



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Managing Organisation Learning and Knowledge

Pete Evans (*Course Organiser*)

EDUA11276

Credit Rating 20 credits, SCQF 11

Rationale

Learning and knowledge are intertwined with learning as a necessary condition for the creation of knowledge. This course will explore the connection between the two concepts to develop a critical understanding of knowledge management and organisational learning in a range of contexts including in the private sector, governmental organisations as well as educational institutions. In addition to exploring the theories and practices of organisational learning and knowledge management, the course will also explore the personal and professional skills associated with designing and implementing knowledge management strategies that promote organisational learning.

Teaching

10 x 2.5 hours = 25 hours

Lectures, group activities and discussions, student group presentations

Assessment

The assessment of this Course comprises of two components:

An analysis of a published case study of 1,200 words (30% of the overall mark). This will focus on the application of theory in the diagnosis of the underlying issues in the case study and the scoping of appropriate pragmatic, evidence-based and theoretically informed solutions for that organisation; and

An essay selected from a range of options of 2,800 words (70% of the overall mark). This will provide an opportunity to explore particular concepts and practices from the Course in greater depth.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the meanings attached to the concepts of knowledge management and organisational learning and associated theories.
2. Analyse and critique a range of applications of the concepts in organisational practices.
3. Design and develop organisation-based knowledge management strategies and programmes that promote, facilitate and exploit processes of organisational learning, taking account of a range of contextual factors.
4. Manage the implementation of knowledge management strategies and processes to support and facilitate organisational learning with the engagement and support of other professionals and managers.
5. Understand the importance of collaboration and the associated enablers of motivation, organisational typology, structure and culture in the success of knowledge management projects.
6. Act ethically and professionally with a demonstrated commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity and to continuous personal and professional development.

Indicative Content

1. **Critically evaluate the meanings attached to the concepts of knowledge management and organisational learning and associated theories.**
Definitions and meanings of knowledge and knowledge management; meanings and theories of organisational learning and related critiques; connections and relationships between the two concepts; critical appraisal of the possibilities and limitations of 'managing' organisational learning and knowledge.
2. **Analyse and critique a range of applications of the concepts in organisational practices.**
The links between organisational structures, cultures, strategies and learning; processes of organisational learning and knowledge creation; patterns of communication and influence in organisations; learning climate and learning environments in organisations.
3. **Design and develop organisation-based knowledge management strategies and programmes that promote, facilitate and exploit processes of organisational learning, taking account of a range of contextual factors.**
Identifying, assessing and analysing the role and impact of contextual factors on the nature and content of knowledge management policies and strategies; connecting knowledge management strategies to processes of formal and informal organisational learning; learning through, at and near work; the notions of creativity and innovation; identifying the role and contribution of knowledge management policies, strategies and programmes in performance improvement in a range of contexts.

4. Manage implementation of knowledge management strategies and processes to support and facilitate organisational learning with the engagement and support of other professionals and managers.

Securing, motivating and managing necessary resources; working collaboratively with others; stakeholder management and building wider support and commitment; mechanisms for knowledge capture, storage, dissemination and sharing; methods to promote organisational learning; monitoring and evaluating knowledge management strategies.

5. Understand the importance of collaboration and the associated enablers of motivation, organisational typology, structure and culture in the success of knowledge management projects.

Definitions and meanings of different models and theories of motivation, group and team working, organisational forms and organisational cultures; understanding the implications of these for successful implementation of knowledge management and organisational learning strategies; devising interventions supporting effective collaborative working in the context of knowledge management and organisational learning.

6. Act ethically and professionally with a demonstrated commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity and to continuous personal and professional development.

Definitions and understandings of ethics including philosophical bases; the similarities and differences of notions of equality and diversity; notions of professionalism and professional practice; implications for and applications in knowledge management; rationales for and processes of continuing professional development (CPD); a range of CPD methods.

Assessment

The assessment for the course has two components:

- An analysis of a published case study of 1,200 words (30% of the overall mark). This will focus on the application of theory in the diagnosis of the underlying issues in the case study and the scoping of appropriate pragmatic, evidence-based and theoretically informed solutions for that organisation. This assessment will take place during the course itself; and
- An essay selected from range of options of 2,800 words (70% of the overall mark). This will provide an opportunity for students to explore particular concepts and practices from the Course in greater depth.

Both components of the assessment must be completed.

Some Indicative Readings

- Argyris, C. (1999) *On organisational learning* 2nd Ed. Oxford: Blackwell
- Brown, J.S., and Duguid, P. (1991) Organizational learning and communities of practice: towards a unified view of working, learning and innovation. *Organization Science*, 2(1): 40-57
- Clegg, S., Kornberger, M. & Pitsis, T. (2005) *Managing and Organisations: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* London: Sage
- Easterby-Smith, M, Burgoyne, J. & Araujo L (1999) (Eds) *Organisational Learning and the learning organisation: Developments in theory and practice*. SAGE publications.
- Hislop, D. (2013). *Knowledge Management in Organizations: A Critical Introduction*. 3rd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Jarvis, P. (2006) *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning* Oxford: Routledge Volume 1
- Little, S. & Ray, T. (2005) *Managing Knowledge: An essential reader* 2nd Ed. London: Sage/Open University
- Raelin, L. (2010) Work-based learning: valuing practice as an educational event. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 124 (Winter): 34-46
- Sadler-Smith, E. (2006) *Learning and Development for Managers* Oxford: Blackwell publishing
- Tsoukas, H. (2000) Knowledge as action, organization as theory. *Emergence*, 2 (4): 104-112