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Working Self Concepts: The impact of Work Based Learning on self-identity amongst senior HRM/HRD practitioners.

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Abstract

This paper explores the experiences of senior HRM/D managers and strategic line managers who have engaged with a Work Based Learning (WBL) programme, and builds on earlier work by Nichol and Williams (2012) who explored the professional identity of HR/HRD practitioners. The paper seeks to understand the personal impact of this combination of work place yet externally derived learning process on self-identity since this will have lessons for the learners, for the organisation, and for providers of such programmes. The basis of this qualitative, interpretive, paper is a series of one-to-one semi-structured interviews with senior practitioners from across the public, private and not-for-profit spectrum. Analysis and interpretation are guided equally by themes arising from the data and by *a priori* knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks. The concepts of self-identity operate at multiple levels, which Lord and Brown (2004) refer to as the Individual, Interpersonal and Collective levels of our 'Working Self Concept (WSC)'. Their model demonstrated how successful leadership processes occur indirectly through follower self-identities, and this current research adapts that model to argue that the WBL process similarly needs to align with participants' self-identity in order to ensure success. There is evidence of positive impacts on self-views at all levels with affective and behavioural changes that enhanced performance as a result of engagement in WBL. Increased confidence in their own value to their respective organisations, and improved belief in the legitimacy of their accumulated knowledge skills and experience enabled them to further contribute to organisational goals.

Introduction

This paper seeks to understand the personal impact of work based learning. It focuses on the experience of senior human resource managers/developers and strategic line managers who have engaged with a work based learning (WBL) programme. The paper builds on the earlier work of Nichol and Williams (2012) who explored the professional identity of HR/HRD practitioners, While the acquisition of professionally accredited qualifications by those already established in their careers may create opportunities for further career enhancements this paper seeks to understand the personal impact of this combination of work place yet externally derived learning process on self-identity including self-esteem and self-efficacy. This personal impact will have lessons for the learners but more particularly for the organisation and the providers of such mixed programmes.

The concepts of self-identity operate at multiple levels, which Lord and Brown (2004) refer to as the Individual, Interpersonal and Collective levels of our 'Working Self Concept (WSC)', a model they developed to demonstrate how leadership, as a process, operated indirectly through follower self-identities. The current paper seeks to adapt that model by arguing that WBL, as a process, similarly needs to align with participants' self-identity in order to ensure success and WBL as a process, like the Leadership-as-process model offered by Lord and Brown (2004), is more effective. Indeed it may *only* be effective, from both learner and organisational perspectives, in circumstances where the organisational goal is closely aligned with a relevant personal goal of the participant.

There are many lenses through which one might study the experience of undertaking work based learning, the concepts of self-identity serve here to illuminate our understanding of how the experience has shaped the participants' career within their organisations. This paper highlights four accounts that exemplify the differing effects of WBL on issues of self-identity.

Background & Context

Self-Identity

Each of us experiences a sense of 'self', an awareness of our past, present and future which affects who we are. However, not only are we aware of our own distinctive personal world but also of our relationships to others, and a sense of belonging to different communities and groups, all of which "*reflect, construct and sustain our identity*" (Stainton Rogers, 2011, p.280). The concepts of self-identity, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003; Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005) therefore operate at multiple levels with our 'personal identity' being defined in terms of idiosyncratic traits and close personal relationships, and a 'social identity', which defines self in terms of group memberships (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). Tajfel (1972, p.292 cited by Hogg & van Knippenberg, 2003) conceptualised the Collective level of social identity as *"the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership"*. These multiple 'social selves', while differing according to time and context, form part of a coherent

self-concept moulded since birth by social processes and social influences. These define who we perceive ourselves to be at any given moment and play an integral role in how we make sense of the world around us, including not only how we make sense of our own actions, but how we make sense of the actions of others (Kunda, 1999).

Lord and Brown (2004) in their study of leader-follower dynamics described the levels of our 'Working Self Concept (WSC)' in terms of our Self-Views (the perceived actual-self), who we aspire to be (Possible Selves), and how we intend to get from where we are now to where we want to be (Current Goals). Their WSC Model (see Fig 1, below) demonstrated how successful leadership processes occur indirectly through follower self-identities, exerting powerful and enduring effects on follower's work behaviour by influencing the way that followers view themselves, and leader-goals. This effectively targets and develops elements of the currently active Self-View in ways that enable progress towards a desired Possible Self by aligning the organisational goals with personal Current Goals.

Figure 1: Working Self Concept Model (Lord & Brown, 2004)
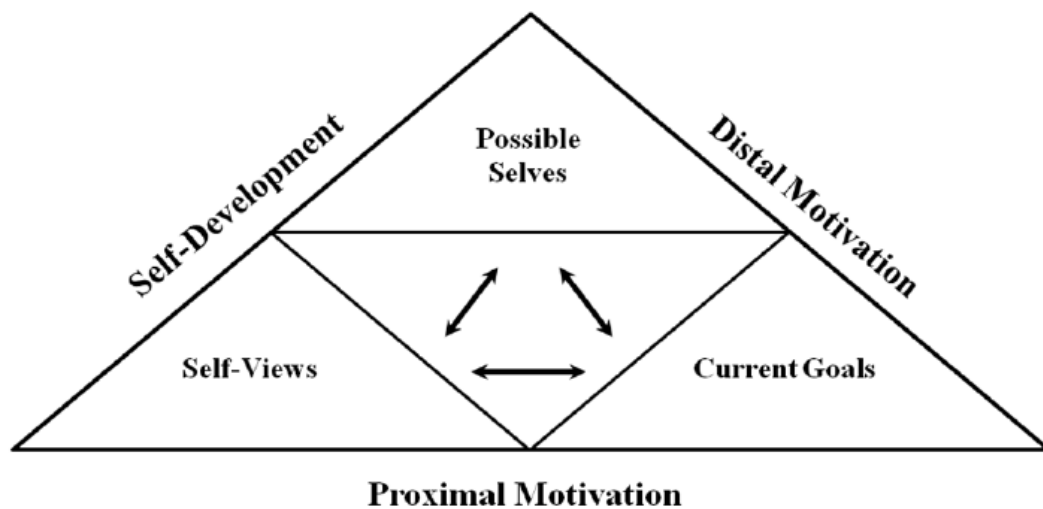
In outline, the Self-Development dimension relates to our awareness of progress towards possible future selves. Proximal Motivations are those that directly link current self views with current goals, and progress or discrepancies in progress often result in affective responses, i.e. positive or negative emotional responses are linked to our perceived performance. Distal motivations are those that link current goals to desired Possible Selves and perceptions of progress towards it tend to be assessed less affectively., i.e. because the Possible Self is based at some point in the future, progress is measured in a more abstract intellectual manner (Lord & Brown, 2004, p.20). Congruence between follower goals and leader goals (at each level of identity), or the ability of followers to develop towards desired selves (or avoid an undesired self) lead to improved self-views culminating in improved levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and a strengthened social identity based on their organisational 'belonging'. In this paper we argue that a similar level of congruence occurs, with similar results, when employees are enabled in developing towards their desired possible selves, through WBL, in ways that align learner goals with facilitator or organisational goals.

In relation to the link between Working Self Concept, motivational control systems, and employee behaviour, Lord and Brown (2004, p.34) demonstrated (see Fig 2, below) that a comparison of "*sensed feedback from relevant environments to standards from higher level systems*" provides the standard for the lower level system and determines perceptions, affect, or behavioural reactions (although note that, for simplicity sake, only behavioural feedback is shown). This negative feedback loop senses discrepancies and responds accordingly with higher level systems specify the goals for lower level self-regulatory loops, the feedback from which flow back to the higher level.

Figure 2: A hierarchical self-regulatory model linking WSC to task performance
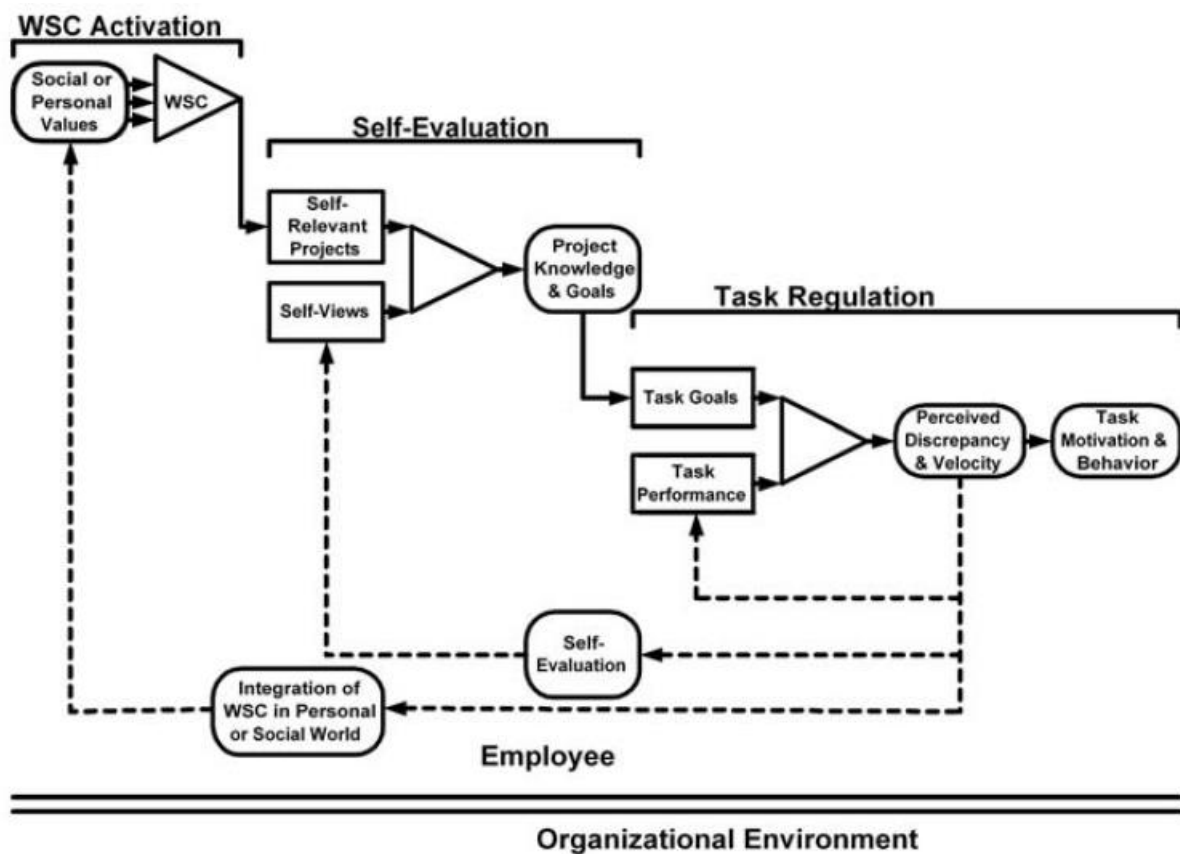
Motivation and self-assessments are therefore "*grounded in a complex, dynamic feedback system*" involving at least three levels that aligns WSC with the accomplishment of tasks and achievement of goals, fully integrated across projects and over a lifetime. This paper speculates on opportunities for WBL providers, and HRD practitioners to engage with learners in ways that positively reinforce this self-regulatory process.

However, there is a *caveat*. Where communicated organisational goals are not self-relevant, i.e. they are not perceived, by the follower, as developing them towards a desired self (or helping to avoid an undesired self) – now or in the future - then engagement is compromised. Indeed it is suggested (Kunda, 1999; Stainton Rogers, 2011; Lord & Brown, 2004), based on a range of personality factors that

affect motivation, that success or failure in a non-self-relevant task; rather than leading to elation or dejection, will be met with varying levels of indifference.

Work Based Learning (WBL)

Raelin (2008) identifies WBL as organizationally based and leading to organizational learning. He characterises WBL "*as those developmental activities and educational efforts within the organization to help establish a culture of organizational learning*" (p.7). In this definition the individual learning is clearly linked with learning on the macro or organisational level. However in this research this perception of impact on organisational learning is questionable. Therefore alternative views of WBL are sought. Svensson, Ellstromand and Aberg (2004) indicate clearly through their model for workplace learning that "*informal learning … is important but not sufficient … it needs to be supported by formal education*". Their rationale is that the intellectualisation of work associated with modern work systems increases the demand for theoretical knowledge and intellectual skills. Lester and Costley (2010, p.562) provide a simpler broader view that WBL "*refers to all and any learning that is situated in the workplace or arises directly out of workplace concerns*" but note that it can lead individuals adopting a "*problem-solving type of learning which lacks criticality of the concepts, the organisation's way of working and of their professional body*". However, where this type of learning meets an external body, a Higher Education Institution in the case of the current paper, they (ibid, p.563) refer to WBL as 'negotiated work based learning' emphasising reflection, processes of inquiry and "*developing people as reflective, self–managing practitioners*" and suggest that practices for learner support are different from the standard taught programmes. In the case of such negotiated WBL they identify that the tutor role can involve:

- Helping learners to become active in identifying their needs, aspirations and abilities to manage the learning process
- Helping learners make effective use of workplace resources
- Inspiring and encouraging.
- Acting as process consultants
- Providing specialist expertise

Methodology

As hearing and presenting the 'voices' and narrative work based learners are essential to the project, the original approaches used during data collection were informed by the traditions of qualitative interviewing and narrative research (Nichol & Williams, 2013). More recently this has been allied to a more abductive/retroductive line of reasoning whereby the analysis and interpretation are guided equally by themes arising from the data and by *a priori* knowledge of existing theoretical frameworks (Blaikie, 1993; Crotty, 1998) that has enabled *understanding* of participant's experiences from additional perspectives.

The four participants discussed in the paper were all successful candidates undertaking a professional qualification at the same university. Those interviewed were all working in HRD/M related roles when they completed and they either

continue to work in HR/D related work or where they have been made redundant are actively seeking HR/D related employment. The interviews were open-ended although guided by themes for exploration that were furnished to the participants prior to the interview, namely;

- their experiences of undertaking WBL,
- their perceptions of the characteristics of an HRD/M professional,
- and their own HRD/M identity.

Therefore, the pre-issued themes were only a starting point for the discussion and participants were free to engage, develop or disregard each of them in the interview as appropriate for them. The initial research drew on the traditions of narrative inquiry to inform its approach to interviews and the presentation of findings in order to access understanding of how the individuals perceived and experienced the process (Nichol & Williams, 2013, p.5). In that study Nichol and Williams adopted an individual focused approach to the presentation of the findings (ibid., citing Priddey & Williams 1996) an approach which the current study replicates as a starting point since those narratives allow us to access claims made about how the participants "understood situations, others and themselves" (ibid., citing Polkinghorne, 2007, p.6) an outcome that is also entirely in keeping with the aims of this current study.

The Interviews

The four participants have been selected for discussion here as they represent examples of senior practitioners who exhibited a range of differing motivations for engaging in negotiated WBL, based on different intrinsic personality factors, and different active self-views. A narrative form of the interviews is presented in order to illustrate the impact of successful completion on self-esteem and self-efficacy.

John

John is HR Manager for a large care company in the north of England, which is currently gaining a number of further acquisitions in the Midlands. He gained his HR experience in the Ministry of Defence where, starting as a pay clerk, he worked his way up to HR Manager.

He undertook WBL during the latter part of his military career and it was his first academic experience since doing his City and Guilds some 30 years earlier (as an apprentice tool maker in the automotive industry). Indeed he stated that "I always felt like a little bit of a fraud, sort of I am in this job but I shouldn't be really because I am not qualified ". His former boss had brought the qualification to his attention and encouraged him to get it and several close work colleagues also enrolled at the same time including one who John identifies as a mentor. John's plans at that time, nearing the end of his army career were to return to England and work based learning represented an opportunity for him to demonstrate his knowledge and skills and to gain external accreditation, something which would otherwise have been impossible "I was frustrated all the way along, I always wanted to do it, it was the time I couldn't do it and the cost as well ... because I didn't have enough leave and I knew without a qualification I couldn't get back to England, I just could not get a foot

in the door". Of the WBL process itself John summed up his experiences by reporting "first of all it made me think about what we were doing and I used to think ... that's just what you have learnt over the years, you learn how to deal with people and things, I never ever knew we were doing it correct". The WBL route therefore offered John a unique opportunity that has changed both his perception of himself, and the perception of him by others. "I needed that stamp to say actually I am not a fraud and I am quite good at what I do ... my personal credibility it really changed ... to be highly regarded amongst your peers ... You're not just some 'chancer' who [*sic*] fell into this job, that's how I used to feel ... People look at you differently, they really do".

His current HR role, in the private sector, is altogether more challenging, and the cultural differences have been a shock. While he has considerable autonomy, he has been appalled at the perceptions of HR amongst both employees and managers within the organisation "We have got people here so de-motivated you just would not believe it." For many employees HR are seen as "the hate police" that handed out written warnings for minor issues and with regard to management perceptions he states "What I see I'm there for and what my boss sees I am there for are probably two different things, he thinks I am there to cut pay at any given opportunity". He is desperate to change the culture within the company and persuade managers that "HR isn't there to be your stick to hit the employees with". John's view is that the managers need to be taught how to manage, "line management is the most dangerous position in the company for them abusing power ... I spend more time with rogue line managers than I do with rogue employees ... every bleeding personnel file I pick up people have got written warnings for DROSS and I said no the whole corporate identity of this business stinks it's wrong and I intend to change it". He recently felt compelled to challenge the Chairman, "I told him my best asset is my integrity and in 25 years with the army no-one has forced me to compromise it and I won't do it". He is aware that his stance might make him unpopular with the management but his professional and personal integrity are vitally important to his sense of being a credible leader.

Maggie

Maggie is Head of HR, a Director level appointment, of an internationally known retail group working alongside the Managing Director, Finance Director and Chief Operating Officer with an equal role in decision-making. Although required to be commercially aware, and heavily involved in business issues, it is recognised that one of the things she contributes to that team, and nobody else has those skills, was "the people and feelings ... I think I am probably more intuitive than they are ... I don't know whether that is an individual thing rather than an HR thing though". She believes strongly in "taking responsibility for the people within the organisation" and works closely on corporate strategies related to vision, values and culture. She notes that "no decisions are made for anything to do with people without me being involved".

Her career in HR spans 35 years, beginning circa-1978. She had been working as a supervisor at one of the company stores, a job she obtained via a recommendation and never actually formally applied for, when her people skills, practical knowledge understanding and experience were recognised and she was moved to the training

department. She subsequently applied to, and was accepted for, the management training scheme, despite not having a degree, and later became training manager, personnel manager, HR manager, and eventually Head of HR. Thinking back on her early career with the organisation she notes that "they wanted blood in those days and they got it ... your career path was very clear and, if you were ambitious, you put your personal life on hold ... I haven't got a work life balance and never really thought about it, it is just what you do".

She counts herself lucky that she has had a variety of informal mentors throughout her career, more senior managers who acted as role models, and encouraged her. Her primary motivation for undertaking the qualification was that following a career break, returning to the same company, she was concerned that she might have lost some of her skills and was aware that had it been any other company they would have asked ", where is your HR qualification?" She began to research ways of achieving qualification but could not afford time off to go back to university and "felt that I didn't want to go back to the beginning ... surrounded by 24 year olds ... I'd be telling them what to do and that is not really what it is about". Work based learning enabled her to manage that conflict whilst utilising all her knowledge and experience.

Her reflections of the   reminded her that "a written policy is a written policy but there are also reason behind why it has been written that way and reason about how we would interpret that in the business". Given that she was already a senior HR practitioner she felt that the external recognition was more important to her, "I don't think I am particularly learning anything new from a career perspective or from an HR perspective ... so it is not adding anything ... but it is making me think about what I am doing, and why I am doing it".

Even though her employer was sponsoring her she had not told anyone in the HR team that she was enrolled. She states "I have not said anything about this to my team about what I'm doing because I feel embarrassed about not having the qualification to be honest, one or two of them know I haven't but I don't broadcast it". Post-qualification she feels as though the qualification has not made a great deal of difference to her daily work practises, or status, although admits that "I have learnt things ... and maybe better ways of operating". Although other people's perceptions of her was a primary motivation she notes that perceptions of her do not appear to have changed since she qualified, "but then that could be years of experience" – after all most people didn't know that she wasn't qualified already.

Celia

Celia is a HR director in a well-known financial services company, with 6-7 years at the senior end and about 15 years experience in total, who got into HR by accident, literally exiting university and walking into an employment agency and taking the first job offered. From there she moved from agency to agency and eventually into the HR department of a major company thanks to a friend of her who already worked for that company. In the following years she escaped redundancy many times, always finding a suitable alternative role, despite others telling her she had neither the qualifications nor the experience to survive. By moving into a HR advisor role, even as maternity cover for the HR manager, she was eventually put in charge of the latest round of redundancies, as UK Head of Change.

Her view on what she does in HR is clear "we enable the business to achieve its objectives by ensuring that people are treated appropriately and that there is a frame work in place that allows people to perform to the highest level but equally makes them feel motivated and wanting to be part of the business, proud to be part of the business. As a HR person that's what we do". Celia's values and integrity are an important part of her personal identity and this has often brought her into direct conflict with the financial imperatives espoused by others within the management team. However, she is proud in being able to balance commercial awareness with values, both personal and professional "in HR you are always having to, not justify your existence but you are always having to justify the impact because ultimately you are an overhead ... and our business is measured on revenue and profit".

Celia was effectively coerced into undertaking a qualification, it was a condition attached to an offer of promotion. Indeed it was pointed out to her that she wasn't actually qualified to do the job she already had, never mind the role being offered. The promotion was hers; based on known experience and skills, but only if she agreed to undertake the qualification. The company had previously tried to get Celia to undertake the qualification, but she had refused – she was good at her job, with good feedback, good appraisals and excellent results – but she was a single mother that "didn't want to commit the time and effort ... another night away from my daughter" for a company that "wouldn't have supported the time off work because of how busy we were" and above all things Celia had zero interest in returning to the class room. WBL therefore gave her control of the process, which suited her work/life balance and recognised the commitments she had outside of work. The process enabled her to demonstrate her competencies, and although she felt that the business gained value, which helped motivate her, she nonetheless found "having to do it" quite difficult.

It was not her idea, and she initially undertook it on sufferance, but she does recognise that she felt a stigma before and that changes in people's perception of her post-qualification have removed and that has increased her confidence. WBL cemented "you do know what you do know ... I think it's a combination of me having more confidence in my ability and actually putting things on the table that they are listening to and then I see them implemented and I feel quite motivated". However, Celia still does not hold a lot of value in academic qualifications, and notes that some of the best members of her team are not traditionally qualified and yet still exhibit exceptional performances and behaviours. So she remains happy to recruit (and promote) on the grounds of attitude, ability, and skills... experience (and voluntarily undertaken qualifications) can come later.

Susan

A Specialist HR Advisor in the public sector for whom HR was actually an unexpected "Plan B" after failing RAF initial officer training after she graduated from university. Ten years later, with a HR career that mostly spanned recruitment, training, and policy work – surviving multiple waves of redundancies along the way by constantly shifting roles (or not surviving and being forced to seek work elsewhere with a new company) she eventually gained a secondment to her current employer even though it was at a lower level than in many of her previous jobs. She is a survivor, in relation to one early redundancy episode she relates "it was just, I did it

for a year, I survived redundancy and it got me over a hurdle and gave me breathing space". Later, after another narrowly missed redundancy episode she tells us "we survived it ... the team were made redundant, they got rid of a team of 6 or 8 and made 2 new roles and I went into 1 or those 2 which was more of a regional assessment consultant role, so they broadened it." However, the escape was short-lived as "... but then they lost several big contracts and they made those 2 [redundant], I went then ... second time around".

It was her choice to undertake WBL, and she pursued it pro-actively. In her own words "I am taking this seriously, I am not a glorified administrator!" during a previous redundancy round an external consultant had been a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development and his knowledge had impressed her. She had come up against barriers; being young and inexperienced even though she was learning quickly and had been promoted, competing against more established careers. She had looked at what she didn't have compared to what others had "and I had nothing, in that generalist area to back me up ... and I felt massively exposed then ... my action point from that was as soon as you can you have got to do something about that otherwise that could happen again". She needed a differentiator, to offset her perceived lack of experience, on the outside she appeared confident "but underneath I was thinking, I don't have these letters or the recognition, I don't have the certificates on the wall".

However, in some respects she finds her new status to be quite negative, "some people feel threatened ... maybe they have had the opportunity to do it and they haven't done or maybe they haven't had the opportunity ... I asked this organisation to support and they said no [*sic*] I said thanks but I will do it anyway and I don't think they liked it very much".   She often experiences conflict and hostility from those within the organisation who she feels have been promoted on the basis of tenure, "maybe they do feel threatened or concerned that I know more up to date stuff than them but I am still me I am still the same .... I have to be really careful now ... it depends who it is and it depends on their security as well, whether or not they feel like they are sitting ducks".

Even though it hasn't revolutionised her life yet she expects that it will, "there are two sorts of people, those who need to achieve, and those who need to avoid failure – and I am definitely a need to achieve".

Discussion

Using a framework informed by that advanced by Lord and Brown (2004) one can see how throughout the exemplars there are instances where motivations, both proximal and distal, for undertaking the learning process are targeted at the Individual, Interpersonal and Collective WSCs of the participants. For example, in the case of John, although intrinsically motivated and aware of the impact of the qualification on his personal identity (Individual WSC), he was spurred into action in response to stimuli provided by a significant others (Interpersonal WSC) namely his boss and his mentor, who also undertook the same route at the same time. It was his perception of how he was perceived by those specific others that was the motivator to undertake this particular course at this particular time. In addition, his Collective

WSC (akin to social identity) specified the norms that were expected of the community of practice to which he aspired to belong. His lack of qualification was a barrier to acceptance by the wider HR community, and potentially a barrier to future employment opportunities. Therefore the objective was self-relevant at all three levels with outcomes that clearly, in his eyes, moved him closer to an ideal possible self. The Working Self Concept at each level directly affects his evaluation of the task, and of himself in relation to that task, an affects his performance in the achievement of that objective.

This same pattern of motivation can be observed in relation to Maggie who was pro-active in pursuit of a goal that clearly met her personal and social identity needs at all levels. With Celia however we see a difference, the motivation is extrinsic in the first instance, as the goal has no self-relevance at the Individual level. However, she moves from a disengaged reactive state to a more pro-active state as the Interpersonal and Collective levels of her WSC become active. She still sees no personal gain, but is aware that significant others, and the HR community at large, will view her in a more positive light, and this does engage her at an Individual level. At first glance Susan appears to follow the earlier examples of John and Maggie, on the surface she is intrinsically motivated, proactive and undertakes the process in order to fulfil needs at all three WSC levels. However, a secondary consideration highlights that one of the main motivators is the fear of being vulnerable to future redundancies. Whilst qualification can and will activate pro-active thoughts, feelings and behaviours it may actually be a form of avoidance rather than promotion. Qualification means she can avoid movement towards a feared self i.e. one that lives in constant fear of redundancy because she feels that she doesn't measure up compared to her colleagues.

Following the Lord and Brown (2004) model further, one can see close convergence of the self-regulatory mechanisms of the WSC (see Fig. 2) in relation to *learning* objectives as were originally demonstrated in relation to leader attempts at bringing personal goals into alignment with organisational ones. Personal values and identity are used to establish the self-relevance of a given project or goal in light of the active self-view, for example John's Interpersonal and Collective self-views are paramount in the decision to undertake WBL. The goodwill of his mentor is vital to him, and he places great value on his membership of the HR profession and is strongly desirous of that wider community holding a good opinion of him and his skills. This self-evaluation then forms a basis for the regulation of the task in it determines the level of performance at that task. In the examples shown we can see that while the learners can see a benefit to the organisation from their undertaking the qualification that is not their primary motivator. For Maggie the qualification comes at the pinnacle of a long career, with almost nobody in the organisation even being aware that she did not already possess it, and for Susan there was no organisational support at all, despite them deriving an obvious benefit. For them the motivation was more Individual, although the good opinion of significant others was also a factor, the desire to achieve the goal was therefore based more on their Individual and interpersonal self-views. The outcome in all cases was positive, but the motivations were different, and the levels of identity at which those motivations occurred were different. It appears that a congruence of personal/social identity, and opportunities offered by an objective, moved the participant towards a desired future self and that this wholly dictated the levels of ownership and engagement in the process.

Participants reported a range of positive impacts on self esteem and self-efficacy resulting from their engagement in work based learning with positive self-image often being reinforced by feedback from colleagues and senior managers providing enhanced career prospects and action within the workplace. Work based learning provided the opportunity to re-evaluate self-image, allowing previously reticent managers to challenge work place practice. Having increased confidence in their own value to their respective organisations, and with improved belief in the legitimacy of their accumulated knowledge skills and experience they were able to improve their performance and further contribute to organisational goals.

On the other hand our findings highlight that, at this senior level, with programmes that combine both internal and externally driven learning, the desires of the organisation (as suggested by Raelin, 2008) are not always fully met, as in the case of John who undertook the learning with a view to leaving his employer, who subsequently lost the benefit of his knowledge, skills and experience.

Implications

Providers and commissioners of Work Based Learning activities need to understand the motivations of those who are recommended (or required) to undertake such development opportunities. Where the basis of the WBL is a focus on competencies for example, in a process that is mostly about gathering evidence regarding your personal experiences and expertise, it is very self-focused. While there may be an organisationally based element, such as a research report about a current problem, it is primarily a self-focused programme in which Individual level self-concepts, and individual motivations, will come to the fore. If you want a programme that emphasises the collective then you need to design it so that it does, or design the environment around the WBL so that it becomes more organisationally useful.

For providers, and particularly tutors, there is an implication for understanding how their activities impact on employee self identity/self esteem issues and connect to learner motivations. What further skills might tutors need, in addition to those suggested by Lester and Costley (2010)? What opportunities are there for providers, HRD and line managers to engage in ways that positively reinforce self-regulatory feedback in order to ensure continued participant engagement with the process? What importance should be given to initial programme needs analysis and diagnostics of participant capabilities and motivations? Should there be some explicit 'diagnostic' discussion prior to the commencement of WBL programmes in order to more fully understand the needs and aspirations that are salient to the *learner*?

HRD practitioners need to recognise which employee self-view is active, determine which goals are self-relevant to that self, and attempt a convergence of organisational and personal goals that simultaneously move both parties in a preferred direction. Lord and Brown's (2004) WSC model demonstrates the possibility of temporarily refocusing the active self-view to a level where a compatible self-relevant goal might be found, e.g. deliberately move them from an Individual WSC to an Interpersonal or Collective one. In simplest terms a given goal may not have an outcome that is perceived as providing a direct personal benefit - but it may benefit another individual or group that they value. That this other individual or group

might then regard them in a more positive light, thereby improving that self-view, could be sufficient to make the goal self-relevant and ensure active engagement. When the goal is not self-relevant, it will not be actively engaged with, and failure to meet the goal may well be met with (well-masked) indifference. One should not assume that the organisation's goals and priorities are understood, or automatically valued, by those who work within it.

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