



# LEARNING IN UNISON

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## THE BENEFITS OF LEARNING AT WORK

UNISON has long promoted the benefits of learning at work to our members, activists and employers. This firmly held belief has also been used to underwrite our negotiations with employers when seeking to work in partnership with them to promote, and deliver learning in the workplace.

And now the proof....research commissioned by the TUC has determined:

*Improving skills at work brings benefits to both unions and employers. When unions and employers work in partnership to improve workers' skills, both reap benefits: unions gain new members and activists, and employers improve staff retention rates and have better industrial relations, it was revealed in two new academic reports issued on 16 March 2007.*

*The research reports, authored by industrial relations experts and published by unionlearn (the TUC's education and skills organisation) show strong links between promoting union-led workplace learning, trade union organising, and direct benefits to employers, workers and their unions.*

*The case studies reveal that engagement with the learning agenda has benefited unions, their members and employers. More women and ethnic minorities have been attracted in to union activity including as union learning reps. Where management has been actively engaged, they have reaped the benefits of improved retention rates, being perceived of as a better employer, and improved industrial relations.*

*Union members and workers have benefited from increased confidence, better skills, and increased job mobility. And they also see unions in a better light for providing them with learning opportunities, which has in turn resulted in increased commitment to union involvement. Many become union learning reps and often progress to hold other union positions. There is a strong indication that this learning agenda is creating more positive perceptions of unions among both workers generally and existing members."*

The reports make good reading: Union Learning, Union Recruitment and Organising and Organising to Learn and Learning to Organise. These can be found on the TUC website: <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk>. If you have difficulty accessing the reports – please let us know and we will ensure you receive a copy.

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