

Editorial

Being and becoming a producer of knowledge

Welcome to this latest issue of the Work Based Learning e-journal in which contributions are increasingly of an international perspective both in terms of where they originate from and in the transferability of ideas. We chose the title of the editorial to embrace the creativity of the community of work based learning and to locate the journal in the knowledge management of the community for sharing new practice knowledge and experience. In doing so the hope is that the journal will be used to further the community's knowledge and understanding of work based learning, work based research and the professional or practice doctorate. We also wanted to acknowledge the contributions from all authors and new writers and in particular those meeting the rather tight deadline for authors following the 2nd International Conference on Professional Doctorates of April this year in Edinburgh. This current issue comprises a majority of papers generated from the 2nd International Conference on Professional Doctorates. An important change for the journal is the Dialogue and Debate section inviting cutting edge and informative papers to generate conversation and debate from the field.

The papers selected for this edition represent research and practice within the field, which has relevance across international boundaries. In an increasingly globalised higher education sector, with the importance of research funding allocation based upon research outputs and excellence, this journal offers rigorous peer review and the potential for high impact through open access. In the ongoing development of the journal, a set of guidelines has been produced for the reviewers of papers in the refereed section. This necessitated the editorial group to reflect on the purpose of the review process in the context of the journal's aims. Through our own conversations we came to a view that the purpose of the review process is to promote a collaborative conversation between author and referee for constructive feedback to enhance the rigour and content of the paper and its presentation. A set of questions have been collated as a basis for reviewers to provide informative feedback to authors regarding the merit and integrity of the paper:

How is the topic of the paper important or relevant to the work based learning community?

Are the claims made in the paper plausible given our existing knowledge about the subject?

Is the credibility of the claims supported by sufficient evidence of adequate quality, rigour and practical significance?

Is the paper coherent and persuasive of the line of development it is taking and the point it is making?

Accessibility and credibility are important aspects for any dissemination activity for producers of knowledge and, in relation to this journal, are linked with producers being and becoming writers of that knowledge. Perhaps we can learn from the schooling of children as they learn to master how to write. We would encourage you to read the action research project of Emerson and Maxwell 'Graphic organisers and writing performance' and to share it with colleagues and students engaged with work based learning. The work is situated in primary schooling and shows the relevance to all of us would be authors that effective writing needs rehearsal; thinking about what you want to write, talking about it and doing the associated researching.

Another form of writing is that of articulating the design and structure of professional doctorates and work based learning curricula to effectively portray the rigour of the programme both in terms of the product and the learning experience to an array of audiences. Maxwell provides an analysis of current trends for professional doctorates in Australia and O'Connor on developments in the USA. The paper by Irvin-Lazorko draws attention to the tensions created by the emergence of the professional doctorate as a labour market qualification. The case study is located in the USA within the nursing profession and explores the contested nature of the practice based doctorate curriculum for career advancement within clinical and university settings. In a second case study Bjørke and Habib compare doctoral level pathways of preparation for career development in Norwegian higher education and use the professional doctorate literature to argue for a preparation that includes practice and inter-professional orientation. All of these papers acknowledge the question of rigour and the realities of the workplace in the design and structure of doctorate programmes. There is a specific concern with issues of rigour in doctoral projects. The work basedness of professional doctorate projects appears to invite a perception that equivalence of rigour is not possible using the traditional bench mark of PhD programmes and is debated in the contributions by Bjørke & Habib, Irvin-Lazorko and O'Connor.

The papers of McAllan & Blair, Sanders et al, Smith et al and Weller et al point to how work based learning generates a learning context which spans the domains of the academy and work place / organisations. This creates an available and accessible social learning network of relationships and associated resources for the work based learning student and doctorate candidate. The recognition by and the interaction of becoming producers of knowledge within such networks is surely essential

to interrogating the 'truth value' or verisimilitude of the project design and outcomes. This challenge of rigour is also experienced by work based researchers in their doctoral journey as they try to find a language to express the robustness of their project. An aspect of doctoral supervision is how candidates perceive and engage with these networks and give rigour to the work given the tacit experiential resources professionals bring with them to the programme. The Delphi study of Weller et al led to literature on affordances to explore how candidates engage with resources of the academy and workplace to support their learning during the project life cycle. Recognising that doctoral candidates need to learn how to work across domains, Sanders et al explore 'Identity, reflection and developmental networks' as an approach to move the understanding beyond *'territorialised professional knowledge to the critical curiosity required of a doctoral candidate'*. The paper 'Student perceptions of the professional doctorate' by Smith et al show the relevance and connectedness of social relations of the cohort experience and interactions with academic tutors and the impact on candidate's professional practice. Bringing yet another perspective of the social learning network is McAllan and Blair's case study of 'The potential to enhance practice' which goes beyond that of the individual professional to transformational change within the organisation.

Alongside the issues of rigour and enhancement of professional practice and the realities of the work place and the academy, within the papers there is a growing recognition that to understand work based learning and doctoral level study, attention also needs to move towards the 'who'. Who is the self that engages with work based learning or doctoral study in the work place and how does work based learning and doctoral study create spaces of exploration for the formation of emergent and fluid identities? Barnard's paper on 'the self in social work' challenges readers to question their understandings of the construction of 'the self' in practice contexts and to ask questions of the desirable professional self. Taking up the challenge Drake et al use narratives to explore how experiential learning within the doctoral inquiry brings a changing view of self in the process of becoming a producer of knowledge. Their work on the reflexivity of merging understandings from practice and academic practices of codifying knowledge continues with the autoethnographic illumination of Robinson in her doctoral supervisory experience of coaching. Together with the work by Burgess et al using interview data to show the web of tensions experienced by doctoral candidates these papers begin to inform and show how the design of doctoral programmes needs to embrace the journey of personal transformation in becoming a producer of knowledge.

The January edition of the journal is continuing the relevance of the professional doctorate to knowing in practice by exploring:

The interplay between reflection and practice in professional doctorates

Methodologies for professional doctorates

Professional doctorates and individual and organisational impact

Ethics of practitioner research

Power relations in the workplace and outcomes of practitioner research

The summer 2012 edition will welcome papers generated from the 3rd International Conference on Professional Doctorates, to be held in Florence on 2nd and 3rd April 2012.

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