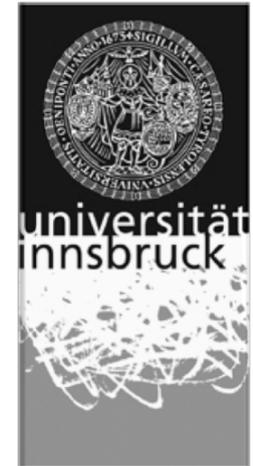


ASEM–LLL Research Network 2: Workplace Learning
Network Workshop July 2011



Informal workplace teaching – the hidden side of knowledge transfer management in organizations

Prof. Dr. Annette Ostendorf
Department of Organization and Learning
– Chair for Business Education –
Innsbruck School of Management

Business Education in German speaking countries like a donkey-zebra



SZ v. 08.07.11, S. 12

Business Administration/Management Sciences and
Educational Sciences

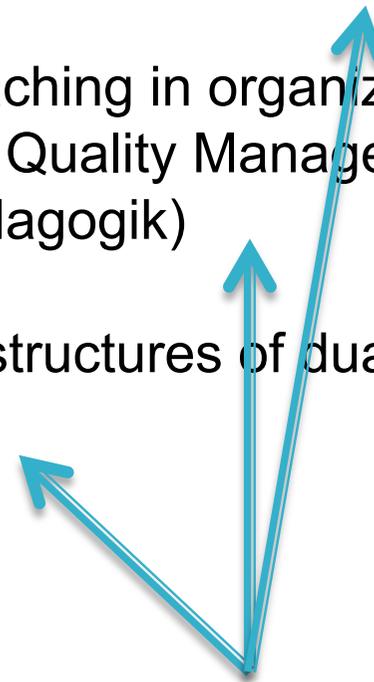
Chairs for Business Education in Austria: 4
(in all German Speaking Countries: estimated 60)

Business Education Research and Practice: specialized areas of research

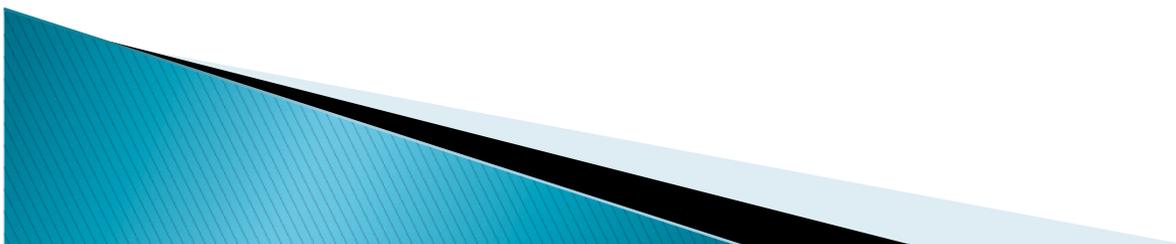
... With a special focus on management subjects at schools (vocational schools in the dual system, higher and medium vocational schools) as ‚business administration‘, ‚economics‘, ‚accounting‘, ‚business systems‘ (Wirtschaftsschulpädagogik)

... With a special focus on learning and teaching in organizations (including HRD, Knowledge Management, Quality Management, Organizational Development) (Betriebspädagogik)

... With a special focus on processes and structures of dual organized vocational education in business fields (Wirtschaftsberufspädagogik)



Workplace learning



The current international workplace learning discourse ... a critical question

- ▶ Following Gert Biesta (2010:5) one can ask: is the workplace learning discourse also infected by the ,learnification‘ syndrome?

„...while learning obviously is one of the central concerns of education, a language of learning makes it particularly difficult to grapple with questions of purpose – and also with questions of content and relationships .“

- ▶ Looking for inclusion and exclusion phenomenon in workplace learning research leads to the question: where are the (informal) **workplace teaching processes**?

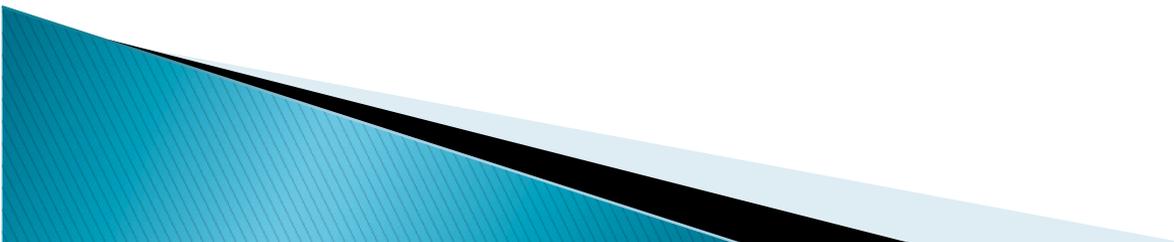


,Corporate informal workplace teaching ‘

,Teaching ‘ is interpreted in a wider sense as arranging a relationship for the purpose of knowledge transfer.

,Informal ‘ means that they are not organized in the sense of having a concrete qualification aim, a fixed curriculum or a time schedule.

But it is also not ,en-passent ‘-learning or socialization because the ,teacher ‘ usually has the aim to transmit relevant knowledge.



Only human ,teachers‘?

- ▶ Following Actor–Network–Theory (Latour 2007) there are –apart from learners and ,teachers‘– further relevant actors in the social field.
- ▶ Workplace learning is also influenced by non–human actants (as e–learning software, computers, learning spaces, machines,)
- ▶ Thinking on non–human and human ,teaching‘ actants as environment of workplace learning might be an innovative enrichment of the current workplace learning discourse.



Who are the (human) corporate workplace ,teachers‘?

formal	informal
HR Development Manager	Manager in business meetings or projects
Trainer, instructor	Colleagues who share new workrelated knowledge Example: like illustrated in Nonaka/Takeuchi ‘s implicit-explicit learning spiral
Master craftsmen (dual system)	Internship advisors Mentors of apprentices



empirical research study

Case study in a mid-sized Austrian company in the public sector (2010)

Context:

Branche: transportation, about 500 employees

The company employed 48 interns in 2009.

There are different types of internships offered: short-term and long-term, service and administration oriented and technical ones.

The company has gained several awards for the apprenticeship program (dual system)



Research method

In the classification of Stake (2005:445) the investigation was designed as an instrumental case study.

The special case was investigated mainly to facilitate understanding of the issue and for generalization purposes.

Four intensive semi-structured interviews have been conducted in 2010 at the workplace. All most intensively in the advisory/mentoring processes of internships involved persons have been reached. Criteria for their selection were their long-term experience in counselling interns and their direct responsibility for the young people.

Additionally an analysis of documents has been conducted and a workshop took place with participation of the human resource manager of the firm.



Some Findings (1): meaning and role

Internship advisors (IA) strongly influence mode and intensity of participation opportunities for interns at workplaces.

They are an important but also critical part of the learning environment in internships.

They are exclusively a part of the corporate learning environment and don't act as a bridging element between school/university and work. There is no systematic cooperation – much to their regret. But nobody takes the initiative.

We saw different types of role taking and role making processes of IA as:

- IA as coordinator and organizer

- IA as teacher (task-oriented, knowledge transmitter)

- IA as „wailing wall“ (Klagemauer) for interns

- IA as a helpful mentor

- IA as controller

- IA as a part of human resource management (recruiting)

All in all the IA saw themselves more as educators than as colleagues.

Some Findings (2): motivation and competencies

IA are motivated by their intention to work with young people.

The mentoring/advising of interns is not seen as a burden, but more than a chance. Actually, IA have the emphatic feeling to help the company with their mentoring and that this is very important.

It is seen as essential that IA are living the corporate culture, that they are sure of the tasks and purposes of the company. They want to transmit the spirit of the firm to the newcomers. Transformation of corporate culture is more in their focus than transformation processes on knowledge.

Their motivation is mainly intrinsic, but appreciation by their chiefs is important. Internship advisory is in their view a meritorious job.



Some Findings (3): the ideal intern

Interns are not expected to have specialized knowledge gained at schools which now has to be transferred during the internship to the workplace.

School teachers sometimes think so, but internship advisors do not. Business basics are welcome but not necessarily. That emphasizes the thesis of Erault (2004) or Lave/Wenger (1991) concerning a critical perspective on knowledge transfer.

For IA the motivation and interest of the intern are the most important features, in service areas also personal maturity and open mindedness.



Research method: follow-up study

Work in progress....

Quantitative study in preparation for the end of July 2011 based on our experiences in the qualitative study.

Survey with internship advisors in business internships which are to be absolved at a higher vocational school in Munich

Estimated participants in the survey: 100 advisors in Munich business companies
Tool: Online questionnaire



References:

Biesta, G., J. J. (2010): Good Education in an Age of Measurement. Ethics, Politics, Democracy, Boulder, Colorado, Paradigm Publisher.

Eraut, M. (2004): transfer of knowledge between education and workplace settings, in: Rainbird, H., Fuller, A., Munro, A. (Eds.): Workplace Learning in Context, pp. 201-221, London, New York, Routledge

Lave, J./Wenger, E. (1991): Situated Learning. Legitimate peripheral participation, Cambridge University Press.

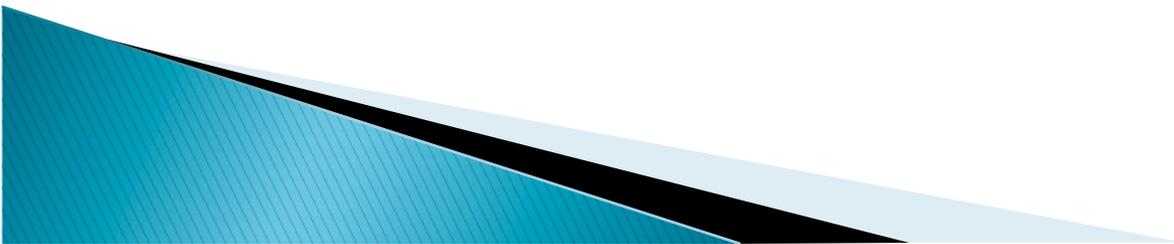
Latour, B. (2007): Eine neue Soziologie für eine neue Gesellschaft (engl. Org. Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory), Frankfurt, Main, Suhrkamp.

Malloch, M., Cairns, L, Evans, K., O'Connor, B. N. (Eds.) (2011): The SAGE Handbook of Workplace Learning, Thousand Oaks, Cal., Sage.

Stake, R. E. (2005): Qualitative Case Studies. In: Denzin, N. K. (Eds.): The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition, pp. 443-466. Thousand Oaks, Cal., Sage.



Thank you for your attention !



„Betriebspädagogik“ (Pedagogy of the firm): historical roots in Austria

- ▶ First chair for business education (and banking) at Vienna University of Economics and Business
- ▶ 1952: very important German book
- ▶ Titel: „Betriebspädagogik. Die erzieherische Gestaltung der zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen im Betrieb.“

Translation: „Pedagogy of the firm. The educational formation of corporate human relations.“ (-> inspired by the human relations movement)

