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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.