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Please select the type of contribution, only one choice :

- \* Workshop [ ]
- \* Plenary Speech [X ]

Title of your workshop presentation/plenary speech:

**Trade Union Promotion Of  
Workplace Learning and Lifelong Learning in the UK**

Objectives of your presentation:

**Summary of content (max 600 words):**

Significant changes in economic, political and legal circumstances after the Second World War have greatly altered the role of trade unions in West European countries. In the UK, one of the most significant changes has been the development of Trade Union involvement in negotiating workers' access to Lifelong Learning within a framework of Social Partnership. These developments are both exciting and significant, but they are, not yet, as wide spread as they might be.

These changing climates have also had a bearing on a series of relationships, particularly in terms of the nature and character of industrial relations; the work force and their representation by trade unions and the bargaining relations between unions and management. The UK literature emphasises the varying contexts in which the developments take place, through, for example, differing constitutional and legal contexts, underwriting human rights and the range of powers that governments and other bodies can exercise. These have an important impact on the nature and direction of the relationships, between the parties, in response to priorities and desired changes.

It has been argued that Trade Unions have been, for the past 150 years or more, the largest provider of adult learning outside the formal education system in the UK.(Fisher 2006) Since the late 1980s, Trade Unions in the UK have taken a more pro-active approach to bargaining for and developing Work-based Learning within a wider context of Lifelong Learning. This paper argues that: an apparent and ever-increasing engagement between Trade Unions and Employers, and Trade Unions and Further and Higher Education is part of an historical process which should be welcomed, supported and developed positively.

To better understand this topic we must have clear definitions about the various key terms employed by commentators, as they are often wrongly or at least mistakenly used as interchangeable. In addition, to understand the history and impact of Trade Unions on Lifelong Learning and Trade Union involvement in Workplace Learning, we must first understand something of the structures and mechanisms for bargaining relations between the UK Economic Partners and how they relate to LL, industry and wider civic society.

Since the Second World War ended, there have been four main approaches to bargaining in UK industry which involved Trade Unions:

- 'Free Collective Bargaining'
- 'Corporatism or Tripartism'

- 'Partnership' also called 'Economic Partnership' under Human Resource Management (HRM)
- 'Social Partnership' the EU Model

And finally, this short paper seeks to shed some light on:

- The need for clarity and definition of terms used in the field.
- The development of 'Government Strategies' for Lifelong Learning in the UK. And why this is not the same as 'Government Policy' for Lifelong Learning.
- The weaknesses of the Leitch Report and highlights the fact that Leitch has all but 'Airbrushed the Trade Unions out of his Report.
- The need to build 'trust relations' within organisations, between partners and between individual workers.
- The impact of Trade Union promotion of Lifelong Learning.
- The Trade Union imperative to use Lifelong Learning as a tool, not only to recruit new trade union members, important as that is but to also use it to; revitalise, reactivate and remake Union Organisation at all levels.
- A short Case Study which will shed some light on 'one model' of Trade Union promotion of Lifelong Learning and Workplace Learning in the UK.
- The need to develop Lifelong Learning across industry and out into Civic Society
- Some questions which may be pertinent for Trade Unions involved in promoting Lifelong Learning and developing strategies for self-sustaining people, organisations and communities.

**Questions for discussion/workshop activity:**