Exploring impact

Welcome to volume 9 issue 2 of the Journal of Work Applied Management.

The year 2017 has been an interesting one globally, where there are new political landscapes emerging across the globe, from new political leaders in the UK and US, and re-emerging tensions reminiscent of The Cold War. Amidst such landscapes, the role to contribute to the sustainable development goals continues to grow. It is an aspiration of many research frameworks across the globe that research is high in impact, or what some might describe, transformational. At the same time, Gravem et al (2017) recently argued that "transformative" research is "inherently unpredictable", and that focusing on such type of research actually may "hinder scientific discovery".

This special issue focused on exploring the impact agenda in the context of reflective and work based research contexts.

It is polyphonic and provocative.

It does not necessarily give answers, but lines of inquiry and prompts for further reflection and insight development.

Scott brings us "*The ignorant manager: conceptualising impact with Rancière*". Underpinned by philosophical thought, Scott raises the possibility that perhaps by taking the stance of ignorance, managers cn facilitate forms of learning and broader impacts, as it allows them to discover new insights. Insights which perhaps the manager may not have thought of within their repertoires of sense making or expertise.

Abstract
Purpose
The purpose of this paper is to offer a response to expressions in the literature concerning the limitations of critical reflection, using Rancière's exposition of the role of values and reasonableness to examine how forms of negotiated work based learning can support learners' pathways to impact in their organisation. The implications for work applied management in terms of enabling these employees to make an impact are considered.
Design/ methodology/ approach
Vignettes illuminate and articulate Rancière's (1991; 2010) ideas, the vignettes constructed through events experienced and narrated, perhaps imagined, tutorial conversations, assignments and work practices. Such construction of 'multiple layers of fiction and narrative imaginings' draws on Sparkes (2007, p. 522). They consider individuals' negotiation of working practices using ideas developed during their studies, and personal and professional development prompted by unexpected insights into their capabilities, interests and possible roles.
Findings
Negotiated work based learning appears to offer the individual opportunity to take responsibility for action in their learning and in their workplace, but effect depends on several factors, and can be perceived in different ways. Students' encounter with autonomy in their studies resonates with Rancière's belief in equality. In the workplace (becoming 'citizens' alongside 'reasonable' individuals) their agency might, at best, lead to 'reasonable moments', as they encounter both negative and positive challenges of work applied management.
Practical implications
Successful utilisation of agency in learning prompts expectations of responsibility and equality in the workplace. Such equality can lead to diverse,

unpredicted insights and consequent opportunities for changes in practice.
Originality/ value
This is the first paper to utilise Ranciére's ideas to offer a critical consideration of both learning provision and workplace practice. Consideration of his profound stance on individuals' freedom and agency provides rich (but challenging) prompts for analysis of one's own practice, and the potential for impact when the manager is 'ignorant'.

Wall, Russell and Moore (2017) then bring us "*positive emotion in workplace impact: the case of a work-based learning project utilising appreciative inquiry*", putting the spot light on the role of positive emotion in workplace impacts. They draw on an example of a work-based learning project utilising the highly efficacious (yet still controversial) methodological perspective of appreciative inquiry. Not only do they demonstrate that appreciative inquiry can be flexibly adapted to difficult organisational settings, but that it can also be effectively used in time-bound work-based learning projects. It also reminds us to keep a close eye on the well-being of the people involved in change or transformation projects in the workplace.

Poole (2017) then provides a radical re-think and re-visioning of the impact debate in his "*re/searching for 'Impact'*". Here, Poole prompts us to re-gain and re-vitalise our creative capacities as human beings, and in doing so, amplifies a way of connecting research as a form of searching – or curiosity – which is so necessary to live a life full of energetic curiosity.

Abstract As an exploration of how 'impact' might be reconsidered, it is suggested that current contemporary understandings of 'impact' fail practice and research by obscuring the space for reflexive criticality that is crucial for an individual or organisation to flourish: This in turn leads to the already predefined enculturated understanding of 'impact'. Offering some interrogation and folkloristic analogy of the meaning of 'impact', three brief expositions of differing arts-based práxes concerned mainly with reflection and connection, are then discussed through the lens of Ricœur's (Ricœur, Reagan, & Stewart, 1978) conflation of the hermeneutical process with phenomenology. It is suggested that the implications of restoring, refreshing, or representing 'impact' give license to a personal/professional revitalisation, and that reformulating an understanding of 'impact' through re/search might offer a potential pedagogic tool, and alternative organising feature. Through the introduction of inter-disciplinary thinking and práxes, the article offers novel arts-based methods for personal, professional, and organisational development and growth

Such an opening leads us nicely in to Rossetti and Wall's (2017) paper on "*The impact of story: measuring the impact of story for organisational change*" which in one sense exemplifies how story and storytelling activates the positive psychological states that are so conducive to organisational change and personal transition.

Pässilä, Owens, Kuusipalo-Määttä, Oikarinen, and Benmergui extend this even further in their paper, "Beyond Text: The co-creation of dramatised character and iStory".

In this paper we introduce two practical methods; iStory and dramatizing character. Both of these have been developed for use in the practical innovation context of organisations in Finland. This is part of a larger exploration of impact within the work place, and in particular of reflective approaches. We are curious about how new insights and collective 'Eureka' moments and momentums occur. These can be forces for work communities to gain competitive advantages. However we know little of how learning is actively involved in the processing of creating new insights can be facilitated (Pässilä and Owens, 2016). Both methods involve a type of learning which goes 'Beyond Text', and we outline the theoretical

underpinnings, co-creative development and applications of each. This paper will be useful to managers in the following ways • provides a concrete way to see blocks on an organisational micro level when their employees are implementing change related to innovation; for example issues in organisations are often so sensitive as a result of power relations or misunderstandings that iStory can provide a safe means to approach them. • increases the number of producers of knowledge in their organisation; for example it values 'ordinary' employees knowledge in innovation processes (not only the R&D employees) • helps them to construct together with their employees a space where they can reflect together on each other's experiences and to break down assumptions related to their own perspectives; for example sometimes different units in organisations becomes isolated silos, iStory allows for overlap for the benefit of the whole organisation.

Robins (2017) then draws on the kind of practical wisdom generated through years of experience and reflection to bring us "*Impact through coaching: Does the use of models limit connectedness in coaching?*".

This viewpoint paper explores the impact of reflective practice and work based learning research from the coaching practitioner perspective. The term coach practitioner is applicable to many roles including, Coach role model, expert coach, internal coach, performance coach, development/career coach, and behavioural coach. Each of these different types of coach practitioner will fulfill the requirements of a different client group (Bachirova, Cox and Clutterbuck, 2014). The importance for both coach and client is that there is an understanding and agreement on the type of coaching being provided. Not every client needs the same type of coaching so it is important to establish requirements at an early stage. The experience and skill level of these difference groups of practitioners may differ, but all need to be appropriate to the client group. Line managers as a coach are also practitioners, however, delivering coaching as a line manager also demands the highest qualities of managers and a willingness to adopt a fundamentally different approach to staff, as well as the skills in coaching (Whitemore 2009). In the current periods of significant change and transition coaching as a tool or approach used by managers to help people learn and develop is growing in the workplace and this group has a significant contribution to make to research practice. (CIPD 2015).

Rowe, Moss, Moore, and Perrin then bring us "The challenges of managing degree apprentices in the workplace: a manager's perspective".

Abstract Purpose – This paper explores the issues and challenges facing employers as they manage degree apprentices in the workplace. It examines the relationship between managers and apprentices undertaking a work-based degree. This research is of particular relevance at this time because of the UK government's initiative to expand the number of apprenticeships in the workplace to three million new starts by 2020 inevitably bringing a range of pressures to bear on employers (BIS, 2015). The purpose is to share early experiences of employer management of degree apprenticeships, and provide a range of recommendations to develop and improve employer and HEI practice.
Design/Methodology/Approach – This paper combines desk research with qualitative data drawn from interviews with a range of cross-sector organisations to investigate the employer's experience of developing the new Degree Apprenticeships. The data is explored inductively using thematic analysis in order to surface dominant patterns and considers the implications of findings upon current and emerging HEI and employer practice and research. Findings – There were a number of key themes which emerged from the data collected. These included the need for effective, employer-led recruitment processes, careful

management of expectations, sound HEI retention strategies, employer involvement and board level motivators to ensure organisational benefits are derived from effectively situated workplace learning and a focus upon effective, empowering mentoring and support strategies.

earch limitations/implications – As degree apprenticeship standards and programmes are currently at the early stages of implementation, and opportunities, funding and resourcing are rapidly changing in the context of government policy, so too will employer appetite and strategies for supporting degree apprentices, along with apprentice behaviour. This means that additional findings, beyond those highlighted within this paper may emerge in the near future. Practical implications – There are a number of practical implications supporting managerial development and support of degree apprentices in the workplace from this research. These are reflected in the findings, and include the development of flexible and collaborative processes, resources, mentor training and networks. Originality/value – This paper is one of the first published accounts of the employers' perspective of managing a Degree Apprenticeship within the new policy context in the UK. As a result the work offers a unique insight into the emerging challenges and issues encountered by managers working with degree apprentices in the twenty first century business en

As 2017 comes to a close, we may utilise the ideas in this special issue to reflect on some of our own insights from 2017 (or before) to guide us in to 2018 and beyond.

References

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