



You're not at school now: Exploring participation and learning in medical education

Dr Deborah Gill and Dr Ann Griffin

11th June 2012

Who?

- Deborah Gill: deputy director for UCLMS and lead for the MBBS (undergraduate) programme. Research interest in professional learning and professional identity formation
- Ann Griffin: deputy director for UCLMS and lead for the postgraduate programmes and scholarship. Research interest in training to work transitions and student voice

What?

- Introduction to some of the theories of learning through participation, practice and performance
- Identify how these theories can be applied to medical education practice and research

Why?

- Medical education in the UK, is predominantly workplace/practice based and therefore
 - The workplace and participation that takes place within it has a profound effect on medical learning
 - Medical learning has a profound effect on the workplace and practice
- Emerging theories about learning through participation and practice require new ways of thinking about medical education

Theories of learning

“Concepts can be likened to searchlights of varying beam width and intensity. They help us see some things but not others. Indeed areas outside the beam appear darker than ever”

Eraut 2002



Sfard's metaphor (1998) and the danger of adopting just one

Learning-as-acquisition



Learning-as-participation

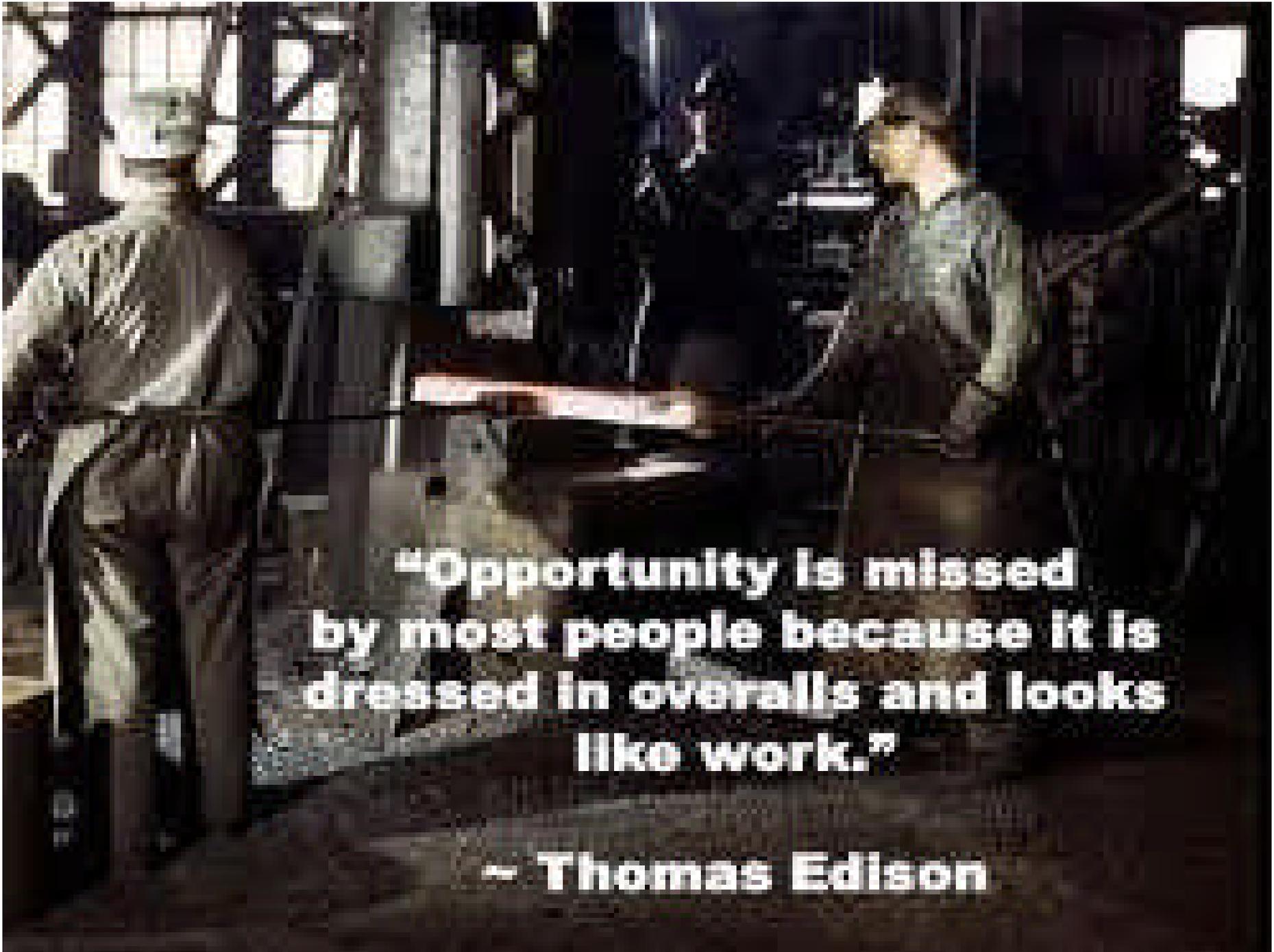




Learning



Acquisition	Participation
Theoretical knowledge	Practical knowing
Transfer of learning	Constructed
Individualistic	Social
Learner as active agent	Learner is subject
Hierarchical progression	Horizontal integration
Autonomous decisions	Negotiated meaning



**“Opportunity is missed
by most people because it is
dressed in overalls and looks
like work.”**

~ Thomas Edison

How do we learn at work?

- Think about your current workplace(s), and consider what opportunities there are for learning
- What does learning at work offer compared with 'classroom-based'?
- How does 'Andrew' learn at work?



Learning in the workplace

- The workplace's prime role is not for learning
- There are many types of workplace and each is influenced by:
 - Culture
 - History
 - Changing demographics
 - Relationships
 - Politics
 - Socio-economic conditions
- Unique and dynamic

Some concepts that helps us make sense of learning through participation

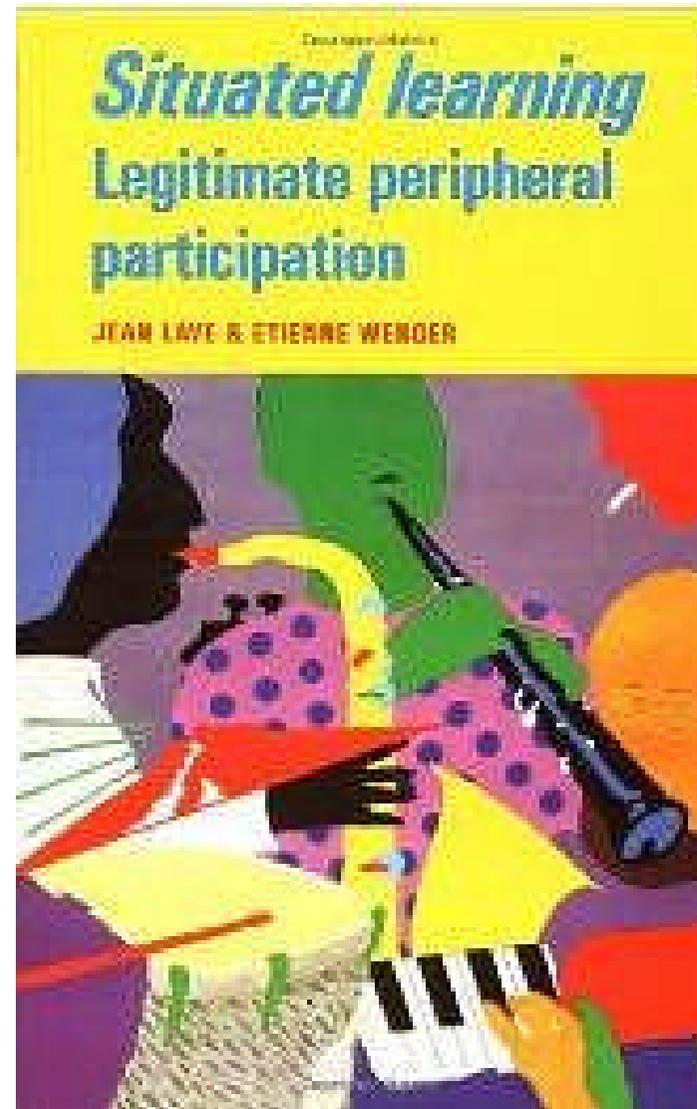
- Situated learning
 - Communities of practice
 - Legitimate peripheral participation
- Expansive-restrictive framework



Situated learning

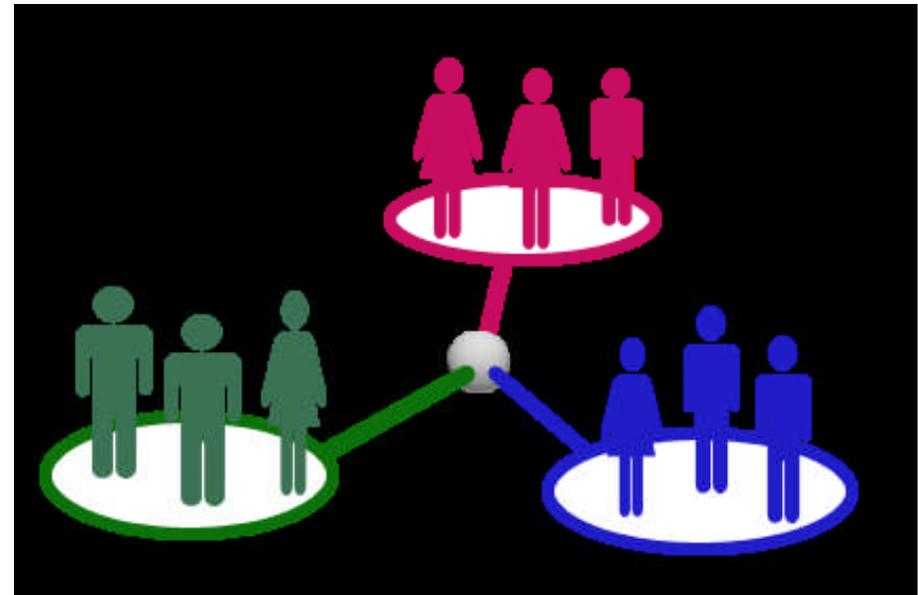
Learning is social:
learning with, from and
through

- practice
- practices, and
- practitioners.



The two metaphors of situated learning

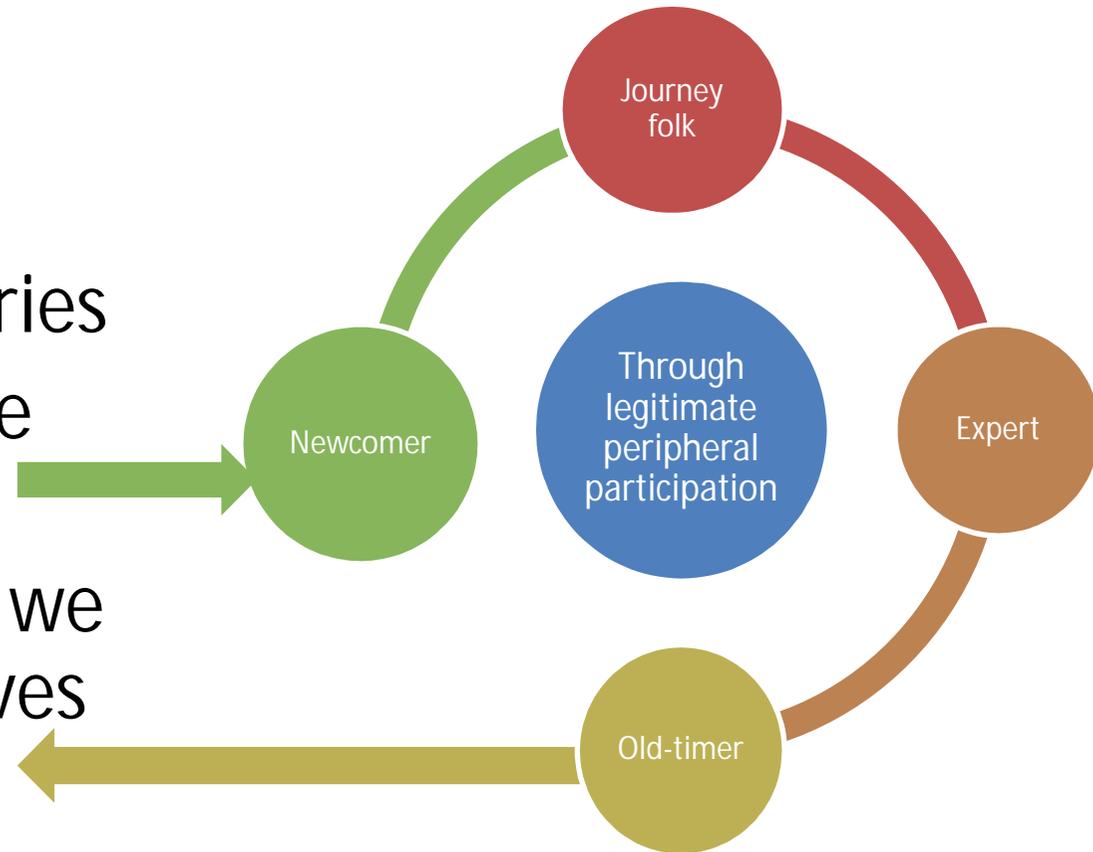
- Legitimate peripheral participation
- Communities of practice



Legitimate peripheral participation

Participation is:

- Learning to do
- Learning to think
- Learning to tell stories
- Learning to become an expert
- It changes the way we think about ourselves – our identity



Community of practice

- Provides the structure by which its members can fully participate
- It shares common understandings about who is part of a community and what the community stands for
- Collegiate working and interpersonal relationships
- Distributed knowledge –through people through artefact through shared stories
- A sense of self arising from membership
- The ability to reproduce

Communities of practice and medical education

- 'Communities' as wholly positive
- Conservative
- Knowledge – a lack of consideration of formal learning and transfer of knowing from one community to another
- Multiple communities & boundary crossing



The post-modern communities

The choice agenda

- Different learning opportunities and career progression
- Portfolio working
- Specialisation
- Boundary work

The risk thesis

Yet this individual agency is brokered by:

- Instability and uncertainty
- Risk
- Complexity



Influences on learning at work

Reflecting on Andrew's experience:

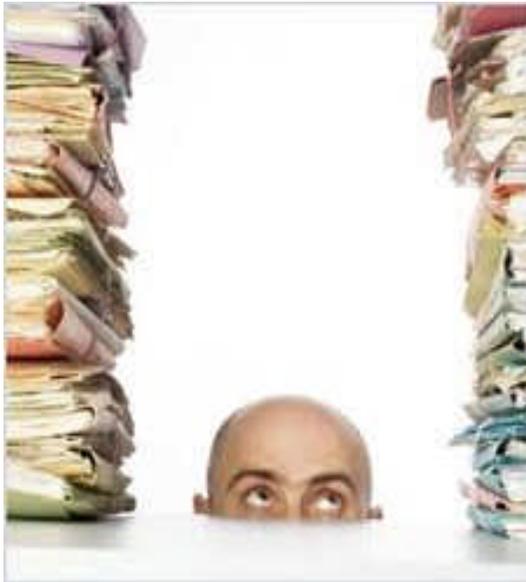
- What factors support the opportunities to learn at work?
- What factors limit opportunities learning at work?



Influences on learning at work

- Support for **learning**, teamwork; mentoring, induction and integration
- **Assessment and feedback**
- The division of labour and **workload**
- **Access** to tasks, time, space, tools and resources
- The degree of **exposure** to change, the degree of exposure to demands, responsibility
- **Professional contacts**
- **Culture**
- **Management** and organisational structure
- **Job design, job security**
- Contracts, **incentives and rewarding** proficiency

Expansive-restrictive framework



Approaches to apprenticeship



Culture of apprenticeship
Access to opportunities for learning in work as well as formal qualifications
Speed of transition
Aim of apprenticeship
Recognition as learner
Alignment of apprentices and institutional goals

Fuller and Unwin 2006

Questions arising from applying socio-cultural theories in medical education

- Is learning as participation recognised as real learning in our workplaces and associated learning institution and venues?
- Is learning through participation consequently valued by learners?
- How do we ensure the community reproduces the desired learning?

Putting sociocultural theories into action as medical educators

- What can we do to make a place of work a place of learning?
- How do we ensure medical students (and very transient workers such as FY doctors) join communities and become legitimate participants?
- Should we choose workplace venues for learning using the expansive-restrictive framework?

References and further reading

Billett, S. 2004, "Learning through work: workplace participatory practices," in *Workplace Learning in Context*, H. Rainbird, A. Fuller, & A. Munro, eds., Routledge, London and New York, pp. 109-125.

Eraut, M., Alderton, J., Cole, G., & Senker, P. 1998, *Development of Knowledge and Skills in Employment*, University of Sussex Institute of Education, University of Sussex Institute of Education, Falmer, Brighton, 5.

Fuller, A. & Unwin, L. (2004). "Expansive learning environments: integrating organizational and personal development," in *Workplace Learning in Context*, H. Rainbird, A. Fuller, & A. Munro, eds., Routledge, London, pp. 126-144

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning Legitimate peripheral participation* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Malloch, M., Cairns, L., Evans, K., & O'Connor, B. N. 2010, *The SAGE Handbook of Workplace Learning* SAGE.

Sfard, A. 1998, "On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one", *Educational researcher*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 4-13.