



# University of Chester



This work has been submitted to ChesterRep – the University of Chester's  
online research repository

<http://chesterrep.openrepository.com>

Author(s): Jon Talbot ; Dilys Leonard

Title: Developing new work based learning pathways for housing practitioners whilst participating peripherally and legitimately: The situated learning of work based learning tutors

Date: 30 April 2009

Originally given at: UVAC annual conference

Example citation: Talbot, J., & Leonard, D. (2009, April 30). *Developing new work based learning pathways for housing practitioners whilst participating peripherally and legitimately: The situated learning of work based learning tutors*. Unpublished conference presentation given at the UVAC annual conference at University of Derby, 30 April 2009.

Version of item: Given at conference

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/86995>

## **Developing new work based learning pathways for housing practitioners whilst participating peripherally and legitimately: the situated learning of work based learning tutors**

(2009) (with D. Leonard) UVAC, University of Derby, 30<sup>th</sup> April

Situated learning theory is one of the underpinning cornerstones of work based learning. This paper describes situated learning in two contexts: those associated with the housing profession as work based learning tutors, with employers, devise suitable accredited programmes of learning. But within that context is the situated learning of work based learning tutors themselves, especially for one newly appointed.

This paper records the experiences of two work based learning tutors at the University of Chester in the context of developing work based learning for housing practitioners. One is newly appointed and the other nearly five years on. Both have subject expertise in housing but have performed different roles. The more experienced tutor has been responsible for initiating learning pathways: the more recently appointed tutor has assumed at least some responsibility for delivery. The context is the 'shell' framework at Chester, the Work Based and Integrative Studies (WBIS) programme. As with work based learning frameworks at other institutions the tutors who work within it are engaged in an approach to learning distinct from that in the rest of the University so that there is a distinct WBIS community of practice. The case study explores not only the way in which work based learning is conceived for particular clients and occupational groups (and hence communities of learning) but also how it is delivered, whilst tutors are at differing stages of peripheral and legitimate participation within their own community of learning.

### **The Work Based and Integrative Studies (WBIS) Framework: Underpinning Principles**

WBIS is one of a number of work based and action learning programmes which operate in UK universities and was developed by a team of tutors at Chester in the late 1990s. Enrolments began in 1998 and there are currently just under 1000 WBIS learners, following a variety of learning pathways. WBIS is informed by a number of theoretical and political developments in the field of learning largely dating from the late 1990s. This was a time when there was a remarkable coming together of developments in the field of learning theory but which also coincided with an interest in the facilitation of formal learning in the workplace (Department for Education and Employment 1998; Eraut et al 1998; Sutherland 1998; Billet 2001).

Important underpinning theories include that of Andragogy which holds that adult learning preferences are significantly different from children and young people. Adults are motivated by such things as a 'need to know', especially as this relates to solving problems in their lives (Knowles et al 1998). Other important and related constructs include Situated Learning theory, where it is assumed that knowledge for most learners is context bound (Lave and Wenger 1991) and Action learning which

holds that learning stems from doing and experiencing that which happens around us (Weinstein 1995). Defining knowledge in terms of the learners' own experience rather than the subject interests of tutors has resulted in WBIS being trans-disciplinary rather than subject specific. This is not to say that WBIS seeks only to capture tacit knowledge: just as classroom knowledge requires authentic practice so practice requires explicit support (Wenger 1998). WBIS therefore uses formal models of reflection, such as Gibbs (1998) which includes evaluation, where feelings and intuitive analysis is compared with more formal ways of knowing.

Another distinctive feature is the inculcation among learners of reflective practice. No particular model is advocated. Instead learners are directed to a variety of writings on reflection, usefully summarised by Moon (2000). Reflective practice is not encouraged simply as part of a programme of accredited learning. It is also seen as the basis for on-going learning and forms part of a wider commitment among tutors to the idea of learning as the basis for professional practice and lifelong learning (Field 2006). An important aspect of reflective practice is that it moves beyond thought to action. WBIS is explicitly designed to facilitate improved performance in the workplace.

Within Fuller and Unwin's (2002) five models of work based learning, WBIS performs a variety of roles but it is principally designed to bring formal instruction to social learning in the work place as the basis for reflective practice and hence altered actions. Individual pathways of learning are constructed for all levels of learning in the context of higher education. A similar framework, *Learning Through Work*, has been developed at the University of Derby (Minton 2007)

### **WBIS in Practice: Devising Learner Pathways**

The WBIS programme is a 'shell' framework and therefore the subject of validation and review not the individual learning pathways learners construct within it. This enables tutors to tailor learning to the needs of the individual or groups of learners without recourse to cumbersome and time consuming validating procedures. Within the framework learners can begin and end their studies as they wish. Some pathways, such as those for housing practitioners, are constructed with groups of other communities of learning interest. Other pathways are tailored to the needs of individual learners or in some cases, those of an employing organisation. Learners, provided they meet standard academic entry criteria, determine not only the content of their programme but also the award and title they obtain. All exit awards have negotiated titles with the suffix (WBIS) in parenthesis. This is to make clear the object of study is the specific practitioner learning, not the method. Examples include FdiG Housing Practice (WBIS), MA Regeneration Practice (WBIS) and so on.

Learners on the programme can study modules which have been developed specifically for WBIS or any module in the University, provided it is relevant and at the appropriate level. Individual learning needs can be catered for through the use of project modules or, if there is sufficient demand, new modules are developed on request. There is a rolling programme of module accreditation to accommodate

changing requirements. Tutors can therefore adapt to the needs of new learners without the need for time consuming validations.

WBIS awards can be obtained with up to 50% Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL), whether certificated or experiential. This enables experienced practitioners to obtain academic credit for their acquired knowledge. This is especially attractive for older learners keen to obtain recognition for years of experience. Younger people, anxious to develop their skills, are more likely to opt for taught content,

## **Learning Strategies and the Learner Experience**

A key feature of the programme is the emphasis on work based learning. Work based learning is now an established feature of many university programmes in the UK (Nixon et al 2006). Learning at work is recognised as a diverse activity, incorporating informal experience and short term training, as well as the more formal learning associated with a university programme (Institute of Personnel and Development 2000). Within organisations, it is widely regarded as a key element of Human Resource Development (Beattie 2006). While it is an established feature in the Faculty of Lifelong.

The first module learners usually complete (Self Review and Negotiation of Learning) is designed to inculcate the values of reflective practice and sensitise the learner to their learning needs and preferred learning style. Within the module students conduct a self assessment of past and present achievements, as the basis for assessing their learning needs. From this they develop their intended learning pathway on the programme. In addition to developing their Pathway Rationale, learners are also introduced to literature in respect of learning preferences and critical reflection. They learn to engage in reflective practice by applying formal theorising to a critical workplace incident. The module is designed not only to enable the learner to think about their learning needs but also to begin to adjust mentally to the process of critical, workplace reflection in the context of their practice.

At this stage, any applications for (APL), either Certificated or Experiential are considered. Hereafter learners can complete modules in any order, provided it is coherent and relevant to their needs.

The determining principles of learning are that it should be flexible and based around the needs of the learner. Tutors do not determine the content of the learners programme with combinations of core and optional modules. The choice on WBIS is far wider and almost open ended. The role of the tutor is instead to assist the learner to identify their learning needs and devise an appropriate pathway with an underpinning rationale so they can obtain formal academic credit bearing qualifications. Embedded within this process are a number of related objectives, such as enabling the learner to understand their own learning preferences, inculcating reflective practice as the basis for lifelong learning and assisting learners to discover more effective ways of working by a process of active, internal dialogue. In this sense tutors regard the process of learning as *negotiable*: the aim to identify needs and translate this into effective learning.

A distinctive feature of the WBIS approach is the intimate connection with workplace practice. In a typical WBIS module, the learner is introduced to a body of theory and wider literature and then asked to interrogate their practice. From the learners perspective the relationship with theory becomes much more immediate than is the case on conventional programmes. They select those theories/models which are relevant to their needs and use this as the basis for an internal dialogue, based upon their own practice and that of colleagues. In this way learners are encouraged to reflect upon their current practice as a means of improving performance.

### **Programme Delivery: The Virtual Learning Environment**

One of the key requirements of the programme is to meet the needs of learners both in terms of content and delivery. E-learning enables the delivery of consistent, convenient and low cost learning to the workplace (Brown et al 2006). A feature of the programme is therefore the development of a series of dedicated Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), hosted on the University's intranet system. In addition to a VLE for general WBIS students, VLEs are developed for particular cohorts or groups of learners, such as Housing practitioners. Each VLE contains specific learning materials developed for the relevant learning pathways as well as links to a variety of other sources. These include electronic books, parts of books scanned in, e-journals and other relevant web sources. For each module, learning outcomes and learning opportunities are specified. For most modules there is also a Theory Document specifically created for the module, which summarises those theories and models appropriate to the learning outcomes. In addition, all other features, such as assignments, are on the VLE. Submission is also electronic.

The VLEs attempt to meet all learner needs and there are facilities for on-line discussion. In practice, these have not been well used and the VLE, like most of its kind is text dominated, asynchronous and essentially uni-directional (Welsh et al 2003)

The requirement for minimum time away from work has greatly restricted face to face contact between learners and between tutors and learners. To overcome isolation learners are allocated a personal tutor and there is a subject tutor for each module. Tutor support is available on-line or by telephone. Workplace support is provided by means of a personal mentor. Peer learning is encouraged wherever possible and if an individual employing organisation requests it, the tutor team provides additional study workshops. In addition, regular peer events are organised, visiting one another's workplaces and dealing with learning issues. As with many essentially on-line programmes we recognise the importance of a 'blended' approach, incorporating a variety of learning experiences, including face to face experiences (Elliot 2002; Singh 2003; Graff 2006; Hughes 2007)

### **Accreditation of employer programmes**

## **Dilys to write**

WBIS is mainly used for the delivery of education pathways for individuals, occupational groups and employer cohorts but it is assuming an increasing role in providing accreditation for employer delivered learning. In this respect there are three types of relationships with employers. First, as partners

## **Non accredited learning**

## **Franchising of WBIS?**

## **Programme Assessment**

Assessment is regarded not as separate to the learning process but its most important element. Most assessments are individually negotiated formal reflective reviews, related to the learning outcomes for each module. In effect, the learner, in consultation with the module tutor, devises their own assignment. This can be formalised through a Topic Learning Plan, where the learner indicates to the tutor how the requirements of the assessment will be met. Learners are encouraged to read the learning outcomes and Theory document and then consider ways in which they can relate materials to their own experience, which should form the basis for their assignment. Submissions can be in many forms, including traditional essays but could also include workplace artefacts with a brief reflective commentary.

Learners are encouraged to submit drafts for formative assessment. Heavy emphasis is placed on formative assessment as a means of facilitating personal development (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick 2006). In addition to evidence of subject mastery and application, tutors seek to encourage enhanced communication skills, as well as cognitive skills such as enhanced ability to synthesise, conceptualise, analyse and so on. Formative assessment is fundamental to adding value over and above conventional training programmes by non-accredited providers.

One of the limitations of a work based approach is that it assumes the learner is engaged in a wide variety of situations and activities upon which to reflect. In practice many on the programme perform fairly limited work roles. Assignments therefore always present learners with the option of work based or work related assessment. *Work based learning* is appropriate where the learner is engaged in an activity and therefore able to reflect upon it in the light of formal theories, models and empirical evidence which are supplied as part of the learning resources. *Work related learning* is suitable where the learning is knowledge based/contextual or where the learner is acquiring knowledge which will be applied in future.

Learners are always encouraged to engage with work based learning as much as possible to ensure relevance. Learners can submit artefacts or portfolios of material generated in the workplace, accompanied by a short reflective commentary. Submission is flexible in the sense that students are free to negotiate their own pathway and deadlines.

## **Work based learning for undergraduates- the WBL module**

In addition to facilitating work based learning for adult learners via WBIS, the WBIS tutor team also facilitate and deliver a work based learning module for most second year undergraduates in the University. Work Based Learning (WBL) like WBIS has been in existence since 1998 and involves arranging and overseeing work placements for hundreds of students every spring. As can be imagined this represents a major undertaking administratively and academically. Two of the WBIS tutors are responsible for oversight and delivery of the module while all others, as a matter of contractual obligation, are engaged in its delivery. In addition, other tutors from elsewhere in the university participate in the six or seven weeks the process takes to complete.

The WBL module is not simply a matter of students completing a work placement. As with WBIS, learners are expected to formally reflect on negotiated learning targets. Tutors from elsewhere in the university have to be inducted into the mysteries of negotiable, reflective work based learning. In addition to providing student support, WBIS tutors are responsible to ensuring tutors are properly prepared and that there is consistency of delivery and assessment.

## **The WBIS Community of Practice**

The WBIS tutor team is comprised of around 10 Full Time Equivalent posts, the majority of whom are indeed full time. Tutors do not all work on the same pathways, nor are learning facilitation roles identical. Some tutors deal with one pathway only, others many; some work on different campuses or never work on campus; some are heavily engaged in e-learning, others more face to face; some use highly unusual assessment practices, others are quite conventional; some have teaching only contracts, others teach and research; some are engaged in developing and delivering content, others more in accreditation.

The backgrounds are extremely varied. All have had a career outside higher education in a variety of roles. Most have entered without a research degree but even those who have enjoyed careers outside the academy. Some are ex-WBIS students but all have a commitment to widening participation and negotiable learning. All WBIS tutors are also WBL tutors. All assume a degree of responsibility for developing new pathways and finding new clients. There are two sets of regular team meetings: one on learning and teaching matters and one in which the development of the programme, from the perspective of developing new pathways and new clients is discussed.

Recruiting WBIS tutors is not easy for a variety of reasons. Demand from employers tends to be less consistent than demand from undergraduates, so advertised posts are usually temporary. Few conventional academics are attracted. The lack of academic prestige, the trans-disciplinary nature of WBIS, lack of research opportunities and

focus on learning relevant to immediate needs are significant barriers. People who have spent all of their working lives in higher education often lack the cognitive flexibility needed; practitioners are rarely sufficiently 'academic'. In this respect we appear no different from other institutions engaged in flexible forms of higher education, who also find it difficult to recruit (Moran and Myringer 2003)

What is remarkable is that despite the diversity and differences, the tutor team is an extremely cohesive group of people, in a business often noted for its fractiousness. To understand this, it is useful to refer to Katzenbach and Smith's (1993) distinction between groups and teams, set out below:

### **Not all groups are teams- how to tell the difference**

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Team</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong, clearly focussed leader</li> <li>• Individual accountability</li>   <li>• The group's purpose is the same as the organisational mission</li> <li>• Individual work products</li> <li>• Runs efficient meetings</li>   <li>• Measures its effectiveness indirectly by it's influence on others</li> <li>• Discusses, decides and delegates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared leadership roles</li> <li>• Individual and mutual accountability</li> <li>• Specific team purpose that the team itself delivers</li> <li>• Collective work products</li> <li>• Encourages open ended discussion and active problem solving meetings</li> <li>• Measures performance directly by assessing collective work products</li> <li>• Discusses, decides and does real work together</li> </ul>

Source: Katzenbach and Smith (1993)

If we regard the two as Weberian ideal types, the WBIS tutor team is much closer to the team 'ideal' than conventional university tutor groupings. Given the variety of pathways and specialisms, all have leadership roles and there is little central control. The diversity is a product of different backgrounds, practices and facilitating different pathways. The sharing of the WBIS model and the educational ideology it embodies unites the team in a way most academics would find unusual.

The sense of shared identity and team work is reinforced by a strongly held collective view of practice. This is not officially recorded or written down in any single university document so for the purpose of this paper, a definition of practice has been discussed and agreed by the tutor team:

- WBIS attempts to bridge the divide between knowledge located in higher education and that in 'real life', specifically the work place so that both are informed by one another
- It enables individuals to engage with lifelong learning by sensitising them to their learning needs and preferred methods of learning



- It places the learner and their needs at the centre of the learning process
- It attempts to deliver in a way which is low cost, flexible and which recognises the profoundly social nature of the learning process
- WBIS values knowledge from all sources including that of learners and recognises that tutors are principally facilitators of learning; learning is shared between tutors and learners
- It enables individuals to capture their informal, practical experience and reflect on that experience in the light of more formal theoretical knowledge
- WBIS encourages internal dialogue in the learner between informal and formal knowledge as the basis for altered action. WBIS ultimately seeks to transform individuals and organisations.

Reinforcing the feeling of cohesion is the sense of having to constantly define objectives and practice in the light of external threats. Not only do tutors feel the constant need to explain WBIS to others- learners, employers, quality assurance, other academics, admissions, finance, registry and more latterly, learning technologists, there is also the need to promote and sometimes defend it. The creation of group cohesion in response to perceived, common external threats, is one of the oldest ideas in social science (Sumner, 1906) but as Coser (1956) notes it is likely to occur where there is internal consensus pre-dating any threat. The importance of a cohesive team in achieving educational goals, even with more conventional educational programmes is recognised by practising academics such as Unwin (2007).

Understanding tutor cohesion is not just a matter of identifying shared objectives; there is a sense of passion, almost evangelism. The question is whether a cohesive academic team constitutes a community of practice. Some, like Knight and Trowler (2001) deny the concept has any relevance for academic tutors since they participate in several activity systems. Other critics, such as Pemberton et al (2007) claim the very idea of a community of practice serves to obscure power imbalances within any group. Knight and Trowler also claim that the concept is too vaguely defined to be of any practical value in the context of academic practice. Others, such as Waddock and Walsh (1999); Adams and Freeman (2000); Cox (2004); Moore (2007); Sirna et al (2008) - all in the context of innovative practice have published descriptive case studies of their own academic community of practice. The term has also been used to differentiate approaches to educational research by Hodkinson (2004) and Hammersley (2005) but, echoing Knight and Trowler's point, Feuer et al (2002) claim all educational research is a single community of practice.

Of all the literature on academic communities of practice by far the most useful is a short paper by Boud (1999). No doubt drawing upon his own experience of working among other work based learning tutors at a time when many innovative learning methods were being devised, he emphasises the importance of informal learning between colleagues characterised as 'reciprocal peer learning – a collegial view of academic work' (p3). He characterises such learning as having a number of historical phases, including development embedded and invisible in academic life, such as keeping up with literature and exchanges at conferences; development as moral purpose, such as a sense of learning from helping students; development as corporate policy (CPD events, the promotion of ICT); development which is multi-dimensional and distributed and finally development as localised practice. It is this aspect in particular this paper explores.

There is no doubt that WBIS tutors are a group of people united by a shared enterprise to which they feel a personal commitment and for which there is a feeling, in an institutional context, there is unique expertise. Wenger's (1998) refinement of the term provides further help to further extend the claim. A community of practice can be said to exist when there is a sustainable history of mutual engagement; members negotiate one with another about what they are doing, how they should behave and relations with the larger institution; where routines and artefacts have been developed to support work together; members know who to ask when help is needed and introduce new entrants who want to become proficient in the practice. More recently Wenger (2007) has described the ways in which communities of practice reproduce themselves by social learning, so that they develop over time. In this sense a community of practice can be said to be emergent, as newcomers develop practice and learning.

These descriptors certainly appear to describe the WBIS tutor team. There has been a sustainable history as the programme has grown (in terms of student numbers) by an average of 20% per annum for a decade and development is sustained by constant, mutual internal dialogue. This dialogue certainly includes behaviours and debates about the relationship with the rest of the university; there are large numbers of highly specific routines, different from the rest of the university, as well as distinctive artefacts. Examples of both abound. There is a distinctive language (with attendant acronyms) around WBIS reflecting its distinctiveness. Examples include ASLAs (Approved Studies Learning Agreement- in which all students state their negotiated pathway, title and award); NELAs (Negotiated Experiential Learning Agreements), in which the student identifies their learning outcomes for a NELM (Negotiated Experiential Learning Module). Other artefacts include the VLEs referred to. While for the rest of the university e-learning is regarded as an adjunct to lectures, for WBIS tutors it can be the principal mechanism for delivery, at distance, with work based learning in mind. As a result the VLEs developed by WBIS tutors are markedly more comprehensive and populated than those produced elsewhere on the campus. The complexity of WBIS, its specialised language and distinctiveness means that new tutors can take some time to feel proficient in their role, as they move from peripheral to legitimate participation. But it is also the case that WBIS practice is shaped and adapted as new tutors enter the practice. None of the original creators of WBIS are now centrally engaged in its delivery; while the fundamentals are in place, there has been considerable adaptation and alteration.

While the WBIS tutor team is undoubtedly a community of practice within the context of the university in which it is situated, there is an issue as to the extent to which it is distinctive within the wider community of UK work based learning practice in higher education. While all such institutions appear to be doing something slightly different, there is nonetheless a shared sense of purpose and enterprise, apparent to all whenever people in the field meet. This is the issue which Wenger (2007) refers to as 'Practice as Locality' and is one which for present purposes, cannot be resolved. The claim for WBIS as a distinctive community of practice rests on its location as part of the University of Chester. The rest of this paper outlines the experience of two WBIS tutors in the development of learning for housing

practitioners, one as legitimate the other as an allegedly peripheral participant. Both are written as first person narratives.

## **The development of Housing pathways within WBIS- legitimate and peripheral participation**

### **Jon's story**

I have been a WBIS tutor since 2004. I was initially employed to help deliver a Foundation degree to the Civil Service. Although developed within the WBIS framework, the Foundation for Government, as it is known, is unusual in that the employer was quite prescriptive about content and delivery. Students on the programme have relatively little choice compared with the majority of WBIS students and delivery is almost all electronic with very little face to face contact. Prior to this I was employed in a Welsh HE institution where I delivered conventionally to Housing and Estate Management students. I have a professional background in Planning and so am familiar with the land professions.

Becoming a WBIS tutor taught me a lot about learning (as opposed to teaching) and I also learned technical skills necessary for e-learning. After about two years in post I developed along with a colleague in another faculty, an M level programme using WBIS for Regeneration practitioners. I have long been engaged with regeneration, both as practitioner and teaching it and it appeared ideally suited for distance delivered work based learning. Practitioners typically come from other disciplines or professions (there are about 100 different occupational groups involved) and rarely have a cognate award. There is no professional body restricting access to educational programmes and although there are Master's programmes, they are expensive and day release- and therefore not a realistic option for most practitioners. Although Chester has relatively few practitioners there are many thousands in North West England so there is a ready market.

Having developed this I also developed a programme using a similar approach for Overview and Scrutiny Officers. These are entirely new occupational grouping created as a result of the Local Government Act 2002. Both the Regeneration Practitioners and Overview and Scrutiny programmes have dedicated VLEs. I was aware there was similar scope for developing specialist pathways on WBIS for Housing Practitioners but feeling the other two initiatives had generated no institutional support, I was reluctant to spend time on new pathways. This changed when in 2007 an opportunity arose to secure developmental funding from the North West Universities Association. They had received money from the North West Regional Development Agency to stimulate the development of programmes in areas where there staff shortages- the Pathfinder project. At the same time the university had received HEFCE funding for Employer Engagement so there was help within the university to meet with employers.

In order to secure funding, it was necessary to demonstrate support from employers. Housing education is unusual in that it is usually paid for by employers and is

completed part time by those already working in the sector. Traditionally most students have completed an HNC (Part 1 of a professional qualification) and a smaller number have gone on to obtain a Diploma in higher education, accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). I have known for some time there is some dissatisfaction among employers with this arrangement. As organisations have tried to control cost by reducing staff numbers, a day out of the office a week is not feasible for many. There is also the question of what students are taught. The traditional emphasis on policy, law and finance is not really relevant for most front line housing staff. Nor is there a sense in which classroom teaching is sufficiently integrated with practice on the ground. Moreover because of low numbers on many courses, they have tended to be offered in a few centres only, making access for many difficult. This has been compounded by a failure to develop modern e-learning methods.

The CIH have been aware of these issues for some time and many employers have simply begun devising their own training programmes. In this context I saw an opportunity for the application of WBIS to deliver the kinds of programmes employers demanded and provide accreditation for their own schemes. We also believe there is still scope for traditional CIH accredited programmes although in these cases learning will be far more prescriptive. The development of housing education at Chester is dependent upon the appointment of someone with role and following the award of a grant in the summer of 2008, the University has appointed a housing (and regeneration) specialist.

My role in the process of developing housing education using WBIS has therefore been as follows. As an experienced WBIS tutor I have been able to put together my knowledge of WBIS/ work based learning and e-learning, allied with knowledge of a particular employment sector to convince employers and an external funder that we have something which is relevant to their needs. The intention, in the first instance is for the new appointee to liaise with a consortium of regional employers as the basis for developing and delivering accredited tailored pathways for housing practitioners. In addition we will seek to identify opportunities for the accreditation of existing provision whether by employers themselves or those delivering housing training/ education/ CPD. Beyond that the intention is to seek accreditation from the CIH for pathways which meet their criteria and extend our provision to those around the country who currently lack any sort of access to accredited housing education or for whom current methods of delivery do not meet their needs.

My role in this process has therefore been one of instigator and developer. As an experienced WBIS tutor I was able to 'sell' the idea to others. Although WBIS is demand led, people have to understand the product before they demand it and the product, for anyone with expectations based upon their own educational experiences, is complex. There are a lot of misconceptions to overcome and a lot of dialogue to be had. Beyond this initial phase, I do not anticipate much involvement in delivery as I have new tasks to complete to extend our collective practice. My immediate role is to mentor new tutors like Dilys and the new appointee. Beyond that I have some accredited modules (including one on Housing Design and Development) which some housing practitioners may wish to complete but my involvement will be minimal.

### **Dilys's story**

Hi Martin

The next bit is a copied email from Dilys- gives you a flavour of her passing thoughts

I could talk about the following : joining WBIS community of practice at Chester - in spite of experience, a new and different way of engaging with learners ( so much is negotiated and flexible ..it is so unscripted) - what my touchstones have been- these are previous knowledge and thoroughly familiar with ideas about experiential learning, assessment negotiated around students' work place practice and activities but in a prescribed vocational course,; critical reflection, notion of community of practice and legitimate peripheral participation.. experience of OU distance learning model . Creating my own learning /induction pathway in my new role ie shadowing colleagues , second marking work, talking to students already established on WBL programmes total immersion in the language of WBL and WBIS; the experience I have had working in private, public, voluntary and government sectors all converging and being useful to me in new role.

Feeling that I am morphing into a hybrid lecturer or educator

Demands of having to clearly articulate WBIS framework and what WBL offering from Chester to a Housing organisation in terms of devising an accredited programme of learning for them based on training already purchased by them. My assumption that it wouldn't be too difficult ( wrong) given my experience ( been a participant in their community of practice ) working in Housing field at the National Tenants Resource Centre and three years delivering at levels 4 and 5 on Housing Programmes. But it has been challenging - gone back to basics as an educator - what is knowledge, what should we teach, what will learners learn, how will they be assessed, how will all this align with the employers' business objectives and so on.

Legit peripheral participation - our philosophical discussions about what they want and what we provide - advice to stick to my guns academic integrity - what can be done and what cannot be done- upholding this quality /standard - training versus education - knowing how and knowing that,; qualification levels, what is demanded at each level and what Higher education is 'for'.

Interactions between me the novice and you Jon the expert and how you have dragged? me along this continuum incrementally - building confidence , building the role, building identity.

Specifically I am now embarking on design of a 60 credit Professional Certificate at Level 4 to tie in with their in house leadership and management in house training which has a high emphasis on using Coaching as a Learning and Development tool, and as a culturally preferred Management style in the organisation. One module in particular - ' Professional Review and development ' trying to align this with Housing Organisation's own in house 7 competences around which their learning, development and appraisal revolve. Challenging, tailor made. But it does bring up the curriculum question as to what should the learner learn , are they ( the employer)

right in choosing these 7 competences? what are these based upon? who says that this knowledge is what their employees need?

This is where the two worlds collide - HE / WBIS Community of Practice facing externally and colliding with housing organisation community of practice - having been part of one doesn't necessarily help when you are now part of another! - when I sit at the table with the employer negotiating, what is my identity and what am I offering and where are the boundaries of my community - it is my community which defines these for me when I get confused. This is where having a community of practice like we've got in PDU has been most useful. Advice, backing up, stick to your guns, you are the expert, academic integrity. ie what the banking sector has lost along the way and brought about disastrous results.

Speed this is happening, I am reflecting in action as opposed to on action!

Would like a Work Based Learning Tutor's Handbook / Companion to refer to... I might write one myself.

Question: do we need Plus Dane's permission to talk about them like this? I would rather not name them and keep them anonymous and not identified just at the moment.

## **Bibliography**

Adams, E. & Freeman, C. (2000) "Communities of practice: bridging technology and knowledge assessment", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 4 (1), pp 38-44

Beattie, R. (2006) "Line managers and workplace learning; learning from the voluntary sector", *Human Resource Development International*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp 99-119

Billet, S. (2001) "Knowing in practice: reconceptualising vocational education", *Learning and Instruction*, 11(1), pp 431-457

Boud, D. (1999) "Situated academic development in professional work: using peer learning", *International Journal for Academic Development*, 4 (1), pp 3-10

Brown, L., Murphy, E. & Wade, V. (2006) "Corporate learning: human resource development implications for large and small organisations", *Human Resource Development International*, 9 (3), pp 415-427

Coser, L. (1956) *The functions of social conflict*. New York: Free Press

Cox, M. (2004) "Introduction to Faculty learning programmes", *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 97, pp 5-23

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1998) *The learning age: a new renaissance for a new Britain*, Norwich: HMSO

Elliot, M. (2002) "Blended learning; the magic is in the mix", in Rossett, A. (Ed.) *The AJTD e learning handbook*. New York: McGraw Hill, pp 58-63.

Eraut, M., Alderton, J., Cole, G., and Senker, P. (1998) *Development of Knowledge and Skills in Employment* Final Report of a Research Project funded by "The Learning Society" Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council: University of Sussex Institute of Education

Field, J. (2006) *Lifelong learning and the new educational order*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.

Feuer, M., Towne, L. & Shavebon, R.(2002) "Scientific culture and educational research", *Educational Researcher*, 31 (8), pp 4-14

Fuller, A. & Unwin, L. (2002) "Developing pedagogies for the contemporary workplace", in Evans, K. et al. *Working to learn*, London: Kogan Page

Gibbs, G. (1998) *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Oxford Further Education Unit.

Graff, M. (2006) "The importance of on-line community in student academic performance", *The electronic journal of e-learning*, 4 (2) pp 127-32.

Hammersley, M. (2005) "What can the literature on communities of practice tells us about educational research? Reflections on some recent proposals". *International Journal of Research and Method*, 28 (1), pp 5-21.

Hodkinson, P. (2004) "Research as a form of work; expertise, community and methodological objectivity", *British Educational Research Journal*, 30 (1), pp 9-26

Hughes, G. (2007) "Using blended learning to increase learner support and improve retention2, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12 (3), pp 349-363

Institute of Personnel and Development (2000) *Success through learning; the argument for strengthening workplace learning*. London: IPD

Katzenbach, J & Smith, D (1993) 'The discipline of teams', *Harvard Business Review*, 71 (2), pp 111-20

Knight, P. and Trowler, P. (2001) *Departmental leadership in Higher Education*. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education and the Open University Press.

Knowles, M., Holton, E. & Swanson, R. (1998) *The adult learner* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.) Woburn, MA: Heinemann-Butterworth

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Minton, A. (2007) *Negotiation of Learning Contracts and assessment in work based learning*. Work Based Learning Network Annual conference, 5-6 July, University of Middlesex.

Moon, J. (2000) *Reflection in learning and professional development*. London: Kogan Page

Moore, B. (2008) "Using technology to promote communities of practice in social work education", *Social Work Education*, 27 (6), pp 592-600

Moran, L. & Myringer, B (2003) 'Flexible learning and university change', in Harry, K (Ed.) *Higher Education through open and distance learning*, London: Routledge

Nicol, D. & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006) "Formative assessment and self regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice", *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (2), pp 199-218

Nixon, I. et al (2006) *Work based learning: illuminating the Higher Education landscape*. York: Higher Education Academy

Pemberton, J., Mavin, S. & Stalker, B. (2007) "Scratching beneath the surface of communities of (mal) practice", *The Learning Organisation: The International Journal of Knowledge and Organisational Learning Management*, 14 (1), pp 62-73

Singh, H. (2003) "Building effective blended learning programs", *Educational Technology*, Vol. 43 No.6, pp 51-4

Sirna, S., Tinning, R. & Rossi, T. (2008) "The social tasks of learning to become a physical education teacher: considering the subject department as a community of practice", *Sport Education and Society*, 13 (3), pp 285-300

Sumner, W 1906, *Folkways*, Boston MA: Ginn

Sutherland, J 1998, *Workplace learning for the twenty first century: report of the Workplace Learning Task Group*, London: Unison

Unwin, A. ( 2007) "The professionalism of the higher education teacher: what's ICT got to do with it?", *Teaching in higher Education*, 12 (3), pp 295-308

Waddock, S. & Walsh, M. (1999) "Paradigm shift: toward community-university community of practice", *International Journal of Organisational Analysis* 7 (3), pp244-264

Walsh, E., Wanberg, C., Brown, K. & Simmering, M. (2003) "E-learning: emerging uses, empirical results and future directions", *International Journal of Training and Development*, 7 (4), pp 245-58.



Wedgewood, M. (2007) *Employer engagement: higher education for the workforce. Barriers and facilitators- the results of a survey for the DfES*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

Weinstein, K. (1995) *Action learning* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) Aldershot: Gower

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wenger, E. (2007) *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press