Developing Workplace Learning: Workplace as Learning Spaces

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- Poem about trainee chefs' learning in high class hotel kitchens
(a positive story about WPL)

- Poem about nursing aides in their first 3 months on the job
(The importance of workplace environments and the organisation of work)

Learning – what is it?

Knowledge – how do we think about it?

The workplace environment & beyond – its mediation of learning

Workplace learning strategies

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Research study

Purpose
- Recognise what is learnt in the selected workplaces, and what assessment processes are used.
- Identify ways in which learning and assessment is supported and constrained in the workplace.
- Propose models for recognising workplace learning through the WSQ framework.

Workplace Trainees	Trainees	Supervisors	Observations @ work	Observations @ TC
Hotel Co Chefs	3	1	5	0
Nursing Home Co Healthcare assistants	2	4	9	0
Café Co Baristas	2	2	11	1
Aircraft maintenance Co Aerospace technicians	3	1	1	3
TOTAL	10	8	26	4

Listen for:

What is being learnt
What mediates learning?

Bound, H., & Lin, M. (2011). *Singapore workforce skills qualifications, workplace learning and assessment (Stage two).* Singapore: Institute for Adult Learning.

Organisation of the work	• Working in teams • Given responsibility • Discretionary power • Supportive supervisors
Architecture of the workplace + vision/mission	• Structure of Hotel kitchens used to enhance learning • Learning written into mission
Workplace pedagogies	• Set challenges • Demonstrations • Opportunities for practice
Individual pedagogical tools	• Ask questions • Observe • Take notes, photos • Trial & error • Practice

HOW

Individual worker/ learner

- Working towards a whole qualification

- Wants to BE a chef

- Feels trusted

- Made to feel confident

- Has opportunities to make a contribution

W H Y

Workplace

- Learning is valued, e.g. learning from mistakes

- Shared understanding of standards

- Structured opportunities to learn about whole of food production and impact on guests

- Range of knowledges required recognised

- Diverse tasks within the role

- Learning built into everyday work activities

- Structured opportunities for learning are created

Listen for:

How is this different from the chef's opportunities for learning?
What were these new nursing aides learning?
What made the experience so different?

Bound, H., & Lin, M. (2011). *Singapore workforce skills qualifications, workplace learning and assessment (Stage two).* Singapore: Institute for Adult Learning.

Pedagogical tools	• Observation • Demonstrations • Buddying for first week

Organisation of work	• Strong hierarchy • Lot of individual work – limited paired or team work • SOPs and time driven

Culture of workplace	Enculturation through- • Follow the rules • Information given on request • Sharing limited, limited feedback • No trust

Role	• Very limited discretionary power • Limited responsibility

HOW

- Cannot see a future

- Limited valuing of
  the work

- Not 'heard'

- Not trusted

- Confidence eroded

W
H
Y

- Industry reliant on foreign labour – limited common language

- Requires medical knowledge but not trained

- Strong hierarchy

- Limited ACCESS to learning e.g. lack of opportunity for interaction and dialogue

- Deliberately structured out of learning affordances

Knowledge

Hotel

Knowledge of:

- Profession/vocation

- Workplace, workflow

- Standards

- Appropriate behaviours, ethical conduct etc.

- Vocation – identity as a chef

Knowledge - dynamic, enacted holistically and recognised as distributed over people and artefacts

Nursing Home
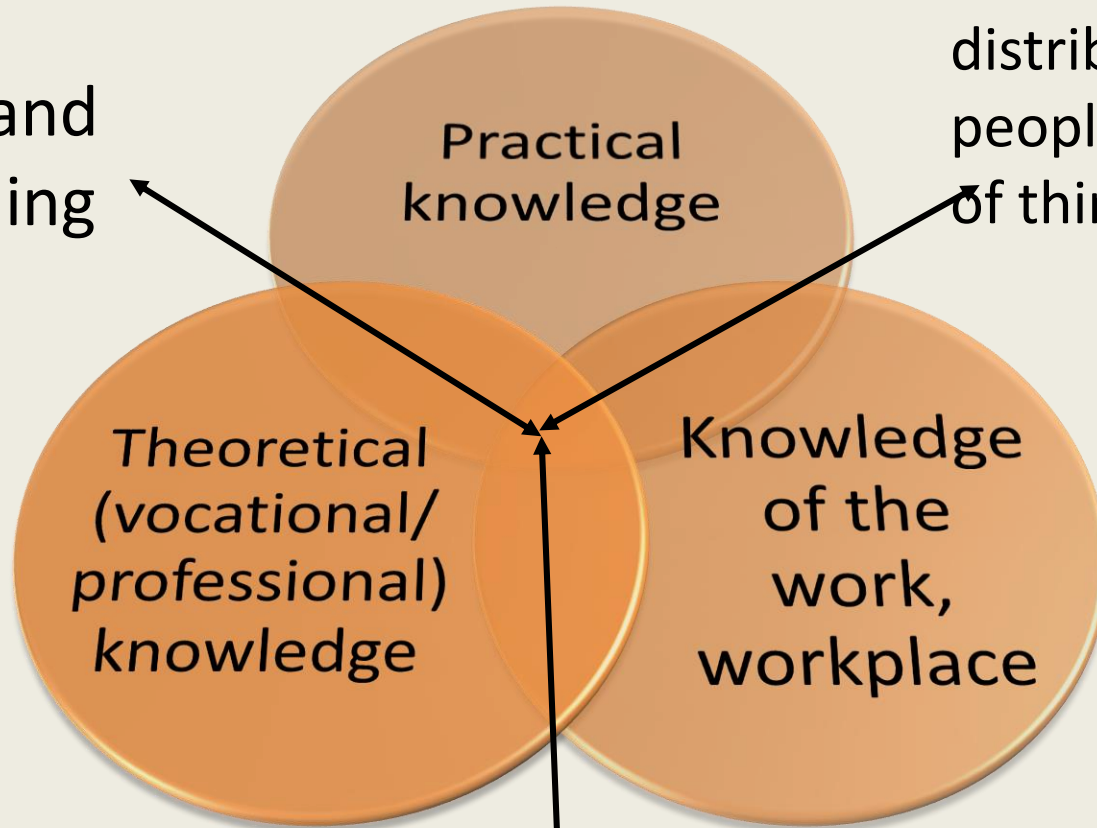
Knowledge of:

- The limits of their contribution

- Follow the rules

- There is no opportunity

- Medical knowledge is valued

Knowledge is static Separation between practical skills and know why

Collective & Individual

Being and becoming

Practical knowledge

Workplace knowledge is stretched / distributed over people, tools, ways of thinking and doing

Theoretical (vocational/ professional) knowledge

Knowledge of the work, workplace

Learning, potential knowledge creation, innovation

Stakeholder perspectives

Hotel

High end hotel, high standards & customer experience paramount

Integrated system of formal & informal learning. E.g. skills passport
Knowledge dynamic, know*ing*

RO: distributed responsibility for teaching, nurturing high performance, focus on development & potential

Worker: strong identity with the organisation and with the vocation
Rises to challenge and contributes

External provider: used tools that linked workplace and 'school'

Nursing home:

Challenge in getting and retaining staff

Knowledge static, know how and know why separated, knowledge and practice separated

RO: limited opportunities to support learning

Worker: very limited discretionary power, rostered out of structured learning opportunities

External provider: train & place, no ongoing relationship with workplace

A learning solution or not?

Market structure

Policy

Vocation /profession

Productive system of organisation

Learning conditions

Cultures
Structures

Institutional relations & infrastructure

Where in the value chain is the firm?

Learning
Individual, team firm

Improved performance

Dr Helen Bound IAL 2014

Workplace Learning

WPL is about the relationships between the human and social processes of learning and working.

We need to understand these processes at individual and organisational levels and in wider societal terms
(Evans, Guile & Harris,2011, p.150)

Learning

Results from everyday practice (Lave, 1996; 2008)

Is highly contextual and socially constructed (Boreham, 2004; Sense, 2005; Lee & Roth, 2005; Bound 2007)

Is mediated by the social relations of production (Bound, 2007; Jewson, Unwin, Felstead, Fuller & Kakavelakis, 2008)

Is individual and collective (Billett, 2001; Leach & Moon,2008; Guile & Okumoto, 2008; Evans, Hodkinson, Rainbird, & Unwin, 2006; Bound & Lin, 2013)

Is mediated by workplace artefacts, norms, structures and interactions (Stevenson, 2008; *Bound, 2011; Miettinen & Hasu, 2002; Leontyev, 1981;* Engeström, 2004)

Takes place in multiple boundary spaces (Fitzpatrick, 2000; Engeström, 2000; Kerosuo, & Engeström, 2003; Bound, 2007)

WPL

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Learning initiatives (individual, team or organisational require:

- Doing (Bound & Lim, 2010; Lee & Roth, 2005;)

- Challenge

- Valuing of the work

- Feedback,

- Trust, support

- Confidence, personal agency, motivation (Eraut & Hirsch, 2010)

- Reflection on experience (DeLong & Fahey, 2000; Eljaer, 2000)

- Theoretical knowing (Lee & Roth, 2005)

- Participation in decision making (Thompson & Kahnweiler, 2002

Workplace as learning environment

- High degree of exposure to change

- High degree of exposure to demands

- Managerial responsibility

- Lot of external professional contact

- Direct feedback

- Management support for learning

- Rewarding of proficiency

Learning conditions
(Skule & Reichborn, 2002)

Workplace as learning environment

- Industry infrastructure and relations

- Systems of production, organisation and flow of the work

- Division of labour

- Workplace structure and culture

- Workplace discourses

- Assumptions about the capabilities of employees

- Individual agency

Access to learning

Affordances for learning

Demonstration

- **Demonstrate at normal pace (understanding of whole task).**
- **Repeat at slower pace with explanations (understanding of sub tasks). Repeat again as necessary.**
- **Verbalise standards of performance.**

Coaching

Repeated practice over _time_ with coach providing constructive feedback, demonstrations, supportive comments to enable smooth performance to required standard

Scaffolding and fading

(adjustable, temporary support that can be removed when no longer required)

- **Assess if learner is ready and able to take more responsibility for the task.**
- **Remove support gradually.**

Guided reflection

- Encourage reflection on what has been learnt.
- Assist them to understand the breadth of what they have learnt and how and where it can be applied.
- Facilitate the abstraction of leaning from one situation to another.

Active noticing

Guide the learner on what to notice, what is more and less important.

Discuss what they see and explore what they are not yet seeing

Gradual release of responsibility

- Sequence the learning, building theory and practice together.
- Sequence tasks to build confidence. Devolve responsibility gradually.
- Over time sequence responsibility to identify gaps

Feedback

- **Use the sandwich method (praise is the bread, the filling is what can be improved)**
- **Praise –what is good about the work**
- **What can be improved –what is not up to standard, or what is missing, etc.**
- **Praise – something else that is good about the work or encouragement e.g. keep at it you will get there, you are doing well.**

Asking questions

Use open questions, not closed questions.

- Open questions examples:
  - What do you think is happening here?
  - How would you explain what the problem is?
  - What do you think we should do from here?
- Closed questions require 1 or 2 word answers: e.g.
  - Did you learn the procedures?
  - Can you tell me the name of….

Using diagrams / models

Draw, make or use a model
to explain or show
what is happening or
going to happen.

Teaching others

To teach is to learn twice.
Assign people with budding expertise to teac
newcomers or others who are seeking to
develop further.

Induction

The orientation and training of individuals in the organization culture showing how they are interconnected to (and interdependent on) others in the organization. Ideally, this should be done as much as possible on the job with a well thought through checklist.

Give workers power to make decisions

People learn when they apply thinking skills su
as analysis and evaluation during decision
making.
Trust them

### *Give responsibility to workers* **People rise to responsibility, if supported with clear goals and roles. Delegate tasks and responsibilities to staff but final accountability rests with the leader.**	### *Spaces for sharing* **Provide spaces (e.g. tearooms, open spaces, meeting rooms, online spaces) for both formal and informal sharing.** **The dialogue that takes place is often about work e.g. information sharing, problem solving, identifying resources, issues etc.**
### *Shadowing* **Build confidence and awareness by following a competent team member or supervisor for a couple of days to get a better idea of his or her role, as well as understand the particulars of the role without the commitment of the responsibility.**	### *Assign buddies* Assign a new person to an experienced worker. The role of the buddy is to show how things are done in the organisation, point out who to go to for what, what resources are available and how to access them.
### *Setting challenges* **Stretch your team, give each individual and/or the team a challenge.** • **This should be something that is a little out of their comfort zone but within their ability to achieve it.** • **Debrief and reflect on the process and on the completion of the challenge**	### *Provide opportunities for practice* Give staff a series of planned tasks to accomplish or assign staff real life situations of handling customers or performing a task.

Teamwork

Working in teams requires dialogue and shared problem solving – important aspects of learning. Understand that team members may possess different strengths and temperaments. Match their skills and talents to the roles and tasks.

Checking for understanding

Ask open questions that require the person to create their own understanding or come up with something different. E.g.

- How could we /you do this differently?
- How would you suggest we /you improve on this?
- Any thoughts about why this is happening?

Tricks of the trade

(Shortcuts / Heuristics)

Learn methods that help do a job faster or better. Observe a skilled professional and ask questions to undercover "shortcuts" / how to think about the process

Mnemonics

Use techniques and memory aids that help information retention. Associate the learning content with ideas, people and things that you are familiar with.

Goal Setting

Provide a goal setting method such as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) to guide staff in setting goals.

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Job Rotation

Provide a different perspective and help staff understand various functions in the organisation by rotating them within the organisation. Help them appreciate the organisation as a whole rather than in silos.

Meetings

Meetings can be a powerful source of learning, informally and formally. Informally participants learn information about what is happening in the organisation or team. Formally, you can structure part of the meeting for participants' to share or provide input, or invite individuals from outside the team or organisation to share their expertise.

Community of Practice

Gather people who share similar interest in a particular domain or areas to gain knowledge related to your field. Share information and experiences and learn from each other. Collaborate on sharing experiences whether online or in face-to-face settings.

Sequencing of tasks

The way tasks are ordered (sequenced) provides a natural structure for a curriculum for learning. Use the way tasks are sequenced in the workplace to gradually introduce the participant to more complex work and greater responsibility.
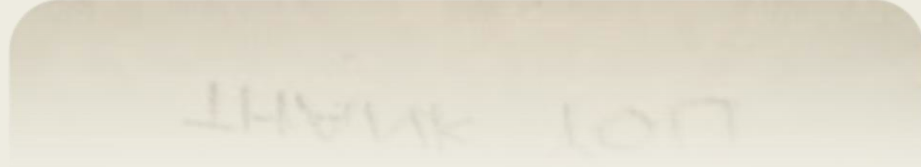
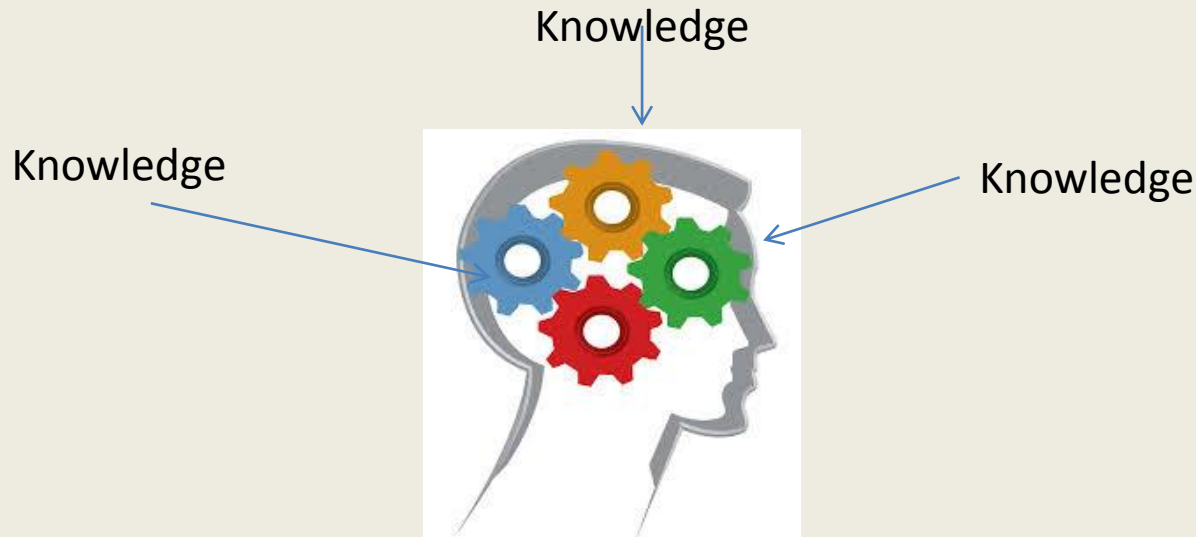# Conclusion
Workplaces as learning spaces

Creating workplaces as learning spaces and learning that develops us and our work that grow us and the system, requires deliberate attention and planning

Believing in the capability and potential of individuals, teams, & the organisation is a must.

Acquisition metaphor of learning

Knowledge

Knowledge

Knowledge

Assumptions:
- Learner is an empty vessel or a 'bank (Frierre, 1972) where knowledge is deposited
- Learner receives / acquires knowledge over time and combines concepts
- Learner a lone operator
- Knowledge is transferred / transmitted to the learner
- Knowledge is a thing that is owned by individuals, knowledge does not change

Participation metaphor of learning

Part icipation

You are a part of something
Suggests action … doing

Assumptions:
- Context is important for learning
- Learning is social, you learn with and through others and the artefacts they create
- Know*ing* (a verb) as opposed to knowledge (a noun)
- Engagement with others

- Ask peers, supervisors / ROs
- Observe others
- Undertake own research
- Interaction with customers / internal & external stakeholders

- Networking with those outside the organisation
- "Just doing it"
- Practice - repetition

Learning happens naturally in the workplace:
In, through and for work

- Meetings
- Team problem solving
- Demonstration

- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Buddying

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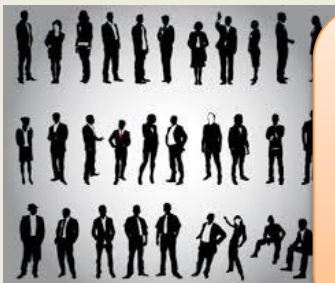
- Rewarding of proficiency

Learning conditions
(Skule & Reichborn, 2002)

Integration of skills, knowledge attitude and values to produce
Performance
Meet required standards

Career progression
Contribute, find meaning in your work
Improve and develop
"it's just a job"

Certification