and identities

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There is a long sociological tradition of occupational socialization research. These studies of professional preparation and socialization aim to explore the formal training programmes and processes of enculturation experienced by 'occupational neophytes' in order to express something of the range and diversity of experiences and expectations of new entrants to a profession. New members of any profession have to learn the technical and more tacit aspects of the expertise that is central to their occupation. In addition to this focus on training and curriculum, professional knowledge and the learning of occupational cultures, there has been a robust emphasis on the occupational settings themselves, as well as occupational and professional identities. In relation to this, bodies and physical spaces are seen to be significant as sites of intersection between localised social action and wider social processes. This type of intellectual labour is strongly shaped and informed by the theoretical paradigm of Interactionism and the Chicago School.

Recent developments, too in the area of 'work and learning' have come to share similar themes, including culture and learning in organisations; the processes of formal and informal learning; and the significances of the structure/agency debate in relation to learning at and for work.

While these two research traditions are well developed, they have tended to be somewhat isolated from each other. This paper will explore and critique some of the ways in which interrogating these two traditions and their key analytical and empirical themes can develop and enable the mapping of new directions for researching learning and work and the significances of these for policy, as well as for employers and workers themselves.

A second stage investigation into the impact of work placements (cooperative education) on formal learning

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Enhanced academic performance of final year sandwich placement students (those who have undertaken cooperative education) has been noted in the higher education sector. A statistical analysis of the degree results of all final year students in the Business School at the University of Westminster, UK, was undertaken. The sandwich placement year was found to be the most significant variable affecting degree result over other variables, including age and entry qualifications. What aspects of the placement experience cause this? What sorts of changes occur to the individual during the placement which affects their subsequent learning? A second stage of investigation using qualitative semi structured interviews aimed to elicit cognitive, affective and behavioural factors which impact on learning and academic performance on return to university. The need for further work to identify more rigorously through testing a larger sample of students with control groups, what the changes in these variables are in the individual, and how far they can be attributed to the placement experience, is discussed in the context of the literature on self efficacy, goals and motivation. The implications for the relationship between work and learning are explored.

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An invisible token? The prescribed curriculum in vocational education

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Drawing upon research into curriculum making in the study of Hospitality, this paper explores the ways in which the prescribed curriculum in vocational education is translated into the enacted curriculum in college contexts. Drawing upon actor-network theory (ANT), it identifies the ways in which organisations - including the future workplace - artefacts, lecturers and students are mobilised by the unit descriptors, translating the inscribed learning outcomes into enacted practices. It explores the degree of visibility of the unit descriptor in these different translations. While the empirical focus of the paper is on a single curriculum area, the conceptual insights derived from ANT are argued to be relevant to workplace learning and vocational education more generally.

Assessor Training as Learning? Exploring the relationship between pedagogy, learning and work-based assessment

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The Accreditation and Registration of Assessors in South Africa requires all persons involved in student learning assessment to formally train and register as assessors. This has resulted in large numbers of people from different workplace contexts enrolling for assessor training courses. The concept of assessment is a highly complex and contentious issue and there are different understandings of the purpose and nature of assessment in South Africa. This paper will explore the ways in which assessment practices have developed in South Africa with reference to its education and training landscape.

As a way of eradicating the imbalances of the past and provide learning opportunities to disadvantaged communities, South Africa has adopted an outcomes based approach to assessment. However, commonly used assessment practices reflect a drive away from constructivist understandings and lean towards behaviourist principles in the delivery of assessor training courses. This paper argues that if the provision of assessor training is linked to an education and training system concerned with equity and social justice as espoused by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), it needs to bring the curriculum, pedagogies and assessment practices for the workplace into close alignment with the realization of that vision.

In South Africa assessment is generally described as a "structured process for gathering evidence and making judgments about an individual's performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications" (SAQA, 2001:16). With an overwhelming focus on criteria compliance and certification, competence is interpreted very narrowly and undermines deep learning, which encourages meaningful engagement and enables learners to conceptualize and seek interconnectedness between concepts and ideas, and reflect on them (Biggs, 1999). With the reforms focusing on grading and certification of workplace performance, knowledge has been relegated to the background and the marginalization of pedagogy has become a reality. This paper argues that assessor training with a focus on workplace assessment should be used to promote lifelong learning. Boud, et al. (2005) views the current assessment practices as inadequate to the task of preparing learners for 'sustainable assessment'.

This paper will explore the key issues and trends in assessment practices in the education and training landscape in South Africa. This preliminary exploration, located in the development of assessor training in South Africa, will examine both international and local literature on assessment and assessor training with a view to understanding the connections between learning, assessment and competence. In addition, interviews will be conducted with a group of trained assessors and a group of trainee assessors to draw on their academic and professional practice experiences, and finally considering pedagogical principles on which sound assessment practices should be based.

Back at school: do they really have nothing else to do?

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Adult learning is usually understood in the framework of participating in (work-related) training or learning at workplace rather than in the contexts of formal education system.

True, there are number of reasons why that is so, one of them being the fact that even in the contemporary societies people are, after initial training, in general still expected to commit their lives to paid work instead of spending hours or days of their busy lives in schools or universities. Or, if paid work is not an option, taking care of family is the legitimate way out of the labor market. One might expect a person indeed has a very clear vision of the reasons and goals to return to formal education system, in order to actually start overcoming the barriers still existent in most of the education systems. Even though the system is more ready than before to accommodate the adults side by side with young high school graduates, the schools are still designed to suit the latter better than the former.

So, what exactly happens when an adult finds him/herself back at school? Are there any specific troubles s/he faces with the studies, compared to his/her younger classmates? Does s/he have any expectations towards school that the teachers and school administrations could take in account?

This paper draws its conclusions on the data that comes from the European Commission 6FP research project which asked these questions from the adults, studying currently at the formal ISCED level 1-5. The goal of the research project was to obtain in-depth comparative information about adult learners' perspectives of formal provision of lifelong learning, and via that the project examines the role of the formal education system in stimulating participation and persistence in lifelong learning, in reducing inequalities in lifelong learning and in fostering social inclusion.

The experiences and perceptions of the adult learners form the starting point of this paper as well, however, these are studied in interaction with the interventions at the meso and macro level.

The main focus of this paper is in revealing if adults in different ISCED levels (and therefore supposedly differently prepared to and differently thinking of their participation in the formal education system) would regard their learning contexts differently in terms of their time-greediness, or could the differences be drawn more by the lines of their employment status, caring responsibilities, household duties or preferences towards spending spare time.

However, the second dimension the paper aims at contributing to is the empirical evaluation of the impact that macro-level institutional settings play in these differences. Since the sample of this research covers learning adults in a number of post-socialist countries and several old members of the EU, the conclusions are expected to draw attention to some generalization along these lines.

Between Social Mobility, Vocationalism, and the Opportunity Trap: Working-class students at university

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The creation of human capital is considered to result in a win-win situation in knowledge economies: the chances of individuals to obtain and secure well-paying, fulfilling, and stable employment increases with their level of education, while a nation benefits from lower levels of unemployment and a competitive advantage on the global market. In Canada, where the data for this study was collected, we have witnessed an increasing participation at all levels of post-secondary education, most of all at university. Yet, access to university continues to be significantly constrained for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Furthermore, working-class youth who do continue to university still face unique, class-specific challenges, evident in higher levels of uncertainty and fears of inadequacy because of their cultural outsider status. In this paper, based on a longitudinal, qualitative study of working-class university students at a large, research-intensive Canadian university, I argue that working-class students may rely on a vocational orientation in order to finish university successfully. The data is drawn from three waves of interviews, which were conducted during the students' first, second and final year of university. The participants explain their reasons for being at university in terms of their increased chances on the labour market, and their hopes for social mobility into traditionally middle-class professional occupations. They also speak about the need to see a return for their relatively high and risky investment into education. University attendance for these students is primarily a form of vocational education and labour market preparation. At the same time, they struggle to consolidate this utilitarian view of higher education with a gradual transformation of their working-class habitus, which is evident in changing social networks and in some cases career goals and expectations. Although a narrow focus on the career potential of university is perceived as problematic, I argue that it may also help working-class students in their school-university-work transition. Nonetheless, a critical educational process is necessary that not only helps working-class students achieve their educational and occupational goals, but also understand their unique status in a social institution that they entered as outsiders and labour markets that continue to be characterized by various forms of social closure.

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Continuing Education: Constraints & Possibilities

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As the nature of work and ideas and attitudes towards it are transformed, lifelong learning and continuing education become increasingly important. Lifelong learning and continuing education play important roles in the development, delivery and dissemination of relevant and timely knowledge and skills (Field, 2001). They also open the door to widening participation in higher and post-secondary education, especially for those from traditionally excluded groups (Dunkin & Lindsey, 2001; Knapper & Cropley, 2000). Indeed, lifelong learning and continuing education have become key concepts in thinking about education and training worldwide (Schuetze & Slowey, 2000; Walters & Volbrecht, 2000) and their systems and practices are increasingly identified as central to the furtherance and realisation of social, economic and cultural goals at national, regional, organisational, community and individual levels (Osborne & Thomas, 2003). In many countries, universities and their continuing education units are now regarded as key venues for the development of lifelong learning and they face pressures to expand and broaden their intakes and transform their curricula and pedagogies in order to accommodate an increasingly "knowledge-based" society.

In fact, recent trends are fueling an unprecedented demand for continuing education in many countries and are leading to the emergence of new approaches to and innovative educational partnerships among industries, professions, and the academy (Cantor, 2006; Nesbit, Dunlop & Gibson, 2007). Further, trends towards the corporatisation of universities, enhanced public interest in university accountability and greater awareness of their outreach and engagement activities have also fostered greater demand for access to the many forms of continuing education. Yet such growth in demand has exacerbated existing tensions inherent in such work and highlighted several new concerns:

- Uncertainty about a standard definition of continuing education and its roles, purposes and functions
- Access to policy formation and development
- The uncertain and ambiguous location of continuing education units within traditional university systems and structures
- Institutional reluctance to structural change
- Funding
- Competition between the historical social orientation and mandate of many continuing education units and a demand for more explicit business- and professional-orientated courses and programs
- Academic legitimacy and credibility
- Insufficient research on continuing education and lifelong learning within universities
- Narrow and technocratic approaches to learning
- Reliable and inclusive methods of assessing value and measuring success
- Partnerships between UCE units and other social, business and cultural organisations.

This paper will explore the current state of continuing education, identify several key issues affecting its development and reflect upon the concerns identified above.

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory and Informal Learning among Front-line Supervisors

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This study examined how front-line supervisors in three different steel mills learn to successfully function in their everyday work-life. The study investigated how front line supervisors experience informal learning as they negotiate their role between two competing agendas, that of the union and that of management manifested in the shop-floor culture and global business realities. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (e.g. Engeström, 1987, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2004; Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999; Sawchuk, 2003) was used as the means to analyze and make sense of the data.

Three steel mills from one corporation were selected. This provided consistent training procedures across the three sites. One researcher worked as front-line supervisor with this corporation for fifteen years and was familiar with both the personnel and work processes. Ten front-line supervisors were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire (Errante, 2000; Hollway & Jefferson, 1997; LeCompte, 1995; McIntosh, 1992). Field notes, focusing on actions and tools were kept, and documents and associated artifacts were examined.

Workplace observations were conducted in the areas where the interview participants negotiated their role and where they experienced the majority of their job responsibility. This was done to obtain a cross section of the mediating instruments (signs, tools, symbol, etc) that are used by the front-line supervisor's as they interact with and transform the object. Artifacts included official and unofficial documents, tools, equipment, and safety apparel. The consideration of mediating instruments becomes significant when trying to understand the shop-floor environment and how such instruments are used to transform the object and investigate how new learning may be initiated that may be contradictory to official policy and procedure.

The study found that learning opportunities for front-line supervisors are situated in discussions and through interactions with each other and with union production and maintenance employees. Livingstone & Sawchuk (2004, p. 61) argue "co-workers, predominantly through various informal networks, collaborate and construct a skills and knowledge 'scaffold' for greater individual and collective knowledge ability." By this standard, learning occurred through the front-line supervisors' daily activities both in the workplace and beyond. More importantly, the new ways of learning were a part of a much more complex process of many social, cultural, economic, and historical processes existing simultaneously on the shop floor. CHAT offered a means to make empirically available the ways that real people live with, reproduce, and alter activity systems and their individual components, any change of which is ultimately rooted in human learning.

Dimensions of participation in work place learning

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The concept of participation has been used frequently in various contexts during the past decade. The aim of the paper is to analyze and discuss participation in work life. The line of argument arises from an empirical study, which was accomplished with questionnaires and interviews, about implementation of participation in caring and nursing. The author claims that participation is ambiguous. It may be promising but even treacherous. Participation may strengthen loyalty among employees and in this respect counteract influence and participation in decision-making. On the other hand it might as well have a stimulating influence. It is a matter of how participation is defined and understood. In the paper it is claimed that participation has at least three dimensions: 1) horizontal or vertical, i.e. participation on the same level in the organizational hierarchy or at another level, 2) concrete or abstract, i.e. participation in job tasks or in values and goals of the organization, 3) doing or being, i.e. participation in meetings and in-service training or in reflective attitudes towards work and work tasks. The three dimensions and their significance for participation, work place learning and professional development are described and analyzed.

Do adult learners personal characteristics predict their learning outcomes and use of annotation and social navigation services in a CSLE?

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In this study, we investigated if adult learners' self-reported learning motivation, learning strategies and social abilities are related to their learning outcomes and actual use of synchronous and asynchronous tools in a computer-supported learning environment (CSLE). The system featured a search engine with a document pool together with annotation, discussion and social navigation tools. Annotation tool allowed participants to highlight and comment (add context specific information) online course material (HTML -documents). Social navigation tool allowed them to see each others position in the course document space, for example, to determine what document other learner is currently reading.

The sample consists of 14 Finnish secondary level vocational education teachers (ten females and four males, age median 43 years) who participated in a university level educational statistics course between October 2007 and March 2008.

We formulated the following research questions: 1) Are differences in the adult learners' profiles statistically related to differences in their learning outcomes? 2) Are the adult learners' actions in the CSLE during the course related to their learning outcomes? 3) Are the adult learners' actions in the CSLE related to differences in their profiles?

In the beginning of the course, participants motivation, learning strategies and social abilities were measured with a multiple choice questionnaire ACALQ III (Ruohotie & Nokelainen, 2000). Controlling variables measured their initial level of statistical knowledge and tested their working memory capacity and computer screen text reading speed.

During the course, adult learners produced two learning outcomes: First, a scientific essay as distance learning task in the CSLE, and second, a statistical computing exercise in the last face to face meeting. Both learning outcomes were evaluated on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). During the course, the CSLE accumulated fine-grained data on the actions of the adult learners.

First part of the results showed, in parallel with our theoretical framework, that learners' motivational profiles were positively connected to their learning outcomes. Learner's self-evaluated 'resource management strategies' and willingness to 'learn by doing' were also positively connected to learning outcomes.

Second part of the results showed that time spent in the CSLE and use of awareness increasing tools (social navigation) correlated positively with learning outcomes. Only a weak positive statistical relationship was observed between an active use of annotation tools (highlighting and commenting documents) and learning outcomes.

Third part of the study analyzed the statistical relationships between self-reported social abilities and actions in the CSLE. Results showed that those learners, who reported high level of social abilities, were the most active users of the social navigation tools provided by the system.

Environments for Work and Learning 2020 - Steps to the sustained preservation of an economic location

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This paper highlights the challenges environments have to face in the field of work and learning up to the year 2020. Therefore, the paper shows the results of the questionnaire "The Future of Work and Learning" from 2008. The results demonstrate that the work and learning environments are affected by a huge number of dilemmas which must be reduced on a continuous basis. This ongoing process requires that the individual and the organization have the permanent ability to change. To preserve Germany as a business location it is necessary to step into dialog with international partners and review changes and innovative solutions. This paper shows the German project "International Monitoring" as an example. The overall objective of the project is to establish a continuous International Monitoring. Through observation, networking and dialogue a national and international opinion leadership in the field of innovative ability is aimed to be achieved in order to keep Germany and Europe globally competitive in the long run.

Exploring Informal Learning of Immigrant Parents in Canada

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Parent involvement is a norm in Canada. Parents are expected to communicate with teachers, volunteer in schools, participate in school council meetings, and assist their children with their homework (Epstein et al., 2002). However, "parent involvement" is mainly a North American concept. It is neither expected nor practised in many immigrants' countries of origin. In fact, there are negative associations to parents' presence in schools in some cultures. For example, Chinese parents seldom attend school functions, because if the school asks to see parents, it means their children have got into trouble.

After immigrating to Canada, many parents are unable to intervene in their children's education in schools due to linguistic and cultural factors (Li, 2002). The absence of immigrant parents from school is often misinterpreted as parents not caring about their children's education. However, many immigrant parents indicate that they care passionately (Ran, 2001).

Many immigrant parents are engaged in informal learning activities on their own (Foley, 1999; Livingstone, 1999). Their informal learning is often unrecognized. Informal learning has been extensively studied in adult education, but not with immigrant parents. This study explores how immigrant parents construct and mobilize their knowledge in informal learning in order to support their children's education. It is based on individual interviews with immigrant parents, who arrived in Calgary, Canada from a variety of source countries including China, Korea, Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria, Ghana, Somalia, Sudan, Columbia, Belize, and Suriname.

The results of the study indicate that many immigrant parents learned the expectations of Canadian schools primarily through trial and error practices. They self-taught Canadian curricula, continued to teach their children their first language and instill the best values of both Canadian cultures and cultures of their countries of origin, and learned how to advocate on behalf of their children, often marginalized at schools. In this sense, their learning is informal, intentional, and emancipatory (Cunningham, 2001; Freire, 1970; Livingstone, 1999). The results of this study will lead to a recognition of informal learning by immigrant parents and an expansion of traditional parent involvement to recognize immigrant parental engagement (Lopez, 2001).

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Heidegger, Arendt and Marcuse; Work and the Higher Education Workplace

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Heidegger's early works provide his most important contribution to our understanding of being, while his discussion of the effects of technology on that being in his later works is one of his most known contributions. I will use his phenomenological approach to understanding the workplace to describe the functioning of higher education as a workplace. Heidegger seemingly fails to offer a subtle approach what is labouring or to whether there is a substantive difference between crafting, labouring or working. To find such approaches I draw upon one core work of both Arendt's and Marcuse's which specifically relate to these distinction. The paper is structured in 3 parts. The first is an outline and discussion of a set of tools for the phenomenological analysis of the workplace. The second part develops an understanding of the meaning of activities in the workplace and the third is an application of these descriptions to three scenarios to investigate their usefulness.

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Innovative behaviour for the development of innovations in different domains: the cases of vocational teachers and business consultants

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Socio-economic developments demand new structures at the workplace and changes in work. These demands require innovations. Innovations can be processes or products and have to be new and appropriate to a specific personal and organisational work context and include a change of goals (cf. Kanter, 1983). These innovations are increasingly important to remain successful as an organisation and capable as a professional. This contribution focuses on the question what kinds of activities are carried by professionals to develop innovations. Within innovative activities we distinguish the development of an idea, and the realisation of that idea. Since these innovations are developed in a specific domain, the question arises: What are the characteristics of professionals' innovative behaviour in different domains that lead to innovations? Therefore data were collected in two different domains comparing partly established and not established professions (vocational teachers and business consultants) in order to identify characteristics of innovations and innovative behaviour.

As vocational colleges are closely linked to the labour market socio-economic changes lead to changes of work structures and tasks. Characteristics of students are changing as well. Teachers must perform additional roles, like that of researcher, developer or collaborator. Part of this new profile is the development of innovations, which become necessary due to the socio-economic development (Hargreaves, 1997). An interview study with vocational teachers (N=9) experienced in innovation implementation, curriculum development or school policy, was conducted to find out more about workplace activities related to the development of innovations.

Likewise, business consultancies are affected by these socio-economic developments leading to increasing competition, job pressure and diversity of clients. Consultants must work together in teams to produce new and applicable results that help to increase the outcomes of companies. Therefore innovations are an important requirement to remain successful (Jackson & Joshi, 2004). A Delphi study with consultants and researchers experienced in innovation and consultancy (N=20) was conducted to investigate into the characteristics of innovative behaviour of consultants in teams. In both studies data are analysed with qualitative research methods.

The teachers provided insight into the complex system of solitary and collaborative activities that lead to the generation, dissemination and application of innovative ideas. The most important activities for the development of innovations mentioned by the consultants are analysing situations from different perspectives, taking risks and communicating in an open and mutual manner.

This contribution outlines a theoretical model of perspectives on innovation and innovative behaviour and analyses the relevance of this model for different domains.

Is Informal Learning Giving Students More Capital-Knowledge Than Formal Education?

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It has been conversely argued that the transition from industrial to knowledge economy is just a matter of increasing job training and not an economic process per se. The rapid technological advancements are developing complex computer skills in students at all levels faster than expected by educational planners. Particularly High School students whom spend a considerable amount of time on the internet accessing faster first-hand information and searching for unlimited resources are questioning what they have learned in school. Two of the key questions of my paper are: What will be the future of education when students are learning information and concepts faster through internet access than in traditional forms of education? Are students accumulating higher capital-knowledge from non-formal schooling? At the same time, given the fact that students are more technologically competent, are we to believe that they are gaining social power becoming more vocal and rebellious towards society?

My paper aims to present an analysis of the relationship between some key social variables: non-formal (or informal) learning, formal education, and knowledge-capital. This topic also provides a focus that will allow us to immerse in deep analysis about the future of educational reform and define some specific terms through full reviews of multiple sets of literature (e.g. economic as well as sociological and educational.)

Condensed summary of the relevant literature

Chatzkel. Knowledge Capital.

Cortada, J. W. Rise of the Knowledge Worker

Nonaka, I., (1994). A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation. Organizational Science. Vol. 5, No. 1

Levin, B. (2000). Putting students at the Centre in Education Reform. Journal of Educational Change 1

Giddens, A. Theory of Structuration. Modernity. Several other publications related to the field.

Hargreaves, A. R. Several publications related to the field.

Learning workplace health promotion – potential and limits within an emergency department

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The aim of this paper is to investigate how features of the learning environment, referred to as expansive or restricted, influence the learning of workplace health promotion. Health promotion can be seen as an activity that enables employees to participate in, thus learn, activities that strengthen their skills to act individually or collectively to exert control over conditions for health (Nutbeam, 1998). In order to link the activity of health promotion and learning, theories of situated learning are used which emphasize learning as participation in activities in practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Evans et al, 2006). The empirical material draws on results from an intervention study examining health promotion activities and opportunities for learning workplace health promotion within an emergency department in a hospital. All employees including management (N=210) participated in the intervention. The intervention was implemented in 22 groups with 6-8 participants, which met 12 times during the intervention. Data were collected mainly through individual interviews with 16 employees and 7 managers at three occasions during the intervention. In addition data were collected through observations of meetings. The findings demonstrate that the workplace health promotion activities produced a number of positive outcomes on the individual and group level, as well as on the organizational level. The findings also indicate that several conditions related to the learning environment were of more or less importance for workplace health promotion. For instance the managements' attention and support were of critical importance for enabling or constraining the learning of workplace health promotion within the emergency department.

Literacy learning through work and community: a focus on New Zealand and British Columbia

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Over the past decade, governments in many countries have turned their attention towards raising the skill levels of their citizens to meet the changing demands of society and the economy. Adult literacy has been propelled into the limelight in New Zealand (NZ) and British Columbia (BC) following the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), undertaken in the mid 1990s, and its successor, the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills survey (ALL), administered in the early-mid 2000s. The findings of these large-scale surveys indicate that many New Zealanders and Canadians have inadequate literacy levels to cope with the changes wrought by economic globalization, increased migration, the complexity of new technologies, and the growing role of information and knowledge in the economy. In noting the rise in policy discourse and discussion around adult literacy in both NZ and BC, I sought to explain recent adult literacy policy development and to understand what is driving policy formation. For this research, I undertook a 'policy sociology' (Ball, 1990) investigating ~200 policy documents and conducting interviews with 35 key people in the policy and practice of adult literacy in NZ and BC. I examined my data through the frame of 'inclusive liberalism' (Porter & Craig, 2004), which notes in recent social policy: the increasing importance of partnerships among the market, state and economy; the promotion of economic and social purposes of policy; and, the emphasis on 'bringing in' those who may have been excluded from the benefits of economic, social and technological change.

While my research indicates increased attention given to adult literacy in BC and NZ, it also suggests that the trajectories of adult literacy policy in both places have been markedly different. NZ appears to have redoubled its commitment to workplace literacy, focusing also on professionalization, building capacity and assessment; whereas BC has paid more attention to the 'community' rather than 'workplace' context, with the release of 'Literacy Now' (2005), part of a wider programme associated with the Olympics. In comparison to B.C, NZ has put forth a much more holistic vision, bringing together various social partners in the goal of fostering social and economic inclusion through workplace literacy.

NZ and BC share many similarities, including population size, the low literacy levels in their Indigenous populations, and the fact they are both considered examples of liberal market economies (Hall & Soskice, 2001). The difference in the two foci of the literacy programmes—of 'workplace' versus 'community'—speaks to the divergent ideological, pragmatic, political, historical and cultural realities in the two places. However, both approaches can be thought of as existing within an inclusive liberal frame of policy. In my paper I discuss the reasons behind these two paths as well as the overall features of inclusive liberalism in adult literacy policy.

Making sense of work integrated learning: A case study of curriculum reform

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Work-integrated learning [WIL] is currently a major focus of national and international education policy, even though it has a very long history and lineage. An educational enterprise and partnership culture has been around since the early 1990s (Skilbeck et al. 1994), as part of the massification and vocationalisation of higher education in Australia and elsewhere. Building school, TAFE, university, industry and community partnerships became an active policy arena in Australia in the 1990s (DET NSW, 1999 Annual Report) and work-readiness as a focus for post-compulsory education has become integral to recent economic planning (Stanley, 2007) in Australia as well as globally. In a study of employer satisfaction with graduate skills, reported by Eunson (2000), it was claimed that 75% of university and TAFE graduates were not suited for the jobs for which they apply. Yet over half of Australian high school students, and approximately a third of VET and university students, have part-time jobs; that is, they are learners and earners (Vickers and Singh, 2008). Thus, in the context of broadening and improving WIL opportunities degree programs, as an institution, this paper asks what it is about the nature of the learning experience and skills we want for our students, and what they want and expect from us and future employment that can be addressed in higher education programs? After reviewing national developments in Australia, this paper will expand on a study by Agllias (2005) within the UoN, *From Student to Professional Practitioner: A two-part study of preparedness for beginning social work practice*, in which field education was cited by new graduates as an essential component of their education, some saying it was the most important part of their degree. Knowing an experienced world is one of the keys to understanding it and to re-arranging it in a way more useful to our purposes. The relationship between knowledge and action (human experience) can be the unifying feature of learning, whereby knowledge acts as a guide for action. Work-integrated learning also provides scope for valuing community engagement (dispositions such as care and generosity as well as social responsibility) that strengthen a democratic society. 'Curriculum-aligned' means that the practice of WIL is considered to be an integral part of an academic program and a valued and rewarding experience for students as it helps them make links between what they learn and what they can do. The central feature of WIL at the UoN is a focus on good teaching and learning outcomes. The paper will conclude with recommendations for further research and policy development around the concept and practice of WIL.

New type of innovation generating - Overcoming the problems of double-loop learning

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Traditionally the collaboration between the work organization and client organization has been studied as single dimension so called client–consulting relationship (e.g. Schein, 1988; Moldaschl, 2000). The environment of the interaction has only seldom been considered in this discourse. In the last two decades, both clients and researchers have stressed over the problems in the two-way interaction. There is a growing skepticism over the validity and quality of consulting services, because in many cases consultants are implementing standardized solutions rather than really listening to the issues of their clients (e.g. Kieser, 2002). There is a threat that the gap between actual consulting solutions and increasing unrealistic clients' demands will increase the clients' dissatisfaction and the client–consultant relationship becomes more difficult to sustain. In order to overcome these threats and challenges new forms of collaboration are needed.

In this paper, three different methodological models of organizational development based on the structure, task and learning process of the client-expert relationship are presented: 1) traditional client–expert relationship, 2) reflective intervention and 3) the innovation generating model. The descriptions of the former two – the traditional client–expert relationship (e.g. Drucker, 1997) and reflective intervention (Moldaschl & Brödner, 2002) – can be found in the literature, whereas the latter is a new one. The main characteristics (e.g. actors, the focus of development, development orientation, theoretical grounding and challenges) will be presented and analysed. In the paper it will be shown how the innovation generative model can overcome the above-mentioned problems between the clients and consultants.

The work starts with a theoretical discussion on methodological models on client–expert relationships. Based on the limitations of the present frameworks an integrated set of theories will be applied to define the theoretical basis for the innovation generating model. In the model, emergent, realistic and pragmatic view of knowledge is combined with the extensions of the reflective intervention model by Moldaschl & Brödner and Koivisto, social system theory and autopoietic theory introduced by Luhmann, Maturana, Varela and Tuomi, complementarity theory by Milgrom and Roberts, process theories by Van de Ven and Poole and the cyclical theories of learning by e.g. Lewin and Engeström. The paper presents the main characteristics of the new model and search for evidence-based proof to the model with a help of two different data sets. The first set of data comprises expert organizations in the field of organizational development (N=223) and the second the participants of development projects in work organizations (N=1113). Both sets of data were gathered as part of the Finnish Workplace Development Programme.

Production strategies, work organizations, and learning processes in the industrial sector in Italy

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The paper adopts ideas from cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) and social science debates about regimes of production to re-conceptualize learning in differentiated work contexts (i.e. Fordist and Post-Fordist). It argues for the centrality of the concept of object-oriented activity in investigating the issues of motivation, learning needs and learning process, and the concept of production strategies for defining the context of work. The focus is on older workers in the shop floor in the industrial sector in the north-west of Italy. The paper will explain how production strategies and their related work organizations play a role in the older workers' engagement in learning at work. The underpinning ontological assumption of the single development of people and contexts in CHAT will be used to shed light on the subjective dimension in the individual's learning engagement.

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Recognition of Prior Learning and Valorisation: A Review of Irish Projects

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According to the National Skills Strategy (2007) by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs in Ireland, it has become apparent that working life is now more knowledge-intensive requiring a commensurate rise in worker skills and qualifications. Furthermore, impetus at European level; Lisbon Strategy, Bologna Process, Copenhagen Declaration, European Qualification Framework, European Credit Transfer System for higher education, European Credit Transfer System for vocational education and training, and Europass, have all contributed to the increasing focus on education, training and skills for the workplace. One increasingly used facet of this workplace focus is the concept of the recognition of prior learning (RPL). The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) defines RPL as the "recognition of learning that has taken place, but not necessarily been assessed or measured, prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal routes" (OECD/DES, 2005, paragraph 19).

The primary research question for this study is: Is there a return on investment in the use of RPL in training programmes? The study will focus on commercial organisations that incorporate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in some (or all) training programmes. Investigations of training effectiveness and return on training investment are not new, but the specific focus on recognition of prior learning has not yet been addressed. There are already incidences of the use of the concept of RPL, especially in adult education and continuing professional education at third level to provide greater access to education for those who may not possess the formal course entry requirements. However, there may be the potential for RPL at industry level, where some work has already begun in industry/company specific training programmes. This opens the way for training providers, evaluators, mentors, whether they are in-house, or from outside such as third-level institutions or private providers.

In order to do this I would like to look at the European concept of Valorisation as a means to examine the return on investment of a number of RPL projects that were undertaken in Ireland in recent years. The first is the VaLEx (Valuing Learning from Experience) project, to develop a model to articulate the learning and core skills of adult learners acquired through experience. Secondly, I will examine the NRB training project, thirdly the NALA project on ICT literacy, and finally the OMNA project on early Childhood Care and Education. This forms one strand of a larger research project that aims at examining if there is a return on investment to enterprises that use RPL in their training. This should act as a solid starting point for further investigation of the question of return on investment and RPL.

Researching the margins in work and learning: Exploring barriers facing recent Chinese immigrants in Canada

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Canada is an immigrant country. Immigration has played an important role in transforming Canada into an ethno-culturally diverse and economically prosperous nation (Knowles, 2000; Moodley, 1995). The 2006 Census of Canada reveals that 19.8% of Canada's total population were born outside the country – the second highest in the world, after Australia; and that 16.2% identified themselves as visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2007). A large proportion of the new immigrants to Canada are adults. When immigrants come, they bring their language, culture, education background, knowledge, and work experience to the new society. On the one hand, Canada has been extolled as an open and friendly society. Its commitment to immigration and diversity has been admired by many nations in the world. On the other hand, it has been criticized for failing to accept differences as valid and valuable expressions of the human experience. With respect to the latter criticism, one of the most outstanding issues pertains to the non-recognition of immigrant's foreign credentials and work experience (Basran & Zong, 1998; Henry et al., 2006; Krahn et al., 2000; Li, 2001; Mojab, 1999; Reitz, 2001). Drawing on the experience of recent Chinese immigrants in Calgary, Canada, this study aims to explore work and learning in the changing context of immigration and cultural diversity. Two major research methods were employed to conduct this study: questionnaire and personal interviewing.

The findings reveal that many recent Chinese immigrants to Canada were young, well-educated, and experienced professionals, many of whom held master's and doctoral degrees. The majority came as skilled workers, which reflected a major shift in Canada's changing immigration policy since mid-1990s in meeting the needs of Canada's knowledge-based economy. Unlike their early counterparts who were motivated to move by economic reasons, for the recent arrivals non-economic reasons such as Canada's natural environment, educational system, and citizenship form the primary motivations to move. In the process of transition from China to Canada, many of them had encountered major difficulties, with language and employment as the most frequently cited barriers. Coupled with the devaluation and denigration of their Chinese educational qualifications and prior work experience, recent immigrants suffered unemployment and underemployment, poor economic performance, and social mobility. Many of them lived in poverty. A large number of them felt disillusioned and despair. Their experiences have tested that Canada's promises to jobs, prosperity, and smooth transition were false and misleading. They have also demonstrated the non-linear transition of immigrant's experience and the challenges facing work and learning in the context of Canada's changing demographics as a result of immigration.

Structural decoupling between VET and employment systems: challenges manifested in assessment of practical training in VET

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This paper aims to analyse how structural decoupling, which is especially relevant problem for school-based VET systems, reveals itself in the assessment of practical training in VET. The concept of communication of Niklas Luhmann's social system theory has been applied to the analysis of assessment practices as communication acts between different sub-systems (VET and employment systems). The analysis is based on empirical data gathered by semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders in the assessment process from two fields of VET – training of nurses and IT specialists. The analysis of communication acts enable to point out several problems in assessment practices including fictitious assessment practices, low quality of training and motivation of workplace trainers, the lack of correspondence between the school curriculum and competence base needed in the real workplace etc. Some of the challenges are explainable by communication disruptions in Luhmann's sense, the others by structural decoupling between VET system and employment system. It will be argued that while in the case of training of nurses VET system have found ordered structures in EU regulations, the structures that are needed for effective operational coupling of VET and employment systems are lacking in the field of training of IT specialists.

Tailormade CPD moving towards an organisational learning perspective.

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Modern Continuing Professional Development (CPD) can be seen from both an individual and an organisational perspective. Being still more tailormade to fulfill individual competence needs and organisational strategies, there is a risk that tailormade CPD courses will be seated between two chairs. A relevant subject to address is whether the applied CPD model is able to distinguish between the two perspectives, to embrace both perspectives and what the consequences are.

CPD-aalborg has developed a model for CPD that contains elements from both an individual and an organisational perspective. The model is called Facilitated Work Based Learning (FWBL) and is inspired by the Problem Based Learning model used at Aalborg University for more than 30 years. The cycle in establishing a FWBL learning course is 1) contact phase, 2) definition of learning objectives, 3) learning contract, 4) implementation of FWBL, and 5) evaluation.

The learning objectives are decided from a discussion of the competence needs as expressed by both the individual employee and the company. The CPD provider is guiding the discussion and drawing a sketch of the learning contract which in the end will treat all conditions of the actual learning course. Unlike a standard course provider the CPD provider in FWBL is taking a large responsibility for ensuring the optimal outcome to the company.

The FWBL proces is thus moving towards the perspective of organisational learning especially by evaluating the learning readiness of the company (Ellström) and the capacity to absorb new knowledge (Nielsen) in the first phases establishing the learning course.

FWBL has proved its usability in several competence development projects and is to be used as the primary model in a larger competence development project adressing the higher educated employees in 80 small and medium size enterprises in Northern Region of Jutland. The project Via Nord ("Viden i Anvendelse i Region Nordjylland") is running for 3 years and is funded by the European Socialfund.

In connection with ViaNord efforts will be made to promote the organisational and strategic perspectives to the companies and research will be carried out to investigate the impact on the organisation and effect on the learning outcome.

The challenges experienced by senior women academics in Zimbabwean higher education.

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Abstract

Women academics across the globe experience challenges both at work and in the societies they live in. Recent research findings indicate some of these challenges in Zimbabwe as lack of access to academic jobs, underrepresentation in top posts, marginalization, discrimination, lack of networks and a host of other challenges which shall be discussed by this paper.

Methodology : The study used descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was made up of top women academics in six universities. A judgement sample was used. The final sample size was 30. Data was collected through the use of open- ended face to face interview technique. Responses were recorded by use of an electronic digital voice recorder as well as on paper. The recorded data was immediately transcribed word for word from the recorder there after. The transcribed data was arranged in order of emerging themes for later interpretation and discussion in the write up.

The relevance of the study is that women are grossly under represented in top administration posts in Higher Education. The findings of this study will help by identifying the underlying challenges that impact on women in Higher Education. There is this persistence of under representation of women in Higher Education top posts. Change will only come if these challenges are known and solved. Then there will be real transformation leading to gender equity in Higher Education top posts.

According to HERS-SA a South African NGO, women in Higher Education, despite them constituting over 50% of Higher Education personnel in South Africa, a survey carried out in 2007 revealed that only 3 of the 23 Vice Chancellors and 5 of the 23 Registrars were women. Also, women comprised 21% of Deputy Vice Chancellors and 21 % of Executive Directors. According to them, the situation is similar in other parts of Africa. In Zimbabwe there are only 2 women Vice Chancellors out of a possible total of 13. At the moment there is this persistence of male dominance in top posts in Higher Education which does not augur well for democratic society in Africa. This study therefore, will contribute to the ever increasing discourse on gender justice which are the whole marks of democratic societies in which gender relations are normal.

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The Evaluation of Learning and Competence Development in the Workplace

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During the last decade validation of skills and competences has become a frequently used method within the Swedish public sector. The skills and competences which individuals learn and develop, often in a workplace context, can in this way become visualized, documented and valued. The speeding up of the education process and meeting the demands of competence in job transition situations can be seen as the most important advantages of validation. Even if validation as a method in visualizing competence has not been commonly used in the private sector the need for development of learning and competence at the workplace has however been something that the sector has given high priority to, much due to the competition advantages a well developed strategy of supplying competence can give. In this study identification, visualisation, evaluation and management of competence within both public and private sector is looked at, mostly through interviews made with personal managers, team leaders and union representatives. The result shows that there are both important similarities and differences between the public and the private sector in visualizing, developing competence. This can mostly be explained by their different starting points as organisations and their individual objectives.

The work-based learning programme as a site of ambivalence for academic staff

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This symposium paper considers recent experiences of developing and seeking quality assurance approval for work-based programmes at postgraduate level in partnership with commercial organisations. It considers the areas of agreement, ambivalence and resistance among Faculty staff at the different stages of the process and uses a localised set of theories drawn from contemporary literature on work-based learning itself, and from organisational learning theory, psychology of learning, identity theory, change management theory, theories of experiential learning and of curriculum design. It also draws on current policy literature and recent critical literature on the changing role of higher education, knowledge production and academic capitalism. The purpose of this paper is to shape some analytical frameworks to better understand the dynamics of academic ambivalence and resistance in similar academic development contexts in the future.

Understanding learning at work: judgement and the goods of practice

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This paper reports the overall findings of a three year funded research project that investigated learning that enabled people to perform well in the demanding aspects of their occupations. Using critical incident techniques, detailed qualitative case studies of major incidents in eight diverse workplaces were constructed and the learning or otherwise by key players involved in these incidents was elucidated and analysed. Each case study addressed a critical incident that involved a multiplicity of workers. These case studies were used to test and refine a theory of learning at work that conceptualises it, at its best, as a growing capacity to make appropriate context-sensitive judgements (Beckett & Hager 2002, Hager & Halliday 2006). MacIntyre's account of practice (1981, 1990, 1999), particularly its distinguishing of internal and external goods within practices, was deployed in this project to add a further dimension to this emerging theory of learning at work. Internal goods are those goods that can only be obtained through the particular practice. Typically they include those standards of excellence that partly constitute the practice. External goods are those goods, such as security, status, money and power that can be obtained in other ways. The salient feature of MacIntyre's work is that it adds a teleological flavour to understandings of learning at work, evident in a focused dedication to the task in hand. For MacIntyre the narrative of an individual life is to be understood against the background of the wider social context that the individual finds herself within. This wider social context consists of sets of practices, which in turn are situated within traditions, which are the repositories of standards of rationality.

This paper will describe how the judgement-focused theory of workplace learning was tested empirically against data from the case studies. As well, the suitability of MacIntyre's account of practice to enrich the theory will be assessed, using data derived from cross-case study comparisons. Overall, it will be concluded that the project has reinforced and extended earlier models of informal workplace learning as highly contextualised and sensitive to social factors, judgements and the tacit elements of practice. A further outcome of our case studies was to identify some key characteristics of collective learning. It is dynamically constructed and emergent from interactions and not necessarily exhausted by summing the effects of individual learning. Finally, whilst the main focus of the paper is on what the eight case studies as a whole have contributed to understanding learning at work, attention will also be drawn to certain aspects of some of the case study findings that suggest the need for further research.

What are the key factors affecting learner motivation to complete qualifications through workplace learning?

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Changes in tertiary education funding priorities in New Zealand and internationally has focused on industry skills development and qualification completion. With the increased rate of change in today's economic environment new models of workplace learning have been developed. Employees are now required to obtain a broad range of skills to operate successfully in the workplace. To achieve this they need to remain open to continuous learning and to achieve new competencies to meet changing skill needs on a continuous basis.

To support industry and employees there has been a growth in the development of workplace learning models. In New Zealand the Industry Training Strategy was established in 1993 and from this strategy industry training organisations (ITOs) were formed. This model has developed as a major success with the growth in numbers totalling approximately a quarter of all learners registered in tertiary education in New Zealand.

The purpose of this research "key factors affecting learner motivation to complete qualifications through workplace learning" was to explore views and approaches of current research and literature on motivation for learner completion of qualifications through workplace learning. The evidence from this secondary research is to enable Learning State the New Zealand ITO for the State Sector to collate key relevant information to assist them to develop strategies and implement new models of workplace learning to increase learner completion in workplace learning.

Key questions explored in this research:

What are key factors associated with completion of qualifications in the workplace

What are effective models of workplace learning to support learner completion

What role does motivation play and how does motivation operative in workplace learning

For workplace learning to be successful this research acknowledges that all participants have a role to play. It explores the role of the ITO, the employer and the learner in motivation for completion of qualifications. Research on completions issues, models of workplace learning, key barriers to effective learning and learner support for workplace learning at all stages of development are identified. Literature on motivating adult learners and the self-directed learner is explored relating this to the workplace learning context.

This presentation will outline key research in this field and present findings from this secondary research along with feedback on the identified strategies for implementation to assist learners to be motivated to complete qualifications through workplace learning.

Workers researching the workplace: the confessions of a Work Based Learning tutor

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While there is a growing body of literature on learning issues in respect of Work Based Learning (WBL) more specific work on the facilitation of research (and its supervision) by WBL students is limited.

This paper presents a case study based upon experience and candid reflections of a tutor supervising workplace research projects at the University of Chester in the UK. The aim is to provide a starting point for discussion around the conceptual and practical issues involved in facilitating workplace research by practitioners from the perspective of the tutor. Within the discussion, the interests and views of other stakeholders are included, notably learners (employees) and employers, who usually pay for the learning.

WBL at Chester is facilitated through a 'shell' framework, the Work Based and Integrative Studies (WBIS) programme. WBIS has been in existence for a decade, during which time numbers enrolling on it have been increasing by about 20% annually. Currently there are about 1000 students pursuing a variety of pathways within WBIS.

WBIS is hugely flexible and is specifically tailored to meet the learning needs of adults in full time employment. Learners, by means of negotiation with tutors, begin when they want, progress at their own speed, determine the content of their learning pathway and even create their own title. Accredited learning and awards are available at all levels, except doctoral level. Learning is typically comprised of combinations of taught and experiential modules, with extensive use of Accreditation of Prior Experiential and Certificated Learning. Delivery typically involves combinations of tutorials, e-learning and workshops with extensive use of formative assessment.

Informal workplace investigation is integral to many reflective assignments in WBIS but more formal research methods are also taught and systematic practitioner investigations carried out as part of graduate and undergraduate pathways, as in conventional programmes. WBL frameworks in other UK universities also include such investigations and there is an awareness of the need for colleagues in such institutions to develop a dialogue on practice to address a number of conceptual and practical issues. The paper outlines the issues as seen from the perspective of WBIS tutors, which in turn is the basis for a small research project to be carried out in the latter half of 2009 with colleagues in other institutions.

“Juggling to teach, juggling to learn: an exploration of part-time lecturers’ experiences who work with part-time students in higher education”

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Abstract:

Part-time employed lecturers, who are working with part-time students in higher education, have several things in common. They are all juggling complex lives across home, work, and community; often teaching and learning at inconvenient, unsociable hours. The teaching and learning interactions are likely to be both constrained and enhanced by these realities. This paper is based on research at one university in South Africa, where we have previously focused on understanding working students’ experiences. This time we have chosen to privilege the experiences of the part-time lecturers in an attempt to obtain a more holistic view of what may or may not impact on the quality of after-hours provision through the eyes of the part-time lecturers.

Although part-time employed faculty are involved in after hours provision across the University, institutional information is uneven, decentralised and faculty-based. Work and learning experiences of part-time faculty are either unknown or, at best, remain at the margins institutionally. This research sets out to establish who the part-time academic staff are who teach on the after hours programmes, and also to gain an overview of both their working, as well as teaching and learning, experiences. We anticipate that baseline information of this kind can significantly assist institutional considerations for improving both the working experiences of part-time employed faculty and also the learning experiences of the students.

The literature suggests that the number of part-time employed faculty is increasing, with reference to North America and Britain (Korbla Puplampu 2004, and Peter Knight, Jo Tait and Mantz Torke 2007). Data is not readily available in South Africa, therefore it is not clear whether there is a similar trend, but it is reasonable to assume there may be.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used at the institutional and faculty levels to determine which proportion of staff was teaching on the after hours programme, as well as who the part-time employed faculty are. From this data a categorization of part-time lecturers is developed. Semi-structured interviews generated detailed information about the interaction between staff and students, work roles and learning identities, job satisfaction, quality of instruction, and recommendations for improvement.

Drawing on the previous research with students, the paper is suggestive of the relationship between work identities of part-time employed lecturers and the learning experiences of their students (Illeris et al. 2004, p. 69*) on the after hours programmes.

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