APPRENTICESHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
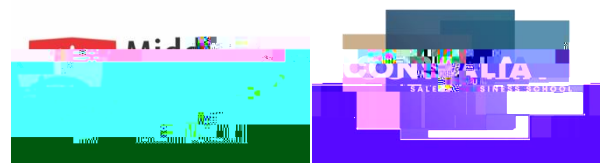
A Starter Guide to the Literature

Middlesex University Collaborative Project

Created by

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Mobilising provider insights for degree apprenticeship delivery: comparing theoretical models to deliver effective integration for on - and off -the-job learning/training.

Introduction

This 'Starter Guide to the Literature' is part of a collaborative project for the Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD) programme funded by the Department for Education (DfE) in partnership with the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), Association of Colleges (AoC), Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), the Strategic Development Network (SDN) and the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC). The project 'Mobilising provider insights for degree apprenticeships: comparing theoretical models to deliver effective integration for on- and off-the-job learning/training' aims to illustrate good practice by considering how practical and theoretical models can inform effective and sustainable degree apprenticeship delivery. The review of selected literature sets out to frame some of the emerging themes around 'integrated learning/training' to respond to the question: How do degree apprenticeships use theoretical models to deliver effective integration of on- and-off-the-job Er392 re W* 4.32 841.9e1- Qetmerem730iMC * n/P <</MCID 4 >>BDC *iMC */P <</MCID 5 >>BDC

The starter guide deliberately engages with the central notion that professional development within occupational job roles is a part of apprenticeship delivery, and introduces the review using five main areas of interest:

1. Policy and training provider context for on- and off-the-job learning/training for degree apprenticeships to determine how integrated learning/training might be achieved
2. Models/frameworks (discursive and visual) to identify which types of learning/training might be used to inform training providers
3. Limitations to establish potential issues with integrating the on- and off-the-job learning/training for degree apprenticeships
4. Current thinking to establish relevant themes and unresolved issues within the literature since the introduction of standards-based degree apprenticeships
5. Success factors to identify and understand what training providers are doing in line with policy and good practice that make degree apprenticeship delivery effective.

Policy and provider context for on-the-job and off-the-job learning/training for degree apprenticeships

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) has provided policy guidance for work-related learning/training within the UK for some time, however the policies and practice for standards-based degree apprenticeships are distinctive as they are based on occupational KSBs with specific job-related outcomes. They have grown in popularity. "Degree Apprenticeships were launched in 2015 with approximately 1,000 students across a very small number of universities. 82,000 students started a higher-level apprenticeship in the UK in 2020-21" (QAA, 2023).

For apprentices   employers, the value of stagdards-based degree apprenticeships is derived from the integration of knowledge rgd competencies within rn occupational role

approaches integrate theory with a broad spectrum of activities (Lester and Crawford-Lee, 2023).

As a starting point, Nottingham's (2016, p. 794) pedagogic perspectives model (Figure 1) conceptualises work-based practice across a range of work-based providers encompassing learning/training that is based in an occupational role (employer-centred) as well as developing skills and competencies that are seen as discipline-centred (accommodating academic categories), and learner-centred (individuals) that stress the autonomy needed for self-managed independent higher-level

Figure 4: Stylised representation of the concept map (Evans and Cloutier, 2023, p. 290, Figure 3).

Further pattern matches undertaken reveal that both consensus and tensions exist between what is considered important as value propositions by the apprentice, employer, and HE provider stakeholders, and define what is considered unique within the eight identified clusters (Evans and Cloutier, 2023). The authors suggest that the clusters act to show more clearly what is missing from previous apprenticeship delivery and propose that HE providers are key drivers to improving the work-based curriculum (Evans and Cloutier, 2023).

Limitations for delivery

There were several key delivery points for degree apprenticeships that the literature indicates might assist or limit effective delivery and performance outcomes:

Importance for the educational process

 (lement of the integrated practice that providers need to support. However, Evans and Cloutier (2023) suggest that learning goals are sometimes viewed as being of secondary importance to work. Fjellström and Kristmansson (2019) identified that there could be a limited importance of engagement with the educational process within apprenticeships more generally. For apprentices having to negotiate study alongside work commitments, time is a critical factor and daily work pressures may affect an apprentice's ability to think critically about their work (Garnett, 2020).

Lillis and Bravenboer advise that to "integrate work and learning... programmes must be designed to recognise that most of an apprentice's learning will be

to accommodate the experiential learning needs careful planning in order to support work-based learning and supplement the knowledge and skills that will underpin the professional qualification".

Self-confidence

From the apprentice's perspective, ineffective integration of on- and off-the-job learning/training may stem from a straightforward lack of confidence. Fjellström and Kristmansson's (2019) general study about apprenticeships compares the experience of a 'confident' apprentice to that of the 'shy' apprentice and report that "a lack of social competence can impact reaching individual, workplace, and educational goals" (2019, p. 575). Self-confidence and the ability to learn in social groups or teams is therefore an important element of learning/training.

As new knowledge is assimilated and applied back in the workplace, the apprentice's improved ability to communicate and articulate their role supports the development of confidence, which in turn broadens their understanding of how they fit into the organisation.... (Evans and Cloutier, 2023, p. 293).

Autonomy

The independ

Employer size and/or context are considerations as training provider input may have an impact on the ways the businesses plan to support delivery as training providers accommodate new policies for degree apprenticeships. The point is made in business-related apprenticeships that the work training providers undertake "across apprenticeships employer culture is multitudinous and wide-ranging" (Sutton, 2023, p. 95). Konstantinou and Miller (2020) found a significant difference in the experiences of public and private sector employees i.e., the link between the 'day job' and university/provider coursework being more of an 'abstract concept' in the public sector than in private sector organisations, where apprentices had more of an opportunity to be guided by their managers in how their projects aligned with the 'wider activity of the company'. The point is made that on-the-job learning is "not just the 'job' of the workplace" (Konstantinou and Miller, 2020, p. 777).

However, employers can argue that the inadequacies in support mechanisms derive from the limited guidance they themselves receiv

23) points out that for a work-based programme "a mentor may be appointed from the student's place of work, or sector. This could be a colleague, supervisor or line manager and does not need to be someone working directly with the student ...Mentors can become inspirational role models."

QAA (2022) guidance encourages support from a competent mentor or coach. Nonetheless, the onus is on the training provider in ensuring mentors are equipped in providing apprentices with effective on-the-job learning/training support (Quew-Jones and Rowe, 2022). This might involve verifying that mentors understand the content of degree apprenticeship modules and KSBs and how they fit with daily work. Mentors can be critical friends demonstrating how expertise, experience and knowledge can be combined for learning. Garnett also points out that for work-based degree apprenticeships "the tutor often acts as a facilitator and critical friend, rather than a subject expert" (2020, p. 717). In many instances in the starter guide literature, effective mentoring is said to draw on the combined efforts of the employer and the training provider.

Promoting inclusive communities of practice

Nottingham and Mao (2023) found that learning communities of practice (Wenger, 1998;

improvement. Crawford-Lee and Wall (2018, p. 239) point out that while two main drivers of apprenticeships are "raising productivity and enhancing social mobility", sustainability is also needed to provide a consistent platform for developing this form of education and training.

With degree apprenticeships, the focus is on developing no more and no less than the KSBs and relating these to the EPA and demonstration of full occupational competence. However, work-based learning is "frequently unplanned, informal, retrospective and serendipitous" (Lester and Costley, 2010, p. 562) and illustrative of knowledge production occurring in "all sorts of venues and in all sorts of ways" (Helyer, 2015, p. 20). Furthermore, learning/training is most effective when the learner takes an active part in the experience (James Relly and Laczik, 2022). Degree apprenticeships embrace diversity of experience, working with planned and unplanned events in the workplace, with the expectation that apprentices put these experiences together as a part of establishing their own of understanding of what defines professional practice in the occupational role and in their specific workplace.

Developing new integrated models for best practice

Whilst each act as stand-alone artifacts for the project, the starter guide to the literature and the provider resource are complementary; with the review seeking to ask questions about successful integration of on- and off-the-job learning/training, and the interactive provider resource seeks to address those questions by offering best practice based on provider insights and learning.

The starter guide to the literature raises the issue of collaboration between employers and training providers to provide learning support to apprentices. Degree apprenticeships can address this by offering provision such as integrated onboarding, tripartite progress review meetings, employer forums and the collective development of a broad learning culture between employers and training providers. The provider resource offers practical advice about current practice by talking about the notion of ownership for learning in the apprentice's mindset and how training providers and employers could jointly support that notion. In addition, this resource provides practical examples in coaching and mentoring, reflective portfolio of evidence, and integrated learning/training support which starts from theory to practice and ends from practice back to theory.

The complementary nature of the exploration of the literature and senior practitioner insights are displayed in Table 1, which demonstrates how new integrated approaches to learning in and from work might be developed using the literature from this review:

Table 1: Developing new integrated approaches for best practice (Sutton/Project Team in response to Evans and Cloutier, 2023)

Conclusion

The purpose of the starter guide to the literature is to add to the current resources to deliver degree apprenticeships that focus on integration of 'on- and off-the-job learning/training'. It reviews key aspects for the successful delivery of degree apprenticeship programmes, briefly looking at policy and training provider context, models/frameworks within the literature, limitations and barriers, and current thinking are explored. The goal has been to establish any relevant themes and unresolved issues and identify success factors to understand what training providers are doing in line with policy and good practice to make degree apprenticeships even more effective as a route to the professions. Whilst much has been written on degree apprenticeships, a legacy (Nottingham, 2019) also exists in the literature of good practice in work-based and work-integrated learning that may be highly relevant for new providers in specialist occupational areas.

The starter guide set out to define terms for 'on- and off-the-job learning/training' and has

As new training providers of degree apprenticeships delivery enter this area of practice, research and practitioner insights will continue to add to this distinctive degree apprenticeship pedagogy. The starter guide to the literature has summarised policy and practice about on- and off-the-job learning/training for a wider audience to engage in an integrated, productive, and sustainable approach to degree apprenticeships.

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) (2022)

Quew-Jones, R. J. and Rowe, L. (2022) 'Enhancing the degree apprenticeship curriculum through work-based manager and mentor intervention', *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 14(2), pp. 242–256. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/JWAM