

Enhancing the Capacity for Workplace Learning and Innovation in Scotland

Thesis Summary:

Workplace learning is achieved in a number of ways, such as through training, coaching and mentoring (Ramage, 2014, p.489). The current research focuses on the learning of skills which make employees innovative. It also considers how organisational contexts can influence the learning of such skills. For example, culture and strategy are important, particularly in relation to informal workplace learning. The research aims to address the following questions: (1) What skills are required for an individual to have the capacity to innovate? (2) How can successful workplace learning be identified within organisations? (3) What are the determinants of successful workplace learning?

Proposed Research:

The research will investigate the learning of innovation skills and good practice within the workplace. Workplace learning initiatives and funding within the UK and Europe will be explored to compare success factors within the learning process. A framework will be developed to explain how employee-led workforce learning can be encouraged to deliver skills for innovation that lead to employment growth, competitive advantage, and increased productivity within the organisational context. Factors in successful workplace learning will be incorporated into the framework, as will the influence of organisational culture and strategy (including how knowledge is shared, used and created) on the development of innovation skills.

Work Plan (including methodology):

The exact research methods are yet to be fixed, however, it is anticipated that both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used in a multi-methods approach. Empirical work will be split into three phases: (1) a preliminary investigation will focus on comparison of UK and European training data; (2) the main study will provide insight into current practice and; (3) practitioner perspectives on workplace learning and innovation.

Preliminary research: UK and European trends in training and skills

Training information will be examined using data from the *UK Labour Force Survey*, the *Workplace Employee Relations Survey* and six of the most recent editions of *The Employment Surveys Dataset*. Trends in training and skills development will be explored qualitatively. Results will highlight influences that require further investigation.

Main study: organisational and sector variations

The main study will explore how organisational culture and strategy influence workplace learning. The focus will be on contextual factors required to develop innovation skills. Quantitative survey data will be collected to determine how organisational culture and strategy are associated to innovation skills development within the organisational setting. Statistical models will be produced, focusing on the factors that make training successful to increase the development of innovation skills. Case studies will then be carried out to observe workplace learning practices in further detail. Qualitative interviews will explore the link between training, learning and innovation, with a focus on how successful workplace learning can be highlighted within the organisational environment. Additionally, contextual influences (such as knowledge sharing) that give rise to the development of innovation skills will be explored. It is anticipated that one large enterprise will be compared and contrasted with two Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in both the manufacturing and service sectors. Comparisons will highlight variations in practice related to regional and sector differences.

Supplementary study: Practitioner perspectives

Representatives from agencies responsible for providing and promoting training, such as Skills Development Scotland, will be interviewed. Interviews will gather information on practitioner perspectives of workplace learning and training success, including potential constraints. Interview findings will be presented in a workshop to employers and agents. Two focus groups will discuss interview findings and add further contributions and ideas.

Progress to date (March 2016):

To date, work has focused on desk based research to determine different forms of workplace learning (such as training) and success factors in workplace learning, as well as how knowledge management may be related to workplace learning. Additionally, information has been sought on funding for workplace learning and initiatives within the UK and Europe. By the time of ISIC 2016, relationships between organisational contexts and the learning of innovation skills will have been explored within the current literature. Specifically, literature on how organisational strategy and organisational culture influence the learning of innovation skills will be explored. Organisational culture will focus on how knowledge is shared, used, stored, and created within organisations to facilitate the learning process. Preliminary quantitative investigations will also determine trends in UK and European training and skills data before carrying out main data collection in the forms of case studies and focus groups.

Research problems to discuss at the workshop:

How to development a theoretical framework for a study that is inherently multidisciplinary, drawing on literature scattered across several domains.

How to manage relationships with a PhD sponsor that expects actionable recommendations as an output of the study.

Reference:

Ramage, C. (2014). Learning to learn through university accredited work-based learning: a threshold conception. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 26(8), 488-510.

Curriculum Vitae: Lyndsey Jenkins

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Education

2015 - Present: Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK: **PhD Information Science**

Research topic: Enhancing the Capacity for Workplace Learning and Innovation in Scotland.

Supervisors: Professor Hazel Hall and Professor Robert Raeside.

Funders: Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Skills

Development Scotland (SDS). ESRC Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences Information Science Pathway.

2011-2012: Durham University, UK; **MSc Developmental Psychopathology**

2008-2011: Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK; **BSc (Hons) Psychology**

Employment

December 2014 – August 2015: National Careers Service, **Careers Adviser**

November 2014 – December 2014: NeuroPartners, **Higher Education Support Worker**

February 2014 – November 2014: NeuroPartners, **Assistant Psychologist** (Neurorehabilitation).

September 2013 – February 2014: NeuroPartners, **Specialist Mental Health Mentor** (Higher Education).

September 2013 – February 2014: NeuroPartners, **Education Support Worker**

June 2008 – February 2014: Various organisations, **Customer service roles**

Voluntary Activities

December 2014 – September 2015: Northumbria University, **Research Intern**

- Project entitled: 'Career exploration and information seeking via social media'.

February 2013- September 2014: Momentum Skills, **Assistant Psychologist**

- Supporting individuals with brain injury to rebuild social and employability skills through one to one support sessions.

November 2012 – January 2014: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), **Schools Service Presenter**

- Delivery of assembly and workshop sessions exploring different forms of abuse and where to seek help if necessary (30 + sessions delivered).

ISIC 2016 Pre-Conference Doctoral Workshop Submissions

October 2012 – September 2013: Royal Statistics Society, **Media Fellow/Lead Science and Statistics Speaker**

- Delivery of workshops to journalists and trainees in North East England.
 - ➔ Science for Journalists (covering evidence, peer review, publishing, uncertainty, balance).
 - ➔ Statistics for Journalists (covering risk, averages, regression to the mean, error margin, percentages).

October 2011 – March 2013: Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, **Research Assistant**

- Supporting clinicians and trainee clinical psychologists in doctoral research.
 - ➔ Main project aimed to improve the use of research findings in clinical and managerial practice via the production of tailored "evidence summaries" by the researcher and her Research Assistant.
Researcher: Rachel Steele, Clinical Librarian.
 - ➔ 'Does attachment style in staff influence causal attributions of challenging behaviour in learning disabilities in patient settings?'
Researcher: Caroline Bryant, Trainee Clinical Psychologist.

Conference Presentations

Jenkins, L., & Jeske, D. (2015). Starting out: Personality and online support effects on career agency and occupational engagement in young adults. 6th Annual Conference of the BSPID (British Society for the Psychology of Individual Differences), York, 10th April. Available at:
http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/22035/1/Lyndsey_Jenkins_BSPID_2015.pdf

Jenkins, L., & Jeske, D. (2015). Personality and role-model effects on career decision-making and career exploration amongst young adults. Northumbria Research Conference, Northumbria University in Newcastle, 20th May. Available at:
<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/research/3174722/3179184/Poster22.pdf>

Jenkins, L. (2012). 'Investigating ratings of how threatening male and female face emotions appear, in a population of individuals assessed for symptoms of social anxiety' (poster presentation). PsyPAG Annual Postgraduate Conference, July 18th, Northumbria University at Newcastle.

Invited Talks

Jenkins, L. (2012). 'Science for Journalists. Workshop for Journalists and Journalist Students'. North East Press Association, October 22nd, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Academic Sponsorship

April 2014: Department of Psychology, Northumbria University: Departmental sponsorship to present at 6th Annual Conference of the BSPID (British Society for the Psychology of Individual Differences), York, UK.

Academic Funding

2015 – 2018: Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) +3 PhD Studentship, 'Enhancing the capacity for workplace learning and innovation in Scotland', Institute for Informatics and Digital Innovation, Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK.

Contact Details

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