Making Connections across Boundaries:

Interprofessional Learning and Communities of Practice

Amanda Lees, Edgar Meyer
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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?
