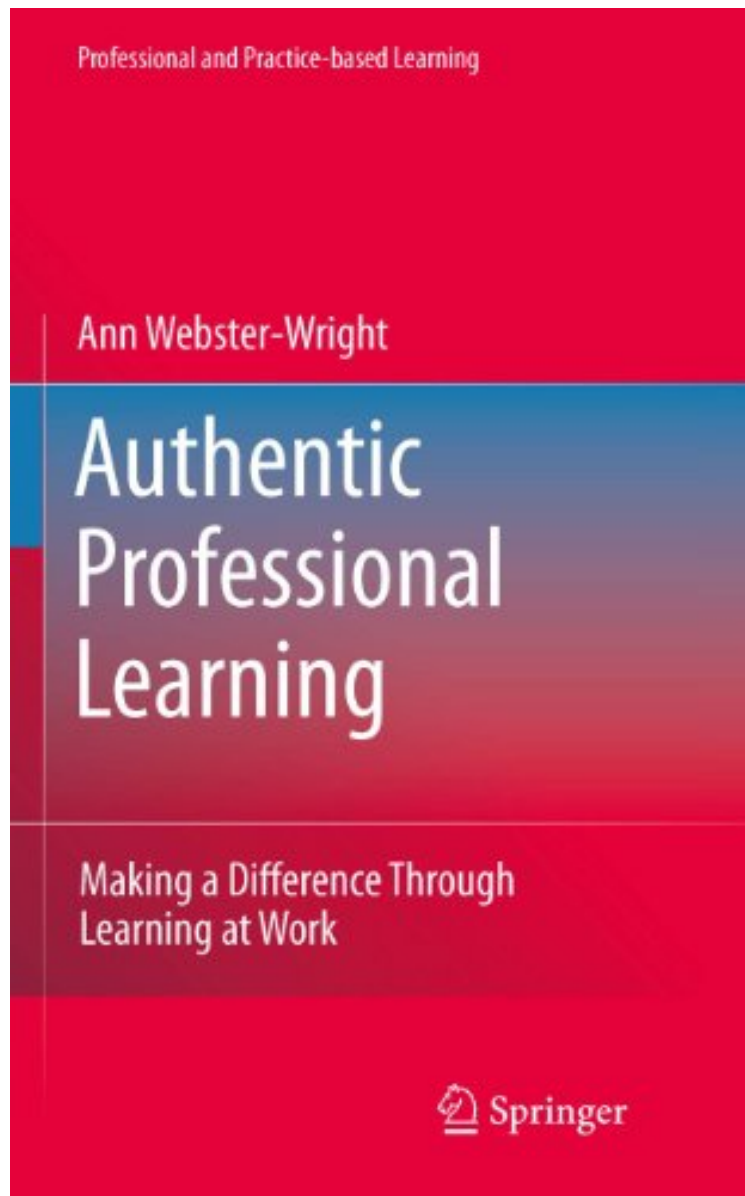


(Ebook pdf) Authentic Professional Learning: Making a Difference Through Learning at Work: 2  
(Professional and Practice-based Learning)

# Authentic Professional Learning: Making a Difference Through Learning at Work: 2 (Professional and Practice-based Learning)

Ann Webster-Wright

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(Professional and Practice-based Learning):

There is considerable and growing interest in professionals learning across their working lives. The growth in this interest is likely premised upon the increasing percentage of those who are being employed under the designation as professional or para-professional workers in advanced industrial economies. Part of being designated in this way is a requirement to be able to work autonomously and in a relatively self-regulated manner. Of course, many other kinds of employment also demand such behaviours. However, there is particular attention being given to the ongoing development of workers who are seen to make crucial decisions and take actions about health, legal and financial matters. Part of this attention derives from expectations within the community that those who are granted relative autonomy and are often paid handsomely should be current and informed in their decision-making. Then, like all other workers, professionals are required to maintain their competence in the face of changing requirements for work. Consequently, a volume that seeks to inform how best this ongoing learning can be understood, supported and assisted is most timely and welcomed. This volume seeks to elaborate professional learning through a consideration of the concept of authentic professional learning. What is proposed here is that, in contrast to programmatic approaches towards professional development, the process of continuing professional learning is a personal, complex and diverse process that does not lend itself to easy prescription or the realisation of others' intents.

From the Back Cover Meeting the challenges of an unpredictable global future will be hard enough for all sectors, but one thing is certain: ongoing learning by all of the professions is vital. This book applies cutting-edge educational theory to the concept of lifelong learning. It argues for a significant paradigm shift from the traditional practice of providing programs to develop professionals, towards enabling professionals' capability for authentic inquiry into their own practices. In doing so, the text contributes much to the ongoing debate about how professionals can be supported in ways that nourish them as individuals as well as leading to worthwhile and sustainable outcomes for society as a whole. The book highlights a disparity between the reality of professionals' learning experiences and the rhetoric commonly employed in relation to professional performance development. Empirical data reveal that professionals take their responsibilities to improve their practice seriously, but consider their continuing learning needs to be more profound than that provided by narrow professional development rhetoric. The didactic and episodic nature of many professional development activities does not adequately support the multifaceted and idiosyncratic nature of authentic professional learning, as lived by professionals in practice. In this volume, the common themes across diverse experiences of learning are defined within a phenomenological framework as understanding, engagement, interconnection and openness. Realistic guidelines to support learning, in ways that balance professional accountability and agency, are elucidated in the context of this framework. The book highlights contemporary workplace dilemmas for professionals, including those working in healthcare, who are anxious to make a difference to the lives of those they care for. Drawing on phenomenological philosophy, Ann Webster-Wright explores the issue of authenticity in professional life as well as the contribution that professionals can make to society. 'This book is a pioneering example of the kind of studies that are needed to further understanding of professional practice and how it can be improved. It focuses on what practitioners can do to act together for themselves. It applies the notion of being professional to the core of practice: learning from what one does.' David Boud 'This book does more than merely challenge the traditional way of conceptualising professional development. It also offers bases for reshaping efforts to secure all ongoing professional learning in ways centred on the learners themselves.' Stephen Billet