



Putting Knowledge to Work: re- contextualising knowledge through the design and implementation of work-based learning at higher education levels

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<http://www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw>

Foreword

Work-Based Learning

While debates about work-based learning have had a long history, there is a new and more widespread interest in the field partially as a consequence of the development of the Foundation degree qualification over the last decade. Development of employer partnerships and a curriculum underpinned by work-based learning are, arguably, *the* distinguishing characteristics of the Foundation degree in comparison to other qualifications that may or may not involve work-related or employability skills in generic ways. It is important to emphasise, however, that the Foundation degree is just one of the vehicles that can be used to articulate work-based learning and that this research is just as relevant to modular work-based developments and the accreditation of existing employer driven education and training programmes.

There has also been a tradition of sandwich degree programmes in some universities in some subject areas but here again the 'sandwich' has often not been assessed or accredited on the same basis as the academic programme credit. Education for the professions (health, engineering and education) clearly involves on-the-job training and work-based learning has actually been shown to be a significant experience for professional development in these areas¹. In other areas there is a strong tendency to see work-based learning as identified with low status vocational qualifications or even as not appropriate to *higher* education at all.

A significant feature in such thinking is to do with 'knowledge' and a limited understanding of work-based learning as about the transmission of *skills* or inculcation into the routine processes of work environments. The important contribution of the *Putting Knowledge to Work* research as an approach to work-based learning is that it challenges conventional notions of academic knowledge as context-free and it demonstrates that there are complex processes of 're-contextualising' knowledge(s) through the design and implementation of work-based learning at higher education levels. In this model the work environment can become an important locus for knowledge production and critical understanding as well as for the development of lifelong learning skills.

fdf is publishing this short document in order to encourage curriculum development teams to think through, carefully and in depth, the purposes and processes involved in work-based learning. There is some evidence to suggest

¹ See TLRP (2007). Early career learning at work: Insights into professional development during the first job, *Teaching and Learning Research Briefing* 25. Available at: www.tlrp.org/pub/research.html

that work-based learning is still subject to minimalist practice defined by students finding their own (short) placements in order to gain a bit of work 'experience' often without significant engagement from the programme team. And without such engagement, it is unlikely that employers will see the exercise as all that significant for their business or operation. The model advanced in this document constitutes the student and the employer as partners in a challenging pedagogic practice that can produce dividends for all involved.

The conventional dichotomies around 'thinking and doing' have been richly explored in recent literature unpicking the complex relationships between cognitive and manual skills. Readers who want to engage more fully with such issues will find them interrogated in Richard Sennett's *The Craftsman*² and Matthew Crawford's *The case for Working with your Hands*³ both of which link the concept of 'craft' to motivation and the concept of 'good work'. This is also a concept developed by the Work Foundation and readers will find some valuable resources on its website⁴.

The **fdf** position, therefore, on work-based learning is that it constitutes an innovative pedagogy that is central to lifelong learning capacities and to enhancing participation in higher education and training opportunities⁵. This is what is now central to all of our work and we will continue to publish case studies and research around work-based learning on our website.

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² Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman*. London: Allen Lane.

³ Crawford, M. (2009) *The case for Working with your Hands*. London: Viking Adult.

⁴ www.theworkfoundation.com

⁵ For more information see Longhurst, D. (2009) What is Work-Based Learning? *Forward*. Issue 19, 13-19. Available at: www.fdf.ac.uk/page.aspx?id=22

Higher education and work-based learning

The term work-based learning entered the lexicon of UK higher education in the late 1980s through the initiatives, for example, Enterprise in Higher Education, sponsored by the then Employment Department (now Business, Industry and Skills), as part of an attempt to: (i) provide degrees that could be designed to reflect employers' needs more closely than traditional academic degrees; and, (ii) to accredit learners' workplace knowledge and skill through the methods associated with the Accreditation of Prior (APL) or the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) within degrees.

This development was greeted at the time with a mixture of excitement and suspicion. In the case of the former, work-based degrees offered higher education institutions and employers a way to expand the range of degrees beyond first generation subjects, such as, Architecture, Engineering, and Medicine, and second generation subjects, such as, Business Administration and Social Work, that developed disciplinary knowledge and occupational expertise and identity. In the case of the latter, the accreditation of work-based knowledge and skill appeared to undermine the traditional higher education concern for standards of scholarship, for example, a weakening of disciplinary knowledge, independent thinking and critical judgement.

Over the ensuing decades, work-based degrees have become a more prominent and accepted feature of the higher education curriculum. It often appears, however, that discussions about this type of degree have been overly skewed towards consideration of organisational arrangements and technical issues that accompany credit and quality assurance frameworks and, as a consequence, discussions about the scholastic basis of work-based degrees has remained relatively neglected. Given UK higher education's concern for quality assurance procedures, this impression is understandable but unfortunate. Irrespective as to whether they are first or second-generation work-based degrees or new forms of work-based degrees, such as, Foundation degrees, scholastic issues, especially the knowledge component of work-based degrees, have been a central, albeit somewhat hidden, concern.

This has been the case for a number of reasons. Firstly, discipline-based knowledge has a different 'logic' from work-based knowledge. The former develops through codified rules that can be used to select and combine theories and concepts into modules. The latter involves a good deal of: (i) 'procedural' knowledge, some highly codified (e.g. legal) others less codified; and, (ii) 'process' knowledge, some highly technical (e.g. software systems) and some organisation-specific (e.g. procedures and protocols), both of which tend to be used tacitly. Secondly, different modes of assessment have been employed sometimes within the same degree. In the case of discipline-based knowledge, learners have been expected to 'apply' it to practice. In the case of work-based

knowledge, learners have been assessed in accordance with the competence-based criteria that are an integral part of NVQs.

As a consequence, policymakers, higher education, employers, learners and agencies responsible for promoting work-based learning, for example, Sector Skills Councils, *fdf*, have struggled to articulate the relationship between discipline- and work-based knowledge. This leaves all parties still searching for an answer to the following question:

- what is involved in 'good' work-based learning in higher education?

The answers to this question presented in this booklet have been gleaned from a two-year research project – *Putting Knowledge to Work* (PKtW) – conducted by members of the Centre for Excellence in Work-based Learning for Educational Professionals University of London (Professor Karen Evans, Dr David Guile and Dr Judy Harris), and funded by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Commercial Education Trust..

The PKtW Project analysed a range of work-based degrees/programmes, including three Foundation degrees (<http://www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw/exemplars> [PDF]), and offered fresh thinking on the above question. Instead of following the grain of existing thought about work-based degrees that seeks to make different types of knowledge equivalent for assessment, the PktW project introduced the intriguing notion that work-based degrees contain *different* but *relatable* forms of knowledge. It used the concept of *recontextualisation* – to not only explain why this is the case, but also to highlight the pedagogic implications for lecturers and workplace trainers/supervisors of supporting learners to understand and use both types of knowledge effectively in the contexts of education and work. As a consequence, although the answers to the question – what is involved in good work-based degrees have been framed with Foundation degrees in mind – they are relevant for other types of work-based degrees. The answers balance the traditional higher education concern for the development of discipline-based knowledge with the traditional workplace concern for the development of 'skills' and in 'know how'.⁶

What is involved in 'good' work-based higher education in Foundation degrees?

The common challenge facing first and second-generation work-based degrees as well as Foundation degrees has always been, as noted above, how to integrate discipline-based and work-based knowledge. Discussions about this challenge have typically focused on questions of how to assist learners to 'transfer' knowledge and skill from one setting to another, usually from theory into

⁶ See Evans, K. Guile, D and Harris, J (2011)'Rethinking work-based learning for education professionals and professionals who educate' in Malloch, M et al. The Sage Handbook of Workplace Learning, London: Sage

practice. What has continually dogged attempts at transfer in general, and in work-based degrees in particular, is how to assist learners to

- overcome the assumed 'abstract' nature of theory in relation to the assumed 'real' nature of practice and,
- the concept that the transfer of knowledge and skill is the responsibility of the individual learner. Both are usually seen as a purely cognitive activity as encapsulated in the term 'from theory to practice'.

Regrettably, this conception of the 'transfer' process plays down the extent to which the forms of knowledge contained in any curriculum are contextualised because they have been 'abstracted' from another context. It also neglects the roles of educational institutions and workplaces in supporting the process of transfer. The contextual basis of degrees is as true for traditional higher education degrees, such as, Physics, as it is for work-based degrees, such as, Media Practice. The former involves a selection of knowledge from the different sub-fields within Physics while the latter involves a selection of knowledge from Social Scientific disciplines (Anthropology, Politics, Economics, Psychology, and Sociology), and practice settings (newspapers, radio stations and television studios). Both types of degree consist, therefore, of contextualised knowledge. Where they differ is that work-based degrees consist of both disciplinary and practice-based contextual knowledge, and this sets curriculum and pedagogic challenges for lecturers and workplace mentors.

This booklet is predicated on the idea that all forms of knowledge are contextual but not context-bound. In doing so, it introduces fresh thinking about the theory-practice relation. The idea that all knowledge is contextualised allows those involved with designing and delivering work-based degrees to recognise that: (i) all the forms of knowledge included in a degree have been *recontextualised*, that is, moved from one context to another to serve a new purpose; and, (ii) the pedagogic challenge facing lecturers is to support learners to progressively *recontextualise* forms of knowledge (i.e. use knowledge in different ways) in different contexts.

Explaining recontextualisation...

The concept of recontextualisation – the idea that *all* knowledge has a context in which it was originally generated, science as much as social science, health and safety as much as company rules and procedures – offers any one involved in designing and/or delivering work-based degrees a way to avoid:

- the trap of assuming that some knowledge, usually discipline-based form of knowledge, is context independent;
- the idea that such knowledge should be ascribed higher status on that basis;

- the assumption that discipline-based knowledge transfers across settings more easily than workplace (i.e. 'know how') knowledge.

The concept of recontextualisation suggests that all forms of knowledge are context-dependent. Disciplinary knowledge is context-dependent because it rests on the 'schools of thought', the traditions and norms of disciplinary practice which were responsible for its generation, application and continued development. Workplace knowledge is also context-dependent; it is just that different schools of thought were responsible for its generation, application and continued development.

From this perspective, forms of knowledge are not entities that remain the same but that are just used in a new context (i.e. place or setting). Rather, for disciplinary knowledge to be put to work in new and different contexts, lecturers, mentors and learners have to make it engage with and change the practices, traditions and experiences of the new context. Equally, for workplace knowledge to be put to work in new and different contexts, it also has to be made to engage with and change the practices, traditions and experiences of those new contexts.

Recontextualisation presupposes therefore multi-faceted *pedagogic* practice. The first recontextualisation practice (Content Recontextualisation) involves:

- curriculum designers moving disciplinary knowledge from its disciplinary origins and workplace knowledge from its professional and/or vocational context and putting both of them to work as part of a curriculum.

The second recontextualisation practice (Pedagogic Recontextualisation) involves lecturers:

- choosing pedagogic strategies, such as 'real life' case studies etc., to assist learners to understand the meaning of concepts and heuristics and to prepare them to put those concepts to work in professional and/or vocational activity;

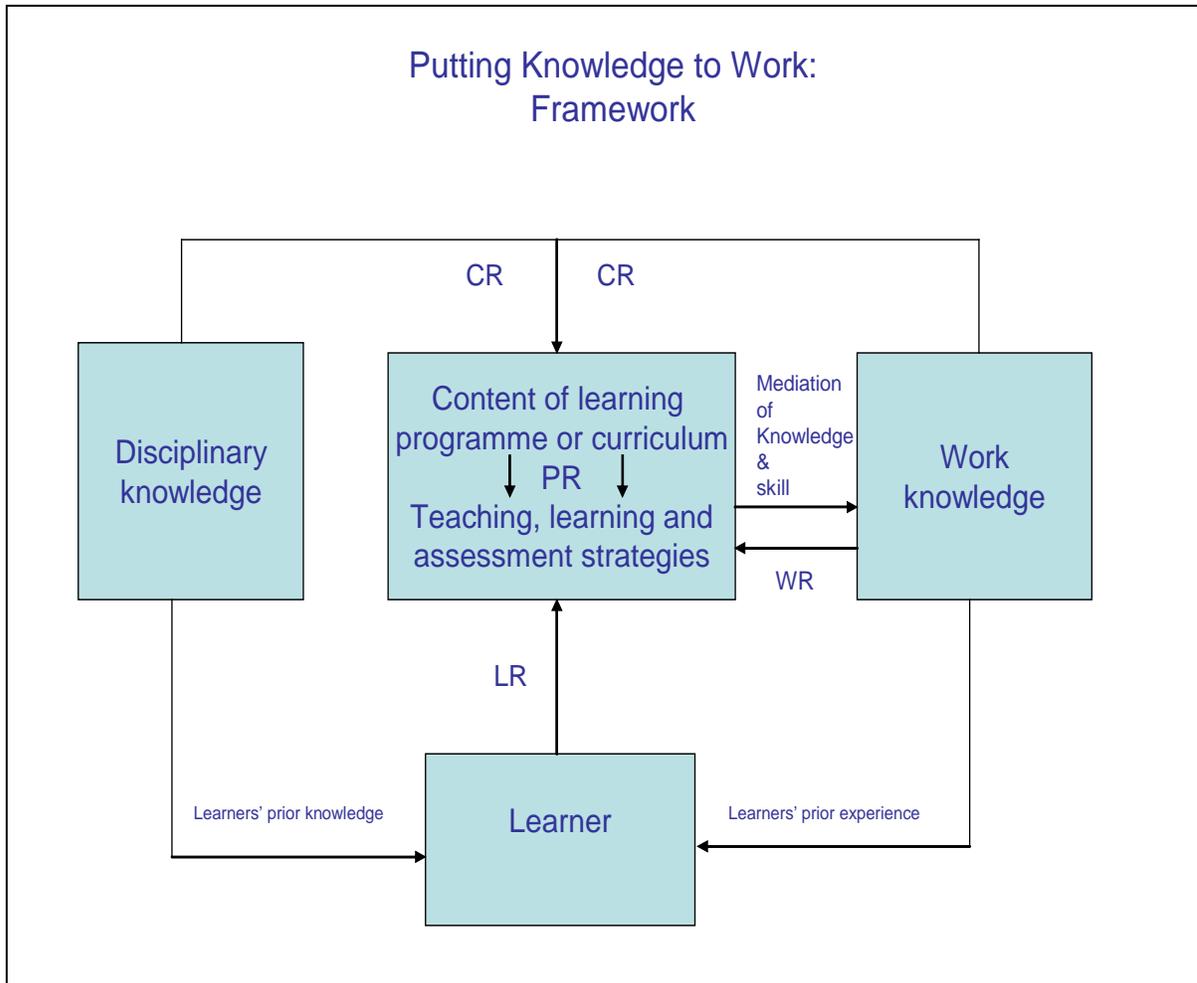
The third recontextualisation practice (Workplace Recontextualisation) involves workplace mentors and learners:

- engaging pro-actively with conceptual and theoretical knowledges and identifying their relevance to workplace activity.

The fourth recontextualisation (Learner Recontextualisation) practice involves learners as partners in any learning process but particularly so in work-based learning contexts:

- making sense of the above recontextualisation processes discursively and practically.

The framework below provides some guidelines and practical examples that can be used by programme designers and practitioners to consider how to put knowledge more effectively to work in both existing and new work-based programmes.



PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN ENVIRONMENT: Content recontextualisation (CR)

Content recontextualisation refers to the process whereby curricula are created as people involved with the design of a curriculum move knowledge from its original context of production into a codified learning programme. One example might be the translation of knowledge from the context of an academic research community into an industry R&D programme.

This process consists of the selection, simplification, and recasting of codified knowledge to make it more teachable and learnable for particular learners, as part of the programme design. In professional and vocational education it entails

the selection and organisation of work and subject knowledge for the demands of professional and vocational practice.

Content recontextualisation is tricky because forms of knowledge characterised by 'vertical' structures (i.e. a capacity for generalisation and applicability in many contexts, derived from, say, disciplinary knowledge and "horizontal" structures (i.e. a capacity for practical and operational connections such as workplace 'know how') differ from one another, and hence are not seen to be easily relatable.

The main idea that underpins this model is that:

- the vertical/horizontal distinction can be fruitfully used to shed light on how to overcome the difficulties of relating different forms of knowledge in professional and vocational programmes [link to be decided].

The best way to approach content recontextualisation is to:

- use the criteria provided by vertical disciplinary knowledge (i.e. logical relation between concepts) to determine the order in which concepts should be introduced to learners – the vertical axis;
- formulate criteria to determine the order in which horizontal knowledge concepts should be sequenced with vertical knowledge – the horizontal axis;
- use these sets of criteria to explain the sequence of different modes of knowledge to learners so they can appreciate their difference from and relation to one another more easily.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK IN THE TEACHING AND FACILITATING ENVIRONMENT: Pedagogic recontextualisation (PR)

Pedagogic recontextualisation refers to the processes that teachers, tutors, trainers employ not only to organise, structure and sequence vertical and horizontal forms of knowledge into modules, but also to assist learners to appreciate the difference and relation between these different forms of knowledge. Pedagogic recontextualisation is also tricky. It involves teachers, tutors, trainers making decisions about how much time they devote - and what strategies they use - to explain the background to different forms of knowledge in formal education settings. These decisions are inevitably influenced by teachers', tutors' and trainers' assumptions (often un-articulated) about what they feel constitutes good learning experiences and worthwhile learning outcomes, and also by the specifications set by professional or examination bodies. Consequently, an effective way to proceed is to:

- present the ‘general principles’ that underpin disciplinary knowledge so that learners can use them to understand/change design of work and production of goods and services;
- invite experienced people and/or industry educators to present case studies/critical incidents from workplaces so that learners can use workplace examples as ‘test-bench’ for recontextualising the general principles they have encountered.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK IN THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT: Workplace recontextualisation (WR)

The story of the theory-practice relation, especially as encapsulated by the theory-into-practice notion, is usually left here. The concept of recontextualisation allows us, however, to demonstrate that although the integration processes start with content recontextualisation and pedagogic recontextualisation, it does not end there. Workplace environments fundamentally affect how knowledge is put to work, and they vary in the nature and quality of learning experience that they afford.

Workplace recontextualisation refers to the processes that take place through the workplace practices and activities that support learner not only to appreciate the value of using codified knowledge to reveal aspects of embedded practice that can be critically evaluated – and enhanced – drawing upon conceptual thinking (see Media Practice exemplar, pp 172-177 in www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw/exemplars [PDF]). Equally, it is important to identify aspects of practice that can be used to reveal the limitations of codified knowledge, for example, the multi-faceted nature of workplace knowledge (see Glass Industry exemplar, pp 83-87 in www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw/exemplars [PDF]).

It is important that work-based learning is designed around the roles of industry educators, and pedagogic practices, such as mentorship and coaching. These are fundamental to learners beginning to vary and modify existing workplace activities or to develop the confidence and capability to work with others to significantly change those activities. They allow learners to appreciate that they are progressively recontextualising different concepts and heuristics in relation to the task-in-hand.

To do so, it is vital that:

- workplaces create stretching but supportive environments so that learners can appreciate the way in which knowledge is embedded in workplace routines, protocols and artefacts;
- learners assume responsibility for actively observing and inquiring about the constitution of workplace routines, protocols and artefacts so they

understand them in their own terms and are also in a position to formulate alternative uses and/or ways of working.

WHAT THE LEARNER/EMPLOYEE MAKES OF IT: Learner recontextualisation (LR)

Learner recontextualisation refers to the processes whereby learners develop their professional and/or vocational expertise and identity and, in doing so, are able to articulate the reasons for the constitution of their chosen occupation and their reasons for wanting to join it. The development of expertise and identity contributes significantly to sustaining their motivation to engage with the other processes of recontextualisation.

What learners make of the other recontextualisation processes varies according to personal characteristics, group/cohort, the scope for action they have in any particular environment and the extent to which they exercise their own agency, and the nature of the learning activities they are asked to undertake.

Self-generated re-contextualisation strategies sometimes involve learners in:

- sharing 'war stories' with one another and their lecturers and, in the process, creating new understanding and insights about practice.

Learners sometimes have to be supported in the workplace to think and feel their way into their professional expertise and identity. This can take a number of forms:

- engaging in 'learning conversations' helps them to articulate more explicitly their growing understanding of practice and paves the way for them to write more critically-based assignments
- being stretched through opportunities to work at the next level and thereby providing learners with a more holistic grasp of the connections between aspects of practice

Putting knowledge to work more effectively

From this framework flow some strategies that can be used to put knowledge to work in work-based degrees in new and more effective ways. The strategies incorporate:

Cross-cutting themes in putting knowledge to work:

www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw/themes [PDF]

Specific practices that assist recontextualisation:

www.wlecentre.ac.uk/pktw/guidance [PDF]

Models for developing work-based programmes can be found in Annex 1.

These cross-cutting themes, practices and models together offer employers and colleges a way to enhance and enrich existing pedagogies in work-based learning programmes and constitute innovative pedagogies. Their defining feature is that they recognise the *different forms of knowledge at work in programmes* – in the programme design, pedagogic and workplace environments and in the learners themselves - and enable these to be put to work more effectively.

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Annex 1

Four Models

-Model 1: Meshing work-based degrees with professional standards and licensing requirements

-Model 2: Using tailored work-based degrees to support the development of capability and capacity within companies.

-Model 3: Using work-based degrees to 'up-skill' and to meet skills shortages in companies and/or sectors

-Model 4: Preparing experienced adults to access a flexible, contract-based employment-labour market

MODEL 1: Meshing work-based degrees with professional standards and licensing requirements

To develop a coherent learning programme that aligns with existing professional licensing requirements, it is helpful if:

- the concerns of industry have been identified by experienced professionals and expressed in the form of statements and/or specifications about theory and practice;
- participants in the design of the work-based degrees possess industry experience (i.e. track record of work) and higher education experience, respect each others' backgrounds and share common values about the importance of balancing both concerns within a programme.

Stakeholders involved can use the above to play to their respective strengths in design and validation and ensure that:

- there is a shared rationale for why different types of knowledge, skill and practice-based experiences are included in the curriculum;
- some of the challenges that the inclusion of vertical and horizontal forms of knowledge generate for vocational programme development are taken account of e.g. the move to generalisation and greater abstraction in the former;
- the logic(s) for the sequencing of modules in the programme is/are agreed and articulated – e.g. a process of 'gradual release' to the operational environment (e.g. aircraft hangar) plus knowledge-related logics i.e. a discipline-first principle and a cumulative principle;
- the work-based degree serves as a bridge for academic and vocational development;
- the flexibility in programme and qualification specifications is explored and maximised to enhance their compatibility, for example: minimum requirements that can be exceeded; language conventions that can be reworked etc;

- assessment satisfies the knowledge and practice requirements of the two sets of specifications in ways that do not overburden the learners.

To convey the purposes of different types of knowledge *and* to support learners in using all forms knowledge resources to ensure safe and professional practice, the principle of 'gradual release' can be used in a wide variety of ways. To:

- support learners to personalise their understanding of concepts in terms of their disciplinary purpose and their practical/operational efficacy;
- value and actively deploy work-based instructors' industry knowledge and experience as a means of drawing connections between types of knowledge;
- be sensitive to different pedagogic approaches that may need to be used to teach vertical and horizontal forms of knowledge and to consider how to relate them to one another;
- intensify the sequencing of programme activities towards the 'live' environment by providing more opportunities for learners to: strengthen and develop their individual skill repertoires through exposure to tools and equipment; make mistakes in a controlled, closely supervised and sheltered environment, but one that progressively resembles the workplace itself; move from predictable to more unpredictable tasks;
- develop a range of simulation-type activities where theoretical and technical knowledge can be adapted, consolidated, applied and re-viewed in relation to operational demands. Consider how far simulations could be set up to support learners to appreciate how different forms of knowledge come together in work practice;
- enhance the teaching environment by using work artefacts (such as manuals and log books) to provide points of articulation between forms of knowledge. They can be used to involve students in structured reading and writing in relation to the job, requiring them to link concepts and skilled performance;
- provide learners with feedback on their progress and tailor that feedback to workplace criteria and academic criteria.

To ensure that the move to the workplace is as smooth and swift as possible, it is helpful to consider:

- senior manager overview of and industry educator involvement in placements;
- the extent to which modifications may have to be made to work practices to support the placement process;
- the length of time it takes for a new qualification to become known and part of industry thinking;
- contribution of industry educator to assisting learners to make connections between forms of knowledge and practical experience;
- the range of informal and formal 'invitational' opportunities e.g. learning with peers, close supervision and feedback, posing 'why' questions, de-briefing sessions that assist learners to develop the confidence and judgement to put knowledge to work; and,
- that putting knowledge to work involves changes in identity as well as knowledge and skill.

Finally, it is essential to recognise that the success of the above processes is only partly based on design, teaching and workplace experience. It is also based on:

- the learners themselves who are active and motivated to learn in order to enter and succeed in the particular employment-labour market.

MODEL 2 – Using tailored work-based degrees to support the development of capability and capacity within companies.

Conditions important to success in this model are that company and the college are interested in each other and enjoy a close collegial relationship based on strong yet flexible alignment. Workplace supervisors and managers accept that learners need access to a mix of routine and novel workplace activities to develop their occupational and organisational capability.

It is important that partners have a shared commitments to education, training and collaborative work, establish close working links that engage all levels of the organisation and have visible support at senior levels of both organisations. Developing a customised national programme that will suit company needs requires a course team and advisory board balanced in industrial and educational experience, with an element of ‘participative memory’; mechanisms for reciprocal and collegial decision-making about broad matters of content and discretion at course team level for pragmatic and responsive decision-making about programme details

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To support learners in moving between different forms of knowledge, it is important for the provider:

- to link the traditional academic subjects and sector-specific legislation and procedures through a series of steps that proceed according to a clear programme logic.
- to utilise the experience of ‘staff’ professionalized through similar pathways to help support students through their ‘participative memory’ because they identify with the specifics of challenges faced.

This requires the course team:

- to organise teaching and learning of procedural and sector-based knowledge in ways that build links between the foundational knowledge and the workplace knowledge embedded in company-specific practices.
- to use different teaching methods for different forms of knowledge e.g. explicit teaching of the theory, laying out the propositions; case studies for procedural and sector-wide knowledge; researching examples close to local practice.
- to bring local work knowledge into the formal curriculum by re-contextualising it into a framework defined by the programme logic.

- to develop the assignment specifications in ways that progressively support the learners in moving between the forms of knowledge.
- to provide learners with formative feedback

In the workplace, the provision of high quality learning experiences requires:

- organisational arrangements that include visible senior support and practical coordination, both through designated personnel
- a workplace curriculum that extends far beyond work experience and business-as-usual
- explicit staff commitment to pedagogy, knowledge exchanges
- planning of structured development opportunities assisted by easy access to company resources, contacts and contexts

This can be facilitated further by:

- developing a form of ‘gradual release’ in which development opportunities are structured in such a way that learners encounter increasing unpredictability and demands concerning e.g. time to complete tasks, as the workplace programme progresses,
- encouraging a spirit of inquiry – ‘the practice of asking’ in which learners are encouraged to take knowledge ‘over the boundary’ both ways
- making increased use methods such as journals, debriefing sessions with peers supervisors industry expert, knowledge exchanges that connect their workplace learning with disciplinary-based and sectoral procedural knowledge

Thinking through the chains of recontextualisation by tracking particular and specific journeys of knowledge backwards and forwards across the company-college can be helpful in pinpointing how learners can be better supported to make connections – see guidance notes.

At the strategic level, this model can offer a very powerful way to advance talent and diversity, providing college and company partners can achieve the challenging conditions for its success. To fulfil this goal, the model presupposes at the operational level that:

- the company has equitable, transparent and robust selection procedures
- the college and company actively cohere their pedagogic approaches to facilitate the chain of recontextualisation

MODEL 3 – Using work-based degrees to ‘up-skill’ and to meet skills shortages in companies and/or sectors

In this model, it is important to recognise that disciplinary, professional, work process and generic knowledge are all characterised by different types of knowledge structures and knowledge logics that relate to 'skill' in complex ways. To develop a coherent work-based curriculum within strong regulatory frameworks, it is necessary not only to have course teams and advisory groups with a good balance of industry (currently active) and educational (i.e. course design and delivery) experience, but also to keep in view the needs for the learners to have solid learning experiences that enable them to recontextualise and move between forms of knowledge.

Rather than following the traditional tendency in work-based programmes of seeking abstract mappings and connections between forms of knowledge (or between theory, procedures and practices), it is important to develop a more contextually-sensitive approach that seeks out *particular* connections between *particular* knowledge in use in different contexts.

To do so, it is important for the course team to:

- understand and articulate the structuring, contents and purposes of different forms of knowledge, including those associated with professional qualification requirements;
- keep this in view by ensuring that they develop a shared rationale for why different types of knowledge have been included in the curriculum;
- discuss with professional associations/bodies ways in which their professional qualification requirements can be
- appreciate the value of deploying industry educators to support learner engagement with practice and to see the relation between practice and academic texts

To convey the purpose of different types of knowledge to learners and to support learners to use that knowledge as a resource to engage with and develop vocational practice, it is important to:

- use cases studies as both a resource for further learning and as a way of sensitising learners to work processes;
- develop and make explicit knowledge pathways and chains of recontextualisation;
- identify programme team members to take on knowledge brokerage roles to assist others to develop this capability.

To prepare learners for academic as well as vocational progression, helpful practices include:

- ensuring that a foundation has been laid for the demands of further academic study (e.g. in the case of Foundation degrees, the completion of an Honours programme) including extensive reading of academic texts and writing in accordance with academic conventions;

- using a variety of formative (i.e. peer feedback) and summative assessment (i.e. written assignments, projects) from the outset of the course to support engagement and build learner confidence and vocational identity;
- developing explicit synergies between modules to facilitate learner engagement and understanding.

In the workplace, it is important to:

- ensure that learners are offered continuity/stability and opportunities of consistent quality;
- be attuned to the development of 'participative memory' as a way of improving the quality of mentorship;
- support learners to access a wide range of company resources (documentary and human).

To support learners to make the most of their vocational experiences it is important to provide them with:

- a range of opportunities to 'reflect' on their workplace learning (i.e. formalised and structured de-briefing sessions with lecturers, mentors and peers) – first in its own terms and then in relation to theoretical elements of the course;
- opportunities to work with workplace mentors to 'de-and re-locate' particular aspects of company knowledge.

Finally, it is essential to recognise that these processes are only partly based on curricular and pedagogic strategies. They are also based in the composition of the cohort. Learners in this type of programme are probably committed to professional careers in the chosen sector if not the company itself. The learning experiences they most value will be those which reflect these motivations and commitments.

MODEL 4: Preparing experienced adults to access a flexible, contract-based employment-labour market.

This model explicitly recognises that:

- adults may enrol on Foundation degrees who have extensive work experience in a particular sector and/or already hold a degree and are using the Foundation degree to diversify their 'skills' base to enter another part of the same or different sector;
- many sectors are characterised by contract-based employment and Foundation degrees have to be designed to reflect the actual context of such sectors.

For example, in media practice, work placements and final year projects are important in developing industry-standard final production capabilities as well as a foundation for

those learners who aspire to progress onto the third year of an honours degree. This type of work-based degree supports mainly non-traditional learners who demonstrate creativity, intellectual enthusiasm and aptitude to develop their vocational practice (i.e. mix of knowledge, skill, creativity and judgement).

To design a model to reflect the above circumstances it is helpful if stakeholders (i.e. university and representatives from a sector) consider how to integrate different types of knowledge – disciplinary, technical, practical and generic – which are characterised by different types of knowledge structures – to make a coherent work-related curriculum. To do so, it is helpful:

- to have a course team and a steering group that possess a good balance between industry (currently active) and educational (i.e. course design and delivery) experience so that the programme has a ‘purchase’ on the industry;
- for the team to identify the appropriate content (i.e. theory and practice) and the way in which that content can be recontextualised within both the national specifications for work-based degrees (e.g. Foundation degrees) and university’s specifications for their own degrees.

To use this experience to ensure that:

- modules are sequenced so as to build upon another thematically and practically;
- there is a shared rationale for why the different types of knowledge - theory as a resource to support future thinking, work knowledge as a resource to sensitise learners to the nature of work, generic knowledge to sustain motivation and engagement - have been included in the curriculum;
- there is (from the outset) a variety of formative (e.g. peer feedback) and summative (e.g. written assignments, projects) assessment methods to support engagement and build learner confidence and vocational identity.

To convey the purposes of different types of knowledge *and* to support learners in using that knowledge as a resource to engage with and develop vocational practice, it is important to:

- design the curriculum in accordance with the principle of gradual release (i.e. allow learners to increasingly assume control over the learning tasks and the pacing of them) in each module and in each term/year of study;
- use the subject-based units and ‘core’ study lectures to provide learners with a range of different opportunities to consolidate their understanding;
- use projects to deepen this understanding and to maximise practical skill development throughout the two-year period of study and work;
- provide learners with feedback on their progress from a number of sources: the course team, industry experts, peers etc.;

- require the course team to draw on a variety of teaching and learning methods – lecturing, modelling, tutoring, and coaching – to support learners at different stages of their development.

To ensure that learners are offered a diverse and stretching range of work placement opportunities, it is very helpful if:

- a work experience coordinator can be appointed who is active in the industry and therefore able to draw on her/his networks and contacts to generate placements;
- industry educators are used to assist learners to appreciate the relation between work practices and academic texts.

To support learners to make the most of their vocational experiences while on placement, it is important to provide them with:

- a choice of placement opportunities (e.g. observation, shadowing, internships, work experience) to reflect their preferences at different stages of their development;
- a range of methods (e.g. diary, Twitter etc) to ‘track’ how far they are developing their knowledge, skill and judgement;
- a range of opportunities to reflect on their workplace learning (i.e. formalised and structured de-briefing sessions with tutors, industry experts and peers) in its own terms *and* in relation to the course-based units (and the knowledge therein).

Finally, it is important to recognise that although the above curricula and pedagogic conditions are important, the composition of the cohort is also important:

- adults who are actively using the Foundation degree to develop their vocational practice to enable them to make a ‘horizontal’ move (i.e. into a different sector or different part of their current sector) in the labour market.

They accomplish this goal in a variety of different ways. Some learners:

- use the course to decide whether to follow a creative or technical path in the labour market or to progress to further study;
- use projects to demonstrate their creative qualities, their technical abilities and their team-working skills;
- use the work placements as opportunities to: (i) apply their knowledge and skill; (ii) develop their vocational judgement; and (iii) identify which networks they need to join so as to help them to move into their chosen niche in the labour market.