

Searching for extended identity: the problematised role of managing people development, as illuminated by the Frontline Management Initiative

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During the past year, there has been considerable research undertaken to explore and evaluate the Frontline Management Initiative (FMI). The FMI is positioned in this text as an important initiative, because it marks the political move towards workplace learning, and provides evidence concerning the development of managing identities and the management of such workplace learning. This paper seeks to examine the FMI as a technology of identity within the discourse of enterprise, and as an instrument of the textualisation of the workplace. As such the FMI is seen as a dichotomy, a powerful tool to both promote elite representations of managing, and in contrast, creating learning spaces within which individuals extend their identity to include managing. FMI is thus positioned on the battleground for the development of manager identity. The paper concludes by identifying the diversity that is emerging from workplace practices, and indicating the critical and problematised role of people development managers as a primary future research imperative.