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NEST

Co-Creating a New Form of Governance in Societal Transition for Healthy Living

Guidelines for Preparing Educators and Students to Become Innovation-Ready (Deliverable 9.2)

Call: ERASMUS-EDU-2022-PI-ALL-INNO-EDU-ENTERP — ALLIANCES FOR INNOVATION – LOT 1

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EU	European Commission
HL	Healthy Living
HEI	Higher Education Instittution
SIE	Social Innovation Ecosystem
SIEHL	Social Innovation Ecosystem for Healthy Living
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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INTRODUCTION

Across Europe, societies are facing increasingly complex and interconnected challenges in areas such as public health, sustainability, social inclusion, and regional resilience. These challenges cannot be addressed effectively within traditional disciplinary, institutional, or sectoral boundaries. They require new forms of collaboration, learning and knowledge creation that connect education directly to societal transformation.

This deliverable provides guidelines for preparing educators and students to become innovation-ready through participation in learning communities embedded in social innovation ecosystems for health and wellbeing.

A learning community is understood here as a collaborative environment in which students, educators, researchers, professionals, citizens and other stakeholders jointly engage with real-world challenges. Within these environments, learning is not separated from practice but takes place through active participation in ongoing societal processes.

The aim of this document is to support:

- educators in designing and facilitating ecosystem-based learning within learning communities;
- students in developing competencies for innovation and collaboration in complex environments;
- institutions in embedding learning communities within their educational structures.

Innovation readiness refers to the ability to work constructively with complexity, uncertainty and diversity of perspectives while contributing to meaningful societal value creation.

The framework is not intended to be used as a stand-alone document. It should be read together with two related NEST deliverables: **Framework for SIEHL knowledge transfer into existing education courses** and **Principles for the Practical Recognition and Assessment of Newly Generated Learning by Students in SIEHL**..

Together, these documents provide practical support for bringing ecosystem-based learning into education from preparing people to participate, to organising learning in practice, and to recognising what learners have learned.

1. Learning in and Through Social Innovation Ecosystems

Learning in learning communities is fundamentally different from traditional education models. Rather than transferring predefined knowledge, learning emerges through participation in real-world challenges that are embedded in local and regional contexts. Students engage with societal issues together with multiple stakeholders, including professionals, citizens, policymakers, and researchers. These interactions allow them to understand problems from different perspectives and to co-develop and test possible responses in real-life settings.

A central characteristic of this approach is that learning is distributed across multiple environments such as campuses, community settings, innovation hubs, workplaces, and digital spaces. These environments form an interconnected ecosystem in which learning continuously moves between practice and reflection.

An important feature of this ecosystem is the circulation of knowledge. Students bring academic and disciplinary knowledge into practice-based settings, while also bringing back experiential insights, contextual understanding, and emerging questions into their educational programs. This creates a continuous feedback loop between education and society.

In this way, learning communities function as living environments in which education and societal development are mutually reinforcing.

1.1 Learning places and the Learning Ecosystem Canvas

Learning in the learning community can be done at different places and in different forms. The learning takes place in physical or virtual environments where students, educators, researchers, and local actors collaboratively engage in real-world challenges. These spaces, such as innovation hubs, campus labs, community centers, learning communities or co-creation sites, provide rich contexts for experiential, transdisciplinary learning. They enable participants to experiment, reflect, and iterate solutions while connecting knowledge across sectors and disciplines.

The **Learning Ecosystem Canvas** (appendix 1) is a practical tool to design, map, and evaluate these learning environments. It helps educators and ecosystem actors to:

- Identify key stakeholders and their roles
- Define learning goals and intended societal impact
- Plan activities and collaborative processes
- Monitor and reflect on outcomes for continuous improvement

By using the Canvas, the learning places in the ecosystem become structured in yet adaptable environments, ensuring that transdisciplinary learning is meaningful, context-driven, and capable of generating real impact in the ecosystem.

2. Learning Principles

2.1 How Students Learn in a Learning Community

Learning in the learning community is built on learning principles that reflect transdisciplinary collaboration, local engagement, and systemic innovation. Each principal guides how students interact with real-world challenges and prepare them to contribute meaningfully to societal transitions.



Transdisciplinary Learning
Students integrate knowledge, methods, and perspectives from multiple disciplines and stakeholder groups to address complex societal issues. They work alongside peers from different education levels (vocational, higher, university) and community actors, combining scientific knowledge with practical expertise, lived experience, and

organizational insights. Students learn to synthesize diverse knowledge sources, develop creative solutions, and navigate complexity, equipping them to collaborate effectively in multi-actor systems. Educators should facilitate boundary-crossing collaboration, scaffold interdisciplinary communication, and model integrative problem-solving practices.

Place-Based Learning

Learning is rooted in the local context, responding to the specific history, networks, and needs of communities. Students engage directly with neighborhoods, schools, healthcare organizations, and local businesses, observing how social, economic, and ecological factors shape challenges and opportunities. Students develop sensitivity to context, adapt solutions to local realities, and understand how interventions interact with broader systems. Educators should connect students with authentic local partners, highlight contextual constraints and opportunities, and guide to observation and analysis of local systems.

Co-Creation and Collective Ownership

Students collaborate with stakeholders as equal partners, jointly designing, testing, and refining solutions. They participate in shared decision-making, negotiate priorities across perspectives, and contribute to solutions that are owned collectively rather than individually. Co-creation builds relational skills, empathy, and accountability, preparing students to work effectively in collaborative, impact-driven environments. Educators should create structures for inclusive collaboration, support negotiation and consensus-building, and ensure all voices are valued in co-design processes.

Long-Term and Iterative Learning

Learning occurs across cycles of experimentation, reflection, and scaling, rather than in isolated projects. Students engage in multiple small-scale experiments, reflect on outcomes, and adjust approaches over time. Students witness how incremental efforts contribute to broader systemic change. Iterative learning develops adaptability, critical evaluation skills, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to sustained societal transitions. Educators should support cycles of planning, action, reflection, and adaptation; guide students in documenting lessons learned and connecting experiments to long-term objectives.

Systems Thinking and Complexity Awareness

Students analyze how societal challenges are shaped by interconnected systems, feedback loops, and emergent behaviors. They explore multiple causal factors, interdependencies, and unintended consequences of interventions. Students learn to anticipate systemic effects of their solutions. Understanding complexity equips students to design interventions that are more robust, scalable, and sensitive to systemic dynamics. Educators should teach mapping and analysis of complex systems, encourage consideration of multiple perspectives, and facilitate scenario-based learning.

Reflexivity and Learning from Failure

Students continuously reflect on their assumptions, actions, and outcomes, embracing uncertainty, and learning from mistakes. They critically evaluate what works, what fails, and why. Reflection informs adaptive strategies and improves future decision-making in collaborative projects. Reflexivity builds self-awareness, resilience, and the capacity to

iterate, essential traits for navigating uncertain and complex innovation landscapes. Educators should provide structured reflection sessions, normalize failure as a learning opportunity, and help students translate insights into actionable improvements.

Ethical and Value-Driven Learning
Students consider the social, ecological, and economic impacts of their actions and design solutions that create multiple forms of value. They assess how interventions affect communities, the environment, and long-term sustainability, making deliberate choices guided by ethics and societal benefits. Students develop the ability to create solutions that are responsible, equitable, and sustainable, aligning innovation with societal needs. Educators should integrate ethical reasoning into project design, prompt students to weigh trade-offs, and guide on assessment of broader impacts.

3. GUIDELINES

3.1 A practical guide for educators

What makes learning different?

Instead of learning primarily in classrooms, students learn through participation in real societal challenges. In learning community environments, learning takes place at the intersection of formal education and informal, practice-based learning in society. While universities, universities of applied sciences, and vocational institutions provide structured curricula and learning outcomes, much of the meaningful learning occurs through participation in real-world collaborative processes with communities, organizations, and governments. Students temporarily join ongoing regional learning processes in which actors collectively experiment, reflect, and work toward systemic change.

For educators, this requires a shift in role and practice: from delivering knowledge in controlled settings to facilitating learning processes that unfold across classrooms, communities, and innovation ecosystems. The following guidelines translate the principles of learning in a learning community into practical strategies for designing and facilitating learning experiences that prepare students to contribute to complex societal transitions.

Students learn through:
Real Challenges
Working on issues that matter to communities and regions
Addressing complex problems without predefined solutions

Collaboration & Co-Creation
Working alongside professionals, citizens, policymakers, and researchers
Designing solutions together rather than for others

Transdisciplinary Teamwork
Combining perspectives from different disciplines and educational levels
Integrating scientific, practical, and lived experience knowledge

Experimentation & Reflection
Testing ideas in practice
Learning from successes, failures, and unexpected outcomes

Learning Across Places
Learning in campuses, communities, innovation hubs, workplaces, and online environments
Connecting local experiences to broader societal transitions

Learning Principles and What Educators Can Do

Theme	What Students Experience	What Educators Should Do
Transdisciplinary Learning	Multiple perspectives and knowledge types	Facilitate boundary-crossing collaboration
Place-Based Learning	Real local contexts and stakeholders	Connect learning to community needs
Co-Creation & Ownership	Shared decision-making	Create inclusive collaboration structures
Iterative Learning	Experimentation and adaptation	Support cycles of action and reflection
Systems Thinking	Understanding complexity and interconnections	Use systems mapping and multiple perspectives
Reflexivity & Learning from Failure	Reflection on assumptions and outcomes	Normalize uncertainty and learning from mistakes
Ethics & Value Creation	Considering societal impact and trade-offs	Integrate ethical reflection into projects

Common Challenges and Practical Solutions

Challenge	Practical solution
Students expect clear answers	Frame uncertainty as part of the learning process
Partners have different expectations	Clarify roles, goals, and communication early
One discipline dominates	Create mixed teams and rotate leadership roles
Reflection is overlooked	Build reflection into assessment and project milestones
Learning remains classroom-bound	Use field visits, community projects, and ecosystem partners
Informal learning stays invisible	Help students document and articulate what they learn in practice
Projects end without lasting impact	Connect projects to ongoing community initiatives

The Educator's Role: From Lecturer to Learning Facilitator
In a learning community, educators do not need to have all the answers.

Key roles include:
Connecting students with stakeholders
Creating safe spaces for experimentation
Facilitating reflection and dialogue
Supporting collaboration across disciplines
Helping students navigate complexity and uncertainty
Translating experiences into meaningful learning outcomes

Think of yourself as a knowledge provider and more as a coach, connector, and ecosystem facilitator.

A Simple Design Checklist
Before launching a learning-community project, ask:
☐ Is the challenge authentic and relevant?
☐ Are external stakeholders involved from the beginning?
☐ Are multiple disciplines represented?
☐ Is reflection built into the process?
☐ Can students experiment and adapt?
☐ Is learning happening both inside and outside the classroom?
☐ Are societal impact and value creation explicit?
☐ Are students supported in making informal learning visible?

For a complete list of the course design checklist educators can use appendix 2: Course design checklist

3.2 Practical guidelines

Guideline 1: Design around authentic challenges
Learning should start from real societal challenges that matter to local communities and cannot be solved by one discipline alone.

Work with external partners (e.g. municipalities, citizens, organizations) to define open-ended challenges linked to broader transitions such as health, sustainability, or inclusion. Keep space for multiple solutions and iteration.

Avoid: over-defined problems or fixed solution paths
Do: co-create challenges with partners from the start

Guideline 2: Combine formal and informal learning outcomes
Innovation readiness includes knowledge, collaboration, reflection, and adaptability. Many of these skills develop in practice, not only in classrooms.

Design learning outcomes that explicitly include both formal learning (courses, theory) and informal learning (fieldwork, stakeholder interaction, experimentation). Make both visible and assessable.

Avoid: only assessing academic outputs
Do: use reflection to capture experiential learning

Guideline 3: Educator as coach
In transdisciplinary settings, learning is non-linear and uncertain. The educator's role is to guide rather than instruct.

Support students through questions, reflection, and connections to stakeholders. Encourage peer learning and experimentation instead of providing fixed solutions.

Avoid: reverting to lecturing in complex situations
Do: facilitate reflection and autonomy

Guideline 4: Enable multidisciplinary teamwork
Complex challenges require diverse perspectives. Teams should combine disciplines and educational levels.

Define roles early but allow flexibility as collaboration develops. Encourage dialogue across disciplinary boundaries and shared ownership of outcomes.

Avoid: dominance of one discipline or unclear roles
Do: rotate roles and support structured team formation

Guideline 5: Integrate reflection continuously
Reflection is essential for learning from experience and dealing with complexity.

Embed short, regular reflection moments (journals, group sessions, stakeholder feedback). Link reflection directly to actions and outcomes.

Avoid: treating reflection as optional
Do: include it in assessment and project rhythm

Guideline 6: Work with external partners as co-creators
External partners are not clients but active participants in the learning process.

Involve them early, clarify expectations, and maintain continuous feedback loops. Use tools like ecosystem mapping to structure collaboration.

Avoid: one-way communication or unclear expectations
Do: formalize roles and keep interaction iterative

Guideline 7: Learn across multiple contexts
Learning should take place in different environments such as communities, campuses, and organizations.

Students should actively compare contexts and connect insights across locations to develop systemic understanding.

Avoid: treating sites as separate projects
Do: connect and reflect across contexts

3.3 Quick Guide for Managers and Program Leaders

Why is this important?
Program leaders play a decisive role in enabling transdisciplinary, ecosystem-based learning. This is not a marginal innovation in education, but a shift in how learning is organized, connected to practice, and embedded in regional ecosystems.

The central question is not only how we design learning communities, but also when, why, and under what conditions we choose this approach as a valid form of high-quality education.

This implies a dual responsibility: maintaining high-quality formal education while gradually enabling new forms of learning that take place across classrooms, institutions, and real-world contexts.

Strategic tension: Quality, timing, and decision-making
Implementing learning communities raises a few recurring strategic questions in programs and faculties:

- When is it appropriate to move from traditional education models toward ecosystem-based learning?

- Who decides that this approach is the right direction, and on what basis?

- How do we ensure that teaching teams are ready and willing to adopt this way of

working?

- What evidence supports that this approach leads to better learning outcomes and professional readiness?

- How do we balance innovation with the responsibility to deliver stable, high-quality education?

These questions are not obstacles but part of the transition process. They require explicit decision-making frameworks, staged implementation, and visible early results.

For this reason, learning communities should not be introduced as a full system replacement, but as iterative pilots that generate evidence, build trust, and gradually scale through early adopters.

From pilots to proven practice

The development of learning communities depends on visible and credible outcomes. This includes both educational impact and professional relevance.

Early pilots should therefore be designed not only as learning environments, but also as evidence-generating cases that answer key institutional questions:

- Do students become better prepared for the roles they will enter?
- Do they develop stronger collaboration, adaptability, and problem-solving skills?
- Do external partners experience added value?
- Does learning improve when embedded in real-world contexts?

This requires a deliberate focus on documentation, reflection, and evaluation of initiatives such as learning community pilots and similar regional experiments. Scaling should follow evidence, not assumptions.

Organizational conditions for success

Learning communities cannot be implemented through individual educator effort alone. They require structural conditions at program level.

The most important enabling condition is space: time, curriculum flexibility, and institutional recognition for learning that takes place outside traditional classrooms.

Equally important is connectivity: sustainable relationships with external partners, supported by coordination roles and clear institutional ownership.

Finally, programs must create conditions for educational change capacity, meaning that teams are supported in gradually adopting new roles, practices, and forms of assessment.

Without these conditions, learning communities remain isolated from experiments rather than systemic innovation.

Managing the transition: people, pace, and adoption
Changes in educational practice are rarely linear. Early adopters play a crucial role in demonstrating feasibility and value, but they cannot carry the transition alone.

Program leaders need to actively manage:
- how teaching teams are involved in the transition process
- how resistance and uncertainty are addressed
- how workload and responsibilities are redistributed
- how educators are supported in moving from content expert to facilitator role

This requires attention to pacing. Not all programs or teams need to change at the same speed. A layered approach helps avoid overload while maintaining direction.

3.4 Guidelines for managers and program leaders

The following guidelines translate strategic principles into actionable program-level interventions.

Creating space for ecosystem learning
Ecosystem-based education requires structural flexibility. Programs should allocate dedicated time for field-based learning, enable modular curriculum design, and support cross-departmental collaboration.

This allows students and staff to engage meaningfully with real-world challenges over longer periods of time.

Supporting collaboration with external partners
External partners are co-educators in learning communities. This requires professionalized coordination structures, clear agreements, and recognition of collaboration as core academic work.

Program leadership plays a key role in maintaining long-term relationships and ensuring continuity across cohorts.

Recognizing formal and informal learning
A significant part of learning in ecosystems is informal, practice-based, and context-dependent. Programs must therefore explicitly recognize this type of learning in assessment and curriculum design.

Tools such as portfolios, reflection journals, and skills mapping help make this learning visible and assessable.

Supporting educators in new roles
Educators require support to transition into facilitation roles. This includes training in coaching, interdisciplinary collaboration, and managing uncertainty.

Equally important is time: educators need space to engage with partners and participate in ecosystem-based projects.

Embedding learning communities in curricula
Learning communities should not exist as isolated projects but be embedded in program structures. This can be achieved through modular design, recurring community-linked projects, and long-term partnerships that span multiple cohorts.

This ensures continuity, scalability, and institutional learning over time.

3.5. Quick Guide for Students

Learning in **a learning community** is different from traditional education. Instead of only learning from lectures and textbooks, you will learn in real-world contexts together with communities, professionals, and other students. You will work on complex societal challenges, often in multidisciplinary teams, and in collaboration with external partners. This section explains what you can expect and how to make the most of this learning experience.

What Students Can Expect
In a learning community learning environment, you will:

- Work on real societal challenges that matter to communities and organizations.
- Collaborate with students from different disciplines and educational levels.
- Engage with external partners, such as municipalities, companies, NGOs, and citizens.
- Experiment with ideas, test solutions, and learn from both success and failure.
- Reflect on your learning and document your development over time.

Learning will not always follow a fixed path. Instead, you will be part of a dynamic learning process where solutions evolve over time.

Working with External Partners
In a learning community environment, many projects involve collaboration with external stakeholders.

How to work effectively with partners:

- Listen carefully to their perspectives and experiences.
- Ask questions to better understand the context and the real challenges.
- Be respectful of their time, expertise, and local knowledge.
- Communicate clearly about expectations and progress.
- Share your ideas openly and invite feedback.

Tip: External partners are not just clients; they are co-creators in the learning process.

Learning in Multidisciplinary Teams
You will often work in teams with students from different disciplines. This diversity is a strength but may also create challenges.

How to collaborate effectively:

- Be curious about other disciplines and perspectives.
- Explain your own expertise in accessible language.

- Recognize that different disciplines approach problems differently.
- Focus on the shared goal rather than disciplinary differences.

Tip: Innovation often happens when different perspectives meet.

Dealing with Uncertainty
Working on complex societal challenges means that there is rarely one correct answer.

You may encounter:
- Unclear problems
- Changing circumstances
- Unexpected results
- Solutions that need to be adapted

This is a normal part of innovation and learning.

How to deal with uncertainty:
- Stay open to new insights and perspectives.
- Treat setbacks as learning opportunities.
- Ask for feedback from peers, educators, and partners.
- Reflect regularly on what you are learning.

Tip: The goal is not to find the perfect solution immediately, but to learn through experimentation and iteration.

Documenting Your Learning
Much of the learning in a learning community environments is informal and practice based. To recognize and develop these learning experiences, it is important to document your progress. You can use the student development reflection tool in appendix 3.

Learning Portfolios
A learning portfolio collects evidence of your development over time.

Your portfolio may include:
- Project descriptions
- Reflections on collaboration
- Feedback from partners and peers
- Prototypes or project outputs
- Documentation of experiments and results
- The portfolio helps you make your learning more visible.

Skills Mapping
Skills mapping helps you identify which competencies you are developing during projects.

Examples include:
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Systems thinking
- Communication with stakeholders

- Problem solving in complex situations
- Adaptability and learning from failure
- Mapping these skills helps you understand how your experiences prepare you for future professional roles.

Reflection Journals
Reflection journals help you think critically about your experiences.

You might reflect on questions such as:
- What did I learn this week?
- What worked well and why?
- What challenges did I encounter?
- What would I do differently next time?
- How did collaboration influence the outcome?
- Reflection strengthens your ability to learn from experience and adapt to your approach.

Key Tips for Students
To get the most out of a learning community learning environments:
Be proactive in collaboration and communication.
Engage with partners and communities respectfully.
Reflect regularly on your learning.
Embrace experimentation and iteration.
Stay curious and open to different perspectives.
By actively participating in these learning environments, you will not only gain knowledge but also develop the skills needed to contribute to innovation and societal transformation.

4. Conclusions and Key Takeaways

The development of transdisciplinary, ecosystem-based learning highlights several key insights for students, educators, and institutions.

1. Innovation readiness requires ecosystem learning
Students learn best when engaging with real-world challenges in local, context-rich environments.
Embedding learning in the broader ecosystem,including communities, organizations, and networks, enables meaningful impact and fosters system-level thinking.

2. Collaboration with external partners is essential
Partnerships with municipalities, businesses, citizens, and community actors provide authentic challenges, diverse perspectives, and practical relevance.
External collaboration must be planned, supported, and valued institutionally to ensure continuity and mutual benefit.

3. Reflection and experimentation are core to learning
Transdisciplinary learning is iterative and non-linear: failure, adaptation, and continuous reflection are part of the process.

Students, educators, and partners must document, share, and act on lessons learned to strengthen collective understanding and inform systemic change.

4. Educators need support from institutions
Facilitators of a learning community require training, mentoring, and institutional recognition for their roles.
Flexible curricula, recognition of informal learning, and dedicated coordination resources enable educators to guide students effectively in complex environments.

5. The Learning Places Canvas as a practical tool
The Learning Ecosystem Canvas helps design, visualize, and reflect on transdisciplinary learning environments.
It supports mapping challenges, stakeholders, learning activities, and assessment methods, ensuring alignment between learning goals and local ecosystem needs.

Final insight:
Transdisciplinary, ecosystem-based learning is a long-term, collective process. By combining authentic challenges, collaboration, reflection, and institutional support,a learning community environments prepare students for innovation and contribute to sustainable societal impact.

Appendix 1: Learning Ecosystem Canvas

A Practical Guide for Mapping, Reflecting on, and Developing Learning Communities in Social Innovation Ecosystems

1. Purpose and Positioning

This canvas helps make learning visible in social innovation ecosystems. Rather than focusing on what people learn, it focuses on how learning is enabled, connected, sustained and developed across an ecosystem. The approach builds on existing traditions such as communities of practice, living labs, action learning, learning networks and ecosystem thinking.

The Learning Places Table is a practical tool that helps you:

- Make learning visible
- Clarify ownership and responsibility
- Strengthen collaboration
- Identify gaps and overlaps
- Support strategic development
- Monitor progress over time

It helps show what is already happening, who is involved, and how different places are connected, providing value both for the ecosystem itself and for organizational management and decision-makers.

2. Three Phases of Working with the Canvas

Phase 1 – Assessment and Mapping: identify learning places, enabling roles, learning strategies and connections.
Phase 2 – Reflection and Use: analyse strengths, gaps, dependencies and opportunities.
Phase 3 – Future Development: identify priorities, interventions and next steps.

3. The Learning Ecosystem Canvas

The Learning Ecosystem Canvas contains five interconnected domains.
• Learning Places
• Enabling Roles
• Learning Strategies
• Connections & Governance
• Development & Next Steps

LEARNING ECOSYSTEM CANVAS

Visualize • Reflect • Connect • Strengthen

Name / Team: _____ Date: _____

Purpose of this session: _____

Not present · Limited · Essential · Somewhat present · Strong

1 LEARNING PLACES

Where does learning happen?

Map the places and environments where learning takes place in your ecosystem.



Essential · Important · Somewhat present · Limited · Not present

Notes & insights

2 ENABLING ROLES

Who enables learning?

Indicate the extent to which each role contributes to learning in your ecosystem.

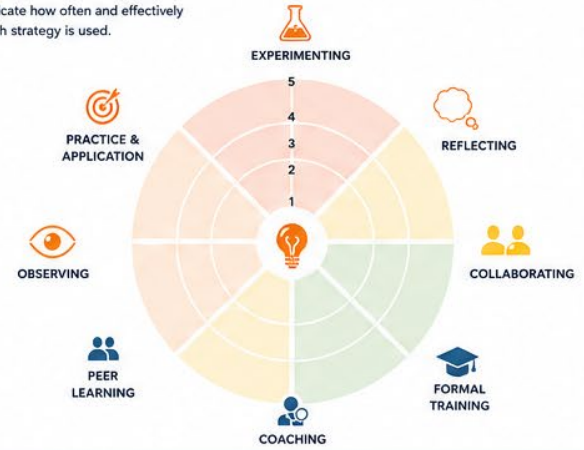


Notes & insights

3 LEARNING STRATEGIES

How is learning achieved?

Indicate how often and effectively each strategy is used.



Notes & insights

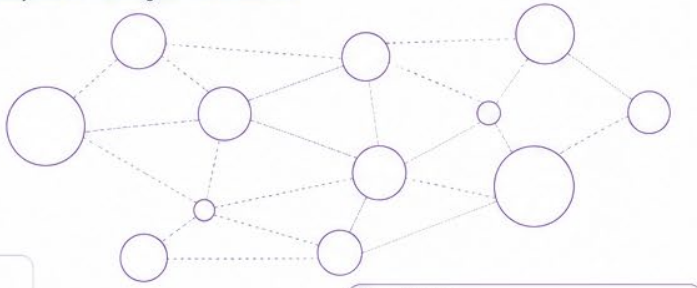
4 CONNECTIONS & GOVERNANCE

How are we connected and how do we work together?

Map the key actors in your ecosystem and the strength of their connections.

ACTOR TYPES

- People
- Teams
- Organizations
- Partners
- Knowledge sources



CONNECTION STRENGTH

- —— Strong connection
- - - - - Moderate connection
- ····· Weak or no connection

Notes & insights

5 DEVELOPMENT & NEXT STEPS

What steps will strengthen our learning ecosystem?

KEEP
What is working well and should we keep?
-
-
-
-

STRENGTHEN
What should we strengthen or give more attention to?
-
-
-
-

ADD
What is missing that we should add?
-
-
-
-

STOP
What should we reduce, change or stop?
-
-
-
-

ACTION PLAN – FIRST STEPS

0 – 30 DAYS	30 – 60 DAYS	60 – 90 DAYS
•	•	•
•	•	•
•	•	•

Tip: Use post-its or digital sticky notes to fill in this canvas together and discuss your insights.

How to fill in the domains:

Learning Place: The context where learning happens. A learning place is not just a location. It is a setting where people come together around a shared challenge and develop knowledge, skills or practices.

This can be:

- A municipal department
- A university program
- A vocational training setting
- A community initiative
- A living lab
- A digital platform
- An informal network

Enabling Role : The person or role that makes learning possible in this place. This role connects people, facilitates dialogue, and ensures continuity.

Examples:

- Policy advisor
- Program coordinator
- Lecturer
- Community builder
- Researcher
- Innovation broker

Learning Strategy: How learning is organized in this place.

Examples:

- Learning by doing in real-life policy challenges
- Action research with community partners
- Peer learning between practitioners
- Co-creation workshops with citizens
- Practice-based student assignments
- This column clarifies the learning logic.

Connections and governance: How this learning place connects to other places in the ecosystem and how does the knowledges flows. This column is essential. It shows whether your ecosystem is fragmented or integrated.

Examples:

- Shares results with municipality
- Students involved in community pilots
- Research feeds into policy design
- Community feedback informs curriculum
- Digital platform connects all actors

Development and next steps
Sort insights into:

- KEEP (what works)
- STRENGTHEN (what to improve)
- ADD (what is missing)
- STOP (what blocks learning)

4. Phase 1 – Assessment and mapping

Fill in the learning ecosystem canvas with all the stakeholders concerning learning. Map learning places and identify enabling roles such as community weavers, conveners, hosts, brokers, facilitators, lecturers, researchers and place stewards. Assess the extent to which these roles are present and active. A wheel or radar-style reflection tool can be used to visualize the strength of each role.

5. Phase 2 - Reflection Questions

The real value of filling in the canvas in phase 1 is reflection on the mapping. In order to identify the gaps, strengthen governance, improve integration, support funding, and trach development over time the following reflection question can be used in a discussion.

- Who is learning, where and how?
- Which enabling roles are missing or overloaded?
- Where is learning dependent on one person?
- Which places are weakly connected?
- How does knowledge travel through the ecosystem?
- Which learning activities create the most value?
- Where should investment, time or funding be prioritized?

6. Phase 3 - Future Development

Use the assessment to develop a roadmap. Prioritize learning places that require strengthening, create new connections, formalize reflection cycles, develop learning histories, and strengthen governance structures.

7. Practical Output

The completed canvas can be used for strategic dialogue, ecosystem governance, funding proposals, impact reporting, monitoring development over time, and building collective learning histories.

Appendix 2: Course design checklist

1. Define the Challenge

☐ Is the challenge authentic and relevant to local communities or ecosystems?
☐ Does the challenge allow multiple possible solutions?
☐ Is the challenge open-ended to encourage experimentation?

2. Identify External Partners

☐ Have key stakeholders (municipalities, professionals, citizens, companies, communities) been engaged early?
☐ Are roles, expectations, and contributions of partners clearly defined?
☐ Are partners integrated as co-creators, not just clients?

3. Design Learning Activities

☐ Do activities combine theory, practice, and experimentation?
☐ Are students given opportunities to research, prototype, and test solutions?
☐ Are learning outcomes and assessment methods aligned with the activities?

4. Facilitate Collaboration

☐ Are students working in multidisciplinary teams?
☐ Do students have guidance from facilitators or coaches instead of traditional lectures?
☐ Is communication and conflict management supported within teams and with external partners?

5. Integrate Reflection

☐ Are structured reflection sessions scheduled throughout the course?
☐ Are students encouraged to document informal learning (portfolios, journals, skills mapping)?
☐ Are lessons learned from experimentation and failure captured and discussed?

6. Assess Learning and Process

☐ Does assessment capture both process and outcomes?
☐ Are informal learning experiences recognized and valued?
☐ Are students receiving feedback from partners, peers, and educators?

Appendix 3: Student development reflection tool

This checklist helps students reflect on their development when participating in a learning community learning environments.

Students can use it to track their learning during projects or courses.

Working with Real-World Challenges

☐ I understand the societal challenge we are working on
☐ I can explain why this challenge is important for stakeholders
☐ I explore the problem before jumping to solutions
☐ I consider multiple perspectives when analysing the challenge

Collaboration with Different Actors

☐ I actively collaborate with my team members
☐ I communicate openly with external partners
☐ I respect different types of knowledge and expertise
☐ I contribute to creating a constructive team environment

Learning from Experience

☐ I reflect regularly on what I learn during the project
☐ I learn from feedback from peers and partners
☐ I see mistakes as learning opportunities
☐ I document my learning process

Innovation and Creativity

☐ I explore different possible solutions
☐ I test ideas and learn from experiments
☐ I remain open to unexpected outcomes
☐ I connect ideas from different disciplines

Personal Development

☐ I take initiative in the learning process
☐ I am comfortable working in uncertain situations
☐ I contribute actively to the project team
☐ I reflect on how this experience contributes to my future career

Reflective Question for Students

At the end of the learning experience, students can reflect on the following questions:

- What did I learn about working on complex societal challenges?
- What skills did I develop during this project?
- How did collaboration with external partners influence my learning?
- What would I do differently next time?