

# ***The policy environment of work-based learning: Globalisation, institutions and the workplace***

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**UTS RESEARCH CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

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## ***The policy environment of work-based learning: globalisation, institutions and the workplace***

***John McIntyre & Nicky Solomon***

Work-based learning is not a development that comes into being out of thin air. An innovation of this kind is a motivated development, born of a politics that need to be made visible and analysed. This can be done from a number of perspectives. In this paper our interest is the policy environment of post-compulsory education that has encouraged a recognition of the workplace as a primary site of learning.

For some, the proposition that there is a ‘policy environment’ pressing institutions into work-based learning is an over-statement of the influence of government. It might be readily argued that work-based learning simply extends the principle of co-operative education or work placement, the result of individual companies approaching universities and colleges. As a development, it does not appear to be driven by the restructuring of higher and further education systems of recent years.

This view is a decided refusal of the politics of work-based learning, for work-based learning is a policy solution, in its own terms and in terms of policy at large, to a range of problems that are strategic for both employers and institutions. Moreover, it is an expression of the response of institutions to developments, in particular the forces of globalisation, which are impacting on national economies, their politics and their social institutions.

While it is true that work-based learning represents an organic accommodation of educational institutions to changing times and new external pressures, to be read in itself as an adaptive shift of educational thinking, it is also important to ask how this development is advanced as a solution to pressures for institutions to be more relevant, to ‘customise’ courses to clients and ‘stakeholders’. It is essential to inquire into the nature of the environment that has endorsed work-based learning as a worthy development, an ‘answer’ to perceived problems. We argue that the educational policy environment has been decisive in suggesting the parameters for this development.

We highlight educational policy in this environment because it is ‘policy’ that has sought the ‘reform’ of educational institutions and pressed them to be more flexible and adaptive, in the interests of national economic competitiveness. Policy has been part of a range of conditions making universities and colleges behave in a more entrepreneurial and outward-looking way. In this sense, we will argue for policy intervention in post-compulsory education as a catalyst of work-based learning.

In saying that ‘policy’ catalyses the shift to work-based learning, we will want to show how the nature of ‘policy intervention’ itself has been conditioned by globalisation processes. As others have argued (Yeatman 1991, Marginson 1993), the rationales of

policy intervention in education derive primarily from the challenges to nation states to accommodate global economic change, though this is one of various transformative forces reshaping institutions. We will outline various narratives of globalisation that have provided rationales for national government reforming their education and training systems as agencies of economic life.

At the same time, saying that policy ‘catalyses’ work-based learning, is not to say that it mandates such innovations. However, policy provides touchstones such as ‘flexibility’ and ‘responsiveness’ in working out arrangements between enterprises and institutions. How this is done is another story, but here it is remarkable how publicly funded institutions have been remaking themselves without much ‘intervention’ by government beyond, say, funding stringencies. This leads us to explore how work-based learning also signifies a new governmentality where ‘new’ systems emerge, dependent on self-regulating professionals who negotiate the new arrangements and institutional performances.

## **NARRATIVES OF GLOBALISATION AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

State policy ‘intervention’ to encourage greater institutional responsiveness is conditioned by broader economic and social rationales for action. The policy environment can be seen as weaving together various of narratives of the forces of globalisation, where nation states are depicted as faced by imperatives to adapt and change to a new world order if they are to remain economically prosperous and socially stable. These narratives continue to dominate the formation of state educational policy and provide powerful accounts of the imperative to restructure institutions.

As Waters suggests, the global highlights the local, as the forces of globalisation impact on local communities, shaping people’s experiences in new ways. Local events can be known globally. Waters cites Giddens’ view that –

Globalisation can ... be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events many miles away and vice versa. ... Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (cited in Waters 1995).

Thus we see the development of work-based learning as a local expression of the working out of globalisations and its impacts. Globalisation represents varying conditions which act on corporation, institution, government and learners alike to promote work-based learning as a policy solution in ‘new economic times’. In this way, we want to see work-based learning as a key location of change in post-compulsory education, in which converge many lines of influence.

‘Policy’ is a vantage point for this analysis, for as we will suggest, policy itself has been itself globalised. Policy has been rediscovered by educational professionals as a consequence of the state’s ‘interventions’ in their work (eg Ahier and Flude 1983; Husen and Kogan 1984; Dale 1989; Ball 1990, 1994; Anderson and Biddle 1991; Halpin and Troyna 1994). In Australia, ‘reform’ of the historically centralised administration of education has provoked similar analysis (Marginson 1993, 1997; Yeatman 1991, 1994, 1998; Lingard Knight and Porter 1993; Taylor Lingard Rizvi and

Henry 1997). The term ‘policy intervention’ needs comment, since public education has been a defining feature of state activity for at least a century. The very notion that *thereform* of education and training is needed, and that policy is a means of *intervention* in education, implies that political agendas have disrupted what educators regard as their professionally autonomous work, though since the 1970s neo-Marxist scholars have regarded public education as part of the Althusserian ‘state ideological apparatus’ and relatively autonomous (Dale 1989).

The literature speaks of policy as an ‘intervention’ because economic rationalism has disrupted the post-war policy settlement which assumed increasing growth and state expenditure along with professional control over educational decision-making. Faced by the unravelling of this settlement, scholars have turned to theorising the politics of education reform, theorising the state and its policy processes, and the way these processes interact to reshape educational contexts (Taylor Rivzi Lingard and Henry 1997, p.33ff).

Though modern states differed historically in the extent to which they made state education serve as an instrument of national policy (Green 1990), globalisation now subjects all nation-states to the imperative of making their education and training systems responsive to the needs of the national economy transformed by economic globalisation. It leads national governments to make education policy more strategic in character, but in doing so, they work with policy understandings that are themselves more international in character.

To return to the question of the global influences on policy intervention in education, the concept of globalisation is complex. Waters (1995) suggests that globalisation emerges as early as the sixteenth century, develops through European imperialism and colonialism and becomes in our time a feature of modernisation and the spread of world capitalism. The following account relies on his discussion of economic, political and cultural globalisation.

*Economic globalisation* refers to many narratives of the global spread of capitalism, and with it intensified and open economic competition, the rise of multinational corporations, the decentralisation of financial markets and the mobility of capital, and the deregulation of labour. There is the narrative of the technologisation of work and the consequent reduction in the power of organised labour. This is the world of ‘fast capital’ where there is a dynamic relation of technological change and ‘informational capital’ (Castells 1995). New information technologies, by increasing inter-connectedness, provide a technological basis for global capitalism, ‘knowledge work’ and the ‘information society’. Changes in work, especially the intensification of work knowledge, impact on educational institutions and their vocational relevance (Kenway & Langmead 1999).

*Political globalisation* has been hastened by these economic forces, bringing a challenge to the power of sovereign states, which are seen as more limited in their ability to govern their populations. Here are to be found the narratives of the demise of the welfare state and the wane of social democratic politics in the West (eg Yeatman 1991). Waters suggests that globalisation is characterised by the growth of international

government and non-government agencies such as the UN, OECD, aid, peace and law enforcement agencies, as well as religious, professional and labour organisations, and sporting and cultural bodies. Globalisation undermines 'customary' definitions of citizenship based on racial exclusiveness and challenges societies to reshape national institutions to accommodate this diversity (Yeatman 1994, p.104).

We highlight a key aspect of political globalisation, that of *global policy hegemony*. Bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have internationalised policy, and disseminate dominant policy constructions to member governments. Economic theories dominate educational policy, dictating the 'reform' of education and training systems so that they contribute to the goal of an internationally competitive economy. In this way, human capital has become a global policy discourse that justifies the restructuring of public education to promote individual choice and require greater individual contribution to its costs (Marginson, 1993, pp.31-54). At the same time, human capital theory is also the rationale for recognising learning in the workplace, promoting the 'learning organisation' (see below) and giving industry bodies and employers more control over vocational education and training. Concepts such as productivity come to have ethical force - no where more significantly than in warranting the virtues of work-based learning.

*Cultural globalisation* refers to tendencies for 'the local' to be at once obliterated and accentuated, according to Waters. Local identity and ethnicity are undermined by the spread of consumer materialism and 'privatised consumption', yet at the same time, fundamentalist religious movements and regionality are fuelled by this breakdown (Waters 1995). Cultural globalisation brings *transculturation* - the increased movement of people beyond national frontiers and the crossing of cultural boundaries creates changing and 'hybrid' cultural identities through migration, creating ethnically diverse national populations in settler societies (Rizvi & Walsh 1999). Cultural globalisation is accelerated by new technologies enabling better transport and communications, and information exchange. A narrative of *global inter-connectedness* emphasises the ways new technologies have made possible better transport and communications, and information exchange. It emphasises the crossing of national and cultural boundaries enabled by the virtual relationships of computer-mediated communications. The new technologies at the same time undermine the hegemony of cultural elites exercised through the higher education system by 'democratising' access to knowledge.

## THE CHANGING ACADEMY

These globalisation processes are reshaping further and higher education, as they are reshaping work and the workplace and the interactions between the academy and the workplace. However there are important questions about how these processes are mediated to educational institutions, and how the policies of institutions mediate the very desirability of 'change' to those who are participating in innovations such as work-based learning.

Working with Ball's idea of policy as discourse, we are suggesting that policy mediates the meanings of globalisation and the imperatives of institutional adaptation and

change. It defines what is problematic and where action is imperative, suggests new directions for change and rational solutions. It defines and requires adaptive institutions and an ethos of change management.

It is important to recognise that this meaning of policy extends beyond that of a 'state control perspective' to acknowledge the negotiated and contingent character of policy processes worked out in and through institutions. As Ball says::

Policy ... is an 'economy of power', a set of technologies and practices which are realised and struggled over in local settings. Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended ... Policies are always incomplete insofar as they relate to or map on to the 'wild profusion' of local practice. Policies are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable. Policy *as* practice is created in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom. Thus, policy is no simple asymmetry of power ... (1994, pp.10-11).

Thus policy is not merely texts, in the sense that the state regulates higher education or vocational education and training through, for example, its financial powers. Contemporary social theory has unlocked for us the vital role policy plays in structuring institutional activity. Policy mediates the semiotics of change. It mediates new representations of the contemporary workplace and its education and training requirements, just as it does new representations of the adaptive academy and the kinds of relationships that ought to obtain between education and the economy.

Policy also embraces the ways institutions themselves have taken on forms of governmentality in which enacting institutional policies, setting strategic directions and monitoring outcomes has become central to their work, and in this, it is not only the state that has demanded outcomes, but the institution itself has become 'performative' in understanding its work in this way. Policy signifies a new form of governmentality in public education, which is evident in the pervasive and persuasive ways policy process features in the new management cultures of higher education, the corporate university. It is policy that defines the performative university, positioning itself competitively in a globalising environment and meditating this positioning to its academic workers (Kenway & Langmead 1999).

Therefore, it is useful to try and identify particular policy discourses, which are forms of governmentality mediating the impacts of globalisation on learning and work in this way.

1. *Corporatisation.* Corporatisation refers to the transformation of traditional models of state bureaucratic control of public sector activity by the adoption of business management models. This shift to concept of public sector management and its consequences is best known in Australia through the analysis of Yeatman (1991, pp.13-32). The corporatisation of public institutions has been a key focus of the intervention of the state in public education institutions, since in itself it is a rationalisation that is required to bring about other kinds of change. A neglected aspect of corporatisation is the remodelling of public policy as business policy. Policy becomes more strategic in character, and targets outcomes and resources action through programs with measurable outcomes. Again, we suggest that policy as discourse facilitates the performative institution. Universities and

further or technical education may well have very different histories and traditions, but corporatisation subjects them to similar regimes, and sets up styles of educational management that do not differ much from sector to sector, that are, furthermore increasingly portable across public and private enterprises.

2. *Commercialisation.* The application of market economics to educational provision is the leading edge of economic rationalism in education. As Marginson's work demonstrates (Marginson 1992, 1997) there are many aspects to the way economic theories have 'colonised' all areas of public policy. Economic rationalism prescribes economic life as the basis of social value and extends economic methodologies to many social phenomena such as health, marriage and divorce and politics (normative and methodological economism). In this context, market liberalism is a key set of discourses which legitimate measures to privatise and commercialise educational activity, including establishing quasi-markets through competitive tendering for service delivery (1994, p.58). Clearly, the commercialisation of education also legitimates new forms of the commodification of educational knowledge, as curriculum is adapted to client demands, particularly those of the workplace. The point here is not that knowledge was not 'commodified' before workplace learning, but that this process takes new forms. In our discussion of the politics of curriculum in work-based learning, we refer to these changes in terms of the codification of knowledge (McIntyre and Solomon 1998).
3. *Knowledge commodification.* The marketisation of courses suggests that other processes such as the commodification of knowledge follow. This has various aspects. There are issues which arise from changes in the codification or packaging of knowledge that come about through the greater engagement of learning with the world of work and professional practice. Here it would be possible to explore the idea of knowledge work and intellectual capital, the 'secularisation' of knowledge, the challenge to disciplined knowledge and so on.
4. *Internationalisation.* Here the impact of globalisation is most keenly felt, as it not only accelerates the exchange of ideas through communication, but creates new possibilities of trade in educational experiences. The globalised economy requires transcultural workers at its highest levels and this becomes the new form of cultural capital, embodied in transcultural professionals. The new workplace and its acknowledgement of 'productive diversity' and new valuations of cultural knowledge. Here, reference could be made to the question of the internationalisation of curriculum in the context of cultural globalisation made by Rizvi & Lucas (1999).
5. *Performativity.* These trends combine to set new parameters for academic or educational identity and performance. In what ways should one behave regarding the goals of the organisation? *That* we know the 'mission' of the organisation and participate in its 'strategic directions' signifies the performative academy. This highlights the role of 'policy discourse' as we use it here, to refer to a way of governing our thinking about educational work. Again, these changes are occurring across universities and further education colleges and institutes,

subverting the stratification and relative privilege of ‘higher learning’ and giving reason for greater co-operation and collaboration across sectors of educational work and the private, community and public sectors of employment.

## **THE CHANGING WORKPLACE**

In this section we examine the changes within the contemporary workplace, understood as a set of parallel yet related responses to the various narratives of globalisation. We will argue that work-based learning initiatives are a manifestation of the convergence of complementary outcomes of governing and policy discourses. We will suggest that this convergence has a more intense impact because of the increased ‘need’ to view higher education as an industry, as a commercial enterprise. Today when talking about the workplace and contemporary work practices we, as academics, are no longer talking about ‘other’. Indeed we suggest that the binary of the academy and the workplace/organisation is problematic and difficult to sustain.

The following ‘view’ of the workplace comes through the lens of governmentality. In Foucault’s conception of governmentality ‘the state is viewed as an ensemble of institutions, procedures, tactics, calculations, knowledges and technologies, which together comprise the particular direction that government has take; the residue or outcome of governing.’ (Johnson 1993:140) At the macro-level the objective of governmentality is to increase the capacity of the population by consent. Our interest in this paper is how these are realised at the micro-level and in particular how ‘subjects’ self-regulate – not in a compliant sense but as active subjects, ie. subjects who have a freedom to act. Foucault argues that power is only power when it is addressed to individuals who are free to act one way or another. We take the view that self-regulation is not about compliance. Compliance suggests passivity, coercion and imposition— but our interest is in varied self-regulatory practices that embody multiple subject positions, including resistant ones.

There is little argument around the fact that management and work practices in the contemporary workplace have changed significantly over the last decade. Our observations, and indeed our experiences, reveal a considerable transformation. Not only are managers and employees ‘doing more for less’, but work is managed and organised in quite different ways as conventional authority and responsibilities are dispersed and as managing uncertainty penetrates the work of all. Some familiar characteristics of the ‘new’ workplace are as follows: work is organised around fluid teams rather than static departments; organisational decisions are made in cross-functional meetings as well as within management ranks; all employees are responsible for quality control; flexibility is central to all operations, processes and employee understandings of their work; employees are appraised and evaluated as job descriptions have given way to performance management agreements; and finally (for the purposes of this listing) there is increased communication (both spoken and written inscriptions and calculations) as employees are informed and inform. Furthermore most employees have knowledge of work outside their own domain including the current state of production levels and accounts.

This list of characteristics (as limited as it is) demonstrates the way workplaces have reinvented themselves. This re-invention is, as understood by most, connected to changing economic imperatives and relationships in the competitive local and global market place as well as to the emergence of sophisticated information and communication technologies. Both conventional and radical understandings of policy suggest that these transformations are policy driven — policies embedded in discourses around productivity and competition. However at the same time the economic policies that drive the reorganisation of work are not just a consequence of government nor do they in themselves prescribe particular ways of being — either as an organisation or as an employee. For example there are no direct state policies on the management and organisation of work. At the state level there is no policy that says that work is to be organised around teams within flatter hierarchies. It would be difficult if not inaccurate to see the construction of and participation in team work, flattened hierarchies and learning as a top-down one-way notion of state policy and power relations.

We argue that such formations and participation are not a consequence of government per se, but rather a consequence of governmentality. The re-organisation of work requires self-regulation to work effectively, that is self-regulation of both organisations and their employees. Here we see a manifestation of technologies of power and technologies of the self where power shapes knowledge of the self and where technologies shape human conduct. This, we argue, is how governmentality works at the micro-level, where diverse forces and mechanisms shape the conduct of both organisations and employees. This is in line with Ball's argument which views policy as discourse rather than policy as text.

We will now attempt to characterise the contemporary workplace in terms of a number of inter-related discourses. We suggest that these discourses, as described below, are constructing work practices, employees and their managers in particular ways that are both cause and effect of the conditions for understanding the workplace as a site of knowledge and as a site of learning. These discourses are also part of the construction of the conditions for the new relationships between workplaces and the academy as manifested in work-based learning awards. They are discourses that relate to corporate language, if not corporate policy, that is constructed through employers' reading of and response to the global environment and the new regimes of truth that link productivity and competition with particular work practices.

The *multiplicity* of discourses is important to our argument. Each discourse does not have its own pre-determined trajectory with predictable paths and outcomes. Rather the trajectory of discourses is contingent and always in a state of becoming as they intersect and interact, resulting in new discursive practices and new subject positions. The intersections themselves create conditions for critique and intervention. Such a view suggests that policy cannot be experienced as a monolithic force, but rather where as a site where power is open to counter-moves and counter positions.

The focus on discourse and discursive practices draws attention to the central role of language in 'government' and in governing. Rose (1990) uses the term 'intellectual technology' to capture the significance of language — not language as a neutral or innocent medium that transmits information but language as a technology for producing

social realities, for creating a domain of thought and action. Language, according to Rose, provides ‘a mechanism for rendering reality amenable to certain kinds of action’ (Rose 1990, p.81). This understanding underpins our selection and analysis of particular discursive practices.

1. *Humanisation of the workplace.* The humanising of the workforce is often understood as a consequence of the replacement of manual work by sophisticated technologies. Within this understanding the technologisation of work draws attention to employees as human beings, rather than as operatives or ‘hands’ on industrial machinery. This ‘explanation’ though needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the significance of this focus on humans in terms of the management of people. In agreement with Rose (1990, 1996) and du Gay (1996) we suggest that the humanisation of the workplace is a technology for managing people and constructing particular kinds of worker subjectivities. These technologies of the self are brought about through a focus on the interpersonal and through the language of ‘motivation’, ‘job satisfaction’ and the ‘entrepreneurial self’. As personnel departments give way to human resource departments, humanisation provides a mechanism for structuring the way employees think, make decisions and act in alignment with organisational norms, attitudes and values. The organisation of work through human technologies is an interesting way of understanding the contemporary celebration and use of ‘culture’ and the social nature of work. The emphasis on self and the touching of human desire and self-fulfillment is a way of maximising capacities in the workplace. This happens not through coercion or force but through freedom of choice. The active subject is a productive subject and to be a productive subject one has to be ‘permitted’ to be one an active one and to think of oneself and others in this way.
2. *Valorisation of knowledge.* Contemporary work is named as ‘knowledge work’ and contemporary employees as ‘knowledge workers’. This naming of ‘knowledge’ as classifying work and worker operates at a number of levels. It describes the work of employees working with symbols, such as concepts, theories, models, data and computer-mediated communication. It also complements the focus on ‘performance’ and to signal the importance of locating performances within understandings of the complexity and diversity of organisational products and processes. In these circumstances knowledge functions as an important tool in understanding and improving manufacturing and service operations — indeed knowing about the organisation and its current status in a key mechanism for self-regulation. Further, it captures the way knowledge goods now sit alongside material commodities, while it also describes (as it encourages) the emergence of knowledge industries, particularly those organisations who now compete with the academy. Knowledge production has become a major form of capital projection (Farrell 1999).
3. *The learning organisation.* Integral to the construction of ‘knowledge work’, the focus on ‘flexibility’ and the emphasis on people is a recognition that the capacity of an organisation depends on the learning potential of its workforce. Learning in the context of the rapidly changing nature of work has process and

product dimensions. Employees need to learn about the new ways of working, they need specific and generic skills to participate in the new decision making processes, they need more 'knowledge' to work flexibly and so on. Learning at work can no longer be understood as a discrete activity limited to a few, nor as an activity that occurs only at occasional moments in one's career. Learning is a productive part of everyday work, embedded in structures, relationships and processes of the workplaces. Learning embedded within practice presents an interesting entry point for work-based learning partnerships. The design and indeed content of each set of work-based awards is individualised. It is an individual partnership between the organisation and the academy, and its parameters are negotiated so that they link directly into the strategic directions of a particular organisation. Furthermore the learning programs are individualised and thus able to penetrate into the very heart of the structures and processes of worker-learners' productive work.

4. *Consultancy, expertise and outsourcing.* At the same time as employees develop their generic capacities, specialist knowledge is needed. But the nature of specialist knowledge varies considerably and the most efficient source of this knowledge is considered to be outside the organisation. Thus outsourcing and the use of consultants are mechanisms for bringing in particular kinds of expertise. Expertise has an authority based on the cultural belief that experts have specialised 'truths'. This truth is linked to particular projects and is seen to be 'untainted' and neutral and thus more able to be incorporated into the desires and needs of the organisation. Expertise can be understood as one of the many strands within the ensemble of technologies which are part of the process as well as one of the outcomes of governing (Johnson 1993). After the experts and consultants have completed their project their expertise is woven into the structural arrangements that have come together in the contemporary construction of knowledge. As academic expertise is brought into the workplace, so industry expertise is brought into the academy. here there is an important argument about the changes in contemporary knowledge production that ties together the academy and the corporate workplace in yet another way.

It is to the question of this tying together of the academy and the corporate workplace, as conditions facilitating the rise of work-based learning, that we now turn.

## **CONVERGENCE OF THE ACADEMY AND THE WORKPLACE**

Intensified relationships between the academy and the workplace are becoming an everyday lived experience for many academics. We suggest that this convergence is a consequence of the trends discussed in the earlier sections of this paper. The discourses of globalisation have their impact both in the academy's construction of new discourses of corporatism and commercialisation and the emerging discourses of the contemporary workplace. Yet the pressures we speak of are also catalysing a merging of the discourses of 'education', 'learning' and 'training'. These are coalescing in a common frame of reference for workplaces and the academy. Flexible learning, lifelong learning and the vocationalising of education are all signaling the opening up of boundaries between academic learning, working knowledge and learning through or at work.

Work-based learning initiatives are just one of the manifestations of this convergence and the opening up of new conditions of possibility for the relation of education and work. The appeal of work-based learning is multiple and indeed work-based learning awards are simultaneously seductive for employees, their organisations and the academy.

Learners are asking for more relevant learning and increased choice in delivery modes, while they are seeking more qualifications in order to enhance their employment choices when they have little time to participate in conventional academic learning. Organisations are understanding the importance of supporting learning practices at work in order to enhance their organisational capability and productivity at a time of on-going change and uncertainty, and they are seeking to 'professionalise' their workforce in order to be more competitive and retain their 'best' employees. Universities, financially stressed by economically liberal governments, are searching for new educational markets to generate income, while they are bidden to 'compete' in their traditional 'markets'. Such trends are causing academics to shift the focus of their educational practices from teaching to learning.

However work-based learning initiatives do not take any one shape or form. While work-based learning may be a strategic policy within an institution (such as our university), its practices are varied and resistance is profound, and it would be a mistake to suggest that academics are wholeheartedly embracing a project of professional reconstruction. Though the processes of 'educational reform' have targeted the definition and regulation of academic work and helped to bring about the 'performative university' (Usher and Solomon 1998), academic work remains highly self-regulating, and in different ways. Thus resistance takes multiple forms. Here it may be useful to name just a few of the management, pedagogic and identity issues through which academics articulate their resistance.

1. *Pedagogical issues.* To the extent that work-based learning programs are instrumentally-driven, questions arise about the place of theory and critical reflection in an program, and questions about the maintenance of academic standards and the 'future' of the university. As we argue elsewhere, the curriculum becomes a key site of struggle for power, for ownership and control of the curriculum (McIntyre and Solomon, 1998). Even for enthusiasts, there are daunting conceptual and practical complexities in 'converting' work into learning.
2. *Academic work practices.* Similarly, academics engaging in work-based learning are faced by a transformations of their identity as they engage in not just a corporatising academy but also with the 'real' corporate world. Here the limits of competence is stretched, for not only must academics manage the design, delivery and assessment of individual program, but these normally exacting processes are complicated by the multiple kinds of negotiation required with the organisation, its employees and their workplace supervisors. The 'corporate' press of decision-making itself reduces the time to discuss the emerging curriculum issues and there is a lack of professional development resources that are needed to build up expertise in these areas. There is a lack of educational resources to support the

pedagogical shift to work-based learning, since this is similar yet so different from other workplace oriented practices, such as sandwich courses, cooperative education arrangements, work placements and even workplace learning subjects or assignments.

3. *Managerial issues.* Furthermore senior managers are questioning the appropriateness of work-based learning awards. Their reservations may be financial, insofar as work-based learning awards have not, contrary to expectation, proven any cheaper (read more profitable) than conventional awards. This is partly due to the key problematic of 'converting work into learning' already referred to, where assessing individual learning outcomes requires substantial one-to-one supervision which makes it potentially more expensive. Risk management drains resources and the cost of setting up additional infrastructure to operationalise the awards is forbidding.

These practices of resistance deserve more analysis than is possible in this paper, and we are particularly aware of the tendency to emphasise the determining nature of the new discourses of academy and workplace. Yet alongside these articulations of resistance, work-based learning partnerships are developing. So academics are resisting yet at the same time assisting the new initiatives. Symptomatic of these co-existing practices is the emergence of work-based learning partnerships within the one university that are very different in shape and design. While the policy says one thing the practices reveal complex and diverse outcomes. Indeed work-based learning exemplifies the way 'policy cannot be experienced as a monolithic force, but rather where as a site where power is open to counter-moves and counter positions.'

*Authors' note:*

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