Developing communities of practice: A strategy for effective leadership, management and supervision in social work

Ivan Gray[1], Jonathan Parker[2], Lynne Rutter[3], and Sarah Williams[4]

Abstract: *Social work in the UK has undergone a period of momentous change in the last decade with the introduction of a 'modernising agenda' that has increased managerial approaches to the organisation, development and delivery of services. These approaches are embedded and social workers and social work managers must find ways of working within them to synthesise appropriate responses that promote the values and cultural heritage of social work within the new context. This paper considers the possibilities offered by communities of practice to develop learning organisations in which a managed and participatory approach to social work and social care can be generated. A super-ordinate model of contending learning cultures is developed and used to create a blue print for practice that draws on a range of management and professional theories and perspectives.*

Successful involvement of people who use services is identified as a key feature of a more advanced approach to leading a community of practice and the effectiveness of supervision is seen as dependent on the development of a community. The approach offers a strategy for first line and middle managers to develop team effectiveness and improve services that is robust and not dependent on organisational initiatives and cultures.

Key words: *communities of practice; learning organisations; management; social work; leadership; supervision; team effectiveness; strategy.*

1. Senior lecturer in Leadership and Management
2. Professor of Social Work
3. Lecturer, Student Support and Library Skills
4. Senior Lecturer, Practice Development

Address for correspondence: *Dr Ivan Gray, Centre for Social Work and Social Policy, School of Health and Social Care, Bournemouth University. Royal London House, Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH1 3TS. England. Email: igray@bournemouth.ac.uk*

Introduction

Social work in the UK has developed in a paradoxical way during its short history. Social work aims to enhance people's autonomy, self-direction and independence yet this has been juxtaposed with the social monitoring and regulatory mechanisms of a state regulated and approved profession (Payne, 2005; Gray et al., 2008).

Recently, the radical reform of the public sector has had a significant impact on social work (Jordan and Jordan, 2006; Parker, 2007). Changes in policy and practice have led to the rationalisation of services and reprioritisation that has resulted in the fragmentation of some services and the integration of others (Blewitt, 2008). Accompanying these changes has been a rise in managerialism and bureaucracy underpinned by a belief that services improve through inspection and regulation (Hafford-Letchfield, 2006). The focus, therefore, tends to be on performance management and measurement rather than professional judgement and practice (Martin et al., 2004; Penhale and Parker, 2008).

Negotiating a pathway through and managing such ambiguities and complexities requires models that maintain the values of social work and promote practice consonant with the agreed definition of social work, yet can also facilitate the development of services, social work practice and their management.

This paper argues that developing communities of practice may provide a bridge between managerialism and authentic practices. It argues that effective, participative leadership can develop and support a community of practice even in an unsympathetic organisational culture. Whilst in other organisations leaders will probably not be equipped or orientated to lead a community of practice, a confluence of social work values, groupwork and community building skills, political awareness and a congruent learning culture/history, might make it a real possibility in social work and provide an attractive leadership model for team leaders. It posits that there is pressing need for research into communities of practice as they might have considerable potential as a leadership model for social work..

Learning organisations and learning cultures in social work

The concept of learning organisations has been given some attention in social work (Gould, 2000; Gray et al., 2008; Hafford- Letchfield et al., 2008) whilst it is receiving increasing attention from policy makers as an ideal to be strived for (DfES/DH, 2006). Attempts are being made actively to develop organisations as learning organisations (SCIE, 2004) and to 'enable work based learning' as a communal provision that can have a significant impact on professional competence (GSCC, 2006); this despite considerable pessimism as to their likely success of learning organisations in social work (Gould et al., 2004).

Senge's (1990) hugely influential work identified the features of a learning organisation. Mobilising teams and individuals seeking to maximise their effectiveness as learners are crucial components of his model, but it is in essence a top down, managed approach. An alternative approach is developing communities of practice, which focuses on the micro-level activity on which organisational learning processes depend. It can either be seen as a valuable companion theory to learning organisations, in that it might be used as the basis for mobilising teams, or it could be seen as an alternative 'bottom up' approach. However, communities of practice as an approach is relatively underdeveloped (Fuller et al., 2004).

Wenger (2006) defines communities of practice as groups of people sharing common interests, concerns and responsibilities and engaging together and improving their practice as a result. He also acknowledges the development of shared resources within these communities. This definition allows for communities of practice to encompass networks of people from a number of different organisations, for instance social workers with a particular specialism might link up to develop their practice. However, in his earlier work Wenger identified communities of practice as natural working groups within an organisation that apart from facilitating learning provide '*ways of ameliorating institutionally generated conflicts'* (Wenger, 1998, p. 46). They also help socialise the workplace and whilst they may extend beyond work teams they can encompass them. This earlier focus on working groups allows the possibility of a leadership strategy that is based on developing social work teams as communities of practice.

A key question is how might a community of practice be developed and led? Hawkins and Shohet (2000) argue for the importance of a learning and development culture to support effective supervision, so developing a learning and development culture may offer a good starting point. As a first step this will require determining the parameters of a learning and development culture.

Learning cultures and communities of practice

Several different learning cultures can be identified in social work (Gray et al., 2008). By learning culture we mean a culture in which learning and development are valued, encouraged and seen as fundamental to the organisation's successful operation. For instance, by introducing registration for social workers with re-registration dependent on the demonstration of continuing professional development; the General Social Council (GSCC) can be seen to be striving for a *professional learning culture* (GSCC, 2002, 2007). 'Investors in People' is best described as creating a *managed learning culture* where training and learning activity is directed towards service strategy and business plans (Hoque et al., 2005). A therapeutic community can be seen as aspiring to a *humanistic leaning culture* (Barber, 1988); and Total Quality Management, that seeks

to address the negative impact of organisational hierarchy and power on workers' involvement in organisational problem solving, can be seen as aiming to create a *democratic leaning culture* (Marinez- Costa and Jiminez- Jiminez, 2009). Each culture has a range of principles (see table 1).

Each identified culture has its particular theory of learning, specific objectives, unique learning processes and defined outcomes. For example, it can be argued that currently in social work a professional and managerial learning culture dominates whereas in the past a humanistic and democratic learning culture may have been more influential (Tsui, 2005).

To foster communities of practice, Wenger (2006) suggests there is a need to minimise prescription, set the context in which communities can prosper, value the work of community building and development and make sure participants have access to the resources they need to learn. In stressing the social and communal nature of learning and the dangers of prescription, Wenger locates communities of practice in humanistic and democratic cultures.

However, in social work a 'super-ordinate' learning culture that encompasses all four organisational cultures, (table 1) may be both desirable and necessary. Professional and managerial cultures have to be accommodated but a communal humanistic culture is essential if the emotional nature of the work and the impact of society and community on the self and learning, is to be recognised. A democratic learning culture is also essential if, in a similar way, social work is to maintain awareness of and engage with the power differentials that can disempower users and carers. If a super-ordinate learning culture might be a goal, a key issue concerns how a community of practice might be led.

Leading communities of practice

After making a case for the importance of group processes and group leadership for communities of practice, Plaskoff (2006) identifies that leaders have an administrative role in setting up and facilitating meetings, and distributing information, but that otherwise their role is one of 'mentoring'. It is almost, for Plaskoff (2006), that leaders need to take a backseat when it comes to developing communities of practice.

So both Wenger and Plaskoff seem to advocate the emergence of leadership within teams, but a manager with a team of inexperienced staff might be waiting for a long time for something to 'emerge' and will need to be far more proactive. It is as if Wenger and Plaskoff have got stuck in seeing leadership as synonymous with control and the antithesis of a community of practice. In social work, this back seat role is not congruent with a manager's or leader's responsibilities to develop and supervise social work practice. Accepting that the use of power is a crucial issue, this

23

Table 1

Contending learning and development cultures and types of learning organisation

Professional learning culture (General Social Care Council)	Managed learning culture (Investors in People)
Professional college sets practice standards and practitioners have a long term relationship with their college	Standards are quality standards determined by managers
Professionals manage their own learning and development	Learning and development is the responsibility of line managers
Competence determined by experienced professionals using personal judgement	Competence determined by appraisal or assessment against published standards
Learning and development driven by personal career and practice agendas. Strong emphasis on professional value base.	Learning and development driven by business need and business case. Strong emphasis on cost effectiveness
Learning and development evaluated in terms of professional growth and development	Learning and development evaluated according to business outcomes and impact on the service
Supervision is focused on personal development	Supervision is focused on case and service management
Sanctions are removal of professional accreditation and judgement is made by peers	Sanctions are managerial i.e. progression, reward or use of capability procedures
Dialogue with a fellow professional, critical reflection and professional education are crucial vehicles for personal development	A range of training and development methods are used according to learning need and cost efficiency considerations
Professional are expected to contribute to professional development as a duty	Professional trainers and consultants are employed, relationships are commercial

Humanistic learning culture (therapeutic communities)	Democratic learning culture (total quality management)
Individuals are liberated by reflecting on their actions and the consequences of their actions for others and making choices. The community both challenges behaviour and supports individuals	Organisational and social expertise and creativity can be increased if the power relations that exclude some from problem solving and decision making are addressed.
Learning and development are natural human activities. Group influence and experiences can be mobilised to bring personal change.	Learning and development are natural human activities but power relationships in society seek to use them to control.
Competence is competence in life and is about self actualisation.	If groups are liberated they can make a contribution to social competence, that is to the capability of society or an organisation to learn and develop.
Learning and development is driven by social and personal needs that are inseparable.	Learning and development should be directed towards the social good.

Achieving
the Task

Building
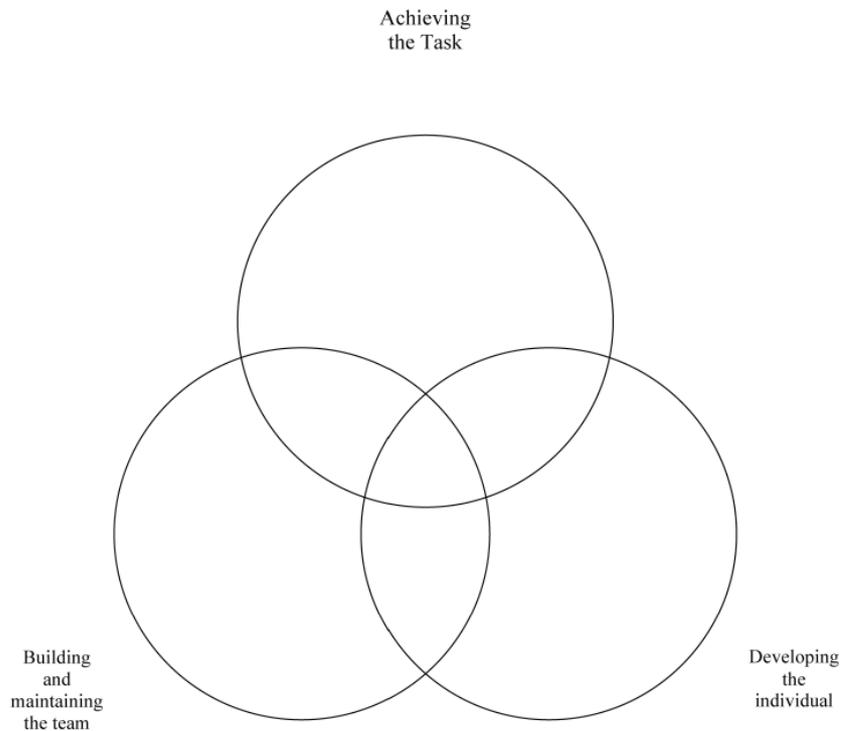and
maintaining
the team

Developing
the
individual

Fig 1. What a leader has to do from Adair, 1983, p.44

does not necessarily negate pro-active leadership by a team manager, but demands a particular value-based approach.

For instance, Hersey and Blanchard's (1993) theory of situational leadership offers an approach to leadership which is congruent with social work values. It is centred on managers' roles in developing staff and is supported by concepts from group work theory. It is 'situational' in that leaders' behaviours need to vary according to the characteristics of the team, group or individual staff member. They see teams and groups of staff as being at different developmental levels that demand different leadership styles. So if a team or staff member is very new they may not understand the purpose of the work or be motivated to do it. They may not have the skills and knowledge to carry out the tasks and may need instruction and close supervision if they are to be able to function appropriately. An experienced team or staff member, on the other hand, may be more self motivated and well equipped to do the work, have a stronger value base, knowledge of essential procedures and objectives and the skills to practise effectively. So a leader can allow them greater opportunity to participate in the management and development of practice and can delegate to them. Developed teams will require minimal facilitation.

The situational leadership model is compatible with the needs of a community

of practice and would make leadership central to its effective development. Adair's action centred leadership model may also be of value here (Adair, 1983). Adair's action-centred leadership model identifies three interrelated areas of activity that are necessary for a team to function effectively. This provides a useful basis for analysing a team's performance and planning for improvement.

Adair's model can help synthesise the different learning cultures into a super-ordinate culture and so it could be particularly well suited to developing a community of practice in social work. The domains all overlap, so that whilst developing the team might include such things as building trusting relationships and positive regard between team members or creating a climate where problems can be raised and practice challenged, it overlaps with achieving core tasks. This means business planning and developing services are not only supported by team development but also provide a medium through which the team can develop. Supervision as part of personal development is also dependent on the effectiveness of the team and is a crucial forum for case management.

The model also emphasises task management, so that a community of practice will give attention to a range of 'soft' and 'hard' issues. Table 2 identifies some questions such a community of practice and their leader need to address, to define concepts and evaluate practice.

Leading communities of practice: Helping a community learn and develop its practice

A crucial challenge for the leader of a community of practice is how they help it to learn and develop its practice. Thompson (2006) stresses the importance of creating a culture which places learning at the centre of organisations, suggesting that effective leadership is needed to help remove barriers to learning and create an environment in which learning is valued and change is embraced. Although leadership can be provided by people at all levels within organisations, managers may take a principal role in providing leadership which achieves these objectives.

If managers are to promote and support the development of a community of practice approach within their team they need to have a specific skill set which must include a good understanding of how individuals and groups learn and develop their professional expertise and an ability to facilitate those processes. Furthermore, they will need a commitment to learning as a fundamental part of the delivery of high quality services and understand that it is not possible to deliver responsive services unless those delivering them are constantly updating and applying new knowledge and understanding to their practice. They will need the capability to build a shared vision, implement strategies for supporting and enabling individual and team growth and the capacity to encourage individuals to increase their confidence and skills to

Table 2
Some essential features of Adair's three domains when applied to social work

Achieving the task
How effective are our business planning processes?
Are we clear about our objectives as a team and our priorities for service development?
How effective are our quality management processes?
How is the team performing against performance measures, quality standards and business objectives?
How effective is our case management in supervision?
How effective is our multi-disciplinary working?
Is the team engaged in service development?
Are people who use services engaged in service development planning?

Building and maintaining the team
How effective are our recruitment processes?
What will be our needs in the short medium and long term in terms of skills and staffing levels?
What stage of development is the team at?
To what extent does the team have:
Trusting relationships between its members and positive regard?
A climate where problems can be raised and practice challenged?
Responsive and flexible leadership?
A good range of personalities and roles?
Procedures and ways of working that allow it to work effectively including resolving conflicts?
Good relationships and established working relationships with co-providers?
Good relationships and established working relationships with people who use services and carers?
Good relationships and established working relationships with the rest of the organisation?
Continuous team development and improvement?

Developing the individual
How effective is induction and probation
How effective is supervision in developing practice?
How effective is our management of training?
How effective is our CPD?
How effective is our appraisal?
How effective is qualifying and post qualifying training?
Is there shared training with co-providers?
Are individuals committed and motivated?

be involved in decision making and to take leadership responsibilities in their areas of expertise (Hafford-Letchfield *et al.* 2008).

Communities of practice are formed by people who strive together to learn and enhance their practice (Wenger, 2006). However, they are not necessarily groups deliberately convened for learning, and Wenger acknowledges that the existence of a community per se does not ensure that it provides an effective environment for learning and development. Having said that, our informal learning and our behaviour can be influenced at a fundamental level by the interactions we have with others and by the inherent beliefs and understandings of the communities in which we live and work. Social learning theories explain that within any social context people can learn from one another, from observation, imitation, and modelling (Bandura, 1997). Accordingly, team managers can use their understanding of group processes and social learning theories to put in place strategies to enhance the learning potential of such groups and communities of practice.

Plaskoff (2006) suggests that community building activities are critical if the potential to support learning within organisations is to be realised. He identifies a number of factors fundamental to the successful operation of a community of practice including trust, sense of belonging, equality and thriving relationships. He points out that in traditional hierarchical organisations trust can be undermined by the way that power is distributed and community building undermined by a lack of commitment to joint working. Managers striving to encourage a community of practice approach need to fully consider the way that they use and share their power, perhaps considering the early involvement of team members in community building processes such as agreeing priorities, philosophical underpinnings and common understandings.

Leaders may endeavour to work to adult learning principles and model the learning and development behaviour required by others. Leaders, acting as enablers of learning, need to allow for the individual and group variations in learning, and acknowledge the function and importance of the learning environment (physical and psychological). By working to the facilitative and supportive values embedded within adult learning principles, leaders become aware and take more account of the real issues, complexities and contradictions that practitioners face. By working co-operatively and meaningfully together in a community of practice, acknowledging the uncertainty of practice, as well as their own learning and development concerns, a meaningful learning culture is more likely to emerge.

It appears that a careful balance needs to be reached in terms of concentrating on the social, emotional and participatory dimensions of workplace learning and the focus on instrumental tasks (Lefevre, 2005).

Communities of practice and effective supervision

Effective supervision is both a means to achieving a community of practice and an outcome. One could see Adair's (1993) action-centred leadership as very hard to achieve without the dialogue between manager and team that social work's model of supervision generates. The Children's Workforce Development Council and Skills for Care have jointly introduced a supervision unit designed to provide a model of good practice and to assist in auditing and improving supervision by identifying relevant standards (SfC/CWDC, 2007). This is an important development aimed at improving the quality of supervision in a current climate that gives it considerable priority (Laming, 2009).

We would contend, however, that there are two futures for supervision that the unit might usher in. One where supervision becomes subject to scrutiny and audit, but the quality of practice really changes little- that is the unit becomes a monitoring tool - and one where there is an in-depth improvement in the quality of supervision – that is the unit becomes a developmental/educative tool. The latter is perhaps dependent on the standards being mobilised by a community of practice to bring change and is situated rather than universal.

This point has been well made by Hawkins and Shohet (2000) in arguing for the importance of a learning and development culture to effective supervision:

> '… a great deal of social work and indeed counselling and therapy is about creating the environment and relationships in which clients learn about themselves and their environment in a way that leaves them with more options than they arrived with… social workers, counsellors and therapists, etc. are best able to facilitate others to learn if they are supported in constantly learning and developing themselves. Hawkins and Shohet (2000 p. 137)

A community of practice is an effective vehicle for introducing complex changes arising from the Effective Supervision Unit (SfC 2007) because it:

- Engenders ownership and motivates the team
- Supports the personal development necessary to respond to the change
- Builds flexible teams that can adjust to the change
- Mobilises the team to problem-solve, drawing on both the leader's and the team's resources and facilitating creativity and innovation

Also, the culture a community generates supports the quality of relationships necessary for effective supervisory practice.

Interagency working and involving people who use services in case management and service design

One measure of team effectiveness is its ability to look outwards responding to the needs of those outside of the team and even welcoming them into the team. A team at an earlier stage of development may be inward looking, concerned with building trust and relationships and determining norms within the team. This can make it unresponsive to those outside of the team or even hostile (Mullins, 2007). Some teams can get stuck in a culture where they blame the wider organisation or co-providers for problems, giving themselves a sense of identity and togetherness in the process, but at considerable cost to their effectiveness.

The tendency for teams to become inward looking is seen by Total Quality Management (TQM) as generating many quality problems (Oakland, 2003). A TQM response is to establish 'quality circles' at the interface of teams or departments and encourage teams to either view 'the next process as the customer' or else focus on breaking down barriers between staff areas (Deming, 1994).In social work it is expressed as a drive towards multi-professional working (Barr et al., 2008; Quinney, 2006; Whittington et al., 2003).

Accepting that a higher performing and developed community of practice will be more outward looking, a constant challenge for the community is managing external relationships. The external relationship that offers the greatest challenge for social work is arguably with the people who use services.

Carr (2004) identifies a daunting number of problems that undermine the involvement of people who use services in developing service provision.

To be successful in building partnership and participation in service design and delivery, practice must be seen as a joint project (Beresford and Croft, 2002; Doel and Best, 2008). This shift is also the essence of personalisation and is one that demands major changes in practice and therefore in leadership and supervision to be successful (O'Leary and Lownsbrough, 2007). Personalisation could be construed as welcoming people who use services into the community of practice and that there is direct parallel here with the principles of therapeutic communities (Hinshelwood and Manning, 1979).

Communities of practice, like groups and teams have different levels of development (Tuckman, 1965). There are also different degrees of personalisation (Carr, 2008), suggesting that advanced communities of practice will be characterised by their inclusion of people who use services. In this way, the community will facilitate more advanced levels of personalisation and fuller participation of people who use services in service planning and design.

Learning organisations and communities of practice

Communities of practice offer an alternative perspective and approach to developing a learning organisation; a 'bottom up' approach in contrast to a 'top down' approach. It places team and group activity at the heart of service and practice development and it relies on team or group leadership to be effective.

Whilst it needs further exploration, the strength of a communities of practice approach is that a team or group leader may still be able to adopt it to good effect even in an unsupportive organisation. Even in an organisation dominated by managerialism it may be possible to create a 'micro- culture' of good communal practice. A leader may, however, need to give full attention to managing the interface with the wider organisation to ensure that its demands and imperatives do not undermine the community of practice and to ensure that the organisation does not come to see the community of practice as a threat. For instance, therapeutic communities as communities of practice can be seen to have been particularly prone to this conflict with the host organisation and therefore prone to closure (Hinshelwood and Manning, 1979). The high failure rate of early Total Quality Management initiatives could also be seen as resulting from the conflicts created by empowering work teams in a hierarchical organisation (Klein 1981; Thompson, 1982). However, a super-ordinate approach to developing a learning culture, that acknowledges organisational purpose and imperatives, may allow a community of practice to survive or even influence the development of the wider organisation.

Leading communities of practice: Understandings and skills

Table 1 clarifies the different cultures that must be accommodated to support a community of practice, generating community understandings and setting the agendas for community leadership.

In the super-ordinate model, all the cultures in order to be integrated must be shaped by a mixture of groupwork and leadership skills and learning and development skills driven by a humanistic value base. This overlays the cultures and is the ingredient that stops mechanistic approaches (Gray et al., 2008). Reflective leadership practice as well as reflective professional practice could also be seen as essential (Lawler & Bilson 2010)

This creates a demanding but social work congruent set of skills and knowledge for leaders or managers to acquire. Figure 2 shows some of the theoretical domains leading and contributing to a community of practice requires, accepting that an understanding of more general management theory is also a necessity.
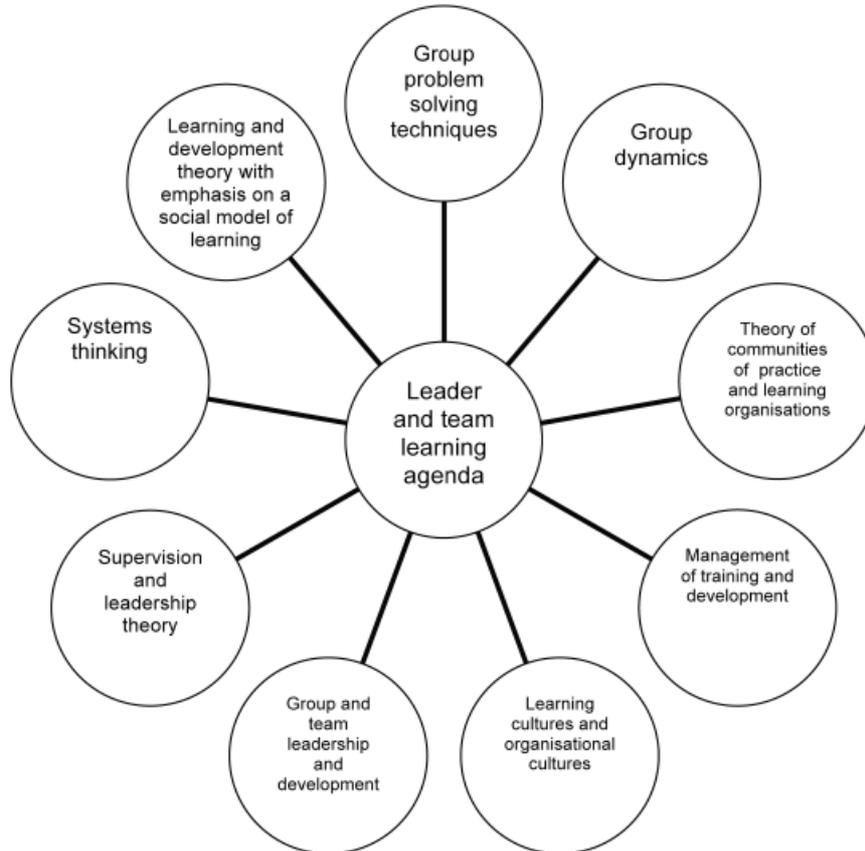
Fig 2. Leading a community of practice: The theoretical domain

The future of communities of practice in social work

Wenger suggests (1998) organisations are designs which construct their own discourses to justify themselves. Social work could be seen as locked into professional and managerial cultures, design initiatives and discourses. Learning organisations are on the contemporary managerial agenda. However, current policy initiatives do not reach for a super-ordinate model of learning culture, for communities of practice or for humanitarian and democratic learning cultures.

When exploring the SCIE organisational audit (SCIE, 2004) with team managers attending our leadership and management programmes many concluded that they

thought that their team had the characteristics of a learning organisation, but the wider organisation did not. This may have been loyalty to their team or simply optimism but, alternatively, it could be that the model revealed to them their community of practice whilst identifying the weaknesses of the wider organisation. Beddoe (2009) also notes this phenomenon and suggests there is a failure of social services organisations to learn from individual teams.

Developing communities of practice is therefore perhaps a strategy for first line managers. It may allow a value driven approach that can create a rewarding work environment for a team and, even given the limitations of an unsympathetic host organisation, has the potential of leading to considerable improvements in service quality. Making the approach explicit for managers can only assist and being realistic about the limitations set by the wider organisation will not, in fact, undermine it as a model. Taking the Effective Supervision Unit (SfC/CWDC, 2007), team managers leading communities of practice may well take a set of standards that will otherwise just increase their auditing burden and, by making the standards theirs and their teams, create a major change in the climate of supervision.

To provide the maximum momentum to the development of communities of practice in social work there is a compelling argument for this demanding learning agenda to be provided to all the potential stakeholders of a community of practice. This would mean, for instance, explicit integration into social work degree programmes and the Post Qualifying leadership and management pathway (GSCC, 2005). It would need to begin to appear as part of in–house training and would have to be at the centre of the specialist level Post Qualifying unit 'Enabling Others' (GSCC, 2006). It links clearly with the Social Work Task Force (2009) emphasis on partnership Working

Social work practitioners are motivated by a strong value base that means they seek to empower others and should have a developed self awareness and awareness of others from their training in social work methods and their everyday practice together with groupwork understandings and skills. Social Workers bring the motivation, perspectives and skills that would support the development of communities of practice. Developing communities of practice could therefore be a crucial opportunity to reach for. An opportunity that may prove truly productive in enhancing service quality, improving performance and building a bridge between managerialism and professional values, practices and experiences.

References

Adair, J., 1983. *Effective Leadership*. London: Pan

Bandura, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman

Barber, P., 1988. Learning to grow: the necessity for education processing in therapeutic community practice. *Journal of Therapeutic Communities,* 9, 2, 101-108

Barr, H., Goosey, D. and Webb, M. (2008) Social work in collaboration with other professions. in M. Davies (Ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work.* (3rd ed.) Oxford: Blackwell (pp. 277-86)

Beddoe, L. (2009) Creating conversation: Social workers and learning organisations. *Social Work Education*, 28: 7, 722-736

Beresford, P. (2003) *It's Our Lives: A short theory of knowledge, distance and experience*. London: Citizen Press

Beresford, P. and Croft, S. (2002) Involving service users in management :Citizenship, access and support. in J. Reynolds ,et al. (Eds.) *The Managing Care Reader.* London: Routledge (pp.21-28)

Blewitt, J. (2008) Social work in new policy contexts: Threats and opportunities. in S. Fraser and S. Matthews (Eds.) *The Critical Practitioner in Social Work and Health Care*. London: Sage

Brown, K., Immins, T., Bates, N., Gray, I., Rutter, L., Keen, S., Parker, J., and members of the Project's Steering Group (2007) *Tracking The Learning and Development Needs of Newly Qualified Social Workers Project*. Leeds: Skills for Care.

Care Standards Act (2000). *Care Standards Act 2000*. London: HMSO

Carr, S. (2004) *Has Service User Participation Made a Difference to Social Care Provision*. Scie position Paper 3. Bristol: Policy Press

Carr, S., 2008 *Personalisation: A rough guide*. London: Scie. http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/report20.pdf [Accessed 19th August 2009]

Dale, P., Davies, M., Morrison, T., and Waters, J. (1986) *Dangerous Families*. London: Tavistock

Deming, W.E. (1994) *Out of the Crisis.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

DfES/DH (Department of Health) (2006) *Options for Excellence. Building the social workforce of the future*. London: DfES/DH

Fuller, A., Hodkinson, H. Hodkinson, P., and Unwin, L. (2005) Learning as a peripheral participation in communities of practice: A reassessment of key concepts in workplace learning. *British Educational Research Journal*, 31, 1, 49-68

Gray, I., Parker, J., and Immins, T. (2008) Leading communities of practice in social work . Groupwork or management? *Groupwork* 18, 2, 26-41

Glendinning, C., Clarke, S., Hare, P., Inna Kotchetkova, I., Maddison, J., and Newbronner, L. (2006) *Outcomes-focused Services for Older People. Scie* Adults' services knowledge review 13. Bristol: Scie. http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/knowledgereviews/kr13.pdf [Accessed 19th August 2009]

Gould, N. (2000) Becoming a learning organisation: A social work example. *Social Work Education*, 19, 6, 585-596

Gould, N. and Baldwin, M.(2004) *Social Work, Critical Reflection and the Learning Organisation.* Aldershot: Ashgate

GSCC (2002) *Codes of Practice for Social Workers and Employers*. London: General Social Council

GSCC (2005). *Specialist Standards and Requirements for Post Qualifying Social Work Education and Training. Leadership and management*. London: General Social Council

GSCC (2006) *Specialist Standards and Requirements for Post Qualifying Social Work Education and Training. Practice education*. London: General Social Council

Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2006) *Management and Organisations in Social Work.* Exeter: Learning Matters

Hafford-Letchfield, T., Leonard, K., Begum, N., and Chick, N.F. (2008) *Leadership and Management in Social Care.* London :Sage

Hawkins,P. and Shohet, R. (2000) *Supervision in the Helping Professions.* Buckingham: Open University

Hersey, P. and Blanchard, K.H. (1993) *Management of Organisational Behaviour : Utilising human resources.* (6th ed.) London: Prentice Hall

Hinshelwood, R.D. and Manning, N. (1979) *Therapeutic Communities: Reflections and progress.* Abingdon: Routledge

Hoque,K., Taylor,S., and Bell, E. (2005) Investors in people: market led voluntarism in vocational education and training. *British Journal of Industrial Relations,* 43, 1, 135-153

Jordan, B. and Jordan, C. (2006) *Social Work and the Third Way: Tough love as social policy.* (3rd ed.) London: Sage

Klein, G. (1981) Implementing quality circles; A hard look at some of the realities. *Personnel Review,* November/December

Lawler, J. & Bilson, A., (2010) *Social Work Management and Leadership; Managing complexity with creativity.* London: Routledge

Lord Laming (2009) *The Protection of Children in England: A progress report.* London: TSO
http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/HC-330.pdf
[Accessed 1st)October 2009]

Martinez-Costa, M. and Jiminez-Jiminez, D. (2009) The effectiveness of TQM: the key role of organisational learning in small businesses, *International Small Business Journal,* 27, 1, 98-125

Martin, G.P., Phelps, K. and Katbamna, S. (2004) Human motivation and professional practice: Knights, knaves and social workers, *Social Policy and Administration,* 38, 5, 470-87

Mayhew, N., (2006) B*oard Level Development- Beyond Change Management.*
http://www.executive.modern.nhs.uk/inview/inviewarticle.aspx?id=58
[Accessed 15.02.09]

Morgan G. (2006) *Images of Organisation.* London: Sage

Mullins, l., (2007) *Management and Organisational Behaviour.* (8th ed.) Harlow: Prentice Hall

Oakland, J.S. (2003*) Total quality management- text with cases.* Third edition. London:Heinemann

O'Leary, D. and Lownsbrough H. (2007) *The Leadership Imperative.*
http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/leadershipimperative [Accessed 22nd August 2009]

Parker, J. (2007) Developing effective practice learning for tomorrow's social workers, *Social Work Education,* 26, 8, 763-79

Payne, M. (2005) *Modern social Work Theory.* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan

Penhale, B. and Parker, J. (2008) *Working with Vulnerable Adults.* London: Routledge

Plaskoff, J. (2006) Intersubjectivity and community building: Learning to learn organisationally. in M.A. Easterby-Smith and M.A. Lyles (Eds) *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management.* Oxford: Blackwell

Quinney, A. (2006) *Collaborative Social Work Practice.* Exeter: Learning Matters

Reynolds, J., Henderson, J., Seden, J. Charlesworth, J and Bullman, A. (Eds.) (2002) *The Managing reader.* UK: Routledge

SCIE (2004) *Learning Organisations: A self assessment resource pack. London:* Social Care Institute for Excellence

Senge, P.M. (1990*). The Fifth Discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*. London: Random House

SfC/CWDC (Skills for England) 2007. *Providing Effective Supervision.* Leeds: SfC
http://www.skillsfor.org.uk/files/Effective%20Supervision%20unit.pdf
[Accessed 14th April 2008]

Sinclair, I. (2008) Inspection: A quality-control perspective. in M. Davies (Ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work*, (3rd ed.) Oxford: Blackwell. (pp. 449-57)

Thompson, N., (2006) *Promoting Workplace Learning.* Bristol: BASW / Policy Press

Thompson, W. (1982) Is the organisation ready for quality circles*. Training and Development Journal*, December

Tsui, M., S. (2005) *Social Work Supervision: Contexts and concepts.* London: Sage

Tuckman,B.W. (1965) Developmental sequence in small groups, P*sychological bulletin* 63, 384-99

Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of Practice. Learning, meaning and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Wenger, E. (2004) *Knowledge Management as a Doughnut: Shaping your knowledge through communities of practice*. Ivey Business Journal, 68, 3, 1-8

Wenger, E. (*c*2006) *Etienne Wenger Home Page http://www.ewenger.com* [Accessed 19th December 2009]

Wenger, E. (2006) *Communities of Practice: A brief introduction*.
http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm [Accesssed 15th January 2010]