Supervisory & reflective practice: the role of e-guidance

The Career Landscape:
from island to global

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Supervisory & reflective practice: the role of e-guidance

Focus:

- introduction of a reflective e-portfolio to a UK call centre (2006/2007)

- sub-contracting arrangement by a major e-learning provider

- service: telephone career guidance

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Primary aim of e-portfolio:

- To support the continuing professional development (CPD) of 'career coaches' providing the telephone service

Secondary aim:

- Improve service to customers

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Key Issue:

- Influence of the two organisational cultures on the process of development & implementation

- Mediated by different understandings of technology and its uses

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Structure:

- learndirect service

- Supervisory & reflective practice

- Workplace PLEs & E-portfolios

- Organisational culture, CPD & technology

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Learndirect Advice Service:

- Telephone and web-based learning & careers service

- Phone service launched in 1998, sub-contracted to BSS

- Website launched in 2000

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Telephone service:

- Initially – single tier of advisers

- Many requests - straightforward

- Peak calls – 1.4m in 2000

- Average call length – 8 minutes

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Telephone service:

- Now offering in-depth careers guidance

- 800,000 callers per year

- Promoted through national television advertising

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Telephone service:

- 7 days a week

- 8am to 10pm

- information and advice offered in 9 languages other than English

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Telephone service:

- 200 employees in two national centres

- 3 tiers of adviser:

    ~ Information adviser

    ~ Learning adviser

    ~ Career coach

- Significant internal training programme with external accreditation

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Web service:

- Self-service access to details on:

  ~ 900,000 course from 10,000 providers

  ~ 800 occupational profiles

  ~ Articles on funding, childcare, etc.

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Supervision:

Purpose:

To develop & maintain usefulness to clients

Definition:

Formal contractual arrangement which enables practitioners to discuss their work with someone appropriately qualified

Ref: Horton, I. (1993). Supervision, in R. Bayne & P. Nicolson (eds.) Counselling & Psychology for Health Professionals. London: Chapman & Hall.

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Supervisory roles:

- *Educative* – deeper understanding, reflective
- *Supportive* – intense or conflicting demands
- *Managerial* – organisational standards/goals

Ref: Kadushin, A.: Supervision in Social Work New York: Columbia University Press, 1976

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Supervision:

E-portfolios offered one method of developing supervisory practice within BSS, compatible with workplace demands & constraints

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Workplace PLEs:

- Based on the development of e-learning tools which are not dependent on VLEs

- Collaborative learning:

  ~ learning communities;

  ~ social networks; and

  ~ communities of practice

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Workplace PLEs:

- Made up of a collection of loosely coupled tools, including Web 2.0 technologies

- Used for:

  ~ working; learning; reflection; and collaboration with others

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Workplace PLEs:

• learner driven, problem-based and motivated by interest;

• learning as a continuing activity (not a process triggered by a single provider);

• use of work-integrated learning support

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Workplace PLEs: some challenges

- linkage of individual learning processes with the development of individual/collective understanding as knowledge and learning processes mature

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Workplace PLEs: some challenges

- Much e-learning, e-assessment and knowledge management offer solutions for specific learning needs that can be 'just-in-time' direct from the workplace

- But have often created a *fragmented learning landscape*

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Workplace PLEs & e-portfolios

- Within the Learndirect/BSS context, the learning activities of the career coaches needed to be conceived (and technically supported) as embedded into *everyday work processes*

- e-portfolios support review, reflection & personal development planning

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E-portfolio

Collection of digital resources that:

- provide evidence of progress & achievement

- drawn from both formal & informal learning

- personally managed and owned by the learner

- can be selectively accessed

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E-portfolio: development phases

- research

- awareness-raising

- consultation

- design

- piloting & refinement

- implementation

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Supervision: the role of e-guidance

- Technology developed to record 'case studies' of interesting &/or difficult customers

- To be discussed and shared selectively with colleagues

Powerful & flexible form of supervisory practice?

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Organisational cultures Learndirect/BSS

The implementation and application of ICT goes through a filtering process of social norms, attitudes and values.

(Symon, 2000)

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Organisational cultures Learndirect/BSS

Emerging tensions:

- Data protection (case studies)

- Privacy (levels of access)

- Organisational policy v. 'personalisation' (files and images)

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Overall:

- Technology can operate as a *catalyst* for change & also used to *encourage* change

- *Too early* to assess the degree of change stimulated by the introduction of an e-portfolio in this context

- However, this innovation likely to play a *significant role* in organisational change