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Negotiating learning and work: Clarifying workers' personal participative practices

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Structure:

- Context
- Negotiation
- Project
- Hugh and Haydon
- Discussion

Context – researching work and learning

➤ Sociocultural constructivism

Learning, like work, is a relational and interdependent practice. Learning is both a personal and a social practice. It is the means by which people actively engage in simultaneous self and social transformation (Lave & Wenger 1991, Billett 2008).

➤ Subject centred

Focus on the person of the learner as the locus of learning success and support.

The premise is simple. If we can better understand how workers personally engage in vocational learning then we can better understand how to provide for and facilitate that learning.

Negotiation – workers participation

A key term – a rich generic set of meanings that capture interaction, interdependence, relational contribution.

- Poorly used – too ambiguous (Billett & Smith 2006)
- Reasonably used – some definition (Solomon 1999)
- Commonly used – but rarely defined (Lave & Wenger 1991 – present, e.g.. Price, Scheeres & Boud 2009)

Needs to be fully explicated if it is to carry understandings of worker participative practices

Project – examining work/learning practice as negotiation

- 4 groups of 3 from 4 workplaces – 12
- Fire & Rescue Service
- Restaurant
- Gymnasium
- IT Support Department

18 months – observation and interview x 5

Hugh - Firefighter

Breathing apparatus –

“That’s my friend, I need that, so I don’t care what station I’m on, where I am, I always test my own BA set at the start of every shift, then I know it’s done. Here they’re a whole lot more – slack. It’s not a nice thing to say, but sorry, the systems in place aren’t as strictly enforced.”



Haydon – Personal trainer

“you’re always consistently learning and new things pop up at work all the time with different clients and what they want to achieve. Sometimes you’ve got to go back and do a little bit more research into some things if something comes up. Its necessary learning. Its learning that you need to do your job properly and learning that you need to do your job safely as well.”



Negotiation - Transaction

- “negotiation is a process whereby two or more parties seek an agreement to establish what each shall give or take, or perform and receive in a transaction between them” (Saner 2005:17).
- What is transacted ?
 - Hugh – personal values that include personal safety, justice, experience, reliance on self and others, trust and confidence
 - Haydon – personal values of care and concern, respect, due diligence, that results follow from directed effort and that motivation is founded on personal preference.

Values transformed - mutualities

The notion of negotiation as transaction enables the value of the resources transformed through social interactions such as work and learning to be identified and accounted – not simply as exchanged, but as transformed into mutualities or shared values that are enacted as vocational practices.

Enacted personal values – work practice

When the personal values of the individual worker are viewed as sociocultural resources that are transacted through the negotiations that constitute work and learning, the personal participative practices of the learner are more clearly illuminated.

