SHOWCASE

Applying networked learning theory to examine work integrated learning (WIL) in a successful grant project team

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Networked learning theory decentralises learning and emphasises the examination of learning through connections with other learners and through access to resources. For the purpose of this study, WIL is understood more broadly as the learning that occurs through activity at work by examining a community of practice (CoP) constituted by a grant project team developing learning technology. Adult learning is examined using a triangulated method derived from Networked Learning theory. 14 members of a grant project team over 7 Australian Universities and 1 rural health services were surveyed using a social network survey tool asking about (a) the frequency and medium of communication with other team members during the course of the project and (b) colleagues’ perceived level of expertise in key areas regarding the project. 6 team members responded to the survey and 3 were interviewed in regard to their experience with the project. Analysis of resulting network graphs showed a high level of frequency and face-to-face contact between core team members, interviews revealed that some felt they had learned from the project, particularly about the possibilities of web technology use. Using the mixed methods of combining interview data and social network survey data may provide researchers with a richer empirical lens for examining WIL.

REFERENCES