

briefing paper: learning competence ecosystems

CYANOTYPES

This Briefing Paper provides a short overview of the concept of learning competence ecosystems.

The term “learning” is often associated with a single site of education: a school, a training centre, a university, a workplace. Our experience tells us that learning is a process distributed across our daily lives - we learn in and across a wide range of situations.

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Learning Competence Ecosystems

The term “learning” is often associated with a single site of education: a school, a training center, a university, a workplace. Our experience tells us that learning is a process distributed across our daily lives - we learn in and across a wide range of situations.

In the CYANOTYPES vision, learning experiences are organized as journeys that take us across multiple contexts. One way to think about these contexts is to think of them as an ecosystem, highlighting their connectedness and their complementarity as well as the active role of context in our experience of learning.

In systems design contexts, the term competence ecosystems is sometimes used to refer to the full range of skills needed to engage with the system in question - a view that becomes even more relevant as the creative tools of the trade begin to include a wide range of data-driven systems.

The role of space in learning - where it takes place, and how the space in question can contribute to the learning experience - has been explored in many skills-related conversations.

Most obviously perhaps in lifelong learning: if we learn throughout our lives, it is very unlikely that all learning will take place in the same context, hence the need to think of multiple contexts and the links that exist or can be created between them.[1]

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But there are other approaches that call on us to not only be aware of, but build on what the context in question can do for us as learners.

This includes place-based learning, which highlights the need to connect what we learn with where we are, sometimes inspired by awareness of the ecological embeddedness of our existence; **work-based learning**, which focuses on how our places of work can become places of learning, closing the gap between building competences and applying them in our everyday work; **digital literacy** efforts alert us to the differences between offline and online learning contexts; **international lab networks** demonstrate the key role co-creation spaces can play in self-organized learning outside conventional educational institutions.

Adding significance to the CYANOTYPES focus on creative agency, the emphasis on learning-as-movement is supported by cross-disciplinary research on embodied cognition.[1]

Simply put, such research - exploring how cognition is embodied, embedded within a context, extended beyond the individual, and enacted as our bodies adapt to changes around us - tries to encourage those who design learning experiences to think of the whole person.

And remind us that the (creative) agency and intelligence of that person is affected by the ecological, economic, and social situation that makes the person who they (currently) are.

We all feel and know somehow that the bodies of learners are linked to their environments, that self and world are intricately connected. Linking this intuition with research-based insight changes how we organize learning experiences.

Rather than cutting learners off from contexts, **we give these contexts an active role as we design learning experiences.**