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# Making Space for Informal Learning

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### What is Informal Learning?

Informal learning is the **unofficial, unscheduled, impromptu** way most people learn. It often takes the form of articles, videos, books, online courses, conferences, etc. as **opposed to formal courses.**

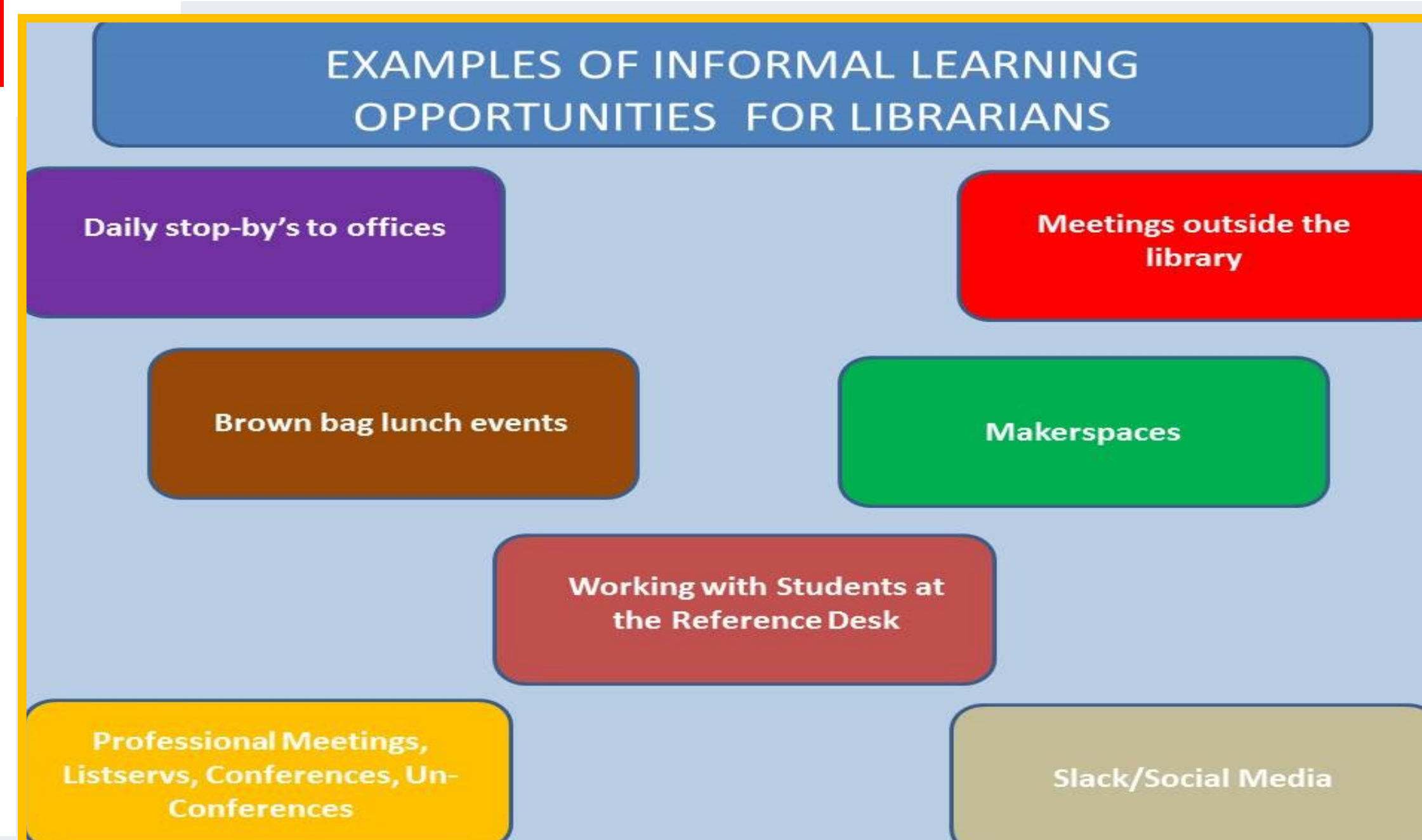
Reliance on **informal learning** is growing because it promotes:

- Autonomy
- Efficiency
- Relevancy
- Flexibility
- Accessibility

*Over 70% of what we learn in life and at work is learned informally and socially say proponents of informal learning. Language is first learned not in a classroom but in the informal setting of home. For most of us social skills are gradually acquired and refined through life experience, rather than etiquette classes. And some of the most critical skills to workplace success—communication, collaboration, teamwork and even technical skills—are cultivated through invaluable and ongoing informal workplace learning: mentoring, coaching, peer reviews and job shadowing.*



GOALS of - Making space for Informal Learning in the Academic Library	
>	Gain a better understanding of what informal learning is in order to recognize when and where it occurs in the library
>	See the importance of informal learning opportunities with students in order to foster these moments in the library
>	Realize that librarians can benefit from informal learning events with each other in order to strengthen relationships and feel more strongly connected as a team or department



Informal Learning occurs naturally and does not need a particular setting or mindset to happen. In Academic Libraries, not only do students learn informally but librarians also have opportunities to gain knowledge from each other through spontaneous conversations and happenstance. The key to taking advantage of informal learning moments is to be aware enough to recognize that they have occurred and take note of them and their effect.

As Academic libraries appear to become less devoted to building dedicated Academic learning environments and desire ongoing connections to students, there are even more openings for informal learning moments. Makerspaces, common areas, and events allow for time to teach and learn when it is least expected but can also be most impactful.

In his *Atlas of New Librarianship*, R. David Lankes stated, 'The mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities.' Informal learning has also been associated with learning through knowledge creation so it is central to what librarians need to understand and integrate now and in the future.



# Making space for Informal Learning in the Academic Library

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