

INFORMAL LEARNING IN THE WORKPLACE

*A Research Project by the Centre for Education and Work in collaboration
with the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board*

The Centre for Education and Work (CEW) and the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB) are collaborating on a project to audit informal learning in the workplace. The project, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, seeks to identify and classify general areas of current practice of informal learning in the workplace.

New research on learning in the workplace indicates that the majority of learning in the workplace is acquired informally, not through formal training or through explicit educational programs. Although the workplace is understood to be a major source of active learning for adults, little research has targeted exactly what people learn, how they use that learning, and where it is applied.

The project will survey 30-50 small to medium businesses in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to determine the kind of informal learning demonstrated by front line workers, especially that linked to essential skills. The survey findings will be used to develop categories and sub-categories as a tool to measure both quality and depth of learning.

From data collected through the survey, an in-depth audit of the workplace will be conducted. The audit may include focus groups, job shadowing, and interviews with both employees and supervisors. The results of the audit will allow the CEW and the SLFDB to develop an informal learning matrix. It is hoped that this matrix will help both employers and employees identify the range and quality of learning which can be transferable within the workplace to evaluate equivalence of knowledge and skills against standards or to enable individuals to use the *Learning Matrix* as a short cut to establishing prior learning assessment credit externally.

In phase two of the project, the Centre for Education and Work (CEW) and the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB) will seek partners to apply the *Learning Matrix* to a variety of sectors and/or workplaces. Workplaces may find that the Learning Matrix can help their employees gain internal or external credit for their informal learning.

For information about the project contact:



Robin Millar
Centre for Education and Work
515 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Mb. R3B 2E9
www.cewca.org