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Dr Anita Walsh is the Director of the Institute of Professional Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. She is a Senior Lecturer in Work-Based Learning, and an expert in the design of academic programmes which are based on people's professional activities in the workplace. Anita has worked in the areas of work-based learning and experiential learning since the early 1990s. She has been awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2009 in recognition of her work. Anita identifies herself as a practitioner researcher, and uses her own professional activities to inform her writing. Her main research interest is in the role of experience in both learning and the development of professional expertise.



Using Reflection in Workplace Learning : Is it possible to use both individual and collective reflection to reconcile the ‘three-party knowledge interests’ in the workplace?

Abstract

The European Commission's 2003 Memorandum of Lifelong Learning recognises the importance of experiential learning in its emphasis on APEL [Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning] both in valuing individual learning that takes place outside the university and in raising individual self-confidence (Pouget and Osborne, 2004, 46). In the UK, this focus on the importance of APEL to the individual is extended through the concept of the reflective practitioner, a model which emphasises the importance of experience to learning in the workplace, and which has been widely adopted across university programmes for professionals. Recently, Boud, Cressey and Docherty have developed the concept of ‘productive reflection at work’. This collective approach to reflection ‘brings changes in work practice to enhance productivity together with changes to enhance personal engagement and meaning in work’ (2006, 5). This paper considers whether a combination of individual and collective reflection can be used as a basis for assessment, and thus reconcile the needs of learner, employer and university.