

SCHOOLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING COMMUNITIES ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

Final Report on the PALLACE project in South Australia

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Background

The PALLACE Project was a two-year international, cooperative project funded by the European Commission involving learning cities and towns in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. (Later, the Chinese city of Beijing joined the project.) PALLACE aimed to expand knowledge, experience and practical participation in lifelong learning communities by stimulating projects among stakeholders that have key roles in the promotion and development of lifelong learning in our cities (i.e. schools, adult education institutions, business and industry, universities, communities, voluntary organisations, cultural services, etc).

The project was managed by Napier University, Scotland and involved the establishment of partners in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Europe to undertake a number of projects, individually or collaboratively, focusing on lifelong learning especially in relation to learning cities. Each partner was allocated a particular lifelong learning focus, as follows:

- Adelaide partnership: investigated the role of the school in the learning city.
- Brisbane partnership: investigated the role of the university in the learning city.
- Edmonton partnership: investigated the role of technology providers in the learning city.
- Espoo partnership: investigated the role of cultural services in the learning city.
- French partnership: investigated the role of councillors and elected representatives in the learning city.
- New Zealand partnership: investigated the role of adult education in the learning city.

The project has stimulated the establishment of a global network through a series of planned seminars in each continent. This has included conferences in Papakura, New Zealand (February 2003), Edinburgh, Scotland (September 2003) and the present concluding conference in Edmonton, Canada (June 2004).

Adelaide Partnership:

The initial partners in Adelaide, South Australia were the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development, which acted as the coordinator, the Mawson Lakes Project in the City of Salisbury and the City of Marion.

Following the closure of the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development in June 2003, responsibility for the project (along with a number of other projects managed by the Centre) was transferred to the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology. Later, in March 2004, administration of the project moved to the South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services.

The closure of the Centre for Lifelong Learning was part of a strategy by the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology to incorporate a focus on lifelong learning as an integral

part of all aspects of their agency-wide strategy to boost the skills and knowledge of people at every stage of their life span in South Australia. It has been acknowledged that the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development has placed lifelong learning on a plane which did not exist several years ago in South Australia.

There were two main strands to the Adelaide involvement in the PALLACE project:

- (a) An investigation of the role of the school in the building of learning communities and regions; and
- (b) An investigation of the role of city councillors and elected representatives in the development of learning communities.

PALLACE PROJECT 1 – ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Aim

The major aspect of the contractual agreement entered into by the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development with Napier University was to examine the role of the school in the building of learning communities and regions. The project's required outcome was the development of an e-learning module that schools can use. The City of Espoo, Finland was the international collaborative partner in this initiative.

Methodology

The original intent was for the PALLACE project to centre on the unique new urban development of Mawson Lakes and the role of the public school, the Mawson Lakes School, in the growth of Mawson Lakes as a learning community.

Early in the life of the project, the decision was taken to significantly expand the group of schools involved in the PALLACE project for two main reasons:

- (a) To enrich the school based resourcing and expertise available to produce the required PALLACE outcome; and
- (b) To stimulate thinking about what needs to happen at school systems level (both government and non-government) to support schools with their roles in building learning cities and regions.

Seventeen schools were initially associated with the PALLACE project and these provided a representative cross-section of the range of schools in South Australia, including:

- Metropolitan and country schools, including remote schools.
- All levels of schooling – pre-schooling, junior primary, primary, secondary, single sex schools, co-educational, adult re-entry, specialist focus schools, aboriginal schools.
- Both sectors of education – government and non-government (Catholic and Lutheran).

For various reasons, including a lack of time and resources, the transfer of key staff and a change in school focus and direction, the number of schools declined to 12 by the end of the project. These are summarised below.

The methodology used by the project leaders to engage with the schools incorporated:

- Appointment of a project manager to provide leadership and to build and strengthen state, national and international links.
- An introductory workshop attended by Principals to explain the PALLACE project and, more importantly, to challenge them to consider the roles of schools in building learning cities and regions.
- Collection of school profile data, which included a self-analysis of how individual schools contributed to the building of learning communities and the learning city.
- Development of a set of guidelines to help the schools move from their present level of involvement in building learning communities to a higher level (see Appendix A).
- Development of a timeline for schools in order to ensure outcomes are met and the project is completed on time (see Appendix A).

- Slight adaptation of the 'Longworth model' (1996) of the role of the school in building learning communities, which was used as a basis for schools to categorise the activities they are engaged in that contribute to the development of learning communities (see Appendix B).
- A series of follow up workshops, seminars and meetings during the two-year period of the project that promoted the concept of learning communities and monitored school progress in the project. This included a workshop with Professor Norman Longworth during his visit to Australia (February 2003).
- Initial discussions with the Queensland PALLACE project officer, which highlighted the potential of a national region to region linked project that could explore how schools in a regional setting with a specific industry base (e.g. horticulture, manufacturing, etc) contribute to building learning for economic and social capital growth. This aspect of the project did not eventuate.
- Extensive email communication with Ms Kristiina Santala, from the Learning City Project in the City of Espoo, in relation to the establishment of links between schools in Finland and South Australian PALLACE project schools. A list of the seven overseas schools that became connected to the project is presented below.
- Development of a template that enabled schools to report on their learning community activities as well as providing profiles to use when matching schools in South Australia and Finland (see Appendix C and Appendix D).

South Australian Schools Helping Build Learning Communities

The South Australian schools and the learning community theme or topic that they were to address are summarised below. More detailed profiles are provided in Appendix C.

South Australian School	PALLACE Theme/Topic to Building Learning Communities
Aberfoyle Park / Heysen Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of interactive internet site, which will address community services for parents ▪ Compilation of a show bag of print materials for parents enrolling children in the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hamilton Secondary College Adult Campus ▪ Flato Special Education Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of curriculum development and formation of partnerships for adult secondary education ▪ Reporting on strategies to enhance extra curricular activities for students with severe and multiple disabilities ▪ Documentation of on-going staff training and development
Immanuel College Seaview Downs Primary School Seaview High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modification of 'Longworth Model' of lifelong learning to meet the needs of individual school environments
Mawson Lakes School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of the formation of Mawson Lakes Education Services (joint facility) ▪ Development of an e-learning module with Finnish school ▪ Engagement with the community to develop sense of ownership
McLaren Vale Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document helping and hindering factors in role of school in building learning communities
Seaford 6-12 School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of a Lifelong Learning Interest Group ▪ Development of a common understanding and culture of lifelong learning at the school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on connecting the school with the local and global community
St Aloysius College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documentation of study tours program as an effective means of cultural exchange ▪ Creation of a database of community resources and how they shape the school's curriculum
St Columba College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of community education courses and volunteers ▪ Partnerships with key stakeholders – community houses, TAFE, schools, employers, community groups, training organisations, universities ▪ Development of student pathway plans
The Pines Junior Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of services – birth to 13 years model of learning ▪ Reporting of links to the community, in particular the formation of links with the Vietnamese community
Woodville High School (Wiltja Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of website and school-home video link across the Wiltja (aboriginal program)

Finnish Schools Helping Build Learning Communities

The schools in Finland, which were partnered with South Australian schools and the learning community theme or topic that they were to address are summarised below. More detailed profiles are provided in Appendix D.

Finnish School	PALLACE Theme/Topic to Building Learning Communities	South Australian Linked School
Etälä – Tapiolan Lukio School	Awaiting details	St Columba College
Finno School	Awaiting details	Not allocated
Mattliden <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mattlidens Skola ▪ Mattlidens Gymnasium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging parents of teenagers in building a network ▪ Program for pupils in different schools to discuss novels over the internet Awaiting details	Seaford 6-12 School Seaview High School Seaview Downs Primary School Immanuel College
Rastaala School	Awaiting details	Aberfoyle Park / Heysen Primary School
Tähtien School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tähtiniitty Primary School ▪ Tähtitarha Special School 	Team work, student parliament, conflict resolution team, bullying prevention, normal-handicapped integration, life skills and self-esteem.	Mawson Lakes School Hamilton Secondary College – Flato Special Education

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The Finnish schools were to use the same reporting template as the South Australian schools to provide a profile of their school and the themes or topics they were to address in building learning communities from the Longworth model.

The information provided by schools in South Australia and Finland was used as the basis for matching schools via the Internet. Initial contact between the schools was at the Principal level, with each pair of partner schools asked to develop their own activities in order to involve other staff and the students.

It was expected that each school would write the story of the development of its learning community role in 2003-04 as a case study for the e-learning module at the end of the PALLACE project.

The formation of links between South Australian and Finnish schools proved to be a difficult exercise.

Progress Report

Progress on the school's component of the PALLACE project during the past year has been patchy. This was mainly due to the closure on 30 June 2003 of the Centre for Lifelong learning and Development which, through the efforts of Professor Denis Ralph and Dr Darryl Dymock, had taken an active role in leading, coordinating and maintaining enthusiasm in the project across South Australian schools.

Responsibility for the project then transferred to the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology with Dr Dymock. However, he was unable because of other commitments to devote the time required to coordinate and manage the project and schools were left to their own devices to achieve the project outcomes. Some did and some did not.

Meetings of the South Australian PALLACE partner schools were held in September and October 2003 to review progress on the project, and in particular progress on their links with schools in Finland. An important invited guest at the October meeting was Mr Chris Rann, Consul for Finland in South Australia.

The Principal (Alan Peucker) of Mawson Lakes School, one of the PALLACE Partner schools, reported at the Learning Communities Conference in Edinburgh (17-19 September 2003) on the South Australian lifelong learning developments and his own school's role as part of a learning community.

Following the retirement of Dr Dymock from the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, responsibility for bringing the project to its conclusion and meeting of the contractual arrangements was transferred to the Department of Education and Children's Services in March 2004. Dr Stan Salagaras, Executive Manager, Education Development Projects, but currently working on secondment to the Mawson Lakes Economic Development Project to manage the delivery of education services to this new urban community, was assigned responsibility to finalise the required elements of the project.

Under the obligations of the PALLACE contract, there was a requirement to:

- (a) Co-ordinate final reports from participating schools and the City of Marion as a series of case studies for presentation to the European Commission, through Professor Longworth as part of the final report, due in June 2004;
- (b) Make arrangements for South Australian representation at the final PALLACE Conference in Edmonton, Canada; and
- (c) Ensure that all financial obligations in relation to the PALLACE Project grant from the European Commission are met.

Dr Salagaras convened a meeting of all South Australian schools participating in the project on 30 April 2004 to ascertain progress on links with Finnish partner schools and progress in developing the lifelong learning objectives of the PALLACE project.

Only Paul Coughlin (St Columba College) and Alan Peucker (Mawson Lakes School) were able to attend this meeting. The feedback from speaking to most of the participating schools was that, for understandable reasons, little work had been done on the project over the last 8 months. Contact with Finnish partner schools has been limited and progress in the development of lifelong objectives as part of PALLACE has been ongoing but somewhat patchy.

Highlights

The project has achieved some positive and encouraging highlights:

- It has stimulated significant interest in the learning community concept amongst a broad spectrum and diversity of South Australian schools, including:
 - ~ Metropolitan and country schools, including remote schools
 - ~ All levels of schooling – pre-schooling, junior primary, primary, secondary, single sex schools, co-educational, adult re-entry, specialist focus schools, aboriginal schools
 - ~ Both sectors of education – government and non-government (Catholic and Lutheran)
- It has reinforced that schools are in fact, as a result of the nature of their role, involved on an ongoing basis in the development of links with their surrounding communities to enhance learning outcomes for all – it is a fundamental component of their educative role and function.
- It has emphasised the important role of schools in the development of learning communities and enabled individual schools to benchmark themselves with learning communities elsewhere. The very nature of a learning community means that it should be open to review and analysis.
- Schools, as they explored the dimensions of their role in developing learning communities, were shown to be at various stages of development; some at the beginning of the journey and others more progressed. This reinforces the view that developing the role of the school in building a learning community is an evolutionary process.
- It has involved children, teachers and parents as well as tertiary education providers, business and community organisations in a debate about what schools can do to help create a learning community. There is significant add-on value to this in that it not only creates heightened awareness of what a learning community can be, but also potentially mobilises hundreds of people to contribute to it.
- It has stimulated the documentation in the form of case studies of a diversity of learning community initiatives as indicated in the above table. Two schools, Mawson Lakes School and St Columba College, have compiled comprehensive reports for the Edmonton Conference on their role in the development of a learning community through the PALLACE project.
- The case studies reflect a cross-section of possible activities and roles for schools in the development of a learning community, and contribute to the database of good practice, which is one of the intended outcomes of the PALLACE project.
- When combined, these case studies identify innovative and practical outcomes, which can help other schools to develop curriculum and methodological practices for collaborative work in schools, another intended outcome of the PALLACE project.
- It has created some initial international links between schools in South Australia and Finland, which will continue to grow and develop in the future.

Difficulties

As would be expected from a major international project of this scope involving schools in four continents – Europe, Australia, North American and Asia – some difficulties were encountered along the way.

- The transfer of project management from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, to the Department for Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology to the Department of Education and Children's Services created difficulty in maintaining continuity, leadership and enthusiasm for the project.
- The time lag in the project responsibility transferring to the Department of Education and Children's Services limited the capacity and scope to pull together the various elements of the project prior to the Edmonton conference.

- Similarly, at the local school level, the transfer of key staff involved in the project or changing school priorities created some difficulty in maintaining an ongoing commitment to the project from one year to the next. There is also an inherent characteristic in some established schools to work to the status quo, rather than taking their schools outside of their comfort zones into new generation learning opportunities and methodologies.
- The formation of links between South Australian and Finnish schools proved to be a difficult exercise, despite initial enthusiasm on both sides of the world. This element of the project was imposed on schools and many of them did not know what to do. The formation of partnerships between schools in local communities takes significant time to develop and involves the building of relationships and trust. This is obviously much more difficult when schools are in different parts of the world, with different educational structures and practices and without any previous history of educational cooperation. However, this part of the PALLACE project did become a catalyst for some schools to incorporate international links as a core component of their learning programs. Mawson Lakes School, for example, has initiated an “e-pal” project with a school in Texas, USA and a Japanese overseas language and cultural program.
- The development of an e-learning module that can be used to stimulate interest and provide direction to other schools, locally and internationally, on the role that schools can play in building learning communities has not progressed very far. Schools did not have a clear understanding of what needed to be done, but the PALLACE project did provide the foundation for other e-learning modules to be developed in some schools.

Outputs/Outcomes

The key output from the project has been the documentation, as a series of case studies, of a diversity of learning community initiatives. These reflect a cross-section of the possible activities and roles for schools in the development of learning communities and contribute to the creation of database of good practice.

The case studies also support an understanding of school and system policy and operational matters that facilitate the building of communities and the development of lifelong learning.

When combined, these case studies identify innovative and practical outcomes, which can help other schools to develop a curriculum and methodology processes for collaborative work between their schools and surrounding communities, as well as schools internationally.

Of particular interest is the work of the McLaren Vale Primary School, which has investigated and documented factors that help or hinder schools in building learning communities.

(a) Helping factors include:

- The importance of leaders from all sections of the community connecting with each other in and out of school environment.
- The value of setting up a number of projects (Sister School Project, Citizenship Project) to act as seeding projects and symbols of change.
- Incorporating Lifelong Learning as part of a culture of self-initiated and independent learning.
- Developing and working with key personal who will take up ideas and model continual learning.

(b) Hindering factors include:

- The limitations of ICT equipment and costs involved in continually upgrading the infrastructure.
- The change in power from the teacher to the learner is often threatening to teachers and parents.
- Many legal issues relating to well founded concern for student safety limit student interaction with community members and vice versa. These issues can occur in and out of the school environment.
- The community perception that the school is only there to offer learning to 5–13 year old students.

Two schools, Mawson Lakes School and St Columba College, have compiled comprehensive reports for the Edmonton Conference on the journey's they have taken and the roles their schools have played in the development of a learning community.

The Mawson Lakes School identified 10 core dimensions of a learning community, which can be strongly facilitated by the school:

- Facilitating equitable access to education services for everyone in the community.

- Providing leadership in the social and cultural development of the community.
- Contributing to the economic development of the community.
- Marketing and selling of educational services.
- Researching and developing educational signatures.
- Making optimal use of information and communication technologies in the delivery of educational services.
- Providing educational services to the surrounding region.
- Delivering international educational programs.
- Transferring the influence of the Mawson Lakes educational services model.
- Maintaining a legislative mandated core educational focus (e.g. Pre-School to Year 7 education).

The major educational outcomes for each of these schools are summarised below:

(a) McLaren Vale Primary School

- Increasing interaction with the community, both in amount and depth.
- Linking with a range of schools across Australia and the World.
- Increasing understanding by students and parents that learning needs to be directed by the learner.
- Increasing links between the theory of learning and the value of practical activities.
- Increasing links with community members, including elderly citizens.

(b) Mawson Lakes School

- Reconceptualising the nature of learning.
- Re-constructing the ways curriculum and teaching and learning are conceived.
- Challenging traditional organisational frameworks.
- Increasing accessibility and flexibility of educational programs.
- Re-examining critical learning pathways.
- Developing a one-stop shop educational advisory and brokerage service.
- Addressing the State Government's Social Inclusion agenda for the Northern Adelaide region.
- Increasing school retention rates in Northern Adelaide.
- Improving higher education participation rates.
- Increasing employment opportunities in north.
- Creating stronger industry-education-community links.

(c) St Columba College

- Beginning of a second energy audit program totally decided and owned by the community and the use of train-the-trainer process.
- Willingness of community members to go to meetings to find out about community gardens, community capacity and community programs.
- Running of a Regional Workshop on how we together can grow our young people and the involvement of community agencies.
- Community ownership of a recycling computer program – the project manager is long term unemployed person from the community.
- Moving of the school from provider to facilitator process in program delivery.
- Evolution of a process of engagement of the community in learning programs – community consultation which leads to community ownership.
- Ensuring that community members have fun in learning programs, while at the same time developing self-esteem and confidence.

Concluding Comments

Two things need to be considered by schools as they embark on the journey of building a learning community:

- (1) What is a learning community? This will provide a theoretical or philosophical foundation from which the school can grow its learning community initiatives.
- (2) What does a learning community look like? This will provide a practical foundation for evaluating what the school does and the progress it is making towards the building of a learning community.

In a community where lifelong learning is a reality, learning will be available for anyone, at anytime and in anyplace. According to the SA Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development (1999), all people in

that community will embrace learning and seek to actively develop their knowledge and skills throughout their lives in a way that:

- Achieves economic prosperity and high standards of living and quality of life;
- Enriches peoples' lives and provides a sense of purpose and fulfilment; and
- Achieves a tolerant and caring community.

Furthermore, a learning community will develop a culture of continuous improvement – it will be a community that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future; it will be a community that responds to needs much faster than other communities. A learning community has the capacity to unite all the diverse providers of learning to meet the aspirations of its citizens. It can create an environment in which business can develop both its people and its potential to compete in global market (Candy, 1998; Copa, 1998).

A learning community will have the following key features, according to Bruce Jilk (1998), an international architect with expertise in the development of learning communities:

- Include a coherent network of multiple learning settings (learning will not be limited to school buildings);
- Dissolve borders among learning settings (learning will be connected to the community);
- Provide a sense of place and learner identity and enhance social connectivity among learners;
- Adapt quickly to a variety of learning needs and accommodate differences in learners;
- Provide for both general and specialised study, and enhance informal learning; and
- Build “learning community” as something to do or practice.

The diversity of PALLACE themes and topics addressed by schools in the process of building learning communities reinforces the view that there is not one defined way for a school to engage with its community. There are a multitude of possibilities, which emerge from a consideration of the school's needs and the opportunities available within the surrounding community. This information provides a useful starting point for school's considering embarking on the journey of building a learning community. It should be accepted that visions, processes and operational arrangements for the development of a learning community evolve over time.

Furthermore, as we think of learning as a pervasive, continuing element in the personal, social and economic life of any community rather than a preparatory activity to be completed in special places, with special people and at set times, then the places of learning become more dispersed to home, work and public places, less specialised and more “fine grained”.

The difficulties encountered in coordination of the project (at state and local levels) clearly highlight the crucial need for a key driver to manage and lead the school in the building of a learning community. Such a person is needed to ensure the progressive development of the project on a daily basis and to facilitate enthusiasm and ongoing commitment within the school to achieve agreed outcomes.

At the school level it is imperative that the project is seen as having a high priority and the support of the school's leadership. Appropriate resources and time need to be allocated to support the activity. The project manager also needs to be supported by a project management group, representative of the key internal and external groups involved in the project.

The South Australian experience highlights the importance of considering in a major way the sustainability of the initiatives started. Too many times they are driven by the enthusiasm of a single person, whether that be the Principal or a key teacher, and cease to operate when that person leaves the school. The importance of embedding the initiative within the development plan and ongoing priorities of the school, and establishing a governance model for the management of the learning community that is valued and owned by the community stakeholders is crucial to its long-term continuity.

Collectively, the South Australian PALLACE project initiatives signal a number of key roles for schools in building their surrounding region and environment as a learning community:

- Infusing the community with a range of integrated learning services, programs and activities that can be brokered through a range of public and private educational providers.
- Incorporating partnerships and alliances with other institutions and the private sector to increase the potential for on-going activity and the sharing of resources.
- Creating a collaborative and sharing environment, conducive to joint development and innovation and one which has an outward focus.
- Developing linkages between education and training, and research and development to sustain the economic growth of the community – education and industry are mutually supportive.
- Broadening the range of educational services offered through more flexible management and administrative arrangements.
- De-mystifying the learning process and ensuring appropriate access to learning resources/opportunities for continued learning.
- Making optimal use of new and advanced information and communication technologies in the delivery of education services.

These themes are considered fundamental to the success, sustainability and affordability of the development of an integrated learning community.

Next Steps

Each of the school's involved in the PALLACE project will need to determine where they go from here with the initiatives that have been started.

Some of the schools, like Mawson Lakes School, St Columba College and McLaren Vale Primary School, will continue to evolve and generate new learning links with their communities by nature of their developments to date and the ongoing commitments that already exist within their schools for the initiatives mounted. They have become embedded in the ethos of each school and how they operate with their surrounding communities to enhance learning outcomes for all.

Other schools that have not progressed to this level are likely to review their further involvement in the initiatives mounted based on several factors, such as:

- Benefits/outcomes achieved to date.
- Priority with the school's development plan.
- Availability of leaders and key teachers to drive the initiative.
- Availability of resources to support the initiative.

Inputs to PALLACE Seminar / Conference

Three things were be provided as input to the PALLACE Seminar / Conference as a result of the learning community initiatives and activities of schools and communities in Adelaide, South Australia:

- (1) Characteristics of Successful Learning Communities
 - Access to education services for everyone
 - Brokerage of educational services
 - Social and cultural development of the community
 - Sustainable economic development
 - Critical partnerships and innovative collaboration
 - New resourcing models
 - Sale of education services
 - Development of educational signatures
 - Optimal use of ICT to generate access and connectivity
 - Educational services to the surrounding region and beyond
 - International programs
 - Culture of continuous improvement
 - Transferability and influence
- (2) Lessons for Lifelong Learning
 - Critical role for schools in building learning communities
 - Vision → commitment from stakeholders → action
 - Importance of a local group of stakeholders led by high level "champions"

- Collaboration between (traditional) providers under a guideline of “more value from no greater input”
- Ownership by the community
- Establishing social environment for community capacity building
- Integration and brokerage of education services for all
- Importance of establishing education access portals
- Flexible entry points to learning for everyone
- Develop a culture that values continuous learning
- Link between learning and work

(3) Key Issues for Debate

There are a number of key issues in promoting the role of the school in the building of learning communities that need to be debated and discussed at the PALLACE seminar / conference. They are:

- How does a school get started?
- What are the key drivers to success that need to be considered?
- Who is best placed to lead the project?
- What resources and support does that person need?
- How will the project be managed or governed?
- How will the project be evaluated?
- How will the project be sustained in the long term?

PALLACE PROJECT 2 – LEADERSHIP IN THE LEARNING CITY

Aim

The secondary focus of the project was leadership of the learning city – an investigation of the role of city councillors and elected representatives in the development of learning communities. This was supported by the City of Marion in South Australia and included developing a link with a French local government instrumentality, the Centre de Formation des Elus (CEFEL). A learning materials package for councillors on learning city characteristics and leadership was the required outcome for this strand, together with enhanced local government awareness and expertise in the expansion of local government’s involvement in learning.

Local Organisation Working with the Secondary Project

The City of Marion, which has a population of approximately 78,000 and an area of nearly 55 square kilometres.

Methodology

Four actions were taken to initiate this strand of the project:

- (a) A very successful workshop involving senior executive staff of the City of Marion as well as a meeting with the Mayor of the City was held with Professor Norman Longworth on 10 February 2003. The objectives of the workshop were to:
 - Acquire information regarding national and international trends/examples of local government involvement in the development of learning communities;
 - Gain a better understanding of the role of the Marion Council in developing a learning community; and
 - Identify potential strategies for realising the opportunities identified in point 2 above.
- (b) Work commenced with the Local Government Authority of South Australia to identify changes that need to be made to policy and program settings in order to facilitate local governments playing a significant role in building learning cities and communities.
- (c) Preparations commenced for the 3rd Marion Learning Festival, an event initiated by the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Development, which is held in the heart of the largest shopping and entertainment mall complex in the southern hemisphere.

(d) Initial contact was made with Alain Bournazel at the Centre de Formation des Elus to provide a brief outline of the South Australian local government PALLACE project.

Work on the PALLACE local government strand continued through:

- The appointment of a project manager to provide leadership and direction to the project, and to build and strengthen state, national and international links.
- More detailed discussions with the City of Marion with a view to conducting a comprehensive learning needs and learning facilities and services audit of the city.
- New approaches to the planning of the 3rd City of Marion Learning Festival.

The intention was to involve:

- Elected members of the City of Marion and especially the Mayor.
- Various staff and officers of the City of Marion.
- Management of the Westfield Shopping Centre, Marion.

The expected outcomes were:

- Greater understanding of the role of local government in building learning communities.
- An e-learning module on the role.
- Productive international links and networks about the role of local government in building learning communities.
- The involvement of other local government authorities in lifelong learning initiatives.

Progress Report

A very successful conference was held on 22 August 2003, with the theme: '*Smart Partnerships Build Learning Communities: Exploring The Role Of Local Government*'. The conference was organised by the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology and hosted by the City of Marion.

Some 80 people participated, including local government Chief Executive Officers, librarians, community development managers, and economic development officers, along with university, school and vocational education and training representatives, and members of the community.

The South Australian Local Government Association offered to host a follow-up discussion website.

Little progress has occurred beyond this.

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