

Learning for Transfer – A framework for action

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The need for the transfer of competence across workplaces and work communities is a fundamental platform which reverberates through the public policy and rhetoric of vocational education and learning. What is not clear is how this goal is to be achieved. Nor is its inclusion in our practice as educators and researchers either specified or overtly encouraged. Can it, therefore be assumed that the transfer of competence is an innate ability? Or do we need to find ways in which to enhance the ability of our workforce to effectively transfer their competence in response to workplace change?

This paper reports on the findings to date from a PhD into the transfer of competence across workplace contexts. It establishes a framework for learning which is student-centred and which integrates the concepts of activity theory (Engestrom 1999), expansive learning (Bateson 1972), communities of practice (Wenger 1998) and multiple intelligences (Gardiner 1993). It looks at the shift in teaching practice which is essential if learners are to be actively empowered to learn in ways which reduce their dependency on formal learning tools and events and develop their capacity for lifelong experiential and investigative learning.