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**Communities, networking and virtual support: the example of
collaborative development on careers guidance and work-
related learning through the UK National Guidance Research
Forum Website**

www.guidance-research.org

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September 2005

**This paper was presented at a VETNET Workshop on 'Knowledge
Development in the field of Vocational Education and Training',
European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) Conference,
University College Dublin, Dublin, 7th - 10th September 2005**

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Communities, networking and virtual support: the example of collaborative development on careers guidance and work-related learning through the UK National Guidance Research Forum Website

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1. Overview

An interdisciplinary team of researchers, practitioners and professional associations in the UK have worked together to create a comprehensive website for those interested in career guidance research. This has been funded by the Department for Education and Skills in England. Target groups include: practitioners, policy makers, researchers, guidance students and trainees, tutors and trainers. The website is to support the development of a community of interest and has the potential to enhance practice. Its overall purpose is 'to bring together research and practice in guidance to increase effectiveness'.

A key feature of this website development is the construction of a shared knowledge base, by working with contextualised professional problems. This has been achieved by the formation of groups with relevant expertise. These groups represented a centre of expertise for particular topics and had several tasks (for example, the identification of gaps, key areas or problems and the provision of a mediated commentary on key documents and research findings on-line). Approximately 55 members of the guidance community contributed to the development of a shared knowledge base that has emerged from the contextualised problems faced in practice.

An important feature of the website is that it provides the opportunity to raise issues, engage in development work and contribute to on-line discussions. This type of collaboration is necessary for active knowledge creation. In this way, it is hoped that we can progress our understanding of guidance issues - as existing available knowledge is combined with new insights to create new forms of contextualised knowledge.

A complementary initiative has resulted in the expansion and development of the section of the website concerned with work-related learning. This initiative has focused upon supporting research in work-related learning and is supported by the UK's Teaching and Learning Research Programme. Additionally the development is being supported as an example of possible collaboration between the special interest groups concerned with workplace learning and professional development as part of a broader attempt at cooperation between EARLI and the European Educational Research Association (EERA).

Aims:

The aims were to:

- develop an imaginative way of linking processes of knowledge acquisition, development, transformation and creation with approaches to tackling the core problems of guidance practice;
- examine the ways in which learning to practise guidance are created and shared (beliefs, concepts, ideas, theories, actions) in the search for new understandings of effective guidance;

Development:

A key feature of the development has been the construction of a shared knowledge base (website) from the contextualised problems that policy makers, managers, practitioners, researchers and trainers face. This has involved expert groups focusing on particular topics and key issues and providing a mediated commentary on key documents and research findings on-line. This has enriched the process and acted to validate the outcomes. The website has two main sections:

- **LMI Future Trends** – consisting of labour market information focusing on labour market changes and skills needs in the UK.
- **Making Guidance more effective** - containing a range of synopses, links, resources and edited discussions on six inter-related themes: Equal Opportunities; Impact Analysis; Using Research in Practice; Improving Practice; Lifelong Learning; International Perspectives.

The website extends the use of ICT to support the knowledge development of the dispersed community of guidance practice (Brown *et al.*, 2002). The work of the six expert work groups meant it was possible to advance understanding through processes of knowledge combination, where existing knowledge was combined with new insights to create new forms of contextualised knowledge. New participants could then make use of online support from a community of interest that focused on the interweaving of guidance research and practice. Participants can make contributions in different forms (e.g. text, images, links to documents, html pages or other notes) and can comment on material and contribute to discussions, and in so doing elaborate the knowledge that is already in the website.

Brown *et al.* (2002) stressed the importance of having time and space for face to face interactions to facilitate socialisation, externalisation (or active reflection), combination of new and existing knowledge, and the internalisation of different types of knowledge (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Opportunities to meet and talk through issues, engage in development work and link to continuing on-line discussions that facilitated the collaboration necessary for active knowledge creation were therefore built into the development process.

Outcomes:

The website, launched in September 2004, has been extensively used and the feedback from the target community has been very favourable. The created knowledge represents a social product, but the process of collaborative knowledge creation also comprises a form of knowledge building

where individuals (learn to) share their knowledge and create new knowledge together. Consequently, a platform, grounded in the realities of guidance practice has emerged, which has enabled us to build continuing relationships with members of the community, especially those engaged in research, training or continuous professional development. The environment enables participants to: (jointly) develop, edit and modify materials; share annotation on material; facilitate the sharing of experience; and promote discussion, sharing and active collaboration.

It does this by: offering virtual (and in some cases real) spaces for debate and collaboration; supporting action research; offering active support and moderation; offering support to particular interest groups; and providing a forum for discussion of attempts to tackle complex problems in careers guidance practice. The website can be accessed at <http://www.guidance-research.org>

Processes:

By working together, participants used the collective and individual knowledge of group members, co-constructing plans of action to extend that knowledge (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1994). In order to work together online and become used to sharing knowledge, deepen their own and common understanding and creating further insights, it is crucial for participants to be able to coordinate, clarify and regulate the discourse themselves (de Laat *et al.* 2001). We therefore adapted a model of progressive inquiry (Hakkarainen and Muukonen, 1999) that engaged participants in the development in a process of question and explanation driven inquiry. These ‘team tasks’ comprised a series of particular questions, grounded in practice, relating to one of the six broad themes, and helped to scaffold the learning activities of participants, together with face-to-face sessions that provided still greater support to the process of knowledge building related to the interleaving of research and practice. The interactive features on the website are being extended to allow group and individual web logs.

This initiative has supported the creation of a dynamic community of interest bringing guidance research and practice closer together. It has enabled us to examine the ways in which learning about guidance is created and shared as well as providing a powerful engine to assist with the search for new understandings of effective guidance.

2. *Full commentary:*

Introduction

This paper outlines the development of a website in the UK that seeks to bring guidance research and practice closer together. The shared knowledge base underpinning the website was developed from the contextualised problems that policy makers, managers, practitioners, researchers and trainers faced. Six expert groups looked at key issues related to their expertise and provided a on-line commentary on relevant documents and research findings. The overall developmental process represents a major contribution to research capacity building within the UK guidance community because it has involved a range of prospective users on an iterative basis in the construction of the website.

Since 1996, a team of researchers based at the Warwick Institute for Employment Research has been involved in various research projects related to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for collaborative knowledge sharing and development. Findings have led progressively towards making links amongst innovative development agendas, network-based knowledge sharing and the construction of virtual platforms (including the development of CEDRA - the CEDEFOP Research Arena). Engaging sufficient numbers of participants with common interests (e.g. ICT teacher trainers; Vocational Educational & Training researchers) and supporting their participation in virtual communication networks emerged as a particular challenge. The guidance community in the UK posed an interesting new case. It apparently has common goals and shared practice, but represents an increasingly fragmented sector with services for adults separated from services for young people in England and further divisions created recently by the devolution of policy and practice in the four constituent countries (OECD, 2003). After working with this community for some time, it became clear that 'shared practice' is problematic because of this sector fragmentation. Increasingly, it has seemed more logical to consider guidance practitioners, managers, policy-makers, researchers, trainers and students as a 'community of interest', with much looser ties than a 'community of practice'. In this paper, the development of this shared web-based knowledge base, designed to bring research and practice closer together for the broad community of guidance in the UK, is critically examined, with some of the lessons learned discussed.

Development of a shared web-based knowledge base

An interdisciplinary team of researchers and developers from the University of Warwick, the University of Derby (Centre for Guidance Studies) and KnowNet (a small specialist collaborative software development company) are developing a major new resource for the guidance community, the UK National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF) website (<http://www.guidance-research.org>). The initial development phase has been funded by the Department for Education and Skills in England and the website was formally launched in September 2004, with some sections still under development at that time. Its overall purpose is to facilitate knowledge sharing and transformation for those interested in guidance research and practice, including: practitioners, policy makers, researchers, guidance trainees, tutors and trainers. The objectives of this website are to:

- create and support an on-line community of interest for guidance;
- bring practice, research and policy closer together; and
- focus on the core problems of guidance practice.

A key feature of the website has been the construction of a shared knowledge base, not from an *a priori* comprehensive blueprint, but by being grown more organically from the contextualised problems that policy makers, managers, practitioners, researchers and trainers face. This has been achieved by forming steering groups drawn from all the above groups, as centres of expertise for particular topics. These groups have looked at key issues related to their expertise and provided a commentary on key documents and research findings on-line. The process has contributed to research capacity building within the guidance community by involving a range of prospective users on an iterative basis. This methodology has both enriched the process and acted to validate the outcomes.

There are three main sections on the website, as follows:

- **LMI Future Trends** – consisting of labour market information focusing on labour market changes and skills needs in the UK.
- **Making Guidance more effective** - containing a range of synopses, links, resources and edited discussions on six inter-related themes: **Equal Opportunities** (where some complex issues surrounding the equality of opportunity and guidance are explored, together with relevant legislation); **Impact Analysis** (here, research resources and discussions related to the impact of guidance can be found); **Using Research in Practice** (which provides an introduction to research processes and contains resources aimed at both newcomers and experienced researchers); **Improving Practice** (focused both on the theory underpinning practice and the ways in which changes - to policy or in technology - can lead to the need to re-examine and possibly rethink practice); **Lifelong Learning** (where the inter-relationships between learning and guidance are explored); and finally, **International Perspectives** (which enables participants to learn from

international developments and contribute to a wider debate on current issues).

- A database – linking directly to the National Library Resource for Guidance, based at the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby.

Note, however, the success of the website has led to major expansion plans. In the first instance this expansion has taken four directions. First, to continue to enhance and extend the LMI future trends section as this resource is welcomed as an independent and authoritative source of LMI. Second, to develop a website, through a European Leonardo project, that builds a similar capability in four other countries (Denmark, Finland, Greece and Slovenia). Third, the discussion facilities (that at one used Community Zero) are being redeveloped and enhanced making use of web-logging capabilities. Fourth, the section on work-related learning will be significantly enhanced and expanded as a top-level section of the site (that is, the site will henceforth have a dual focus on guidance and work-related learning).

The project extends the use of ICT to support knowledge development for the dispersed community of guidance practice (Brown & Bimrose, 2000). The formation of six expert work groups (one each for Equal Opportunities, Impact Analysis, Using Research in Practice, Improving Practice, Lifelong Learning and International Perspectives) meant it was possible to advance understanding through processes of knowledge combination, where existing knowledge was combined with new insights to create new forms of contextualised knowledge. Previously, Brown, Attwell & Bimrose (2002) had adopted the same type of interactive and collaborative approach to knowledge creation. This also stressed the importance of having sufficient time and space for face-to-face interactions to facilitate socialisation, externalisation (or active reflection), combination of new and existing knowledge, and the internalisation of different types of knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka & Konno, 1998). An important feature of the new website development has, similarly, been the combination of opportunities to meet and talk through issues, engage in development work and link to continuing on-line discussions that facilitated the collaboration necessary for active knowledge creation. The created knowledge represents a social product, with the process of collaborative knowledge creation also representing a form of knowledge building where individuals (learn to) share their knowledge and create new knowledge together.

Participants in the development of the NGRF website were able to make use of online support for a community of interest that focused on the interweaving of guidance research and practice in a way that offered significant advantages. These included: being able to collaborate independent of time and space; participate in their own time and at their own pace; make contributions in different forms (e.g. text, links to documents or other notes); explore something thoroughly by commenting on material and contributing to discussions (and in so doing elaborate on the knowledge that is already in the website).

Overall, the key to this process of knowledge development has been to set up a genuinely collaborative environment for a wide range of participants. The environment enabled participants to: (jointly) develop, edit and modify materials; share annotation on material; facilitate the sharing of experience; promote discussion, sharing and collaborate actively. This was achieved by offering virtual spaces for debate and collaboration; supporting action research; offering active support and moderation; offering support to particular interest groups; and providing a forum for discussion of attempts to tackle complex problems in careers guidance practice.

Reflection point: Note, however, what is particularly important for more general debates about Virtual Communities is that during the development stage the volume of contributions was so overwhelming that the Community Zero site used during development became unmanageable. Syntheses and knowledge combination then become vital tools if participants are able to access useful material quickly.

Collaborative development processes

Individuals from many organisations involved in guidance participated in the development process for the website. They were drawn from careers companies; Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) partnerships; higher education; voluntary and community sector organisations; the private sector; various government organisations and employers. Additionally, the project team actively engaged in continuing dialogue with representatives of those organisations with a strategic interest in the development of career guidance policy and practice and/or the development of labour market information. By working together, participants used the collective and individual knowledge of group members, co-constructing plans of action to extend that knowledge (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1994).

It is crucial for participants to be able to coordinate, clarify and regulate the discourse themselves (de Laat *et al.* 2001) whilst working together on-line to become used to sharing knowledge, deepen their own and common understanding and creating further insights, A model of progressive inquiry (Hakkarainen and Muukonen, 1999) was therefore adopted that engaged participants in the development in a step-by-step process of question and explanation driven inquiry. These were called 'team tasks' and comprised a series of particular questions, grounded in practice, relating to one of the six broad themes described above. For example, in Impact Analysis a lively discussion ensued around "Much of quality assessment is to do with how systems operate with an emphasis on what the organisation does, procedures and paper trials, complaints, appointment procedures and so on. There could be an inbuilt danger that quality assessment tilts too far towards looking at organisational systems and practice at the expense of enquiry into the benefits to service users." The results of this discussion, including exploration of the benefits quality standards bring to clients, can be seen on the website, framed by related discussions and linked to a wide range of other materials.

de Laat *et al.* (2001) consider that by introducing a model of progressive inquiry, you develop frameworks, or scaffolds, to structure and regulate the

learning activities of participants. The approach adopted for the NGRF website added still greater support to the process of knowledge building by making continuing use of face-to-face sessions which focused around the interweaving of research and practice.

Reflection point: there should be a clear focus for a progressive enquiry - the goal is not, as is sometimes the case, discussion to show that the virtual community works - participation has to be for an authentic purpose and something has to happen to the results of the discussions – there needs to be a clear outcome.

Continuing collaboration

The commitment of the project team to collaboration throughout the development process is central to how the site is now being operated – supporting the ‘community of interest’ in an interactive way. For example, the processes of **reflection, consolidation and community development** will be supported by presenting resources in ways that are meaningful for the community at a particular time.

Resources have also been allocated to **supporting active discussions**, by organising material to support discussions and establish links between current or past discussion topics. Like the discussions that took place during the development phase, it is expected that new discussions will cross topic or subject boundaries, evolve and change shape over time. This 'organic growth' of discussions will continue to be supported.

For the site is to be useful to both practitioners and researchers, then participants need to be encouraged **to be more explicit about their purposes and desired outcomes**. Ideally, users of the site will eventually play oracle to each other - posing questions and receiving useful answers. This is central to the future purpose of the website.

As well as supporting live discussions, extensive use of **discussion summaries** has been made, with active editing of material by members of the project team. After discussions are finished, the discussions are deconstructed so that the separate points and strands can be placed in an appropriate context where they can be framed by supporting material (with copies of the full, original discussion archived).

Adding value to key documents over time is also a goal. For example, the project team received requests for help in learning how to undertake research from a number of practitioners. Whilst the website already has useful support materials for this, it could be rendered even more useful if examples were added of how users managed when they tried to put these ideas into practice, together with a record of discussion on this topic.

Finally, the website also provides a link to the related development of the National Library Resource for Guidance (NLRG) based at the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby. This library holds the UK's largest collection of guidance literature, comprising both historical and

contemporary work, supplemented with examples of guidance research and practice from around the world. The NLRG supports the work of the website both by providing access to annotated materials to support discussion and research as well as providing an archive for completed discussion strands.

Community of interest

In this particular context, 'our community' (those interested in careers guidance research and practice) could best be described as a 'community of interest': a group interested in sharing a discourse; sharing thinking; and sharing values to some degree. Group identification, however, may not be strong. They have fairly loose ties. Indeed perhaps one reason why people may value a 'community of interest' in this area is that the 'community of practice' associated with careers guidance in the UK is fragmenting¹. Maybe some people involved would like at least to be able to construct a 'shared story' about what is happening in their professional field. 'Our community' therefore has interests in learning for practice and/or working and learning. With a community of practice you would expect a much stronger sense of mutual engagement, joint enterprise and sharing of goals with a common repertoire of shared practices.

From the developers' perspective, the value of testing ideas in multiple contexts and of building understanding of the activities and perspectives of others should be emphasised. The project team share an ideal (from the perspective of site developers) where we seek progress from passive awareness to engaged interaction of participants. However, we also need to recognise that for some participants, the ideal is passive awareness.

For the NGRF website, the intention is to support professional development that is based around research and practice grounded in the questions, concerns and enquiries of a group of practitioners. The aim is, therefore, for shared rather than individual, development. There is a role for coaching, mentoring, observation by colleagues (knowledgeable others) and examples of how practitioners can engage with research. For example, a journal article could be annotated to help practitioners 'break the research code' - how to make judgements about the conclusions. There could also be value in collaboration on problem-oriented case-work (working on interpretations of a 'shared case'). A final issue relates to how to resolve emotional tensions arising from an inability to perform in the way you think is appropriate (for example, if you are not resourced to offer the quality of service possible).

¹ note careers advisers and personal advisers (offering a range of advice to young people at risk of social exclusion) now have different knowledge domains. It is unclear where the boundaries lay between different types of practitioners involved in giving Information, Advice and Guidance in different settings - are the boundaries clear, fuzzy or contested? How far do they share at least some domains of knowledge? Also, since devolution, the four constituent parts of the UK are now following very different agendas as to how they deliver careers guidance.

Knowledge combination as the key challenge

In distributed (computer-mediated) discourses conversations can often dwindle, so the 'knowledge spaces' for 'our community of interest' are being supported so that they can contribute to the public life of ideas. For example, the development ideas for a research project could itself be outlined as a way of representing the research process as peer review through the public disclosure of plans. Ideas and concepts can be worked on by perhaps just a few members of the community in a public space, but then the wider community may benefit.

The inter-linking of discourses, and the facilitation of different 'views' of material, can help build (or highlight the disjunctions in) coherence, comprehensiveness and links between theory and practice within and between different areas. The use of summaries, syntheses, reflections and annotations in the heavily mediated environment of the NGRF website can help with the transition between (to adapt Donald Schön's (1983) analogy) the cliff-top of critical analysis and the swamp of everyday practice.

One of the difficulties encountered by successful knowledge-building approaches is how ideas and contributions, together with the space they take and the time to search them, starts to increase rapidly. Hence it is important that representations show relationships between topics and that these representations are to some degree under the control of participants in the 'community of interest'. Sharing of individual representations of knowledge relationships and how these relate to individual 'stories' may facilitate collaborative knowledge development and combination of different types of knowledge.

Scardamalia and Bereiter (1994) highlight how the growth of 'individual and communal knowledge resources' can revolve around the development of 'improvable ideas'; cultivating the abilities of synthesis and reflection as the basis for a 'disposition' towards knowledge-building; and building a discourse aimed at knowledge transformation. They also sought to link narrative accounts of participants' learning goals, achievements and self-reflections with accounts of practice through activity reports and learning logs (on a daily or monthly basis); and they highlighted the value of 'rise above' sessions.

The practitioner-researcher interactions on the NGRF website have, therefore, been linked to the wider concerns of the 'community of interest'. The importance of scaffolding knowledge-building have been recognised: helping to develop models and viewpoints and overcoming problems of isolated contributions. The site can be seen as a representation of the stage that the 'community of interest' as a whole has now reached. Knowledge-building involves learning how to find different types of knowledge as well as learning how to learn together with collective responsibility for developing expertise and conceptual ideas.

Lessons learned about computer-supported collaborative learning

Lessons learned so far about computer-supported collaborative learning and how it can help realise the aim of bringing guidance research and practice closer together include:

- there is a need for thoughtful mediation;
- the recognition that work-related learning may figure behind other aspects of private lives and working lives;
- the relative failure of ideologies and 'big ideas' may be because they are crowded out by lots of smaller but more immediate ideas and concerns;
- the value of existence of examples of co-operation 'scripts' regarding goals, types of activities, sequences, roles, format etc.;
- that the goals regarding production of explanations, summaries, solving problems etc. should be made explicit;
- there is a need for the identification of different message types;
- the value of prompts for comments, guided questioning ('what is the difference between...'; 'how does this work in practice...')
- the recognition that there are different ways of organising messages;
- the cognitive strategies that are used in understanding relationships, etc.;
- that activities can be clustered to support collaboration;
- how information pooling: may be explanatory or questioning;
- that it may be useful to represent the same information in different ways;
- that problems may arise due to a loss of motivation; a loss of co-ordination or because of a lack of feelings of co-presence;
- the recognition that making contributions to discussions can feel rather demanding and exposing;
- there could be a number of bases for common ground in a 'community of interest': shared understandings; shared meanings; shared opinions; and shared positions;
- that participants are more likely to contribute if they have an awareness of process and what others are doing;
- how shared knowledge can build in common misconceptions;
- that abstract general lessons cannot be abstracted from the complexity, context and goals of many particular situations;
- how collective meaning making may lead to development of certain 'voices' which may depress other voices - we all have different voices in different contexts;
- that inter-textual links (where different voices meet) are rich in terms of justifications, meeting of different discourses, explanations varied according to context etc.; and
- that individuals were seeking direction, making meaning and establishing roles for themselves in their contributions over time.

This initiative represents an exciting opportunity to create an inclusive and dynamic community of interest bringing guidance research and practice closer together. It will increase our understanding of how learning about guidance is created and shared (beliefs, concepts, ideas, theories, actions) as well as providing a potentially powerful engine to assist with the search for new

understandings of effective guidance to benefit all clients. Please join us in our endeavour: visit: <http://www.guidance-research.org>. The project team also sought to put these lessons learned into practice through a collaborative approach to the development of a framework to structure the work-related learning branch of the site (see section 3 for details of this approach).

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3. Example of collaborative development of a framework to structure the work-related learning branch of the site

[The ten categories](#)

06-Jan-2005

The categories agreed at the January meeting.

The group agreed at the meeting on the 6th January to revise the chosen categories. After further discussions the group as a whole came up with the following ten categories:

- Research Methodologies / Strategies
- Theoretical bases
- Learning contexts and settings
- Organisational learning and work design
- Strategies for enhancing learning
- Factors affecting learning
- Policy (national / regional / organisational)
- Learning processes
- Knowledge at work
- Learning trajectories and transfer



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *06-Jan-2005 15:01* /

[Outcomes of January meeting](#)

06-Jan-2005

Discussion on three categories (Learning contexts and settings; Organisational learning and work (re)design; Strategies for enhancing learning) at the meeting on January 6th resulted in the following agreement.

Learning contexts and settings

Materials which analyse the social practices oriented towards learning within different settings. Topics include opportunities for learning, spaces for learning, expectations for learning and creating supportive learning contexts. Other key areas include:

- use of and access to artefacts, information, knowledge
- pressure of work
- expectations, rewards and punishment
- availability and nature of feedback
- challenge and value of work
- organisation and nature of work
- group learning: culture of setting; relationships

Additionally, contexts for learning include schools and colleges, workplaces, training centres, networks, communities and families.

Contexts for learning at work include:

- meeting context
- ‘on the job’ context
- ‘working alongside’ context
- ‘work encounter’ context

Organisational learning and work redesign

- relationships/ culture
- flows of people and work
- experiences and engagement (of individuals and groups)
- organisational policies and influences
- couplings between learning and work
- 360 degree learning
- learning as an organisation
- roles and influence of tools and technology

materials which examine how organisations learn and for example respond through the design of work. Topics include how job and task design are orientated towards workplace learning, how organisations and systems accommodate new tools, how organisations are managed as environments for learning by enhancing productivity through knowledge development.

Strategies for enhancing learning

This section focuses on and develops our understanding and knowledge of the ways in which learning can be improved. This includes understanding individual approaches to learning, learner needs and engagement in activities that allow them to learn,

learning resources including ICT, the role of feedback and assessment to support learning together with the ways the curriculum can be developed.

Pedagogies for developing learning and learning identities. Topics include modes of interactive support, for example direct teaching and more informal mentoring.

- Addressing factors that hinder learning
- Developing capabilities (of learners and those who support them) for enhancing learning
- Creating contexts that facilitate learning.
- organisational policies and influences
- couplings between learning and work
- 360 degree learning
- learning as an organisation
- roles and influence of tools and technology



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *06-Jan-2005 16:26* /

[Work Related Learning Research: key categories](#)

02-Feb-2005

The group working on structuring resources on 'research on work-related learning' is principally drawn from projects in the Teaching and Learning Research Programme, with support from researchers from IER and SKOPE. This is an inclusive activity and we would welcome contributions and ideas from others too.

The [current developments](#) on the site demonstrated the potential to cluster issues related to work-related learning. From a TLRP perspective the group felt that it would be important to produce some narratives that through hyper-linking allowed users to go in different directions and also allowed for different perspectives. It was felt that the initial clustering was important as this needed to support investigation of theoretical and methodological issues as well learning processes and to allow switching between different levels of analysis.

In order to allow for different lenses with which it would be possible to view research on work-related learning the group felt that 12 - 20 branches might be about the right number for ease of organisation. After discussions in small groups at two meetings the group as a whole came up with the following ten categories:

- Research Methodologies / Strategies
- Theoretical bases

- Learning contexts and settings
- Organisational learning and work design
- Strategies for enhancing learning
- Factors affecting learning
- Policy (national / regional / organisational)
- Learning processes
- Knowledge at work
- Learning trajectories and transfer



Posted by **Stephen Tufail** on *02-Feb-2005 11:25* /

Replies to this item...

*Listed below are links to (1) replies to this item:
Click the title of a reply to open its details for reading or replying*

- [Comments on overall framework](#)

(Alan Brown, 02-Feb-2005 12:59)

[Learning contexts and settings](#)

02-Feb-2005

[Interaction of learning and contextual factors](#)

This is where we will develop commentary and resources for 'Learning contexts and settings.'



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *02-Feb-2005 13:42*

Replies to this item...

*Listed below are links to (1) replies to this item:
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- [Pressure of work](#)

(Alan Brown, 02-Feb-2005 13:57)

■ [Organisational learning and work redesign](#)

02-Feb-2005

This category will include materials which examine how organisations learn and for example respond through the design of work. Topics include how job and task design are orientated towards workplace learning, how organisations and systems accommodate new tools, how organisations are managed as environments for learning by enhancing productivity through knowledge development.

Some key issues for organisational learning and work redesign are:

- relationships/ culture
- flows of people and work
- experiences and engagement (of individuals and groups)
- organisational policies and influences
- couplings between learning and work
- 360 degree learning
- learning as an organisation
- roles and influence of tools and technology



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *02-Feb-2005 15:43* / [permalink](#) / [Discussion \(1 \)](#) / [How-To?](#)

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Click the title of a reply to open its details for reading or replying

- [Issue around key topics](#)

(Alan Brown, 02-Feb-2005 16:04)

■ [Strategies for enhancing learning](#)

02-Feb-2005

This section focuses on and develops our understanding and knowledge of the ways in which learning can be improved. This includes understanding individual approaches to learning, learner needs and engagement in activities that allow them to learn, learning resources including ICT, the role of feedback and assessment to support learning together with the ways the curriculum can be developed. Pedagogies for

developing learning and learning identities. Topics include modes of interactive support, for example direct teaching and more informal mentoring. Some of the key issues are outlined below:

Strategies for enhancing learning

- Addressing factors that hinder learning
- Developing capabilities (of learners and those who support them) for enhancing learning
- Creating contexts that facilitate learning.



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *02-Feb-2005 16:11* /

Replies to this item...

Listed below are links to (2) replies to this item:

Click the title of a reply to open its details for reading or replying

- [Duplication of issues](#)

(Alan Brown, 02-Feb-2005 17:26)

- [Key section](#)

(Alan Brown, 02-Feb-2005 16:16)

[Meeting on 11th February](#)

07-Feb-2005

[Significance of individual dispositions \(Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004\)](#)

[Basic skills and workplace learning: Katerina Ananiadou, Andrew Jenkins and Alison Wolf](#)

Information on next group meeting.

This will take place on 11th February from 10 - 3.30 at the Institute for Education, 20 Bedford Way, London Room 901.

The group will consider development of text for some of the other categories at this meeting. Results of the meeting will be posted here.

Note the links above (just below the date) show how we could link to existing D-space entries.



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *07-Feb-2005 17:23* /

Replies to this item...

Listed below are links to (1) replies to this item:

Click the title of a reply to open its details for reading or replying

- [Registering replies](#)

(Alan Brown, 08-Feb-2005 19:30)

▣ [Factors affecting learning](#)

08-Feb-2005

Here we can decide on what we see as the key factors affecting learning. It may be that we want to point to content that illustrates certain themes as well as some that offers models of these factors.



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *08-Feb-2005 21:09* /

▣ [High performance management](#)

10-Feb-2005

-  [High Performance Management](#) [[Download](#)] (Peter Butler et al. High Performance Managementnt.pdf - 284.97 Kb) [Preview](#)

Peter Butler and colleagues from the TLRP project on 'Learning as Work: Teaching and Learning Processes in the Contemporary Work Organisation' conducted a literature review looking at how ideas of High Performance Management may influence learning at work.



Posted by **Mike Malloch** on *10-Feb-2005 18:38* /

▣ [Theoretical bases](#)

11-Feb-2005

Theoretical bases involves how they predispose people to look at research on learning in and through work.

- Activity theory
- Actor network theory

- Socio-cultural practice theory
- Multi-lens perspective
- Labour process theory
- Sociol-cultural linguistics
- Organisational learning
- Knowledge development/management
- Socio-psychological constructivist
- Post-structuralist
- Grouping of concepts
- Perspectives and concepts:
- Gender

■ [Research Methodologies](#)

11-Feb-2005

This section allows entry into the range of methods, methodologies and strategies that have been and are currently in use or being considered to study learning at work. It identifies a range of methods in use. It also gives links to the epistemological and theoretical positions that can underpin their use.

Some methods (which are often used in combination) include:

- Observation (participant/repeat/non-participant)
- Interviewing
- Use of technology (eg email, computer assisted interviewing, video)
- Instruments and tools (eg questionnaires, diaries and learning logs)

A case study approach is often used, which frequently draws upon a mixture of methods.

Consideration also has to be given to:

- Decisions about which methods to use (eg epistemological positions)
- Methods in action (adapting and using methods in context)
- Data handling, reduction, analysis and synthesis (eg validation, tracking, coding, etc)
- Ethical concerns

- Scope of the study (eg longitudinal, snap-shot)

Of course methods are not used in a vacuum. They are used in accordance with theoretical/epistemological perspectives, which can be found under Theoretical bases.



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *11-Feb-2005 13:06* /

■ [Knowledge at work](#)

11-Feb-2005

- Formal knowledge
- Informal knowledge
- Technical knowledge and skills
- People skills
- Tacit knowledge
- Procedural knowledge
- Process knowledge
- Knowledge of the organisational culture
- Collective and organisational knowlegde
- Knowledge transfer
- Emotional labour?
- Emotional intelligence?



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *11-Feb-2005 15:41* /

■ [Factors affecting learning](#)

11-Feb-2005

Distinguishing between working and learning through work is difficult. It is similarly difficult to separate factors that affect learning at work because in many cases they interact strongly. The distinctions made below particularly in the main headings should be understood as analytical aids rather than distinctly different categories.

Factors affecting learning emphasises the relational aspects of learning at all levels. It is a dynamic rhetoric.

Individual

- life history
- current position
- hopes
- dispositions
- attitudes to career

Group/community

- availability of support
- informal communication
- occupational positioning
- presence or absence of learning culture
- the nature of teamworking

Wider organisations

- the nature and challenge of work
- the kind of mentoring available
- patterns and management of work
- HR systems
- quality of feedback
- purpose of product and service strategy
- corporate structure

Macro (labour market): structures

- Globalising tendencies (how to translate policy through intermediaries)
- MNCs
- Third and First world
- American hegemony
- ICT
- Workforce mobility/migration (illegal workers)
- Performance discourses

Labour market

Gender

Ethnicity

Class



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *11-Feb-2005 16:27* |

[Final meeting](#)

14-Feb-2005

Plans for final meeting

The meeting on February 11th went very well - thanks for all your efforts. We will need one more meeting to flesh out the final two categories (transitions and trajectories) and policy and then review all ten sub-categories and see how well they fit together. We thought we would have a little time before fixing the next meeting, so that we can catch up with some of the proposed technical refinements.

After the final meeting in April / May (that can also consider how to represent all the TLRP wrl projects at the Sydney conference) Sally and I will work on linking to existing documents etc. so that we can give a demonstration of the full potential of the system at the TLRP annual conference,

I will circulate possible dates for the next meeting and thanks again for your ideas - things are starting to take shape,

Alan



Posted by **Alan Brown** on *14-Feb-2005 21:55*
