

Developing Learning Autonomy in Work-Based Learner-Centred CPD Provisions

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Overview

The project focuses on enhancing entrepreneurial learning by developing learner autonomy in learner-managers within their work environment. It aims to develop autonomy in learner-managers that enables them to take responsibility for determining the purpose, content and method of learning, and delivering transformation to their organisations.

We want to examine:

- The role of learner autonomy in the enhancement of work-based, entrepreneurial learning and managerial skills development.
- The use of enquiry-based learning and assessment in the development of learner autonomy in the context of entrepreneurial learning.
- The role of the teacher as facilitator.

Executive education that uses structured content and standardised delivery is in danger of becoming out of touch with the changing needs of these learners. Practising managers and executives have been shown to be unwilling to study on traditional masters courses which they believe are largely an extension of their undergraduate degrees. This project explores an alternative way of engaging with this type of learner. The provisions are intended to be work-based, non-standard and centre upon enquiry/problem based approaches targeted at the resolution of real business problems.

Current Progress

A number of parallel activities:

- Literature: Literature review on enquiry based learning and problem solving practice and curriculum development
- Action research: Through working with colleagues on a Northern Leadership Academy programme of learning sets, we are collecting data from the programme managers, learning set facilitators and course participants
- Programme Design: Initial outline of the design for a programme, including the framework for managing credits as we are developing the concept and testing it through action research.
- External Impact: Currently discussing with SHU HR department on developing managers more capable of autonomous, cross-departmental management necessary for business transformation. Proposed a management development programme to Creative Sheffield, who are leading the drive to build higher level skills in the City region.

Future Plans

- A new LTA strategy that produces a genuine innovation in work-based CPD provisions
- A programme framework that initiates and supports business and management innovation and transformation
- Develop a facilitating mechanism that enables the learner to access a broad range of specialist, leading edge practices that are relevant to the autonomous learner

Timescales:

Stage One - end of December 2008
Stage Two – end of March 2009
Stage Three – end of June 2009

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