

PAPER:

***MAKING JUDGEMENTS AS THE
BASIS OF WORKPLACE LEARNING:
PRELIMINARY RESEARCH FINDINGS***

Paul Hager
University of Technology Sydney
and
Dr David Beckett
University of Melbourne

Abstract:

Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning of interest in workplace learning, particularly in its informal manifestations. One of the clear findings of this work is that an unusually large number of variables influence workplace learning. This creates the problem of 'far too many variables' for researchers wanting to investigate workplace learning. What is needed is some way of conceptualising workplace learning that draws attention to the main features of the phenomenon, while at the same time being sensitive to the potential contributions of the many variables that have been shown to influence workplace learning. It is proposed that conceptualising workplace learning as a growing capacity to make judgments incorporate these many variables while providing a manageable means of investigating workplace learning empirically.

This paper will report on preliminary studies of work in a range of occupations that identified and analysed the main judgments involved in individuals' work performance. The primary aim of the research in this, its 'pilot' phase, was to establish the usefulness or otherwise of the major hypothesis that workplace learning is primarily a growing capacity to make appropriate judgments in the particular circumstances that occur in the workplace. Subsidiary aims of the research were to identify major factors that shaped the judgments and to study the range of propositions offered in explanation and/or justification of judgments. These propositions are analysed in the light of a classification derived from Dewey's work on judgement.