In What Ways Does the Workplace influence Trainee Learning?

Michelle Phillips Melick

2015

Certificate of Original Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Michelle Phillips Melick
Date:

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List of Acronyms

AAC	Australian Apprenticeship Centre
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACOTAFE	Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education
AiG	Australian Industry Group
AQF	Australian Qualification Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
AWPA	Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency
CBT	Competency Based Training
DET	Department of Employment and Training
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEVET	Department of Employment
DEVETIR	Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training and Industrial Relations
ESCAN	Environment Scan
ETRF	Education and Training REFORMS for the Future
IBSA	Innovation and Business Skills Australia
ICT	Information Communications Technology
ISC	Industry Skills Council
ITAB's	Industry Training Advisory Boards
LLN	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
MCVTE	Ministerial Council for vocational and Technical Education
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MCTEE	Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment
NAS	New Apprenticeship Schemes
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Educational Research
NQC	National Quality Council
NRT	Nationally Recognised Training
NSF	National Skills Framework
NTF	National Training Framework
NTP's	National Training Packages
NTIS	National Training Information Service
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
RTO	Registered Training Organisation

STAs	State and Territory Training Authorities
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TDA	TAFE Directors Australia
TYIMS	Training and Youth Internet Management System
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WHS	Workplace Health and Safety

Glossary of Terms - adapted from the National Quality Council Training Package

Access and Equity: policies and approaches aimed at ensuring that vocational education and training (VET) are responsive to the individual needs of clients whose age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, sexuality, language skills, literacy or numeracy level, unemployment, imprisonment or remote location may present a barrier to access, participation and the achievement of suitable outcomes. Access and equity do not mean that a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) has to accept anyone as a client.

Application of the Unit: a brief description of how the unit is practically applied in industry.

Apprenticeship/Traineeship: a structured training arrangement for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It usually involves the person receiving training and being assessed both on and off the job.

Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract: a contract governing the terms of an apprenticeship or traineeship that is made between an employer and a person employed by them as an apprentice or trainee. The contract must be registered with the relevant state or territory's government department or agency in accordance with that state's or territory's legislation. The training provided under the contract must be delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) approved by the state or territory's department or agency and a training plan developed by the RTO must form the basis of the person's training and assessment.

ASQA see - The Australian Skills Quality Authority (under 'T')

Assessor: An assessor means an individual or organisation responsible for the assessment of Units of Competency in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework.

Australian Apprenticeships: a job pathway that combines training for a nationally recognised qualification with employment. The term Australian Apprenticeships covers both Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): the policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training in Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines that define each qualification, as well as the principles and protocols covering cross-sectoral qualification links and the issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.

Australian Qualifications Framework Alignment: alignment to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) occurs when a group of units of competency are a viable AQF qualification or qualifications (in line with the guidance provided in the current AQF Implementation Handbook).

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF): the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. The first version of AQTF was

implemented in 2002. It was revised in 2005 and again in 2007 including the identification of excellence criteria.

The AQTF comprises:

a) AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration

b) AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies

c) AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria

d) AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses

e) AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies

Certificate I-IV: a set of qualifications that prepare candidates for both employment and further education and training. These qualifications recognise achievement of specified national industry competency standards at four Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels in a wide variety of trades, industries and enterprises. These qualifications may be gained through a wide range of pathways, including: Australian Apprenticeships (including Traineeships); work-based and/or school/institution-based training; and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (which may include training programs or an accumulation of short courses).

Employability Skills: the non-technical skills and competencies that have always been an important part of effective and successful participation in the workplace. Employability skills are applicable to all occupations, and have been defined in the vocational education and training (VET) sector as: communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organising, self-management, learning and technology.

Endorsement: the formal recognition of Training Packages by the National Quality Council

Entry Requirements: specified prior knowledge, skill, and experience, expressed in terms of competency, and may include licensing or industry recognised standards. Where entry requirements are identified, these are mandatory. Entry requirements:

• do not form part of a qualification for training and assessment purposes.

• must be completed prior to enrolling in a qualification.

• must be specific to the knowledge, skills or experience required to enter a qualification.

EScan – Environment Scan – underpins advice to governments and other stakeholders on skills needs and workforce development priorities.

Formal Learning: learning that takes place through a structured program of learning and assessment that leads to the full or partial attainment of a recognised AQF qualification or other formally recognised qualification.

Industry: includes, but is not limited to, business owners and employers and their representative bodies, employees and unions, and their representative bodies.

Industry Skills Councils (ISCs, May 2014): national bodies contracted by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to develop and maintain Training Packages specific to the industry area(s) for which they have coverage.

Informal Learning: learning gained through work-related, social, family, hobby or leisure activities and experiences. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not organised or externally structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support.

Integrated Assessment: an approach to assessment that focuses on the assessment of a 'whole off-job' role or function. This involves drawing on a number of units or elements of competence, and combining the assessment of the application of knowledge, technical skills, problem solving, and demonstration of attitudes and ethics.

Job/Role Environment Skills: one of the four dimensions of competency. These skills involve demonstrating the ability to deal with responsibilities and expectations of the workplace, including working with others.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN): taken collectively, these are the skills to communicate in oral and written form. The term includes reading and use of written information; the ability to write appropriately, in a range of contexts and the integration of speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing. LLN includes numeracy, such as the recognition and use of numbers and basic mathematical signs/symbols within text.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives: The set of knowledge, skills and /or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process.

Learning Resources: products designed to enhance and support the effectiveness of the learning process, providing an integrated approach that commonly combines guidance, materials, activities, and relevant information to support delivery/facilitation, learning, and/or assessment.

Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE): a Council comprised of the State, Territory and Australian Government Ministers with responsibility for tertiary education and employment. MCTEE is the key decision-making body and has overall responsibility for the national tertiary education and employment system.

National Quality Council (NQC): a committee of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE). The NQC has a role in: (a) providing the Ministerial Council with advice on the operation of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and any changes to it that are considered necessary; (b) providing the state and territory registering and course-accrediting bodies with information and advice on implementation of the AQTF; and (c) providing the Ministerial Council with information and advice on the operation of the AQTF in each state and territory

National Register: the register for recording information about Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Training Packages, and accredited courses.

National Training Information Service (NTIS): see **National Register**

Packaging: the process of grouping competencies in a Training Package into meaningful combinations which represent whole jobs or key functions in the workplace.

Performance Criteria: specify the standard to which elements must be achieved and reflect the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.

Qualification: the formal certification, issued by a relevant approved body, in recognition that a person has achieved learning outcomes or competences relevant to identified individual, professional, industry or community needs.

Qualification Code: a unique alpha-numeric code of eight-characters allocated to a qualification. Using the code 'ICT50308' as an example, qualification codes identify:

Qualification Title: the name given to a qualification that is unique and reflects the identified occupational outcomes of the qualification. Each title has a unique qualification code.

Qualifications Framework: a framework created by packaging units of competency into meaningful groups defined in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): an assessment process that involves assessment of the individual's relevant prior learning to determine credit outcomes of applications for credit.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO): a training organisation registered by a state or territory registering body in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Standards for Registration within a defined scope of registration. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess Nationally Recognised Training (NRT) and issue nationally recognised qualifications.

Required Skills and Knowledge: the essential skills and knowledge identified in units of competency as required for competent performance.

- Knowledge - identifies what a person needs to know to perform the work in an informed and effective manner; and
- Skills - describes the application of the knowledge to situations where understanding is converted into a workplace outcome.

Skill: the ability to perform a particular mental or physical activity which may be developed by training or practice. The skill may be intellectual, manual, motor, perceptual, or social. Specified skills are identified as part of each competency standard. Competence usually requires a combination of skills in the application of cognitive and psycho-motor functions.

See also: Required Skills and Knowledge

Skill Sets: single units or combinations of units within Training Packages which link to a licence or regulatory requirement, or defined industry need.

Skills Australia: an independent statutory body that provides advice to the Minister for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on Australia's current, emerging and future workforce skills needs and workforce development needs.

State and Territory Training Authorities (STAs): a body within each Australian State and Territory government that administers vocational education and training (VET) including

allocating funds, registering training organisations, and accrediting courses. STAs have a key role to play in the development and endorsement of Training Packages

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) regulates courses and training providers to ensure nationally approved quality standards are met

Training Contract: see Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract

Training Package: a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Unit of Competency: the specifications of knowledge and skill, and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace.

Vocational Education and Training (VET): the sector responsible for developing the skills and knowledge of individuals for work. It includes VET undertaken in industries, enterprises, government agencies, and community and school settings. The VET sector encompasses both recognised training leading to a qualification/statement of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and non-recognised training, such as in-house, product-based training.

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) - activities concerned with the prevention and mitigation of work-related illness or injury including illness or injury that may be of long onset. WHS requirements are embedded within units of competency in Training Packages.

Abstract

In a time when skills shortages are in the forefront of Australia's training agenda this thesis involved a mixed mode study entitled: *"In what Ways Does the Workplace influence Trainee Learning?"* Over the last ten to fifteen years a significant amount of government funding has been diverted from Australia's public vocational education provider to encourage the growth of private providers including employer-based providers and community providers. The aim of this agenda included facilitating work-based learning as a legitimate alternative to conventional forms of institutional provision. As a result government funding cuts had a flow on effect for trainees includes a reduction in delivery costs (time) and increased reporting costs both of which impact on teaching and learning. With this trend to delivering training and assessment in the workplace the area that was explored in this thesis is how the workplace influences trainee learning. The thesis arises from the problem that while there are various theories about workplace learning there was a significant gap in the understanding of 'in what way' and 'how' trainee learning was being influenced by the workplace. The research investigated on-the-job learning in order to understand how 'the learning' was being influenced by the practices and culture that exist within the workplace systems and/or under the influence of the supervisor. The research design consisted of a case study approach in conjunction with qualitative (interviews) and a quantitative (semi-structured questionnaire). This thesis was informed by data collected from the following main sources: document searches; a semi-structured cross-section questionnaire (for 70 trainees; 20 teachers/trainers and 10 workplace supervisors) and interviews from three case study worksites, a public RTO; a medium sized security organization and an online group buying organization. The selected traineeships involved learning in the context of Business Services Training Package BSB07 – specifically Certificate III and IV levels in Business Administration and Technology and Customer Contact. The data collected indicated a major disconnect between the requirements as set down by traineeship legislation and current practices. It also highlighted a significant disconnect between the various interpretations and expectations (by key stakeholders) as to what constitute workplace learning for trainees. The thesis makes an important contribution to the telling of the stories of those struggling to undertake training and the barriers and lack of support they experience. It is a modest study of three case studies that provides a lens to expose issues and challenges in the workplace learning for these business sector trainees.