Students' conceptual knowledge about workplace pedagogies and applications to learning in the workplace

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Literature

- Conceptions of knowledge and learning + learning orientations influence the strategies and quality of outcomes
- Conceptions affect the cognitive processing strategies.

Workplace pedagogies

- Daily work practices
- Coaching
- Other workers
- Questioning
- Observing and listening
- Modelling
- Workplace document procedures (Billett, 2002)

My research

- Pilot study
- Survey
- Sample
  - 17 students (16 female, 1 male) 2nd year of Diploma in Nursing at TAFE
  - Av. age = 29yrs
  - Previous work experiences in hospitality, child care, retail, and nursing (as an assistant nurse or as a dental nurse).
  - 25% international students.

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<th>Source of learning in the workplace</th>
<th>How it may help you learn</th>
<th>Examples of activities</th>
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Considering your previous learning, in what ways do you think you would learn best in the workplace?

What is your preferred approach to learning in the workplace for your current course?
Findings

**Daily work practices**
- Application of theory to practice (53%)
- Helps put theory into practice
- Reinforce what is being taught
- Development of work skills and practice - medication recognition, basic skills of personal care and dressing, peoples’ skills, and time management.
- Gain competence and confidence.
- **Best and the most preferred approach**

[Rehearsing and reproducing - lower levels of projective or adaptive knowledge for later use]

**Coaching**
- Improving understanding by clarifying matters and getting clear explanations.
- Learning the accepted techniques, and receiving guidance and assistance to become more efficient.
- Identifying areas for improvement, providing encouragement, and maintaining motivation.
- Coaches maintain motivation – leads to increased confidence.
- 2nd best approach to learning.

Other workers (co-workers, supervisors, guides, technical experts)
- Induction – settling into the culture
- New techniques - ‘the right way’, short-cuts
- Problem solving
- Rules and regulations of the workplace, and time management techniques.
- ‘Working as a team and with other co-workers allows you to discuss and talk about different aspects of the job.’
- Preferred approach to learning – by only 1 student

[Overlap between this and other elements (coaching, mentoring, modelling, observing and listening to others...)]

**Questioning ???**
- Clarification (41%)- ‘Make sure I understand what I’ve learnt’
- Correction of errors (29%)
- ‘To understand more in-depth’
- Examples: specific medical skills, job roles, and brainstorming ideas.

Observing and listening to others
- ‘To understand the situation and techniques at work, clarify and improve methods, and expand the knowledge and skills.’
- Opportunities to watch other more experienced workers demonstrate ‘new and better ways of completing tasks’.
- Learn new skills and appreciate different viewpoints and learn how others interact and perform in the workplace.
- Gain some understanding of the workplace cultures, distinct ways in which work is completed in particular workplaces.
- Preferred by 29%

Modelling
- Demonstrated professional practices, and enhanced understanding and confidence.
- Way of learning the correct ways of performing tasks, learning new techniques and building confidence at work.

**Workplace document procedures**
- Ensure the procedural aspects of work and compliance with legal obligations.
- To avoid mistakes, follow the correct practices and maintain consistency in practice across particular workplaces, thereby enhance individual confidence.
- Provide a range of medical terms.
Limitations

• Brief statements from the international students
• Untested assumption that the students fully appreciated the distinct differences between each of the seven elements of workplace pedagogies - that they all interpreted the scope of each dimension consistently.
• Types of things included or excluded under each of the seven sources of learning were not explained.

Conclusions

• Basic understanding - only a few cognitive processing strategies, need to engage in meta-cognition – develop agentic roles
• Tendency to rely more on passive approaches - daily practices, observing and listening to others, modelling and coaching, and other workers - fewer student initiated interactions and less intensity in any interactions
• Learning as a product (Hager, 2004, p. 3) instead of learning as a product and process.

• Rely mostly on typical academic learning skills listed by Tennant (2000)
• Need more meaningful data
• Before, during and after workplace placement
• Developing and guiding the exercise of personal epistemologies needs to become an important educational priority (Billett, 2009).

Acknowledgement

• Centre for Learning and Innovation (Queensland University of Technology) for the project grant
• Students and teachers who assisted with data collection
• Prof. Stephen Billett for his insightful comments