

TOWARDS A LEARNING CITY: A Continuum

Learning - the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values - occurs in every city. However learning cities are places where learning throughout the life-span of all citizens is explicitly, systematically fostered, and the learning resources of every sector of a city are mobilized whether they be the **economic** - (from private to social enterprise); **civic** - (local government and its senior counterparts); **public** - (libraries, museums, health and social service agencies); **education** - (Kindergarten to post-graduate studies); or **voluntary** - (from faith communities to self-help, and cultural groups).

Learning cities are distinguished by their explicit use of the concept of lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal. The cross-hairs of the lens of lifelong learning are focused on systematic provision of learning opportunities from birth to death (the vertical or life-span dimension) - and the use of learning resources (human, facilities and materiel) across every sector (the horizontal or life-wide dimension). Learning cities are places where people are learning how to forge new partnerships and strategic alliances across different sectors to achieve their mutual goals. Innovative working relationships, and use of new learning technologies to enable networking within and among learning communities– are hallmarks of learning cities. As is evident from the following table, cities can placed on a continuum from those that are intentionally learning how to mobilize their learning assets to achieve their aspirations in the emerging knowledge-based economy and society to those in which the response is at best reactive, sporadic, and piecemeal.

← Learning City - <i>Towards an Ideal</i> -	Conventional City ⇒ - <i>A Variable Beginning</i> -
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ECONOMIC SECTOR

<p>PROACTIVE PARTNERS IN A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literacy, learning how to learn, team and thinking skills provide a comparative economic advantage ▪ social and human capital is valued, added to, and used for comparative advantage ▪ learning is seen as an investment ▪ learning is seen as a social process that results in a comparative community advantage for economic development ▪ innovations are supported by interactive learning among learning organizations within the community ▪ economic and education partners share their training resources with each other and the community ▪ larger firms share training resources with their supply chain ▪ most firms foster individual learning plans 	<p>REACTING TO ECONOMIC CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ literacy and learning are ignored as fundamental to a strategy for managing economic change ▪ social and human capital is unrecognized and largely untapped ▪ education is seen as a cost ▪ learning is viewed as an individual activity solely for individual economic benefit ▪ innovations are isolated and viewed as competitive threats by others in the community ▪ companies and education often compete: there is often little or no community access to resources of either ▪ supply chain training is sporadic or non-existent ▪ few, if any, firms offer individual learning plans
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CIVIC SECTOR

<p>CIVIC LITERACY & ENGAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fosters learning within and across all its department policies and practices e.g., community policing; restorative justice; police recruit job shadowing of youth workers; Youth Council ▪ enables student service-learning opportunities that enhance youth leadership and civic literacy ▪ joined-up problems are dealt with by joined solutions across government portfolios 	<p>PUBLIC APATHY & CYNICISM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ civic government is viewed in competition with school and recreation board initiatives ▪ civic learning resources (expertise and facilities) are largely untapped in terms of youth leadership and civic literacy ▪ joined-up problems of under-education, ill-health, poor housing, etc. are dealt with by government departmental silos
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PUBLIC SECTOR

<p>A PROACTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ library, museum, social and health agencies are partners that sometimes play a lead role in providing learning opportunities e.g., IT or health literacy ▪ not-for-profit sector is supported to provide service-learning and other voluntary learning opportunities 	<p>REACTING TO CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ library and other public sector providers are seen as supplemental to education sector provision ▪ public sector is seldom adequately aided to support community service-learning and other voluntary activities
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EDUCATION SECTOR

<p>NEW EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ both formal and non-formal sector learning resources are mobilized ▪ many pathways are created within and between formal and non-formal learning sectors in a coherent, seamless system ▪ learning is seen as the common denominator of education & training ▪ education is viewed as an important partner in production and distribution of learning ▪ the education system builds partnerships with the other four community sectors ▪ literacy and learning how to learn provide foundations for life-span learning ▪ the education system provides community service-learning opportunities at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels ▪ health determinants and brain research informs preventative learning strategies to save costly remedial education, health, criminal justice, and social programs 	<p>OLD EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ education is seen as sole provider of learning ▪ the formal education system has few links to the non-formal learning sectors, particularly the community ▪ education is viewed as prestigious and training is devalued ▪ education is seen to have a monopoly on the production and distribution of learning ▪ the education system has few, if any, links with the other four community sectors ▪ weak literacy & learning skills widen gap between under-educated minorities and the educated dominant society ▪ the education system provides few, if any, community service-learning opportunities at any level of schooling ▪ there are few preventative learning strategies and access to quality early health and learning opportunities is either limited or non-existent
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VOLUNTARY SECTOR

<i>VOLUNTARY LEARNING SECTOR</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ voluntary service provides opportunities for both volunteer learning and enriching social capital ▪ pathways between voluntary service and paid employment are systematically developed ▪ volunteers are well-trained members of quality provision teams 	<i>VOLUNTEERISM</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ volunteerism is seen as a means of reducing delivery costs ▪ volunteerism is employed to replace paid employment ▪ volunteers may or may not be adequately trained
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LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

<i>LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES: A TOOL</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ local lifelong learning strategy developed with learner smart cards and/or learning passports to facilitate learning for all ▪ universal local, public access to learning technologies and training for networking within and among communities 	<i>A DIGITAL DIVIDE</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ incoherent, sporadic, and unequal learning opportunities are provided with chief benefits to an educated elite with access to learning technologies ▪ limited public access to learning technologies with little networking/training beyond the community
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OVERALL CONSEQUENCE

<i>OVERALL GOAL</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of a lifelong learning culture is a community goal 	<i>OVERALL RESULT</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ some individuals promote lifelong learning values and life styles
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