

# Knowledge is Power

## RAISING THE VALUE OF LEARNING

“In the new holistic, all-embracing world of the 21st Century, every individual becomes a depositor into and a withdrawer from the bank of knowledge which comprises the learning society”

Norman Longwerth and  
Keith Davies - Lifelong  
Learning



## Background

*“In the new holistic, all-embracing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, every individual becomes a depositor into and a withdrawer from the bank of knowledge which comprises the learning society”.*

Norman Longworth and Keith Davies – Lifelong Learning

The phrase and principle of education for life is at the heart of all strategies which the National Assembly promotes as a key part of any regeneration process for Wales – to create a Welsh society where learning is pursued, valued and used effectively for the individual, the community and the economy. To put the principle into practice, agencies need to reach into communities and engage with people who, for a variety of reasons, do not connect with the philosophy of lifelong learning culture.

Research by Stephen Gorard of Cardiff University states that, despite calls for lifelong learning, adults are less likely to take part in learning than they were 20 or even 50 years ago: *“The informal learning culture of lifelong learning requires a change in people’s motivation and attitudes to learning”*. There is as great a need today to support the development of new Learning Networks and Learning Exchanges that increase and widen participation in educational provision as there was in former times.

In disadvantaged communities many people have settled into a new life of low educational expectation. The challenge is how to re-engage these people into a learning culture that is relevant to their lives, supports their aspirations and recognises their own inherent talents; recognising that communities are full of unused talent, skill, knowledge and experience.

All too often what is termed as learning in the community consists of people attending a series of 10/20-week courses. At the end of these courses there is limited evidence of learning circles being constructed. Individuals may continue their learning, but on a collective level the learning experience often grinds to a halt.

## 1. Objectives

- a) To explore new ways of building Learning Networks to assist the development of a learning culture within wider regeneration strategies.
- b) To construct a new learning dialogue, the message being that “if you help build the collective capacity of your Learning Network, your Learning Network will help the development of your individual ability”.
- c) To move away from unilateral learning services to two-way transactions that generate mutuality and empower ‘people in communities’ to become active contributors to the learning process.
- d) To test an innovative approach to learning in disadvantaged communities by introducing learning time credits that facilitates the engagement of peoples’ skill and talents for community benefit.
- e) To increase the capacity of people who are termed as ‘socially excluded’ to play an active part in lifelong learning.
- f) To design, promote, and develop new frameworks for learning that encourage co-operation and mutuality.

## 2. Raising the Value of Learning

**Raising the Value of Learning works on the principle that one hour of “learning through doing” = one learning credit.**

‘Learning Time Credits’ (LTCs) are a method designed to increase the number of local people as active participants in life-long learning. Each member of the Learning Network will be allocated an **Individual Learning Account** (designated in learning time credits). For each hour that someone engages in community learning activities they receive one learning time credit into their account.

Learning credits can be acquired by:

- 1) Becoming involved in a learning support group, learning circle or forum
- 2) Teaching or mentoring other learners
- 3) Recruiting learners to courses
- 4) Organising learning events
- 5) Governance activities at learning centres
- 6) Peer tutoring

LTCs can be redeemed for social, educational and cultural experiences. Each participant will receive LTCs in the form of learning time notes.

## 2.1 Examples of Acquiring and Using Learning Time Credits

### ACQUIRE

Mentoring on courses  
Intergenerational exchanges  
Recruiting learners to courses  
Organising learning events  
Governance activities at learning centres  
Peer tutoring

### USING

Accessing new learning  
Social activities  
Educational visits  
Learning exchanges  
Learning events

## 3. Benefits

The Learning Network:

- Provides a means to generate large amounts of community learning
- Builds the collective learning capacity of the community
- Provides easy access points into learning
- Encourages learners to value what they already know, thus strengthening the self-esteem, self-efficiency and self-confidence of learners
- Complements and adds value to the work of tutors and learning providers
- Recognises that learning is a life long journey and provides strong incentives for re-entry and progression
- Values active learning equally at each stage of that journey
- Encourages learning outside the classroom