

**“There are workplace trainers and then
there are workplace trainers”:
Re-conceptualising their role as workers and trainers**

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Recent attention has focussed on the pervasiveness of informal learning in the workplace and the important role played by workers in fostering the learning of their work colleagues (Harris and Simons 1999). This has raised some significant questions with regard to the role of the workplace trainer and how that role might be conceptualised.

In the light of the presenters' findings from an NREC-funded research study on workplace trainers, this paper will offer a critique of the current conception of the role of workplace trainer as represented in the Training Package for Assessment and Workplace Training. Then, drawing on network learning theory, distinctions will be drawn between different types of workplace trainers - and in particular, the roles of trainers who are primarily located in the workplace and the roles of trainers who are primarily located in training providers but also enter organisations to train workers. A model, highlighting how workplace trainers act on and within the learning and work networks in their enterprises to facilitate learning, will be presented and discussed.

Key words: workplace trainers, informal learning, network learning theory

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