

## What is in our toolbox? Assessment of Learning from Experience

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

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- What are we assessing when we assess **learning** from experience?
- Dewey: Experience is the basis for all learning (= raw material for reflection)
- Situated learning theory claims that learning takes place everywhere!

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

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- What sort of learning is this?
- We are familiar with learning in academic disciplines (Gibbons et al: Mode 1 knowledge)
- This takes the form of enculturation into a specific approach and content
- It involves teaching and emphasises the expertise of the tutor

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ Biggs: functioning knowledge is required in professional role (declarative, process, conditional, functioning)
- ❑ Jarvis: practice-based knowledge is pragmatic (= about 'what works') and can combine content and process
- ❑ Eraut: expertise combines technical, social and experiential knowledge

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ All these models involve a combination of codified and experiential knowledge
- ❑ Assessing learning from experience is different to assessing 'pure' content
- ❑ Need elements of performance assessment – how ensure that assessment design appropriate?

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ Assessments cited in recent HEFCE project: reports, projects, artefacts, essays on 'applied' topics, interviews, video recordings, observation reports, analytic and evaluative description of practice etc
- ❑ Can be experience-based or a 'hybrid' model in include specific content

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

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- ❑ Assessment of experiential learning frequently associated with portfolio and seen to be labour-intensive for both staff and students
- ❑ BUT 'portfolio' just means a collection of work – tutors can decide what sort of materials and how they should be combined

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

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- ❑ Reflection often seen as fundamental to experience-based learning – but what does 'reflection' mean and how is it demonstrated?
- ❑ Intellectual demand of reflection should vary in the same way that subject content does
- ❑ Reflection/critical reflection : single/double loop learning

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

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- ❑ Volume and level of assessment of experience-based learning should be equivalent to that on conventional programmes
- ❑ Essays/examinations are familiar – is risk that lack of familiarity with different assessment leads to over-assessment 'just to be sure' of standard

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ Students also much less familiar with experiential learning and its assessment
- ❑ Helpful to provide brief example of required assessment and/or have workshop to discuss how to do it
- ❑ Important that tutors clear on what they want the student to do and how assessment will be judged

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ Is wide experience of assessing work that has not been 'taught' e.g. supervision of projects/theses
- ❑ Role here = 'critical friend' and concern is with way in which work undertaken/reported
- ❑ Barnett's 'practising epistemologist' – andragogy? 'Art and science of helping adults learn' (Jarvis)

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## Assessment of Learning from Experience

- ❑ Finally, what is the role of theory?
- ❑ Dealing with abstract material is required graduate skill – what does this mean?
- ❑ If assessing integration of experience and theory assessment needs to be theoretically informed, not theoretically driven.

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