Developing agentic professionals through practice-based pedagogies

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Discusses prospects for the effective integration of experiences in practice settings with higher education.

Proposes developing students as agentic learners and practitioners through integrating experiences in practice and university settings.

Reflects theoretical advances reconciling contributions amongst the personal, and social and brute facts, and individuals' mediating role in learning.

Progression

- Learning through life-wide and long experiences
- Epistemological agency and learning
- Agentic professionals
- Developing agentic professionals through integrating practice experiences within higher education
- Promoting agentic personal epistemologies
- Considerations for curriculum, pedagogy and epistemologies

Key concepts informing the talk

- Ontogentic development as lifelong learning
- Duality of affordances and engagement
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- Agentic personal epistemology

Learning through life-wide and long experiences

Interaction between individuals and the social and brute world is long established

Referred to as inter-psychological processes leading to intra-psychological outcomes: learning.

Neither the social suggestion nor individuals' agency alone is sufficient to explain the processes and consequences of participating and learning through social practices, such as work.

Instead, there is an interdependence between the two – a duality of affordances and engagement

<u>Affordances</u> – the invitational qualities of the immediate social setting (e.g. workplace, university)

<u>Engagement</u> – the degree by which individuals engage with what has been afforded them

This interdependence is relational

Consequently, moment-by-moment learning throughout our lives (i.e. microgenetic development) that is generative of ontogenetic development (i.e. across the life span) negotiation comprises negotiation within this duality.

Microgenetic processes (moment-by-moment development) (Scribner 1985) comprises negotiations between personal and, social and brute contributions that constitute ontogenetic development.

Individuals' construal and construction of what they experience are key mediating factors.

They are mediated by individuals' subjectivities, including the discourses they have access to and their gaze, that have arisen through their life histories (pre-mediately).

These contributions shape and exercise individuals' focus, intentionality and intensity of individuals' constructive processes.

Gergen (1994), proposes: "As people move through life, the domain of relationships typically expands and the context of any given relationship typically changes. In effect, we are continuously confronted with some degree of novelty--new contexts and new challenges. Yet our actions in each passing moment will necessarily represent some simulacrum of the past; we borrow, we formulate, and patch together various pieces of preceding relationships in order to achieve local coordination of the moment. Meaning at the moment is always a rough reconstitution of the past, a ripping of words from familiar contexts and their precarious insertion into the emerging realisation of the present." (pp. 269-270)

Individuals have to engage actively in processes of construing and constructing, and remaking of practice, because the social suggestion is never complete or unambiguous.

Learning environments are privileged by the kinds of activities and interactions they afford individuals, and their interest in engaging in them, not their institutional purposes.

In particular, personal agency is salient to this knowledge construction

Brings to centre stage - issue of individuals' personal epistemologies, as well as the suggestion of the social and brute worlds.

Individuals' epistemological agency and learning

Personal agency, learning and the remaking of culture

Vygotsky concluded that social guidance was secondary to individual agency in the development of psychological functions. In referring to child's play, he noted:

In play, the child is always higher than his average age, higher than his usual everyday behaviour; he is in play as if a head above himself. The play contains, in a condensed way, as if in the focus of a magnifying glass, all tendencies of development; it is as if the child in play tries to accomplish a jump above the level of his ordinary behaviour. … Play is the resource of development and it creates the zone of nearest development. Action in the imaginary field, in the imagined situation, construction of voluntary intention, the formulation of life plan, will motivate -- this all emerges in play." (Vygotsky 1966: 74-75 translated and cited in Valsiner, 2000)

Cole (2002, 1980) proposes a similar agentic role for individuals' remaking of cultural practices

The individual here is positioned as being social shaped (Meade, 1913), albeit uniquely so through ontogeny. Essentially, the self emerges through relations with the social and brute worlds

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"… personality becomes socially guided and individually constructed in the course of human life. People are born as potential persons, the process of becoming actual persons takes place through individual trans formations of social experience" (Harre 1995: 373)

Developing agentic professionals

The agentic qualities of their personal epistemologies are essential for both rich learning and effective professional practice.

Importantly, it is students who participate in, negotiate and learn practices across both university and practice settings.

Knowledge to be learnt for professional practice

Developing the capacities to realise vocations

Expert performance is founded on:

Domain-specific conceptual knowledge – 'knowing that' (Ryle 1939) (i.e. concepts, facts, propositions – surface to deep) (e.g. Glaser 1989)

Domain-specific procedural knowledge – 'knowing how' (Ryle 1939) (i.e. specific to strategic procedures) (e.g. Anderson 1993)

Dispositional knowledge - 'knowing for' (i.e. values, attitudes) related to canonical and instances of practice (e.g. Perkins et al 1993), includes criticality (e.g. Mezirow)

Comprises both:
(i) canonical occupational knowledge and

(ii) that knowledge required for situational performance

No such thing as an occupational expert, per se

Expertise arises through episodes of experiences, perhaps most centrally authentic instances of practice

Yet, the capacities workers need to learn are more than techne - technical knowledge. There is also the need to:

• generate and evaluate skilled performance as work tasks become complex and as situations and processes change,

• reason and solve work problems,

• be strategic,

• innovate and

• adapt.

(Stevenson, 1994)

Indeed, professionals need critical insights and to be reflexive to both practice and learn through practice (e.g. clinical reasoning).

Developing capacities through occupational practice

1. Authentic experiences - provide access to activities through which knowledge is structured, organised and refined (i.e. authentic activities, novel and routine)

2. Indirect guidance - observing and listening (i.e. cues and clues)

3. Direct guidance - access to more experienced co-workers

(Billett 2001)

Note the central role of personal agency in these experiences

However, there are limitations to learning through practice ….

Bad habits
Lack of opportunity to practice or extend
Lack of support and guidance
Doing, but not understanding what or why
Constraining experiences
Confronting experiences

Again, personal agency will be central to
addressing these kinds of limitations

Developing agentic professionals through integrating
practice experiences

Developing agentic professionals through practice-based pedagogies – Stephen Billett (ALTC Associate Fellow)

Aim: how to maximise students' learning experiences by developing and appraising pedagogies for practice-based learning.

Engaged 4 discipline areas (i.e. nursing, physiotherapy, human services & midwifery) in 5 university programs to integrate work-based and academic experiences to develop students as independent practitioners and intentional learners.

<u>Key premises</u>
Work-integrated learning is required to develop the kinds of knowledge required for effective professional practice.

Educational provisions are nothing more or less than an invitation to change.

This Fellowship examines how students might best take up this invitation.

In particular, it examined the development of agentic qualities in students engaged in work integrated learning.

Five sub-project

1. Preparing undergraduate nursing students for their professional role - Jenny Newton & Brian Jolly (Monash University)

2. Preparing for professional practice: A transition curriculum - Liz Molloy and Jenny Keating (Monash University)

3. Midwifery learning through a continuity model to produce an agentic professional - Pauline Glover & Linda Sweet (Flinders University)

4. Learning to deal with confronting experiences: Human services students - Jenny Cartmel & Jane Thomson (Griffith University)

5. Developing agentic student nurses through a Clinical Progression Portfolio - Marion Mitchell & Marie Cook (Griffith University)

In overview, it was found that:

(i) preparation for the required level of procedural skills for and conceptual understandings about the occupational practice undertaken before students participated in practice settings permitted them to most effectively participate and learn;

(ii) processes to heighten awareness about the capacities required to be agentic were central to effective practice and learning;

(iii) having peer and other forms of support during their participation in practice settings through forums that promoted peer interaction was helpful for developing professional understandings, and the procedures and dispositions required for effective practice;

(iv) students learnt the processes and value of being agentic in their practices through practice and peer-based processes; and

(v) processes in the university setting after practice-based experiences that gave students the opportunity to share, reflect and critically appraise their experience were central to developing their professional capacities, including those associated with being agentic as practitioners and learners, and to maximising their learning.

Considerations for the effective integration of experiences:

Before,

during

after
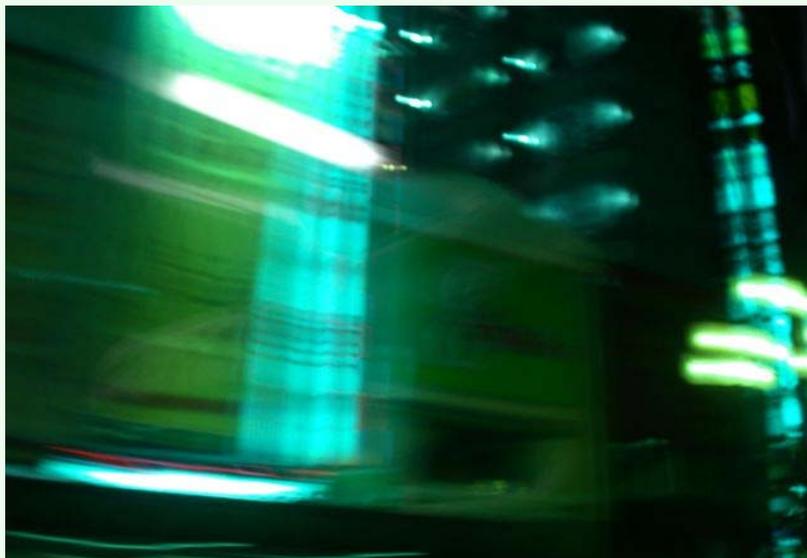
practice based experiences.

Before practice experiences … Molloy – pre-practicum week

- Establish <u>bases for experiences</u> in practice setting, including developing or identifying capacities in practice settings

- <u>Clarify expectations</u> about purposes, support, responsibilities etc (i.e. goals for learning)

Newton et al – advanced organisers

- Inform about purposes, roles and expectations of different parties (e.g. advance organisers)

- Prepare students as agentic learners (- the importance of observations, interactions and activities through which they learn)

- Prepare students for contestations

Cartmel and Thomson – learning circles…

     "The key messages I'm getting from this week are to be proactive in my learning during clinicals in terms of critically reflecting and not leaving it to the supervisor to make times with me for feedback. To be professional and show interest in what I am doing, be punctual and be prepared with notes. To concentrate on the patient rather than the fact that I am being tested and to understand that I am not the priority- the patient is. To be socially aware of people, adapting to my supervisor's style of teaching." (Q 6 response 10)

Liz Molloy – Monash University

During ………

- <u>Direct guidance</u> by more experienced practitioners (i.e. proximal guidance)

- <u>Sequencing and combinations of activities</u> (i.e. 'learning curriculum' - practice based curriculum)

- Identifying and utilising <u>pedagogically rich work activities or interactions</u> (e.g. handovers)

- Promote effective <u>peer interactions</u> (i.e. collaborative learning)

- Active and purposeful engagement by learners in workplace settings

Glover and Sweet – follow throughs for student midwives
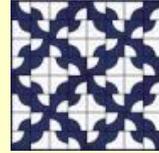
After ………

Sharing and drawing out experiences (i.e. articulating, and comparing - commonalities and distinctiveness) (e.g. identifying the canonical and situational requirements for practice)

- Making links to what is taught (learnt) in the university setting

- Emphasising the agentic and selective qualities of learning through practice (i.e. personal epistemologies)

- Encouraging critical perspectives on work and learning processes

Newton et al reflective learning groups

Pedagogy, curriculum and personal epistemologies

To realise the educational worth of integrating practice experiences within higher education provisions:

Need to identify, acknowledge and exploit the pedagogic potential of practice to maximise learning experiences.

Curriculum considerations include how best to prepare for, sequence and the extent of practice experiences, including support for learning.

Identify what kinds of experiences might best utilise develop, and sustain students' personal epistemologies, including their critical engagement and reflection.

In sum, …………

Practice-based learning experiences - need to be seen as more legitimate experiences within higher educational provisions, and most importantly – integrated within university-based experiences.

Smooth transition to practice - most likely realised by graduates who are informed, prepared both canonically and situationally, and exercise personal agency and critical insights.

In realising these transitions, mature relations between academics and practitioners, and academic institutions and practice-settings are most helpful, but difficult to generate and sustain.

Hence, the importance of students' effective personal epistemologies.

So, beyond developing occupational capacities, the educational worth of work integrated learning in both the short and long-term is likely to be secured through preparing students as agentic learners: developing their personal epistemologies.