

SOURCE STUDY TITLE AND AUTHOR

Desegregating Work and Learning Through ‘Earn-and-Learn’ Models. Annelies Goger.
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SUMMARY

The Research: Earn-and-Learn Strategies Open up Career Pathways to People of Diverse Backgrounds and Experiences, Expanding the Labor Force

DESCRIPTION

According to a recent study by the Brookings Institution, our traditional model of education can no longer keep up with the pace of technological change, leaving many workers behind. In addition, job seekers have difficulty navigating career options and accessing additional education. Meanwhile, employers fall back on degrees and personal networks to connect with jobseekers and underinvest in training, which leads to heightened competition for a narrow pool of talent and underutilization of other sources of potential workers. Earn-and-learn strategies, by closely linking learning and working, can provide more pathways to jobs and careers for people of diverse backgrounds and experiences, expanding the pool of talent for employers to tap into.

KEY FINDINGS

- Despite the dominance of tradition four-year college degrees in the US, more than two-thirds of the adult population lack one. However, most workers will require additional postsecondary training throughout their lifetime due to the changing nature of work. Nonetheless, the alternative postsecondary training landscape that has proliferated has created a confusing and chaotic multitude of credentials and programs that both workers and employers struggle to understand. Earn-and-learn programs offer quality education options more closely linked to the labor market suitable for working adults and other nontraditional students rather than relying solely on education suited only for “college-age” students.

- The earn-and-learn program in the US already exists, but it is only at a small scale and not systematic. Common forms of earn-and-learn training in the US includes registered apprenticeships, customized training programs created in partnership with employers, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, cooperatives, military training, practicums, residencies and internships. Earn-and learn participants are an extremely small share of participants in the US learning ecosystems (classroom-based job training, higher education, and work-based learning). However, earn-and-learn participants (registered apprenticeship and incumbent worker training) have been shown to earn double the annualized median earnings of participants in classroom-based occupational skills training.
- Earn-and-learn pathways can provide a paid route to a college degree and lifelong learning. They provide workers with opportunities to show their value and greater access to professional networks. For employers, earn-and-learn pathways provide a more robust and stable talent pipeline with academic and industry-specific knowledge that can be more agile and responsive in today's rapidly changing world of work.

SOURCE STUDY LINK

Desegregating Work and Learning Through 'Earn-and-Learn' Models

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[JFF.org](https://www.jff.org)

[JFF.org2](https://www.jff.org2)

[JFF.org3](https://www.jff.org3)

[Skillup.org](https://www.skillup.org)

[Bain.com](https://www.bain.com)

Figure 1. Common forms of earn-and-learn training

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded training*	Other common earn-and-learn models (not covered under WIOA)
✓ Registered apprenticeship – long-term training (two to four years) under the mentorship of a more experienced worker that is formally approved to meet federal or state standards under the National Apprenticeship Act ✓ Customized training – training designed for new hires on specific employer requirements, often with subsidy from the employer ✓ Incumbent worker training – training that employers provide to existing workers to keep their skills updated, sometimes with government subsidy or tax incentives ✓ Transitional jobs – time-limited work experiences that are subsidized for individuals with barriers to employment, such as people with conviction records, to de-risk hiring	✓ Cooperatives – engineering programs typically require students to gain first-hand experience in an engineering workplace ✓ Military training – the U.S. has Training and Education Command units in each branch of the military that provide hands-on training and have centers of excellence, applied universities, and management schools ✓ Practicums, residencies, and fellowships – health professions such as nurses and medical doctors require learners to complete practical experience hours under the close supervision of a more experienced professional ✓ Internships – employers in many industries host learners (usually college students) in short term programs of three to six months to gain exposure

Source: Brookings Institution