Improving Lives through Literacy.

The Learning Co.
literacy centre Johannesburg, South Africa

Democracy
Responsibility
Reconciliation
Equal Opportunity
Diversity
Freedom
Respect
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1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION
1.1 The Proposal

The first democratic elections in South Africa took place in April 1994 and marked one of the ‘…most startling periods of political and social transformation in recent history.’ (Coombes: 2003)

The Learning Co. is a literacy Centre situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. Due to restrictions imposed on education by the previous government, a large majority of South Africans were denied the right to a basic education and as such have been marginalized in society. As well as the implications of this inequality for the individual, the lack of a basic or a very limited education for a large portion of the population has created social imbalance in South Africa.

‘The legacies of inequality in expenditure and the poor standard of education dished out to blacks by the apartheid regime remain evident today in low literacy levels, low enrollments, lack of fully trained and qualified teachers, poor and inadequate facilities, high drop-out rates, and other ills that will take the new government of South Africa years of vigorous and sustained efforts, as well as enormous resources, to address and redress.’ (Afolayan: 2004. p207)

Since the first general elections of 1994, the new government of South Africa have embarked on numerous ambitious public projects in an attempt to rectify the political policies of the past and in doing so to create an environment of equal opportunity for all South Africans.

The Learning Co. hopes to contribute to these initiatives, by providing a mechanism through which those who were previously denied a basic education are rightfully afforded one. The centre caters primarily for adult education, as it was these past generations that were most affected by the education policies of the past.

A strong connection exists between the lack of basic education and the increasing statistics of poverty and crime in South Africa. The Learning Co. will attempt to address this situation at the source and in this way will attempt to contribute to social change in South Africa through the medium of literacy.
The Learning Co. will incorporate new technologies and media advances, as these are essential tools in the world market today. At the same time, it will also explore the economic viability of such civic-based programs and investigate alternative funding opportunities, including literacy organizations, technological media corporations, and publishing houses. The incorporation of a wholesale book store will contribute to the financial feasibility of the project and simultaneously its realization.

The provision of a daycare facility aims to bring the young and old together in a cohesive learning environment; where knowledge and learning will be encouraged to pass between generations.

Lastly, the architectural language of the Learning Co. will challenge changing ideas of South African vernacular architecture that are taking form in a climate of political change.

The project is aimed at providing a place where individuals are able to better their circumstance through literacy and learning.

1.2 Project Objectives

1.0 To facilitate Social Change

2.0 Establish a Cultural Connection with Context

3.0 Fuel the Imagination

4.0 Allow for Physical + Psychological Accessability

5.0 Propose a Feasible Financial Possibility
1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.3 Design Principles

MATERIALITY + LOCATION

The choice of location and materials has been made by their perceived accessibility and transparency to the public.

LEARNING SPACES

Literature will be used as a base tool for social upliftment and personal fulfilment.
Learning spaces are versatile and accessible and encourage dialogue between different generations.
Social space of the lekgotla encourages openness and interaction.
Incorporate an interactive and progressive technology infrastructure.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

South Africa has a particularly complex cultural heritage. The Learning Co. explores that diversity and attempts to find common spatial connections in an environment of learning.

FEASIBILITY + REALIZATION

To encourage personal economic enhancement for the individual through learning.
The centre incorporates a retail component to encourage financial feasibility and stability.

AESTHETICS

The building itself will be a tool for learning literature, incorporating visual and graphic stimulus.
1.4 Stakeholders

**LEADERSHIP**
- city of Johannesburg
- local metro council
- department of education

**direct stakeholders**
- students
- lecturers
- david krut publishing
- literacy council of south africa
- school administration

**indirect stakeholders**
- family
- operations
- neighbors
- maintenance

**general stakeholders**
- community leaders
- local council
- reconstruction + development
- environment
- SABS building codes
2.0 RESEARCH COMPONENTS
2.1 Literature + Literacy

Literacy, the art of reading and writing, came to South Africa with the Europeans and was formally consolidated with the establishment of the Dutch settlement on Table Bay in 1652. Europeans did not, however, introduce literature to the region. Before 1652, and long after, the indigenous peoples of South Africa gave expression to their creative and intuitive imagination through the medium of oral tradition. Transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another, oral traditions are means through which nonliterate societies conceptualize, preserve, and transmit their empirical and cosmic realities. Oral traditions are not just rote recitations, they are performances. In this regard, context is as important as content’ (Afolayan: 2004: 87).

The practice of literature, through oral tradition and performance, was and still is an important social and cultural tool of many of the indigenous people of South Africa. In addition to this, however, it is also the multitude of foreign and imported traditions that have made South Africa such a rich cultural nation. It is these seemingly opposing influences that the Learning Co. intends to harness to create an architectural language uniquely South African.

The Learning Co. intends to explore ways in which contemporary forms of learning can be intertwined with traditional literary practices, primarily oral in nature, through the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems. In this way the Centre will provide a middle ground where current literature practices can co-exist with traditional wisdom. In this way culturally rich local practices will be maintained and enhanced while allowing the opportunity to compete globally.
## 2.3 Precedents

### 2.3.1 City Lit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>CITY LITERARY INSTITUTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Covent Garden, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>Allies + Morrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Engineer</td>
<td>Ramboll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>$13 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Capacity</td>
<td>approx. 20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City Lit is an adult education facility situated in Covent Garden, a vibrant commercial district of London. The school caters for approx. 20,000 students and offers more than 2700 education courses.

Accommodation includes 56 teaching rooms, including dance studios, a learning resource centre, rehearsal rooms and seminar rooms. Common + social spaces are primarily situated on the ground floor with direct access to the street level. Pause spaces are scattered throughout the school to encourage social interaction + create a dynamic educational environment.

The programmatic + quantitative parameters of the school were of particular interest to the Learning Co. Catering solely for adult education City Lit provides a model for the dynamic and versatile spaces required for a more mature student body.

City Lit offers a diverse range of courses and qualifications including: business training, visual arts, languages, dance, deaf education, computing + speech therapy among many others.
The aim of the Kirkintilloch Adult Learning Facility was to create an open learning environment which would attract potential students from all sectors of society. An aspect equally as important in the design of the Learning Co.

The centre provides traditional type learning spaces while also incorporating a resource centre, and places particular importance on media technology. Here adults who were unable to receive further education, or who wish to return to their studies are able to do so in an accessible environment.

The open reception arrangement allows the visitor to be easily orientated, and intentionally avoids intimidation or confusion. From this vantage the position of private learning spaces and public gathering spaces can be easily identified.

The building also demonstrates a connection to the exterior. The learning spaces aligning the river adjacent to the centre, project out of the building in a series of triangular bays. In this way learning spaces have been created almost among the trees. Through physical + visual connectivity provided in circulation + communal spaces emphasis is placed on the social aspects of learning.

A continuous roof light positioned between the classrooms and main gathering space plots the progress of sunlight through the day.
2.3 Precedents

2.3.3

Project: FREEDOM PARK HERITAGE PRECINCT
Location: Tshwane, South Africa
Architects: Mashabane Rose, GAPP + MMA
Landscape Architect: Newtown Landscape Architects
Completion:
Phase I + II December 2006
Cost:
Size:
Student Capacity:

Freedom Park is a national heritage precinct, situated in Tshwane, the capital city of South Africa. Although it is not an educational building, the primary purpose of Freedom Park, as a civic institution, is to educate + inform the public.

Freedom Park is intended as a centre of knowledge and aims to create a deeper understanding of South Africa and its people through the narration of the country’s pre-colonial, colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid history.

In an attempt to convey an unbiased representation of South Africa’s complex past, extensive research into the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) of South Africa was carried out. These IKS gave the project an authenticity which had a vast reach among many South Africans.

Local culture and customs informed both architectural program and landscape form, to provide a rich + meaningful place to commemorate the heritage of South Africa. This approach influenced the conceptual direction chosen in the design of the Learning Co.

Through the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems, in particular those associated with learning + literature, the Learning Co. sought to achieve an appropriate cultural and contextual response.
2.3 Precedents

2.3.4

Project: CONSTITUTIONAL COURT
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa
Architects: Urban Solutions + OMM Design
Landscape Architect: 
Completion: March 2004
Cost: $ 50 million
Size:
Student Capacity: 

The Constitutional Court of South Africa was designed to reflect the values of the new constitution: Freedom, democracy, equal opportunity, diversity, responsibility, reconciliation and respect.

The building was intended to reflect the openness and transparency called for in the new constitution. It illustrates the intentional agenda of the new government of nation building. By its material form, the building intends to reflect the ideals and ambitions of the new government and stands as a symbol for these principles.

Although the Learning Co. has a very different functional purpose, it does have similar cultural and civic intentions, including public appeal and accessibility; finding appropriate form and expression in a new social climate; and bridging public perception.

The site selected for the Constitutional Court was historically significant. In direct opposition to its original function as a fortress, the new court building was designed to mend the surrounding fractured urban grid and to become incorporated into the city creating an accessible public precinct.

The location of the Learning Co. adjacent to the court building intends to build upon the creation of a public, civic precinct and to extend the gesture of reconciliation and healing initiated by the Constitutional Court.

Light on a Hill, landmark of the Constitutional Court and Peoples’ Square. (www.mashabanerose.co.za)
3.0 CONTEXT
3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Social Context

The site chosen for the Learning Co. is situated in Braamfontein, an inner city neighborhood of Johannesburg, just north of the Central Business District. Although not the capital of South Africa, Johannesburg developed into the country’s economic centre after the discovery of gold in the 1830’s.

The Zulu name for Johannesburg is eGoli, meaning ‘City of Gold’, which beyond its historical significance is a perception of promise and opportunity held by many South Africans. Johannesburg and its perceived promise of wealth and opportunity attracts many migrant laborers from rural areas. In most cases, however, the city does not live up to expectations resulting in low employment rates, high crime and overcrowding.

In South Africa the conscious search and struggle for the formation of a unified national identity has taken two distinct directions. ‘The first of these is that of resistance, defiance, struggle and triumph; a narrative of loss, heroism and celebration, in which national identity is packaged in terms of the resilience, resistance, vitality and creativity of apartheid’s opponents. The second is a narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation, a necessarily publicly unscripted message of recuperation, around which the myth of post-apartheid as a unitary force is formed.’ (Bremner:2007:95)

Through these strategies the new civic spaces of post-apartheid South Africa form a particular narrative of the South African journey and in this way the buildings begin to tell a select story of the formation of and the resulting character of the ‘New South Africa’. The Learning Co. intends to contribute to the ideals of the ‘New South Africa’ by creating spaces which are socially responsible and culturally accessible to all South Africans.
3.2 Historical Context

- **1487**: Bartolomeu Dias
- **1652**: Jan van Riebeeck
- **1750**: Establishment of a trading station
- **1800**: French invasion of the Netherlands
- **1820**: 4000 British Settlers
- **1834**: Great Trek
- **1854**: Boers established in the Transvaal
- **1886**: Discovery of gold in Transvaal
- **1889**: Anglo-Boer War
- **1902**: Boer defeat
- **1910**: Union of South Africa
- **1948**: National Party
- **1961**: Republic of South Africa
- **1976**: Soweto Uprising
- **1990**: First General Elections
- **1994**: Mandela released
- **1995**: First General Elections
- **1999**: Anglo-Boer War
- **2000**: **INDEPENDENCE**

**Timeline**

- **1600**: Earliest inhabitants
- **1650**: Dutch
- **1700**: British
- **1800**: British
- **1850**: British
- **1900**: British
- **1950**: British
- **2000**: **INDEPENDENCE**
3.3 Demographics 2009

TOTAL POPULATION
- 52% Female
- 48% Male

TOTAL POPULATION
49.32 million

25 450 000

23 870 000

POPULATION GROWTH RATE
1.07%

The population Growth Rate has decreased from 1.38% in 2001.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

POPULATION ETHNICITY
- African: 39 140 000 (79.3%)
- Coloured: 4 430 000 (9.0%)
- Indian + Asian: 1 280 000 (2.6%)
- White: 4 470 000 (9.1%)

POPULATION AGE
- Younger than 15 years: 31.4%
- Between 15-60 years: 61.6%
- Older than 60 years: 7.5%
3.0 CONTEXT

3.3 Demographics 2009

MORTALITY RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

45.7 per 1000

POPULATION MIGRATION

Migration is an important demographic process in shaping the age structure and distribution of the provincial population. An definite concern not reflected in the statistics is the migration of skilled + educated individuals and the migration of unskilled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migration Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outmigration</td>
<td>249 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>269 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net migration</td>
<td>137 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POPULATION + HIV

Total No. of people living with HIV: 5 210 000 million

One fifth of South African women in their reproductive ages are HIV+

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV+ Population</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIV+ Population of 15 to 49 years: 413 000

Estimated no. of new HIV infections 2009: 413 000

LITERACY STATISTICS - 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Education</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9 - Less than Full</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Grade 7</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(www.ukzn.ac.za)
3.4 Geographical Context

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THE LEARNING Co.
literacy centre, Johannesburg, South Africa
3.0 CONTEXT

3.4 Geographical Context
3.4 Site Location

The site lies in the inner city neighborhood of Braamfontein, a historically significant area of Johannesburg which has recently undergone a period of significant renewal.

Braamfontein is an important cultural district of the inner city; it incorporates the Civic Theatre, The University of the Witwatersrand, The National School of the Arts, and the recent addition of the Constitutional Court Precinct.

The position of Braamfontein in relation to greater Johannesburg is significant as it acts as a buffer between three diversely Johannesburg inner city neighborhoods. As mentioned above the city centre lies directly south of Braamfontein; with Hillbrow to the east, notorious for its inner city slums and high-crime rate; and Parktown to the north, a historically and materially rich remnant of colonialism. In this way and illustrated by the following figure ground, Braamfontein provides an important connection between these disparate neighborhoods.

Site Advantages:
Braamfontein is an established cultural district.
Adjacent to the Constitutional Court - Symbol of South African democracy.
Addition to + an extension of a cultural precinct.
Close proximity to the Johannesburg CBD + perceived as the promised land.
Adjacent to Hillbrow, an area of need.
FIGURE GROUND indicating the intersection of three vastly different neighborhoods.
3.6 Site Location

Illustration of the inner city neighbourhoods of Johannesburg. Braamfontein is situated just east of the M1 motorway and west of the telecommunications tower.
3.6 Site Analysis - Cultural Precinct

**Cultural Precinct**

1. The Learning Co
2. Section 4 + 5 prisons (historical significance)
3. New Constitutional Court
4. Constitutional Square
5. Woman’s Jail (museum)
6. Old Fort
7. Proposed Mixed Use Development
8. Old Queen Victoria Hospital
9. Covered Parking

**Analysis of Cultural Precinct**

- Site
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Commercial Development
- Important link to the Jo’burg CBD
- Western boundary towards Hillbrow
- Internal site view south

**Important Link to the Jo'burg CBD**

- University of the Witwatersrand
- Commercial Development
- Important link to the Jo'burg CBD

**Western Boundary Towards Hillbrow**
4.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
### 4.1 Quantitative Parameters

#### 1.0 LEARNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Room</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>20 per room</td>
<td>10 800</td>
<td>45 sq. ft per student for specialized learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Room</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indaba Room</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Lobby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td>10 sq.ft per seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause Areas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 200</td>
<td>To function as a lobby for the auditorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5 student</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3 750</td>
<td>Recommended Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Room (Media Center)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>30 stations</td>
<td>1 500</td>
<td>Adjacent to the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop + Crafts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Room - Young Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1 800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>20 050</strong></td>
<td></td>
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#### 2.0 STAFF SPACES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no.</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor’s Lounge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>SABS 400 Building Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Kitchen + Pantry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1 700</strong></td>
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### SUPPORT SPACES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>approx. 8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>Please refer to detailed program 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>approx. 15</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Please refer to detailed program 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>5% of Indoor Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical + Electrical Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>SABS 400 Building Codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Restrooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11750</td>
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### COMMERCIAL SPACES

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<tr>
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<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publisher's Bookstore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2850</td>
<td>Please refer to detailed program 4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Cafe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2850</td>
<td>Please refer to detailed program 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### ADMINISTRATION

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception + Waiting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Accessible + transparent to the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Workspace</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloak Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing + Copy Station</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Room</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorís Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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### 4.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.2 SPECIAL NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy Rooms</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Incl. storage space for therapy equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Therapist Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Private counseling rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Room + Waiting Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>Discrete location</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.3 STUDENT LUNCHROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dining Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Based on 60% usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Area</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Cooked snacks only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4 PUBLISHERS BOOKSTORE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td></td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>Visible + accessible to passing traffic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Large storage space required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store Room + Cloak</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2 WORD CAFE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>qty</th>
<th>net sq. ft</th>
<th>no. student</th>
<th>total sq. ft</th>
<th>qualitative characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Seating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>Vibrant cafe with internal + external seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Seating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Approx. 1.5 sq.ft per seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation + Serving Area</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Coffee + light meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Office + Store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Organizational Parameters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>COMMERCIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>classroom 900 ft²</td>
<td>administration 2050 ft²</td>
<td>publisher’s bookstore 6800 ft²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading 900 ft²</td>
<td>lounge 600 ft²</td>
<td>word cafe 2500 ft²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indaba 400 ft²</td>
<td>staff kitchen 300 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading 900 ft²</td>
<td>student dining 2500 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indaba 400 ft²</td>
<td>special needs 1500 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom 900 ft²</td>
<td>Indaba 400 ft²</td>
<td>word cafe 2500 ft²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conversation 150 ft²</td>
<td>library 3759 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workshop 2000 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>story room 1800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>apple room 1500 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mech + elec 2500 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms 800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms 800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms 800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms 800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restrooms 800 ft²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.0 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

4.3 Qualitative Parameters

- ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
- REGIONAL MATERIALITY
- EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
4.0 Project Development

4.3 Qualitative Parameters

- Light Access
- Multi-Functional Places
- Transparency + Accessibility
5.0 CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT
As mentioned previously, oral traditions are a vital social and historical tool for many indigenous people of South Africa. ‘In symbolic and idiomatic languages, they explore the fundamental issues of life, such as love and hostility; courage and resourcefulness; beauty and ugliness; justice and retribution; order and chaos; and the triumph of good over evil’ (Afolayan: 2004:90).

Although ‘European literary culture from the mid-seventeenth century provided an apparently more efficient alternation, orality has remained a dominant element of indigenous culture.’ (Afolayan: 2004:214) Oral traditions and story telling are still practiced in South Africa today despite the presence of strong colonial influences which have introduced their own cultural traditions and technologies.

Addressing the current social climate of nation building and reconciliation, I intend to use the Learning Co. to merge these seemingly opposing influences and create a vernacular or a language appropriate for the social complexities that exist in South Africa.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) can be broadly defined as the knowledge that an indigenous (local) community accumulates over generations of living in a particular environment. Through the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, including local traditions, materials and form, the Learning Co. hopes to achieve learning spaces that resonate with and are accessible to its users.

By using familiar cultural elements and local materiality that have a strong cultural connection to the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of South Africa, I intend to make the building both physically and psychologically accessible.
5.2 Indigenous Form

A central element to these indigenous oral traditions and performances is the Lekgotla. The Lekgotla is a circular space, formed around a tree, it the social centre of the traditional African village, where public meetings are held and community decisions are arrived at by consensus. The tree has an important spiritual connection with ancestors, it provides place and shade.

‘A village is usually established around a central tree, which serves as a social and political anchor for the group. The site of this tree is where the chief kindles his first fire, which is then used to light the fire of the other members of the camp. This site also serves as the meeting place for the men and the dancing space for the group.’ (Afolayan: 2004: 138).

I have taken the element of the Lekgotla and placed it at the centre of the Learning Co. encircling an existing tree. In this way the Lekgotla will form the social hub of the learning centre and will encourage interaction and learning among its users. The form of the Lekgotla is intended to form a physical and psychological connection with its users and to span the cultural distances that exists in South Africa.

Images of traditional outdoor learning spaces and village form, identifying the importance of the tree in making place.
5.0 CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

5.3 Indigenous Form - Gathering + Performance

GATHERING SPACE

PERFORMANCE SPACE
5.0 CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

5.3 Site Development

01 Retain Existing Trees

02 Focal Corner

03 Linear Edge

04 Entrance Element

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

VEHICULAR PERSPECTIVE

PARALLEL LEARNING

IMPORTANT COMMUNITY CONNECTION
6.0 DESIGN DRAWINGS
1  bookshop
2  public terrace
3  administration
4  indaba
5  office
6  restrooms
7  library
8  office + store
9  garden store
10  learning garden
11  lekgotla below
12  special needs
13  speech therapy
14  social worker office
15  pause area
16  classroom
VIEW OF LEKGOTLA
EXTERNAL COURTYARD
7.0 CONCLUSION
7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Proposed

The Learning Co. is intended as a place where individuals can improve their lives through literacy.

As a European import, literacy is not a practise that has a strong connection to many of the indigenous people of South Africa, but is often perceived as something foreign and unknown. Literature, however is a dynamic and passionate practice of the indigenous people of South Africa, and is a strong cultural and social element.

By centering the Learning Co. around the form of the Lekgotla, the literacy centre intends to create a connection with its user and to overcome preconceptions about learning. The familiarity of form will encourage the user to feel at ease in a space previously perceived as foreign and unfamiliar.

The Lekgotla is intended to be a space of learning as well as gathering, where planned performances and spontaneous gatherings can occur. It is also intended to encourage interaction and learning between students.

The use of local materials, of brick and stone, coupled with imported technologies of glass and concrete, add an additional layer of cohesiveness and corroborate to the material form of the structure.

The Learning Co. intends to create a dynamic place for learning. Incorporating the ideals of the new constitution: democracy, equal opportunity, responsibility, reconciliation, diversity, freedom and respect - the Learning Co. intends to create a physically and psychologically accessible environment of learning for all South Africans.
8.1 References


Warlick, David F. Redefining Literacy 2.0. 2nd ed. Columbus: Linworth, 2009.
8.0 RESOURCES

8.2 Internet References

British Broadcasting Corporation (www.bbc.com)
Statistics South Africa (statssa.gov.za)
Mashabane Rose Architects (www.mashabanerosearchitects.co.za)
South Africa Information (www.southafrica.info)
Noero Wolff Architects (www.noerowolffarchitect.co.za)
Archidose (www.archidose.org)
Constitutional Court of South Africa (www.constitutionalcourt.org.za)
Newtown Landscape Architects (www.newla.co.za)
Allies and Morrison (www.alliesandmorrison.co.uk)
Richard Murphy Architects (www.richardmurphyarchitects.com)
World Intellectual Property Organization (www.wipo.int)