

Making Connections across Boundaries: Interprofessional Learning and Communities of Practice

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CETL: IPPS CPD Programme

- Continuing Professional Development Programme for staff working within Children and Family services
- Programme designed collaboratively with one local authority
- Enhance collaborative working potential of staff and impact practice
- 5-6 month programme
- Four cohorts of 10-15 middle managers from health, social care and education

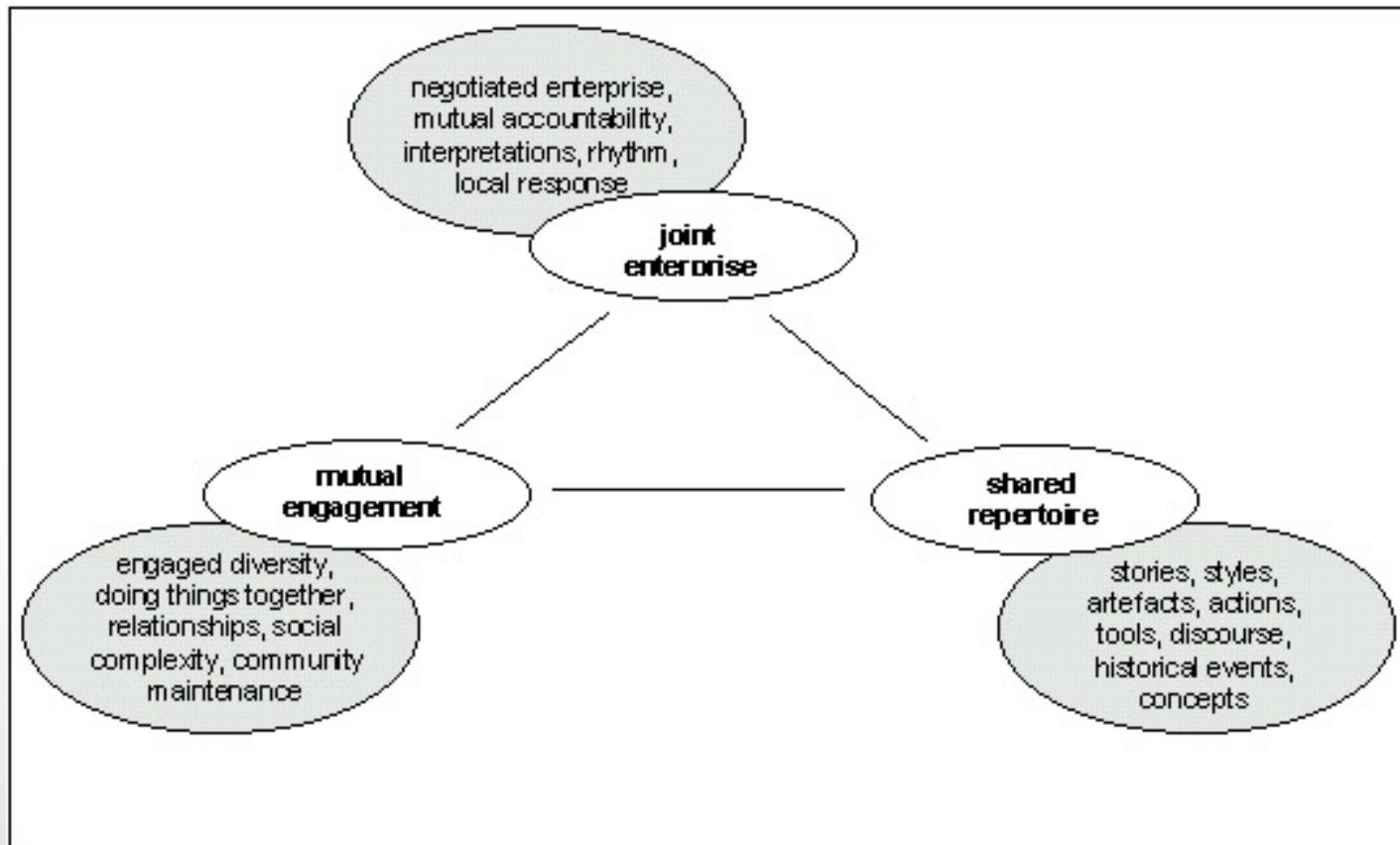
Details of Evaluation

- To explore participants' interprofessional practice before, during and after the CPD
- Theoretically driven framework for analysing learning beyond intrapersonal change and looking at contextual influences on IPL (Payler et al, 2007) – addressing the paucity of theorised IPL
- Pre-course: 26 interviews and 25 questionnaires
- During: ethnographic observation of sessions
- Immediate post course: 33 questionnaires
- 12 month follow up: 33 interviews

Communities of Practice (CoP)

- A social theory of learning based on work of Wenger (1998) and Lave and Wenger (1991)
- Learning as social participation
- We are all involved in a whole range of different CoPs, for example work, school, sports club, family

Characteristics of CoPs



Wenger (1998)

Relevance to Interprofessional Learning (IPL)

- Highlights contextual factors in IPL
- Labels concepts
- For example, shared repertoire

“I can remember sitting in the first meetings, you know health management meetings and not having much of a clue about, well what’s SUHT, what’s CASH and GUM, you know, actually raising, having the confidence to actually say ‘look guys, I don’t understand your glossary of terms, I need some translation.’”

Relevance to Interprofessional Learning (IPL)

Joint Enterprise

- “I have this thing about we only ever see things in the context of our experiences and if you are a health worker, that’s all you see, if you’re a social care worker, that’s all you see, if you’re an education worker, that’s all you see.”



Boundaries with the rest of the world

- Implicit knowledge can create boundaries and barriers with the rest of the world



*"I got a blank memo too.
Management must have added another unwritten rule."*

How to forge links between CoPs? Lessons for curriculum design

- Wenger observes that connections are made between CoPs, in practice, in a number of ways including:
 - Boundary encounters
 - Boundary objects
 - Brokering

How to forge links between CoPs? Lessons for curriculum design

Boundary encounters

- Members of separate CoPs come together
 - One-to-one conversation
 - Visit to a practice
 - Delegation
- When boundary encounters become established and provide opportunity for ongoing mutual engagement they can become boundary practices

CETL:CPD as boundary practice/encounter

- Provided a forum for ongoing mutual engagement for IP colleagues:
 - 5-6 month timescale
 - Group activities to ensure engagement
 - Provision of safe, neutral environment

Boundary objects

- They use forms of reification to bridge disjoint forms of participation
- Wenger refers to these as objects that serve to coordinate the perspectives of various actors for some purpose
- We could call the Common Assessment Framework a boundary object

Pedagogic 'boundary objects'

- Pedagogic devices used to co-ordinate perspectives with the aim of enhancing interprofessional understanding:
 - Group presentations;
 - Systems maps;
 - Problem solving techniques
- Sharing of views, ideas, perspectives
- Working towards consensus
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of interagency colleagues

Brokering

- Wenger says that the job of brokers is to:
 - co-ordinate and align perspectives
 - influence the development of practice
 - address conflicting interests
 - link practices
 - and cause learning
- Sounds like the role of the facilitator!

Facilitation

- Knowledgeable, relaxed, encouraging discussion but retaining focus, allowing for emergent content
- Delivery greatly appreciated by participants
- Reinforces importance of facilitation to IPE

“it’s about having a facilitator which brings you together to say think about what the barriers are and get together and be creative about how you get over them”

Conclusion

- Relevant and applicable to design and evaluation of IPL
- Contextual influences on IPL
- Ways in which links can be made
- Guided and clarified analysis
- Use of theoretically established terms

- Any questions?

References

Payler, J., Meyer, E., & Humphris, D. (2007). Theorising interprofessional pedagogic evaluation: Framework for evaluating the impact of interprofessional education on practice change. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 6, 156-169.

Lave J. and Wenger E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK

Wenger E. (1998) *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK