

Apprentice Mentoring: A return to relationship in learning

A white banner is mounted on a grey, textured wall. The banner features the word 'Built.' in a large, bold, orange font. To the right of the main text, there is smaller black text that reads 'Building Relationships.' and a website address 'www.built.com.au' in a smaller font.

Built.

Building Relationships.
www.built.com.au

Being an apprentice



Pre- 20th Century apprenticeship

- knowledge and skills tacit
- usually a young man or boy
- likely to live where he worked
- familiar with the business and local employer
- not always paid, often fed and clothed
- relationship had strong personal element through connection to the local community

20th Century apprenticeship

- Apprenticeship Act 1923 : part of apprentice training at technical schools (later polytechnics)
- Apprenticeship Act 1948: national exams, fixed wages
- 1950s NZ: safe international markets, full employment social development towards social equity
- 1960s NZ: secondary school attendance longer, more university education
- 1970s NZ: aspirations rose for the working class
- 1980s NZ: increased access to HE, growing stigma re trades
- 1990s NZ: apprentices numbers declined dramatically, causing a crisis of skilled labour

From welfare to workfare

- 1970s: downward trends in employment from loss of British markets, the oil crisis and inflation
- 1987 government: economic restructuring, market ideology in education
- Apprentices had to meet national training requirements
- Apprentices low priority for employers - more reluctant to take on apprentices, and to offer learning support

Industry Training Organisations (ITOs)

- Industry Training Act 1992: ITOs -national industry standards, quality of training, arranging training providers.
- Apprenticeship training - competency-based (rather than time-based) and modular.
- 2002 Apprenticeship Co-ordinators to reduce dropout rate.
- Co-ordinators to facilitate placement and mentor apprentices *and employers* (conflicting responsibilities).

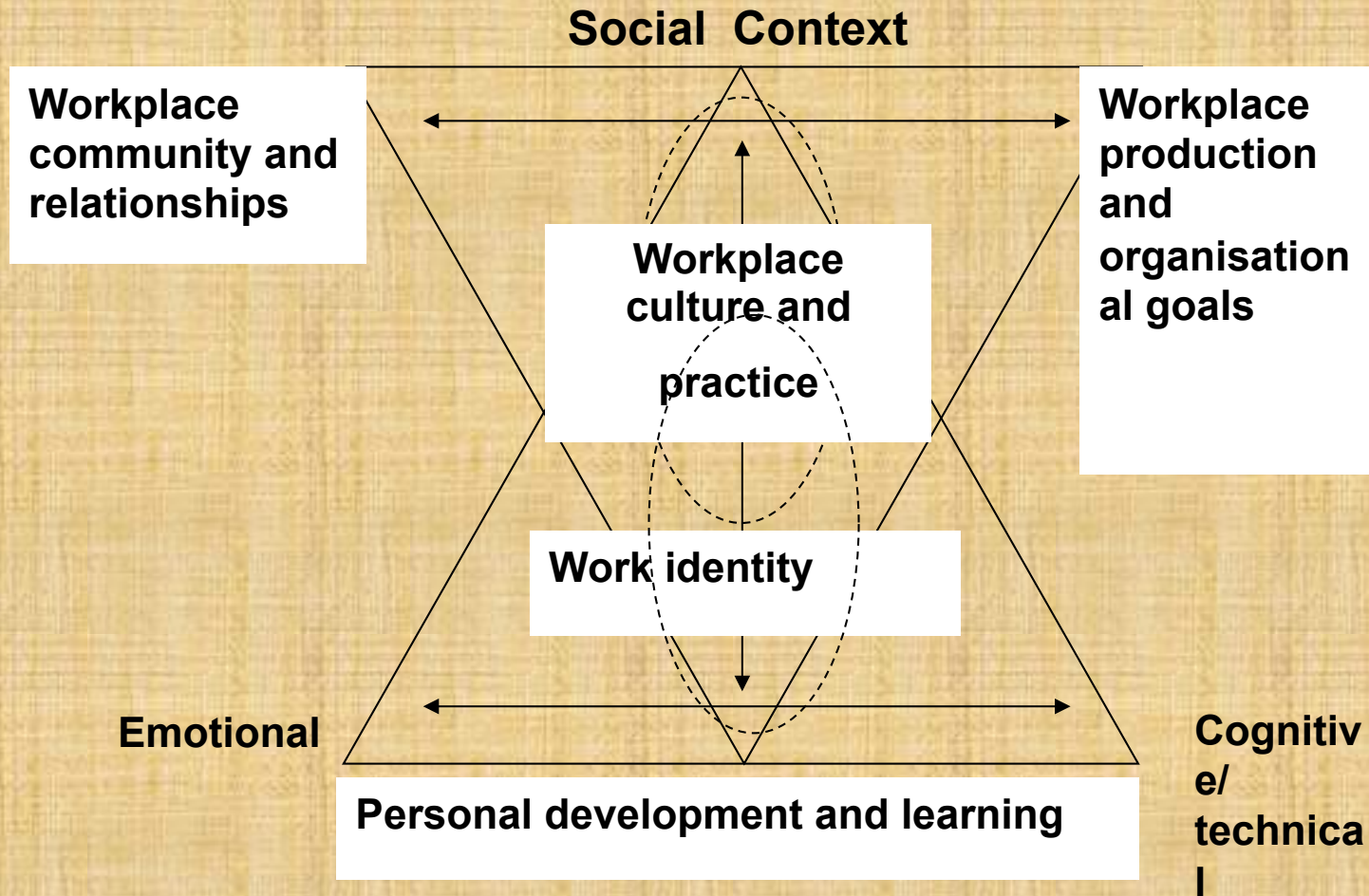
The Workplace Literacy Solution

- 2001, MOE *More than Words: the New Zealand adult literacy strategy*
- The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), teacher resources, vocational teacher training, and initial literacy assessment.
- New apprentices are required to undertake decontextualised literacy and numeracy tests that focus on functional deficits.

Social Dimension of learning

- Workplace culture, politics and hierarchies affect apprentices
- Status, ethnicity, and gender impact on workplace relationships
- Low job security and low wages reduce apprentice ability to negotiate
- Cultural differences between home and workplace cause friction for the apprentice
- Emotional toll of all impacts on learning

Cognitive, social, emotional



Relational Apprenticeship Mentoring

- Strengthening emotional bonds
- Trust-based
- Confidential
- Recognises social dimension of learning
- Non-authoritarian
- Includes frequent contact
- Aims at personal growth, development, enrichment for mentors and proteges
- In line with indigenous collectivist approaches

Traditional strategic approaches

- Authority model
- Hierarchical
- Cognitive, focus on instrumental competence
- Non-confidential
- Concerned with individual learning deficits
- Aimed at socialisation re organisation goals
- Infrequent contact

The importance of being Trustworthy

High trust = high emotional safety =
disclosure =
ability to provide meaningful support

Mentors need to show:

- care (commitment, empathy)
- competence (in mentoring)
- confidentiality (in terms of matters discussed)

The mentored apprentice

Assigned a mentor for the first year.

Helped to:

- better understand the expectations of the course
- manage time more efficiently
- make sense of unclear learning material
- put together assessment portfolios
- manage difficult workplace relationships
- talk with the course tutor

Offered opportunity to train as a mentor