



Learning Community Symposium October 3 & 4, 2007

Do you want to live in a community that is socially inclusive, culturally exciting, environmentally sustainable, and economically advanced? Participate in Nova Scotia's premier Learning Communities Symposium and find out how to make it happen!

Learning communities promote learning widely, developing effective local partnerships between all sectors of the community, and supporting and motivating individuals and employers to participate in learning. Learning communities support every person's participation in lifelong learning and use learning to promote social and economic regeneration.

Free Public Lecture – Dr. Ron Faris (biography below)

Date: October 3, 2007

Time: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Place: Riverview Room, Jenkins Hall , Nova Scotia Agricultural College

Free public showcase and panel discussion

Includes highlights of local examples of learning communities

Date: October 3, 2007

Time: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Place: Debert Hospitality Centre

Provincial Workshop

Date: October 4, 2007

Time: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Place: Debert Hospitality Centre

Learn how to turn your community into a Learning Community. Participants will learn how to mobilize learning resources for all five community sectors (civic, economic, education, public and voluntary), build partnerships, and leave as champions of the Learning Community Model. For registration details, see www.ns.literacy.ca

A Learning Community:

- Places learning at the heart of community capacity building and development;
- Increases pathways between the formal learning (education) sector and the non-formal (workplace, community and not-for-profit) sectors through active partnerships;
- Fosters early learning and literacy, including learning how to learn, as the foundations of a lifelong learning strategy;
- Values and uses existing learning resources but seeks to identify new ways of doing things;
- Provides a practical approach to lifelong learning for individuals and communities facing the challenges of our knowledge-based economy and society;
- Promotes social inclusion and makes it easy for all people to learn and continue learning, in a variety of ways;
- Uses and builds human and social capital, including the multicultural values and knowledge base of aboriginals as well as recent immigrants.

CHEERS: Key Components of a Learning Community

Citizenship education

Learning communities are incubators of democratic citizenship where democratic values and skills are learned in homes, schools, voluntary associations and faith communities. In learning communities, civic literacy and learning are constantly informed, refreshed and sustained by conversation and action about democratic rights and responsibilities.

Health promotion

Health literacy, including preventative public health initiatives, workplace safety, and nutritious food security, is central to forging healthy families, schools, workplaces, and communities. Learning communities systematically foster a sense of meaning and belonging.

Economic development

Learning communities are prepared to pro-actively meet ever-changing economic conditions because of their awareness of the socio-economic and technological drivers of the emerging knowledge-based economy and society. Sustainable community economic development, or economic literacy, requires both individual and organizational learning. “Glocalization”, where systems and structures change to meet local conditions, becomes an alternative to merely reacting to forces of globalization.

Environmental sustainability

Learning communities foster learning, action and informed conversation about local environmental issues and global ecological challenges. Wide-spread eco-literacy will be a major challenge in the coming decades but it will be central to the triple bottom line approach of modern organizations.

Rural/urban development

Learning communities are a form of learning-based community development. They build bridges between First Nation and non-First Nation communities in both rural and urban settings. They foster rural-urban collaboration rather than the existing ‘silo’ thinking that encourages a false rural-urban dichotomy and subsequent policy and program failure.

Social/cultural development

Learning communities are based on the consensus that good social capital builds bonds and bridges within and between communities and should be fostered as a means of building community capacity, promoting social inclusion, and enhancing human capital development.

Facilitator Biography

Dr Ron Faris is an adult educator and expert in carrying out community development through community-based learning opportunities. He has researched, taught and consulted on learning communities (villages, towns, cities and regions) and community service-learning in Canada and abroad. Currently he is President of Golden Horizon Ventures, a consultancy focused on lifelong learning strategies, education and training reform at governmental levels, and learning-based community development at the local level.

While charter President of the Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning (SALL), Dr. Faris chaired a task force that created that province's unique brokerage model community college system. His associated *Saskmedia Report* integrated the developing college and educational communications systems with the existing regional library system. Executive Director of Continuing Education in British Columbia from 1973 until 1987, Dr. Faris went on to become Associate Executive Director of the National Literacy Secretariat in Ottawa. In 2005-6 he served as a member of the Bradshaw Advisory Committee on Literacy and Essential Skills that developed a comprehensive pan-Canadian literacy strategy. He has co-authored the 2007 CMEC report of the national Adult Literacy Forum.

Dr. Faris has taught distance learning program, graduate courses and non-credit workshops at the University of Victoria. He has also taught at the new Royal Roads University in the MA Program in Leadership and Training. In 2004 Dr. Faris was a keynote speaker at the Swedish Municipal Adult Education Association Conference and seminar presenter at the Swedish National Agency for Rural Development.

Dr. Faris places the issue of individual, social and corporate responsibility for lifelong learning in an historic and global context. He also brings the perspective of one committed to voluntary sector service - he served on the executive of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) for over a decade and among his awards is the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal for Voluntary Services. Many of his reports and articles, and his book, are freely available at: <http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>

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- Adult Learning Knowledge Centre
- Coastal Communities Network
- Colchester Adult Learning Association
- Colchester Regional Development Agency
- National Adult Literacy Database
- NovaKnowledge
- Nova Scotia Community College
- Nova Scotia Agricultural College
- Nova Scotia Department of Education
- Nova Scotia Economic Development
- Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection
- Truro Rotary