

Research Activity 5: Investigating learning through work

Introduction

All organisations, including Australian RTOs, are looking to find ways to achieve competitive advantage through the people they employ. Creating this advantage has a number of facets and most of these depend on the training/development of people and their ability to learn.

At the same time the use of traditional training, as the key to improving individual and organisational capability is no longer regarded as sufficient in itself to satisfy the needs of the contemporary work environment. Problems of transfer, flattened organisational structures, financial and time constraints, commercial pressures and the changing nature of work itself have led to renewed interest in finding *learning* solutions rather than training solutions to workforce development; with learning conceptualised as a central, on-going and integral feature of contemporary work.

This research activity is designed to investigate this issue by harnessing the latest thinking concerning learning through work and applying it to the needs of different Australian RTOs.

The research activity will:

- review the latest thinking and evidence from Australian and European researchers who have identified the characteristics of the contemporary work environment that lead to effective learning at work
- analyse the current learning and development practices of a range of RTOs including the mix of learning and training solutions that are deployed
- analyse the current strategies that support learning at work and the extent to which the characteristics identified as leading to effective learning at work are present

Products

- **Diagnostic tool** to evaluate the extent to which the organisation of work is conducive to learning
- **Literature review** that provides the rationale for the development of the tool
- **Final research report** that summarises the findings of the research activity

Benefits

Participating RTOs will benefit from this research by:

- being able to identify how well they are creating a learning-conducive workplace
- becoming more self-reliant in terms of learning and development
- being the first to use the diagnostic tool in their own business
- identifying strategies to improve the ability of their workforce to learn at work leading to an increase in organisational performance