

Planning Learning Cities: Addressing globalisation locally

Local Challenges of Globalisation

Around the world, on all continents, hundreds of cities are Learning Cities. These are local communities that have determined to address global social, economic and technological change by facilitating 'learning for all' as a means of building their local community capacity. Learning Cities harness resources across the community – knowledge, social networks, environmental assets and financial capital – to enable local people and organizations to develop skills, knowledge and values. Through this collaborative effort, Learning Cities develop not just resilience and adaptability to change, but enhance their capacity for sustainability and competitiveness. City and regional planners are responsible for the allocation and management of land resources – their role is to ensure that the built and natural environments support the community's objectives. The focus of this paper is the ways in which professional planners, through their practice and the environment they shape, contribute to building capacity within Learning Cities.

Contemporary society is characterised by what might be described as “extraordinary global change”¹. Globalisation – the “economic and cultural linking of diverse societies across large distances”² – is occurring now with greater speed, scale, scope and level of complexity than ever previously³. A worldwide labour market, the growth of the so-called knowledge economy and information society⁴, and the pervasion of information and communication technologies throughout all aspects of life mean that change is not only extent but ongoing. Linkages that are taking place at national and international levels are having significant legal, technological, cultural, social, political and economic effects locally within cities and regions. Individuals, organizations and institutions – indeed, entire communities – need to develop resilience and adaptability if they are to be free and able to function economically, politically and socially on a global stage. Thus “...as the constraints of geographical distance are becoming less important, the specific features of particular locales are becoming *more* important...”⁵ and cities are constantly challenged to maintain skills, knowledge and systems that are relevant and competitive. The global phenomenon of the Learning City has evolved in response to this challenge.

Learning Cities

“A Learning City is any city, town or village which strives to learn how to renew itself in a time of extraordinary global change. Using lifelong learning as an organising principle and social goal, Learning Cities promote collaboration of the civic, private, voluntary and education sectors in the process of achieving agreed upon objectives related to the twin goals of sustainable economic development and social inclusiveness...”⁶

In essence, Learning Cities respond to the challenges of globalisation by seeking to realise their human potential or capacity. Harnessing resources community-wide, these local areas seek to ensure that “people of all ages...have equal and open access to high-quality learning opportunities and to a variety of learning experiences” in any field they want or need⁷ – in short, lifelong learning for all. This includes ‘formal learning’ – the development of skills and knowledge in education and training institutions; ‘non-formal learning’ in workplaces and civil society organisations, and ‘informal learning’, which is often unintentional and may occur in any setting or context.⁸ The underpinning idea is that if everyone is “able, motivated and actively encouraged to learn throughout life”⁹, personal competence and confidence will be fostered, organizations will be able to function more efficiently, democratic values strengthened, community life cultivated, social cohesion maintained and innovation,

productivity and economic growth promoted. This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1. In short, developing a culture of learning opportunity and support is intended to lead to socially and economically sustainable communities. Similar to the human capacity¹⁰ thesis of Sen's *Development as Freedom*, Learning Cities focus on developing "people's imagination, commitment and skills"¹¹ as the key to the future.

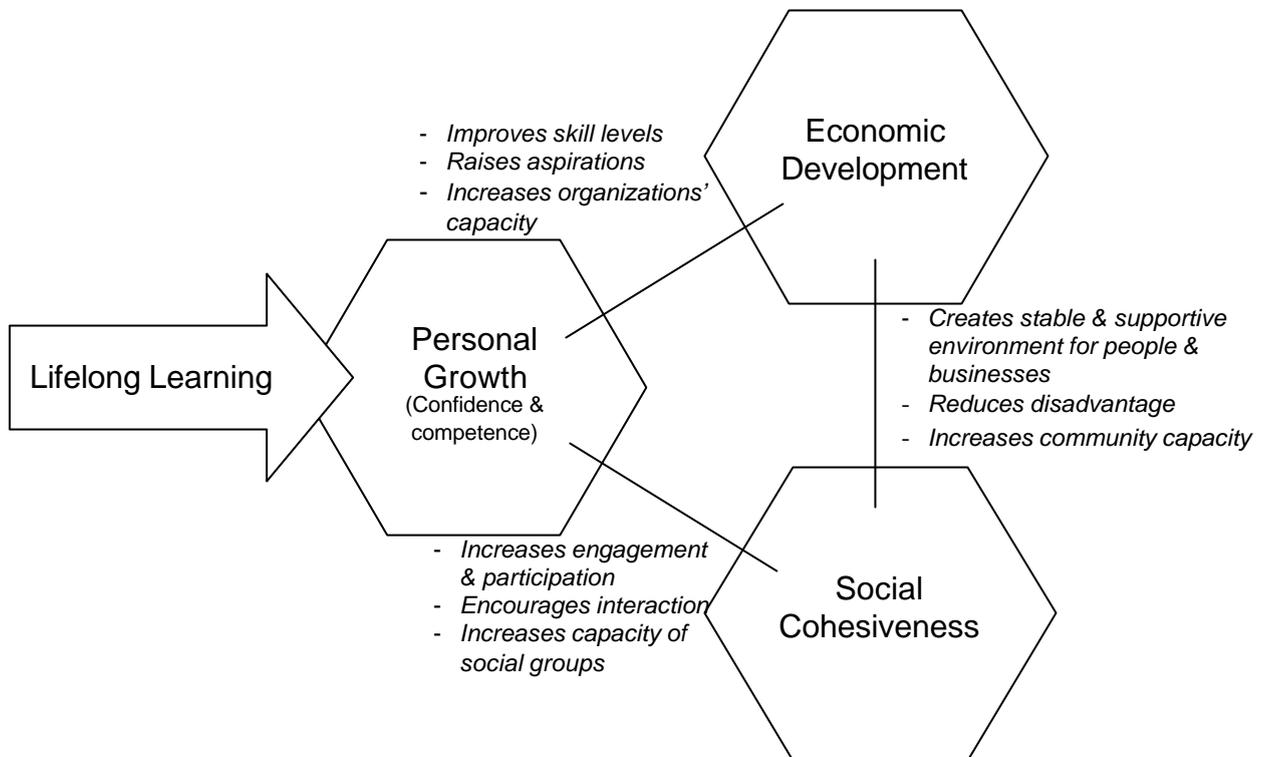


Figure 1: Community Capacity-Building through Learning

The notion of Learning Cities is one that has risen to worldwide prominence in a relatively short period of time. The first Learning Cities are regarded as stemming from an OECD project on 'Educating Cities' in the 1980s¹², which involved a small number of cities in building community capacity by investing in education and lifelong learning. This spawned the International Association of Educating Cities, which now has over 200 member cities spanning South America, Africa, continental Europe, the Middle East and Australia. The release in 1996 of reports by both the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlighting the importance of learning for society into the future¹³ provided significant impetus for the development of Learning Cities worldwide. Germany, Japan and Singapore were amongst nations to develop national strategies for the facilitation of learning in localities or regions. The United Kingdom facilitated the development of a Learning Cities Network with over 50 member cities; whilst in Australia and Canada, dozens of individual cities and neighbourhoods moved to declare themselves Learning Communities. In 2001, the Towards Europe as a Learning Society (TELS) audit identified more than 80 Lifelong Learning Cities across that continent. Although they are identified by different names in different places, Learning Cities globally are consistently committed to addressing complex challenges locally through facilitating learning for all.

Given the breadth of social, cultural, political and economic circumstances in which Learning Cities have developed, the range of initiatives focused on facilitating and supporting lifelong learning in locales varies vastly in order to respond to the circumstances of place. According to Yarnit's audit of Learning Cities, however, many share the following common elements: a public commitment to lifelong learning; a public campaign to promote and celebrate it; the

establishment of an organising committee or partnership; and development of policies and projects to broaden access to learning opportunities.¹⁴ These four broad categories clearly belie the considerable variety of Learning City initiatives worldwide, however they demonstrate the necessity that Learning Cities be developed by multi-sectoral community partnerships. At least, the realisation of lifelong learning requires the “participation of four distinct groups: the community, education and training providers, business and local government”¹⁵ if a shared vision of learning is to be formulated, opportunity access broadened, and participation and success promoted across the community.

Although the focus of Learning Cities is on individual human potential, the benefits of ‘learning for all’ individuals can only be realized in the context of social, economic and political systems and structures that complement the learning objective. Similarly, the United Nations identifies “capacity building and partnership development as one of the main requirements”¹⁶ for communities to be sustainable into the future. This focus identifies the interconnection of individuals and organizations, and requires not only training of individuals but also “strengthening of the institutions and the frameworks within which they work”¹⁷. Thus, human capacity building, as the objective of Learning Cities, requires that individuals, organizations and institutions community-wide are involved in ‘becoming the change’. Partnerships are essentially to achieving efficient resource use, and the focus is not on ‘providing learning *for* people’ but on ‘supporting learning’ – recognising the contexts in which it occurs, and utilising skills and knowledge gained within organizations and the wider community. A Learning City can only evolve if the people, organizations and institutions that make it up understand the principle of learning for all and are committed to its realisation, and if the community’s policies, processes and structures reflect lifelong learning as a goal.

City & Regional Planning

The idea of the Learning City is all very well, but what does it mean for city and regional planning practice? How does the Learning City relate to planning? What might planners do about learning? And does it work?¹⁸

In its broadest sense, city and regional planning (spatial planning) is about the allocation of scarce resources within a defined geographical area¹⁹. More specifically, it is concerned with the management of land and physical resources; “the calculated control of urban [or regional] physical conditions in the social interests of the community at large”²⁰. Thus, it is a decision-making process concerning the allocation of land and regulation of its use, for the present and the future. Taking account of local social, economic and environmental circumstances, context and goals, city and regional planners devise and implement policies about the use of land across a range of time scales. The strategic planner is concerned with the development of objectives and policies up to 25 years in advance, whilst a development planner focuses on the allocation of land for current use. In any timeframe, however, urban and regional planning comprises three (much simplified) elements - the principles that underlie it; the decision-making process itself; and the products of the process. Figure 2 shows how these elements fit together. Essentially, the principles of the practice are the desired objectives for the community. The process concerns the allocation of land and regulation of its use, and results in land use policy and physical environments suited to the local city’s context.

The social, cultural, legal and political frameworks at local, regional and national levels influence the context and detail of planning practice. This context affects the structure and system of planning in determining the prioritisation of principles, the political level at which decisions are made, the extent of involvement of stakeholders in the process, and the range or type of land uses facilitated. Regardless of its state context however, the planning process works physically and politically in fundamental local detail, determining mixes of land use, affecting the appearance of the public realm, shaping interaction in the community and ordaining patterns of expansion and movement. In a Learning City, therefore, the influence of

the city and regional planner has two-fold potential. Firstly, the structure and system of land use planning should complement a community culture of learning. Secondly, the allocation, regulation and management of land use itself should contribute to broadening access to learning opportunities across the community.

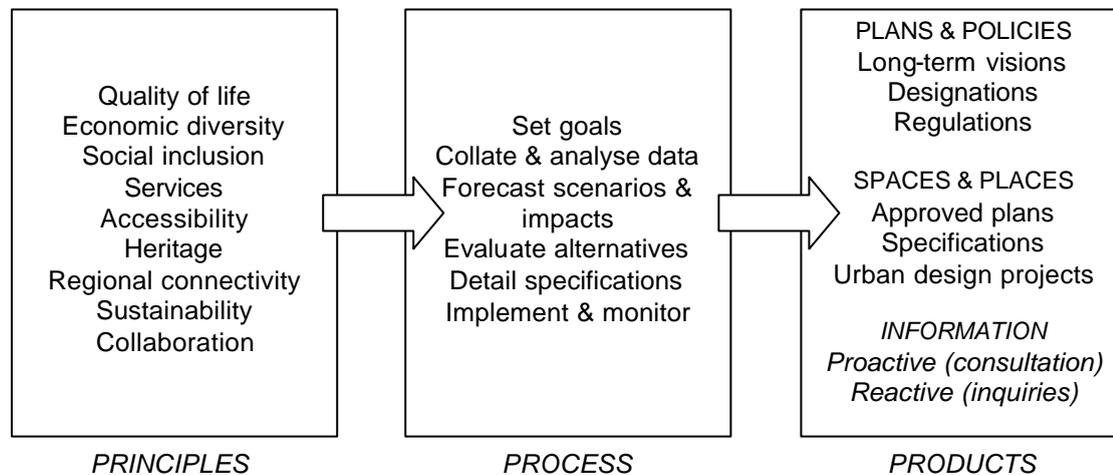


Figure 2: Elements of City and Regional Planning Practice

Planning Learning Cities

The research on which this paper is based is a project carried out in Australian Learning Cities in 2002, less than four years after the first Learning City was declared in that country. A mailed survey was conducted of 48 Learning Cities, including a mix of metropolitan and regional communities across all six states. In Australia, planning and development legislation is determined at state level, and implemented through local plans by local authorities. Two questionnaires were distributed to each community – one to the Manager of City or Regional Planning in the local authority, and the second to a person in the community identified as ‘Learning City Co-ordinator’. The objectives of the survey were to determine the extent of involvement of planners in Learning Cities; and to encourage respondents to consider how this role might evolve in the future. A total of 44 completed questionnaires were received from 32 communities.

The experiences of respondents reveal a range of planners’ contributions to lifelong learning, and their ideas explore a multitude of ways that this might evolve in the future. One planner compares the involvement of planning professionals in facilitating learning to others: “As a profession, I think we make enormous efforts to inform and involve the public in decision-making and general learning about the development of cities and towns. Far more than say the legal, architectural or medical professions in their fields.”²¹ Although only six of 25 planners reported active participation in Learning City initiatives, almost all identified potential for future involvement, and many related projects and programs that were not implemented for learning objectives, but which nevertheless achieve learning outcomes. The responses also revealed some of the challenges for planners in Learning Cities, from low rates of current involvement by planners in learning initiatives – “I don’t know what a lifelong learning agenda is”²² – to limited awareness of the function of planners by others – “I don’t even know if our shire has a town planner.”²³ For consistency, these revelations are examined through the three afore-mentioned elements of planning practice – principles, process, and products. It is not intended to suggest that Learning Cities require the adoption of completely new practices (though it is unlikely that many organizations currently identify the learning outcomes they achieve through planning); nor is it intended to imply that planners must implement every initiative in order to contribute in Learning Cities; rather, it is intended to explore the range of

opportunities that exist to facilitate lifelong learning in local communities through the practice of city and regional planning.

Addressing Global Challenges Locally

Learning as Principle

In the words of one planner, “lifelong learning...can shape our approach to planning and the outcomes of it”²⁴, however planners “first must embrace planning [then] perform all future planning with lifelong learning in mind”.²⁵ It is therefore a formative principle of planning practice in Learning Cities. For practitioners in these communities, lifelong learning as a principle can affect practice in two different ways – as a principle of the community, and as a personal or organizational principle.

As a community goal, learning as a principle sits alongside the ‘traditional’ principles described in Figure 2 – quality of life, economic diversity, social inclusion, services, accessibility, etc. Indeed, as described above, the facilitation of lifelong learning directly contributes to these traditional goals, but arguably requires a different way of considering them. One planner respondent suggested that the facilitation of learning by planners requires “a ‘planning for people rather than just planning for infrastructure approach’”. A planner from another city indicated, “we see a lot of what we do as trying to bring people together physically for exchange and learning”, whilst another explained, “facilitation of lifelong learning is not necessarily how planners see their role. [Our] main concern is to help the community acquire the skills, knowledge and outlook to participate in a more meaningful way in the planning and decision-making process – capacity-building”. It is meaningful, therefore, that a Learning City co-ordinator respondent indicated that it may assist planners if co-ordinators held “education / information forums for town planners on lifelong learning”²⁶ to enhance their understanding of the concept and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for people in the community.

Given the interconnection of individual, institution and community within Learning Cities, it is perhaps not surprising that practitioners consider the principle of lifelong learning to extend beyond a new perspective on community outcomes, to influencing the way in which planning organizations and professionals approach their work. One co-ordinator respondent, for example, suggested three ways in which planners could or should facilitate learning in Learning Cities – “attitude to the community (i.e. positive), leadership roles (by example) [and] ongoing learning (themselves)”²⁷. Another added, “town planners, [like] other professional bodies, should always seek to learn and improve their skills and experiences. It is a process of continuous improvement.”²⁸ This reflects the notion that lifelong learning requires complementary structures and systems at each level, and therefore affects the way in which organizations and individuals function, as well as their community, in realising a new direction – each embodying, or in fact becoming, the change that is sought – in this instance, a culture supportive of learning. Indeed, one planner responded, “...we have been encouraged to share the value of continuous lifelong learning.”²⁹ It is critical to note, however, that even if a community embraces a Learning City vision and the individual planners support and participate in learning, “incorporating lifelong learning into the vision of the organization is also a key factor in raising its importance in the planning process”.³⁰ Without the structural and systemic validation of the learning objective by the organization, individual and citywide efforts will not connect to contribute to community capacity.

The Learning Process

Whilst embracing the principle of learning concerns planners’ level of awareness of lifelong learning, the incorporation of the objective within professional process is about acting to implement that understanding. It assumes, at least to some extent, the adoption of learning as a principle, and encompasses the ways in which the six-stage decision-making process set out in Figure 2 can be altered and adapted to facilitate learning by the people who are

involved at different points. Given that enabling people's involvement (democratic strengthening) is a key objective of Learning Cities, sharing of information and facilitation of involvement in decisions through planning may contribute significantly to Learning Cities.³¹ In addition to facilitating the development of skills and understanding, learning-oriented planning may also assist the building of social networks and foster group learning, problem-solving and decision-making skills professional sectors and in the broader community, supporting the creation of a citywide learning culture. Moreover, it is not only members of the public for whom the planning process can afford learning opportunities – learning potential exists wherever there is interaction³², therefore throughout the process there is opportunity for two-way learning relationships amongst a range of stakeholders.

In some communities, respondents reported whole planning processes – from goal-setting to evaluation of options – that facilitate learning. One of the most comprehensive examples was “community learning process[es in]...the production of local plans [which] involve intensive community participation over a 12 month / 2 year period.”³³ The challenge identified by this local authority, however, is that “for all the time and money spent (approx \$300,000 AUD or 40-50% of local plan cost), less than 1% of the local area plan population actually engage in the process.” Given that the objective of facilitating lifelong learning in Learning Cities is to provide access to learning opportunity for those who need or want it, the objective is achieved when proportion of the community that is interested (however small) is able to access this learning. If, however, the objective is to facilitate widespread local involvement in decision-making, then the process is clearly not achieving its aim. It is critical, therefore, to consider at the beginning of the process the desired outcomes, and then to monitor progress against these aims, and alter subsequent processes as necessary. In this way, the process too ‘learns’ from the past.

The process of goal setting, particularly as it relates to the development of a strategic long-term vision for a community, is often cited as facilitating learning. In fact, one-third of planner respondents who were active in Learning City initiatives referred to “visioning workshops”³⁴ as a means of involvement, and several others referred to forums of some sort – bringing together community representatives and experts from relevant fields and providing opportunities for them to understand others’ perspectives. Furthermore, as goal formulation is the beginning of a planning ‘cycle’, such processes are an opportunity for participants to build “knowledge of the planning process and city visioning”³⁵. In one Australian Learning City, the planning department even used ‘search conferences’ to fulfil the strategic vision development process³⁶. Taking place over several days, the search conference engages individuals from across the city to share their concerns and aspirations about the city’s future and to build understanding; then to formulate a common vision and action strategies. It is not only in strategic planning that learning is a relevant process to consider.

Goal setting is also a critical element of development, or short-term, site-specific planning. Although it is considered only infrequently, there are two aspects. Goal setting in development includes the formulation of ‘desires’ by owners prior to the creation of plans; and the identification of legislative requirements by the planning authority. There is potential for learning exchanges when applicants make inquiries about process, or hold preliminary discussions. Perhaps one of the most often perceived challenges to the realisation of learning opportunities in (short-term) process is the reality of process itself, particularly in the making of ‘immediate’ planning decisions – development assessment – and the correspondence, reports, and deadlines that are the legal obligations of the practitioners. The manager of one local authority’s planning department explains, “I do not see that my Council Development Assessment Section has a role to play in the ‘lifelong learning of the community’. [T]he assessment process is a complex one and Councils have neither the resources or (*sic*) inclination to participate in this field.” By contrast, according to a development assessment officer in a local council, facilitating learning is very important: “It is so much of my job. If I can help people understand to the requirements at the beginning, they

are less likely to complain if their application is refused...and more like to submit a good application."³⁷ Thus, investment in the process of facilitating understanding is not only to contribute to a 'culture of learning', but makes the planning assessment process more efficient.

Data collation and analysis, and the forecasting of scenarios and impacts in the planning process are two further processes that involve substantial interaction, and therefore provide opportunity for two-way learning exchanges. In both long-term and short-term planning, it is about an exchange between professionals in the community. The multi-disciplinary nature of the planning field means that many planning matters (both strategic forecasting and imminent development impacts) require assimilation of technical information ranging from engineering and cultural heritage. Each exercise is therefore an opportunity for the planner to enhance his or her understanding in technical disciplines and the synthesis of complex subject matter. Several respondents identified local tertiary campuses as an under-utilised research resource in relation to understanding local community³⁸. The learning benefits in such projects are both for students who obtain 'genuine' experience, and for practitioners who obtain information and evaluation of high quality. For experts and consultants, too, the preparation of reports and forecasts to the specification of land use planning affords particular skills, if the planner takes the time to explain procedures and requirements.

Data collation and impact forecasting are also processes that have potential to be learning interactions between planners and the interested general public, if configured to allow input and exchange of views. A planner from an active Learning City reports, "we have been encouraged to actively share our knowledge of the community, and research work undertaken."³⁹ In particular, consultative processes involving reference groups or working parties, for example, provide opportunity for those individuals to develop a comprehensive understanding of "regional and local issues and processes"⁴⁰, however this is dependent of the time allowance and access by group members to experts. Finally, another aspect of learning that can result from data collection and forecasting is the learning that planners can realise from interaction with the community in which they work. "Town planning could be involved [in the Learning City initiative] by holding workshops with the community to provide feedback, [or] conduct surveys."⁴¹ In fact, however, learning does not require a structured format, and mutual learning can occur in any query or conversation, and requires only that one party is prepared to share knowledge or insight, the other is open to learning.

The stage of 'option evaluation' within the planning in process is arguably the stage at which the decision is actually made regarding the outcome. In some processes, professionals in isolation may make the decision, or, more likely, either the decision will be made by professionals in the company of laypeople, or by untrained individuals in receipt of professional recommendation. If an open public decision-making process (such as much consultation) is carried out for the evaluation of alternatives in a guided process, the transparency of the process will determine the potential for others to gain understanding from it. Where systems dictate decisions being made by "untrained individuals" (such as working parties) it is at this point that it becomes evident whether a workable understanding of planning process has been learned. Depending on the political level at which local planning decisions are made, a critical key element of process learning at this stage may be the "education of Council elected members."⁴² In many local authorities in Australia, the job of the qualified planner is to undertake the planning process (either strategically, or in assessment of an application), and present a recommendation together with the alternatives to the elected members of the Council. Thus, the decision is affected by professional recommendation and political context. Where planners are not decision-makers, the learning opportunity stems from observation of the process to understand local priorities.

Once a decision has been made, the focus of the process is on the products, with specification developments resulting in policies and approval conditions; and implementation and monitoring creating the city's environment of places and spaces.

Planning Products for Learning

The interactions and information exchange that the planning process requires – between planners and ‘the community’, within the community, amongst professionals, etc – are a significant component of the profession's involvement in the facilitation of learning for all. There are, however, also ways in which the products or outputs of the decision-making process, too, may allow or encourage lifelong learning within communities. In fact, many of the initiatives mentioned by planners and Learning City organisers, focus on these ‘tangible’ aspects of the profession. The overview of planning practice in Figure 2 identifies three main types of ‘planning products’. These are places and spaces (the configuration of the built environment) and plans and policies (the documentation that details land use requirements, and determines the layout and function of places and spaces). The third ‘product’ is information, which acknowledges the element of professional practice that does not affect decision-making, but calls on ‘the planner as urban expert’ within the organization or community.

Arguably the most oft-cited contribution of planners to facilitating learning within Learning Cities centre on so-called “infrastructure for learning”⁴³, which refers to the location and function of dedicated learning facilities within local areas. This predominantly concerns schools and their relationship to the broader community. In strategic planning, this might involve the fundamental “development of education-specific local land use policies and clarification of the role of education within the strategic vision.”⁴⁴ In growing suburbs, and on long-term expansion plans, this might involve “siting schools for release areas”⁴⁵ on strategic infrastructure plans. In more established areas, planners may instead be involved in “building vitality around schools as places for meeting and exchanging learning”⁴⁶, not only facilitating community cohesion, but seeking efficient use of the school's resources around the clock and throughout the week. Re-considering the connection of schools to their local environ also provides scope for “looking at the role of schools in suburbs as business/learning areas”⁴⁷, and may offer impetus to “foster relations between local business and the education community.”

One Learning City that included a recently master planned ‘learning suburb’ in its bounds described an ongoing project to establish a ‘Learning Centre’, combining library and studio resources of the primary and secondary schools and the public library in a prominent location in the midst of that suburb's central commercial/business, thus facilitating not only efficient resource use, but interaction between people from across the city. The high profile nature of the site is akin to Allison's “learning centre as a vehicle for development”⁴⁸, in which the notion of learning as the community's core principle is reflected physically in the construction at the heart of the Learning City of a learning centre; a hub for information, recreation and skill development. A planner in an outer metropolitan local authority in another state described the negotiation with multiple stakeholder required to secure a ‘community campus’ – also a high profile, shared use site combining university and technical college services on a substantial site within the ‘town centre’.

Another element of Learning Cities that is interesting to consider is the facilitation of learning in the city itself – within the public realm – which takes place on two levels. Firstly, learning by the individual within public space, who is fundamentally dependent on stimulus, observation and interaction to learn about the city and one's role in it; and secondly, the interaction of community ‘groups’ (across land uses or between amongst types of residents), facilitating learning through interaction. The layout and design of public places and spaces is critical to the individual's opportunity to learn within it. The layout of places and spaces for

learning has much in common with the layout of space for social inclusion, environmental health and community safety – it should include distinct spaces or ‘rooms’, suitable for moving, meeting, eating, talking, observing and reflecting. It should feature complementary design elements, to facilitate visual and cognitive stimulation. These elements may be in the treatment of surfaces, landscaping or furniture, to reinforce the character of the space, and stimulate the learner’s interest. The facilitation of learning in the public realm, though, extends beyond the design of spaces and places to the patterns of use of land around public areas. Amongst some types of land use land uses, such as knowledge-based industries or of centres of learning⁴⁹, fostering cluster development may afford interaction and the exchange of ideas that nurtures innovation. In other circumstances, co-location such as incorporation of learning centres in industrial or retail centres through mixed use and integrated development⁵⁰ raises the profile and accessibility of learning opportunities within the community. The grain and variety of land use is also influential within residential neighbourhoods. Gated or isolated residential estates (such as retirement homes), for example, do not facilitate opportunity for informal learning and community vitality; in the way that more diversified neighbourhoods are able to through the enabling interaction and observation by and of people. Given this duality of clustering and co-location, and the uncertainty about exactly how the use of any one given area may evolve, it is essential that planners “ensure land use decisions [and] planning scheme provisions retain flexibility and site-specific performance requirements”⁶¹

Finally, is the role of planner as urban expert, and provider of information about the urban environment and planning process is one that assumes a multitude of forms. It involves “Council educating its community about new projects and initiatives [as well as] the planning profession being proactive in educating the broader community about the role of planning, new initiatives and innovations”⁵² and the ‘as needs’ professional advice to members of the community. In a small number of Councils, the planning section is responsible for overseeing the Environmental Education program in schools and public forums. In general, however, the urban expert role is rarely formally recognised as a function. Indeed, a local government Manager who declared, “I don’t envisage a formal role for my town planning section to be involved [in facilitating learning]” continued, “Rather...Council planning sections can add to lifelong learning through presentations about issues, specific projects, topics, etc... at public meetings, panel hearings, during the answering of general queries... This is more about adding to people’s awareness and general knowledge about the areas in which they reside and work.” Thus, whilst the tasks are not formalised, the role is critical to facilitating understanding of planning processes and practices amongst the community.

Conclusion

In settings as diverse and disparate as Great Britain, Australia, Finland, Japan, Iran, Rwanda and Uruguay, cities are Learning Cities. In each case, each individual local community has that have determined to use ‘learning for all’ as a means of building their local community capacity to tackle the challenges posed by global social, economic and technological change. Learning Cities harness their knowledge, social networks, environmental assets and financial capital to facilitate the development of skills, knowledge and values by local people and organizations. City and regional planning professionals in these communities have a particular role to play – they allocate and manage the land resources – to ensure that the physical environment (built and natural) facilitates not only broad community objectives of inclusion, development and sustainability, but the specific goal of lifelong learning.

The transformation of a community to a Learning City is necessarily a unique journey that each community must negotiate in the context of its political framework, social structure and economic resources in order to meet its local needs. Likewise, there is also no ‘one-size-fits-all’ ‘model’ of professional planning practice to reflect what might be described as a practice

of 'learning planning'. If a community is to realise its potential as a Learning City, however, it is crucial that lifelong learning as a principle and goal is understood by the city's planners, and reflected in their practice – throughout the decision-making process and in the spaces and places, and plans and policies they produce. If learning is understood as resulting from interaction, it is critical that the 'facilitation of learning' community wide is at no time considered as a one-way information flow. Rather, learning opportunities are two-way interactions, in which each party – whether individual, organization or entire community – has skills, knowledge and values to offer, and is ready to learn more. In the case of the city and regional planner, this does not negate the 'role' as urban expert; but acknowledges that there are stages within the planning process when the professional is listening and learning from others, and times when the professional's skills can be shared. This is the essence of professional practice within Learning Cities.

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¹⁶ United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (2001) *op cit* p.161

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²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*

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²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Candy, Janet H (1999) *Learning to Plan; Planning to Learn: Learning cities and town planning for the 21st century* [unpublished Honours thesis] Brisbane: University of Queensland

³² Colomer, Jaume (year unknown) *La Ciudad Educadora: Conceptos, estrategias y acciones*
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³⁶ Campbell, Bob (2002) *Launceston: Our City of Learning and Innovation* at '2nd Australian Learning Communities' Conference 2002, Ballarat

³⁷ Wise, Georgina (2003) *pers comm.*

³⁸ Responses to *Town Planning and Learning Towns* survey *op cit.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Allison, Janelle (2001) *op cit* p.6

⁴⁹ Allison, Janelle (2001) *Towns, Cities and Regions in the Knowledge Nation and Smart State: How a learning communities approach enables urban and regional planning to meet these new policy agendas* at Future Directions of Planning National Congress October 2001 Royal Australian Planning Institute: Canberra

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