

# Post Graduate Work Supported Learning



By

Ian Sunley & Prof. Lorna Uden



# Introduction

- In 1997 the student grant towards living expenses was replaced by a student loan, which was repayable on graduation by deductions from salary once an income of £15000 was being earned.
- In 2003 students were also required to pay £3000 per annum towards their fees.
- In 2003 the European Union completed a research paper on Funding Higher Education. It looked at several models, with particular interest in the UK. In the current economic climate I believe most countries will eventually adopt the UK route.

# Why?

- Getting your first degree is becoming more expensive?
  - The National Union of Students claim that **‘We expect that the average student will have acquired, by graduation, around £25,000 worth of public debt (money that they owe to the state, this does not include bank debt, credit card debt or commercial loan debt)’**
- So many exceptional students capable of masters and doctorates need to earn a living as well as study.

# Why Postgraduate study?

- Most professional bodies in the UK that issue chartered status (e.g. C.Eng, C.Sci, CITP, MBA) require Masters Level education.
- Euro Ing requires a similar academic level.



# Employee Benefits

- Can keep a good employee at a company.
  - If the employee is working on a company-based project, they have an increased likelihood of staying during the degree and may also have a sense of loyalty to the company.
- Company can get access to leading edge techniques.
  - If the student is also doing research for his degree based on work, they will be looking at current research into that area.

# What type of awards?

- Masters and Doctorate Level.
- At Masters Level a quick search on Google showed Masters work based courses in Health, IT, Engineering, Social work, Business Administration and Fine Arts.
- At Doctorate Level there were courses in Business Administration, Health, Engineering and Education.



# Part time Masters awards -1

- An E-Learning award with all the modules taught via E-Learning and a project that could be work related.
- A Masters by Research award where the student has to understand how to write research papers and then undertake a proposal and dissertation (in the style of a mini PhD)
- A part time masters where the student has to complete 3 research informed projects ideally based around the subject area they are involved in their employment.



# Part time Masters awards -2

- Knowledge Transfer Partnership, KTP, currently offered by the UK Dept. of Industry. Pays 50% of the salary of a student working for a small company in a new technical area. The student also has an academic advisor for half a day a week, which is also funded by the government. If the student is successful they are awarded a Masters in Science. How long this will continue in the current economic conditions is unknown.



# Traditional Doctorate study

- Universities are viewed to conduct research to build up a body of knowledge that is then taught as a 'truth'.
- Students follow an existing curriculum.
- Content is fixed and determined.
- Methodologies used are disciplinary.
- Learning is individual.
- Problem solving is academic and timeless.
- Reflection on learning occurs unintentionally and non systematically.

# Work Based Doctorate

- Does not arise directly from the disciplinary frameworks.
- Exemplifies more local knowledge, flowing from the particular spatial and temporal circumstances of work contexts and situations (Boud 2001).
- Content is flexible and individually determined.
- Knowledge is derived through a multidimensional, inter professional, work-based frame of reference.
- It is constructing, not absorbing, knowledge



- Is concerned with the knowledge gained by doing work and aims to be developmental for the practitioner, purposeful for the community of practice and useful in its contribution to academic learning and the knowledge stored in higher education.
- Work-based pedagogies focus on the creativity and reflexivity of individuals within a work based context (Costley 2000) (rather than on the learning of a set syllabus).
- Reflection is an integral part.

- Work-based learning involves Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning.
- Methodologies used are transdisciplinary, applied and exploratory research methodologies (Boud & Solomon 2001).



# Work-based doctorates

- Aim to create and apply new knowledge (Brennan 2005).
- Learning outcomes for a work-based learning programme operate at a number of different, yet interrelated levels – knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and abstraction.
- Are context bound, driven by specific and immediate work requirements.

## Continued

- Reflection on learning occurs intentionally and systematically as an integral and important part of all aspects of the studies (Costley 2000).
- Project planning or project proposal outlines the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the project.
- Doctorate project has to be based on solid theory, but has to be applicable and serve a need in a professional setting. (Portwood, et al. 2002).

## Continued

- Expected outcome of the work based research does not only include the research dissertation or report.
- It also has to be accompanied by the evidence, a product that can be directly useful to the project stakeholders (Portwood et al. 2002).
- Work-based pedagogical approaches emphasise process curriculum which is strongly student-centred (rather than content-driven and pre-set curricula derived);
- These include a self-directed approach to learning (learn how to learn) (Raelin 2000).
- Experiential, and reflective learning.



# Doctorate awards

- Students work on research in related work project.
- Students prepare papers related to research project and publish them.
- Students then write thesis related to their work project.
- Important Emerging subject: Service Science.
- Desperate shortage of service science solution engineers
- Answer : Work Based Postgraduates.



# Research

- Conduct surveys in Europe among companies to find out their views.
- Analyse the results.
- Determine appropriate approaches to take.



# Conclusion

- Traditionally universities have been the places for research and the creation of knowledge (Angelides and Vrasidas 2003).
- Considerable discussions occurred among academics regarding the nature of knowledge, the kind of research that creates it, and the relations between theory and practice.
- Universities must be able to respond to the new and different needs of today's society.