weaken the institution. The advice in these pages would be well taken by vice-chancellors and finance directors in England, just now.

The additional material on managing the core business focuses on teaching and research, elements which were implicit in the first edition but made more transparent here and given greater centrality, albeit rather briefly. The role of QAA and the RAE/REF are highlighted but lest the reader fears a recommendation to embrace additional bureaucracy the author warns us in typical outspoken style that 'In too many university central offices there is a tendency to take on a jehadist [sic] view of QAA principles and seek to enforce them unquestionably on academic colleagues' (109).

It is this continuous questioning of context, accompanied by guidance on how to achieve, maintain and enhance success that makes this book such a readable and convincing bible for university managers – indeed, for anyone who has an interest in the continued success of universities at a time when their very *raison d'etre* is coming under such sustained attack.

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The Sage handbook of workplace learning, edited by Margaret Malloch, Len Cairns, Karen Evans and Bridget N. O'Connor, London, Sage, 2011, 476 pp., £90 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-84787-589-1

This handbook claims to provide a 'state-of-the-art overview of the field of workplace learning internationally' (xv). Moreover it aims to serve as a basic resource for researchers and 'serious academics' who are interested in this burgeoning topic. These are bold claims indeed, and ones that are largely justified by the extensive list of contributors (46 in total) that are marshalled into 34 chapters. With editors from Australia, England and the US many of the contributions originate from these countries, although this tendency is offset by individual contributions from elsewhere including the Nordic countries, Germany, Korea and Canada and a case study of Ethiopia. Whilst the growing importance of the economies of China and India are alluded to in some chapters the limited research available in these contexts means there are perhaps limits on the 'international' purchase claimed.

Given the breadth and ambition of the handbook some structure is needed and the editors have grouped the chapters into three sections: theory, research and practice, issues and futures. In practice some chapters span these divisions of course. Each section is introduced by a brief summary of the contributions to follow, a helpful device given the extent of the volume. Cairns and Malloch's chapter opens the theory section by examining the scope of 'work' 'place' and 'learning', arguing for a shift towards broader and more inclusive meanings, encompassing unpaid work in the home and community and spiritual or virtual spaces. An impressive array of chapters follow led by Paul Hager's overview of psychological and socio-cultural theories of learning, and emerging postmodern takes on workplace learning; where he surprisingly perhaps locates Engeström's cultural historical activity theory. Contributions

by major figures such as Illeris, Fuller and Unwin and Billet follow. It is Billet who brings to a head debates which have been brewing in earlier chapters about the role of the self and personal agency in workplace learning, arguing that social and cultural aspects have been unduly privileged in many recent theorisations. He advocates greater exploration of the 'relational interdependence' (68) of the individual and the social world, and the resulting remaking of cultural practices. The interesting omission of a contribution exploring Lave and Wenger's influential 'communities of practice' is explained by the chapter supplied by Cairns himself which provides a review of critiques of both the concept and its influence on the field. More positively he suggests that both the Japanese concept of Basho (Nishida 1987) and Engeström's concept of 'expansive learning' offer ways of moving forward. Having been thus trailed Engeström himself has a chance to outline his concept of 'co-configuration' and the difficulties of holding an ever expanding theory of workplace learning together. Russ-Eft's own attempt to develop a meta-theory of learning puts one in mind of the labours of *Middlemarch*'s Casubon to develop a key to all mythologies, luckily it proves a shorter endeavour. The section is extended with a consideration of knowledge from Allix and then Evans, Guile and Harris.

Sawchuk's opening contribution to the research and practice section suggests six 'lines of research inquiry' can be discerned from the current state of the literature. These are (i) cognition, expertise and the individual; (ii) micro-interaction, cognition and communication; (iii) mediated practice and participation; (iv) meaning, identity and organisational life; (v) authority conflict and control; (vi) competitiveness and knowledge management (165). Whilst these lines do not appear to be particularly strongly bounded it is reasonable to argue, as he does, that greater dialogue between them would deepen our understanding of the many facets of workplace learning. In particular greater consideration of the effects of power, both generative and restrictive, on workplace learning practices would strengthen much current research. These six lines of inquiry are not clearly operationalised as a framework for the remaining chapters, but the general point of multiplicity is. Contributions in this section range from Eraut's tightly written account of his research into professional learning to reflections on the context and affiliations of researchers themselves. Diverse themes are explored including transitions from school to work in the US, virtual learning in the workplace, the role of emotion in workplace learning, and the implications of an aging workforce. The benefits of retaining older workers which are explored within this chapter may, in the UK at least, now be overtaken by the pressure to cut costs; not least amongst the HE sector itself. Despite not featuring in the section title policy is thankfully the focus of several chapters. Tara Fenwick examines discourses of knowledge in the 'knowledge economy'. Drawing on Canadian policy on both skills and innovation, she identifies spaces of uncertainty and ambiguity between them, which provide room for educators to manoeuvre. Other chapters consider policy in relation to competency-based training in Australia, work-related learning in the US, and vocational education and training in Korea. Less successful are the chapters that merely map out the level of research activity in different locations.

The final section is entitled 'Issues and futures' and apparently it's all about 'creating environments in which learning can fly' (371). Here the baton is consciously passed to 'scholar-practitioners' whose credentials stem from their active participation in creating such environments. Necessarily perhaps this creates a bias towards the higher education context. Costley's chapter provides a useful review of the development of HE programmes which incorporate, or are wholly based on, work-based learning. This draws largely on her experience at Middlesex University in the UK and the development of an open framework for work-based learning that extends to doctoral level. There was perhaps less acknowledgement of the expansion of WBL at sub-degree level, through for example the foundation degree programme in England. Also from the UK Harris and Chisholm argue for a further

expansion of HE's remit into the wider 'Lifeplace' (373) of the learner. Such sentiments chime in with attempts to include life-wide learning amongst economically focused lifelong learning agendas (Williams 2007), yet there is little reflection on the effects, negative as well as positive, that might accrue from this 'formalisation' (382) by higher education. Other chapters focus on higher education in the US exploring the development of corporate universities and partnerships between public universities and the private and public sectors, viewed somewhat uncritically as a 'win–win' option by O'Connor and Lynch (421). Two contributions take us out of higher education and into a virtual space where new technologies, particularly social software, reshape job structures, locations and approaches to managing knowledge. Innovative approaches to apprenticeship, located wholly in the workplace, are explored by Guile who combines activity theory with social capital theory in an interesting study of the creative industries. The section, and therefore the handbook, ends with a welcome contribution from Johnson who explores 'the shadow side' (456) of workplace learning. He identifies a range of ethical issues which arise for educators including the power of the economic paradigm, excessive corporate control, corporatism in the traditional university and exploitation of the knowledge worker. He also suggests some potential responses that could guide educators at a general, and occasionally specific level. A useful addition to the text would have been to include contributions from researchers and practitioners who have encountered these ethical issues in specific workplace learning contexts to explicate in more concrete terms the dilemmas and power plays of this practice.

The handbook will be particularly useful as a recommended text for postgraduate students who are beginning to explore this burgeoning research area. It is well designed for readers who wish to dip in and out of selected chapters; perhaps more so than for those tackling a whole section, who have to bear a certain amount of repetition. Overall I would recommend it to both serious academics and those who frivolously wish to sample the topic. However until a cheaper soft cover version becomes available it is likely to be only the former who contemplate making a purchase.

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Oxford, the collegiate university: conflict, consensus and continuity, by Ted Tapper and David Palfreyman, Heidelberg, London and New York, Springer, 2011, 209 + xxi pp., ISBN 978-94-007-0047-5

Oxford, the collegiate university, is unashamedly a work of advocacy, for the revival and maintenance of a world the authors think is almost lost. Fortunately, the work is also well-grounded in historical, sociological and political scientific analysis.