

# Practitioner Learning In and Across Organizations

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## PROJECTS

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TLRP is made up of over a hundred investments including:

- 4 research networks
- 52 research projects (below)
- 6 associated projects
- 2 career development associates
- 5 research training fellowships
- 25 'Meetings of Minds' fellowships
- 20+ thematic initiatives

TLRP's first projects started in January 2000 and the the 'generic phase' (consisting of a wide-ranging portfolio of projects) is expected to end during 2009.

The specific Technology Enhanced Learning projects began in 2007 and this phase will continue into 2011.



# TLRP investments in learning at work include:

## **Workplace Learning**

Improving Incentives to Learning in the Workplace

Early Career Learning at Work: LINEA

Learning as Work: Teaching and Learning Processes in the Contemporary Work Organisation

Understanding the System: Techno-mathematical Literacies in the Workplace

Enhancing 'Skills for Life': Adult Basic Skills and Workplace Learning

Globalisation and Skill Formation Strategies of MNCs: A Comparative Analysis

## **Professional Learning**

Competence-based Learning in the Early Professional Development of Teachers

Vicarious Learning and Teaching of Clinical Reasoning Skills

Learning in and for Interagency Working

Learning in and for Interagency Working: multiagency work in Northern Ireland



# Settings covered include:

- The three main sectors of the economy: manufacturing; services; & construction (only agriculture & mining are not covered)
- Public, private & voluntary sectors



# Occupations include:

- Accountants
- Assembly line workers
- Call centre operators
- Engineers (mechanical and electrical)
- Nurses and other health professionals
- Research and development workers
- Sales staff
- Social workers
- Teachers



# Some Key Questions

- What is involved in learning in work systems which are themselves becoming increasingly responsive to change?
- What are the best ways of studying learning at work so that learning and development can be supported?



# Four Stories of Contrast and Change

- Learning under *different* work systems
- *Changes* to learning following shifts in the system of work
- Studying learning in *changes* in inter-professional collaboration in social care
- The *changing* sources of learning for young professionals



# 1. Learning in different work systems

- Learning cannot be viewed and studied in isolation from work systems which provide the contours for what is learned, by whom and how
- Learning needs to be 'situated' more broadly as those in the same occupation can experience different learning environments



## 2. Changes to learning following re-organization of work

- Learning can be 'fat' or 'thin' and involve 'many' or 'few' communities, hence some workers may get 'to know a little about a lot'
- If the insertion of new tools, whether technologies or ideas, involves workplace learning - the organisation also needs to adjust.

For example, *rule bending* by learning practitioners was a sign that adjustment in the system was needed



# 3. Changes in inter-professional collaboration

- Distributed expertise
- Relational agency and knowing how to know who
- Values as inter-professional 'glue'
- Being explicit about own expertise AND being able to contribute to and access distributed expertise
- Negotiating with professionals easier than negotiating with clients
- An enhanced form of professionalism



# 4. Changing sources of learning during occupational socialization

Learning involves seeing the workplace in a new way **and** connecting to it in a different way.

To support workplace learning managers need to:

- understand the emotional conflicts faced by workers who are identifying contradictions e.g. between established practices and how they are now seeing work and its purposes
- recognise that conflict and contradictions are evidence of learning



# How should we study learning at work?

- Mixed designs to capture evidence of learning and change and the dynamics of change processes e.g. between individual and system
- Participatory designs which include ‘users’ alongside researchers in a wide variety of ways
- Anticipatory designs which allow research teams to inform development as it occurs

# Anticipatory designs

*University-based researchers need to be able to connect what they know with what practitioners intend to do (Gibbons, 1999)*

TLRP has shown the benefits for both research and practice (including strategy and policy) of getting in and alongside practitioners to examine their practices and their intentions – opening up knowledge management processes **within** research projects





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