LLAKES
CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND LIFE CHANCES IN KNOWLEDGE ECONOMIES AND SOCIETIES

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Expansive Learning Opportunities for Skills

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UKCES Skills, Jobs, Growth Convention 2010

Why are returns to training so difficult to measure?

Need to use broader concept of
LEARNING

- Deliberate (on and off-the-job)
- Accidental
- Individual or collaborative
- Invisible – embedded within everyday activity
- Subversive

Workplaces as Sites for Learning

- Why are some workplaces better environments for learning?
- What should employers (and employees) invest in?
- What can government do to help?

Worlds within worlds: where does the workplace sit in the productive system?

Creating an environment for learning

- **Organisation of work**
- **Level of discretion and trust**
- **Physical (and virtual) environment – spaces for sharing and creating knowledge**
- **Use of everyday artefacts as catalysts**
- **Japanese concept of *ba* – *harmony/integration***

Expansive-Restrictive Framework

Workforce development aligns organisational and individual goals	Individual moulded to fit organisational goals – ‘learning’ seen as an ‘event’
Employees have dual identity: worker and learner	Fast track to productive worker
Expertise widely distributed: multi-dimensional concept of expertise	Expertise narrowly defined and confined to top level – ‘need to know basis’
Manager’s key role to support learning – supported by mentors	Manager’s role to meet targets – rhetoric of mentoring

Workers given discretion to make judgements and contribute to decision-making	Discretion limited to key workers – no employee involvement in workplace decisions
Participation in different communities of practice is encouraged – job/team boundaries can be crossed	Participation restricted to immediate work team/area – boundary crossing discouraged – isolated workers
Planned time off-the-job for reflection and deeper learning beyond immediate job requirements	All training/development on-the-job and limited to immediate job requirements

Accrediting Development, Achievement and Progression

- External validation – qualifications give recognition beyond immediate workplace
- Internal validation – embeds learning culture
- BUT – current UK system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) can be used to accredit existing skills without providing platform for progression

Looking Outside the Workplace

- Access to off-the-job training and development extends immediate horizons
- Knowledge acquired for the future not just the present
- Role for government to support employers/sectors - ‘Expansive’ approach to skills through improved work organisation and business capability
- Role for employees - personal investment

Further Information

- Felstead, A., Fuller, A., Jewson, J. And Unwin, L. (2009) *Improving Working for Learning*, London: Routlege
- Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2008) *Towards Expansive Apprenticeships*, ESRC TLRP Commentary – www.tlrp.org