The OHS consultant as a facilitator of learning in workplace design processes - DTU Orbit (02/11/2019)

The OHS consultant as a facilitator of learning in workplace design processes: Four explorative case studies of current practice

Occupational health service (OHS) consultancy on workplace design processes in client enterprises is expected also to entail some elements of learning. When the OHS consultant has performed the task the enterprise should have learned something on how to integrate health and safety aspects into the workplace design process, thereby making it easier for the enterprise to manage such a change in the future. The objective of this explorative study was to survey current practice of OHS consultants and put forward recommendations on how to improve the learning aspects of OHS consultancy. Four cases were studied by qualitative methods. Episodes of potential learning during the OHS consultancy were identified based on two different learning models. It was concluded that learning aspects of the OHS consultant work practice were not intentionally considered. In spite of that, episodes of potential learning were identified. This took place when the OHS consultant was working across organizational departments and borders and facilitated meetings between actors from different parts of the organization. It was also concluded that the OHS consultant should carefully choose boundary objects as learning devices between different communities of practice. Certain boundary objects work better than others in promoting learning and collaborative workplace design processes. For both industry and OHS units it is of importance to properly understand learning models and to align their mutual expectations to the learning aspects of OHS consultancy.

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