

# PODCAST 4

## Developing and recognising new capability through the Award

### Guidance Notes

This podcast examines the particular forms of capability that the Award is intended to develop and recognise, together with the more intangible qualities, values and dispositions that make you who you are.

#### What do we mean by capability?

John Stephenson defines capability 'as an integration of confidence in one's own knowledge, skills, self-esteem and values.... Capability depends much more on our confidence to effectively use and develop our skills in complex and changing circumstances than on our mere possession of those skills.'

While this emphasises the totality and integrated nature of capability its not very helpful in helping us understand it. John Stephenson developed the following working definition of capability

#### SLIDE 2

##### What do we mean by capability?

**Capable people have confidence in their own ability to**

- **take effective and appropriate action**
- **explain what they are about**
- **live and work effectively with others and**
- **continue to learn from their experiences as individuals and in association with others, in a diverse and changing society.**

*From Quality in Learning, edited by John Stephenson and Susan Weil, published by Kogan Page, London in 1992.*

#### *Values, self-esteem and a commitment to learning*


Capability is not just about skills and knowledge. Taking effective and appropriate action within unfamiliar and changing circumstances involves judgments, values, the self-confidence to take account of and work with risks and it involves a commitment to learn from the experience.

Educating for capability is developed as much by the way we learn as by what we learn. If we have experience of being responsible and accountable for our own learning, within a supportive, enabling and empowering environment, we will develop confidence in our own ability to take effective and appropriate action.

### SLIDE 3

Learning Trajectory	Details
TASK PERFORMANCE	Speed and fluency Complexity of tasks and problems Range of skills required Communication with a wide range of people Collaborative work
AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING	Other people: colleagues, customers, managers etc. Context and situations One's own organisation Problems and risks Priorities and strategic issues Value issues
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	Self evaluation Self-management Handling emotions Building and sustaining relationships Disposition to attend to other perspectives Disposition to consult and work with others Disposition to learn and improve one's practice Accessing relevant knowledge and expertise Ability to learn from experience Use of evidence and argument
ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	Accessing formal knowledge Research-based practice Theoretical thinking Knowing what you might need to know Using knowledge resources (human, paper-based, electronic) Learning how to use relevant theory in a range of practical situations
ROLE PERFORMANCE	Prioritisation Range of responsibility Supporting other people's learning Leadership Accountability Supervisory role Delegation Handling ethical issues Coping with unexpected problems Crisis management Keeping up-to-date
TEAMWORK	Collaborative work Facilitating social relations Joint planning and problem solving <b>Ability to engage in and promote mutual learning</b>
DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING	When to seek expert help Dealing with complexity Group decision making Problem analysis Formulating and evaluating opinions Managing the process within an appropriate timescale Decision making under pressure
JUDGEMENT	Quality of performance, output and outcomes Priorities Value issues Levels of work

**What does capability look like in the workplace?**




**Michael Eraut**

**Professional capability – Everything someone or a group knows and can do - defined through learning trajectories**

We can also develop our understanding of what capability means through the extensive research conducted by Michael Eraut into how professionals learn through work, Michael concluded that **your capability is everything you know and can do to bring to a situation** (Michael Eraut 2010).

He went on to elaborate the dimensions of capability in the professional environment concluding that all professionals advance or regress their capability along over 30 different dimensions, which he called learning trajectories. Development or regression of a particular learning trajectory depended on whether their everyday practice enabled or stopped them from using their know how and gaining and learning from the experience of dealing with new situations (Eraut, 2010: 63).

## SLIDE 4



**Professionals harness their capability to deal with the situations they encounter in the work environment**  
**Michael Eraut (2007)**  
<http://learningtobeprofessional.pbworks.com/How-professionals-learn-through-work>

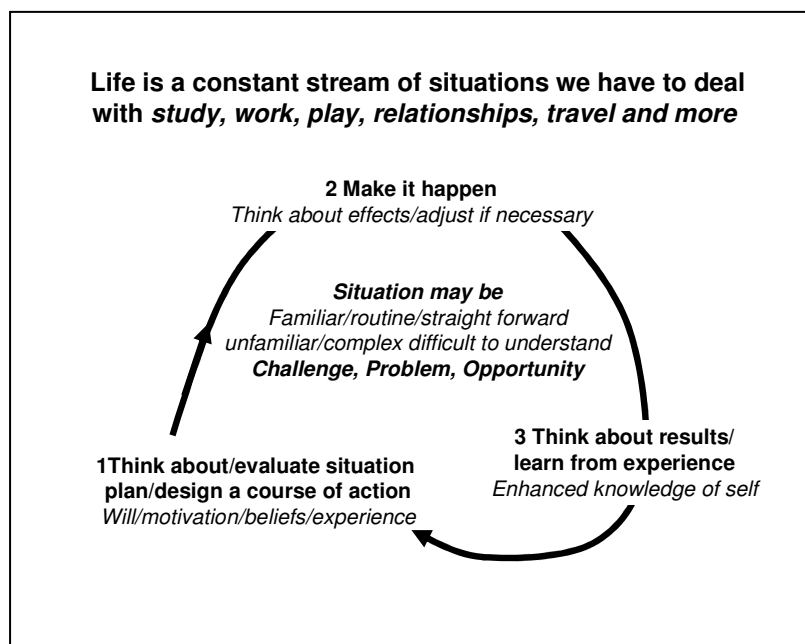
- **Assessing situations** (sometimes briefly, sometimes involving a long process of investigation) and continuing to monitor their condition
- **Deciding what, if any, action to take**, both immediately and over a longer period (either on one's own or as a member of a team)
- **Pursuing an agreed course of action**, performing professional actions - modifying, consulting and reassessing as and when necessary
- **Metacognitive monitoring** of oneself, people needing attention and the general progress of the case, problem, project or situation; and sometimes learning through reflection on the experience.

Michael Eraut also demonstrated that professional capability is geared towards dealing with situations in the work environment – the problems and challenges that a particular professional deals with day in day out using their specialised knowledge and skills, applying them confidently and in a professional manner.

Common sense tells us that this holistic view of capability and the focus for learning is likely to be more generally applicable to the broader pattern of learning across our lives. So the question to ponder is 'what would the dimensions of capability look like that embodied the whole of our life-wide learning enterprise?'

## Capability promoted through the life-wide learning award

## SLIDE 5



**Podcast 3** focused on the importance of being able to deal with and create situations and we have positioned the life-wide learning award in terms of a more complete education for developing further the key capability needed to engage effectively with everyday situations. We believe that this capability is transferable between the different contexts of life and that it is of particular relevance and value to students when they progress to fulltime work and their chosen careers.

Being able to deal with situations involves solving problems, working with challenges and creating opportunities for yourself. It involves dealing with situations that are familiar or unfamiliar and of all levels of complexity. It involves working in real time and sustaining interaction over long periods of time in order to achieve a particular goal. It involves working by yourself and with others.

Your reflections will show how you have worked with challenge and uncertainty, and engaged with problems in a range of *real world* situations. These stories will reveal how you have understood and analysed a situation, decided what to do, found things out in order to decide what needs to be done, done things and learnt through the experience. In short, how you have made things happen. Your stories will not necessarily reflect success, in some cases stories may reveal how you have had to overcome significant setbacks and demonstrate your resilience in the face of failure. Coping with failure and trying again is another significant dimension of dealing with situations.

## **SLIDE 6**

The award encourages you to think about these important dimensions of capability to deal with situations and make things happen. In particular,

**Being able to develop the knowledge you need to deal with the situation:** to be able to find out what you need to know in order to do what you need to do.

We often don't know enough about something to take action so we have to find out. In the real world our everyday learning is likely to come from other more knowledgeable people than books.

**Being creative and enterprising:** to make things happen you often need to be creative, enterprising and resourceful in order to invent new solutions, adapt to changing circumstances in novel ways and create new opportunities for yourself.

In general we pay little attention to creativity in every day life. This is not the creativity we associate with artistic enterprise. Its more about using your

imagination, having good ideas, seeing things that no one else has, connecting and adapting things and perhaps inventing things that are new to you.

**Being an effective communicator** : to make things happen you need to be an effective communicator, to be able to communicate in ways that are appropriate to the situation, and communicate to different audiences using different media.

Think of the situations you encounter and almost everyone will involve some form of communication. It involves many things, talking, listening, writing, emailing, using images, audio or video. Increasingly it involves the internet.

**Being able to work with and lead others:** to make things happen you often need to involve other people. Your reflections will reveal how you have worked and developed relationships with other people and taken the initiative in helping others make good decisions and actions.

**Behaving ethically and with social responsibility:** in making things happen you will need to make decisions about what is right and wrong. Your reflections will reveal how you have dealt with ethical issues in situations you have encountered. How do you decide what is right or wrong. How have you considered the perspectives and values of other people in order to do the right thing.

### **Recognising your commitment to making your own education more complete**

The Life-wide Learning Award values and recognises the personal development that you have decided to undertake in order to develop your capability for engaging in the situations that make up your life and become a more rounded and developed person. This includes both the day to day learning we all need to accomplish for a particular task, and the more strategic development which moves us in the direction of who we want to become.

Managing your own development involves you deciding that you are going to do and doing it. Fundamentally, its about your will to take on certain things and engage in experiences that are likely to result in personal development.

In successfully completing the award you will have demonstrated that you have:

- taken responsibility for, thought about, planned for and engaged in your own personal development, taking advantage of the opportunities available to you on and off campus

- reflected on and evaluated the learning and personal development you have gained through the experiences that you have chosen to incorporate into your claim for life-wide learning
- documented your experiences and what you have learnt from them, and gathered and organized evidence of your learning and development in your Life Skills Portfolio
- summarised and communicated what you have learnt and how you have developed through a reflective account and an enhanced CV.

## **Your will and your values**

At this start of this podcast we referred to John Stephenson's definition of capability 'as an integration of confidence in one's knowledge, skills, self-esteem and values... We agree with this view of capability and through your engagement with the award you will also have the opportunity to demonstrate your capability for dealing with and creating situations and show us

**How you have exercised your will to be and become who you want to be:** the award is intended to nurture your spirit to become the person you want to be. We are interested in understanding why you choose to do the things you did to develop yourself. What meanings did you give to these experiences?

**Your values:** your reflections will reveal the values you invested in the enterprises to which you contributed and the value you added to lives of other people and the enterprises you participated in.

**Your growing confidence:** your reflections will reveal how your confidence has developed as a result of encountering and dealing effectively with situations, accomplishing new things and coping with significant challenges

## **Recap**

In this podcast we have considered:

- The idea of capability and examined the results of research into how professionals learn and used this knowledge to inform our thinking about the capability the award is intended to promote.
- We have shown how the life-wide learning award is positioned in terms of encouraging the further development of your capability for dealing with and creating situations and elaborated a number of dimensions we believe are important to your capability
- We have recognised that capability is an integrated concept involving the will to develop certain forms of capability, and confidence to develop and

use our own knowledge, skills, qualities and values to achieve particular purposes.

## How can you apply this knowledge?

Think of a couple of specific examples of recent situations that have required you to practice and develop these dimensions of capability. Sketch out what you did in each part of this diagram.

### Evaluating your own capability

Dimensions of capability	Over the last 12 months what examples of situations can you give that have required you to practice and develop these dimensions of capability	How would you rate your overall performance? <i>Weak – lots of scope for improvement</i> <i>Okay but could be improved</i> <i>Completely satisfactory – cant imagine how I can improve</i>
Managing your own development		
Being able to deal with and create situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity		
Being creative and enterprising		
Being a good communicator		
Being able to work with and lead others		
Behaving ethically and with social responsibility		
<i>Other items which are important to you, and which are not included in the above</i>		