

## Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is completely initiated by the person who wants to acquire the knowledge or the skills for a specific purpose. Certification for non-formal learning can take two routes: accredited certification and non-accredited certification. Accredited certification means that the organisation or institution through which you are studying complies with the requirements of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and these qualifications are transferable and recognised nationally and internationally. Most universities offer accredited non-formal learning diplomas and degree courses, often called "short courses".

Non-accredited certification means that an organisation or institution has not registered their courses with SAQA and their training material is not nationally standardised. However, this does not mean that what you have learnt on a non-accredited course is not valuable. It merely means that certain institutions or organisations may not recognise your achievement.

Non-formal learning can take many different forms to suit the learner. You may find non-formal learning can take the form of part-time studies, evening classes, online learning, short certificate courses, seminars or conferences. Most non-formal learning is individual-centred and concentrates on the personal development of the individual. Many people who participate in non-formal learning activities have become successful entrepreneurs or have made drastic career changes and become very successful as a result.

## Earn while you learn

Very often teenagers want to feel more in control of their lives. They rebel against authority and become extremely misunderstood. One way to regain your independence is to find employment while you are still at school. This will help your parents to see that you are willing to take on responsibilities. But this does not mean that you should leave school in order to work. Working while you are still at school is a great way to gain experience and when you matriculate you will have a more impressive curriculum vitae.

## How to combine work time with schoolwork time

- You will be required to prioritise your activities.
- You have to manage your time more effectively.
- Reduce your television time and use that time to complete homework and assignments.
- Complete your household chores quickly and efficiently so that you do not waste time having to redo them.
- Set boundaries with your friends so that they know they should not infringe on your study time.
- Do not take on more than you can handle.
- Perhaps you should initially only work on the weekends so that you get used to this type of schedule.
- Speak to your parents if you become overwhelmed by the workload.
- Set goals for yourself.
- Be very clear as to why you want to work after hours. Do you want to be of service to others, do you want recognition and credit, do you want to earn money to buy a particular item, do you want to gain experience in a particular field, do you want to earn money to go on an overseas trip, or ...? Whatever your reason is, honour it.
- It is very important that you do not feel exploited or abused and that you speak up for yourself.
- Do not forget that you are still young and you also need to take time out for fun.

## Types of work

It is always more beneficial to choose a type of work that is closest to the career you will be choosing. However, this might not always be possible.

- Job shadowing is one way of gaining experience. Initially you may shadow someone and see where there is an excess of work. Approach the manager and ask if they will take you on as a casual on the weekends.
- If you are interested in gaining experience only, then community work is a great possibility. Here you are exposed to many learning opportunities and networking with other people becomes promising. It is unlikely that you will earn lots of money, if any.
- If you are very creative, you may start a project from which you could earn money. Think of the needs in your community. Entertainment, health, beauty and food are always needed in any community. You could learn to cut men's hair, blow-dry women's hair, cut and paint finger and toenails, offer massages, etc. If you are musically inclined you could teach younger and older people to play a musical instrument, you could sing at weddings and funerals, etc.
- If you are good at cooking and baking you could bake bread, rolls, cakes, donuts and maybe sell them on a Friday afternoon when parents are too tired to cook when they come from work.
- If you live near a very busy shopping centre or restaurant ask the manager there if you could wait tables. Most restaurants like to train their own waiters and waitresses. You could learn valuable business skills, meet interesting clients and earn lots of money in tips.
- Volunteering is also a wonderful way of gaining experience. This also helps to give you insight into societal issues. Volunteers do not earn money, but are often assisted with transportation stipends.

## Informal learning

Informal learning is learning **tacitly** or through imitating someone. In the informal learning process there are no courses or learning programmes. A typical example of informal learning is when in the work situation you do not know how to execute a particular computer command. You then ask a work colleague to show you how to do it. Once your work colleague has shown you, you have learnt on an informal basis. Informal learning or tacit learning can also apply in your classroom. You may ask your friend to explain a mathematics problem that you do not understand. Once your friend explains the problem to you and you understand it, informal learning has taken place. Informal learning can also take place through dialogue, communication, social engagement, presentations, cultural exchanges, and so on.