Symposium
Learning Cities
12 November 2016

A learning city for elders

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UNESCO's definition of a learning city

- Inclusive education

- Learning in families and communities

- Workplace learning

- Use of modern learning technologies

- Quality and excellence in learning

- Culture of learning throughout life

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Suggest to add

- Learning for all ages

- Lifewide and lifelong learning

Benefits of later life learning

- Learning plays a vital role in maintaining cognitive functioning and capability even in old age

- Less decline in memory and intellectual ability

- Improving social relations

- Personal development: empowerment, self-esteem, confidence

- More positive outlook towards life

- Enhancement of the overall quality of life (including health)

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McClusky (1974) – Five Types of Needs

- Coping

- Expressive

- Contributing

- Influence

- Transcendence

Meriam (1990)

- Contemplative needs or needs for life review

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<u>Learning for older adults should focus on:</u>

- Transcendental goals and objectives

- Development of a reflective mode of thinking to facilitate older learners to contemplate the meaning of life, come to terms with their past, and hone their quest for self-fulfillment and spiritual advancement

- Cultivation of wisdom rather than mastery and competence that later life learning should be directed at

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Implications:

- Different lifestyles as people age

- Different learning needs and expectations

- Need to understand needs and motivations of elderly of different age groups

- Reasons for enrolling or not enrolling

- Barriers to elder learning

Findings about elder learning from a cross-cultural study of ageing and learning: Hong Kong and Australia

Reasons (top 3 out of 23):

Hong Kong elders

- Always wanted to go to school

- For self-fulfillment

- Interest in specific courses or subjects

Australian elders

- For self-fulfillment

- Interest in specific courses or subjects

- To learn new knowledge and skills

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The least-valued reasons for both samples:

- To enhance my employability

- To acquire new skills for re-employment

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Summary – Motivations for Elder Learning

Expressive

- Personal development, social relations

- Intrinsic

Instrumental

- Related to work, career, skills training

- extrinsic

Barriers to participation

Two top barriers for both samples:

- Personal health reasons

- Money (programs are too expensive)

Two bottom barriers:

- Did not feel welcome on campus

- Bad experience at school before

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Learning interests

Top 3 chosen areas of interest for both groups:

- Health, Leisure, Art

Least preferred topics:

Hong Kong group

- Humanities, Sciences, Finance

Australian group

- Basic education, Literacy and Grammar

Instructional preferences

3 most preferred ways of learning

Hong Kong group:

- Learning in a group

- In a formal teacher-classroom situation

- Read newspaper, magazines, books

Australian group:

- Learning in a group

- Read newspaper, magazines, books

- To do something hands on

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Least preferred ways of learning

Hong Kong group:

- Self-study courses

- Online learning

- Educational travel

Australian group:

- Self-study courses

- Online learning

- In a formal teacher-classroom situation

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Conclusion

- Elder learning is an integral part of the learning city concept

- More government policy and commitment to the promotion of learning for all ages

- Huge social benefits to all sectors if elders' well-being is enhanced through learning

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Comments and questions?