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▶ Learning from knowledge transfer and recontextualisation of experiences in the context of workplace learning: Insights from the UK

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the way that individuals cross boundaries and transfer knowledge between contexts and spaces in work-related settings, particularly focusing on the experiences of further education (FE) tutors in the context of the UK. Learning through boundary crossing and knowledge transfer in the context of vocational education and training (VET) has been recognised as an important area of work-related learning research (Guile, 2010; Bakker et al., 2011; Edwards, 2011; Evans et al., 2006; Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003). Within the VET context, transferring knowledge through bringing together its different types (e.g. work-based, personal, subject-based knowledge) has emerged as a significant aspect of vocational pedagogy. The fundamental principles of vocational pedagogy have often been considered within the concept of 'learning through boundary crossing' within and between the contexts of education and work (Guile, 2010; Bakker et al., 2011; Edwards, 2011; Evans et al., 2006; Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström, 2003).

The interplay between learning, working and personal spaces has been characterised by their somewhat blurred boundaries, where boundaries and spaces are multifaceted and multidimensional (Kersh, 2015). Boundaries have often been described as spaces and contexts with affordances for learning (Harris & Ramos, 2012; Edwards, 2011; Kersh, 2015). Crossing the boundaries across a range of spaces at work, such as physical, virtual or informal, enables individuals to navigate these spaces while learning and using their skills and applying knowledge within their environments. Research suggests that engaging in learning and applying skills not only within, but across, a variety of contexts involves recontextualisation of skills and knowledge across these contexts (Kersh, 2015). In this discussion, the concept of recontextualisation will be employed for a better understanding of boundary crossing in

work-related settings and the ways that FE tutors use different types of knowledge in their teaching practices, thus aiming to enhance vocational pedagogy.

In order to illustrate the ways that college tutors draw on their knowledge and skills in a range of settings, this paper draws on a review of related projects dealing with issues of boundary crossing and knowledge transfer in the VET context, such as 'Working Places as Learning Spaces', 'Impact of Poor English and Maths Skills on English Employers' and the 'Post-16 Teacher Development Project', carried out at the UCL Institute of Education. Data collection has involved undertaking semi-structured interviews with tutors teaching in VET-related settings, including FE colleges and workplaces. Within the three projects, 15 interviews with tutors and practitioners teaching in VET settings have been completed. In addition, ten interviews with VET students have been carried out, as part of the 'Post-16 Teacher Development Project. The data from these projects have indicated ways in which individuals bring together different types of knowledge through boundary spaces that emerge from different practices and experiences.

2. Theoretical considerations: Recontextualising knowledge and experiences through boundary crossing

The forms of learning that can occur at the boundary of social practices (Guile, 2010) have been the subject of interest in a number of national and international studies (Star, 2010; Säljö, 2003; Young et al., 2003). In the literature, the concept of 'boundary crossing' has been used to advance knowledge and understanding of vocational pedagogy and the ways that learners acquire and use their knowledge and skills across different contexts and settings. Vocational pedagogy and the significance of different configurations of 'learning in, for and through the workplace' (Evans et al., 2006) have been discussed extensively in a number of recent research publications (e.g. Aspin et al., 2012; Malloch et al., 2011; Evans et al., 2006; Boud, 2006; Guile, 2010). The notion of 'learning through boundary crossing' within and between the contexts of education and work has often been employed to illustrate the ways that individuals endeavour to enhance the teaching and learning process in VET settings (Young et al., 2003; Guile, 2010; Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

The complex interdependencies between learning spaces, knowledge transfer and boundary crossing have been considered through different theoretical lenses. Bakker et al. (2011) note that in sociocultural and cultural-historical theories, challenges in communication between practices are often conceptualised in terms of boundaries. Activity theory (Engeström, 2004) as a 'theoretical lens' has been employed to analyse workplaces and their boundaries as being characterised by their own object of activity. In the literature, boundaries have often been perceived as 'spaces' with potential for learning (Harris & Ramos, 2012; Edwards, 2011).

Within the VET context, transferring knowledge through bringing together different types of knowledge – in ways that meet the requirements and expectations of the learner, the

college, the employer and the awarding and professional bodies – is considered to be one of the most significant underlying principles that permeates the notion of vocational pedagogy. The strategies that provide a foundation for the implementation of this principle across courses are based on the concepts of boundary crossing, transfer and recontextualisation (Guile, 2010). As argued by Edwards (2011), boundary spaces emerge when the resources from different practices are brought together to expand the interpretation, perception and understanding of a task. The interplay between learning and working spaces (e.g. the college and the workplace) has been characterised by their somewhat blurred boundaries, where boundaries and spaces are multifaceted and multidimensional. Individuals' personal, working and learning spaces enhance their effectiveness, creativity and social practices, as they acquire, use and apply a range of skills across different contexts, within the boundaries of constantly changing contemporary spaces (Kohlegger et al., 2013). Harris & Ramos (2012) employ the concept of 'boundary crossing' to illuminate this movement of learners between different sectors and settings, specifically drawing attention to learning across contexts. Settings and contexts play an important part in knowledge creation and development. For knowledge generated and practised in one context to be put to work in another, it has to be transferred in various ways that simultaneously engage with and change those practices, traditions and experiences (Evans, Guile & Harris, 2007). Guile (2010) further draws attention to boundary crossing within and between the contexts of education and work, specifically considering the ways that students learn through work experience, making a point that this requires educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to apply the concepts from their formal education to interpret the reality of workplace cultures and practices and, vice versa, relating everyday experiences to more formal bodies of knowledge. Equally, as Guile (2010) further notes, it involves workplaces allowing students to participate in 'communities of practice' and supporting them to negotiate their own learning in those 'communities'. These strategies are essential if students are to develop the polycontextual skills, i.e. the ability to relate the interests and needs of one community to another, that are associated with boundary crossing within and between the contexts of education and work (Guile and Griffiths, 2001). The term boundary crossing, , refers to the process of 'negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve hybrid situations' (Engeström et al., 1995, p. 319). Akkerman (2011) further identifies two important issues about learning, knowledge transfer and boundary crossing. The first is that boundaries are an important condition for learning because they support us to develop, for example, domain and cultural traditions, thus facilitating human understanding. The second issue, which follows from the first, underpins the role of educational institutions and workplaces in supporting people to learn at the boundaries of social practice. Similarly, Young et al. (2003) make a link between the concept of 'learning through boundary crossing' within and between the contexts of education and work, and the development of vocational education and its practices. Such boundaries, as helpfully noted by Akkerman and Bakker (2011) can be crossed by people, by objects and by interactions between actors of different practices.

The notion of boundary crossing and knowledge transfer has also been used and applied in order to develop collaboration and share good practice across VET contexts and settings. A significant configuration of knowledge transfer and boundary crossing has been associated with the development of modern technologies, which allows learners to extend their learning spaces to a variety of environments, including home and workplace settings. The expansion of digital technologies provides learners with opportunities to access and undertake learning activities in a range of other settings, including home, college and workplace environments, public libraries and youth centres. Felstead and Jewson (2012) observe that the recent developments in information technology have weakened the spatial fix, with workers and learners becoming increasingly detached from personal cubes of space, thus facilitating the crossing of boundaries between different contexts. The use of devices such as computers, laptops, mobile phones and netbooks has contributed to the development of the virtual learning space where learning might not be associated with a specific place or a specific time. The virtual learning environment provides a degree of flexibility for learners, enabling them to acquire learning at a time and place convenient for them. The use of new technologies and mobile learning has been gradually changing approaches to and ways of teaching and learning within the VET context. Crossing boundaries and transferring knowledge and skills across a range of contexts presupposes these skills and knowledge to be adapted, deployed and used in the new settings. One way to approach understanding and explaining the challenges associated with boundary crossing is, as Guile (2010) argues, through employing the concept of 'recontextualisation' as it offers a unified perspective on the role of lecturers and employers in moving knowledge into courses, as well as on lecturers and employers and learners engaging with that knowledge in college environments.

Settings and contexts play an important part in knowledge creation and development. As Evans, Guile and Harris (2007) note, all knowledge has a context in which it was originally generated. Contexts are often referred to as settings or places but they could also extend to 'schools of thought', traditions and norms of practice, and the life experiences in which knowledge of different kinds is generated. For knowledge generated and practised in one context to be put to work in another context involves the crossing of boundaries between such contexts, and further presupposes knowledge recontextualisation in various ways, which simultaneously engage with and change those practices, traditions and experiences (Evans et al., 2007).

The term recontextualisation, which has to do with extracting meaning from its original context (decontextualisation) in order to introduce it into another context, was first developed in the sociology of education (Bernstein, 1961; 1990). Bernstein's concept of recontextualisation had a profound influence on sociological research on education. A number of researchers have drawn on this concept in order to develop a research framework (e.g. Leeuwen, 2008; Guile, 2010, Harris & Ramos, 2012). Recontextualisation, which involves discourse being transferred from its place in fields of knowledge and relocated in a new context for the purposes of transmission and acquisition, is a multifaceted concept. It refers to

the idea that knowledge, skills and practices change as we use them in different settings. Each of our expressions of recontextualisation sheds light on some element of the challenge of relating subject-based and work-based knowledge in real-life programmes (Evans et al., 2007). Mannion and Miller use the term recontextualisation to explain how people carry out known activities in new contexts or develop new patterns of activity to solve problems in new contexts (Mannion & Miller, 2005):

> *Because we continually identify across contexts in any one moment, recontextualis–ation is seen as the process of participating in any number of contexts while concur–rently changing that context through making sense of it out of experience of other situations, past and present (Ibid, p. 5).*

The research of Evans et al. (2007) identifies four types of recontextualisation: that of content, pedagogy, workplace and learner. Pedagogic recontextualisation refers to the design and organisation of the teaching and learning dimensions of programmes. As Evans et al. stress, disciplinary knowledge is combined with practice-based knowledge that goes beyond specific jobs, and with local company knowledge. Pedagogic recontextualisation involves teachers, tutors and trainers making decisions about how much time they devote to, and what strategies they use to explain the background to, different forms of knowledge (Evans et al., 2007).

Interviews undertaken as part of our fieldwork indicate that educational professionals perceive teaching as a constructive and co-constructive process that requires continuous boundary crossing between a range of settings and contexts, both past and present. Different types of knowledge, skills and experiences are being recontextualised in their work environments, thus contributing to the development of their unique approaches in their teaching practices. The process, as our data indicate, involves crossing boundaries between past and present experiences, i.e. transferring previously acquired knowledge and skills, including:

▶ Subject-specific stored knowledge, learned and developed through both past and present learning experiences;

▶ Personal experiences and skills, which also refer to individual biographies and dispositions; and

▶ Workplace-related skills, acquired as a result of engaging in workplace learning both formally and informally.

3. Drawing on subject–specific data in teaching practices: Crossing boundaries between previously acquired knowledge and current teaching practices

Loo notes that curriculum knowledge is part of teachers' 'tools of the trade', like knowledge of materials, which can be used in class. General pedagogical knowledge refers to strategies and rules around classroom management and organisation. With pedagogical content knowledge, it is a combination of content and pedagogy, which he saw as unique to this profession. Loo (2006, 2011, 2012) further argues that one outcome of the teaching process is that students are taught something which may be based on data, facts and stored knowledge in order to achieve an academic goal. The way they receive this knowledge is the task for each lecturer to decide how it is best disseminated and delivered to suit the group and individuals within the group. I suggest that previous work experience will ideally colour this process, while ongoing teaching experience may well allow for innovative adaptations of delivery. As a result, subject-specific knowledge delivery is not simply a mechanical reproduction of various kinds of information and facts in the classroom. As our interviews indicated, the process involves crossing boundaries between the context where the knowledge has been acquired and the context where the knowledge needs to be delivered and passed on to someone else within the teaching and learning context. Therefore, subject-specific knowledge needs to be embedded and recontextualised in teaching practices. The way that subject-specific knowledge is recontextualised in the classroom depends on many different factors, such as types of learners, classroom context, available resources, number of learners in the class and the extent to which disciplinary knowledge needs to be contextualised in practical activities.

Other important factors that influence the way in which subject-specific knowledge is recontextualised in the classroom have to do with the personality, skills, experiences and dispositions of the teacher (practitioner). The way that subject-specific knowledge is delivered to learners depends on the tutors' teaching approaches and strategies. As noted by one of our respondents:

> *There are a number of different ways you can teach the same discipline, the same topic, the same subject, depending on a particular context. You look at the context, and sometimes your intuition helps you to find the way to deliver the discipline to the learners. Subject–specific knowledge is recontextualised when we transfer it to a specific context. Sometimes you need to use different terminology, depending on a context or the groups of learners [FE college tutor].*

Recontextualisation in this context also deals with how the subject specifications and generic teaching standards are selected in terms of what to teach, the order in which things are taught, the time that is required to cover the curriculum, and how the different parts of the subject specifications are related to each other and to generic teaching standards. Also, the past knowledge and experience of trainees need to be considered in the teaching process (Loo, 2006).

4. Drawing on personal experience, embedding previously acquired personal skills and experiences in teaching practice: Crossing boundaries between personal experiences and teaching practice

Crossing boundaries between personal and work-related spaces involves transferring skills and knowledge acquired in one context and recontextualising them in a new context. As Pye (1994) suggests, recontextualisation draws on one's biography of experience, which is fluid, embracing past and future possibilities. Both our empirical and theoretical research emphasised the importance of tutors' individual biographies in the development of their teaching practices and methods. The significance of individual biographies, experiences and dispositions in the workplace and, in particular, in teaching practices, has been stressed by Hodkinson et al. (2004). They identify four overlapping and interlinked ways in which biography is relevant to learning at work:

Workers/learners bring prior knowledge, understanding and skills with them, which can contribute to their future work and learning;

The habitus of workers, including their dispositions towards work, career and learning, influence the ways in which they construct and take advantage of opportunities for learning at work;

The values and dispositions of individual workers contribute to the co-production and reproduction of the communities of practice and/or organisational cultures and/or activity systems where they work;

Working and belonging to a workplace community contributes to the developing habitus and sense of identity of the workers themselves.

Loo's (2006, 2011, 2012) research also emphasises that one way in which teachers can acquire their knowledge is from their life experiences. Within the present research, interview data already indicate a wide range of learning experiences outside formal teacher training schemes or other formal education and training settings. While the considerable learning which takes place in the workplace has been increasingly recognised, learning also results from a range of life experiences, in home and family settings, engaging in volunteer activities, and overcoming various setbacks in life. Our interview data have shown that tutors' and practitioners' prior experiences play a significant part in developing their teaching practices:

> *My previous work and life experiences have greatly influenced me in the way I deal with [challenges of the teaching profession]. I have had jobs in a variety of different employments in Australia, the US and UK in both large and small companies, plus I studied for several years to qualify in Homeopathy and Reflexology as well as gaining more conventional academic qualifications and it is clear to me that both management of staff or management of students has many parallels. The best managers and teachers I have had have been the approachable easy-mannered ones, those confident enough in their own world to either delegate work without strings attached or calm and patient enough to talk things through [FE college tutor].*

The acquisition of these skills is often tacit in nature and thus individuals do not necessarily recognise to what extent they use their previously acquired skills in their teaching practices or draw on their learning biographies in developing new strategies and approaches to be used in college contexts. However, our research has indicated that these skills have proven to be very important for the development of teaching practice in a college context. Various dimensions of the tutors' previous experiences as well as their previously acquired skills are recontextualised in their current workplace context. In this context, recontextualisation of the tutors' previous experiences/skills and the crossing of boundaries between workplace and personal contexts could be either tacit or explicit. Loo (2006) points out that most life-changing experiences are informal, such as parenting, travel, balancing work and personal life, death in the family, living abroad, and the break-up of a serious relationship. He found that life-experience learning was significant in two ways. The first affected the individual, resulting in an expansion of skills, abilities or self-awareness, or the experience transforming the person. The second finding involved the value assigned to the experience by the individual, which might place a 'personal stamp' on the experience, such that it was viewed as of importance in the individual's life. Our interviews support the argument that tutors draw on their personal experiences and previously acquired skills when they undertake various teaching activities in college contexts. Their skills, knowledge and experiences are recontextualised in their new settings:

> *I began teaching Art in 1993, then IT in 1994, at which time there were very few suitable materials available for the subjects that I was teaching. I taught mainly foreign students who were here to learn English and computer skills became part of their timetable. With no examples to refer to I devised training materials entirely based on my own personal work experiences. In hindsight these materials were at best adequate; however, they improved as my academic experience grew. I learned heavily from my mistakes [FE college tutor].*

The tutor further demonstrates the way his skills and experiences are being recontextualised in order to respond to changing circumstances and become better embedded in everyday teaching practice:

> *Today, however, I have changed the way I teach in response to the different students I now encounter. Previously they were foreign students who had high levels of capability and they also expected a more traditional lecture-centred delivery. Now I teach mostly local and younger students who initially at least seem to need more parenting and role modelling as well as academic training. There may be several factors at work here in that these students come with higher levels of IT skills having grown up with this technology as a key part of their lives, yet their academic skills are generally very poor. The focus for these students appears to be more on their basic communication and social interaction skills so the traditional lecture-centred teaching system is not*

*always the most appropriate method. The original simple system of materials delivery
I used, based heavily on my previous work experience, has changed significantly, due
principally to my academic experience [FE college tutor].*

This indicates that the workplace environment fundamentally affects how skills and knowledge are put to work (Evans et al., 2007). The work of Hodkinson et al. (2004) illustrated the importance of the influence of prior activity on current activity and the different ways in which actors may construe situations as being 'similar'. In this context, multiple processes involved include adjustments to affordances and constraints, and the distribution of 'transfer' across mental, material, social and cultural planes. Furthermore, skills and knowledge have to be developed and possibly changed, as they are operationalised in the culture of the new workplace. Furthermore, it is not the skills and knowledge that develop, but the whole person, as s/he adjusts, with greater or lesser success, to working in a new environment. That adjustment depends as much on the receptive or expansive nature of the new workplace as on the prior experiences that workers bring. Put differently, the processes entailed can be significantly helped or hindered by the actions and dispositions of employers and co-workers.

Different factors derived from workplace environments influence the way skills are embedded in teaching practices. In addition, workplace environments enable individuals to learn and acquire new skills and experiences, which are then recontextualised within the same environment but maybe also within different contexts of the environment. The next section will consider some aspects of the embedding and recontextualising of skills acquired in workplace practices.

5. Crossing boundaries between work-related practices: Drawing on workplace experiences/embedding (newly) acquired skills and experiences in teaching practice.

5.1 The significance of workplace experiences

As our interviews suggest, tutors' work involves crossing boundaries between various concomitant (parallel) settings and contexts. Apart from the recontextualisation of personal skills and personal experiences in their teaching practices, college tutors tend to actively use skills, practices and professional knowledge and experiences that they have acquired in their workplace practices, often from informal learning. Unwin and Fuller's (2003) definition of the workplace embraces all types of learning generated from or stimulated by the needs of the workplace, including formal on-the-job training, informal learning and work-related off-the-job education and training. Evans et al. (2006) adopted this definition in their formulation of workplace learning as that learning which derives its purpose from the context of employment, i.e. 'learning in, for and through the workplace'. Learning here is perceived as something that 'you do continually whilst at work, both out of choice and by necessity' (Gray

et al., 2005). Similarly, 'most of what we learn takes place at work rather than on formal courses. Work activities, the workplace, the supervisor, other workers … are the key learning resources for workers' (Malone, 2005, p. 67)

What employees learn as learners-in-the-workplace leads to the development of certain skills or competences, which may be job-specific or related to occupational or personal development. Recontextualisation of such skills and competences is important in this context. Even if the work-related skills of teachers/tutors have been acquired within the setting of their current workplace, the skills often need to be embedded and recontextualised within the same workplace, but within different contexts of the same workplace. Examples could include, for example, acquiring skills through participation in a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions, and then embedding and recontextualising these skills in real teaching practices.

Our respondents reported that in order to be deployed and utilised, such newly acquired job-related skills, knowledge and experiences need to be recontextualised, or in other words, properly embedded, in the work with learners, for example, in classroom activities. Transferring skills and knowledge from one location (context) to another is neither straightforward, nor simple. It depends on many factors, such as tutors' attitudes and dispositions, regulatory frameworks and the structural organisation of their workplace environment as well as workplace constraints or opportunities.

Our research has indicated that the process of recontextualisation can be facilitated by tutors' positive attitudes towards learning in the workplace. College environments could be thought of as workplace environments where tutors/practitioners could assume the role of learners within these environments, in the sense that they can learn through their workplace experience and activities and develop their skills and competences. Workplace recontextualisation takes place throughout workplace practices and activities that support knowledge development and through mentorships and coaching and other arrangements through which individuals can engage with and learn through workplace environments (Evans et al., 2004). Our fieldwork has suggested that tutors' skills and teaching practices are in the process of constant development within their college environments. Their skills and knowledge need to be continuously recontextualised in their workplace (college) environments, as the environments themselves are in a process of constant transformation. The factors that contribute to this transformation include new/changing learners' requirements, changing government policies, internal changes in the college, etc. All these changes require tutors to adapt their skills and knowledge to the changing demands of workplace environments. Thus, their knowledge needs to be recontextualised and embedded in their current practices.

Recontextualisation of knowledge and learning in the college environment could be facilitated through the following:

▶ Encouraging tutors to be lifelong learners;

▶ Genuinely putting the learner first (e.g. influence of external drivers);

▶ Supporting tutors to achieve accreditation aims from a learner's perspective;

▶ Facilitating tutors to use new technologies as part of the lifelong learning process.

Fuller and Unwin's (2004) typology of expansive and restrictive workplace environments suggests that workplace environments *experienced as* expansive facilitate further development, deployment and embedding of skills, whereas environments *experienced as* restrictive are found in workplace settings that do little to encourage further professional training or development of new skills. Restrictive working environments are also connected with isolation at work when employees have a feeling that they are outsiders or mere observers. Conversely, as the authors observe, expansive workplace settings are often associated with the feeling of being part of a team at a workplace. Our research findings support the argument that environments experienced as expansive facilitate the meaningful recontextualisation of tutors' skills and experiences.

5.2 Recontextualisation of knowledge at work through the use of modern technologies

The growing role of technologies in work-related learning has been emphasised by our interview data. The use of technologies is considered to be an important trend across all areas of work-related learning. The interviews with tutors indicated that the introduction of a range of technologies in a college environment has been regarded as a beneficial development that could improve learners' motivation and facilitate their skills and competence development. The use of technologies has been gradually changing approaches to and ways of teaching and learning in work-related contexts. In this context the concept of mobile learning has been emphasised by our research. Pachler (2009) stresses that mobile learning is not simply about delivering content to mobile devices but, instead, about the processes of coming to know and being able to operate successfully in and across new and ever-changing contexts and learning spaces. Our respondents reported that the use of modern technologies in their college environments may help the process of recontextualisation of knowledge and skills in their teaching practices. One of the respondents argued that various configurations of modern technologies in the college setting facilitate the transmission of knowledge from one context to another:

> *The use of blackboards, VLE (Virtual Learning Environment), e-mails, and even a mobile phone helps me to recontextualise the knowledge and transmit it to the learning in my teaching practice. Learners feel more motivated and receptive, in terms of the knowledge acquisition [FE college tutor].*

Modern (digital) technologies alone do not facilitate learning. To be meaningful, e-learning processes need to be grounded in a pedagogical or educational approach. E-learning or modern technologies provide opportunities to facilitate and support teaching practices in the college context, in particular, by providing flexibility of time and place of delivery; al-

lowing the sharing and re-use of resources; enabling collaborative working and fostering student-centred learning.

Modern technologies facilitate the implementation of methods and approaches to be recontextualised in teaching practices. One specific approach that has been piloted in the college has aimed to enhance learners' motivation through self-evaluation of their personal competences and tacit skills. The approach has employed the Dynamic Concept Analysis (DCA) modelling method (as a tool for self-evaluation of personal competences in the context of classroom- or work-related activities). The DCA method, assisted by a dedicated software programme, enables users to build conceptual models that can be used for self-evaluation purposes.

Tutors maintain that the self-evaluation of learners' skills in the context of classroom activities may help learners and their tutors to establish links between skills development and certain classroom tasks and assignments. As a result, the process of skills development could be potentially facilitated by tutors through more purposeful learner-centred implementation of various activities and tasks within the classroom. Self-evaluation of the learners' personal skills and competences in the context of classroom activities has a positive impact on learners' confidence, self-assurance and learning outcomes. Learners' awareness that they are able to use their previously acquired skills in various classroom activities enhances their confidence and encourages them to use their skills more actively and intensively (Fuller & Unwin, 2004). Moreover, if learners recognise that they develop or deploy their tacit skills within various classroom activities, they feel motivated towards more active participation in such activities, which ultimately contributes to their positive attitudes towards learning. While both learners and the tutors recognise the potential benefits of modern technologies, they notice that all types of technologies need to be implemented carefully, taking into account learners' individual needs and backgrounds. Some students may need more training and support before they can feel confident to use technologies within their learning or workplace settings. Some students need more time to get used to them. Our data suggest that if learners' individual needs and requirements are not taken into account, technologies may provide barriers to learning and, as a result, undermine learners' motivation. Our interviews have shown that tutors may play an important role in the process of supporting the learners in using technologies for the benefit of their learning. As e-learning becomes embedded in adult learning, it may further contribute to facilitating expansive learning environments for adult learners in both workplace and college contexts. Technologies enable learners to shape and personalise their learning environments in order to respond to their individual requirements and provide meaningful learning. In addition, these factors may influence both learners' motivation for knowledge acquisition and learners' motivation to use technologies within their learning contexts.

5.3 Recontextualising to motivate

The data indicate that when tutors are able to recontextualise their own skills and knowledge in their workplace environments, they might also motivate their learners to use and employ their previously acquired skills in the classroom. Our interview data suggest that tutors may employ a number of methods and approaches to help learners to make their skills visible and to improve their motivation. Teamwork, one-to-one tutorial help and encouraging learners to help their fellow-learners have been identified as the methods that may help to uncover tacit skills and to enhance their motivation. Another important factor has been associated with the prior/current workplace experiences of adult learners. One student who combines her studies with part-time work commented on how her workplace experiences contribute to her understanding of her learning experiences in the college. At the same time, her experiences within the college setting motivate her towards evaluating and reconsidering her workplace practices:

> *What motivates me personally is I do enjoy learning, the process. And I do think it will be useful because [...] when you are in the working environment, you are very much coping with the day-to-day demand and you don't have time to step back and think about it. So, seeing this, coming on this course, rather, gives you that insight, almost stepping back and looking at things you do at work more objectively [FE college student].*

The interviews have shown that tutors and supervisors may considerably facilitate learners' motivation by drawing on their work settings and experiences in the course of their learning activities and assignments. As noted by another student:

> *What I like about the course, it's very work-related, because we are asked to think about our own situation and how we work ourselves. I find that really helpful because it makes it easier to understand the work that you are doing if you can apply it to your own workplace [FE college student].*

Recontextualisation of learners' experiences and competences reflects positively on their skills development and recognition. Motivating learners is considered to be an important aim of the learning process in the context of adult/further education. By emphasising the significance of the learners' attitudes and disposition, tutors may stimulate them towards better performance and achievements within their learning:

> *With this in mind the primary methodology I use is therefore more psychological than academic in that I always treat all students as adults, continually stressing that their performance is wholly derived from their own attitude to their work. Statements like 'only you are in control of your life' and 'I am just one of your resources' underpin the way I now work with students. Preparing them to be independent learners is, I be-*

lieve, essential, yet this only appears to work efficiently when there is a mutual trust or bond formed [FE college tutor].

Tutors may draw on their own experiences in order to facilitate students' engagement and motivation. Taking into account and recognising learners' personal interests and dispositions may significantly enhance their learning attitudes:

This takes time to achieve but once a student's confidence is gained then the task becomes much easier. Another key aspect that I use based on my academic experience is to engage students in their world not my own. To achieve this I don't discipline them for their 'novel' internet use (games or football sites mostly). I ask them to show and explain the sites to me. I do, however, mention that they may need to hand in some work at some time. I find this deliberate lack of judgement or punishment from me in time creates that important mutual trust that I have mentioned even with the more aggressive 'alpha males'. The other key element is establishing realistic, agreed boundaries with students [FE college tutor].

The project findings suggest that providing adult learners with the opportunities 'to be motivated' or facilitating their intrinsic motivation may enhance their learning success and skills development. Tutors may employ various methods and approaches to facilitate learners' motivation including employing self-evaluation tools, facilitating teamwork and group discussion, and providing feedback and support for learners. Tutors may also motivate learners by providing them with the opportunities to relate their acquired skills to their workplace situations and environments.

6. Conclusions

Crossing boundaries between a range of settings and contexts, both past and concomitant, plays an important part in the development of teaching practices. Crossing boundaries involves transferring skills and knowledge acquired in one context to a variety of new contexts. Employing skills and knowledge in new contexts through recontextualisation has become a significant element of everyday teaching practices in VET settings. The research has indicated that tutors continuously draw on their previous and current experiences and knowledge, sometimes subconsciously, in order to develop their pedagogical strategies and approaches within their institutional contexts. The significance of different types of knowledge and experiences has been emphasised by our research interviews, including knowledge gained from life experiences and from workplace learning, as well as from a range of various informal contexts and settings. Recontextualisation of such knowledge and experiences occurs when tutors draw on a specific skill, knowledge or experience in their pedagogical practice. It could be facilitated by, for example, the necessity to introduce new teaching strategies; to respond to specific learners' requirements; to change the learning environment in the classroom; or to

motivate the learners. Recontextualisation in this context presupposes embedding previously acquired skills in new settings or contexts, and this process often involves self-evaluation of tutors' skills and approaches in responding to constantly changing learners' needs:

> *As for recontextualisation of knowledge, this is an evolving process that doesn't just happen between different sites and institutions but also between different groups and individuals. However, based on my own experience I would also suggest that the most important element to consider is the continuing evolution of a lecturer's own experience in the academic sphere. It seems that today's students are changing due to the technological influences they have grown up with, including significant changes in our social strata. Could it also be that work–related experience may be a key asset while flexibility and innovation based on current needs and experience can also be highly beneficial? I would reason that one method of teaching or even the use of various dynamic techniques to entertain and engage students may not be enough. I suggest that innovative lecturing techniques influenced by a lecturer's work and life experiences yet based on current student needs, which include a patient sensitivity to each individual, may be more beneficial to students trying to academically achieve despite their previously stifled potential in the educational sphere [FE college tutor].*

Through engaging in various configurations of their teaching practices, tutors and practitioners cross boundaries between a range of spaces and contexts and recontextualise their skills and knowledge in new settings. What is more, as a result of boundary crossing and of the recontextualisation of their previous experiences and knowledge, new knowledge or new types of skills may be constructed and developed. Another important factor is that of the influence of the workplace environment. Tutors entering a new workplace may experience their working environment as expanding, and this would also facilitate further embedding and recontextualisation of their skills. Environments that are experienced as giving recognition to and supporting deployment of their tacit, as well as explicit, skills assist in further development. The parts played by tutors in creating environments that support their deployment of skills and their further learning are contributory factors. The way they experience these environments often has to do with the feeling of being a part of a team, allowing them to deploy their tacit skills in ways that enhance their confidence and self-assurance. Beyond the transfer or recontextualisation of skills and knowledge we emphasise the agency of the whole person (such as tutors' identities) and their personal processes within social settings, which structure their experiences and facilitate the way they engage in crossing boundaries through constructing and negotiating the opportunities and constraints of new environments.

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