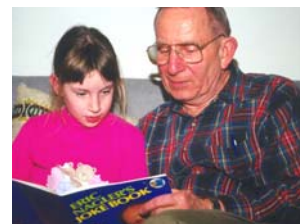




Learning Cities Annotated Bibliography

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Vancouver Learning City Initiative

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Introduction:

Project Overview:

This report complements an associated background paper, Learning Cities: Lessons Learned, which was commissioned by the Vancouver Learning City Working Group as part of its efforts to foster a consultative approach to its initial developmental process. The two documents will provide a global and conceptual context for the discussion of a Vancouver Learning City Initiative. Specifically, they will augment the Lifelong Learning Strategy for the City of Vancouver, as Vancouverites explore the challenges and benefits of a “made-in Vancouver” Learning City informed by leading-edge theory, and global good practice.

Selection Criteria:

A number of objective criteria were used in the production of this bibliography during the period of November 2005 to January 2006. Key search terms included: learning cities, learning towns, learning regions and the generic term, learning communities. However, the review was limited to communities of place and the growing body of literature focussed on place-based analysis. This work does, however, include some documents relevant to learning communities that have been produced by authors examining other initiatives in which learning will play a central role in achieving their objectives, such as vibrant cities, creative cities and inclusive cities.

With one exception, the literature cited is in the English language. Most of the literature was produced in the period 1996 to 2005, although a number of earlier, seminal documents are reviewed to illustrate the evolution of thought and action in this field. For example, two books found in the community development section uncover the roots of the current learning-based community development approach in learning communities – specifically Laidlaw’s analysis of the Antigonish Movement and Kretzmann and McKnight’s work on asset-based community development.

It is important to emphasize that the selection of documents annotated is not exhaustive. Considerably more information is available from, for example, the two nations that are generating most of the learning community/city activities in the English language literature: the Australians and the British. There was an important subjective criterion that influenced the choice of documents, namely the author’s perception of the usefulness of the material as he was engaged in a variety of roles related to learning-based community development over the past seven years, including as community developer, action researcher, government policy advisor and university instructor.

Sources: Geographic and Inter-Disciplinary

The growth of learning communities (learning towns, cities and regions) has been rapid since 1996. In that year, the concept of lifelong learning was placed on the international agenda with both the celebration of 1996 as the European Year of Lifelong Learning, as well as the publication of two seminal documents - the OECD and UNESCO Lifelong Learning Reports – that firmly linked the concept to the social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges that are not only most clearly evident but also most amenable to immediate action at the civic or community level.

Relevant literature has been generated in three geographic regions:

- The European Union's and the OECD's Lifelong Learning/Learning City-Region Initiatives.
- The United Kingdom, with its pioneering national government initiatives and the development of a Learning Communities Network, which fosters learning city development and analysis.
- The State of Victoria's Learning Towns Network and the development of both an Australian Learning Communities Network and the creation of the Melbourne-based PASCAL Observatory on Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions.

The confluence of new developments in the mid-1990s has informed the conceptual framework of learning communities and cities and inspired related literature. For example:

- brain scan technology has advanced neuroscience/brain development research and learning theory;
- social capital theory and its connection to human capital has informed an emerging new political economy;
- lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social, cultural goal has influenced thought and practice in fields from town planning to learning-based community development.

Hence, the growth of inter-disciplinary learning community literature is anticipated as it is driven by the new findings and insights of current and future research and development.

This bibliography has focused on the literature of learning communities of place. The use of the term learning communities appears to vary geographically. That is, American literature using the term usually alludes to academic or educational institutional learning communities, electronic or virtual learning communities and communities of practice rather than communities of place or learning neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities or regions. For example, a Google search conducted on January 21, 2006 returned among the first one hundred references: 42% related to academic learning communities; 38% related to electronic or virtual learning communities; 14% related to communities of practice and 6% related to learning towns or cities (four of British and two of Australian origin).

A bibliography by Donovan Plumb and Robert McGray, 2006, Learning Communities – Adult Learning: A Report on the State of the Field, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, contains almost 70 pages of references to literature on all types of learning communities identified in the period of the mid-1970s until the present.

Any errors or omissions and all views expressed in this work are those of the author.

All websites cited contained relevant documents as of February 4, 2006.

Sections/Themes:

1. Assessment and Evaluation:

DfEE, 1998, Practice, Progress and Value – Learning Communities: Assessing the Value They Add, UK Learning City Network and Department for Education and Employment, London.

This toolkit was prepared for the United Kingdom Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Learning City Network (later renamed the Learning Communities Network) by a two person team; Sue Cara from the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education and Professor Stuart Ransom, University of Birmingham. This guide was developed for practitioners engaged, or planning to engage, in learning city development. Based on research findings, three strands of development were identified as critical success factors, namely learning how to:

- build and maintain partnerships across all community sectors;
- foster participation of all in public policy but particularly those previously excluded;
- assess performance.

Each strand is discussed under three levels of learning – from getting organized through to reflecting on what has been achieved and measuring gains. The guide contains useful information on all stages of learning city development, including:

- getting started and who to involve;
- workable strategies and ideas – and possible pitfalls;
- examples of effective practice;
- examination of ways of assessing progress and value;
- suggestions of ways of comparing and benchmarking achievements.

Sheed, J. and C. Bottrell, 2001, Learning Towns Network Program Evaluation, Latrobe University, Bendigo.

This is an evaluation report commissioned by the Victorian State government one year after it launched its Learning Towns Network Program – nine learning towns of which were initiated by the government in collaboration with civic administrations. The report concludes that in the first phase of learning town development there were three main success factors, namely:

- definition of a clear geographic identity;
- strategies for developing a range of partnerships between key stakeholders that serve to increase participation;
- adequate levels of funding.

A literature review and discussion of key concepts provide a rationale for learning towns. For example, the authors argue that:

The idea of a learning town represents a shift in policy. The shift is from a focus on learning as an individual activity to learning as a social activity. There is also a shift from an emphasis on human capital to recognition of the relationship between human capital and social capital.

Exemplary learning town activities are highlighted throughout the extensive section on the report's findings. The evaluation concludes that the network had immediate impacts but that evidence was chiefly anecdotal and that there was a need for an appropriate performance review system. Key recommendations include:

- longer-term project funding;
- special funding support for strategic planning processes and development of business plans for all projects;
- developmental funding to new learning towns.

State of Victoria, 2005, Measuring Impact: A Project Evaluation Tool, Education Centre, Gippsland and Morrison House of Mt. Evelyn, Adult Community and Community Education Division of the Department of Education and Training, Melbourne.

This tool is based on a framework that demonstrates a learning community project's impact and the associated learning and development that occurs in the community. The framework is developed from the Faris conceptual model of learning communities, focussing on:

- input/output evaluation;
- process evaluation.

The framework is composed of four tiers at which project effectiveness can be measured:

- function – e.g., evaluation of specific project activities, need identification and extent of networking;
- delivery – e.g., examination of participation levels, delivery of formal and informal activities and changes in knowledge and skills;
- lifelong Learning – e.g., includes informal learning, measures of a culture of lifelong learning for individuals, groups and communities;
- community capacity – e.g., project impact on social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions of the community.

This guide includes a table that illustrates how the following three questions can be applied to all four tiers, namely:

- What you need to know?
- What you measure?
- How you measure it?

The toolkit is being field-tested and developed in Mt. Evelyn Learning Town and will subsequently be revised.

Torjman, S. and E. Leviten-Reid, 2004, Learning and Evaluation for Poverty Reduction, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Ottawa.

This paper focuses on the learning and evaluation dimension of a pan-Canadian poverty reduction initiative, Vibrant Communities, co-sponsored by the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. It argues that investment in learning is crucial in a knowledge-based economy if both human development and community wellbeing are to be fostered. Creation of an electronic Pan-Canadian Learning Community has been a central tool in promotion of the initiative.

Wheeler, L., Phillips, I., and K. White, 2005, Hume Global Learning Village Learning Together Strategy: 2004/2008, Evaluation - A Report on Progress to Date, Hume.

Hume City Council, as part of its 2030 vision, is implementing its lifelong learning theme in terms of a Global Learning Village – a multi-tracked strategy to serve all of its multi-cultural citizenry. Hume, population 155,000, has a diverse population with 128 nationalities speaking 101 languages, with 35% of the population being foreign born. The city has woven its learning initiative with its Social Justice Charter (2005) and associated Citizen's Bill of Rights. The Global Learning Village, anchored by a purpose-built community centre and library, is a network of learning organizations that commenced in 2003. Key strategy themes include:

- Inspiring Lifelong Learning in Hume;
- Starting Out – Starting School;
- Moving On – School to Further Education and Employment;
- Continuing On – Learning in Community Settings;
- Language Literacy and Numeracy Skills;
- Information Technology Uptake and Virtual Communities;
- Information about Learning Opportunities;
- A Village Network.

The evaluation framework emphasises two components – the role of partnerships and of participation. This report provides reflective thought about the challenge of evaluating a dynamic, complex learning city. It emphasizes analysis of two early initiatives – planning the annual Learning Festival and Taking IT out to the Community. A third, immediate source of data has been provided by the active distributed library services – membership and circulation of which has increased about 25% in each of the first two years of the learning city project. Overall, the evaluation initiative will be linked to a lifelong learning framework informed by the British Columbian experience. It will also draw upon the reflective thought of the project's leaders, including identification of success factors such as the importance of:

- weaving lifelong learning into the work of local communities;
- the support of the Hume Council and its senior administration and the prestigious, appointed Project Advisory Board;
- building on the commitment and passion of project staff and community volunteers.

2. Case Studies:

Australia:

Adult Learning Australia, 2000, Learning Around Town: Learning Communities in Australia, ALA community Leaders Program, Canberra.

This booklet was produced to coincide with the inaugural Learning City: From Concept to Reality Conference of the Australian Adult Learning Association. It was produced as a contribution to the Australian discussion of learning communities – defined as “a learning city, town or community regardless of its size or location.” Its target is interested local councillors, community organizations and policy makers. The document commences with a brief history of the learning community concept – emphasizing its OECD roots. It then describes three broad goals of existing learning communities – the practical achievement of lifelong learning; the promotion of social cohesion; and the building of effective community partnerships. Specific outcomes are then identified, including:

- provision of learning opportunities for all;
- encouragement of economic revival;
- provision of learning information, advice and guidance;
- creation of community forums for dialogue about local issues.

The text then provides analysis of a number of pioneering learning communities, including:

- Albury-Wodonga – Australia’s first learning cities on the Victoria/New South Wales border;
- Ballarat, Victoria;
- Mursion Lakes and Salisbury West, South Australia;
- Launceston – Tasmania.

The final section identifies 10 ideas for planning and checking progress related to the crucial issue of building effective learning community partnerships.

Australian National Training Authority, 2000, Turning on Learning Communities: Report, Canberra.

A team of adult and community educators from South Australia won a competitive bid to investigate the links between lifelong learning and learning communities in order to develop a framework that could be used by community-based organizations to develop a “vibrant learning community.” To accomplish this task, a literature review was conducted which identified key inter-related themes around learning communities, community development and lifelong learning. Next, the project focused on learning community developmental processes in the Salisbury West region of the City of Salisbury, South Australia – processes that resulted in three key findings, namely that:

- local community involvement leads to ownership and commitment to a learning community;
- networks and participation are fundamental to the development of a learning community;
- learning is integral and adds value to every step in the development of a learning community.

It is noteworthy that the community consultation found “high importance attached to both the development of basic skills (for example literacy and numeracy) and the development of a perception that learning has a purpose with positive outcomes both for individuals and the wider community.” A host of insights was gained through the consultation, including:

- that word-of-mouth is the most powerful tool for getting people reconnected to learning;
- that community champions are needed to promote the concept of lifelong learning;
- that the work of a learning community is also about community development, health promotion and developing a strong and effectively functioning community;
- that lifelong learning would have no impact if it were seen as a one-off project without the long-term commitment to support and funding.”

The importance of acknowledging and building upon positive current initiatives was underscored, as was recognition of systemic barriers to learning community development, including:

- short-term or “drive-by” funding;
- lack of access to information technologies;
- inadequate recruitment and training of volunteers;
- lack of adult career and learning counselling;
- inadequate information and training opportunities for small business.

An action strategy based on the Salisbury West experience included:

- creating a key organization to drive, coordinate and mentor the process of developing a learning community;
- developing processes that enable individuals and organizations to develop partnerships and networks;
- enabling larger organizations to adopt an advocacy role for reforms;
- involving business groups and employers;

- developing a local marketing strategy in which community leaders and mentors are prominent;
- creating an evaluation process that recognizes strengths, celebrates progress and is seen as an integral part of building the learning community;
- recognizing that the community's diversity leads to a diversity of outcomes.

The final section deals with development of a three stage learning community framework that: (1) satisfies a specific need (issue); (2) draws upon community resources; and (3) works towards an active a learning community. In each of these three stages, there are four aspects: need identification: planning; action; and reflection/evaluation – in which the learning of both project coordinators and community members is seen as an integral part.

Bendigo City, 2000, Learning City Bendigo Project: Strategic Plan, October 2000, Bendigo.

This document focuses on Bendigo's role as one of the first nine communities selected as pilot projects in the Victoria State Learning Towns Network. It has initiated a novel structure based on the Quality Circle model. Each of four learning circles – Enterprise; Media; Education; and Government – will be self-managed teams setting their own goals and measuring their performance against overall project objectives. The objectives and tasks of all four teams are listed and ways to create a culture of learning are identified.

Deeth, J., 2001, Strategic Cultural Plan for Launceston, Launceston City Council, Launceston.

The Launceston Learning City vision proclaims: "Launceston, our City of learning and innovation, open to the world." This report, the result of a community process that identified the city's rich cultural resources, includes 16 clusters of recommendations such as acknowledging aboriginal cultures, harnessing the community's knowledge, extending the cultural economy and celebrating local artists. The definition of culture used is "all things we do that connect us with a place" and the report places the cultural strategy within the Learning City's vision.

Kimberley, H., 2003, Urban Disadvantage and Learning Communities: Integrating Report, OVAL Research Working Paper, 03-21, The Australian Centre for Organizational, Vocational and Adult Learning, Sydney.

This report is part of a series that assesses the efficacy of Australian VET (Vocational Education and Training) colleges in incorporating their roles in broader community capacity-building approaches – specifically learning communities. For purposes of this study, a learning community:

should be an active partnership with mutual interdependency that involves the active participation of all participants and that uses learning as its focus. In addition, a learning community should be acting to satisfy a specific need, be drawing on available resources in the community and be working towards an active learning community.

Case studies of colleges working in disadvantaged urban communities in four different states were undertaken. Key findings include:

- VET colleges normally are not playing proactive roles in creating or developing learning communities;
- VET colleges focus solely on vocational outcomes and this inhibits their ability to contribute to broader learning outcomes.

There is a significant tension between the centralized policy frameworks within which VET has come to operate and the focus on regional economic development and community building that is more often the focal point of learning communities:

- the building of trust is a long-term project when many colleges operate within systems with short-term policies and funding;
- there is a significant tension between the “commercial imperatives of colleges and the need for community involvement that provides no measurable, short-term return.”

Some positive shifts in Australian policy and practice were identified, including:

- there are whole-of-government or joined-up government strategies emerging;
- there is a recognition that “vocational learning is broader than skills training specific to the needs of particular industries and that it includes fundamental capacities of literacy, numeracy, socialisation, communications, flexibility and learning transfer acquired from a range of formal and informal locations.”

Shire of Melton, 2005, Community Learning Plan: 2005-2007, Community Learning Board, Melton.

In 2004, the Milton Shire Council restructured its Education Board as a Community Learning Board to express its commitment to lifelong learning “by fostering a community culture of learning at all age levels and providing high quality learning opportunities for all residents of the Shire.” Seven goals and related strategies have been identified for a two-year action plan. The goals are:

- to encourage a positive and proactive environment where education and learning opportunities are valued and linked to the improvement of the municipality and its residents;
- to investigate the educational and learning needs of the Melton Shire community and coordinate a planned approach to meet those needs;
- to support local institutions and providers of education and training to deliver high quality education;
- to meet the learning needs of all groups in the community;
- to improve community access to information technology training and equipment;
- to encourage and facilitate cooperation between learning providers;
- to improve the links between business and industry and vocational training.

The Shire has developed an integrated policy based on five guiding principles that are elements of the Shire’s Community Plan. For example, one principle is “sustainability – all strategies must be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable for the long-term benefit of the Shire.”

Shire of Yarra Ranges, 2003, Yarra Ranges Learning: Report of the Learning Towns Advisory Group, Lilydale.

This report summarizes the processes and content of the Learning Shire Development Initiative. It describes the establishment of a Learning Towns Advisory Group; the development of project goals, scope and process; the results of a national and an international literature search; creation of detailed strategies, performance indicators and implementation options; and the production of a project website.

Shire of Yarra Ranges, 2003, Yarra Ranges Learning: A Learning Communities Strategy, Development and Partnering Department, Lilydale.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges comprises over 40 communities east of Melbourne. The Shire's Vision 2020 Community Plan included "Developing the Shire as a Living and Learning Community" as one of its six key themes. In 2001, a Learning Towns Advisory Group (LTAG) was created to advise the Shire Council on strategies to create a learning community. In 2002, a series of community and LTAG meetings resulted in this strategy report. The objectives (and related performance indicators) and strategies to achieve the overall goal of increased participation in both individual and community learning are laid out in three themes:

Theme 1: Learning for Individuals

Theme 2: Learning to Create Sustainable Communities

Theme 3: Learning to Create a Sustainable Shire: Promoting a Culture of Learning

A three year implementation plan and an organizational network chart are appended.

Wong, S., 2004, The Practice and Progress of Geelong as a Learning City, RMIT University, Melbourne.

This thesis, written by the initial manager of the Geelong Learning City Project, focuses on the experience as a case study. The author was also informed by her study-visit to five learning cities in Europe and the United Kingdom. The dissertation is an evaluation of the economic and social development of a community that has declared itself a Learning City by identifying key characteristics of a Learning City; potential outcomes; and success indicators. Among the key findings are:

- that it is possible to shift an emphasis on education and training to valuing learning and lifelong learning as a strategy to strengthen a community committed to becoming a learning community;
- that where there is a commitment to a learning city that is understood by local government, it is possible to improve social inclusion and local economic performance;
- that the concept of a learning city provides a "neutral space" which is "non-threatening, non-competitive and belongs to the whole community" and fosters cross-sectoral partnerships that address local issues and build community capacity;
- that participatory initiatives can mobilize the community to challenge systems and become active in decision-making processes that empower citizenship and shift the focus from institutions to networks and groups.

Canada and Europe:

Belanger, P. and B. Paetsch, 2004, Montreal, Ville Apprenante, Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche et de Developpement sur l'Education Permanente (CIRDEP), UQAM, Montreal.

This document surveys learning city models from the United Kingdom, European and Australian experience. It argues that Montreal is already a city of education, knowledge and science en route to becoming a learning city. Emphasis is given to the future development of a metropolitan information/counselling service and associated adult learning awareness campaigns such as an Adult Learner's Week.

Clutterbuck, P., C. Freiler and M. Novick, 2005, Meeting the Civic Challenges of Social Inclusion: Cross-Canada Findings and Priorities for Action, Inclusive Cities Canada, Prepared for the National Symposium on Building a New Canada: Meeting the Civic Challenges of Social Inclusion, November 27-28, 2005, Gatineau, <http://www.inclusivecities.ca>

In March 2005, local reports were released in six Canadian cities including Vancouver/North Vancouver related to assessments of the state of social inclusion in those cities and needed policy and program changes. This report analyzes and synthesizes the local findings. It frames resultant issues as four civic challenges for governments and communities:

- make democracy work;
- affirm urban diversity;
- reduce disparities in living conditions;
- invest in social infrastructure.

Challenges and recommendations for action are included and a final report will be released on the Inclusive Cities Canada website early in 2006 following feedback on this draft. It is a timely contribution to the discussion of issues and priorities of a Vancouver Learning City.

Faris, R., 1998, Learning Communities: Cities, Towns and Villages Preparing for a 21st Century Knowledge-based Economy, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria. <http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>

This study entailed a visit to the United Kingdom in 1998 when the British National Learning cities/Communities Initiative was commencing. It assesses a variety of case studies from United Kingdom cities and towns that exhibit exemplary partnerships and participation, as well as performance and national education and training targets. It also identifies a wide array of social-economic challenges in the United Kingdom that appear to have been best met at the local level such as economic development, social inclusion, poverty, youth alienation and appropriate use of learning technologies.

Holden, M. and S. Connelly, 2004, The Learning City: Urban Sustainability Education and Building toward WUF Legacy, A Discussion Paper in Preparation for the World Urban Forum 2006, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby.

This report focuses on the role that innovative post-secondary institutions in Canada, Europe and the United States can play to promote urban sustainability. The paper defines a learning city as “a city that approaches sustainable development as an ongoing educational process.” It argues that

Although social learning needs to occur throughout the city, the urban institution best suited for reinvigorating the learning city is the school. With this in mind, we focus particularly on the role of universities and colleges in the learning city.

The report presents profiles from 16 post-secondary institutions and assesses their contribution from at least one of the following four dimensions: partnering, serving, designing and teaching. The paper concludes with discussion of research questions around development by four post-secondary partners involved in visioning and planning a new Centre for Urban Sustainable Environments at the proposed Great Northern Way Campus. Non-traditional approaches such as community service-learning will be part of building community-institutional collaboration. While reference to the term “learning city” is found in various parts of the paper, no literature related to the concept or practice is found in the references or in case studies of environmental institutions in learning cities such as Glasgow.

Kenneally, A., 2003, Public Libraries in Learning Communities, State Library of Victoria and Glenelg Regional Library, Hamilton.

Kenneally, a librarian of the Glenelg Library Corporation, engaged in a 2003 study tour of learning communities in British Columbia and the United Kingdom with a special focus on the role of participating libraries. She commences with an analysis of library involvement in two learning community partnerships in British Columbia – Mt. Currie and Whistler, and Lillooet. She then assesses roles of libraries in the context of the larger, more complex United Kingdom Learning Cities: Birmingham; Blackburn with Darwen; London Boroughs such as Southwark and Tower Hamlets; Norwich; Nottingham; Edinburgh; and Glasgow. She observes that while libraries are “at the table” in British Columbia and Glasgow Learning Communities, often they were not, except for expanded use of ICT and, in some cities, learning centre development. However, she noted transformation of library functions in several United Kingdom centres (Blackburn, Norwich and Tower Hamlets) where “learning in its broadest sense was at the centre of their operations” and new community outreach initiatives had been successful.

Selman, G., 1977, A Chronology of Adult Education in British Columbia, No. 14, Occasional Papers in Continuing Education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

This document is a useful chronology of formal and non-formal learning initiatives in British Columbia’s urban and rural centres from 1833 to 1976. Specific references to pioneering learning initiatives in Vancouver are found throughout the work.

United Kingdom and Europe:

Bateson, G., 2003, Moving the Mountain: A Whole-City Approach to Basic Skills Development, Birmingham Core Skills Partnership, Birmingham.

Bateson, then Manager of the Birmingham Core Skills Partnership, wrote this report – an amalgamation of various presentations he made during a visit to Nakusp and Vancouver in British Columbia in 2003. It is chiefly an overview of the history and accomplishments of the Partnership. He recounts how Birmingham had to quickly move from a smoke-stack to a knowledge-based city. Educational leaders in the city realized that their community was facing a major basic skills gap – with a constant drag-down effect on any future socio-economic development. Fortunately, by 1998, the national government introduced a National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy that provided support and funding for a wide array of initiatives aimed at literacy learning from childhood to adulthood. Central to the success of the Birmingham Learning City approach was commitment of key civic heads of service, supported by the City Council, to take a different approach:

- that took a 10 to 20 year view; with a 5 to 7 year initial plan;
- that committed them to work more in partnership, to secure a number of common purpose outcomes;
- that would take a strategic, whole-system approach;
- that would aim to impact on large numbers;
- that was necessary whatever money was available – i.e., the scale of the money would simply enable more or less to be done each year;
- that would build on whatever was known – i.e., stripping out the elements that worked best, rearranging these into a model that had a best fit universal application; putting this in place everywhere.

An independent legal entity – owned by all the partners but not under the control of any one of them was created with a vision of Birmingham “as a self-sustaining literate, numerate and IT competent community.” Success in scaling up delivery was immediate, for example, there was a 40 fold increase in a Books for Babies Initiative (with public libraries playing a major role in this initiative); a 25% increase in parents involved in school curriculum activities; an increase from 30% to 70% of eleven year olds leaving primary schools with good skill levels; and reducing the number of adults with poor basic skills by 25% by 2005 and by 50% by 2010.

DfEE, 1998b, Learning Towns, Learning Cities, United Kingdom Department for Education and Employment, London.

This is a survey of 19 pioneering United Kingdom learning towns and cities – all of which were at early developmental stages. Analysis indicated at least three common concerns, namely:

- economic growth;
- social cohesion;
- personal fulfilment.

Two distinctive strategies were apparent. One emphasized early development of a strategic framework, while the other focussed on joint projects. Similarly, the organizational structures have tended to be either partnerships involving local governments or initiatives independent of local government. Early problems included:

- lack of employer involvement;
- lack of school involvement;
- lack of funding for infrastructure;
- lack of interest on the part of a particular partner;
- initiatives too closely associated with one partner;
- difficulties devising strategies to involve the whole community.

The report indicated that while additional government funding was being sought, the largest source of resources was from local learning partners.

Espoo, 2002, The Learning City Project: A Report on the Procedure of the Learning City Project in Espoo, Espoo.

Espoo, a pioneering Finnish learning city, commenced its development in 1998 and has subsequently been active in the Finnish Learning City Network (comprised of 14 of the largest cities), as well as in several international networks. This report – based on the Espoo experience – reviews the process of developing a learning city, including the role of the Espoo Civic Administration. A learning city agenda is highlighted, including the city as a learning organization, and evaluation as a tool of development. The Appendix includes several pages of key websites, and “The Learning City in a Nutshell” emphasizes that “the city creates preconditions for learning” and “the whole city is a learning environment.”

Longworth, N., 2002, Learning Cities for a Learning Century: Citizens and Sectors – Stakeholders in the Lifelong Learning Community, Napier University, Scotland.

Longworth, a leader of the British Lifelong Learning and Learning Community Movement, reviews perceptions of lifelong learning over the past 30 years. He focuses on the work of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI) that has produced substantial documents related to the characteristics of a learning society and a Charter for Learning Cities, and the European Commission’s TELS (Towards a European Learning Society) Project that surveyed 80 European municipalities from 14 countries and analyzed their performance and progress towards learning cities, towns or regions. He concludes that the concept of lifelong learning will most often be implemented at local and regional levels as learning communities.

McNulty, D., 2005, Dreams, Dialogues and Desires: Building a Learning Community in Blackburn with Darwin, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester.

This is a case study of developing a learning community in Blackburn with Darwen, a town of 135,000 with a significant South Asian population, from 1998 to 2003. Among the most successful initiatives have been:

- an Asian Heritage Program that not only serves the ethnic communities but also builds bridges between all groups (e.g., since 2000, Muslim cultural events have been predominantly aimed at non-Muslims);
- a Community Credit Framework, in concert with the Manchester Open College Federation, as a way of recognizing and validating the learning of, for instance, volunteer workers;
- an annual Learning Festival in which over 80 community groups participate;
- an initiation of Neighbourhood Learning Planning that is an action research approach that emphasizes the learning process rather than immediate learning outcomes.

This is a story engagingly recounted by the project's original director and is replete with the insights, reflective thought and sometimes delightfully heretical educational views of the author.

Wong, S., 2002, Learning Cities: Building 21st Century Communities through Lifelong Learning: A Report on the Travelling Scholarship awarded by the Department of Employment, Training and Tertiary Education of the Victorian Government, Geelong.

Wong, the initial developer of the Geelong Learning City, engaged in a 2002 study-visit to six European and United Kingdom learning cities, including Blackburn with Darwen, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Great Yarmouth, Norwich and Rotterdam. She concluded that in learning cities "there seems to be a widespread acceptance and understanding of the concept of lifelong learning and its value to individuals, communities and countries." She argues that whether a learning city is driven by a local government or a community organization does not make a critical difference. The development of partnerships and their continued involvement is a critical success factor. However, she does observe that civic-based learning cities appear to more successfully access other government funds. She also contrasts importance of a formal declaration of a city as a learning city in Australia with the lesser importance in Europe. Wong also notes some value added outcomes of all of the learning cities she visited, including:

- long-term outlooks – e.g., 10 year horizons are often found;
- adult basic skills (literacy) has been rediscovered as a priority;
- creative work with refugees and asylum seekers is an emerging target group;
- significant ICT initiatives, often involving libraries or neighbourhood centres;
- use of "learning champions" who promote learning in enterprises and communities;
- alignment with other major initiatives such as healthy cities or local career and guidance centres;
- successful engagement of "non-learners, especially women, young people, migrants and some underemployed and unemployed groups."

Her report concludes with examples of innovative strategies that various learning cities employ to engage previously excluded groups.

Yarnit, M., 2006, Building Local Initiatives for Learning, Skills and Employment: Testbed Learning Communities Reviewed, United Kingdom Department for Education and Skills and NIACE, Leicester.

This book reviews the development of the learning communities created as part of the 2003 United Kingdom Skills Strategy. The first section places the testbed initiatives in a policy context and notes similarities and differences with other local initiatives. It concludes by identifying a number of emerging service delivery models. The second section focuses on ways the learning communities are important in developing sustainable community futures and related success factors. Section three is composed of eight case studies that illustrate the importance of locally designed responses to learning disadvantage. Section four provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the impact of the testbeds. The final section suggests resources for further information on learning communities.

Yarnit, M., 2000, Towns, Cities and Regions in the Learning Age: A Survey of Learning Communities, United Kingdom Department for Education and Employment, London.

This is a wide-ranging and very insightful survey by the initial developer of the Sheffield Learning City. Yarnit analyzes the policies and practices of 10 learning cities in Europe and the United Kingdom. He also notes the explosive growth in the United Kingdom of over 100 local Learning Partnerships and of about 40 Regional Learning and Skills Councils in England. His major conclusion is that:

there is underway a process of transformation affecting education and training, with a new system emerging alongside the old. The old or mainstream system reflects the learning needs of previous decades, whilst the new ... is inventing solutions for rapidly evolving learning needs.

Yarnit then argues that the key tasks of learning community partnerships are to:

- help bring about an integration of the two or at least create a permeable membrane between them;
- develop new forms of governance which reflect new learning needs and new types of learners.

Yarnit concludes, based on his survey, that there are four main types of learning community partnerships:

- for regions, mainly business driven, typified by strategies to promote innovation in industrial clusters and sectors;
- for towns, cities and counties, driven by the search for a new role or identity in a time of rapid change, characterised at best by a comprehensive and overarching strategy for regeneration;
- for neighbourhoods, using learning in all three senses (formal, informal and reflexive) to reverse decline and to promote active citizenship through new forms of community management;
- for education and training providers and users, creating local Learning Partnerships to promote collaboration, shared use of resources and to widen and deepen participation in learning.

Based on learning community experience, he identifies good practices for neighbourhood renewal and provides several case studies in each of the following six theme areas:

- Family Learning;
- Basic Skills (Literacy and Numeracy);
- Engaging the Community: Skills for Citizenship;
- Employment: Learning how to Overcome the Jobs Mismatch;
- Learning Centre Networks;
- Sustainable Schools and Communities.

Finally, he offers “top 10 tips: a checklist” drawn from the case studies and the initial DfEE learning cities guide – important points for consideration in the development of learning communities.

3. Civic Literacy:

Jacoby, B. and Associates, 1996, Service-Learning in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

This book contains an excellent collection of articles about the theory and practice of service-learning (both community and international) in post-secondary institutions in the United States. Service-Learning – the application of classroom learning in the community – is a form of experiential learning that emphasizes:

- reflective thinking on the part of students;
- reciprocity among student providers, their educational institutions and those served;
- collaboration of educational institutions and the not-for-profit organizations with which they wish to partner – e.g., civic governments, libraries, museums, health and social service agencies.

This book provides a useful review of the principles, curriculum design, faculty training, provision and evaluation of service-learning. Many examples of good practice are provided. This book has informed practitioners in a number of British Columbia’s learning communities that have successfully used service-learning for both in-school and out-of-school youth and adults.

Milner, H., 2002, Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work, University Press of New England, Hanover, NH.

Milner is a Canadian academic who has studied social democracy in Sweden – and lessons to be learned by analyzing how a relatively small nation (population 9 million – equivalent to that of Ontario) is constantly among the leaders in international surveys of initiatives in such fields as adult literacy, special education, housing, health, environment and civic engagement.

While this book focuses on civic literacy – the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate competent citizenship – it quickly highlights the role of the adult education component of the Swedish Lifelong Learning System. For example, he writes approvingly of the Swedish adult study circles in which almost one-third of a million adults participate. Study circle subjects range from cultural/artistic topics to informed discussion of national referenda about issues such as membership in the European monetary union or national use of nuclear power. The author, comparing civic engagement in Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, concludes that a population's degree of civic literacy is the single best predictor of its level of political participation. His insights and recommendations are particularly pertinent as Vancouver and other Canadian cities face stark challenges of increasing citizen engagement.

Veeman, N., 2004, Adult Learning in Canada and Sweden: A Comparative Study of Four Sites, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

The author compares the comprehensive adult education system of Sweden in which literacy is a priority with Canada's piecemeal approach to literacy and adult education. Diverse literacy provision (public education/workplace/non-formal community) at the municipal level in Sweden is contrasted with the Canadian approach that emphasizes "public awareness campaigns and an extensive policy network rather than increased learning opportunities." The Swedish model of community level provision by local adult education associations is augmented by extensive use of adult study circles (1/3 million participants in a nation of 9 million); adult/family residential education (folk high schools); and a worker study leave system in which literacy and Swedish for new Swedes are priorities – a comprehensive approach which the learning city model would enable.

4. Community Development:

Faris, R. and W. Peterson, 2000, Learning-Based Community Development: Lessons Learned for British Columbia, Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers, Victoria, <http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>.

This report was aimed at development of policies and practices that would be the framework for a Provincial Learning Communities Initiative within the then Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers. All of the five key recommendations for government consideration included in the report are based on the research and analysis contained within the document. It draws upon surveys, interviews, and literature searches related to:

- a review of the experiences of BC communities committed to developing their own learning community initiatives;
- an investigation of leading-edge theory, concepts and practice related to learning-based community development and learning communities in other jurisdictions of Canada and abroad;
- an analysis of learning-based community development and learning communities.

Six major purposes for learning-based community development and a related process model are included in the text.

Kretzmann, J. and J. McKnight, 1993, Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets, The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston.

This book is the classic presentation of the asset-based approach to community development – the foundation of learning-based community development that has informed development of British Columbia's learning communities. It provides pioneering thinking on fostering community capacity building whether it be that of individuals, associations or institutions. The approach also serves as a bridge for community economic development – a field that in Canada, despite being historically rooted in the adult education movement, has until recently drifted into technical/organizational models. This text is comprehensive, in that the assets that it identifies include:

- youth, seniors, people with disabilities, welfare recipients and local artists;
- voluntary associations, faith communities and cultural organizations;
- parks boards, libraries, schools, community colleges, police and hospitals;
- local businesses, cooperatives, credit unions and community development loan funds.

The model leads to mobilization of every sector of a community, including respectful, facilitating collaboration of all levels of government. Dozens of examples of practice are found throughout this book. Reflection upon the multitude of assets in Vancouver lead one to conclude that given a shared vision and a practical strategic action plan a world-class learning city is assured.

Laidlaw, A., 1961, The Campus and the Community: The Global Impact of the Antigonish Movement, Harvest House, Montreal.

This is a very readable historic review of the Canadian antecedent of the learning community concept – the Antigonish Movement. The author focuses on the role of the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier and its adult educators who used adult education as a means of bringing social, economic and spiritual renewal to their region. They used the new technology of their day – the radio – to build a network of listening and discussion groups among local farmers, fishers and miners. They infused learning in the people's local economic development initiatives as they built cooperatives (e.g., housing and marketing coops, and credit unions) that enabled them to become “masters of their own destiny.” They also created a global perspective that, to this day, is expressed in the learning-based community development work of the Coady International Institute.

Martin, J. and R. Faris, 2004, The Likelihood of Learning Communities: A Canadian-Australian Perspective, Paper presented at the 2004 ACSANZ Conference, Macquarie University, 23-26 September, Sydney.

This comparative study views learning communities as a form of learning-based community development in which local people from every community sector act together to enhance the social, economic, cultural and environmental conditions of their community. The paper explores the history of two local governments developing learning communities: the Resort Municipality of Whistler (and its Learning Partnership with the Mt Currie First Nation) in British Columbia and the Shire of Yarra Ranges in Victoria State. It summarizes several policy implications for local government and concludes that:

If governments at all levels are going to take advantage of the latest research about community resiliency, then the importance of connectedness and a sense of place must be reflected in their community development policies. Clearly, a learning town/community strategy is one which enables community leaders to learn about and understand the pressures from without and within for change. It enables them to interact with these changes in positive ways which empower individuals and communities making them healthier, productive places where people have a greater sense of wellbeing, lead enriched lives and make a contribution to their neighbourhood, nation and the world at large. There can be no finer purpose for governments at all levels to pursue the development of learning communities.

Torjman, S., E. Leviten-Reid, C. Camp and A. Makhoul, 2001, From Information to Application: How Communities Learn?, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Ottawa.

This document commences with a 27 page analysis of the literature on community learning. It specifically identifies the learning interaction between social and human capital and the emerging movement of learning-based community development and learning communities. Three general themes were identified from the literature, namely: the significant difference between information and knowledge; the learning process must take in the needs of learners or users of information if it is to be applied effectively; and the conversion of information into knowledge is a two-way process. The 90 page annotated bibliography and the report are found at <http://www.caledoninst.org>

5. Conceptual Framework:

Bradford, N., 2005, Place-Based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada, Research Report F/51 Family Network, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa.

This is the latest of a series by Bradford, a Canadian Policy Research Networks' Research Associate on Cities and Communities, that draws upon international, as well as pan-Canadian, experience in the evolution of cities as viable third levels of government – "the places where today's major public policy challenges are being played out." Bradford observes that other nations have progressed much further by adopting four key elements of a place-based framework:

- tapping into local knowledge;
- balancing a mix of economic and social policies which combine place-based programs such as health and education;
- governing through collaboration with civil society and the economy;
- recognizing the emerging roles of local governments.

Bradford distinguishes among the strategies of the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union as follows:

- the United Kingdom's government shifted from targeted interventions (1997-2000) to mainstreaming in 2001 by incorporating the main lessons and innovations into broader public policies – central government as driver;

- the United States initiated its flagship Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community Program in 1993 and mobilized community leadership and planning, all the while attempting to align all federal civic agencies with local empowerment coalitions in cities and communities – central government as facilitator:
- the European Union has designed multi-level funding and programs to promote three thematic principles: cohesion – especially in socio-economically distressed areas; social partnerships; and networking both horizontally across cities and vertically from the local level to the national and supra-national levels – central government as catalyst.

The paper then discusses possible future Canadian directions, including development of an urban policy lens and development of action-oriented tri-level agreements such as existing Urban Development Agreements – of which Vancouver is a participant.

Bradford concludes that:

Canadian policy communities are now well-positioned for a concerted round of policy learning and practical experimentation. They can learn from elsewhere, drawing on the experiences of other jurisdictions and they can build from within, reflecting on several promising collaborations already underway in Canadian cities.

Duke, C., 2004, Learning Communities, Signposts from International Experience, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester.

This review analyzes some international and United Kingdom learning community initiatives. It questions the current United Kingdom emphasis on individual learning outcomes and raises the challenge of wider community development and capacity building approaches. Twelve observations comprise the executive summary – which is directed to those engaged in the expanding United Kingdom learning community testbed initiatives – 28 of which are currently experimenting with various learning community models. A useful summary of website and print material on learning communities is found at the conclusion of the document.

Faris, R., 2004, Lifelong Learning, Social Capital and Place Management in Learning Communities and Regions: a Rubik's Cube or a Kaleidoscope?, Observatory on Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions, <http://www.obs-pascal.com>.

This is a hot topic paper produced for the newly-created Observatory on Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions located in Melbourne, Australia. It provides a Canadian perspective on the development of the concepts of lifelong learning and social capital and their application in British Columbia's learning communities. The concepts of place management or whole-of-government approach, as well as that of social capital analysis, are discussed and their applicability to learning communities and regions analyzed in the context of a world of complexity and constant change. A shorter version of this paper is found in a book edited by Chris Duke et al.

Faris, R., 2001, The Way Forward: Building a Learning Nation Community by Community, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, Toronto, <http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>.

This paper identifies key elements of a pan-Canadian learning community strategy. One of the few conceptual frameworks developed in the field of learning communities – it sets such initiatives in the context of an emerging knowledge-based economy and society. This framework is of an inter-disciplinary nature that initially draws on 40 years of UNESCO research on lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal. It then draws upon the confluence of research and practice-based insights from the following fields:

- ecological science;
- human development, including health determinants and neuroscience studies;
- political economy, including human and social capital studies;
- communitarian studies, including community service-learning.

The framework supports a comprehensive model that mobilizes learning resources from all five community sectors – civic, economic, education, public and voluntary/community. It also recognizes the important role of learning technologies as a tool to build networks within and among learning communities. Success determinants initially identified in United Kingdom learning city development – learning to build partnerships, foster participation and assess performance – are adopted. Learning outcomes and targets pioneered in United Kingdom initiatives and drawn from literature of healthy communities, social and human capital, sustainability and community economic development are integrated in the evaluation component. The appendix reviews recent international, as well as Canadian policy developments, and concludes with related project initiatives in six Canadian jurisdictions.

Gruenewald, D., 2003, “The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place,” Educational Researcher, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp.3-12.

The author identifies a convergence of two traditions, critical pedagogy and place-based education into a synthesis that he terms “a critical pedagogy of place.” He argues that consideration must be given to the notion of “eco-justice” the aim of which is:

to develop an ethic of social and ecological justice where issues of race, class, gender, language, politics and economics must be worked out in terms of people’s relationship to their total environments, human and non-human.

His view is that place-base education is a pedagogy for student engagement in community life and that:

Place-based educators do not dismiss the importance of content and skills but argue that the study of places can help increase student engagement and understanding through multidisciplinary, experiential and intergenerational learning that is not only relevant but potentially contributes to the wellbeing of community life.

He concludes that:

critical, place-based pedagogies can help to reframe and ground today's tiresome debates over standards in the lived experience of people and the actual social and ecological contexts of our lives.

Quality service-learning methodology, found in many learning communities, is among the means of expressing a "place-based pedagogy."

Kilpatrick, S., M. Barrett and T. Jones, 2003, Defining Learning Communities, Discussion Paper D1/2003, Centre for Research and Learning of Regional Australia, University of Tasmania, Launceston.

This paper acknowledges the confused and confusing use of the term learning communities in the literature. It notes that usage appears to vary in different regions of the world with greater emphasis on communities of place in Europe and a melding of communities of place and communities of practice in Australia. Many definitions of the term emphasize common geography or common interest while others focus on curricular structures in educational settings. Yet other definitions refer to online or virtual communities of the worldwide web. The paper observes that the metaphor of the learning community is:

- influenced by the social constructivist approach to learning that recognizes the central role of interactions with others in the development of values and identity;
- a response to a complex society in which no one person has the knowledge and skills sufficient to address all issues.

The paper concludes with a series of research questions centred on how various communities interact and how they create new knowledge.

Plumb, D., 2005, "The Learning City in a Planet of Slums," 2005 National Conference On-Line Proceedings, Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, University of Western Ontario, London.

The author urges a deeper, more critical analysis of learning in urban contexts – the places where most of humanity lives – in order to foster fuller citizen participation rather than what he sees as a pervasive narrow economic view that dominates much of the literature. He relates that his students at Mount Saint Vincent University have formed a Learning City Halifax Social Action Group to explore how "different urban forms support or inhibit situated lifelong learning processes."

Rae, K. and B. Pearse, 2004, "Value of Place-Based Education in the Urban Setting," Presentation at the Conference on Effective Sustainability Education: What Works? Where Next? Linking Research and Practice, Sydney.

This paper is a case study of a quality place-based education program carried out in Sydney, New South Wales, that focused on creating awareness and changed behaviour in a community with severe water quality challenges. The Watershed was a Sydney Area Environmental Education Centre that engaged with the local voluntary, business, residential and government community in a range of initiatives to improve the local environment. The authors, after initially discussing the experiential basis of place-based education, conclude that it "develops community ownership by being responsive to the local context and results in sustained outcomes."

Stavrou, S., 2003, "Building Learning Regions – An Innovative Concept for Active Employment Policy," Speech to the European Forum for Local Development and Employment, Rhodes.

This presentation by the Deputy Director of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training of the European Union, provides a rationale for the recent interest in the concept of the learning region. Stavrou argues that the concept implies that certain societies are able to innovate because they have the capacity for collective learning – learning from each other and learning with each other – and that this collective learning takes place better in small, more contained social units – such as regions, localities or cities – where people have the opportunities to live and interact and cooperate with each other in an immediate way.

The author identifies distinctive features of learning regions, including:

- the cooperation of the different sectoral partners;
- the flexible definition of region that includes "any geographic area or locality (which can sometimes be quite small) whose inhabitants share common objectives or problems;"
- the facilitation and mediation of cooperative learning – i.e., task-based, interactive and informal learning.

He argues that the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Policy promotes innovative actions "to build communities that achieve a balance between economic and social goals." Further, he calls for "top-down structural change and bottom-up development forming a dialectic through which local and regional development is bolstered." He concludes by citing a range of projects that illustrate the learning region concept, including:

- parts of northern Italy (in particular Emilia-Romagna) in which clustering and cooperative competition are created;
- the German "Learning Region Chemnitz" in support of small enterprises;
- the Austrian "Learning Pyramid" model operating at company, inter-company and regional levels around Graz;
- the "Building Learning Communities" program in northern Spain aimed at disadvantaged youth.

Wheeler, L., 2004, Negotiating the Agendas: Developing an Operational Framework through the Exploration of Learning Network Models and Practices, RMIT University, Melbourne.

This thesis was written by the Manager of the Victorian Flexible Learning Networks – LearnLinks – of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University – a leading distance education provider in Australia. The dissertation is a product of an international study-visit to learning communities in British Columbia and the United Kingdom, as well as almost a decade of provision of innovative learning network provision in Australia - chiefly the Victorian Learning Towns, as well as metropolitan Melbourne. It develops an operational framework for a learning network project and key factors for long-term sustainability. It is a significant contribution to the emerging field of community informatics and an understanding of the crucial role of clear network goal setting and the organizational and political context in which the network operates. Her discussion of the synthesis of community informatics and learning communities (British Columbia's models are noted with approval) is particularly enlightening.

6. Developmental Health Dimension:

Keating, D. and C. Hertzman, 1999, Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics, The Guilford Press, New York.

This book contains 18 interdisciplinary articles on topics including:

- links between socioeconomic status, academic achievement and health;
- impact of early life experience upon brain and behavioural development;
- the effects of school and community learning environments on intellectual growth and human behaviour.

The important challenge of both creating a learning society and of developing the capacity of communities to foster “creative organization of everyday social practices” is emphasized. An article on “The Community as a Participative Learning Environment” set in five Montreal neighbourhoods and a nearby village relates the experience of the first five years of an early learning project based on community empowerment and development processes in which experiential learning of project and community members was emphasized – an important lesson for all learning communities.

7. Economic Dimension:

General:

Duke, C., M. Osborne and B. Wilson, 2005, Rebalancing the Social and Economic: Learning, Partnership and Place, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester.

This is a collection of ten articles, eight of which – in fuller versions – are found on the website of the PASCAL Observatory on Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions. The Observatory is a consortium of RMIT University, Australia; the University of Stirling, Scotland; the State Government of Victoria, Australia; the Scottish Executive; and the Kent County Council, United Kingdom. Authors from Australia, Canada, Finland, South Africa, and the United Kingdom explore different aspects of learning communities of place (from towns to regions) in the knowledge-based economy and society of their countries. The Canadian article emphasizes the development of the lifelong learning concept in Canada and British Columbia and concludes with reference to the Victoria Learning City Initiative. The book's central theme challenges the dichotomy of classical economic theory that ignores the interaction of the social and the economic – especially in an emerging knowledge-based economy in which the synergy of human and social capital is recognized by such bodies as the OECD and the World Bank. A summary weaves new economic thinking – including social capital theory – and lifelong learning into a call for the “long-term investment” in sustainable development. See <http://www.obs-pascal.com/hottopics.php> for eight of the longer, original texts that appear as hot topics written in 2005/06.

Florida, R., 2002, The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life, Perseus Books Group, New York.

Florida provides a stimulating view of communities of place as he argues that a new social class – a creative class of persons with “the ability to create meaningful new forms” – is emerging at the very time that the United States government and the private sector “has been cutting back investments in creativity – in education, in research, in arts and culture – while pouring billions into low-return or no-return public projects like sports stadiums.” He advises to keep your eye on countries and the regions within them that seek to attract all sorts of people and nurture creativity: that is now the key element of global competition, more than flows of goods and services or capital. Regions like Toronto and Vancouver already have concentrations of immigrants and bohemians that surpass all United States regions.

OECD, 2001, Cities and Regions in the New Learning Economy, OECD, Paris.

This publication assesses the contribution of learning cities and regions to the new learning economy. The study analyses the relationships between various forms of individual and organisational learning and economic performance in five different European learning regions and cities. An especially important finding is that “social capital – in terms of social networks and conventions and norms – affects both individual and organisational learning.” Ten policy principles for creating and sustaining learning cities and regions directed to regional or urban policy makers conclude the paper.

Environmental:

Natrass, B. and M. Altomare, 2001, The Natural Step for Business: Wealth, Ecology and the Evolutionary Corporation, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island.

The Natural Step is an international consulting, research and educational organization rooted in Swedish ecological thought and learning organization experience. The Natural Step is a conceptual framework that “helps to accelerate the learning required to achieve economic, ecological and social sustainability.” Four case studies illuminate the principles and practice of the Natural Step, including:

- IKEA;
- Scandic Hotels;
- Interface Carpets;
- Collins Pine Company.

The Learning Community of Whistler has adopted the Natural Step process, and the Resort Municipality and the hotel industry are among the community’s organizations that have made substantial progress in reducing waste and creating environmental awareness.

Social Capital:

Putnam, R., and L. Feldstein, 2003, Better Together: Restoring the American Community, Simon and Schuster, New York.

This work follows upon Putnam’s classic book, *Bowling Alone*. It contains 12 case studies of how social capital has been built in both large and small communities across the United States. It provides examples of how disparate organizations such as libraries and public schools; small businesses and farmers; trade unions and corporations; faith communities; and city councils can all provide leadership in building the stock of social capital and improving their community’s life.

The chapter on “Portland: A Positive Epidemic of Civic Engagement” is particularly relevant to those pondering the development of a learning city. Over 30 years ago, community activism in Portland was energized with creation of a civic Office of Neighbourhood Associations, a body that provides technical training and expertise to members of some 90 associations. As is so often the case, non-formal learning – not formal credentialized learning – has been especially important to the growth of civic movements in cities like Portland.

Putnam, R., 2000, Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, Simon and Schuster, New York.

This is a modern classic in the field of social capital theory and practice. The author argues that over a century ago, Americans faced the same challenges as today – the erosion of interpersonal trust, networking and shared values. Then, the development of a wide range of voluntary associations rebuilt the social capital and enabled almost a century of social development. Putnam asserts that social bonds are the most powerful predictors of life satisfaction and urges, in particular, that increased civic engagement be fostered to restore social capital. He notes that – controlling for social-economic class – communities with less social capital have, for example;

- lower educational performance;
- more teen pregnancy;
- more prenatal mortality and low infant birth weight;
- more child suicide;
- more crime.

The author concludes with a future action agenda to restore social capital, including:

- reformation of the education system by such means as creating smaller schools or schools within schools and initiating community service-learning;
- creation of family-friendly and community congenial workplaces;
- creative urban planning to encourage casual socializing with friends and neighbours;
- mobilization of faith communities to foster social capital via increased social and community activism;
- promotion of increased citizen participation in art and cultural activities;
- reformation of the political system to increase citizen engagement and trust in the democratic process.

The above agenda, in principle, is that of many learning cities, and is worthy of consideration in Vancouver.

8. Environmental Dimension:

Allen, W., M. Kilvington and C. Horn, 2002, Using Participatory and Learning-Based Approaches for Environmental Management to Help Achieve Constructive Behaviour Change, Prepared for the Ministry of Environment by Landcare Research, Wellington.

This report is based on a literature review, as well as Landcare Research experience with participatory learning. It commences with a review of current approaches to environmental policy making with a view towards improving motivation, information flows and collaborative learning. Then social science frameworks for behavioural change are summarised and related to both policy and practice, with a focus on modern collaborative learning theory. Specific concepts related to policy and capacity building – i.e., social capital and empowering people and communities, are discussed and then key aspects of managing a participatory process are analysed. Finally, means of building group capacity for environmental change are discussed. Main findings include:

- the need to foster shared understanding of individual viewpoints and group participation;
- complementary approaches are required to promote action, based on educational initiatives;
- change is a developmental process that takes time;
- it is important to give attention to both task and process;
- transformational change requires group cultural change that spreads to others.

Capra, F., 2002, The Hidden Connections: Integrating the Biological, Cognitive and Social Dimensions of Life into a Science of Sustainability, Doubleday, New York.

This book expands upon Capra's application of the principles of complexity theory on living organisms found in his earlier work, *The Web of Life* (see below). He provokes thought about how "cognition is the very process of life" and how "continual structural changes that are characteristic of all living systems, are the basic phenomena underlying the process of learning." He also argues that "the aliveness of an organization – its flexibility, creative potential and learning capability – resides in its informal communities of practice" and fosters organizational learning. He concludes by asserting that "ecological literacy" is essential for ecological sustainability. More information on the theory and practice of ecological literacy is available from the Centre for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley: www.ecoliteracy.org.

Capra, F., 1996, The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems, Doubleday, New York.

This book is a synthesis of recent scientific thought, including complexity and chaos theory, and explanations of organisms, social systems and ecosystems. He challenges older notions of cognitive science and argues that "information does not create ideas; ideas create information. Ideas are integrating patterns that derive not from information but from experience." He argues for "ecological literacy" that would enable people to understand and apply the principles of ecological communities to create and sustain human communities. Some key principles of sustainable human communities that he identifies include:

- interdependence or the interconnection of networks of relationships he calls the "web of life;"
- recycling systems – e.g., community waste;
- partnership or co-evolution and cooperation;
- flexibility of an ever-fluctuating network;
- diversity or different relationships and perspectives to shared problems.

Roseland, M., 2005, Toward Sustainable Communities: Resources for Citizens and Their Governments, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC.

This is the third edition of a classic text on sustainable development. It contains conceptual insights around the notion of community capital and provides practical advice, examples and case studies of good town and city planning, including Vancouver. The earlier edition of this book contained an extensive appendix of useful resources. The resources section of this book is now available and regularly updated on the website of the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at SFU at: www.sfu.ca/cscd/publications/tsc/TSC_index.htm.

9. Ethical and Spiritual Dimension:

Etzioni, A., 1994, The Spirit of Community: The Reinvention of American Society, Simon and Schuster, New York.

This book is a classic document of the communitarian movement – launched in the United States by Etzioni and a host of academics and community activists who see American society as a community of communities – dedicated to nurturing families, fostering moral education in schools (rejecting racial and gender discrimination and violence, and treating others with love and respect), and fostering honest, truly democratic government. The book provides strong arguments for balancing individual rights with associated social responsibilities. It critiques the drift to self-absorption with a challenge to restore the notion of the common good. Subsequent communitarian research has supported introduction of community service-learning in all education systems – a methodology that enables school and post-secondary students to apply their classroom learning to the service of their neighbourhoods and communities – a powerful means of enhancing civic literacy and responsibility among future leaders.

Lerner, M., 2000, Spirit Matters: Global Healing and the Wisdom of the Soul, Hampton Roads Publishing, Charlottesville.

Rabbi Lerner provides a holistic Hebrew spiritual lens to his discussion of the urgent need for what he entitles “Emancipatory Spirituality” – a positive response to what he views as the self-absorbed, narcissistic mentality of a materialistic America. He sees spiritual crises in families and communities and the need for “ecological sanity” that, like the fields of law, education and medicine, call for a spiritual transformation. His reform of education would be based on a new perspective in which “awe and wonder” would be education’s first goals and education would be for:

- love, caring and cooperation;
- tolerance and diversity;
- citizenship.

The building of compassionate communities would be a priority in a transforming world. This book provides thoughtful, coherent support for those who declare a spiritual dimension to community building. In a city like Vancouver, with its diverse faith communities, this text provides much food for thought.

10. Lifelong Learning:

Capey, M., 1999, LEAs and Lifelong Learning, A Report of the Education Management Information Exchange for the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, London.

This report is a result of a survey of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England at the initial stage of development of the British National Lifelong Learning Initiatives. It assesses the Authorities' understanding of the concept of lifelong learning and how they promote it. It explores ways that they work in local partnerships; how their Adult Education and Youth Services promote the concept and arrange for quality assurance. A significant section of the report deals with the emerging "Learning Community, Alliance, City, Town, and County." This document provides insight into the challenges that the formal education system faces as it grapples with the notion of lifelong learning – and how many British Learning Authorities commenced the task.

Dave, R., 1975, "On Learning Strategies for Lifelong Education," Reflections on Lifelong Education and the School, (ed. R. Dave), UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, pp. 43-58.

This article, written by UNESCO's chief proponent of lifelong learning and education in the 1970s, reflects the leading-edge learning theory of his day: self-directed learning; inter-learning; and learning to learn. An associated appendix provides a list of characteristics of lifelong education, including its:

- emphasis on the role of the home and the community on initial learning;
- democratic as opposed to elitist nature;
- adaptive and innovative individual and societal functions;
- role as an organizing principle for all education.

Delors, J., 1996, Learning: the Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, Paris.

This seminal document on lifelong learning was the product of a three-year international consultation process led by Jacques Delors – a notable European leader. The report was released in 1996 – the European Year of Lifelong Learning. The key conceptual framework is based on four pillars:

- learning to be;
- learning to know;
- learning to do;
- learning to live together.

The report emphasized means of reforming current education systems that "tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning" and argued perceptively that "learning to live together" – or citizenship in a diverse world – is the greatest current challenge.

OECD, 1996, Lifelong Learning for All, OECD, Paris.

This report was released during the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning. It concluded the Organization's transition from a concern with the notion of "recurrent education" to that of "lifelong learning." It promoted a comprehensive definition of the concept that would serve several objectives: to foster personal development; to strengthen democratic values; to cultivate community life; to maintain social cohesion; and to promote innovation, productivity and economic growth. It saw the concept as a way to bring about reform of the education system. It identified priorities to make lifelong learning a reality, including:

- improving the foundations of lifelong learning – i.e., early learning and literacy;
- facilitating pathways through lifelong learning and work;
- rethinking the roles and responsibilities of all partners – including governments – in implementing and financing the organization of lifelong learning for all.

Subsequent OECD promotion of learning cities and regions – including European pilot projects in Denmark, England, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden – has inspired development of the concepts among many of its member nations.

Thomas, A., 1991, Beyond Education: A New Perspective on Society's Management of Learning, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Thomas, a Canadian pioneer in lifelong learning theory and practice, clearly distinguishes between education and learning – a distinction that he argues "has been forgotten most of the century." He argues that important learning "constantly takes place in families, work settings, libraries and other organizations outside formal education systems." He argues that Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) will serve as a bridge between the non-formal learning and formal education domains. Despite his detailed argument for a "learning society" he omits discussion of learning-based community development. He does, however, provide an analysis of the importance of fostering membership in group learning environments – chiefly the family and voluntary associations – as opposed to the diminished status/role of a "student" found in so many formal learning institutions. He also stresses the importance of developing a lifelong learning system to maintain literacy skills in an ever-changing society. The challenges that Thomas presents – an expanded role for PLA; the fostering of community membership; and embedding literacy in a learning community – are all worthy of any learning city.

11. Urban Planning:

Candy, J., 2005, Town Planning for Learning Towns, Flinders University, Adelaide.

Candy, a town planner involved in development of a number of Australian learning towns, reviews learning city/town developments around the globe, as well as recent Australian initiatives. She surveyed town planners and learning town organizers in almost 50 Australian learning towns to assess the current and potential roles these professionals play – and the learning they have engaged in as they apply the principles of lifelong learning to their work. She identifies six ways, six s's, in which town planning can support and facilitate learning, namely;

- Supplying Information;
- Sharing Perspectives;
- Stimulating Interest;
- Setting-up Exchanges;
- Supporting Engagement;
- Sustaining Learning.

She concludes that the “most enduring or influential of these is sustaining learning, which concerns how the physical environment can be shaped to reinforce and promote the value and profile of learning in the town.”

This study contributes not only a conceptual framework for viewing learning towns but also an understanding of the function of town planning in the promotion and facilitation of lifelong learning.

Duxbury, N., 2004, Creative Cities: Principles and Practices, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Ottawa, <http://www.cprn.org>.

This document focuses on the municipal cultural planning perspective as it identifies key guiding principles of community-based innovation and four frameworks including the:

- Innovative Knowledge City – e.g., Montreal;
- Niche Economic Development – e.g., St. John’s;
- Local Community/Economic Development with a Cultural Component – e.g. Ottawa;
- Creative City – e.g., Vancouver.

No discussion of the role of cultural planning and activities in learning cities is found in the document. Vancouver is used as an exemplary creative city and its vision statement in its 1993 Report Toward the Creative City is cited:

A city where: the arts are respected for their aesthetic importance and for their ability to foster understanding and communication; cultural diversity is embraced and the expression of creativity in all its forms is encouraged; people can enjoy creative activities in their everyday lives; the arts are viewed as an educational necessity and creativity is recognized as an invaluable skill in the Age of Information; the arts are valued for their important role in the economy, as well as a for their spiritual, intellectual and social benefits.

Jacobs, J., 2005, Dark Age Ahead, Vintage Canada, Toronto.

In her most recent book on cities and civilization, Jane Jacobs argues that the five pillars of our culture – family and community; higher education; the scientific state of mind; taxation and government; and the self-regulation of the learned professions – are in decay. She warns that “any culture that jettisons the values that have given it competence, adaptability, and identity becomes weak and hollow.” She devotes a full chapter to the domination of credentialing as opposed to education in North American universities. The devaluing of non-credit or non-formal learning within the formal education system is symptomatic of the old education paradigm that persists despite the clear challenges of the knowledge-based society in which universities are recognized as important, but not sole, producers and distributors of knowledge and skills. Her critique raises further questions about the implications for communities that receive graduates that have learned little or nothing of the ethical, social, community or economic implications of their professions – or the greatly diminished community service of university extension divisions forced to act as market rather than need-driven agencies. This work clearly identifies challenges for our 21st Century cities, including learning city initiatives.

Jacobs, J., 1992, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Vintage Books, Toronto.

Jacob's classic work critiques the principles and aims that have forged current, orthodox city planning and rebuilding. The first portion is about the social behaviour of people in cities while the second is chiefly about the economic function of cities. She argues that it is a critical error to transfer insights from studies of towns and suburbs into the analysis of cities and that “we need desperately to learn and to apply as much knowledge that is true and useful about cities as fast as possible.”

Jacobs states that a new, unsentimental definition of neighbourhoods is essential and that this new meaning will recognize the need for “rich choice and wide opportunity.” When she looks at neighbourhoods as “organs of self-government,” she posits only three kinds are useful:

- the city as a whole;
- street neighbourhoods;
- districts of large, subcity size, composed of 1000,000 people or more in the case of the largest cities.

Her discussion of street neighbourhoods anticipates aspects of social capital thought as she reviews the self-government function of city streets:

to weave webs of public surveillance and thus protect strangers as well as themselves; to grow networks of small-scale, everyday public life and thus of trust and social control; and to help assimilate children into reasonably responsible and tolerant city life.

Her call for greater horizontality in civic administration at local city levels anticipates more recent place management initiatives in United Kingdom and Australian cities.

She may well approve of the innovative learning city planning advocated by town planner Janet Candy.

Sandercock, L., 2004, "Sustaining Canada's Multicultural Cities: Learning from the Local," Breakfast on the Hill Seminar Series sponsored by Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ottawa.

The author, a member of the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, argues for a new civic and neighbourhood multicultural strategy. She discusses the challenges for a multicultural society in regard to urban planning and policy, urban governance and citizenship. She comments approvingly of "beacons of innovation" in several Canadian cities, including Vancouver (with a population of 51% non-English speaking background). She cites three institutions funded by the City of Vancouver; the Roundhouse Community Centre, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and Little Mountain Neighbourhood Houses – and cites their effective and inclusive anti-racism, community leadership and diversity training programs. She concludes with recommendations for a coherent, multi-level government strategy that strengthens local governments and non-governmental organizations, and a reform of university programs to ensure cross-cultural professional and multicultural citizenship education.

12. Some Useful Websites:

Australia:

Learning Communities Catalyst – <http://www.lcc.edu.au/lcc/go/home/pid>

This site, maintained by the Australian Adult Learning Association, is in the reviewer's opinion, the most outstanding learning community resource on the web. It contains information focused on:

- learning cities – e.g., learning city profiles, experiences, fact sheets, web links and tools for building learning cities;
- research and reports – e.g., Australian Learning Community Network conferences, Learning Community conferences, papers and essays, publications and research, and speeches and presentations;
- policies and guidelines – e.g., local, state, federal and international policies;
- partners and networks – e.g., Australian and overseas learning communities, learning community networks, learning agencies and research centres;
- community profiles;
- practical tools – e.g., related to learning community establishment and structures, stakeholders and collaboration, activities and operation, and evaluation and monitoring;
- fact sheets for practitioners – e.g. background and justification, establishment and structure, stakeholders and collaboration, etc.;
- sharing information on experiences and lessons learned by practitioners involved in learning cities, centres and groups.

Canada:

Lifelong Learning Communities Home Page – <http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris>

This site contains reports and articles written by a consultant who has been engaged in developing, teaching and policy formation related to learning communities since 1998. It also contains documents related to lifelong learning, community service-learning and educational reform. The site links to some key websites in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

St. Albert Continuous Learning Community Society – <http://www.learning.ab.ca/>

This society pioneered learning community development in Alberta and is associated with international initiatives stemming from Europe. No links are provided.

United Kingdom:

Learning Communities Network – <http://www.bgfl.org/services/lcn/home.htm>

This site is sponsored by the United Kingdom Learning Communities Network – comprised of over 30 learning city members in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The site has links to over half a dozen United Kingdom government departments and agencies involved in community and neighbourhood renewal and provides access to several United Kingdom guides and reports produced at earlier stages of learning city development.

Testbed Learning Communities – <http://www.renewal.net/lc/Default.asp>

This website, featuring policy and research aspects of 28 Testbed Learning Community Projects, is sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills. It contains three sections, including:

- the Policy Context, with documents related to an Overview, Solving the Problem, Policy Guidance and Research;
- the Testbeds, with reports on 28 projects;
- other learning communities with documents related to an Overview, Research and Case studies.

Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning (WBL) – <http://www.learningbenefits.net/Index.htm>

The WBL Centre was created by the Department for Education and Skills to investigate the benefits of learning gained over the life course. Its multidisciplinary research explores the social benefits of learning in terms of individual wellbeing, family dynamics and community cohesion. It combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to inform policy, to understand the complex ways learning creates benefits and to provide evidence about the scale of these effects and the returns they represent. Fifteen thought-provoking research reports have been produced since the WBL'S inception, the latest being, Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes.