

Lean Learning

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W I L M

Workplace Informal Learning Matrix

www.wilm.ca



WILM

Workplace Informal Learning Matrix

Centre for Education and Work (CEW)

- The Centre for Education and Work (CEW) is a not-for profit organization affiliated with the University of Winnipeg
- Research and development on the WILM since 2003

www.cewca.org

Learning informally



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With a partner, discuss something you learned at work, not through training, but on the job.

What did you learn?

How did you learn it?

Current workplace situation



Industry needs to **grow** its workforce

Tools are needed

- To help reduce waste in unnecessary training
- To target skill development areas
- To provide routes for professional and personal development

Assumptions



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People learn complex skills and knowledge on the job.

This learning can be assessed and recognized.

People appreciate being valued for their learning.

Only 21% of innovative workplaces recognize informal learning.

Why look at Informal Learning?



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NALL study (1999) found that the most learning was acquired in the workplace

Training survey (2000) identified the most common way of learning was informal

Why do people learn informally?



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To perform their jobs more effectively and efficiently

To fill in gaps not provided in training

To learn new skills demanded by workplaces



Definitions: Informal Learning



W I L M

Workplace Informal Learning Matrix

Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family, or leisure. It is not structured in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning is learner directed and dependent upon work situations.

Research Questions



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What do people learn informally?

Who do they learn it from?

How do they learn?

What skills do they use to learn





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CEW research in Informal Learning 2003-04



Developed a research methodology for assessing informal learning in the workplace

Applied this to over 48 entry level positions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan

Research data 2005-08

The WILM has been validated with:

supervisors

middle managers

In over **120** different jobs across a range of sectors including construction, manufacturing, public service, crown corporations, energy, entertainment, hospitality, hotel management, health centres

Who do people learn from?



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From others and on their own
Informal mentors and coaches
Others who are interested in helping
Not necessarily formal or supervisors

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The purpose of the WILM is to

- **raise awareness in workplaces about informal learning**
- **provide useful ways of assessing “soft” or essential skills**
- **provide a tool that is easy to administer and user friendly**

How do people learn informally?



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observation
demonstrations
asking questions
trial and error
practice
feedback



Research findings...



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Essential skills

Workplace specific skills

Non-technical skills

What do people learn informally?



Essential Skills

Oral communication

Working with others

Thinking skills: especially problem solving and decision making

Learning skills

New Additions to the WILM



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Leadership
Diversity
Workplace culture



Categories for informal learning

Organized what people learn informally into categories

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Capture the Learning Video

Over 120 jobs

Companies participated from

Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan,
Alberta, British Columbia

Sectors included construction, manufacturing, public service,
crown corporations, energy, entertainment, hospitality, hotel
management, health centres

Sample Companies



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Boeing Canada
Palliser Furniture
Manitoba Lotteries
City of Kingston
Epcor
TD Bank
Alco Ventures



What is the "Matrix"?



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Factors plus four complexity levels

People evaluated **their jobs** not
themselves personally

WILM example



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Company Name:

Job Position:

C. Problem Solving

The position requires the employee to:

Factor	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Comments
C1 Number of steps in a typical problem	1 step	Between 2 – 3 steps	Multiple steps	All steps have embedded sub steps	
C2 Commonness of a problem	Problem is common and solutions regular	Problem has some unique factors	Problem is unusual	Problem is rare or unique	
C3 Isolate source of the problem	Problem source easily identified; all factors identified	Most factors identified; however, some difficult to isolate	Few factors of the problem identified; difficult to isolate	Problem unique; factors difficult to isolate	
C4 Recognize severity and urgency of problem	Severity and urgency immediately apparent	Severity and urgency needs some analysis	Severity and urgency may be uncertain	Severity and urgency is unknown	
C5 Locate procedures	Procedures provided for problems	Procedures available if not readily accessible	Procedures may need to be modified	Procedure modification is essential to find solution	
C6 Frequency of sequence	Sequence repeated regularly	Sequence sometimes repeated	Sequence rarely repeated	No sequence	
C7 Recognize familiarity of sequence	Sequence highly familiar	Sequence familiar, but may need modification	Sequence familiar only through experience	Unfamiliar sequence	

What does the WILM do?

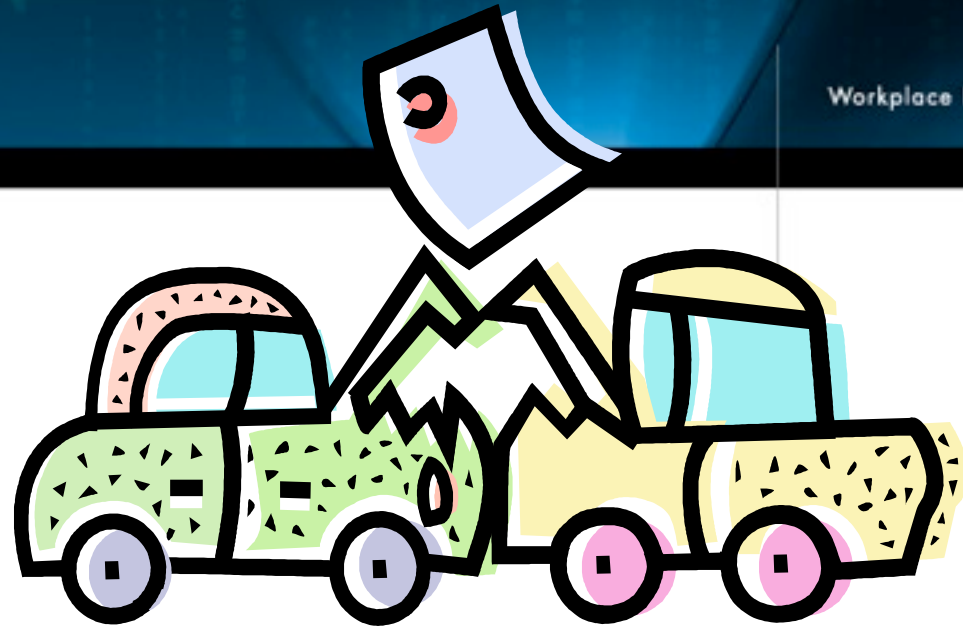
- Assesses individual strengths related to job categories
- Summarizes data into reports, charts, etc. for comparison purposes
- Provides avenues for thinking about workplace learning structures



Impact Study

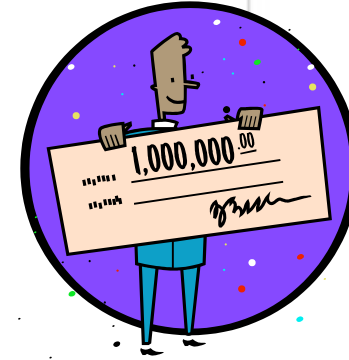


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In 2007-08, we examined the WILM in over 40 companies to identify how they used the tools

Applications of the WILM



As a recruitment tool

For developing better job descriptions

For developing behavioural questions for interviewing new hires

Applications of the WILM

As a retention tool

For performance review and performance appraisal

To provide more in-depth information for competency development

To provide more in-depth information for benchmarking quality

To target individual training plans and develop employee learning plans

For recognizing learning to improve company morale

Retaining workers

- **Identify strengths and weaknesses in learning**
 - target training events
 - focus on what people really need to know, reduce costs
- **Recognize informal learning**
 - As part of a range of retention strategies
- **Helps develop new retention strategies**

Example



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Comparison of two working teams

Analyzed strengths and weaknesses using
WILM data

Provided information about what areas need
development

communication

problem solving

leadership

Customizing the WILM

The CEW can:

provide a free orientation for participating companies

demonstrate how to administer and gather data from the WILM

analyze WILM results and link to company business

develop a customized WILM for your company

develop a competency-based system for employees

WEBSITE materials



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