

# Module 2: The Individual in the Learning City

Written by Martin Molholm and Peder Key Kristiansen (Skagen Adult Education Centre, Denmark) and Professor Norman Longworth (Formerly Napier University, Edinburgh)

## **Module Description**

Learning Providers can offer excellent courses and municipalities can exhort its citizens to take up learning in the interests of wealth creation, social stability and personal development, but ultimately it is the individual who makes the decision to learn or not to learn. This fundamental truth is what pervades this module. Therefore individuals comprise a legitimate and important focus for the development of a Learning Society in a Learning City and Region. Those who do little to develop their own talents and skills are destined to fall behind in the rapidly changing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Similarly, the local authority which shows little regard for the needs and demands of the individual citizens under its care or which does not help them to develop their creativity and their awareness, will become an inward-looking place with problems of poverty and social stability, economic decline and an underachieving population. There is thus a symbiosis of interest between the city and its citizens, which is well documented in many an official government report at both local and national levels.

Individuals can indulge in a wide variety of learning activity from straightforward vocational education courses at both degree and technician level, through continuing education for the updating of their skills, competencies and knowledge to the more esoteric courses offering leisure time learning and personal development. Where they missed out the first time round, they can join remedial programmes such as those to give literacy skills for adults. If they among the minorities, whether they be immigrants, prisoners, socially, mentally and physically handicapped or socially deprived, most local authorities will offer courses to help the. Education for individuals can, and should, take place anywhere – in purpose-built colleges, village halls, factories, community centres, church halls, theatres, museums, business centres, airports, galleries and even on the street. In this module we address all ages after the age of 18, including the education of seniors after the age of 60, which we regard as being equally important to a stable and successful society as the more economically justified career-oriented courses for young adults.

But we are conscious too that a focus on individual learning is not an age thing.

Schoolchildren are

also entitled for example to have their own learning styles taken into account. But there are also great challenges. There are many thousands of people, young, old and middle-aged, who have been so turned off education that they are disenfranchised from the joys of learning. Switching them back on again will not be an easy task. We have seen in other modules how the more enlightened companies are encouraging individual members of their workforce to get into the habit of learning and are willing to provide the funds to do so. But where the workplace is not so active or where there are problems of unemployment and deprivation or where social manners and mores encourage a culture of despair and indifference – indeed sometimes active opposition to the idea of learning – it is the individual who suffers.

This module therefore explores the available tools and techniques to tempt the individual to dip his/her toes into the learning waters and the role of communication and information systems in persuading people to contribute to the common good.

It comprises 3 key topics:

1. Active Citizenship
2. Personal Learning Issues
3. Developing a personal learning plan

#### **Module Objective:**

To help the individual learner to understand the complexity of factors and issues influencing his/her ability and motivation to learn, and the self-image they have of themselves as learners;

For the individual to grasp the importance of being a participative and active citizen, Influencing decisions that have a direct or in-direct impact on their lives and the generations to come;

To stimulate the individuals motivation to learn, making the learning-process meaningful to the learner.

#### **Target Audiences**

There are a variety of target audiences for this module.

Initially there are the local government professionals, elected representatives and decision-makers who will need to see the importance of learning as a generator of wealth and stability.

Secondly there are those members of the community, workers, educators and volunteers, who exist to activate and enlarge the educational process in ways that are not always in the book - Parents, Guardians, Doctors, Lawyers, Counsellors, Councillors, Scout and Guide leaders, Political and Religious Leaders and many others in the community.

These are the people who will need to apply the tools and techniques described and move the wheel of education in a forward direction. All of these can profit from the seminars this module generates.

#### **Notes for Learning Leaders**

1. The topics and lessons in this module can be taught sequentially or can be mixed and matched to suit the audience. Equally lessons from other modules within the course can be added where they fit.