

How learning helps people in their career

How learning helps people in their career: skills development and the role of CVET in individual career development

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- **European study: implications for continuing vocational training & training (CVET) for changing patterns of career development across Europe**
- Context: Other IER activities, including UK TLRP Learning at work research programme

Prospects for future collaboration: adaptability

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Landscape:

Transitions: upskilling; reskilling; reframing;

Identities – occupation – organisation – skill set;

Life-course: periods of relative stability and periods of substantive learning and development;

Strategic Biographies: career development across the lifecourse, coherent career narratives.

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Changes:

- Labour market change; technological change; globalisation; diversity within and between countries
- How do people's careers actually evolve over time
- 'A transition is any event, *or non-event*, that results in changed relationships, assumptions & roles'. [Schlossberg, N.K., Waters, E.B. & Goodman, J. (1995) *Counseling Adults in Transition: Linking Practice with Theory*, New York, Springer].

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Nature of transitions:

- Predictable or unpredictable; positive or negative; voluntary or involuntary; gradual or sudden
- Generally, transitions involve stress
- Affect individuals differently
- Different styles of managing
- Individuals can be helped to adapt and gain from a transition

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Labour market transitions:

- up-skilling
- re-skilling
- opportunity to re-direct your career
- downward drift
- career break
- education based re-skilling for labour market re-entry

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Successful transitions:

- individuals need to reframe & refocus - require new perspectives
- support required to move on: problem-solving, decision-making & coping skills
- value of learning and development, including CVT

Support for successful transitions:

- access to specialist labour market information
- new insights, focus, confirmation & confusion reduction
- support to motivate
- support to increase self-confidence
- opportunities for reflection

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Key events and processes in life-course:

- Intensive *episodes of learning* across the life-course
- Many people *actively shape* their personal work biographies (but often value help)
- **Work attachment** aligned to a **career anchor** can affect willingness to engage in upskilling (positive) and reskilling (negative?)
- Reskilling: individual belief in **transferable skill sets**

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Evolving careers and learning:

- Importance of development of coherent career narratives.
- Lack of engagement with substantive learning and development linked to downward career drift.
- Key to career success of older workers in a new context is a positive disposition towards learning.
- With a proactive approach to career development people are more likely to engage in CVT and LLL.
- Employees in learning-rich work environments more likely to have a positive disposition towards learning.
- Importance of encouragement, time and space to engage in self-directed learning and critical reflection for proactive approach to career development.

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Learning and development:

- Learning to learn and link continuing learning strategically to career development is important.
- Development needs to deliver breadth and depth of learning across the levels: competence alone will be insufficient
- Premium on supporting the learning of others and creativity; changes in ways of thinking and practising
- Transferable skill sets (i.e. ability to switch between different contexts)

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TLRP Learning at work: factors facilitating skill development

- engagement with challenging work: common way for newly qualified or experienced workers to upskill
- interactions at work: clients, customers, colleagues, mentors, supervisors, trainees, teams, personal networks - source of development but can also create need for additional learning
- knowledge at work: development of disciplined ways of thinking and practising; conceptual understanding; valued forms of knowledge
- self-directed learning at work
- identities at work: transferable skill sets - ability to switch between different contexts
- supporting the learning of others: developmental model of expertise.

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European survey:

- **Learning while working** is an established form of learning for individuals, especially in changing work environments.
- Patterns of career development and CVT vary according to: national, organisational & sectoral contents & nature of learning environment at work (expansive v. restrictive)
- **Individual access** to learning and development opportunities is constrained by **individual, organisational and contextual factors: opportunity structures**

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Learning from others:

- Learning from others and through networks facilitate a proactive approach to career development
- Organisational emphasis on breadth of competence development help individuals develop proactive approach to career development.
- Aerospace: technical competence, but also ability to support learning of others and change ways of working
- Timely and appropriate feedback and support crucial for learner identities & proactive approach to development.

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TLRP: Eraut – early career learning

At any stage we might need to enhance our skills, knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

- Task Performance
- Role Performance
- Situational Awareness and Understanding
- Teamwork
- Personal and Group Development
- Decision-Making and Problem-Solving
- Academic Knowledge and Skills
- Judgement.

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Conclusions 1:

- need a developmental model of expertise (not a binary view of development of competence)
- need to encourage people to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways
- need to encourage **mid-career change** if want more older people to remain engaged in the labour market
- people need support to develop coherent career narratives of where they have been; what they are doing now and where they are going
- interest in how individual careers are changing across the life-course in response to national and international change:next stop?

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Conclusions 2:

'Useful' careers guidance

- **Positive outcomes** (e.g. focus, confusion reduction)
- **Access** (i.e. Knowledge and networks)
- **Supporting positive change** (self- confidence, motivation)
- **Positive experience** (self-reflection, interested professional)

Informal careers support

Often used informal support, but wanted access to formal support [i.e. *training, funding, job search, job prospects, skills assessment*]

Differential access to learning & career

Social justice and equity issues - strong underpinning themes

Differential access to learning

- **Qualitative, case study approach**
 - ❖ In-depth study to provide rich, deep insights
- **Purposive sampling**
 - ❖ Specific focus on gender – 52% of the world population, yet suffer persistent, systemic & systematic disadvantage
- **Women aged 45 – 65**
 - ❖ Benchmark: '*mature age workers*' : re-entry problematic
 - ❖ International comparison: 12 Australian; 12 English; 12 South African; 12 Italian; 12 German; 12 Argentinean

Differential access to learning

Background data:

- ❖ Age, income, marital status, dependents
- ❖ Employment status & qualifications

Work and learning experiences:

- ❖ past, present & future
- ❖ nature
- ❖ reflections
- ❖ future

(Ref: Patton, Wendy A. and McMahon, Mary L. (2006) *The Systems Theory Framework Of Career Development And Counseling: Connecting Theory And Practice*. International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 28(2). pp. 153-166)

Differential access to learning

- ❖ **Methodology:**

Grounded theory

- ❖ **Analysis: code development**

2 stage, 9 phase thematic analysis across 3 countries (Australia, England and South Africa):

- ❖ *Stage 1:* Five phases of code category development resulting in 9 master code categories
- ❖ *Stage 2:* Four phases of subsequent refinement of master codes

Differential access to learning

Emergent themes:

- ❖ Learning across the lifespan
- ❖ Transitioning styles (e.g. strategic, opportunistic)
- ❖ Intrapersonal Influences (e.g. values)
- ❖ Contextual Influences:
 - ❖ Finance
 - ❖ Social
 - ❖ Work
- ❖ Relational influences (e.g. relocation)
- ❖ Reflections:
 - ❖ Advice to Others
 - ❖ Future planning

Career Adaptability

Research findings - issues:

- Learning - increasing motivation
- Career development - supporting

International research group:

Attempting to craft an operational definition for the conception of career resources or adapt-abilities & measures

Career Adaptability

Career construction theory:

- ❖ conceptualizes human development as driven by adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person-environment integration
- ❖ takes a contextual & cultural perspective on social adaptation and niche-making.

Occupation:

- ❖ mechanism for social integration & sustenance

Dynamic Model:

Adaptability --> Adapting --> Adaptation

Readiness --- > Response --> Result

Reference: Savickas , M.L. & Porfeli, E. J. (2010) Career Adaptability: Psychological Readiness and Psychosocial Resources. In Savickas, M. L. (Chair). *Career Adaptability: Model and Measure*, Invited symposium conducted at the 27th Congress of Applied Psychology, Melbourne, Australia, July 12-16, 2010

Career Adaptability

Career adapting:

- navigating vocational development tasks;
- coping with occupational transitions;
- adjusting to work traumas & contingencies.

Five sets of behaviors: (each named for their adaptive functions):

- orientation, exploration, establishment, management & disengagement.

Career Adaptability

- a **psychosocial construct**;
- denotes an **individual's readiness & resources** for coping with:
 - ❖ current and anticipated tasks,
 - ❖ transitions, traumas in their occupational roles that alter their social integration

(Savickas, 1997, 2005)

Career Adaptability

Career resources or adapt-abilities:

- Four scales under development:
 - ❖ concern,
 - ❖ control,
 - ❖ curiosity,
 - ❖ confidence

Career Adaptability
