

What is the Composite Learning Index?

A product of the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), the Composite Learning Index (CLI) is Canada's annual measure of progress in lifelong learning. It is based on a combination of statistical indicators that reflect the many ways Canadians learn, whether in school, in the home, at work or within the community.

The only index of its kind in the world, the CLI is an unprecedented measurement tool that expresses how learning in all aspects of life is critical to the success of individuals, communities and the country as a whole. On an individual level, Canadians stand to benefit from lifelong learning through higher wages, better job prospects, improved health and more fulfilling lives. Accordingly, Canada stands to gain through a more resilient economy and stronger bonds within and between communities.

Although most Canadians are aware of the potential benefits of lifelong learning, until CCL launched the CLI in 2006 there was no way of measuring how Canadians were performing across the full spectrum of learning.

To reflect this broad perspective, the CLI uses a wide range of learning indicators to generate numeric scores for more than 4,500 communities across Canada. A high CLI score means that a particular city, town or rural community possesses the kinds of learning conditions that foster social and economic well-being. A low CLI score means that a community is under-performing in certain aspects that are key to lifelong learning.

It is important to note that these scores are not meant to single out "winners" and "losers," but rather to help Canadians understand the state of lifelong learning in their communities and to encourage them to think of concrete ways that they can improve on these conditions.

With new results published on CCL's website every spring, the CLI is an objective and reliable measurement tool that can help communities make the best possible decisions about learning—decisions that will strengthen social ties, bolster the economy and hopefully improve people's lives.

How does the Composite Learning Index work?

Though the CLI is unique in concept, it is founded on a common statistical model: the composite index. A composite index is a measurement tool that combines a selection of figures and statistics to produce an overall score for a particular subject. Composite indices are widely used in business and government to track and analyze trends over time, or across different regions.

Well-known examples include the New York Stock Exchange's NYSE composite indices, the Toronto Stock Exchange's TSX composite indices and Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index (CPI). Nearly 100 years old, the CPI is a measure of the cost of living in Canada based on the rate of price change for goods and services used by a typical Canadian household. Each month Statistics Canada compiles a virtual "shopping basket" of about 600 goods and services, and then calculates a numerical score that provides a richer understanding of the cost of living over time in Canada than, for example, a comparison of the price of bread or gasoline alone would.

Like the CPI, the Composite Learning Index also uses a basket of statistical indicators, each chosen for its relationship to the overall state of lifelong learning in Canada. These indicators include high-school dropout rates, participation in job-related training, volunteering and access to broadband internet. (For the complete list, along with their data sources, please see [The CLI Indicators](#)).

As with the Consumer Price Index, in which the price of fuel to heat your home is given greater statistical weight than the price of milk, not all of the indicators in the CLI have the same effect on the overall scores. Each learning indicator has a different degree of importance to a community's overall social and economic well-being and the CLI is designed to reflect this. The index statistically determines this level of importance, rather than arbitrarily assigning values based on perceptions of importance.

By using an objective, statistical method, the CLI effectively and reliably connects the dots between a community's learning conditions on the one side, and its social and economic well-being, or outcomes, on the other. In fact, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre assessed the Composite Learning Index as "internally sound and robust" in a 2007 validation review. (For a more in-depth overview, please refer to [Methodology](#).)

Technical details about the CLI model can be found in a [validation report of the index](#) (PDF, 1.1 MB) produced by the [European Commission's Joint Research Centre](#) in 2007.

The four pillars of lifelong learning

Support from Jacques Delors

"I am convinced that your Composite Learning Index will make it possible to chart progress in learning, allowing your country to identify improvements that are required to maintain its leadership in this area. I hope that other countries will take this route."

—Jacques Delors, from a letter sent to CCL in June 2007

At its core, the CLI is designed to measure the progress of lifelong learning, a holistic approach to learning that encompasses more than what occurs in the classroom. Lifelong learning is a philosophy that involves the development of knowledge, skills and values throughout all stages of a person's life—from early childhood through adulthood. It also recognizes that learning is not just an intellectual process, but one that permeates all aspects of an individual's life, including their role in the community, performance in the workplace, personal development and physical well-being.

The CLI was developed using a conceptual framework of lifelong learning put forward by UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (under the leadership of Jacques Delors, the former president of the European Commission). The commission's 1996 report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, presented a model that organized lifelong learning into four pillars: **Learning to Know**, **Learning to Do**, **Learning to Live Together**, and **Learning to Be** (see *Table 1*). The statistical indicators used in the CLI were chosen to best reflect the full spectrum of learning as proposed by the four pillar framework.

Table 1: Learning pillars

Learning to Know

Learning to Know involves the development of knowledge and skills that are needed to function in the world. These skills include literacy, numeracy and critical thinking.

Learning to Do

Learning to Do involves the acquisition of skills that are often linked to occupational success, such as computer training, managerial training and apprenticeships.

Learning to Live Together

Learning to Live Together involves the development of social skills and values such as respect and concern for others, social and inter-personal skills and an appreciation of the diversity of Canadians.

Learning to Be

Learning to Be involves activities that foster personal development (body, mind and spirit) and contribute to creativity, personal discovery and an appreciation of the inherent value provided by these pursuits.

The Components of the 2010 CLI

The 2010 CLI is made up of 17 indicators and 26 specific measures, which are organized under the four pillars of learning.

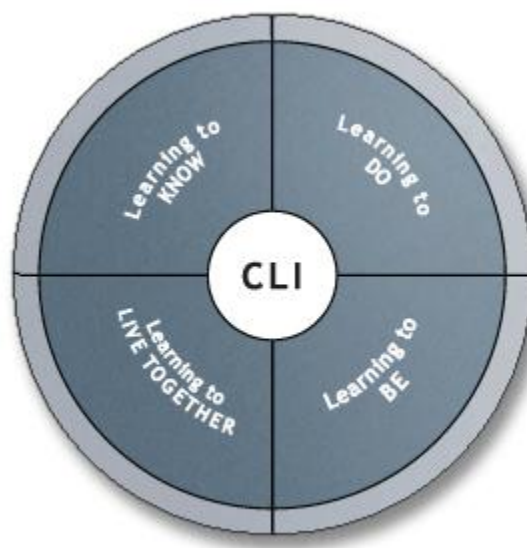
Indicators:

Each of these 17 indicators represents a different facet of lifelong learning in Canada, such as “Youth Literacy Skills,” which falls under the Learning To Know pillar. Each indicator can include more than one specific measure. Fact sheets on the indicators are available on the [Indicator fact sheets](#) page.

Specific Measures:

The building blocks of the CLI, the 26 specific measures have defined units that quantify each indicator. For example, Youth Literacy Skills is a Learning to Know indicator comprised of four specific measures:

- mean problem-solving scores for 15-year-olds
- mean reading scores for 15-year-olds
- mean math scores for 15-year-olds
- mean science scores for 15-year-olds



Learning to KNOW

2010 CLI Indicator	What is it?	Data source	Data frequency	Level of geography
Youth literacy skills	An assessment of the literacy skills of 15-year-old Canadians. The Composite Learning Index includes mean scores for literacy in reading, mathematics, problem solving and science.	PISA, 2006 (<i>problem-solving, 2003</i>)	Every 3 years	Province
High-school dropout rate (CM)	The proportion of Canadians aged 20 to 24 who have not completed high school and are not attending school. This indicator demonstrates the degree to which young Canadians possess the minimum level of education needed for the challenges of the adult workplace.	LFS, 2008	Annual	Province CMA
PSE participation (CM)	The proportion of Canadians aged 20 to 24 participating in post-secondary education (university, college, or trades program). This indicator measures the skill and knowledge levels of young Canadians who are preparing to enter the workforce.	LFS, 2009	Annual	Province Region CMA
University attainment (CM)	The proportion of Canadians aged 25 to 64 who have completed a university program. This indicator measures the number of working-age Canadians who have finished a university-level program.	LFS, 2009	Annual	Province Region CMA
Access to learning institutions (NDS)	Average travel time required to reach learning institutions (elementary and secondary schools; universities and colleges)	CCL, 2009	Annual	Province Region City Community

Learning to DO

2010 CLI Indicator	What is it?	Data source	Data frequency	Level of geography
Participation in job-related training (CM)	This indicator includes two measures. The first measures the proportion of Canadians aged 25 to 64 who participate annually in any form of job-related training (either at or outside the workplace).	SLID, 2007	Annual	Province Region CMA
Participation in job-related training over time (NDS)	The second measures the proportion of Canadians aged 25 to 64 who participated in any form of job-related education or training at least once during the previous six-year period. Together, this indicator measures the ability of working-age Canadians to maintain and develop the skills needed to stay competitive in the economy whether through courses, workshops, seminars or training.	ASETS, 2008	Every 2 years	Province Region CMA

Availability of workplace training (CM)	The proportion of Canadian employers that offer any form of training for their employees, from on-the-job to more structured classes. This indicator measures the extent of workplace training available to Canadian workers in order to help them update their skills and knowledge.	WES, 2005	Every 2 years	Province CMA
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Access to vocational training (NDS)	Average travel time required to reach vocational schools, business and secretarial schools.	CCL, 2009	Annual	Province Region City Community
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Learning to LIVE TOGETHER

2010 CLI Indicator	What is it?	Data source	Data frequency	Level of geography
Volunteering (CM)	The proportion of Canadians involved in unpaid activities within a group or an organization. This indicator measures the level of social and community engagement among Canadians.	CSGVP, 2007	Every 3 years	Province CMA
Participation in social clubs and other organizations (CM)	The proportion of Canadian households that reported spending on membership in or contributions to social clubs, fraternal organizations, alumni associations, political organizations, or cooperatives. This indicator measures the degree to which Canadians participate and engage in activities within their communities.	SHS, 2008	Annual	Province Region CMA
Learning from other cultures (CM)	The proportion of Canadians who socialized with people from other cultures a minimum of a few times a month. This indicator aims to measure the degree to which Canadians are interacting with and learning from cultures different than their own.	SCAL, 2008	Annual	Province Region CMA Community
Access to community institutions (NDS)	Average travel time required to reach community institutions (libraries; clubs; religious organizations)	CCL, 2009	Annual	Province Region City Community

Learning to BE

2010 CLI Indicator	What is it?	Data source	Data frequency	Level of geography
Exposure to media (CM)	The proportion of Canadian households reporting expenditures on reading material and internet service in the home. This indicator measures the level of exposure Canadians have to both traditional and new media.	SHS, 2008	Annual	Province Regions CMA
Learning through sports (CM)	The proportion of Canadian households reporting annual expenditures on sports and recreation facilities. This indicator measures the level of exposure Canadians have to sports and recreational activities.	SHS, 2008	Annual	Province Region CMA
Learning through culture (CM)	The proportion of Canadian households that reported spending on cultural activities such as museum visits, music festivals and the performing arts. This indicator measures the level of exposure Canadians have to cultural activities.	SHS, 2008	Annual	Province Region CMA
Broadband internet access (CM)	The proportion of Canadian households with access to broadband internet services— including fixed wireless, digital subscriber line (DSL), or cable. This indicator measures the degree of high-speed internet access available to Canadians.	Industry Canada, 2007	Annual	Province Region City Community
Access to cultural resources (NDS)	Average travel time required to reach museums and art galleries.	CCL, 2009	Annual	Province Region City Community

Source: <http://www.cli-ica.ca/en.aspx>