

Making transitions: the role of interaction in joining a new Community of Practice

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Interaction is the main channel through which people establish connections with others at work, but it is also a crucial means of learning how to become a well-integrated member of the workplace community and of becoming acquainted with relevant professional values. While local norms or “ways of doing things round here” are sometimes made explicit by a mentor or workplace buddy, analysis of workplace interaction in a range of New Zealand workplaces indicates that the rules for appropriate behaviour and the related professional values are often very subtle and inexplicit. This paper examines some of the challenges this raises for workers transitioning from one country, organisation, or workplace team to another.