

INFORMAL LEARNING: OPPORTUNITY IS EVERYWHERE

INFORMAL LEARNING PROVIDES MANY BENEFITS



To Learners:
Work-relevant skills—both technical and soft skills, career exploration and advancement.



To Employers:
Work-relevant skill development, and immediate application, improved work environment.

INFORMAL LEARNING IS



NONCREDIT LEARNING



WORK-BASED LEARNING



VOLUNTEERING, SERVICE LEARNING



COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE



MENTORING, COACHING



TRIAL & ERROR



MODELING OTHERS



READING, WEB SEARCHING



OCCUPATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

Lifelong learning is essential to support career success, but not all learning takes place in a classroom. Informal learning occurs everywhere all the time and can include many activities that are organized, as well as others that are part of everyday activities.

ROAD BLOCKS

EQUITY IS A CHALLENGE

Attention is needed to ensure access to and support of informal learning for all.

THOSE WITH MORE FORMAL EDUCATION OFTEN BENEFIT MORE FROM INFORMAL LEARNING

Learners who may have grown up in disadvantaged school environments and/or previously felt frustrated by learning may not feel empowered to seek out informal learning opportunities.

TECHNOLOGY PROMOTES INFORMAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES BUT MAY ALSO CREATE AND EXPAND A DIVIDE

The new “digital divide is not only between those who have computers and those who do not, and increasingly between people who know how to use computers to their advantage and those who do not” rather than saying “is not between.”

WORKPLACE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL LEARNING ARE FEWER FOR LOWER-SKILLED WORKERS

Workplaces tend to offer organized informal learning opportunities to educated, more highly paid, younger, and permanent staff over lower-skilled staff.

QUALITY & RECOGNITION ARE CHALLENGES

Content of learning will vary and can sometimes be too narrow or contain errors.

Employers do not have a clear way to measure and reward informal learning.

THE GOOD NEWS

Alternative credentialing systems offer a potential solution.

INFORMAL LEARNING IS LIFELONG LEARNING

Changes in the economy and the increased need for lifelong learning, coupled with innovations in technology expanding possibilities for learning, elevate the importance of informal learning. With this broadened recognition of the possibilities for learning come new opportunities for innovation and the possibility of envisioning a future with more learning available to more learners.