Negotiated work-based learning at postgraduate level: what are the challenges within healthcare practice?

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(2ND SEPTEMBER, SESSION: 6AI, 2.00-3.20PM)

Work-based learning

"WBL is the process whereby HEIs and workplaces create new learning opportunities within the work being undertaken" *(Boud and Solomon, 2001*)
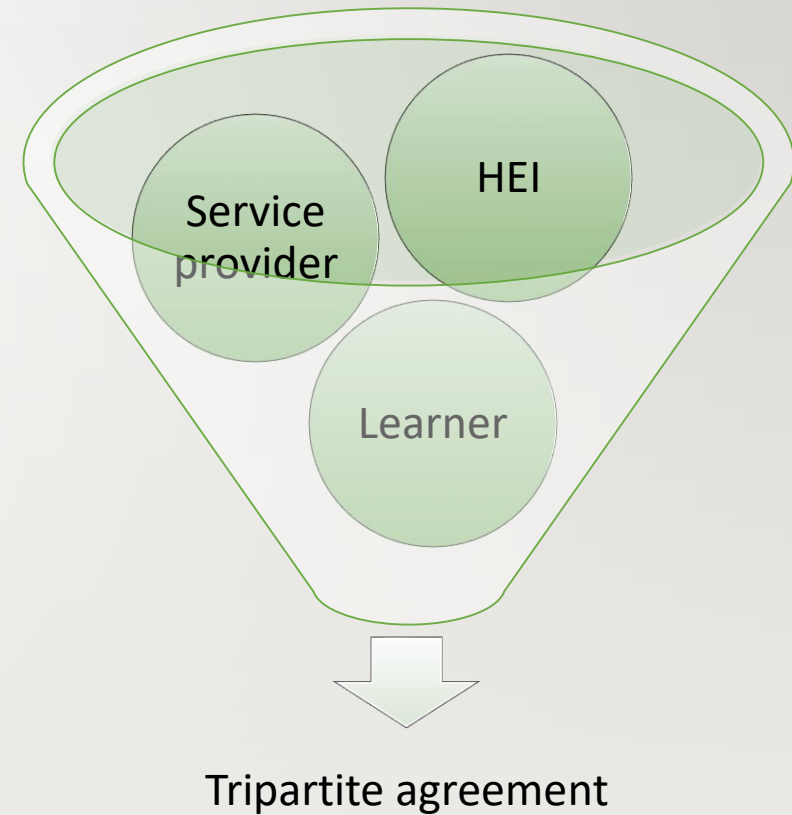
"All learning that is situated in the workplace or that arises directly out of workplace concerns" *(Lester and Coster, 2010)*

"WBL involves programmes of study whose programmes of study is embedded in the workplace and is designed to meet the learning needs of the employees and the aims of the organisation" *(Sobiechowska and Maisch, 2006)*
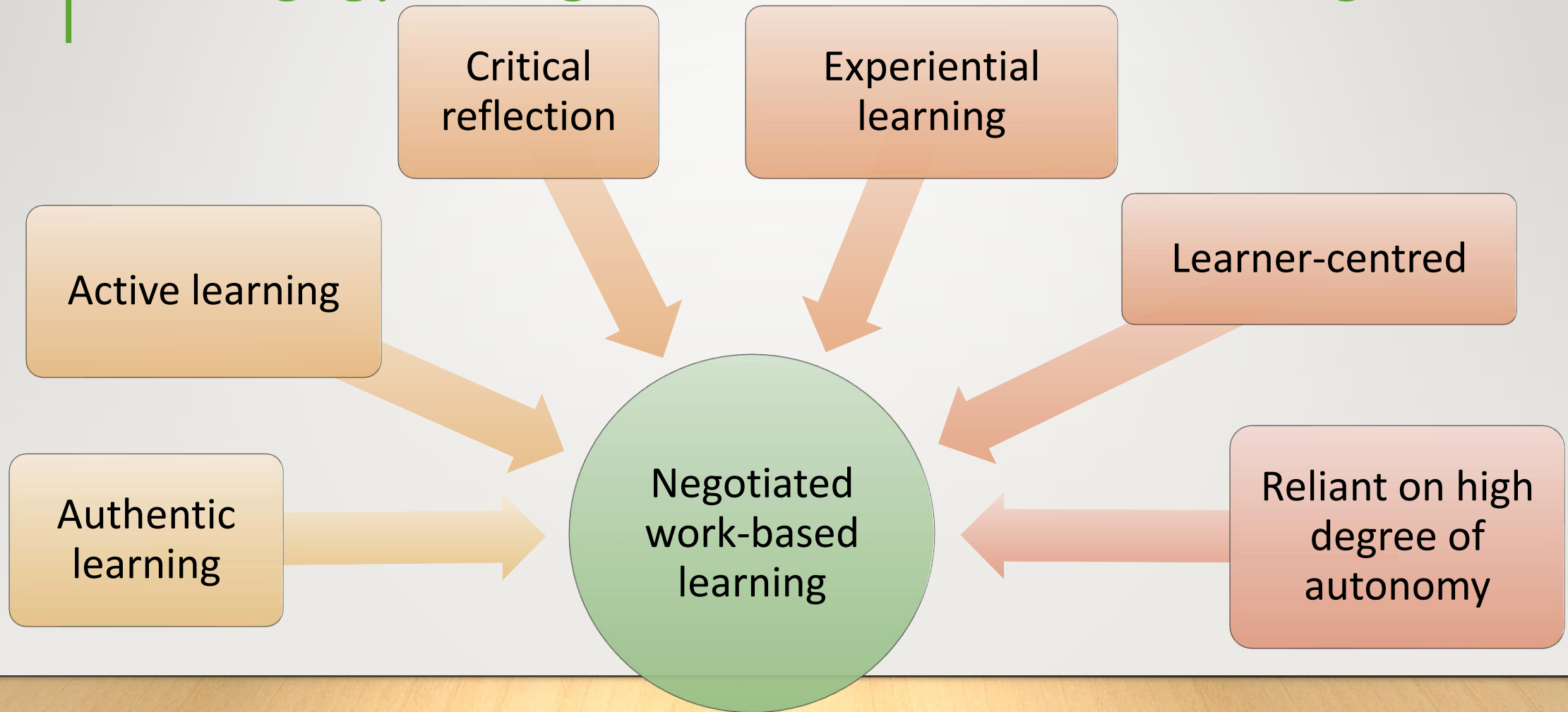
"Work-based knowledge deals with engaging in the mode of creativity….and revitalizing transformation" *(Pässilä, Owens and Pulkki, 2016)*

Negotiated work-based learning

- Facilitates development of bespoke roles necessary to address views and plans of health care organisations (Health Education England)

- Increasingly important for advanced clinical practitioners to meet local health needs (NHS 2019a; NHS 2019b)

- Enables education to be delivered in partnership with increased collaboration between education providers (HEI) and service provider (clinical environment) (Attenborough *et al*, 2019) as part of a tripartite agreement

Service provider

HEI

Learner

Tripartite agreement

Andragogy of negotiated work-based learning

Critical reflection

Experiential learning

Active learning

Learner-centred

Authentic learning

Negotiated work-based learning

Reliant on high degree of autonomy

The module

- **Formal work-based learning**

- Level 7 – 20 credit module and optional

- Part of MSc Advanced Practice in Healthcare; MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Apprenticeship) and Nursing programmes

- Academic sessions to cover:
  - Tripartite nature and learning contracts
  - Principles of work-based learning and andragogy
  - Principles of assessment
  - Portfolio development
  - Critical reflection and motivation

The module

- **Module assessment (3 parts):**
  - Learning contract (bespoke module specification) – 20% weighting (2000 words)
  - Critical reflection of the learning – 80% weighting (3000 words) including recommendations such as:
    - Next steps/ assessment of impact (such as through change reports or research project)
  - Portfolio of evidence – to support achievement of learning outcomes as defined within the learning contract (pass/fail element)
  - *Overall assessment by the HEI*

Examples of negotiated work-based learning projects

- **Advanced clinical skills and competency in:**

- Arterial Blood Gas (ABG) sampling for the management of critically ill patients;

- Interpretation of 12-lead electrocardiograms (ECG) in adult patients

- Interpretation of plain chest radiographs in the identification of nasogastric tube tip position

- Interventional radiology for insertion of peripherally inserted central catheters and verification of tip location through radiological image interpretation

- Children, Adolescent and Mental Health Services – as in advanced clinical practitioner-led clinics

Examples of negotiated work-based learning projects

- **Development of education and competency documents**
  - Proctoscopy within a sexual health service
  - Role of pre-assessment nurse for patients undergoing gastroscopy
- **Implementation of tools**
  - Implementation of risk assessment tool in a secure unit
  - Individual palliative outcome scales to optimise rehabilitation services in a day therapy unit
  - Therapy outcome measures in an adult social care occupational therapy team
- **Training needs analysis** in preparation for the development of best practice document

Challenges associated with work-based learning

Planning

Learning in the work-place

Academic aspects

Learner aspects

Planning for work-based learning

- **Pre-module meeting:**
  - Suitability of learner to undertake work-based learning
  - Managing expectations
  - Negotiated work-based learning topic

- **Appointment of (a) suitably qualified work-based mentor(s)**
  - Expertise
  - Time commitment
  - Training on module and expectations as a NWBL mentor
  - Contract
  - Partnership: based on mutual respect

Planning for work-based learning

- **Tripartite meetings and progress meetings**
  - First tripartite meetings within the first two weeks of the semester
  - Individual progress meetings
  - Further tripartite meetings

- **Development of the learning contract**
  - Title
  - Aims and learning outcomes
  - Syllabus
  - Learning and teaching strategies and resources
  - Assessment strategies

Learning in the workplace

- **Learning and partnerships**
  - Mentor and learner
  - Colleagues including peers
  - Identify as a learner as opposed to usual role as a health care professional
  - Shadowing of colleagues
  - Collaborative working and learning opportunities
  - Networking – external to the learner's organisation

Learning in the workplace

- **Time for:**
  - Work-based learning including learning and teaching strategies
  - Formative and summative assessments
  - Collecting evidence of learning
  - Reflection of progress
  - Completion of project

Academic aspect

- Culture of the learner's organisation (Stephens *et al,* 2014; Doherty and Stephens, 2019)

- Managing the mentor's expectations

- Flexibility

Academic aspect

- Shift in role of the academic from "teaching" to being an advisor, mentor, coach and supervisor

- Sharing of power in terms of:
  - Curriculum
  - Assessment

Academic aspect: sharing of power

- Curriculum

- Bespoke

- Co-designed

- Knowledge and application

- Evaluation and reflection (critical)

- Structure – formal v informal

Academic aspect: sharing of power

- Assessment

- Attainment of each of the learning outcomes

- Co-designed assessment

- Creativity

- Suitability and range of assessments

- Application of Miller's pyramid: a hierarchy of knowledge is necessary before a task can be performed

Professional authenticity

Does

Shows how

Knows how

Knows

Behaviour

Cognition
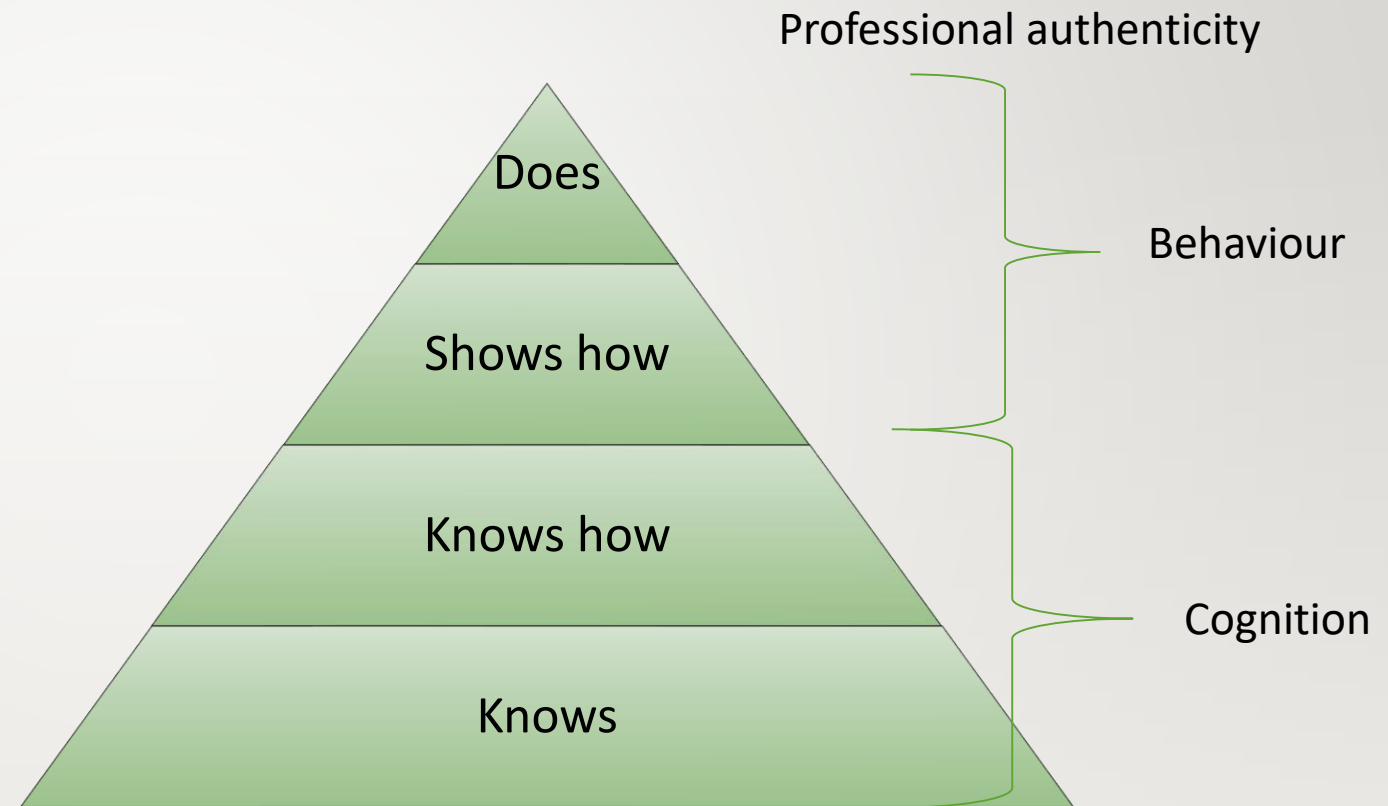
Learner aspect

- Transition from task-orientated practice to advanced practice and utilisation of clinical reasoning and evidence-based approaches

- Managing NWBL along with an additional module (if on a MSc programme)

- Organisation

- Flexibility

- Isolation from working on own

Final thoughts

- Rewarding form of attaining academic credits as part of a Master's programme

- Meets employers' needs

- Requires strong partnerships and mutual respect to ensure success

- Satisfying for the learner

- Results in transformation and facilitates ongoing development:
  - New practices
  - Implementation
  - Basis of a research project or quality improvement project
  - Basis of a change report as part of the apprenticeship End Point Assessment

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