

**Examining Work, Learning and the Remaking of Cultural Practices  
Through the Duality of Affordances and Engagement**

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# **Relational interdependence at work: Examining work, learning and the remaking of cultural practices**

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# Learning and work: remaking cultural practices

- ◆ Learning and work are premised on affordances of the workplaces and engagement of individuals
- ◆ Learning is a part of the exercise of conscious thought and action
- ◆ Dual process of learning and the remaking cultural practices
- ◆ Questions whether individuals bring about change or it is dependent upon social forms and structures
- ◆ A relational interdependence is proposed and investigated

# Structure

- ◆ Relational bases of work and learning
- ◆ Interdependence at work
- ◆ Procedures
- ◆ Processes of affordances and engagement
- ◆ Individual learning and the remaking of work practice
- ◆ Relational bases of work and learning

# Interdependence between social suggestion and individual agency

- ◆ Self and identity are important to work and work-related learning
- ◆ Beyond the affordances of the workplace is individuals' epistemological agency
- ◆ Epistemological agency has two dimensions: (i) intentionality – focus and direction; (ii) intensity
- ◆ Continuity and transformation of both individuals and development and the remaking of culture arises from epistemological agency

# Interdependence at work

Neither social suggestion nor individual agency alone is sufficient to understand learning and remaking of cultural practices

Four bases of the interdependence between individual and social

1. Individuals need to engage with social suggestion to access socially derived knowledge
2. Personal dependence in individuals' knowing
3. Individuals' premediate experiences
4. Duality between individual and social is relational, rather than reciprocal

# Relational interdependences at work: Procedures

- ◆ Groups of three workers in four workplaces
- ◆ Fire Station, information technology helpdesk, restaurant, gymnasium
- ◆ Two long and detailed initial interviews followed by progress interviews over the next 18 months
- ◆ First interview: workplace and its affordances (institutional facts -- Searle 1995)
- ◆ Second interview: individual workers' work histories and engagement
- ◆ These two initial interviews are the source of the data reported and discussed here

# Affordances and engagement

Distinct bases of affordances and engagement across and within the four workplace

Across the workplaces:

- ◆ Fire station
- ◆ IT helpdesk
- ◆ Restaurant
- ◆ Gym

Within the workplace:

- ◆ Fire station
- ◆ IT helpdesk
- ◆ Restaurant
- ◆ Gym



# Individual learning and remaking of work practice

**Fire Officers – Extended role – emergency work**

- Work is about learning, rehearsal and practice
- Living and working together

**I T Workers – Dynamic, Standard Operating Environment**

- Remote access,
- Being and working together

**Restaurant – Individual personal and workplace affordances**

- Owners – waitress

**Gym – Individual personal and workplace affordances**

- Manager – receptionist - trainer

# Relational bases of work and learning

- ◆ Duality between individual and social is richly complex and interwoven
- ◆ Workplace affordances and individual engagement are relationally interdependent.
- ◆ Explains apparently contradictory practices
- ◆ Supports a diversity of practices
- ◆ Diverse enactments of learning for and through work
- ◆ Supports a diverse base of learning goals