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

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9-27-2022

# Final Report: The Ecosystem of 21st Century Employer Supported Education and Training Initiatives

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# **FINAL REPORT: THE ECOSYSTEM OF 21ST CENTURY EMPLOYER- SUPPORTED EDUCATION AND TRAINING INITIATIVES**

**September 27, 2022**



# ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

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Who conducted this study?



**JILL  
CASTEK**

**Professor in the College of  
Education at the University  
of Arizona**



**KATHY  
HARRIS**

**Director of the Literacy,  
Language and Technology  
Research (LLTR) Group**



**GLORIA  
JACOBS**

**Research Associate, Literacy,  
Language and Technology  
Research (LLTR) Group**



**JEN  
VANEK**

**Director of Digital Learning  
and Research at the Ed Tech  
Center and World Education**

The 21 CLEO research is supported by a generous grant from [Walmart](#). The opinions and ideas expressed on this website are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the funders.



# ABOUT THE PROJECT

Why and how did we do this research?



## PURPOSE

Examine factors that influence the 21st century learning ecosystem and open up more opportunities for working learners' skills and knowledge development



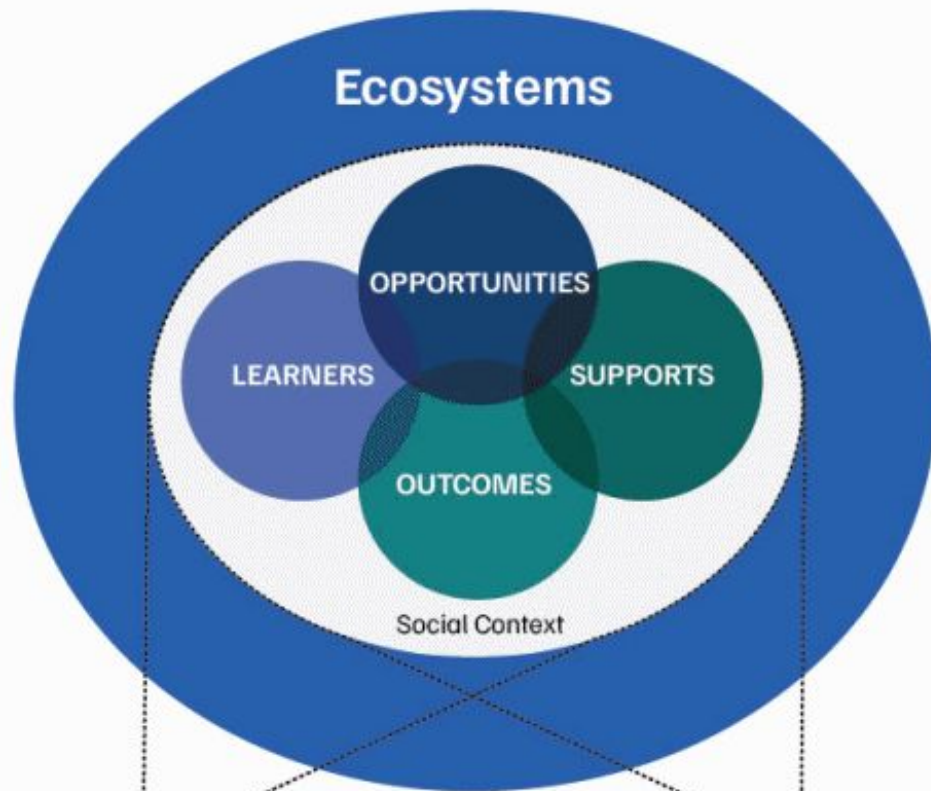
## SIGNIFICANCE

Consider how opportunities to learn can better support success on the job and may lead to a strengthened capacity to engage with others and continually learn



## EVOLUTION

The research moved through four phases responsive to what the data showed, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the racial reckoning within the United States



# 21 Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities: Research and Findings

[Download Report](#)

## Research

-  Purpose
-  Significance
-  Evolution
-  Researchers

The **21st Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities** (21 CLEO) research was launched to increase understanding of the complexities of learning ecosystems in employer-supported education and training initiatives. This work envisions workplace learning as ecosystems shaped by a constellation of factors that operate in dependent and independent ways. This website contains an interactive summary of insights about working learners, the types of education and training initiatives offered to working learners, and the outcomes from participating in employer-supported education and training initiatives.

<https://edtech.worlded.org/21cleo-report>

# PARTS OF ECOSYSTEMS

What makes up ecosystems?



## FEATURES

**The system functions optimally when the different elements work together**



## SUSTAINABILITY

**Healthy ecosystems endure when contributions are valued and efforts are appreciated**



## CONSIDERATIONS

**The realities of change, systemic issues of race, and learners' individuality are key facets that need to be acknowledged**



# LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS

What are the features of learning ecosystems?



## LEARNING GOALS

Working learners have goals that may change over time



## EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Employers and other organizations offer training and education initiatives



## ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Working learners make decisions that affect a learning ecosystem



## COMPLEX & DYNAMIC

Ecosystems change according to context and socio-economic shifts

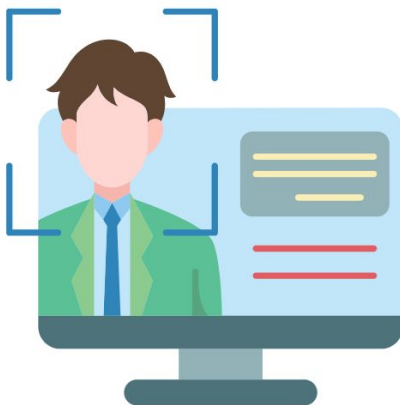
# ALL ABOUT THE LEARNERS

What do the data tells us about working learners?



## CHARACTERISTICS

Each learner is unique and engages in learning for different reasons



## PERSONA

Portraits drawn from learners' experiences help us understand their experiences



## INTERSECTIONALITY

Considering learners' identities are essential to customizing motivation and supports



## Learning Goals

-  Learn foundational skills
-  Advance in a career pathway
-  Earn a degree
-  Meet job specific skill requirements
-  Learning for future possibilities

# PERSONA

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What do persona of working learners illustrate?



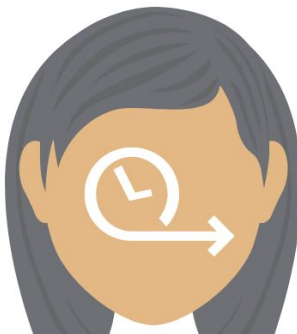
**REGINA**

**Healthcare Worker  
Seeking to  
Establish a Career**



**NEBURU**

**Working to Feel  
Comfortable  
Interacting with  
English Speakers**



**NAOMI**

**Learning for Future  
Possibilities**



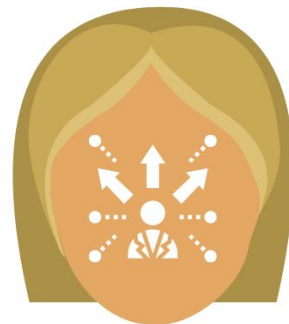
**DANI**

**Front-Line  
Supervisor Paid  
Hourly Seeking  
Certification for  
Advancement**



**ALIMAYU**

**College-educated  
Retail Worker  
Learning English**



**ELISE**

**Juggling Work,  
Required Training,  
and Long-Term  
Goals**

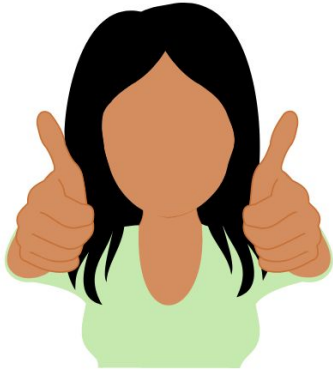
# LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

What factors support participation?



## GOALS

Meet learners needs, desires, and goals



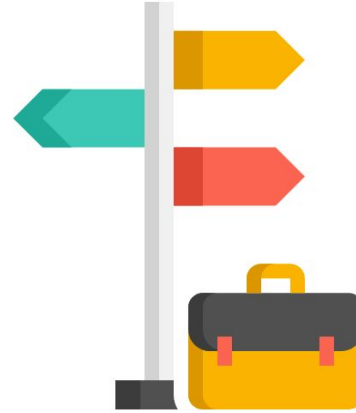
## ENCOURAGE

Encouragement drives motivation



## FLEXIBILITY

Make learning fit into lives and responsibilities



## CHOICE

Choose learning that fits individual needs



## RELEVANCE

Learning is meaningful & leads to advancement

# SUPPORTS

What supports encourage participation?



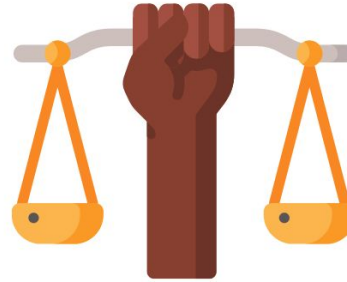
**PROVIDE  
SUPPORT**

Material and affective supports from family, friends, and employers help overcome barriers.



**CONNECT**

Supervisors play a key role in helping learners make connections between learning and advancement.



**MENTOR FOR  
EQUITY**

Proactive and ongoing mentoring may be needed for historically marginalized groups.

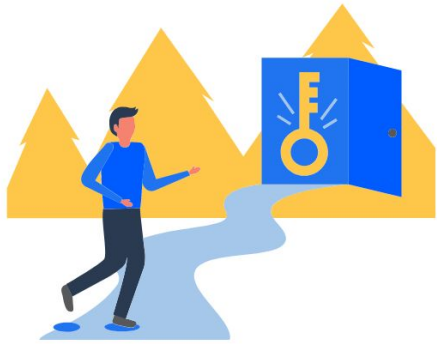


**COMMUNICATE**

Communicate clearly about benefits, time, and effort needed to fully engage in learning.

# OUTCOMES

What does participation in learning lead to?



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

**Employers recognize learners' education and training efforts; make connections to advancement opportunities**



## ADVANCEMENT

**Create clear paths for advancement and communicate about progress along the way**



## RETENTION

**Create conditions to support the retention of skilled frontline workers through relevant training that leads to advancement**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

What actions can be taken?



## LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS

Learners are central to ever-changing learning ecosystems; learners need encouragement and material support from employers, supervisors and extended networks



## SUPPORTS FOR WORKING LEARNERS

Supports need to help learners see how learning could lead to advancement; employers need to create flexible and relevant education and training opportunities that meet learners' goals



## CENTERING EQUITY

Learning ecosystems are best viewed through an equity lens that considers who learners are, their needs, and create ways that they can participate equitably



# Read more.



The screenshot shows the top section of a website. At the top left is the EdTech Center @ World Education logo. At the top right are search and menu icons. The main heading is '21 Century Learning Ecosystem Opportunities: Research and Findings'. Below the heading is a 'Download Report' button. Below the button is a 'Research' section with a dropdown arrow and four sub-items: Purpose, Significance, Evolution, and Researchers. To the right of these sub-items is a paragraph of text describing the research.

**EdTech**  
CENTER @  
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21 Century Learning Ecosystem  
Opportunities: Research and  
Findings

Download Report

**Research** ^

- Purpose
- Significance
- Evolution
- Researchers

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<https://edtech.worlded.org/21cleo-report>

# THANK YOU

Who helped make this research possible?



Literacy  
Language &  
Technology  
Research



**WORLD EDUCATION**



Portland State  
Applied Linguistics