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Between College and Work in the FET/TVET College sector

The article investigates the relationship between learning and doing at the College and Work practicums.

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Introduction

- Focus is on Civil Engineering students
- Students spend periods of time – employability
- Difficulty for colleges to perform this role
- SDA 97 of 1988 – economic imperatives
- Artisan training has gone through a period of neglect
- Introduction of : National Artisan Moderating Body(NAMB)
Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
- In terms of learning: Lecturer and the WPS
- Perceptions and experiences lecturers and WPS
- Information taken and put into a more abstract theoretical language
- Activity Theory

Theoretical Framework

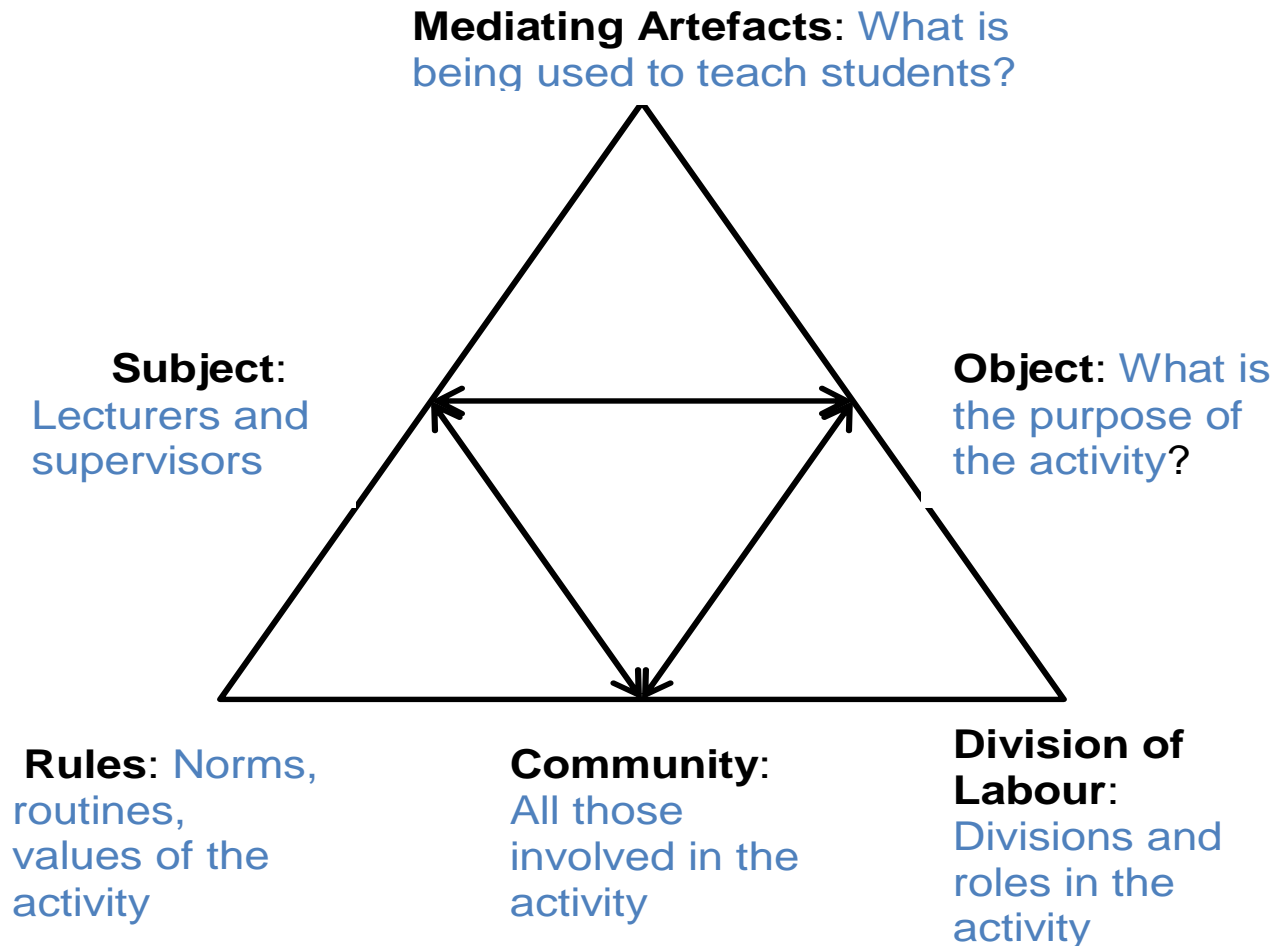


Figure 1: The various elements of an activity system (Engestrom, 1987)

AT – Always underpinned by certain principals

For this study- used the principle of contradictions

Why this theory?

Powerful tool to identify contradictions

AT has been used to examine transitions
(Konkola et al., 2007)

Methodology

- Focus- comparison of learning different sites
- Aim- was to locate significant contradictions across the sites
- Mix-method approach- surveys, interviews and observations.
- Basic questions were asked:
 - What students were learning
 - What mediating artefacts were used
 - Who was involved at the different sites

Results and discussion in various elements

Rules

- Classroom- mostly assessment rules determined by DHET
- Workplace- rules mostly linked to production
- What seems to emerge from the analysis
- The classroom focus on knowledge and assessment and the workplace wants to get the job done. Contradiction between the two.

Results and discussion in various elements

Object

- Expectation- Object should be the same – To prepare students as Civil Engineering Artisans
- What seems to emerge from the analysis
- The classroom focus on preparing students for the final examinations and the workplace wants students to understand instructions in order to do the job . Contradiction between the two.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Research findings- Interpreted through an AT lens, point to serious disjuncture between learning sites.

This disjuncture in turn point to a *gap* between the FET/TVET College system and the CE industry.

This research put forward that the disjuncture may originate from the “object” the purpose of the activity.

The analysis suggest improvement in the AS, this refer to a more “advanced object”(Blackler, 2005)

College and the workplace should work collaboratively produce this more “advanced object”

Follow the example of Advisory Committees that would firstly ‘acknowledge the differences between the AS’ and secondly ‘what is needed in the exploration of these differences’.

Engeström Y (2001) encourage “boundary crossing” which may lead to an ‘integrated theory and practice’ model.

Questions or Comments