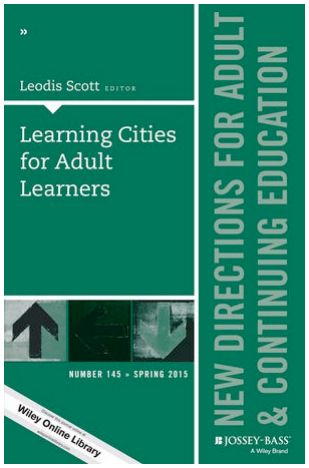


Learning Cities for Adult Learners (New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, Number 145)

Scott, Leodis, ed.
Wiley, 2015

Book Review

Tags: adult education | adult learners | adult learning theories

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In *Learning Cities for Adult Learners*, Leodis Scott compiles seven articles that explore how cities are uniquely positioned to provide new directions for adult and continuing education. “Adult education needs more space,” Scott writes, and scholars and practitioners must take the lead in building larger spaces for all learners (1). The larger spaces are cities themselves – “learning cities” that take education beyond the traditional walls of schools, colleges, and workplaces in order to connect and grow in all life experiences. Scott suggests cities can take on the characteristics of learning, and in doing so, adults of every social class and educational level can experience a new quality of life.

Scott is cofounder and research scholar at LearnLong Institute for Education and Learning Research, and lecturer in adult learning philosophy and practice at DePaul University–School for New Learning and Columbia University–Teachers College. Contributors to the volume come from a variety of universities, research centers, and programs that are committed to connecting the scholarship of adult learning with concrete practices that encourage a more widespread approach to learning. Most articles are co-authored, further demonstrating how collaboration and cross-disciplinary thinking is a natural hallmark of building the necessary infrastructure for learning cities.

After an Editor’s Note by Scott, Connie Watson and Aimee Tiu Wu introduce key themes of lifelong learning and lifelong education in Chapter 1, as they explore the evolution and reconstruction of learning cities for sustainable actions. In Chapter 2, Hiram E. Fitzgerald and Renee Zientek write about the connections between learning cities, systems change, and

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community engagement scholarship in the context of a learning city/region. Lyle Yorks and Jody Barto investigate in Chapter 3 the interconnections between workplace, organizational, and societal learning, showing how 21st-century cities must function to promote learning for a larger society. In Chapter 4, Alysia Peich and Cynthia Needles Fletcher provide research and a case study for how public libraries and cooperative extension can work as community partners for lifelong learning and learning cities. In Chapter 5, Joanne Howard, Diane Howard, and Ebbin Dotson provide a connected history of health and education and demonstrate the necessity of including both health and education endeavors in any strategic planning of learning cities. Dan K. Hibbler and Leodis Scott write in Chapter 6 about the role of leisure in humanizing learning cities. Finally, Scott provides a summary in Chapter 7 of the main themes from the book and suggests a way forward: scholars and practitioners in the field of adult and continuing education can become facilitators of learning cities so that citizens have the power and ability to construct their own cities appropriate to their needs.

This book is written for scholars and practitioners in adult learning and provides both a compelling vision and practical strategies for how citizens can work across fields and disciplines for the betterment of society. It will take leadership, vision, and talent to connect civic institutions in the formation of learning cities. One strategic type of institution not mentioned in the book is local religious communities. It seems that religious groups could be uniquely situated to both model and help facilitate the essential elements of a learning city. As scholars and practitioners continue to work towards this new direction for adult and continuing education, they will certainly do well to collaborate with as many different types of civic institutions as possible – for building a learning city is certainly worth the pursuit.

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