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Obstacles related to different purposes, contents and institutional settings

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wle
Work-based learning for
education professionals
A Centre for Excellence
at the Institute of Education

The central challenge for programmes that build on and incorporate work-based learning:

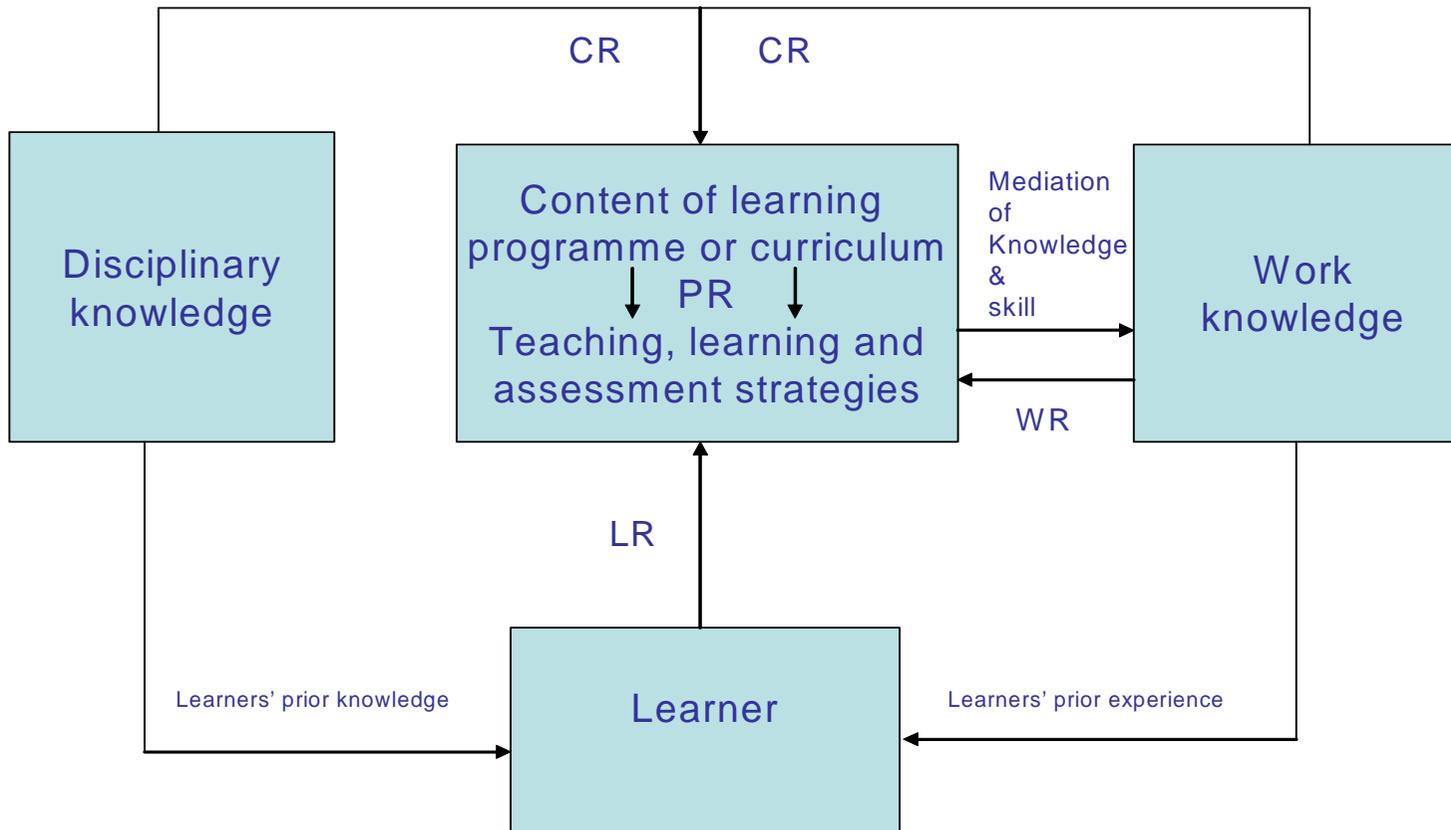
How best to bring together
subject-based and work-based knowledge,
in ways that meet the
requirements and expectations of
the learner/employee (for recognition and progression), the
employer, the F/HE provider, the awarding and
professional bodies.

Practitioners know how difficult this is...

Programmes that build on and include wbl:

- have always been tricky to design
- Why? They involve forms of knowledge characterized by different logics
- Disciplinary knowledge, ‘know-how’; work process knowledge, professional knowledge, procedural knowledge, legal, personal/tacit/individual knowledge.

Putting Knowledge to Work: Framework



Realities in progression to higher levels of vocational learners

- ‘There was insufficient curriculum fit between existing vocational further education programmes and existing higher education provision in the region’ and
- ‘some HE subjects did not relate sufficiently to the subjects and learning provided by FE (VET providers)’
- ‘much of the existing provision had been developed by educational institutions with a supply driven approach driven by institutional recruitment targets...’
- Source: Wise and Shaw, 2011– findings from Lifelong learning Networks research and development

Barriers to progression from VET to HE, confirmed by LLN research, are found in

- Pre-entry guidance
- Qualifications
- Frameworks and transfers
- Attitudinal barriers
- Structural barriers – inflexibility
- Student finance
- Institutional finance

Field: Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences

- Students who entered with A levels (traditional entry) into animal and equine studies performed better than those who entered with a vocational National Diploma.
- No difference in marks at end of first year of study.
- Significant difference in marks achieved in second and final years of study suggested that vocational students struggled with the analytic and evaluative skills necessary for the higher level study.
- UCAS points* 'lacked parity with A levels and had little predictive effect for performance in HE'. (Huws and Taylor)
- * **UCAS points** tariff is a scoring system, which allocates **points** to applicant qualifications in order to apply for entry to higher education courses.

Response: Scoping study to 'stretch' vocational learners:

- More core science
- Close cooperation with universities to determine essential knowledge requirements for the higher levels of studies
- Partners worked together on a 'top-up' curriculum for entrants

Top-up curriculum negotiated in this case

- Higher level biology
- Additional chemistry
- Functional skills – particularly mathematics to higher level
- Higher level study skills incl. advanced note taking
- Research methods
- Study skills geared to more independent and critical approach
- Advanced writing skills

Wider recommendations focus on the need for HE curriculum change too...

- “Universities need to get better understanding of the pre-HE curriculum” – LLNs progression agreements helped this process as practitioners on both sides had to articulate and negotiate their *particular* knowledge requirements – and they often don’t concur.
- Universities should ‘get smarter’ about how to engage students who have several years’ experience in the subject area – ‘conversion or continuation’ needs resolution
- These points have a bearing on the wider credit transfer debate

Further sources:

- Detailed exemplars of new types of degree programme, including admissions and entry processes, are also given in
- Evans, Guile and Harris (2009) Putting Knowledge to Work, <http://wbl-ipd.uwe.ac.uk/FileStore/LearningObjects/LearningObject378/Book%20of%20Exemplars.pdf>