

LONG LEARN ACTIVE LEARNING MATERIALS

FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL LEARNING PROVIDERS

AND

**EVERYONE AND EVERY ORGANISATION WITH AN INTEREST IN CREATING STABLE,
VIBRANT AND PROSPEROUS LEARNING CITIES, TOWNS AND REGIONS**

Chapter 5 Session 9:

The Personal Learning Audit Parts 7, 8 and 9: Preparing your Future

‘as tools, used flexibly, they can help make a difference to a great number of people, as the results below show. They are self-awareness and empowerment tools that can be used in workplaces, schools, colleges, city administrations, community centres and small and large communities to help break down learning barriers and inculcate a learning culture, and to help build a learning city or region.’

From ‘Learning Cities. Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government’ (Norman Longworth)

LONG LEARN LIMITED – HELPING TO SHAPE A LEARNING FUTURE

Chapter 5 Session 9:

The Personal Learning Audit Parts 7, 8 and 9: Preparing your Future

Session outline : This session comprises parts 7, 8 and 9 of a personal learning audit, whose overall objective is to articulate the need, and stimulate the desire, for learning among citizens. These sections home in on the creation of personal learning plans that make a commitment to learning in the future. They provoke an inner searching into motivations, aspirations and personal needs. As in most audits, the questions and exercises are non-judgmental and are designed to promote a sympathetic dialogue between the participant and the person, usually but not necessarily a learning counsellor, as a culmination of the process of developing of a personal learning plan. The processes concerned here involve the use of a learning planner which harvests all learning aspirations, the development of a learning plan which rationalizes those aspirations and a section on how to keep to the plan and where support may be found. Learning Cities and Regions can use these exercises in many different types of environment - in community centres, with the unemployed, on second language courses, in learning providers and workplaces, in voluntary organizations and youth clubs, and as part of a drive to create a culture of learning among hard to reach people. They are however equally useful for those motivated people seeking to improve their status, performance and prospects. They can also be used to gather information on learning attitudes and requirements. The audits have been tested in a number of environments and this version improves on previous versions tested in the SKILL Europe and Learning Jamat projects. The opening introduction is repeated here for those who have not completed the previous sessions.

Guidelines for using this Active Learning session

Goals

The creation of learning cities and regions is in all our interests. It promotes social stability, encourages wealth creation, and enables citizens to fulfil their potential, their dreams and their ambitions. It is a survival strategy for our future, and that of our children and grandchildren. But it won't happen unless all of us play our part in making it so. It won't be a simple transition process, to be put into practice by someone else in the local authority. That means that we all, especially local government managers, professionals and staff, need to know and understand more about what it is, why it's important and what the major issues and opportunities are. There are many of them. These sessions have been written to enable each of us to increase our understanding and knowledge of those issues and opportunities. Each one, and there are 57 of them, takes a different theme and offers the learner new insights.

Learning approach

This is an Active Learning session. Lifelong Learning has taught us that people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning. We have therefore given the ownership of the learning over to you, the learner. As well as presenting new concepts in the assignments and exercises, , we draw upon your experience, creativity, imagination and knowledge so that you can better understand the subject matter, and will be better able and more motivated to act upon it. You may, or may not, have a learning leader to help organise the groups, and to bring several learners together into discussion groups and sessions. That will certainly make it easier. We all have different learning styles – but we can also all learn from each other. That is why this session, like all the others, recommends a mixture of individual, small group and large group work, so that ideas and experiences and understandings can be bounced around people. Above all you are urged to make this an enjoyable experience. Learning can be fun. It's up to you to make it so.

Learning Organisation

You will find that the session is divided into 2 main parts

- ✓ **The Learning Space:** A set of assignments that will unlock the brain and involve learners in practical discussions and exercises leading to a greater understanding of the issue
- ✓ **The Learning Kitbag:** A set of source learning materials that provide additional information, charts, diagrams, case studies etc to stimulate further insights.

While each session could be used individually as a self-learning module, it is preferable if there is a learning leader to organise small and large group discussions and to act as a focal point. This can be a departmental manager, a staff member appointed to perform that task, or a professional educator from inside or outside of the organisation. Assignments may be studied on site, or set as preparation for group discussions in the workplace or at a learning provider.

The whole course can be incorporated into a continuous professional development programme in the workplace, or taught separately at a school, college, community centre or university. It takes its provenance, and its inspiration, from the book:

Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government
By Norman Longworth, published by Taylor and Francis ISBN 10 0 415 37175 9

Learners taking the course are recommended to obtain this book either from Amazon.com or from the publishers at http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth

Target Audiences

The session will be suitable for those who wish to improve their understanding of the session title's theme, in order to help influence the city, town or region's response to the realities of the 21st century. This includes:

- Elected representatives and Mayoral staff
- Managers, Professionals and staff from all departments in local government as part of a continuous development programme
- Community and Voluntary organisation leaders
- Educators at all levels in local and regional stakeholder organisations, including schools, universities, colleges and workplaces
- Industrialists and Business people as stakeholders in the local authority
- All Citizens with an interest in the development of their community
- Students in universities, adult education institutions and teacher training establishments

Further Reading

Learning Leaders wishing to update themselves on the subject matter of this module will find the following additional references useful.

- 'Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st century Education' by Longworth, (Taylor and Francis, Abingdon) http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth
- 'The Local and Regional Dimension of Lifelong Learning ' EC Policy Document found on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/poledu/tels.pdf>

Ideas for treatment particular to this session: *For seminars and courses with several participants* it is suggested that, after the opening assignments, the rest of the session is performed in groups of two, with one person acting as the counsellor and the other as the participant in the audit, exchanging roles from time to time. You should take frequent open session discussions to discuss progress based on the assignments below, and to decide where changes may be needed to meet local cultural requirements, how it can be improved etc and what effect it might have on a particular target audience. Assignment 16 is an opportunity to identify other topics of interest to the course/workshop/seminar members and to develop individualised courses for each. For *self-learning individuals* try to find someone with whom you can discuss your answers and opinions either by email or face to face.

This session may require 2 sessions to complete

The Learning Space

Assignment 0: These learning materials derive from, and extend, the concepts and ideas in ‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.’ Reading pages 98 to 102 of this valuable book before carrying out these assignments would provide an excellent introduction to the session, and strengthen learning.

(NB For those who have completed parts 1 to 6 of the personal learning audit in sessions 5.5 to 5.8, assignments 1-4 below will not be necessary)

Assignment 1: Why is a learning culture essential for your city or region? Try for 5 reasons

1
2
3
4
5

Assignment 2: Discuss your answers with others

Assignment 3: As Individuals, read the opening blurb of the audit in the learning kitbag, noting its analogy with a learning voyage. Comment on this below.

Assignment 4 Discuss your comments with others

Assignment 5: Role play participant counsellor – get the counsellor to go through the points made in the introduction with you and to persuade you that this is a good action to take.

Assignment 6: Complete all parts of section 7 of the Audit in the learning kitbag individually. Then discuss your answers with your neighbour.

Assignment 7: What reaction do you have to this exercise?

Assignment 8: Discuss your answers to assignments 6 and 7 with all others in the group

Assignment 9: Look at the introduction to section 8 (How will you know.....) With another person acting as your counsellor, go through the points made.

Assignment 10: Complete your own personal learning plan in twos with one person role-playing the part of learning adviser. Exchange roles and do the exercise again

Assignment 11: Discuss your reactions to this exercise with others in a plenary session. What improvements would you make?

Assignment 12: Read through section 9 on keeping to your plan. Are there any other recommendations you would make?

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Assignment 13: Read through the section on support at the end. What particular support would be available in your own city or region and where from?

Assignment 14: For which sections of the population in your city would this exercise be most useful?

Assignment 15: Discuss your ideas with others

Assignment 16: This completes this session but not hopefully your need for knowledge on this important subject. You are invited to complete the diagram on the next page by ticking the relevant box

LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE - YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

		High	Enough to get by	Not enough	None	Session
1	Consultation methods and levels					7.1, 7.2
2	Characteristics of a Learning Organisation					2.3
3	Your city as a learning organisation					2.4
4	Skills and competences for learning cities and regions					1.6
5	The city as an ideopolis					1.5
6	Learning Communities in all their senses					2.5
7	Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities					2.6
8	Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture					3.3
9	Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:					3.2
10	Leadership in the Learning City/Region:					3.4
11	Tools for measuring city and region performance					3.1,4.1,4.2, 4.3,4.4,4.5
12	Lifelong Learning as wealth creator					5.3, 1.5,2.3
13	Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits					5.4,5.5,5.6, 5.7,5.8,5.9
14	Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?					6.1
14	Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region					6.2, 8.4
15	Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region					6.3
16	Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region					6.4
17	Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city					6.5, 8.5
18	Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world					6.6
19	Family Learning					6.7
20	The power of partnerships					6.8
21	Using Technology in the learning city					7.3
22	Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city					7.4
23	Mentoring in the learning city and region					7.5
24	Resources for the Learning City and region					7.6
25	Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions					8.1
26	Internationalising Learning City Networks					8.2, 8.3
27	International projects as learning city stimulators					8.4, 8.5
28	Two-way profiting from international cooperation					8.6
29	Organisational issues in the learning city and region					9.2
30	Enabling issues in the learning city and region					9.3
31	Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions					9.4
32	Practical Actions to become a learning city					9.1, 1.4
33	Learning Cities for Elected Representatives (Councillors					4.6
34	Individuals as learners					5.1,5.2,6.7
35	Change, society and the city/region					1.1, 1.2
36	Learning City Domains					1.3
37	Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions					4.2,4.3, 4.4
38	Towards true Learning Societies					2.2
39	Defining Learning Cities and Regions					2.1

All sessions shown in the last column follow the progress of the book **‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government’** by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9, and add new dimensions. They are downloadable from www.longlearn.org.uk .

Assignment 17: On the lines below please put your personal reactions to working on this session, based on how much you have learned, how much you have worked creatively and how your ideas have developed as a result.

Chapter 5 Session 5.9

The LEARNING

KITBAG

Tools for Developing Human Potential

Route 1 - A **Routemap** for your **Personal Journey into Learning**



'Learning is the most natural Human instinct'
(Written on the wall of a car manufacturing plant to encourage world-class learning)

A PERSONAL LEARNING AUDIT

PART 5: DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

It is recommended that this personal learning plan is carried out together with a professional learning counsellor. However, anyone - a friend, a family member, a stranger - who is willing to listen to your needs and is sympathetic to your aspirations and personal goals can help you go through these exercises and questions and discuss with you why it is important to develop a clear plan in order to kickstart your learning future. Read on.....

Route 1 - A Route Map for Personal Learning - what is it about?

Learning is the most natural human instinct. And in a rapidly changing world, each one of us needs to remain adaptable, flexible and versatile. Equally, each of us has a personal challenge to recognise our own greater potential and our ability to achieve it. This can only be done through motivating ourselves to learn continuously.

There are new tools and new approaches to make learning more effective, more attractive and more pleasurable - throughout life, whether you are 5 or 95, whether you have found it difficult in the past or not, whether you are rich or poor. None of us is immune from the need, or the desire, to learn more. We may want to enrich ourselves in our personal lives by developing new skills or improving old ones; we may want to improve our performance, and our salary, at work; we may want to give ourselves and our families a better quality of life

Whatever our motive, we believe that Learning, developing your own potential, is:

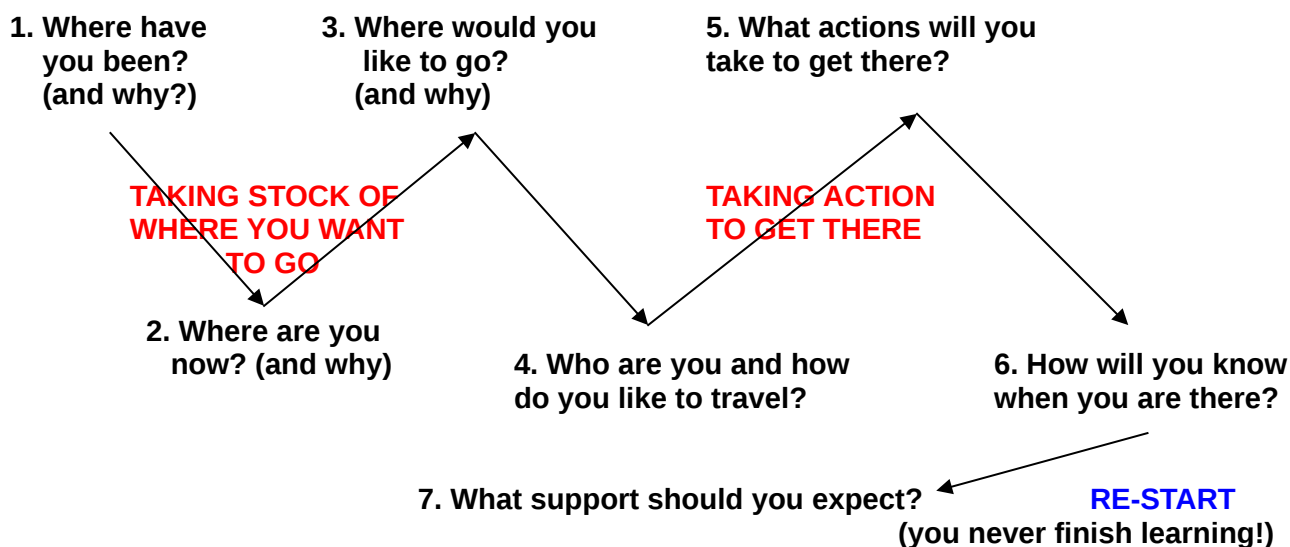
- ◆ for **everybody** throughout life, from cradle to grave, from hatch to despatch, from womb to tomb;
- ◆ about making **progress** at work, about more enjoyable **leisure** and a better **quality of life** - all those things which encourage you to live up to your own potential;
- ◆ about **continuously** acquiring **new** knowledge, skills and understanding;
- ◆ about learning in a **variety** of new ways and focused around **your own needs, your own circumstances** and your preferred ways of **learning**;

It's the natural human condition which somehow many of us lose during formal education.

So what follows is a route map to help you achieve this - to take stock of your own learning needs and then to take action to do something about them. It is your own personal voyage to self-fulfillment through learning. On the voyage you will be asked many questions to help you understand yourself and your learning requirements and goals. At the end, you will complete an exercise to put these into a realistic perspective so that you can commit to meeting all your objectives confidently and creatively. It is not a process to be rushed. Journeys offering the greatest reward take time to plan.

We involve you in the journey planning all the time - this isn't an exercise in telling you what to think or what to do. We want your opinions, your thoughts, your dreams. Naturally, those with an already high commitment to learning will find it easier to embark on the trip and may wish to take a short cut by by-passing some of the questions. But this route planning process can be used by everyone - employed and unemployed, young and old, qualified and unqualified, rich and poor, those who have been inspired by past experiences of learning and those who have been damaged by it. You are about to become a **Learning Community** of one, within a Community of many and each individual in your family and your community will benefit. Your journey starts here. So have a look at the diagram below for a preview of the routemap

START



In Part 5 here we take you through steps 5, 6 and 7 above

7. What actions are you going to take to move forward?

In Part 6 we explored together what stimulated you to learn and you gave some examples. Here, in this last stage, is where you look in a bit more detail at what you might want to learn for the future. This was partly done during the Learning Requirements Survey, but there is now a need to be more precise. You may be surprised by the amount of knowledge and skills you have picked up already over your lifetime. It is probably most certainly far from complete since it is difficult to remember and record everything you ever learned.

So in [part 7](#) you assemble in a more formal way into a personal learning record what your learning hopes and aspirations might be, and what you need to do to move forward - a kind of passport of present and future learning trips. Learning covers all aspects of your life, and so you will look at what you may need to do to enhance:

- Your working life - your current skills that enable you to carry out your work or profession and how these may need to be developed
- your family life - bringing up children, doing household jobs, encouraging family learning
- your sports, hobbies and leisure interests - the skills and knowledge you need to pursue and improve them -
- your own personal development - the new knowledge, experiences, attitudes and values which make you a better person
- your contribution to the Community - whether this be to the **Jamat** or our local community

You will explore your future needs and desires, articulate where you may want to be in the future and the quality of life you want to achieve. Some people decide what they want to be early in life and pursue that goal single-mindedly. But the majority of us are not sure. We may (be forced to) change our ambitions, our destination. We may revise our dreams. We may arrive somewhere through force of circumstance than personal design. Family, home, friends, locality, new perceptions, economic conditions etc can all change our viewpoint in all parts of our lives.

But it is important to know who and where you want to be in the future and to be realistic about it, without closing down, dreams and ambitions. Many things are possible given the right advice, support and personal determination to succeed in a goal. You can become who and what you want to be, and go wherever you want to go, through learning.

The [Learning Planner](#) in this session encourages you to make a list of the things you feel you would want to learn and the skills you would want to acquire in the next five years to enrich yourself in every way. It includes

- What other people have said you are good at
- Things you know you can do and always wanted to prove
- Things you've always wanted to learn but could never find the time
- Skills you've always wanted to acquire - personal, social etc

The planner will also help you assigning priorities to each aspect of your learning, decide how long it will take, how you want to learn, what qualifications you may want (if any), and most importantly, who can help you achieve your learning goals. By the time you have finished it you will have recorded all your learning desires for the future in all aspects of your life.

Part 7: Making something of yourself.

7.1 In this penultimate part we putting together all the new insights and knowledge we have gathered in the personal learning audit and the first part of the personal learning planner in order to help you achieve a better quality of life. This may be related to your own personal development, for example, learning a new language or a new skill, or to your home life - a new interest, a new insight or to your career at work.

You may want to acquire a new skill (e.g. cooking, computer literacy etc), a new subject knowledge (e.g. history, geography, maths), or new experiences (eg foreign travel, new relationships or develop more self-friendly attitudes and values (e.g. self-reliance, inner peace etc)

Whatever your aspirations you may need to be more self-disciplined in order to realise them and the exercises we do in this section will help with that. So let's start with a few to the point questions.

		Yes	No
7.1.1	I am really prepared to continue into a new learning phase of my life		
7.1.2	I am ready to start preparing a personal learning action plan		
7.1.3	I recognise that this may bring changes in my life		
7.1.4	I recognise that it will need some self-discipline		
7.1.5	I already have some idea of what I might want to do		

7.2 Overall Planning

Here is where you do some personal thinking. Doing a personal brainstorm

You'll see a Learning Planner on the next page. On it make a list of the things you feel you would want to learn and the skills you would want to acquire in the next five years to enrich yourself in every way. For example:

- Things you can already do and want to improve . Write down a couple of those

1
2

- Things you've always wanted to learn but could never find the time. Do the same

1
2

- Skills you've always wanted to acquire - personal, social etc. And again

1
2

- Things which you feel you are not good at and need to improve upon. Try to add at least one of these to each section, Put in a couple here

1
2

7.3 So let's do it in some order. Take your Learning Planner and...

- ✓ 7.3.1 First write down a few things that might enrich your family life – perhaps new cookery skills, parenting, stress management, time management etc
- ✓ 7.3.2 Then enter a few possibilities to improve your career and work prospects – say management skills, language development, further technical skills, project management and so on
- ✓ 7.3.3 Now write down some ideas that might improve you as a person – for example yoga, meditation, public speaking, discriminating skills etc
- ✓ 7.3.4 Fourthly write down some ideas for improving your performance at sport or hobbies – maybe new interests to take up, sports coaching, learning an instrument such as a guitar etc
- ✓ 7.3.5 Fifthly enter a few things you can do that would help make the community in which you live a better place – prison visiting, volunteering (what?), mentoring someone, helping the disabled etc
- ✓ 7.3.6 Lastly think of the many other subjects, values, contributions, experiences you have always wanted to do or have never had the time or inclination to develop them. – in this category might come travelling (where), walking, choral singing, international links with others and lots more,

If you need more space for some categories use two planning sheets

Don't hold back - Make this as complete as possible for the next 5 years with all the things you have ever wanted to learn. To get this right for the further planning process make it as complete as you can - we'll refine the list later, Inevitably there will be some overlap between the categories. Use the second column of the planner and use the categories in column one to guide you. Include the things you are already learning and doing and which require further learning.

7.4 After you have completed your list - you may want to think about this a little more about these - so take a break. You may wish to discuss this with others - relatives, friends, workmates.

My Learning Planner

Category	Learning Topic/Skill	Type	Priority	Time?	How	Q?	M?	Where?
To enhance your family life	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							
To improve work performance and prospects	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							
For your own personal development	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							
To improve your sport, hobby or leisure interest	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							
To help contribute to the Community	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							
To develop new experiences, attitudes, values and knowledge	1.							
	2.							
	3.							
	4.							
	5.							
	6.							

Part 7 (contd) - Analysing your list

You can of course add to or subtract the topics from this list as you wish but let's look more closely at what you have there.

7.1 What sort of learning is it?

First you'll need to decide whether this is something you want to learn to gain more knowledge as a topic or a personal skill or an experience. So in column three (type) write down

S - if this is a personal skill you want to acquire

K - if it is more personal knowledge you need

B - if it is both

E - if it is an experience you want to have or a service you want to provide (e.g become a learning counsellor, serve the community etc)

Doing this exercise may prompt you to add more topics - feel free.

7.2 Assigning Priorities

Not all of it will be urgent, so here is where we start to assign some priorities. Complete column 4 with a number under the following categories

1 = Urgent - I need to learn this as soon as I can

2 = Important for me and I intend to start soon

3 = Important but it can wait until later in the year or next year

4 = Something I'd like to learn to do, but it has low priority and may take up to 5 years to achieve

5 = Might be interesting but very low priority

Again, priorities change and you may wish to re-visit this later.

7.3 How long will it take?

Some knowledge and skills take longer than others to acquire - In the next column, under time? write down your estimate (in months) of how long it will take to become proficient and/or knowledgeable in that topic/skill.

7.4 How can I learn?

There are many ways of studying in the present day. Some learning requires going back to school or college. In the next column insert your preferred method of acquiring this knowledge/skill/experience under the following codes. By this time you will know how you best learn and whether or not you need constant stimulation or are self-disciplined enough to do it yourself.

T = signing up for a formal course at a learning provider

D = finding a distance learning self-study course from a distance learning provider

C = buying a course to study on a computer at home

L = Learning by doing - either by yourself or with another person

S = Self-study yourself - making your own course and doing your own reading

O = One to one paid private tuition (if possible and you can afford it)

G = In an informal group of people doing the same thing

SC = In an electronic study circle networking on the computer

M = a mixture of several of the above

7.5 Do I need Qualifications?

Now complete the column headed Q - which means do you want a qualification or certificate for this or not. Use the codes below

- D = degree or post- degree level qualification
- B = qualification needed but below degree level
- C = Certificate of Attendance to say I completed the course
- N = No qualification or certificate needed

7.6 Who can help me learn?

Many people need the stimulus of someone who can help them keep up with their plan - a mentor or a counsellor. Children need the support of parents and teachers. Adults may need the encouragement of family and friends - or even someone unknown to them. A mentor for instance is someone who can provide personal support and encouragement. You would choose him or her depending on the sort of support you want.

It doesn't have to be a teacher or even someone knowledgeable about the subject area. It's more important that the mentor knows and cares about you and your learning plan. It should be someone you are comfortable with, respect and someone committed to the idea of lifelong learning.

So think about this and complete the column headed M? according to the codes below.

- C = I would appreciate having someone on hand whom I could contact to help me with the subject matter of the object of study.
- M = I would appreciate having someone available who I can speak to about general learning matters
- T = I would need someone to ring me every now and then to ask me how I'm doing with implementing my plan.
- S = I can find my own mentor or counsellor
- N = I don't need help for this

7.7 Where can I find out?

There are a variety of sources of information depending on your location and the country you live in. These are listed below - so look at the list and write down where you think you can obtain the information for the learning you wish to follow.

- L = Local library
- LP = Local Learning providers
- I = Internet
- C = Careers Office
- J = Job/Employment Centre
- E = Your employer
- J = The Jamat
- P = Newspaper
- A = Adult Guidance Centres
- CC = Community Centre
- CAB = Citizens Advice Bureau
- O = other (give it your own code)

8. How will you know when you have reached each goal?

You are coming to the end of the process of planning your future learning journey. On your Learning Planner you will have entered a great deal of information relating to wishes and desires to learn. But it would be impossible to do all of these things immediately. Module 6 introduces a little reality into the action plan.

Ideally what you choose to learn first should reflect the priorities you set out in your Learning Planner. At the same time it should be a mixture of categories to satisfy yourself, your family and if relevant, your work.

In this module you will write out your own formal Learning Action Plan for the next 1 or 2 years, that is what you have every intention of doing and how, and where, you intend to do it, and for how long. It covers

- Learning related to work, if relevant, during the next 2 years, and the new knowledge and skills you intend to develop
- Learning related to improving yourself in the next 6 months - this may be developing new skills related to your hobby, sport or interest (improving tennis, taking up bird-watching, photography, building a cupboard, reading and writing etc), improving your values and attitudes (meditation, self-reliance, personal communication skills etc) or gaining new knowledge in areas you interested in (learning a language, learning to throw pots, local history etc etc). It can include an ambition eg to join a club, to stop smoking, to slim.
- Learning related to improving the way you relate to others in the next 12 months - this may be training to be a counsellor or councillor, family skills, interpersonal skills, and the things you do to improve your performance in your family, society as a whole or the community.

Obviously there will be overlaps - for example learning a new language is useful on any journey to improve both personal and work life, a cooking course can offer both personal and family benefits, but these are unimportant - the priority you give to them is more important

The session will also prompt you to choose how and where you intend to learn it and to take the steps to enrol yourself on the courses at those places, if relevant, or to obtain the self-study materials, or activate the personal tutor. It will set realistic target dates for starting and finishing and require you to discipline yourself to set aside the time to help achieve them

So, by starting to implement your personal learning action plan, you have already set out on the path of achieving your personal goals. If the goal includes a qualification, the achievement of that qualification will satisfy your goal. If there is no qualification your only indicator of success lies within yourself - better relations within the family, more relaxed attitude to life, a renewed intellectual vigour, you as a more complete human being, a better tennis player, a more creative person. The observations of other people - your friends, your colleagues, your relations and your mentors are also indicators of whether or not you are achieving goals.

Section 8 - Making your Learning Action Plan- Setting off on the Learning Journey

On your Learning Planner you have entered a great deal of information relating to wishes and desires to learn. Here's where you start to get real and develop your learning plan. Have your learning planner with you as you write down your action plan. You may also wish to have a Learning counsellor with you to advise you or bring out ideas you haven't thought of.

Use the form on the next page

8.1 Choosing what you intend to Learn

Ideally what you choose to put into your should reflect the priorities you set in column 4 of the Learning Planner and be a mixture to satisfy yourself, your family and if relevant, your work. So the Action Plan below is divided into 3 sections and given a time-scale.

8.1.1	First write down the Learning related to your work and career you intend to do in the next 6 months - this may be to make yourself more employable, to develop new up to date skills, to change your job or career, to improve your present job performance etc. It may be a subject (eg accountancy) or a new skill (computer literacy, language, management,) or a new trade or profession you have along term wish to take up to make your self more employable. This is also relevant to those who are presently unemployed but not to those who have left employment for good. It can include an ambition - eg to join the works council
8.1.2	Next write down the Learning related to improving yourself in the next 6 months - this may be developing new skills related to your hobby, sport or interest (improving tennis, taking up bird-watching, photography, building a cupboard, reading and writing etc), improving your values and attitudes (meditation, self-reliance, personal communication skills etc) or gaining new knowledge in areas you interested in (learning a language, learning to throw pots, local history etc etc). It can include an ambition eg to join a club, to stop smoking, to slim
8.1.3	Lastly fill in column one with Learning related to improving the way you relate to others in the next 6 months - this may be training to be a counsellor or councillor, family skills, interpersonal skills, and the things you do to improve your performance in your family, society as a whole or the community

Obviously there will be overlaps - for example learning a new language can improve both personal and work life, a cooking course can offer both personal and family benefits, but these are unimportant - the priority you give to them is more important

8.2 Choosing how and where you intend to learn it.

Against your topics for learning enter the method you intend to use. If it's at a college or university say which one, or it may be at home or at work or on long journeys. These are your choices, but they have to be tempered by what is available. For example if there is not a self-study course in your chosen topic, you may have to go on a course.

8.3 Choosing who can/will help you

This is your choice. Choose someone you know will be helpful and friendly but at the same who will make sure you continue without nagging. Name the person - it might be more than one person. But make sure you ask him/her first.

8.4 Choosing when you start and finish

Sometimes, if it is a course you have no choice but to start and finish it when the course starts and finishes. With others you may have more flexibility. Set yourself a realistic target date to start and finish.

8.5 Choosing how much time you are willing to spare.

This is where you might meet reality, especially if you have a long list of interests and intentions. On the other hand you may be able to negotiate a few hours a week with your employer for example. But it's a useful exercise to put down the number of hours per week you estimate each item of learning will take.

8.6 Choosing your goal

Do you need a qualification for this? What is it? What is your real goal? Think very carefully about this, discuss it with someone if necessary.

8.7 You now have the elements of your Action Plan for the first 6 months - leave it a few hours or days. Then come back to it. You have worked hard at this. Discuss it with others if you wish. Let your family, your friends, your workmates know what you have done - not only do they need to know what your ideas and ideals are, - they'll all want to join in!

8.8 It just remains in this section to complete the rest of the plan at a time when you are buzzing with ideas. Go back to item a) to f) above and complete the other two parts of the plan? You may even wish to change what you have already done - and that's OK - It's your plan, and better to get it right now than to decide it was wrong later.

My Learning Action Plan

This is what I intend to start to learn/experience or join in the next 6 months	This is where I intend to learn it (home, work, college etc)	This is the person(s) who will help me	I plan to start it (date)	I plan to finish it (date)	Hours per week you will devote to this.	I know I will have succeeded when (eg qualification type, job, feeling etc)
This is what I intend to start between 6 months and one year from now						
This is the list of things I hope to start at some time after 1 year						

9. Keeping to your plan

Keeping to your plan is of course your responsibility and no-one else can do it for you. But it's also important that you give yourself some support and that you are not afraid or embarrassed to use it. But the following 'golden rules' will also help you to achieve your learning goals.

9.1	Use your Learning Adviser and/or mentor frequently - make contact with him/her at least once a week. If you don't ring give him/her permission to ring you to see how you are getting on. Mentors and advisers are trained to ask the right questions
9.2	Review your plan regularly. Take a checkpoint say at least once a month. If you're falling behind it could be for a variety of reasons a) Your goals were unrealistic - You expected too much of yourself b) Your motivation was low - You couldn't be bothered or you lacked personal will-power c) You lacked confidence in yourself - I need more help. d) You didn't have enough time - my time options closed down or I became ill, or I had to see to something else. e) There wasn't the opportunity - the courses weren't there or my family or my manager wouldn't let me f) Your circumstances changed - you got a new job, a new baby, a new house etc g) It was too difficult for you at this stage - you need to start at a lower level. Whatever the reason, do something about it as soon as you can. Talk it through with your family or adviser.
9.3	Keep your plan updated. If you fall behind amend the end dates. Remember this is not a rigid timetable to be adhered to come what may - it's a guide to help you achieve learning goals which will improve you as a person
9.4	Always be at peace with yourself in your learning. If you regard it as a competition you are only competing against yourself. Instead try to cooperate with your inner self. There are no prizes for finishing first. There are enormous prizes for finishing
9.5	Set yourself short-term checkpoint goals to keep an eye on your own progress. Small achievements lead to bigger ones and the cumulative effect is to increase your capacity to learn
9.6	Incorporate faster learning techniques into your plan - for example accelerated learning, using the techniques devised from Professor Howard Gardner's research into multiple intelligences, has a proven track record
9.7	Never underestimate yourself or your power to learn. You have the most remarkable instrument for learning sitting on your own shoulders. It's yours to use or to ignore

Most times you will need the support of other people to help you achieve this and the next, and last section tells you where you can obtain that support.

YOU CAN DO IT! - YOU WILL DO IT! - YOU CAN AND WILL ENJOY DOING IT!

Learning Can be Fun

But only you can make it so

If you need help contact your Learning Counsellor or Mentor

They are there to support you.

Where can you get support for learning?

In life, we are constantly on our own learning voyage. We recognise that learners setting out on a lifelong learning journey will need to be supported in many ways. However usually there are only a few learning advisers and the process of obtaining mentors is also only in its embryo stage. In this sense the learning adviser is the travel agent who tells you how to get there, and the mentor is the tour guide, who helps when you are there. A longer term objective within a city or region would be to create a cascade system of new entrants into the learning world each year supported by new learning advisers who will mainly come from participants in previous stages. Each learning adviser will be responsible for helping new learners understand their learning requirements and using the Personal Learning Audit to help articulate and satisfy those needs.

Local Authorities are beginning to address the problems and opportunities which this project raises. For example for unemployed people there are not always suitable courses running at the right time to make them employed and employable, while suitable course for 3rd age people are fairly scarce. There will probably be a time when a community itself tries to solve some of these problems from within its own resources, assisted also by outside funding bodies such as the European Commission, national Governments and Foundations.

These are the sources of support gradually being made available. They will be supplemented by information made available through electronic networks. Some countries are more advanced at this than are others. The UK for example has initiated many national support services such as Learn Direct, the National Grid for Learning, New Deal and many others. Local Authorities and advisory bodies such as Learning and Skills Councils and Lifelong Learning Partnerships are established to offer education and training pathways to individuals. Learning Providers are being more flexible in their entry requirements through such schemes as APEL (Assessment of Prior Learning Experience) in which accumulated life skills act as qualifications to start new courses. They are also aware of the need to make learning more attractive in a customer-oriented world and make their publications much more enticing. Other countries have some way to go.

Over-riding all of this however is the notion that the responsibility for learning lies with you, the individual learner. Learning providers and local and national Government will continue to do all it can to give the support learners need, but the motivation and the will to achieve learning success lies in your hands.

YOU CAN GET THERE! - YOU WILL GET THERE! - YOU CAN AND WILL ENJOY GETTING THERE!

Learning Can be Fun

But only you can make it so

The Personal Learning Audit can be used separately in organisations, municipalities and communities. For further information, please contact longlearn1@hotmail.com

Where to find sessions on topics – A reminder

All sessions follow the progress of the book 'Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government' by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9

	Topic	Session(s)
1	Consultation methods and levels	7.1, 7.2
2	Characteristics of a Learning Organisation	2.3
3	Your city as a learning organisation	2.4
4	Skills and competences for the 21 st century	1.6
5	The city as an ideopolis	1.7
6	Learning Communities in all their senses	2.5
7	Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities	2.6
8	Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture	3.3
9	Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:	3.2
10	Leadership in the Learning City/Region:	3.4
11	Tools for measuring city/region performance	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5
12	Lifelong Learning as wealth creator	5.3, 1.5, 2.3
13	Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits	5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9
14	Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region	6.2, 8.4
15	Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region	6.3
16	Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region	6.4
17	Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders	6.5, 8.5
18	Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world	6.6
19	Family Learning	6.7
20	The power of partnerships in the city and region	6.8
21	Using Technology in the learning city	7.3
22	Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city	7.4
23	Mentoring in the learning city	7.5
24	Resources for the Learning City	7.6
25	Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions	8.1
26	Internationalising Learning City Networks	8.2, 8.3
27	International projects as learning city stimulators (schools, adults)	8.4, 8.5
278	Two-way profiting from international cooperation	8.6
289	Organisational issues in the learning city and region	9.2
309	Enabling issues in the learning city and region	9.3
31	Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions	9.4
32	Practical Actions to become a learning city	9.1, 1.4
33	Learning Cities for Elected Representatives and Councillors	4.6
34	Individuals as learners	5.1, 5.2, 6.7
35	Change, society and the city/region	1.1, 1.2,
36	Learning City Domains	1.3
37	Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions	4.2, 4.3, 4.4

The sessions themselves are downloadable from the learning materials section of the longlearn website www.longlearn.org.uk