
Why do more advanced apprentices ask more questions and request more help than others at the workplace?

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Help seeking and self-regulated learning

- Needing help as a potential mark of incompetence in the traditional classroom.
- Help seeking behaviours as an important strategy in a self-regulated learning paradigm (Newman, 1994; Karabenick, 2006)
- Seeking help as adaptative (Newman, 1994)
- Instrumental help seeking vs executive (expedient) help seeking (Karabenick, 2004)
- Help-seeking vs help-avoiding behaviours (Butler, 1998; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

Why would you avoid asking for help when needed?

Students' personal characteristics

- Seeking help interferes with autonomy strivings, ability concerns or expedient perceptions (Butler, 1998)
- Help-seeking avoidance is more important among low achievers (Newman & Goldin, 1990) and among students perceiving themselves as low in social competences (Ryan and Pintrich, 1997)
- Help seeking tendencies are directly related to global self-esteem and to learning strategies use (Karabenick & Knapp, 1991)

Why would you avoid asking for help when needed?

Classroom's or potential helpers' characteristics

- Perceived classroom goal structure predicts help-seeking approach or avoidance (Karabenick, 2004)
- Individualistic norms inhibit, collectivistic norms promote help seeking (Sandoval & Lee, 2006)
- Teachers are preferred than classmates as helpers (Newman & Schwager, 1993)
- Strong personal relationship with teachers heightens students intentions to seek help (Newman & Schwager, 1993)
- Teachers react more positively to help requests in classes high in perceived mastery orientations (Turner et al., 2002)

Research questions

- Are attitudes and behaviours towards help identical at school and at the workplace?
- What kind of help do apprentices ask for at the workplace, when and from whom?
- How do their requests for help evolve with expertise, along their training years?

Participants in the research

28 volunteer apprentices in car mechanics

- 4 in year 1
- 6 in year 2
- 9 in year 3
- 9 in year 4



All of them working in garages of 10-15 people

Setting

- Apprentices were equipped with mobile phones and handfree headsets or headband cameras
- They were called for an hour up to 7 times each and asked to describe thoroughly what they were currently doing while acting in the garage
- All calls were transcribed and analysed

Focus of the research

- Types of activities executed by apprentices
- Verbal interactions (questions, help-requests) initiated by an apprentice in the garage
- Recipients of the help-requests (supervisor, fellow mechanics, store department, secretary, client, ...)
- Nature and content of such help-requests
- Timing, durations and consequences of help requests, impact on the working mode

Nature of the activities according to years of experience

- Transcript of 947 questions or help-requests
- Apprentices often work alone. Colleagues however are never far
- Activities are rather long-lasting and often repetitive
- Many activities given to 4th year apprentices are similar to those given to apprentices in their 1. or 2. year of training already

but....

Nature of the activities according to years of experience

- Activities reserved to more experienced apprentices are less defined problems (noises; faulty electronics; air losses), rare or security related problems
- More experienced apprentices sometimes work in parallel on different "problems" or cars, less experienced ones don't
- 3d and 4th year apprentices seem to have more opportunities to work together with licensed mechanics than less experienced apprentices

Number and Frequency of the diverse types of help-requests observed

- On average one request for help is made every 6 minutes approximately
- 60% of them are produced while working collaboratively
- Only 13% of the requests formulated while working alone forces the helper to stay aside the helpee for more than one minute

Evolution of help-requests with experience during apprenticeship

- More advanced apprentices produce more requests than their “younger” peers

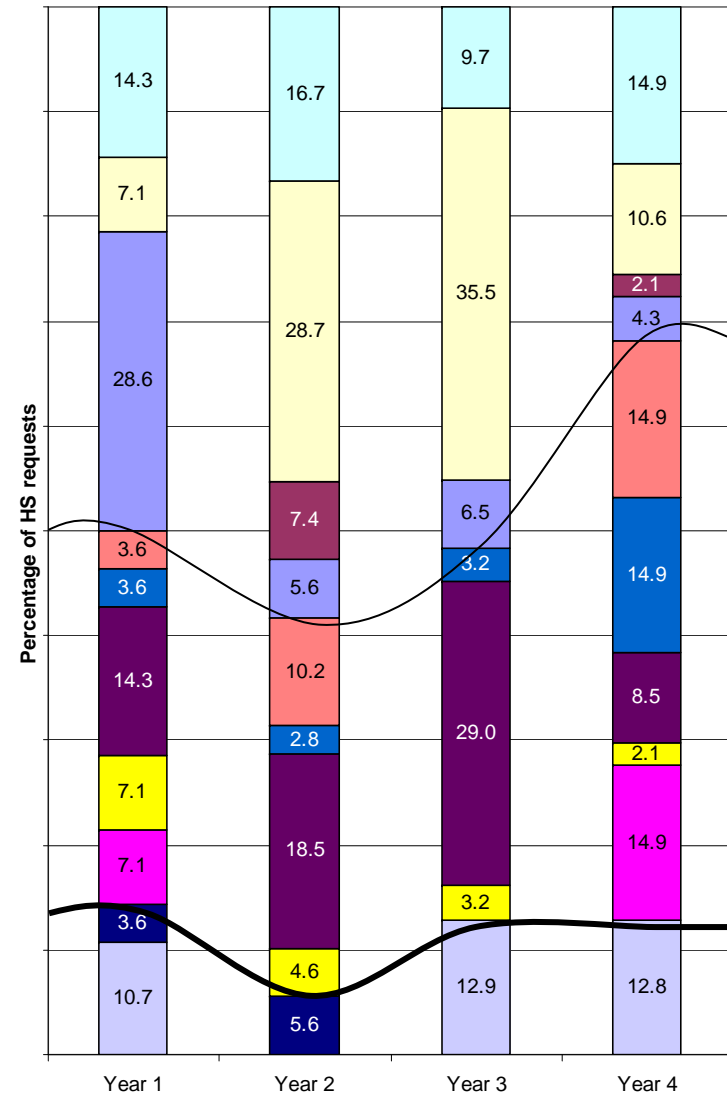
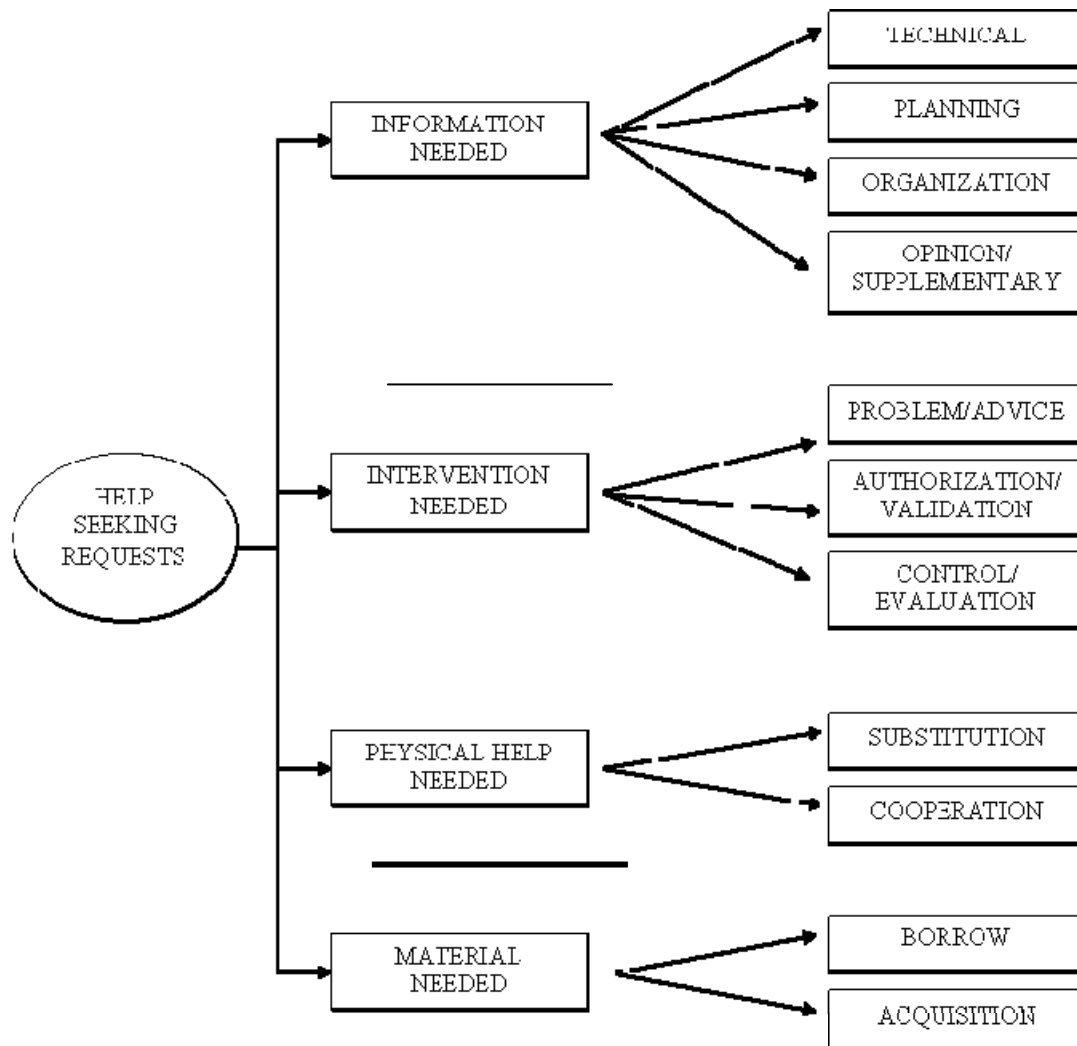
Year of training	Mean number of requests per session
1	5.71
2	8.33
3	12.12
4	13.11

Evolution of help-requests with experience during apprenticeship

- More advanced apprentices (year 3 and 4) tend to work more often with colleagues than year 1 and 2 apprentices

Year of training	Mean number of collaborative work at start of a session
1	0.14
2	0.00
3	0.21
4	0.30

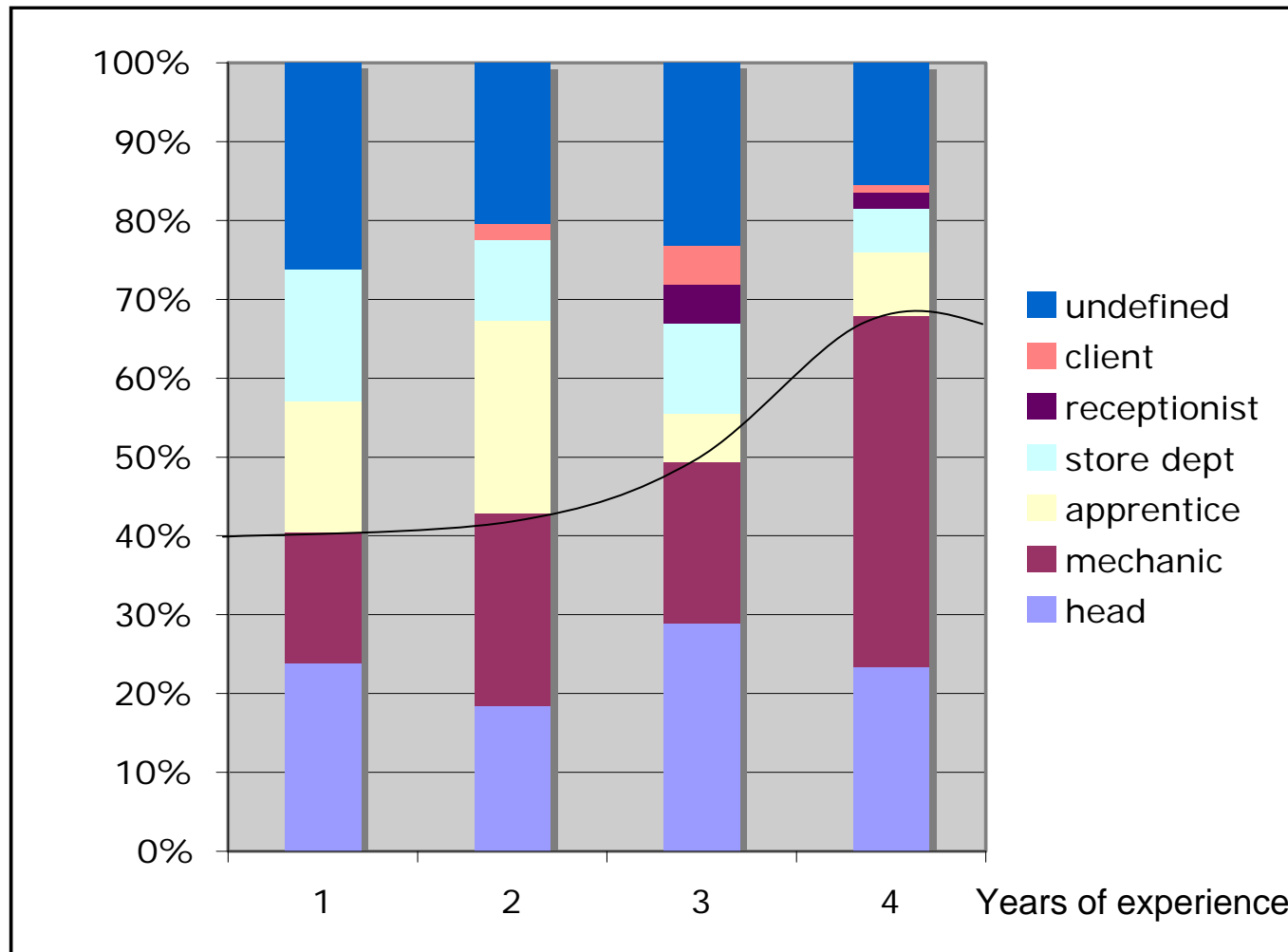
Types of Help-requests and their relative frequencies at the WP



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Evolution of addressees with years of experience during apprenticeship



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Evolution of help-requests with experience during apprenticeship

For apprentices in their **first** years of training

- Learning at the workplace = Learning to be autonomous “the hard way”
- “legitimate peripheral participation” is true at the institutional level, not at the activity level
- guided learning is limited to their first weeks in the enterprise
- Help remains (deliberately?) parcimonious

Evolution of help-requests with experience during apprenticeship

For apprentices in their **last** year(s) of training

- Learning at the workplace = Learning to be full professionals
- Collaboration is intensified with professionals
- Guided learning “re-starts” in order to take advantage of the potential for learning of non-frequent situations

Evolution of help-requests with experience during apprenticeship

- Although encouraged, requests for help are controlled by the physical organisation and the distribution of work at the WP
- Opportunities and reasons to ask for help increase over the years of training due to participation in more cooperative and less trivial work
- Nature of addressees attest apprentice's progressive changes in status:
 - More frequent exchanges with “grown up” mechanics
 - Less frequent interaction with other apprentices
 - Lower time spent outside of the “atelier”

Concluding remarks

- Ethnographic studies provide new insights on help-seeking behaviours “in action”
- Ethnographic studies show the importance of taking needs for help into account in Help-seeking research
- Help-seeking behaviours evolve with expertise, nature and mode of work and
- so do also the pedagogical objectives and attitudes of their supervisors at the workplace.