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21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities  
(21CLEO) Research Project

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9-3-2021

# 21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities Convening

21CLEO Research Team

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# 21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities

## Convening 3 - September 27, 2021

### Agenda

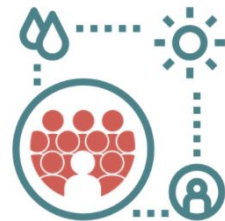
Introductions

Setting the Stage: Learning Ecosystem and Worker Voice

Discussions

- Relationship between learning opportunities and advancement
- The 'special sauce': Impact of support, nudging, & mentoring
- Who has access to the 'special sauce'?

Wrap up and final word



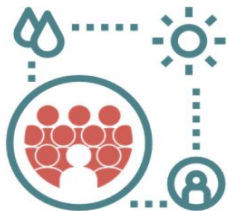


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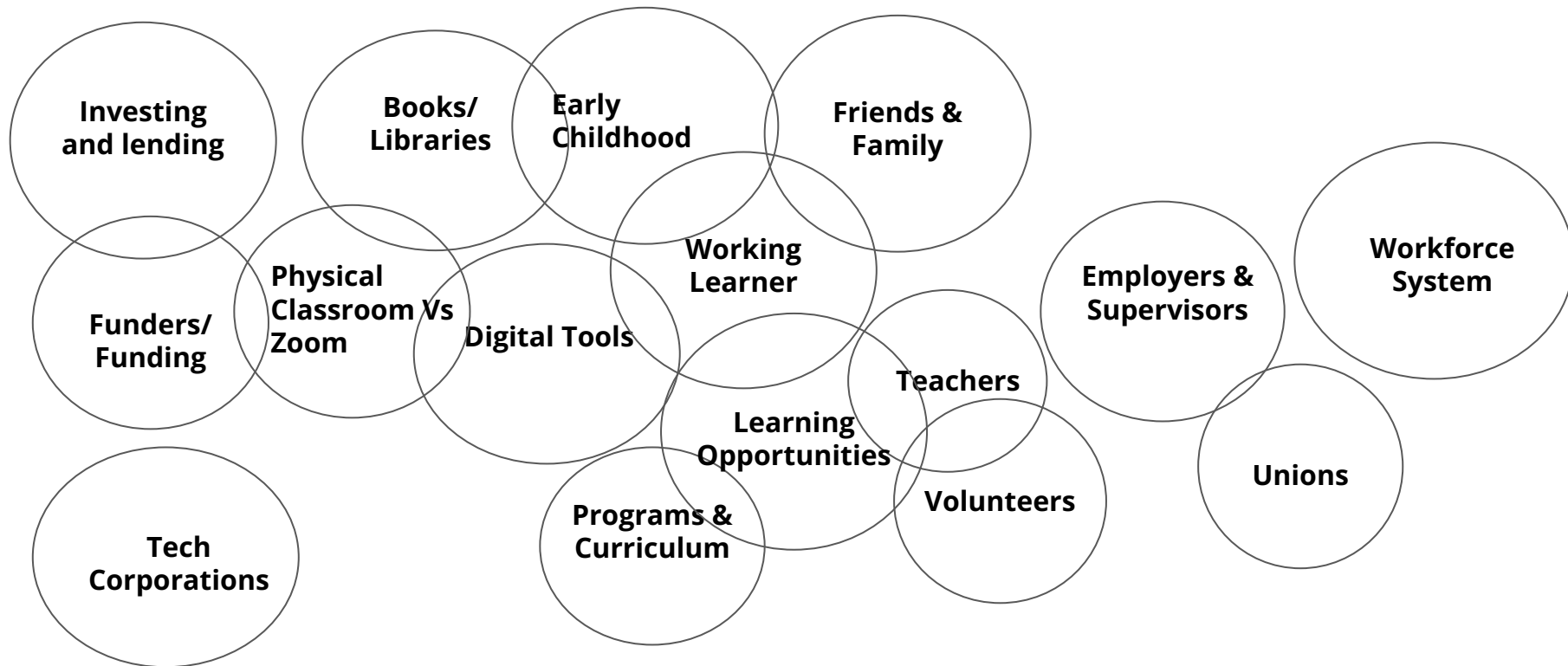
# 21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities

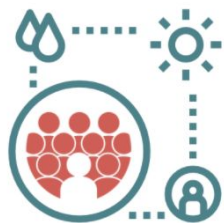
## Introductions

Where you work; what you do there.



# Setting the Stage: Learning Ecosystem and Worker Voice





# Setting the Stage: Learning Ecosystem and Worker Voice

Train of Logic -- What's assumed versus what we've seen

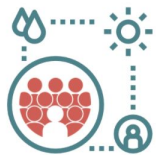
## ***Assumption***

Learning leads to advancement

## ***What we've seen***

Outcomes of learning are multiple and can be applied beyond the contexts in which the learning takes place.

However, for learning to be relevant, it needs to have some relationship to the here and now. Some learning opportunities may not lead to outcomes such as a promotion or a better job (immediate or otherwise) but can support attitude toward, learning relationship building, which lead to other kinds of learning (mentoring, etc.)



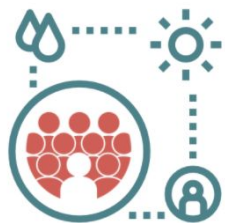
## Setting the Stage: Learning Ecosystem and Worker Voice

### Promise Fulfilled

Supportive supervisor that did some just-in-time coaching, providing in-context learning/training opportunities; builds worker confidence, visibility in the workplace are someone who “can do the work”; set the stage for advancement

### Promise Unfulfilled

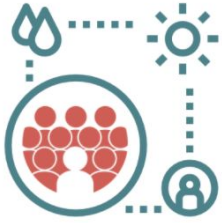
Working learner engaged in a learning opportunity related to the job, but it didn’t lead directly to any end point or wasn’t even noticed by the employer or supervisor (promise but no payoff)



# Discussion 1

## **What is the relationship between learning opportunities and advancement?**

1. Discuss in small groups. Post aha's and questions in your group slide.
2. Go to the other groups' slides and review what others noted.
3. Jot down observations in the notes section of the slide.



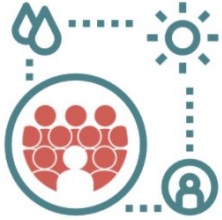
# Discussion 1- Group 1 - Key insights

Employers are key to the equation for the final outcomes

Health care sector has a clear route

Risk to employee -- only some learning opportunities lead to apprenticeships (employees might not believe that outcome at the end is real), making sacrifices of pay+time for opportunities that are likely, but not guaranteed





# Discussion 1- Group 2 - Key insights

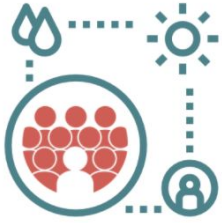
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Virginia: Moved from being a mechanic - webinar courses, learned about self and developed confidence, then was sought after to move into management. Made a huge difference for personal growth, which lead to promotion

Ashlei: currently training to become a manager after only working for a few months. Is currently learning in needed areas. One thing that lead to seeing own potential was manager identifying her leadership potential. Helped Ashlei develop self-confidence and a new goal of becoming a manager.

Iftu: learning every day, opened the door to continue learning, English class didn't relate to advancement in retail but opened self-improvement and provided access to learning resources.. Other career courses helped to develop skills in a new career



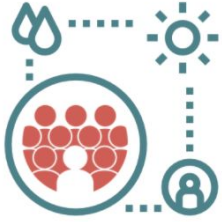
# Discussion 1- Group 3 - Key insights

Employer engagement: The employer has to be aware and onboard  
Before advancement happens, training allows the learner to get credentials  
Short term training needed. Want to incentivise in some way. Tie it to advancement.

Challenge of tracking data. No way to enforce employers to report out. It is voluntary reporting.

Relationship between upskilling training and retention

Upskilling is hot topic: so many programs and leveraged for specific communities. Not clear how they interconnect.



# Discussion 1- Group 4 - Key insights

- On ramps to prepare working learners for advancement are important
- Contextualized ESL, NRF credential - no guarantee that these things will get you promoted, but will hopefully put people in the lane to be promoted

Addressing skill gaps maybe doesn't lead to promotion right away but to helps people do their job better. -- Especially foundational skills; but employers don't always know what skills are missing therefore an assessment might be a part of the development plan. ANY PD is going to advance career potential and readiness for promotion; boost confidence, make job easier.

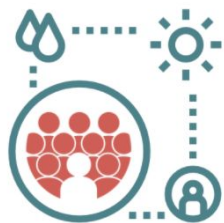
Empowering the individual to communicate what they have learned is important. Can help them describe how previous work experience developed the transferrable skills needed for a next step job. Example illustrated workers confidence because she had language to talk about skills - got her not only a job offer and negotiated a higher wage.

Immigrants (& other workers, too) may not know they should go back to employer to tell them about training and new skills. Employers lose employees because they don't prep current employees for training and promotion - so employees leave; Employees don't know how to negotiate. Don't know they can push back; AND workers need to be able to SIGNAL their skills, goals, expertise. Need training to do so.

Give bullets for a cover letter, for LinkedIn, practice talking about skills when in a training program. These could be summative activities at the end of training

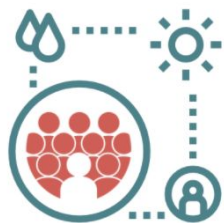
If employers are engaged in developing the training/PD/Ed opportunities they won't have understanding of skills and learning; Employers are supposed to know what the outcomes of the program is, it is more likely to lead to advancement.

An assessment pretraining would help to make sure they are prepared for the ed opportunities: writing and technology



## Considering the 'special sauce'

*Our data lead us to understand that provision of a formal learning opportunity does not necessarily lead to advancement -- that there is something above and beyond that is required.*

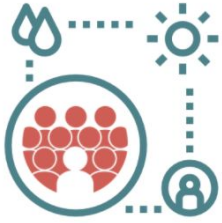


## Discussion 2

**We've noticed that providing supports like nudging and mentoring gets working learners to relevant learning opportunities and then advancement opportunities, or provides opportunities for incidental and/or just in time learning.**

**What have you noticed in your past experiences and workplace?**

1. Discuss in small groups. Post aha's and questions in your group slide.
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# Discussion 2- Group 1 - Key insights

**We've noticed that providing supports like nudging and mentoring gets working learners to relevant learning opportunities and then advancement opportunities, or provides opportunities for incidental and/or just in time learning.**

Be Fair, firm, and consistent, create a safe space, Build them up, teach them how

Soft skills

Role of mentor/coach is key in transmitting the passion - help person see what is possible, can see myself doing that - that makes or breaks it

Training of mentors

Transparency, pre-planned process, people need to know



## Discussion 2- Group 2 - Key insights

Ability in the job place where the learner can apply what is learned directly

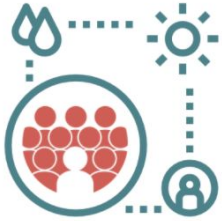
Being told you can do it (to the learner) -- learner want to be the best they can be, even with little experience in the industry

Clear criteria -- do XX to gain YY -- sharing stories of success. Sharing experiences and talking about it through “examples and faces” so learners can visualize this for themselves.

Structural challenges -- many entry level roles, very few management roles. Challenging to create opportunities for everyone. Be creative about what advancement looks like, even when it's not a clear pathway. How to manage limitations.

Lots of attention on entry level roles, losing managers to other industries -- need pathways for managers too. Management to being a good manager, too. Managers who could be successful in encouraging and enabling others to advance.

Help employers engage with employees about career pathways. Made assumptions about employees. Open dialogue to engage with employees. What skills employers want and what employees have and need.



## Discussion 2- Group 3 - Key insights

Nudging and mentoring has to happen before the WL participates in an opportunity.

Felt like there is a disconnect between the special sauce the learner needs and what the supervisor provides in terms of nudging/mentoring

Mentorship programs: Helpful tool for like-minded individuals to share (mentee peer groups) A mentorship space allows for things to come up. Conversations brings topics up. Talking about things that are important to them. Encourages them to pursue more.

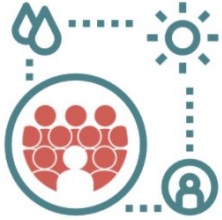
Professionalism and confidence that comes out of being mentored. Helps connect the special sauce.

Bit of imposter syndrome, feel unwelcome, not experienced enough. People from different cultures come in with different expectations. They need to do the work to learn the self confidence to raise their hand.

The mentorship circle helps to address the insecurity of people who may not have the confidence. Peer group to bolster confidence and help you see things about yourself that you may not see.

The groups tend not to be available for front line workers. Conversations can happen informally -- not intentional





## Discussion 2- Group 4 - Key insights

Nudging works if training is aligned with career goals, otherwise just “nagging” so need a discussion at the beginning.

Mentoring is important -- but people have good intentions but perhaps don't follow up.

“Civility and empathy and flexibility” are additional components to what is needed to support advancement. Being too strict or putative disincentivizes learners.

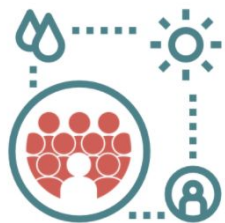
Demonstration of flexibility and interest is motivating. People will complete a program for a financial incentive but may not go into industry.

The communication problems are what get in the way of doing a job or engaging at work. Employers think “we don't know nothing - we know the jobs”

Make it clear to employers how formal learning is connected to workplace, otherwise incentives to employees will not pan out. Employer needs to be supportive. Needs to be convinced that it would have an positive impact on workplace.

Example -- ESOL in a chemical plant. Needed to know how to converse on social topics. Could figure out the lg needed for technical aspects of work, needed lg to socialize and make relationships with coworkers.

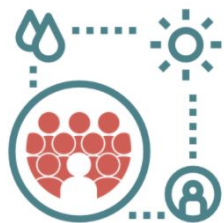
Need to continue coaching and supporting and help learners how to advocate for themselves. And for working learners in general.



## Consider equitable access to training, educational, and advance opportunities

This leads us to a series of questions:

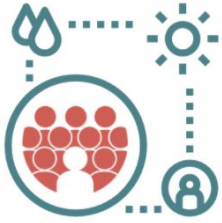
1. Who gets the special sauce? Who doesn't?
2. Who is a good "fit" for the next career step? Who isn't?
3. Who is "ready" for the next career step? Who isn't?
4. Who initiates?
5. Who decides?



## Discussion 3

### Who gets that 'special sauce'? Why? How?

1. Discuss in small groups. Post aha's and questions in your group slide.
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# Discussion 3- Group 1 - Key insights

This leads us to a series of questions:

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3. Who is "ready" for the next career step? Who isn't?
4. Who initiates?
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Either leaders or employee can initiate

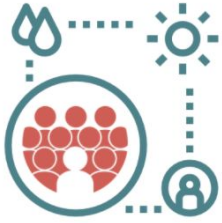
Should there be more formal methods?

Identify areas for career pathways-input and validation from employers, should share with new hires and other employees

Who gets information about opportunities?

Whose responsibility is it?

Who feels like it is their right to ask for advancement?



## Discussion 3- Group 2 - Key insights

Assumptions (explicit or not): racial or language. Loosy goosy is problematic. Tie career pathways to clear competences. Has to be concrete and measurable (not personal affinity).

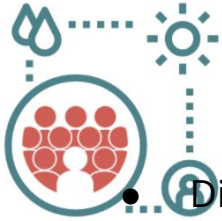
Fit can't be "reminds my of myself" -- it's problematic. Better ways -- demonstrated skills and awareness of the step

Traditional view -- layers that need to more clear and less personally driven (beyond personal connections)

How are you asking people to show up? Just because you're the loudest doesn't mean that person is most qualified  
More formats to speak out than just one way.

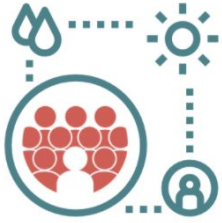
Some learners wait to be recognized. Learners want to get the attention of the manager. Look at learner to say, "look at me." Finally getting confident -- asking, "do you see me as a leader." Pivot point for confidence -- a crew member shared, "I need your help, what should I do" then general manager saw the confidence and the leadership.

Working learner -- make yourself available as someone other learners can go to for help, guidance, support, training



# Discussion 3- Group 3 - Key insights

- Differentiation between is the special sauce the worker or the who is making the opportunity available
  - Who gets the mentoring, the “finger of god”
  - The learner asking, why not me? Its up to the leaders to provide access.
  - Providing in a pilot touch points so they show up as the person who is ready
  - Part depends on “readiness” Do I show up to the job, problem solver, decision making skills etc.? A real risk in terms of equity.
  - Supervisor has been very helpful in making things available.
  - There are many pathways people can get promoted. Young people going to school but don’t see that they can move from the store into the corporate.
  - Not everyone wants to be a manager. It’s not the only opportunity. You need to let us know so we can help you grow.
  - After immigrating necessary to take job for survival, but then can move into a position that fits better with previous experience. I spent a lot of time getting education and experience then had to start from scratch.
  - Who decides is multidirectional. Management needs to keep an eye out, and front line needs to knock on doors too. There are tracks and processes. You have to let people

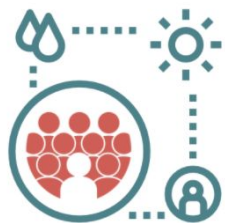


## Discussion 3- Group 4 - Key insights

In the perfect world, everyone gets the same treatment and a good manager would be the best person to initiate the next step. But we don't operate in this perfect world: limited info, bias, lack of access to knowing how to ID skills and abilities. Front line workers are overlooked - many focus on middle management. Objective standards like a success planning system based on learning and skills and competencies should be enough but that doesn't always happen

Ex - training at a hospital in Houston - asked employers what they needed to see in an employee to the next level job. They tailored training to prepare learners to get skills to fit that description - Viewpoint -- they had a responsibility to get the class ready as a collective. Convinced managers to pay for the courses -- they'd have lots of potential applicants. Learners were guaranteed an interview.

Not all working learners are interested in promotion but there for certification nonetheless. Clients that are really interested get coached and supported. Employer side -- small business will do a better job using WkFce Dev services. They are hungry for training services - doesn't guarantee a promotion, so still a need to teach learners to advocate for themselves and communicate their new skills

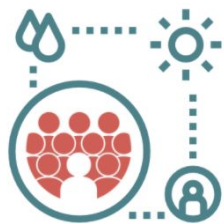


## What else?

What's your reaction to our findings and the discussion?

What did we miss?





## Final words.

Davondra:

I would like the people who sponsor these type of workshops to strongly encouraged the leaders of departments to pick who they think would benefit from these type of events and trust in the leaders opinions

Muhammad:

I think employers need to expand their sponsored learning from short courses to degree level. This may raise the ability of these workers to qualify for higher pay and promotions inside the organization and in job market. English speaking courses would also be a plus for workers with different first language.

<https://edtech.worlded.org/our-work/projects/21learning/>



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# 21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities

*Thank you!*

<https://edtech.worlded.org/our-work/projects/21learning>