Learning Cities: Lessons Learned
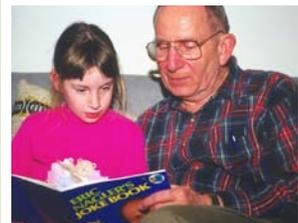
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Prepared by: Ron Faris, Ph. D.
President, Golden Horizon Ventures

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1. Executive Summary:

Learning cities are emerging on every continent. They appear to be a response by communities of place that wish to sustain cherished values, beliefs and the quality of life and environment which make their places special, if not unique. This is at a time when interrelated drivers of change – i.e., globalization, information and communications technologies and the explosion of knowledge, especially in the sciences and technologies – are creating an homogenous, materialistic mass culture that threatens the people's sense of place, history, community and challenges a sustainable environmental, economic and social future.

These three drivers are key elements of an emerging knowledge-based economy and society – the only constant of which is change. Learning – the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values – can only be measured by change whether in new knowledge, skills, behaviour or attitudes. Paradoxically, change in the form of learning appears to be the best response to managing the profound socio-economic change that is transforming whole economies, nations, industries and communities. Learning occurs in every city but the explicit recognition, valuing and investing in individual and social learning in learning cities is a critical difference. Learning is the chief means by which cities can become more vibrant, healthier, safer, more inclusive and more sustainable.

The year 1996 – the European Year of Lifelong Learning – was a watershed in global thought. That year, both the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released their major reports on lifelong learning; and a growing number of European nations launched learning city and regional initiatives. Both reports illuminated the importance of community-based learning and the understanding that learning is embedded in our everyday community settings – the family, the neighbourhood, the school and the workplace. They argued that the foundations of lifelong learning – early learning and the literacy – must be provided to all to enable every person to participate and contribute to their community and society. Notions of the common good, and a balance between individual rights and citizen responsibilities, were to be learned and practiced in the increasingly diverse, complex and dynamic cities where increasing numbers of people are gathering.

What difference does the explicit recognition, celebration and investment of lifelong learning in the policy and practice of five sectors – civic, economic, educational, public and voluntary – of a community make? Predictably, the first years of learning city development in most nations appear to have focused on practical issues of learning how to build a process or structural model relevant to their community and answering specific questions such as: Should their model be civic government-based or non-government organization based? What should their communities' priorities be? How could information technologies be used as a tool to foster learning in their cities? How could their initiatives become sustainable? How could the evaluation of the learning city initiatives become a continuous learning process?

The new millennium has found rapidly increased interest in investigating the differences a learning city can make. Interest in both the macro, as well as the micro-level changes that can occur in learning cities has arisen. For example, the United Kingdom government has supported several seminal guides, reports and initiatives to assess learning community processes and outcomes. <u>A Guide to Assessing Practice and Progress: Learning Communities</u>, field-tested in 1998/99 was followed by an analytical survey of learning cities in 2000, and then by the current learning community test-bed initiative in 28 sites. In Australia, the launch of the Victorian State Learning Towns Program in 2000 was followed a year later by a state-wide evaluation. Evaluation tools and reports have also been developed over the past two years at the local level in Hume city and Mt Evelyn, for instance. Two success determinants of learning cities are emerging, namely the community's ability to learn to build and sustain partnerships within and across all community sectors, and to foster participation of all community members, including the most disadvantaged.

Transformation in learning cities is only possible if the transformative learning of individuals and groups is systematically fostered. A new paradigm that focuses on suffusing learning strategies in the policy, planning and programs of all five community sectors increases the probability of achieving a triple bottom line of sustainable economic, environmental and social conditions. The degree to which organizations within each sector become learning organizations – investing in the learning of all their members and strategically leveraging the organizations' human and social capital is one measure of the transformative power of a learning city.

Case studies from different nations reveal both some common outcomes as well as different areas of emphasis. Pioneering learning city initiatives in the United Kingdom emphasized two objectives to which all learning cities aspire – economic development and social inclusion. They also began to recognize that the reform of the conventional education systems – to ensure greater relevance to the social as well as economic roles that citizens play – can be enhanced by providing a wider context and ambience for needed change. Birmingham, for instance, has developed exemplary basic literacy initiatives to attain significant improvement in both educational achievement and social inclusion in an increasingly multicultural environment. Australian learning cities, initially influenced by the United Kingdom models, emphasized economic and social goals but have increasingly focused on cultural objectives and learning needs of minorities including aboriginals and recent immigrants. Recognition of the importance of environmental concerns and use of information technologies has also evolved in many Australian learning towns.

Recent doctoral research on Australian learning cities has yielded useful insights and findings. These studies have been conducted by practitioners – one is a city planner involved in learning city planning, another was the community developer of an emerging learning city, and the third is a manager of a university learning technology initiative that blends community informatics and learning community theory and practice – who have reflected upon their own practice and have drawn upon the lifelong learning concept and international good practice as basis for analysis.

Action research in British Columbia's rural learning communities has shown significant success in building bridges between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities; increased community economic development; and effective use of community service-learning projects to challenge youth and adults to leave a legacy for their communities as they learn the values and skills of service-leadership. This experience has informed development in Victoria, Canada's first learning city, which has initiated a multi-tracked City youth strategy involving creation of a Youth Council; a citizen apprenticeship model of service-learning; and exploration of strategies to extend learning-based restorative justice in local schools.

Learning occurs in every community but the explicit use of the concept of lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal that informs the analysis, planning and implementation of sectoral and cross-sectoral learning partnerships, networks and collaborative strategies is the essential and distinguishing feature of a learning community.[1]

Based on an assessment of learning cities in other countries, we know that becoming a learning city:

- provides a coherent, integrated and comprehensive approach to organizing and mobilizing existing and future lifelong learning resources necessary for individuals and communities to face the ever-changing challenges of the knowledge-based economy and society of the 21st century;
- fosters early learning and the literacy, including learning how to learn, as the foundations of a lifelong learning strategy;
- makes it easy for all people to learn and to continue learning in a variety of ways;
- places learning at the heart of community capacity building and development;
- celebrates, and inspires enthusiasm for, continuous learning of all;
- commits to a vision and strategy with immediate impacts and long-term consequences;
- enables increased pathways between the formal learning (education) sector and the non-formal (community, not-for-profit and workplace sectors) through active partnerships and networks;
- invests in learning that brings lifelong benefits to both individuals and their communities – i.e., investment in formal education and non-formal learning has been proven to be the best means of combating poverty, increasing overall health, and eliminating social exclusion;[2]
- promotes social inclusion – i.e., those previously marginalized can, through active learning, end dependency relationships and contribute to their communities as well as enrich their own lives;
- uses and builds human and social capital, including the cultural values and knowledge base of aboriginals and recent immigrants;
- uses learning technologies as tools to acquire the full range of learning and literacy for all, to establish intra- and inter-community networks to share common concerns and best practices;
- values what exists and uses existing learning resources but seeks to constantly develop deeper understanding and identify new ways of doing things.

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[1] Candy, J., 2005, Town Planning for Learning Towns, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Flinders University, Adelaide.

[2] Keating, Daniel P. and Clyde Hertzman, 1999, Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics, The Guildford Press, New York.

Vancouver is superbly endowed with the assets necessary for a world-class lifelong learning city, including: a rich multicultural society; excellent formal and non-formal learning providers; a vibrant civil society; a strong financial base; and a splendid cultural and artistic community. Mobilizing the learning resources of all of these sectors in a comprehensive, collaborative and cross-sectoral initiative is an achievable goal.

2. Preface:

This background paper, and the associated <u>Learning Cities Annotated Bibliography</u>, augments a previously published discussion document: <u>Lifelong Learning Strategy for the City of Vancouver</u>. Taken together, it is hoped that they will foster wide discussion and commitment to a Vancouver Learning City Initiative that will be informed by a growing body of literature, current research and good practice – both locally and globally.

There has been approximately a decade of learning city development on almost every continent. However, the most active regions have been those of major OECD nations – particularly the United Kingdom, Australia and countries of Western Europe. Colleagues in the United Kingdom and Australia who have generously shared their expertise, experience and insights have influenced my perspective on lessons learned. Martin Yarnit, a pioneer of the United Kingdom movement, has conducted studies in Europe and the United Kingdom and visited British Columbia as has Geoff Bateson, then Manager of the Birmingham Core Skills Partnership, Birmingham; Professor John Martin, Director of LaTrobe University's Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, Bendigo; Dr. Leone Wheeler, Manager of RMIT University's Learning Networks, Melbourne and learning community researcher/evaluator; Jan Simmons, CEO, Morrison House of Mt Evelyn Learning Town; and Vanessa Little, General Manager, Learning Community, Hume City.

Jim Saleeba, Coordinator of Australia's first learning Cities of Albury-Wodonga, and Dr. Shanti Wong, CEO, Brinbank/Melton Local Learning and Employment Network, Shire of Melton, have also shared their learning and reflection about not only their own communities but also their understanding of other countries during their international study-visits.

There are many similarities between Australia and Canada – economically, geographically, historically, demographically and culturally. Both are middle powers that have been dependent upon natural resources from their hinterlands and the economic cycles of international trade; both have large land masses with sparse rural populations and dominating urban centres strung along, in one case a coastline and in another an international boundary. Historically both developed as a result of British colonial imperialism with its racial and religious beliefs, as well as the gradual evolution to democratic, independent nationhood with federal political systems. Both nations, since the Second World War, have become increasingly multicultural, especially in their burgeoning urban centres, and both countries are grappling with a unique aboriginal worldview that challenges that of the dominant society. At the same time, aboriginal people are making legitimate demands for social, economic and political justice and inclusion. Hence, many of the insights of Australian practitioners seem to have a special relevance to our Canadian experience and challenges.

All views in the following text are those of the author – as are any errors or omissions. All websites were cited were in effect as of April 6, 2006.

3. Introduction:

A. Vancouver Learning City Vignettes: 2020

It is 8:45 a.m. on a Tuesday morning and Tom and Jenny Lee have just dropped their two-and-a-half year old daughter off at the childcare/learning centre at Jenny's office complex in downtown Vancouver (one of many such downtown centres resulting from the 13-year Learning City "Quality Early Learning Partnership" strategy). Tom, who normally goes on to his work as an assistant City Planner, is heading off to an East Vancouver Neighbourhood House for the initial meeting of a cross-disciplinary learning team which is working with local youth and seniors to design and build Vancouver's 67th Neighbourhood Learning Centre (Vancouver's 23 neighbourhoods average almost three such centres – this one is co-sponsored by the branch library, the local community school and the local inter-faith community). Tom's contribution is the community service-learning part of his individual learning plan that will lead toward his accreditation as a community mentor and eventually a certified Learning City Planner.

Jenny's learning plan includes community service-learning coaching of single parent mothers who are seeking entry-level employment in Jenny's firm, as well as blended (face-to-face and distance learning) college courses in management supervision that are part of her learning pathway. Jenny and Tom, like almost 70% of the Vancouver's workforce, are participating in an individual learning plan scheme that was launched 14 years before when it was estimated by the Vancouver Learning City Initiative that less than 10% of the workforce had individual learning plans.

It has been a busy week in Vancouver. Mayor David Singh, Aldermen Wendy Chow and Mohammed Lazreq, and Musqeam Band Chief Mary Campbell have just returned from New York where they accepted the UNESCO award to Vancouver as the world's most socially inclusive city. Today, the 2010 Olympic Heritage Foundation reported that its 10-year project grant to the Vancouver Learning Partnership for its "Citizen Apprenticeship" program had resulted in over a quarter of a million school students engaging in community service-learning with civic, school, library, social and health agency and community partners.

Tomorrow the popular annual Vancouver Learning Festival commences its 14th year with the introduction of the Vancouver multi-cultural choirs' "Ode to Learning." This is a special celebration as Stats Canada has just reported that Vancouver's Learning City Literacy Strategy had reduced the number of citizens with low literacy rates in Vancouver by 60% over the past decade thanks largely to the comprehensive Learning City Literacy Initiative commenced in 2007 that resulted by 2020 in:

- *100% of all infants and children participating in age appropriate pre-school play and learning activities;*
- *over 50% of all recent immigrant families having been involved in a unique family/workplace literacy strategy;*
- *100% of all grade 6 students being able to demonstrate intermediate computer skills;*
- *100% of all students having participated in at least one elementary and one secondary school civic literacy (community service-learning) experience;*

- *70% of all aboriginal people being able to demonstrate fundamental cultural literacy (i.e., knowledge of language, dance, song, and elder stories);*
- *a tripling of public library membership and circulation of print and electronic media and community access information technology training;*
- *100% increase in youth-senior intergenerational learning initiatives (e.g., youth service-learners helping seniors write family and community histories and gaining or maintaining ever-changing information technology skills), and seniors mentoring youth (e.g., entrepreneurial skills, foreign language skills and foster "Grannies and Grandpas" programs).*

B. Why a Learning City?

The global urbanization process has clear parallels in Canada. Whereas almost 80% of Canada's population a century ago was living in rural settings; today 80% of Canadians live in cities. The growth of cities – spurred chiefly by economic, technological and social/cultural drivers – has generated profound issues everywhere. In the western world, many movements have recently arisen to meet specific, as well as general, challenges to cities. Hence, an array of movements has developed dedicated to such objectives as "safe cities," "healthy cities," "inclusive cities," "educating cities," "vibrant cities" and "creative cities." In the midst of such a cornucopia of perspectives, a global movement of "learning cities" has grown. A recent research study estimated that there were almost 300 learning cities and towns distributed around the world in which lifelong learning is explicitly used as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal to foster safer, healthier, more inclusive, better educated and creative cities.[3]

- Why Learning?

    Learning – the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values – is an innate human activity that is based on the universal desire of human beings to make sense and gain meaning of their surroundings. The spur is curiosity – seeking answers to questions such as what is on the other side of the hill, how does a gadget work – or how could it work better, and why the world is as it is? Learning is essentially a complex multi-dimensional social process – most of the learning we acquire is with and from others. Throughout our lifespan, our learning is embedded in the expanding settings of our life course - from the home, the community, the school to the workplace and the wider world. Our learning results in changed behaviour or attitudes of both ourselves as individuals and of the groups within which we function. Learning is often therefore measurable and demonstrable. It is also an historical process through which successive generations have contributed to the gradual accumulation and transfer of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of our species.

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[3] Candy, J., 2005, <u>Town Planning for Learning Towns</u>, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Flinders University, Adelaide.

David Hargreaves argues that there have been "three great revolutions" – human epochs – in which how people learn has reflected the nature of the dominant socio-economic system.[4] Specifically there was an:

- agricultural economy, lasting about 12,000 years, in which experiential learning (learning by doing) enabled sons and daughters to learn from, and work with, their parents or local craftsmen;
- industrial economy, developed over the past 200 years, in which formal educational institutions arose that mirrored the emerging industrial factory system;
- an emerging knowledge economy in which people engage in lifelong learning and use learning technologies as tools that will enable learning anywhere and at anytime.

The one constant throughout the epochs is that informal or serendipitous learning, and non-formal or systematic, uncredentialized learning within the family, workplace or community has always been central to the quality of life of individuals and their communities.
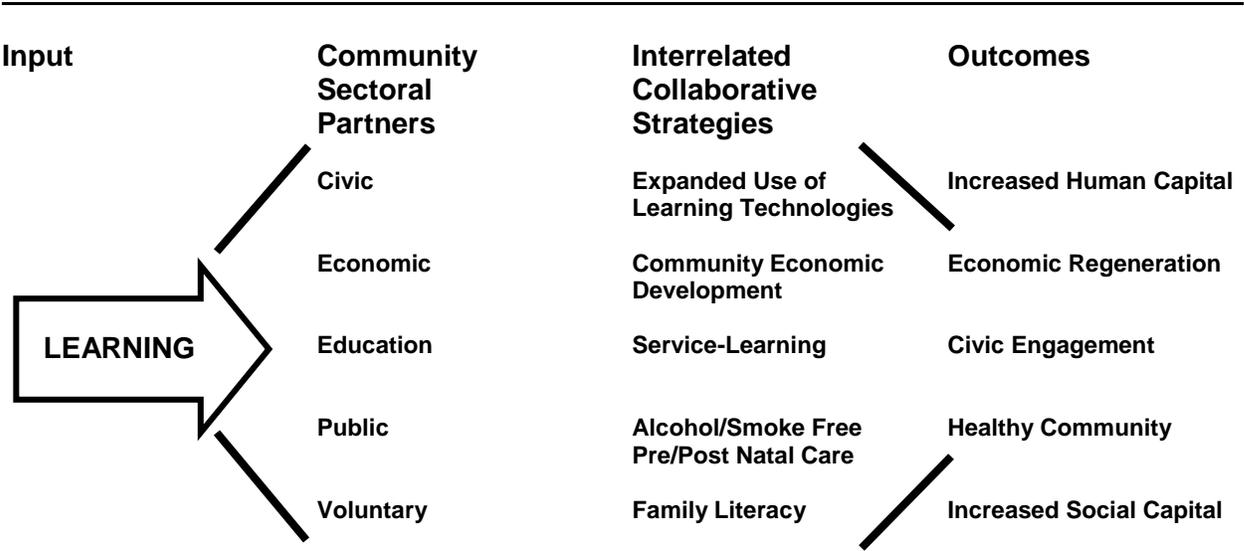
Formal or credentialized learning arose in the middle ages and has flowered in the industrial age schools, colleges and universities that have gradually arisen over the past two centuries. The formal learning sector, encompassing education and training systems, has dominated public policy discourse and funding for over a century. The initial distinction between "education" and "training" created a false dichotomy that in much of the world has led to devaluing "training" and promoting academic "education" – even in the midst of growing trades skill shortages. However in a learning city, learning is seen as the common denominator of education and training systems, whether in the public or private sectors. Further, all learning – formal, non-formal, and informal – is recognized, celebrated and invested in as the development of whole people in whole communities is fostered.

The OECD initially promoted the notion of "recurrent education" that emphasized the alternation between the worlds of work and education throughout the adult lifespan. However, over the past 15 years, the OECD has promoted research and development of lifelong learning among its 30 member states – the majority of which are the wealthier industrial nations undergoing rapid urbanization and socio-economic change. It was a 1992 OECD conference on learning cities in Gothenburg, Sweden that launched what became the world-wide learning communities movement – and resulted in OECD learning region projects in Europe following the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning.

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[4] Hargreaves, D., 2000, "Knowledge Management in the Learning Society," Forum of OECD Education Ministers Developing New Tools for Education Policy-Making, 13-14 March, Copenhagen. He argues that neuroscience and cognitive science will interact with information technologies "not only to accelerate the speed of change in knowledge economies but also to open up new possibilities in the provision of learning services demanded in such societies."

UNESCO has, for over forty years, examined and promoted the concept of lifelong learning. The organization foresaw the need for continuous learning of individuals and groups across the lifespan to meet the demands of a changing economy and society. It also recognized the necessity of reforming the conventional education systems that front-end loaded educational resources for school children so that support for lifespan learning into the adult years was equally important. UNESCO also identified the importance of "life-wide" learning - the expanding settings of learning we experience as we move from child to adulthood (with its distinctive citizenship, worker and parenting roles) and the contribution that all five sectors of the community (i.e., civic, economic, education, public and voluntary) can make to improved quality of individual and community life if their policy and practice is suffused by learning (See Appendix #I: A Learning City Matrix – Examples of How Sectors Contribute to Achieve Shared Objectives).

Learning occurs in every community, but the explicit use of the concept of lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal that informs the analysis, planning and implementation of sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships and collaborative strategies is the essential and distinguishing feature of a learning community.[5]

Input	Community Sectoral Partners	Interrelated Collaborative Strategies	Outcomes
	Civic	Expanded Use of Learning Technologies	Increased Human Capital
	Economic	Community Economic Development	Economic Regeneration
LEARNING	Education	Service-Learning	Civic Engagement
	Public	Alcohol/Smoke Free Pre/Post Natal Care	Healthy Community
	Voluntary	Family Literacy	Increased Social Capital

Learning Communities: Suffusing Learning into Sectoral Policy and Practice and Mobilizing Learning Resources in a Knowledge-based Economy and Society.

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[5] Candy, J., 2005, Town Planning for Learning Towns, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Flinders University, Adelaide.

- Learning Communities and Cities:

"The city is dead. Long live the city! Those who have rushed to pronounce the city's demise in today's globalized communications world may have to eat their words. For cities – and their regions – can offer just the right mix of resources, institutional structures, modern technology and cosmopolitan values that allow them to serve as incubators and drivers for the knowledge-based societies of the 21st century."

Kurt Larsen, "Learning Cities: the New Recipe in Regional Development," OECD Observer, August 1999.

There is a growing body of research and literature on learning communities and cities in the emerging knowledge-based economy and society.[6] It is important, however, to situate the learning community of place (i.e., neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities and regions) within the confused and confusing literature on learning communities.[7] Perhaps, predictably, the web documents tend to focus on "electronic" or "virtual" communities – a function of self-selection. In the United States, interest in "virtual learning communities" is paralleled by research and development of "academic learning communities" – classrooms, schools and colleges that intend to promote a sense of community and shared learning within the educational institution by such means as team teaching and collaborative learning methodologies.[8]

In a recent study of the term "learning communities," an example of the shifting definitional sands is contained in an otherwise worthy analytical summary, as follows: "…as humans lose their capacity to engage in processes of cultural learning, they lose the ability to build strong and vibrant communities capable of supporting varied tasks like identity formation, social integration and cultural reproduction. Without an immediate, diligent and long-standing commitment to improve "learning communities," Canada is at risk of continuing to lose what is perhaps its most important social, cultural and economic asset: the capacity of its citizens to participate fully in learning together in communities of practice."[9]

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[6]   Faris, R., 2006, Learning Cities: Annotated Bibliography, Vancouver Learning City Working Group, Vancouver.

[7]   See; Plumb, D. and R. McGray, 2006, Learning Communities: CCL Review of the State of the Field in Adult Learning, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, and Kilpatrick, S., Barrett, M. and T. Jones, 2003, Defining Learning Communities, CRLRA Discussion Paper D1/2003, University of Tasmania, Launceston for discussion of various uses of the term "learning community" Faris, R., 2006, Learning Cities Annotated Bibliography, Vancouver Learning City Working Group, Vancouver conducted a Google web search on January 21, 2006 using the term "learning community" that found of the first one hundred references, 42% referred to "academic learning communities;" 38% referred to "electronic or virtual learning communities;" 14% referred to "communities of practice;" and 6% referred to learning towns or cities – "communities of place." Subsequent replications of such a search result in similar findings.

[8]   An analysis of American definitions is found in the ERIC Digest 1999 document on "Learning Communities" that identifies "five major learning community models in existence" – all institution based. It makes no reference to OECD, European Commission, United Kingdom or Australian learning communities of place. Eric Clearinghouse on Higher Education, Washington D.C., BBB32577_George Washington University, Washington D.C.

[9]   Plumb and McGray, 2006.

Greater clarity is possible if we view the generic term "learning communities" as a nested concept of social/cultural learning with an expanding scale of learning environments. The following diagram and table are an attempt to locate "learning communities of place" – learning neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities and regions – in a nested Russian egg of social learning.
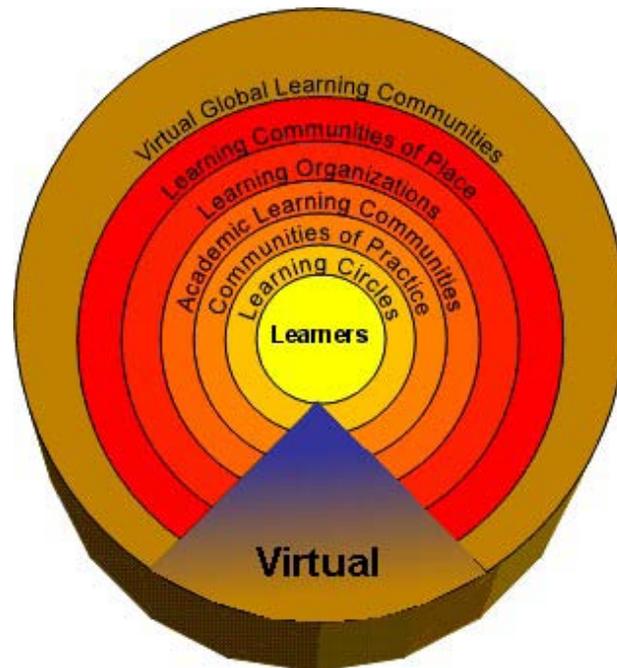
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Learning Communities: A Nested Concept of Expanding Scale and Cascade of Social Learning Environments.

The following Table I illustrates the differentiation of social learning groups from those of smallest scale (learning circles) through to those of largest or global scale (virtual global learning communities). It also attempts to distil the unique features of the various types and, when possible, identify leading exponents of each concept. Finally, several examples of each type are provided but with the recognition that a wide variety of organizations or models could be cited.

While there are clear definitional boundaries among all types of learning communities, at least two generalizations applicable to all are possible. First, every type is subject to "virtualization," that is the creation and adaptation of every type on the Internet, regardless of the argument by early exponents that the original face-to-face learning version provides unique learning processes and outcomes. For instance, both the "learning circle" and "communities of practice" were initially premised and promoted as means of gaining the special benefits of face-to-face interaction and group dynamics. Today, there are a myriad of learning circles and communities of practice that are conducted electronically. Second, learning in every type of "community" is recognized as a two-way, interactive social process.

Table I: **Learning Communities: A Nested Concept of Expanding Scale and Cascade of Social Learning Environments**

Type	Scale (Smallest to Largest Scale)	Example(s)	Unique Features or Characteristics
Virtual Global Learning Communities	**Largest**: World Wide Web Networks of Shared Interest or Purpose	*CISCO Academy of Learning * Commonwealth of Learning	Solely dependent upon Information and communications technologies (ICT) e.g., Electronic Learning Communities
Learning Communities of Place	Civic Entities: Neighbourhoods, Villages, Towns, Cities or Regions	*Kent Learning Region *Victoria Learning City *Finnish Learning Villages	Place-Based Settings *Places that explicitly use life-long learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal *Political jurisdictions *Residents define operational boundaries * ICT used to network within and among learning communities of place
Learning Organizations	Corporations/Bureaucracies through to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises	*IKEA Natural Step Eco-Economic Model * UK Investors in People Scheme	Private, Social or Public Enterprises that Foster Learning as a Strategic Objective * Shared Vision * Systems Thinking * Mental Models * Personal Mastery *Team Learning - Peter Senge, chief exponent
Academic Learning Communities	Educational Institutions: Colleges/Classrooms	*Evergreen College *Community Schools	Formal Education Settings *Team Teaching * Interdisciplinary Approaches *Co-operative Learning - A. Meiklejohn, chief exponent
Communities of Practice	Communities of Interest: Professions, Trades, Avocations, etc.	*Artists' Workshop *Legal Assistants' Network	Initially Solely Face-to-Face *Often Theme-Based *Members are Practitioners *Members Learn from One Another - Etienne Wenger, chief exponent
Learning Circles	**Smallest**: Small Groups Engaged in Learning Activities of Mutual Interest	*Swedish Study Circle Movement *Small Group Discussions	Initially Solely Face-to-Face *Small Group Dynamics *Optimum Size: 8-12 Persons - Kurt Lewin and Myles Horton, chief exponents

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- Why the Emphasis on Place?

"The world is a sum of its parts and all the parts are local."

Sheila Fell, quoted in From Place to Place, Common Ground, 1996.

In the midst of an age of the growing use of information and communication technologies and the creation of the "virtual" dimension of almost every human experience, the expanding research and literature on "place-based" theory, analysis, planning and practice may appear paradoxical. Disciplines such as geography, history, anthropology, social psychology and urban planning are, however, predictable sources of such perspectives.[10] Similarly, the unique aboriginal worldview, with its profound respect for the land and the living systems thereon, promotes a concern for place.[11] These concerns are increasingly reinforced by the findings of the ecological sciences and the associated environmental or eco-literacy movement.

In more recent years leading economists, often concerned with the development of creative, sustainable cities or regions have engaged in place-based analysis.[12] Of particular relevance to those exploring the conceptual framework of learning communities is the growing interest in "place-based pedagogy" or learning.[13]

Recently, particularly in Australia, "place management" strategies involving collaboration among different levels of government (federal, state and local or sometimes state and local) across a cluster of departments – in a whole-of-government approach – have focussed substantial public resources to successfully address a variety of issues of special concern in a specific locale or place (neighbourhood, town, city or region).[14]

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[10] See 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 for an inter-disciplinary, international comparative analysis to inform place-based public policy in Canada. This report cites the Vancouver Urban Development Agreement, and other western Canadian urban agreements as emerging place-based models. It should also be noted that there is a body of research in social psychology around the concepts of "propinquity" and "proximity" that analyses the apparent importance of space and human interaction in human social intercourse.

[11] Semken, S., 2005, "Sense of Place and Place-Based Introductory Geoscience Teaching for American Indian and Alaska Native Undergraduates", Journal of Geoscience Education (March, 2005). Some geographers argue that a "sense of place" comes into existence when humans give meaning to a part of the larger, undifferentiated geographic space – a view akin to a constructivist learning theory.

[12] 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; Duke, C., Osborne. A. and B. Wilson, 2005, Rebalancing the Social and Economic: Learning, Partnership and Place, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester; Wolfe, D., 2000, "Social Capital and Cluster Development in Learning Regions," Paper presented to the XVIII World Congress of the International Political Science Association, August 5, 2000, Quebec City.

[13] Gruenewald, D., 2003, "The Best of Both Worlds: Critical Pedagogy of Place," Educational Researcher, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 3-12. 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.

[14] Faris, R., 2004, Lifelong Learning, Social Capital and Place Management in Learning Communities and Regions: a Rubic's Cube or a Kaleidoscope? Observatory PASCAL: Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions at URL: http://www.obs-pascal.com

4. The Global Setting:

Canada is in the midst of the most rapid social, economic and cultural change in its history. We find ourselves in a situation where the only constant is change. Our nation, like all others, is subject to the forces of change impelled by at least three inter-related drivers:

- market-oriented globalization;
- rapid increase in the use of information and communications technologies;
- an explosion of new knowledge, particularly in the sciences and technologies.

Throughout the world, whole economies, societies, industries and communities are being restructured as a result of such a condition. Paradoxically, the constant change of the knowledge-based economy and society appears to best be met by those nations that are most expert in promoting change in the form of continuous learning for all.[15] Learning – the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values – can be measured in terms of demonstrable knowledge and skills, changed behaviour and attitudes.

A new model of political economy is emerging in the knowledge-based economy that incorporates the concepts of human and social capital.[16] Research and analysis by international bodies such as the OECD and the World Bank are exploring the role and relationship of both social and human capital – the "intangible assets" of the knowledge-based economy.[17] Research at the University of Tasmania focused on the synergy of the two capitals has concluded that the assumption of the dominant human capital theory that 'basic literacy skills' equip individuals for life's transition is false. Further, it has:

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[15] Keating, Daniel P. and Clyde Hertzman, 1999, Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics, The Guildford Press, New York. The importance of greater equality of socio-economic conditions in enabling greater community capacity to solve problems in the future economy is emphasized in Bowles, Samuel and Herbert Gintis, 2002, "Social Capital and Community Governance," The Economic Journal, Vol. 112 (November), Royal Economic Society, Oxford. Pp. 419-436. The importance of more equal opportunities for learning, health and social development in a knowledge-based economy are emphasized in Brown, Philip and Hugh Lauder, 2000, "Human Capital, Social Capital, and Collective Intelligence", Social Capital: Critical Perspectives, (Eds, S. Baron, J. Field, and T. Schuller), Oxford University Press, Oxford. Pp. 226-42.

[16] Simon Szreter of Cambridge believes that social capital theory has the potential impact of Keynesian thought in the 1930's and 40's. He argues that a new literacy based on "equality of communicative competence" will enable all community members to function more effectively in the local market economy and be actively involved in participatory democracy. See Szreter, Simon, 1999, 'New Political Economy for New Labour: The Importance of Social Capital', Political Economy Research Centre Policy Papers – Paper 15, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, p.8.

[17] OECD, 2001, The Wellbeing of Nations: the Role of Human and Social Capital, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Paris. The World Bank Social Capital website focuses on poverty reduction and sustainable human, social and economic development:
http://www1.worldbank.org/prem/poverty/scapital/index.htm

"taken our attention away from the underpinning, and critical importance of, social capital that facilitates effective learning of any kind, including literacy learning. Part of the significance of bringing human and social capital together lies in their joint capacity to enhance people's learning and response to change. The networks, shared values and trust (social capital) acquired through people's interactions serve to bring the appropriate knowledge together in the process of shaping and shifting perceptions of self – that is, their identities – in ways that manage learning and change rather than simply being carried along on its tide."[18]

A. The Knowledge-Based Society and Lifelong Learning:

The importance of lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society is widely acknowledged at international, regional and national policy levels.[19] Both the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) conducted between 1994 and 1999 and the recently released Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALLS) place literacy within the continuum of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is not only a normative concept but also an organizing principle with several dimensions and aspects. Specifically, there is a vertical or life-span dimension that recognizes the learning process from birth to death, and an horizontal or life-wide dimension that focuses on the different settings of learning, including the family, the community, the school and the workplace. Viewed together, these dimensions provide a valuable lifelong learning analytical lens.

The lifelong learning model recognizes the importance of not only the systematic, credentialized learning of the formal education and training system that forms human capital but also the systematic, non-credentialized learning of the non-formal setting of the family, community and workplace, as well as the serendipitous or informal learning that may occur when one participates as a volunteer in a community association, reads a newspaper or chats with a neighbour – all of which contribute to building social capital.

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[18] Falk, Ian, 2001, "Literacy by Design, Not by Default: Social Capital's Role in Literacy Learning," Discussion Paper D7/2001, Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, University of Tasmania, Launceston. p. 2. A conceptual model of human-social capital interaction and literacy is discussed in Falk, Ian, 2001, "Sleight of Hand: Job Myths, Literacy and Social Capital," Discussion Paper D14/2001, Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia, University of Tasmania, Launceston.

[19] OECD. 1996, Lifelong Learning for All, Paris; Delors, Jacques, 1996, Learning: The Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Paris; G8, Charter – Aims and Ambitions for Lifelong Learning, Cologne; Commission of the European Communities, 2000, A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Commission Staff Working Paper, Brussels.

The lifelong learning concept of both UNESCO and OECD do not view learning as a value-free activity. Rather, both organizations have emphasized the importance of life-long learning so that all may contribute to democratic life in their communities and societies.[20] Specifically, the 1996 OECD report, Lifelong Learning for All, views "…lifelong learning for all as the guiding principle for policy strategies … to improve the capacity of individuals, families, workplaces and communities to adapt and renew." It states that:

"…this view of learning embraces individual and social development of all kinds in all settings – formally, in schools, at home, at work and in the community. The approach is system-wide; it focuses on the standard of knowledge and skills needed by all, regard-less of age. It emphasizes the need to prepare and motivate all children at an early age for learning over a lifetime and directs efforts to ensure that all adults, employed and un-employed, who need to retrain or upgrade their skills, are provided with opportunities to do so. As such, it is geared to serve several objectives: to foster personal development, including the use of time outside of work (including retirement); to strengthen democratic values; to cultivate community life; to maintain social cohesion; and to promote innova-tion, productivity and economic growth."[21]

B. The Triple Bottom Line of Learning and Sustainability:

"A quiet transformation is taking place in communities all over North America and around the world. Thousands of citizens and their governments are embracing a new way of thinking and acting about the future. Motivations for involvement vary but they include a desire to improve the quality of community life, protect the environment and participate in decisions that affect us; concern about poverty and other social conditions, whether in faraway countries or in our own towns; longing for a sense of satisfaction that money cannot buy; and pride in the legacy left for our children. These motivations are all com-ing together now in a movement toward sustainable communities…." Mark Roseland, Toward Sustainable Communities (2005).

There is growing awareness that the present rate of consumption of the Earth's non-renewable resources cannot continue. Indeed, the sustainability of the human and other species is at risk. Nowhere is the challenge of sustainability more evident than at the community level – specifically in the cities and towns that we inhabit.

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[20] Recent comparative studies reveal that Canada is lagging Sweden in terms of adult literacy. Declin-ing voter turn-out and participation in political parties are indicators of both lower social capital and civic literacy measures in Canada. See Milner, Henry, 2002, Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work, Tufts University, London, and Veeman, N., 2004, Adult Learning in Canada and Sweden: A Comparative Study of Four Sites, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.
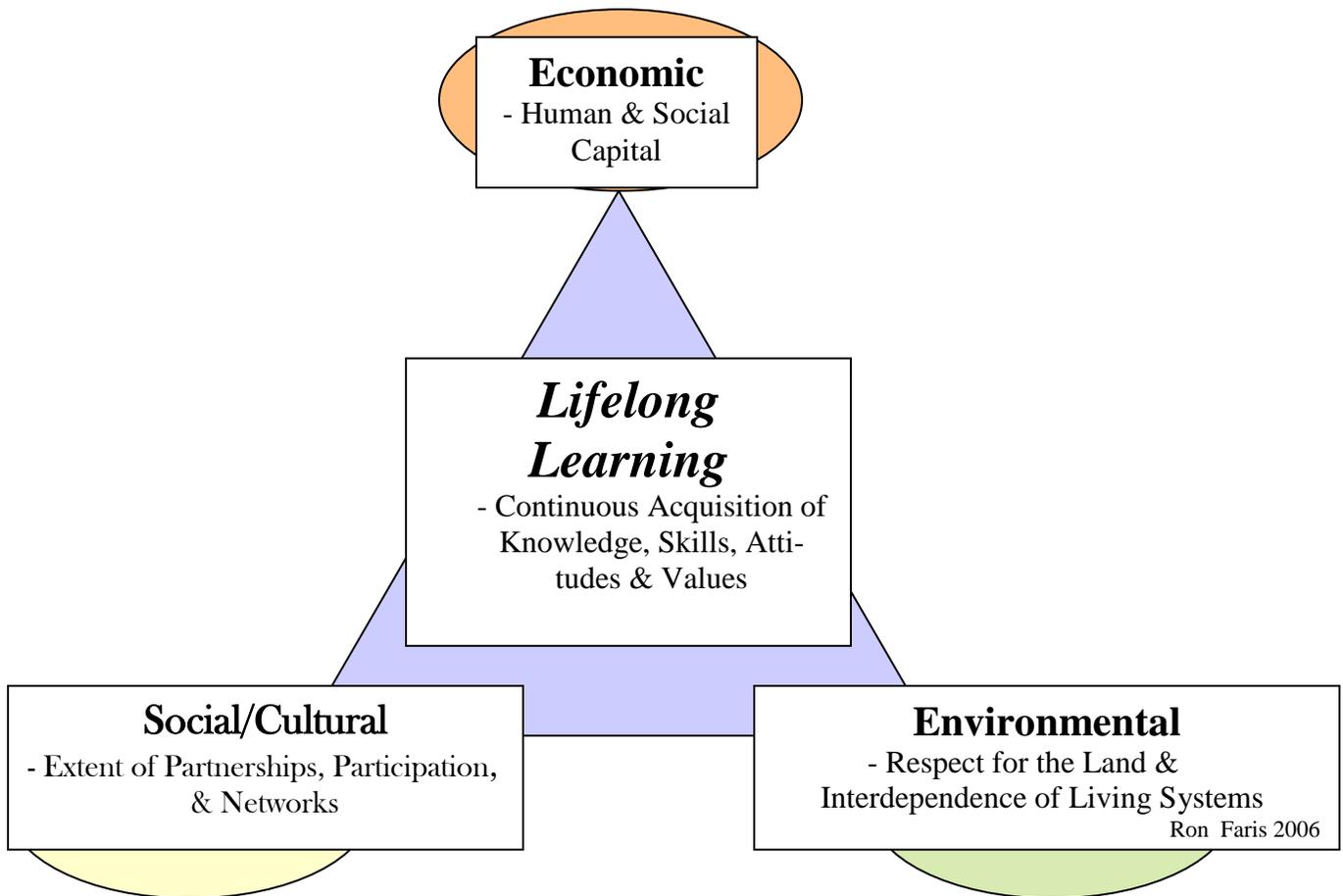
[21] OECD, Lifelong Learning for All, Paris p. 15. The report notes that because of the lack of literacy skills in many OECD nations "adult basic education must feature centrally in any strategy for realising lifelong learning for all," p. 95.

Three inter-related aspects of "sustainability" become apparent when the term is defined in the context of the ever-changing knowledge-based economy and society. Learning, which is only discernable and measurable in terms of demonstrable new knowledge and skills and of changed behaviour or attitudes, is the necessary response of human beings buffeted by change. Hence, systemic change in the overall socio-economic system must be reciprocated by learning-based change in human beings – both individually and communally – if sustainable development is to be achieved.

The concept of sustainability in a learning community or city has a special focus enabled by the lens of lifelong learning. Continuous learning informs essential change in three inter-related domains – environmental, economic and social/cultural – the triple bottom line of sustainability:

- **Environmental** – Learning to act as if future generations matter is founded on acquiring values and attitudes that foster respect for the land and an understanding of the interdependence of all living systems – the two profound gifts that aboriginal people around world have given to an often unheeding, thankless and arrogant dominant society.

- **Economic** – The new knowledge-based political economy recognizes the crucial importance of fostering human capital (educational achievement measured chiefly by formal learning attainment) and social capital (measures of trust, networking, civic engagement and shared values – chiefly, but by no means entirely, non-formal learning), and the vibrant synergy thereof. Healthy families and communities produce both higher measures of social and human capital.

- **Social/Cultural** – The extent to which we learn: to build partnerships across all five community sectors; to foster participation of all community members; and to construct networks within and among learning communities increases the probability of sustainability. The broader the base of this social/cultural infrastructure – and the community capacity it represents – the greater the probability of sustainability.

The Triple Bottom Line of Learning and Sustainability:

Economic
- Human & Social Capital

Lifelong Learning
- Continuous Acquisition of Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes & Values

Social/Cultural
- Extent of Partnerships, Participation, & Networks

Environmental
- Respect for the Land & Interdependence of Living Systems

Ron Faris 2006

5. Learning City Case Studies:

"Make every home, every shack or rickety structure a centre of learning." Nelson Mandella quoted by Shirley Walter.[22]

There has been over a decade of global experience regarding development of learning communities of place and learning cities. What becomes readily apparent as one reviews the research and development of learning cities is that each community of place has a unique history, geography and socio-economic and cultural context in which the people's lives – and therefore their learning and literacy, are embedded.[23] While it is clearly unwise, if not impossible, to transplant any specific learning city model into another jurisdiction, it is equally difficult not to learn from the following case studies of learning city development on three continents – Europe, Australia and North America (Canada).

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[22] Walter, S., 2005, "South Africa's Learning Cape Aspirations: the Idea of a Learning Region and the Use of Indicators in a Middle-Income Country" in Duke, C., Osborne. A. and B. Wilson, 2005, Rebalancing the Social and Economic: Learning, Partnership and Place, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester. Pp. 126-42.

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

A.   The United Kingdom:

"Learning is the key to prosperity and opportunity, both for individuals, families and communities and for our nation as a whole …. How local communities respond and develop their learning resources will be a key factor in the success of the Learning Age." Hon. David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, Practice, Progress and Value – Learning Communities: Assessing The Value They Add (1998).

Following the 1992 Gothenburg OECD Conference on Learning Cities, several British cities commenced learning city developmental processes. By 1995, the United Kingdom Learning City Network was created to "promote the use of lifelong learning for urban regeneration through the exchange of best practices between cities, towns and smaller communities." Today, the Network, renamed the Learning Communities Network, is composed of over 30 learning cities and almost 30 "testbed learning communities."[24]

The following is a brief analysis, in alphabetical order, of three of the United Kingdom learning cities – two in England and one in Scotland – that reflect the unique development and priorities of each.

- Birmingham:

   The Setting:

   Birmingham is the United Kingdom's second largest city, with a population of approximately one million people. It is a diverse and youthful city with over 30% of the population from ethnic communities and 44% of residents under the age of thirty compared with an English national average of about 38%.

   Demographic trends indicate that by 2020, the majority of the population will be from ethnic minority communities of Asian, Caribbean and Chinese descent. Little wonder the issue of social inclusion is high on the Birmingham City Council's agenda.

   Until a generation ago, Birmingham was a gradually decaying industrial and commercial centre of the West Midlands – the old "smokestack" city threatened by the tsunami of the knowledge-based economy and society. Over half of the unemployed persons in 2003 had no post-school qualifications; literacy and re-skilling needs of the population was both a civic and national priority.

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[24]   The UK Learning Communities Network is at http://www.bgfl.org/services/lcn/home.htm and the UK Department for Education and Skills Lifelong Learning site is: www.lifelonglearning.co.uk. The Testbed Learning Communities are at URL: http://www.renewal.net/lc/Default.asp.

Process, Structure and Funding:

Since the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning, the concept of lifelong learning has been an organizing principle of the City Council and its corporate Lifelong Learning Strategy, including a Lifelong Learning Plan and a Strategic Lifelong Learning Partnership. A Lifelong Learning Forum, comprised of partners from the civic, economic, education, public and voluntary sectors, led development of the initiative – with support from the City's Education Department – through a series of public conferences on the membership, role, structure, mode of operation and progress of the learning city initiative.

Initial Council support in cash and in-kind has been significantly leveraged through acquisition of both national program funding for such issues as literacy and neighbourhood renewal, and European Commission support for programs of social and economic development.

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

Two particularly active initiatives have been the Birmingham Library and Information Services (BLIS) and the Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership (see URL: http://www.coreskills.co.uk). BLIS comprises almost 40 community libraries and three mobile libraries. It operates six formal learning centres (with distance and face-to-face learning opportunities) and 38 Homework Help Clubs within its community libraries. A "learning shop" is co-sponsored at the main library in partnership with the City Council, a regional advisory and information service, and the Birmingham Lifelong Learning Partnership.[25] The Birmingham Core Skills Development Partnership – an independent legal entity comprised of civic and educational, and private sector partners – has since 1999 fostered literacy throughout the lifespan. Scaling up literacy program delivery has resulted in:

- a 40 fold increase in a "Books for Babies" initiative led by libraries;
- a 25% increase in parent involvement in school curriculum activities;
- an increase from 30% to 70% of eleven year olds with good skill levels;
- a reduction in the number of adults with poor basic skills by 25% by 2005, with a 2010 target of 50%.

- Edinburgh: http://www.edinburghlearning.com/what.htm

The Setting:

Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, has a population of about one-half a million persons. It has experienced strong economic performance – especially in the service sectors – for several decades, however, several areas of the city have about three times the City average of unemployment. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the issue of more equitable provision of lifelong learning opportunities is a clear priority.

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[25] Keaneally, A., 2003, Public Libraries in Learning Communities, State Library of Victoria and Glenelg, Regional Library, Hamilton, p.18.

Process, Structure, and Funding:

The roots of the Edinburgh Learning City stretch back to early interest in 1994 that culminated in 1995 with creation of "Edinburgh City of Learning" – a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. In 1997, this city of half a million created the Edinburgh Lifelong Learning Partnership (ELLP) as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status with key civic, economic and educational partners. The ELLP has established priorities that include:

- providing a coherent framework for the development of lifelong learning strategies;
- creating a learning culture within the city;
- developing collaboration between sectors and organizations;
- improving and increasing access to existing learning opportunities in and out of the workplace;
- promoting lifelong learning within individual organizations and sectors;
- securing resources for the promotion and development of lifelong learning activities.

The Partnership's strategic objectives are:

- reducing poverty and disadvantage;
- enabling people to raise educational achievement;
- developing organizations and their staff;
- developing the economy.

Initial funding was dependent upon the partner's financial and in-kind contributions. Additional funding has been gained for specific projects. Initial core funding brought in about C$300,000 annually and enabled a small unit (Chief Executive, Marketing Project Manager and Administrative Support Officer) to function, as well as manage a small amount for seed or match funding of projects. (For example, almost C$ one million was obtained for a Community Access to Lifelong Learning Strategic Project from National Lottery funding.)

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

Among the first actions taken was development of the partnership's brand, Edinburgh Learning, and its subsequent use by all partners. In order to further communicate the shared objectives and strategies of the partnership, an Intranet for ELLP has been created and information about ELLP initiatives is carried in partner's house publications. The ELLP partners were involved when the City's Community Education Department produced a Community Learning Strategy, and when the Scottish Parliament required that all local governments develop community learning strategies, ELLP was identified as a successful urban model.

Edinburgh is acclaimed as a "Library City." The Edinburgh City Libraries and Information Services (ECLIS) is an ELLP member and as such has created a strategy to provide city residents with equity of access, physical or electronic, within 10 years.

- Nottingham: http://www.gnlp.org.uk

The Setting:

Nottingham, population of about 300,000, is the largest city in England's East Midlands. A university city, over 25% of the city's population are under 20 years of age – about half of whom are post-secondary students. About 15 years ago, a high proportion of jobs were in the manufacturing industries; today, the majority of work is in the service industries. Yet many workers have low educational qualifications and the up-skilling of the workforce has been among the city's priorities.

A Nottingham City for Learning initiative commenced in 1996 when the Chief Executive of the Nottingham Development Enterprise led creation of a Steering Group composed of organizations involved in education and training, employers and the city. The group researched existing learning partnerships, good practice and developed strategic objectives in a draft consultation paper. A year later, a "City for Learning" conference was held to launch informed discussion and gain endorsement of the initiative and identify key themes. Three key priorities – literacy, marketing and information and guidance – are achieved through related working groups. Strategic objectives include:

- increasing the number of employers committed to re-skilling;
- engaging more of the disadvantaged;
- raising aspirations/developing a learning culture;
- raising standards of educational attainment;
- improving transitions from school to work;
- leveraging additional funds.

Two years after initiation, the project expanded to cover the Greater Nottingham region (population 600,000).

Process, Structure and Funding:

Start-up funding and office space was secured from the regional office of a national training agency and three executive staff members – a full-time Project Manager and an Administrator, and a half-time Project Leader provide executive support. In the first two years of operation, European Union funds were gained for a parenting initiative (C$ 300,000) and a Lifelong Learning Strategy (C$10 million). Substantial financial and in-kind resources have been provided by a wide range of local partners.

The initial organizational structure was unique. A Board of Directors acted as a decision-making group to:

- manage the strategic implications of generic/community-wide issues affecting learning;
- determine, monitor and evaluate the conversion of the strategic direction into action by the Executive and a Partnership Forum.

The Forum served as an informal and inclusive partnership composed of individuals and organizations from all sectors of the community. It holds three meetings a year in order to:

- encourage recommendations and contributions on the future of the partnership;
- promote broad debate around issues impacting learning and discussion between different sectors;
- offer stimulating insights from local and national figures;
- explore new routes to success.

The forum was composed of four groups – three functional and one specialist. Each of the groups had a lead organization responsible for coordinating the way it delivers its business plan priority activities. The three groups, composed of volunteers from the forum, were as follows:

- project groups initially focusing on three partnership priorities: literacy guidance and information and marketing;
- working groups initially focusing on development of the Adult Learner's Week;
- existing groups established prior to the partnership but forum partners linked to the business plan around issues such as widening participation, labour market strategy, post-16 tracking and parenting.

The specialist group provided information to inform decisions of the Board of Directors, Functional Groups and the Executive.

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

Planning and carrying out the first of many annual Adult Learners Week celebrations was among the first partnership projects. This became a central marketing and awareness tool that many United Kingdom, and subsequently Australian, learning cities have engaged in.

Negotiations between unions and management in several industrial plants resulted in workplace literacy and English Language Training initiatives, and the partnership negotiated substantial New Deal Unemployment Strategy programs for 18 to 24 year olds.

B. Finland; Espoo: http://english.espoo.fi/

"Lifelong learning is a principle that operates on a number of levels. In addition to the individual person, it also covers the communities in which people live and work and the social parameters which shape their opportunities for action. It guides the educational career of individuals, the activities of communities and the policies employed to promote learning in such a way as to allow the realization throughout society of a broadly based and continuous process of learning." Joy of Learning, National Lifelong Learning Strategy, Finland, 1997.

Finland, like all Nordic countries, has a long, strong tradition of education and learning. Like the other Nordic nations, it has actively responded to the challenges of a knowledge-based economy. For example, the world famous Finnish electronics manufacturer Nokia has, for over a decade, provided jobs and national revenues to such an extent that without its contributions the nation would have had a growing annual deficit rather than continued prosperity.

The Setting:

Espoo, a city of about one quarter million people, is Finland's second largest city and lies on the outskirts of the nation's capital of Helsinki. Home of Nokia, it is a centre of high technology. During the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning, Espoo hosted an international conference on "The Joy of Learning" – a theme that became the title of the Finnish National Lifelong Learning Strategy. Inspired by the event, the city of Espoo reviewed its own learning activities and assessed lifelong learning as a tool for community development. In 1997, Espoo joined several European initiatives for lifelong learning and learning cities and is a member of several international comparative studies in these fields. Espoo is also a member of the Finnish Learning City Network comprised of the nation's 14 largest cities.

Process, Structure and Funding:

The Learning City project is led by a Project Manager of an Executive Team. A Steering Group, comprised of representatives from all community sectors, is co-chaired by the Deputy City Manager and the Deputy Mayor of Education and Culture. In addition, ad hoc consulting groups and work teams are formed from experts in the fields of education and city administration. An Advisory Committee of representatives from companies and learning providers offered advice at the beginning of the developmental process.

Core funding is provided by the City and additional funding and in-kind support is gained from local partners and national and European Union (EU) agencies (in 2002, over 20 EU education projects were undertaken in Espoo).

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

Many steps have been taken to implement the Espoo Learning City agenda, including:

- promoting learning organization approaches in the City administration through to library, education, recreation and daycare providers throughout the city;
- creating both a Youth Council[26] and a Council for the Elderly, which advise on civic policy and practice related to their groups;
- developing a Learning City website linked to all partners;

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[26] The Espoo City Youth Council is an elected body of 30 members aged 13 to 18 years of age. The General Assembly of the Youth Council meets every three weeks and provides opportunities for youth to influence civic policies related to their concerns. City officials mentor youth on specific issues and student teams initiate a variety of youth projects.

- creating a learning organizational approach for a taxi company serving disabled people;
- creating an integrated (multidisciplinary) outdoor environmental education program;
- creating learning leadership training programs for civic executives and head teachers;
- holding Netlibris international literature circle connecting school students in virtual discussion groups using the Internet and occasionally videoconferencing;
- initiating the Osterinet project that has developed a virtual learning cluster or network of educational, civic and private providers and users that, for instance, produce and broker a high school-university net media course or address a local community problem that educational institutions can assist in solving.

C. Australia:

"A Learning City is a 'way of life,' it is one where industry, education, business and the community come together to encourage, recognise and celebrate lifelong learning for all. It is a city that integrates economic, social and environmental development." "What is a Learning City?," Ballarat: A Learning City.
http://www.ballaratlearningcity.com.au

Australia, and particularly Victoria State, is the home of many of the most innovative learning cities in the world. Many of the Australian learning communities – including the first of the Australian learning cities, Albury-Wodonga, on the Victoria-New South Wales border that was launched in 1998 – have drawn inspiration chiefly from British learning city initiatives. Subsequent visits by a number of British learning city experts and study-visits by Australian practitioners to the United Kingdom have also influenced the Australian perspectives.

By the year 2000, the Victoria State government had launched a "learning towns" initiative that encompassed rural villages through to major urban centres across the State. Visits to British Columbia's learning communities by Australian experts (ranging from a university open learning manager to a regional librarian; a "Learning Town" Neighbourhood House Director and a Learning City Manager; and a Director of a University Centre for Regional Communities Development) and two reciprocal visits by this author to Victorian Learning Towns have ensured cross-fertilization of Australian-British Columbia thought and practice.

Since the focus of this paper is on learning cities, only passing mention will be made of the remarkable initiatives in rural Victoria State. For example, The Learning Shire of Yarra Ranges, home of the Mt. Evelyn Learning Town and over 40 other communities, is an innovative leader in the development of learning communities.[27]

- Albury-Wodonga: http://www.learningcityalburywodonga.com

    The Setting:

    These pioneering learning cities were initially inspired by a small group of civic and community leaders led by a local adult educator, who has also sparked creation of the Australian Learning Communities Network. The City of Wodonga (population 38,000), on the Victorian side of the border declared itself a learning city in 1998 and, in 1999, its sister city in New South Wales, Albury (population 43,000), proclaimed itself a learning city.

    Process, Structure and Funding:

    Initial funding and in-kind support came from the local cities. Some financial aid has come from the Victoria State government. A Learning City Consultative Council composed of 17 members from civic, economic, educational and community sectors guide the initiative. Five groups report to the council including:

    - a Festival of Learning Organizing Group;
    - a Way We Live Ecological Group;
    - a Regional Futures Steering Group;
    - a Learning City Alliance committed to advancing Peter Senge's Learning Organization Model;
    - a Sponsorship Group composed of representatives from many sectors.

    Two Coordinators, one for the Learning City and the other for the One-Stop Information Centre, Learning Connections, and several support staff serve the council and project initiatives.

    Some Exemplary Initiatives:

    Perhaps the single most successful learning event in the twin cities is the annual two-week Festival of Learning which celebrates the wide range of learning activities available in the area. For example, the festival in mid-August 2005 (Australian winter) commenced with a launch that featured performances by:

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[27] Information on the Shire of Yarra Ranges Learning Communities Policy, Strategy, Structure and Development Toolkit is at: http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/page/Page.asp?Page_ID=231&h=1. The Mt. Evelyn Improvement Committee (METIC) website is: http://www.metic.org.au. The Victoria State website for Learning Towns is at: http://www.acfe.vic.gov.au/comltown.htm. It identifies some nine key objectives and notes that Learning Towns: foster social and economic outcomes; improve educational and training delivery; engage in projects for environmental, community leadership, capacity building and multicultural purposes; and promote use of learning technologies. The towns have formed a State-wide Victorian Learning Towns Network.

- Wodonga High School Band; Wodonga Primary School Choir; and the local Flying Fruit Fly Circus.

Festival of Learning Awards were bestowed, including the Learning Champions Awards that "recognize those who have made it against the odds after having overcome substantial barriers such as a disadvantaged background, literacy problems and age or cultural reasons." Learning Innovators Awards and Business Innovators Awards were also presented.

During the two week period a wide range of activities occurred including:

- unveiling of the local wetlands interpretive trail signage sparked by the local Rotary Club;
- hosting a "Breakfast to Celebrate Men and Fathers" featuring a presentation by a Hall of Fame football coach;
- hosting a Farmers' Market conference;
- hosting a local public broadcaster (ABC) radio series on aspects of learning;
- hosting a presentation on learning community developments in British Columbia;
- hosting family history and local author workshops in the local library;
- hosting open houses by the local university and college campuses;
- offering free bus tours of historical sites, a local industry and civic urban development sites;
- staging a community centre's "Adult Learners Day."

Street banners proudly flutter to identify the city as a learning city, and both a Learning Connections Office and a project website provide information on learning opportunities on an ongoing basis.

For the past three years, The Way We Live Partnership Project with local planners, architects and ecologists has:

- developed an ecologically sustainable demonstration house;
- facilitated discussion of commercial innovative design and affordable housing by visiting planners/designers;
- developed programs for the Festival of Learning.

- Hume: http://www.hume.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_ID=182&h=-1

The Setting:

Hume (population 150,000) is a city rich in cultural and ethnic diversity with over 130 ethnic groups speaking over 50 different languages. A suburb of Melbourne, it has a relatively young population (31% under 18 years compared to 23% for the Melbourne area). English is the most common language spoken at home (60% compared to 69% for the Melbourne region). Christian denominations are the most common in Hume with 38% Roman Catholics, 12% Islam and 10% Anglican (across Melbourne it is 29%, 2% and 13% respectively). The urban core of Hume, Broadmeadows, ranks amongst the third lowest in socio-economic indicators in Australia and has historically been viewed as a "deprived area" while the suburban/semi-rural component is composed chiefly of middle-class commuters.

Process, Structure and Funding:

In 2003, the Hume City Council created the Hume Global Learning Village as an innovative partnership that links learning providers across the city, including five libraries and the mobile library, local schools, seven neighbourhood learning centres (one donated by the Visy Cares Recycling Corporation), six neighbourhood houses, the Kangan Batman TAFE (college), local businesses and Victoria University. All of these facilities and sponsors, as well as some other 300 associations and individuals, are members of the Learning Village – the hub of which is a purpose-built community centre/library, the Hume Global Learning Centre.

The Hume City Council supports and facilitates the Global Learning Village and village members take on and resource projects identified in the village's strategy Learning Together (2004-2008). The strategy outlines more than 50 strategies to address learning issues related to eight themes, including:

- inspiring lifelong learning;
- starting out: starting school;
- moving on: school to further education and employment;
- learning in community settings;
- language, literacy and numeracy skills;
- information technology uptake and virtual communities;
- information about learning opportunities;
- fostering the Village Network.

In order to drive these themes, a well-resourced staff is led by a General Manager who reports directly to the senior city executive.

A Global Learning Village Forum of all village members is served by a Learning Village Committee, composed of representatives from key providers (such as the local schools, colleges, universities, learning centres and neighbourhood houses) that is presently chaired by a local high school principal. Overall, policy advice is given by a blue-ribbon Advisory Board presently chaired by an esteemed former State Premier.

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

A Hume Festival of Learning, organized by the Global Village in 2005, celebrated both non-formal and formal learning and social inclusion in Hume by including:

- a free community Turkish lunch sponsored by the Australian Turkish Community Association;
- a number of free Taekwondo and Tai Chi classes;
- a number of free tours of the local Ford Motors Plant;
- a number of introductory workshops and open houses for prospective college and university students sponsored by local post-secondary institutions;
- a "Parents as First Teachers Literacy Expo" by a community multicultural group;
- a Sound and Light Show by the local Historical Society;
- a Sri Lankan Storytime in Singhalese and a Turkish Storytime in Turkish;
- a "Transition into Further Education" event by the local Disability Service;
- an "Early Years Literacy Expo" at a downtown learning centre;
- an interactive energy display by the Alternative Technology Association.

The festival was launched by presentation of the Australian National Opera's "OZ Opera" – a children's opera group that performed before several hundred elementary school children.

Hume City Council approved the first civic Social Justice Charter in Australia in 2001. Development of an Inaugural Citizens' Bill of Rights in 2004 followed. Hume City Council sees the Global Learning Village as an important means of ensuring the learning that will fulfill the Charter and the Bill of Rights' objectives of social justice and social inclusion.

Hume library membership and circulation has grown by about 23% annually since 2003. The City Council has broadened the role of its libraries from custodians of knowledge to learning facilitators.[28]

The Global Learning Village is sponsoring a very successful Inspiring Stories project that celebrates "ordinary people doing extraordinary things" in Hume whether in the community, arts, sport or business field. It is also offering Inspiring Teacher Scholarships *of* $1,500 to $5,000 for teachers, registered trainers, tutors, coaches, learning facilitators and child care workers to learn new approaches in Australia or overseas.

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[28] Department for Victorian Communities, 2006, Local Government: Partnerships, Ideas and Action, Local Government Victoria Division, Melbourne.

- Shire of Melton: http://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Page/PagePrint.asp?Page_Id=86

  The Setting:

  Melton Shire is a dormitory suburb of Melbourne with a population of about 76,000 persons. It is the fastest growing municipality in Victoria State with a recent annual growth rate of over 9%. Approximately 80% of the Shire's working population travels outside the shire to access employment.

  Process, Structure and Funding:

  The Melton Community Learning Board, created in 2004 upon the Shire of Melton declaring itself a "learning community," is the key body that oversees development of the Shire of Melton as a learning community. The Board, a subcommittee of the Shire Council, is composed of providers of learning from infants to seniors (early childhood services through to local library services and the University of the Third Age), and youth and industry representatives. The Board Chair, who had previously led development of a learning city initiative in a near-by city, is the Executive Director of the Melton Local Learning and Employment Network.

  The Shire has entered into a joint venture with Victoria University – the Melton Township Learning Precinct – to coordinate and implement the three-year Community Learning Plan strategies. The Learning Hub of the Precinct is located at the Melton Campus of Victoria University – that is developing itself as a community college.

  Yet another innovation in the conventional education and training system delivery of the region is creation of Learning Innovations West – a partnership of education, training and employment services in three western suburbs of Melbourne – of which Melton Shire is one.

  Basic funding sources are Melton Shire and partners from the education and learning and employment networks. Additional project funding is obtained from the State of Victoria.

  Some Exemplary Initiatives:

  Three public schools have collaborated in shared information campaigns, course piloting and shared classes with increased student numbers and retention. There has been a similar rise in participation and retention rates, and work placements, in the post-secondary colleges with increased numbers of students going on to further education or employment. Overall, there has been increased industry involvement and support for the Shire's education and training system.[29]

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[29] Blunden, P., 2005, "Melton: A Learning Community", Report of the Deputy Chair, Melton Community Learning Board (November 2005).

D. Canada; Victoria: http://dv2020.urbanreader.net/archives/action_plans/000018.php

"Men and women have within themselves and their communities the spiritual and intellectual resources adequate to the solution of their own problems." 1946 Statement of Purposes, Canadian Association for Adult Education.

The Setting:

Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, has a population of about 78,000 persons. Victoria leads the country with the highest percentage (25%) of adults having a bachelor's degree or higher. About 72% of all adult residents have taken some form of post-secondary education. The Victoria region is the home of two public and two private universities and a large community college.

Of the over 22,000 businesses in the region, 93% employ less than 20 people. Public administration provides 40% of regional income but service-oriented and knowledge-based industries form the basis of the city economy. Over half of the working population commutes within City boundaries but two-thirds of all of the regional workforce comes into the city.

Process, Structure and Funding:

In 2003/04, the Downtown Victoria Community Alliance – a business led organization – initiated a 2020 Vision process that included a series of public conferences in 2003/04 and the creation of a Working Group on "Downtown as a Place of Learning." The Working Group reported that:

"By 2020, Victoria will be known as a leading learning community. The city enhances its economic, environmental and social conditions on a sustainable and inclusive basis, using lifelong learning as an organizing principle and cultural goal that mobilizes the human, social, built capital and other educational resources within its civic, economic, education and voluntary/community sectors."

The Working Group identified 2020 lifelong learning objectives such as:

- quality early learning/childcare for infants of downtown employees and residents;
- individual learning plans for at least 50% of downtown workers;
- elder college participation of downtown seniors will exceed 50%;
- cross-sector initiatives related to the arts and learning will increase by 50%;
- a doubling of educational tourism: visitation, temporary and medium to long term.

It also called for strategies to ensure that the downtown was a "dynamic service core of arts and learning" and to provide the means to support "creative and learning industries of downtown" such as development of a Victoria Arts and Learning Trust, and implementation of a "Civic Place Management Strategy." Short- to medium-term action included development of a "new Central Library as an anchor to a downtown learning precinct."

The City of Victoria embedded the development of Victoria as a learning city into its policy framework (i.e., 2004 Corporate Strategic Plan).

Some Exemplary Initiatives:

The Mayor created a "Learning Commons Task Force" in the fall of 2004 that reported to City Council in the summer of 2005 that:

- in May 2005, the City had proclaimed itself as a "Global Learning City;"
- the Council had initiated a multi-tracked Youth Initiative including: creation of a Youth Council; development of an associated service-learning "citizen apprenticeships" in collaboration with the School District; and exploration of a joint School Board-City youth "Restorative Justice" Initiative.[30]

The City of Victoria has produced a Socio-Economic Profile that includes both Neighbourhood Profiles and associated Community Resources Inventories that provides maps and lists of resources and services including community, recreation, education and seniors and childcare facilities, housing and social service agencies, and places of worship.[31]

6. Analysis; Lessons Learned:

"Building learning organizations is not an individual task. It demands a shift that goes all the way to the core of our culture. We have drifted into a culture that fragments our thoughts, that detaches the world from the self and the self from the community. We are so focused on our security that we don't see the price we pay: living in bureaucratic organizations where the wonder and joy of learning have no place. Thus, we are losing the spaces to dance with the ever-changing patterns of life. We need to invent a new learning model for business, education, health care, government and the family. This invention will come from the patient, concerted efforts of communities of people invoking aspiration and wonder. As these communities manage to produce fundamental changes, we will regain our memory – the memory of the community nature of the self and the poetic nature of language and the world – the memory of the whole." Peter Senge, Creating Quality Communities.[32]

A. An Overview:

In an age when a tsunami of political economic and technological forces has resulted in the restructuring of whole nations and industries, workplaces and communities, those jurisdictions least capable of learning how to manage change are the most vulnerable. Failed states and market failure are commonplace where the stock of human and social capital is diminished – in such conditions, the people's last and only hope is the community.[33]

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[30] City of Victoria, 2005, Interim Report of the City of Victoria Downtown "Learning Commons" Task Force to the Mayor and Council (July 25, 2005).

[31] See URL: http://www.victoria.ca/residents/profiles.shtml.

[32] See URL: http://www.eccdc.org/creating_quality_communities.pdf. Page 6 of 7.

[33] Bowles, S. and H. Gintis, 2002, "Social Capital and Community Governance," The Economic Journal, 112. (November), Royal Economic Society, Oxford. Pp. 419-36.

In those nations that are proactively meeting the challenges of the emerging knowledge-based economy and society – chiefly the richer member-nations of the OECD – learning communities of place, i.e., learning towns, cities and regions, have been seen by some government leaders as an important initiative. In the advanced nations, the necessary political will and commitment are based on a number of interrelated policy assumptions understood at both central and local levels, including:

- lifelong learning is a useful organizing principle and desirable social/cultural goal to which all nations and communities should aspire;[34]
- the old social/economic policy dichotomy is particularly misleading, and dysfunctional, in the emerging knowledge-based political economy that recognizes the importance of the human/social capital synergy;[35]
- glocalization – the recognition of the interpenetration of the local and the global that celebrates the importance of local values and interests and the interaction with global forces and issues – is an alternative to uncritical acceptance of globalization;[36]
- the "risk society", characterized by complexity – if not chaos – and subsequent low levels of predictability, demands continuous learning of individuals and organizations, including governments;[37]
- a society (or community) that tolerates a permanent under-class is competitively disadvantaged compared to one that fosters the lifelong learning, participation and contribution of all;[38]
- governments at all levels must be challenged to develop "joined-up solutions" to the "joined-up problems" they encounter – and end the departmental silos that are readily apparent at the community level;[39]
- city-wide action must be blended with neighbourhood specific initiatives that focus on issues of local community importance and strengthening relevant community capacity-building, including local leadership training.[40]

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[34] OECD, 1996, Lifelong Learning for All, Paris. UNESCO, 1996, Learning: the Treasure Within, Paris.

[35] Duke, C. et al , 2005, Rebalancing the Social and Economic: Learning, Partnership and Place, NIACE, Leicester; OECD, 2001, The Wellbeing of Nations: the Role of Human and Social Capital, CERI, Paris.

[36] The past-President of the World Bank, James Wolfenson, is credited as the author of the concept of "glocalization."

[37] Anthony Giddens, Director of the London School of Economics, is the initial exponent of the "risk society" thesis and subsequent third way modes of analysis.

[38] The European Commission has warned of creation of a "two-tiered society" differentiated by those with knowledge and skills and those without. Canada faces a special challenge in regard to adult literacy skills. A C.D. Howe Institute report revealed that, based on the 2005 ALLS data, raising Canada's literacy scores "by one percent relative to the international average is associated with an eventual 2.5 percent relative rise in labour productivity and a 1.5 percent rise in GDP per head. These effects are three times as great as for investment in physical capital. Moreover, the results indicate that raising literacy and numeracy for people at the bottom of the skills distribution is more important to economic growth than producing more highly skilled graduates." A 1.5 % GDP rise equals $18 billion annually – a significant return on investment. Coulombe, S., and J. Tremblay, "Public Investment in Skills: Are Canadian Governments Doing Enough?," C.D. Howe Institute Commentary, No. 217 (October 2005), Ottawa.

[39] The UK Blair government is a chief exponent of "whole-of-government" strategies that have, with limited success, attempted "joined-up" strategies to aid disadvantaged individuals and communities.

[40] Neighbourhood renewal programs supplement learning city initiatives in the UK and Australia.

There is no single model of learning communities or cities. A "cookie-cutter" approach will not work. An important part of "learning" in learning cities is the process that early champions engage in within their communities as they begin to discuss and reflect upon the issues, challenges and assets that they and their colleagues identify. The setting of every city is unique – its history, geography, demography and economy – and the values and aspirations of its citizens can very greatly. There are, however, insights that can be gained from those who are engaged in developing their learning communities of place.

Doctoral research in Australian universities provides scholarly analysis of, and reflection upon, theory and practice of learning community development.[41] Victoria State has systematically supported evaluation of its "Learning Towns" initiative, as have several of its leading communities such as Hume City and Mt. Evelyn in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.[42] The United Kingdom government has engaged in systematic reviews of its learning cities, and is currently engaged in action research of "testbed learning communities."[43] Lessons learned in British Columbia's learning communities are found in several documents.[44]

The international consortium supporting the PASCAL Observatory on Place Management, Social Capital and Learning Regions has sponsored several conferences and many papers on aspects of learning community evaluation, as has the European Commission.[45] Hence, some insights – and good practice – regarding learning city process, structure, and funding; emerging priorities; use of learning technologies; and sustainability are available from both international and local practice, as follows.

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[41] Candy, J., 2005, Town Planning for Learning Towns, Flinders University, Adelaide; Wheeler, L., 2004, Negotiating the Agendas: Developing an Operational Framework through the Exploration of Learning Network Models and Practices, RMIT University, Melbourne; Wong, S., 2004, The Practice and Progress of Geelong as a Learning City, RMIT University, Melbourne.

[42] Sheed, J. and C. Bottrell, 2001, Learning Towns Network Program Evaluation, LaTrobe University, Bendigo; State of Victoria, 2005, Measuring Impact: A Project Evaluation Tool, Education Centre Gippsland and Morrison House of Mt. Evelyn, Adult Community Further and Community Education Division of the Department of Education and Training, Melbourne; Wheeler, L. et al, 2005, Hume Global Learning Village Learning Together Strategy: 2004/2008, Evaluation – A Report on Progress to Date, Hume. http://www.lcc.edu.au/lcc/go/home/pid/124

[43] Yarnit, M., Towns, Cities and Regions in the Learning Age: a Survey of Learning Communities, London: DfEE, the Network for Learning Communities and the Local Government Association; Duke, C., 2004, Learning Communities: Signposts from International Experience, NIACE, Leicester; Yarnit, M., 2006, Building Local Initiatives for Learning, Skills and Employment: Testbed Learning Communities Reviewed, UK Department for Education and Skills and NIACE, Leicester.

[44] Faris, R. and W. Peterson, 2000, Learning-Based Community Development: Lessons Learned for British Columbia, Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers, Victoria; Faris, R., 2001, The Way Forward: Building a Learning Nation Community by Community, discussion paper prepared for the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, Toronto.
http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris/LC.htm

[45] See URL: http://www.obs-pascal.com. The European Commission is funding, under the title R3L, 17 interlinked projects that will develop understanding of the benefits of lifelong learning in municipalities and regions throughout the continent (Regional Networks in Lifelong Learning).
http://r3l.euproject.net The Commission has also supported the TELS (Towards a European Learning Society) project that surveyed 80 European municipalities from 14 countries and analyzed their performance and progress as learning cities.

B. Process, Structural and Funding Models:

Learning cities, like all learning communities of place, are the products of innovative process and structural development. Developmental processes interact with the decisions made about how the learning resources of all five community sectors (civic, economic, education, public and voluntary) can best be mobilized. Reflective learning during all developmental stages – however they may be defined – is crucial. A study of development of learning communities in Australia distilled three key findings:

- local community involvement leads to ownership and commitment to a learning community;
- networks and partnerships 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.[46]

Process:

There appears to be a general pattern to the process of learning community development. Initially, a small group of champions – often from almost every community sector – meet to explore the concept of a learning city. Many times, local issues or crises have motivated one of more of the local leaders to learn more about the concept of a "learning city" – especially in nations such as the United Kingdom, Finland and Australia where learning community networks (and associated websites) have raised awareness of the concept.

One or more consultants knowledgeable about learning city development are often hired to provide content expertise and guide an agreed-upon public process. Without exception, an open and transparent process is launched to create awareness of the initiative and promote informed conversations about the future function and form of the learning city initiative. Further, an asset-based approach that focuses on identifying and mobilizing the learning resources – individual and organizational – that exist in every one of the five community sectors, and fostering effective collaborative strategies that will transcend the traditional sectoral silos in order to produce exceptional results.

Often there is agreement that an "early success" is important to the longer-term prospects of the initiative. Very frequently either a Festival of Learning or an Adult Learner's Week is a celebratory event that launches the public process – sometimes in concert with a civic proclamation of commitment to a learning city initiative – and serves as an initial step of an ongoing awareness/communications strategy.

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[46] Australian National Training Authority, 2000, Turning on Learning Communities: Report, Canberra. This report identified four community development steps: identifying a need; planning; action; and reflection/evaluation. Wong identified three cycles – i.e., from awareness to involvement; from involvement to understanding; and from understanding to commitment. Wong, S., 2004, The Practice and Progress of Geelong as a Learning City, unpublished doctoral dissertation, RMIT University, Melbourne.

Structure and Funding:

Despite the significant differences in political structure in various nations – i.e., the United Kingdom is a unitary state, albeit with a recent measure of devolution to Scotland and Wales, while Australia is a federal system – there appear to be essentially two options for the structure and location of learning city initiatives (with some clear funding implications). The first location is within local government (civic models) and the second is within civil society as a non-governmental organization (NGO models). In either case, it appears important that the initiative be housed in a "neutral space" that is seen by partners from all community sectors as "non-threatening, non-competitive and belongs to the whole community" and fosters cross-sectoral partnerships that address local issues and build community capacity.[47]

Civic Models:

There appear to be essentially three places within local government that learning city initiatives are located. The first is the education authority, which in the United Kingdom has broad responsibilities for childhood, youth and some adult/college education (in Australia and Canada this authority is more limited). The second is a variety of civic line departments ranging from economic development to community/social development units that play lead roles in a number of learning cities. A third option, perhaps unique to the Hume Learning City, is to have the initiative's General Manager report directly to the City's senior administrator – and liaise horizontally with mangers of the line departments.

The strength of housing the initiative within an education authority is that a more comprehensive and coherent approach is possible in the formal learning sector. The weakness is not only the optics but also the reality that the initiative is seen as an education driven rather than a learning driven model – a fundamental difference that most non-educator's readily understand and some conventional educator's appear unable to discern.

The strength of housing the initiative within a line department other than education is that the initiative may immediately have strong links with other community sectors such as the economic, the public (e.g., libraries) or the voluntary. The weakness is that the educational sectoral silo may be impermeable – and limited collaboration is forthcoming from a sector that should play a crucial role in the emerging knowledge-based economy and society.

Having the learning city unit report directly to the civic leadership appears to have special strength as the initiative would have parity of esteem with all other civic functions rather than be one of many functions within a line department. The challenge would be to suffuse the policy, planning, budgeting and operation of every civic department with the city's lifelong learning corporate objective.

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[47] Wong, S., 2004, The Practice and Progress of Geelong as a Learning City, RMIT University, Melbourne. Wong, the pioneer learning city developer in Geelong, also argues that the initiative: shifted emphasis from education to lifelong learning; improved social inclusion and local economic performance; and that its participatory nature empowered citizenship and shifted the focus from institutions to networks and groups.

One clear advantage to a civic model is the apparent ability of this sector to attract funding from other, higher levels of government – particularly on a project basis. However, the "disease of short-termism," as the British call it, is ever-threatening. Governments tend to think in terms of the four-year electoral cycle while the corporate sector is often pre-occupied by the quarterly report. Equally harmful is the short-term "drive-by funding" that is currently favoured by many levels of government, as well as many foundation granters. Deeply rooted, inter-generational problems of many disadvantaged groups that live in the shadows of our society have often taken generations to create. Why anyone would think that one- to three-year project funding would significantly contribute to the resolution of serious long-standing community issues is one of the great paradoxes of a time when government rhetoric is about the need for evidence-based approaches – while providing little or no evidence that their drive-by funding is having any long-term impact. Ten year community development funding in the Welsh Communities First initiative or some of the American Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities (EZ/EC) Program initiatives provide examples of more sensible approaches that enable communities, and particularly those working with them, to devote less time to form-filling and grant-seeking and more time to the community developmental tasks for which they have been engaged.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Models:

There appear to be two alternatives in the NGO option. The first is common in the United Kingdom – a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status. The second is formation of a voluntary organization under a Societies Act.

The strength of a corporate model with charitable status is not only its potential flexibility and responsiveness to changing challenges but also its ability to garner funds as a charitable body from both other foundations as well as other donors – an important feature for sustainability.

An NGO model is arm's length from government. This is paradoxically its overall strength and weakness. Certainly this model is less prone to the executive or political fiats or the sometimes cumbersome procedures of government bureaucracies but it is not immune from the shifting sands of political fortune – and like every one of the models or options discussed, depends upon political will to foster community capacity to meet the vicissitudes of an ever-changing knowledge-based economy and society.

C. Emerging Priorities:

Initial learning city development in Europe (including the United Kingdom) tended to focus on three interrelated objectives: economic development, including urban regeneration; social inclusion; and expanded use of learning technologies for educational and economic enterprise.[48] In recent years, these objectives have continued, and several newer – but related – themes have developed.

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[48] Faris, R., 1998, Learning Communities: Cities, Towns and Villages Preparing for a 21st Century Knowledge-based Economy, A Report submitted to the Resort Municipality of Whistler and the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, Victoria. Pioneering cities also shared a concern for adult literacy and for adult guidance and information services. From the outset, they also identified the need to have a capacity for social marketing, http://members.shaw.ca/rfaris/LC.htm.

New Themes:

The first wave of United Kingdom learning cities developed in the mid-1990s. They were products of their time and manifested the social, economic and political priorities of their day. In Australia, the majority of learning cities developed in the new millennium. They had the advantage of assessing the first wave of United Kingdom experience and also of drawing upon new insights from the social sciences regarding the impact of both human and social capital upon the new knowledge-based political economy and society.

By the year 2000, two surveys of learning communities identified development of wider concerns. A United Kingdom survey identified six themes of "best practice for neighbourhood renewal," including:

- family learning;
- basic skills (literacy and numeracy);
- engaging in community: skills for citizenship;
- employment: learning how to overcome the jobs mismatch;
- learning centre networks;
- sustainable schools and communities.[49]

A survey in British Columbia identified six most common purposes for the learning-based community development of learning communities – the **CHEERS** acronym – as follows:

- **C**itizenship Education;
- **H**ealth Promotion;
- **E**conomic Development;
- **E**nvironmental Sustainability;
- **R**ural/Urban Development;
- **S**ocial/Cultural Development.[50]

A second wave of learning communities in the United Kingdom, chiefly in smaller towns and sometimes in rural regions, became testbed models equally influenced by social capital and community capacity building theory and practice.[51] For the first time, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada have developed significant learning community initiatives in both urban and non-metropolitan settings. At least three common themes – one theoretical and two issue-oriented – may enjoy increasing importance in learning cities in all three nations.

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[49] Yarnit, M., 2000, Towns, Cities and Regions in the Learning Age: A Survey of Learning Communities, UK Department for Education and Employment, London.

[50] Faris, R. and W. Peterson, 2000, Learning-Based Community Development: Lessons Learned for British Columbia, Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers, Victoria. Most of the **CHEERS** purposes can be translated in terms of the literacy – i.e., civic literacy; health literacy; economic literacy; environmental literacy; etc. The rural/urban relationship is of increasing interest as economists and ecologists, for example, understand the importance of safe, secure local food sources, and phenomena such as rural-urban work migration, and economic cluster development.

[51] Duke, C., 2004, Learning Communities: Signposts from International Experience, NIACE, Leicester.

Social and Human Capital Analysis:

Human capital theory, the result of significant analysis and use since the 1960s, was by the new millennium essentially an uncontested concept among mainstream economists. While there was a slowly growing body of literature on social capital theory in the 1990s, the publication of Robert Putnam's modern classic, <u>Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community</u> in the year 2000 placed the concept of social capital firmly on the global political agenda.

OECD and World Bank interest in both social and human capital and the synergy thereof has, in subsequent years, spurred work on the concepts – and their application at the community level. Thus, predictably, the development of learning cities and their objectives have been influenced by a consensus that good social capital – that not only builds bonds but also bridges within and between communities – should be fostered as a means of building community capacity, promoting social inclusion, and enhancing human capital development.

The link between lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal and the fostering of human and social capital is among the issues being examined in several Australian "learning towns."[52] This appears to be an especially fruitful line for action research that will assist in the cause of providing an increasingly sound theoretical, research-based foundation for learning city development world-wide.

Environmental Issues:

While the first wave of United Kingdom learning cities seldom mentioned environmental issues during their developmental stage, there has been gradual awareness of this important dimension of sustainability in some later initiatives. The Australian developments appear to be much more influenced by the triple bottom line thinking and the pioneering Albury-Wodonga Learning City, for instance, has always fostered learning and action around local environmental issues.

Australia, New Zealand and Canada all have aboriginal people who have shared their profound respect for the land and recognition of the interdependence of all living systems with newcomers. This gift has largely been spurned by the dominant society but those communities that understand the wisdom of learning to act as if future generations matter are best prepared to create a sustainable new economy and society. In the Hume Global Learning Village, for example, an Aboriginal Advisory Committee has clearly informed and influenced the learning initiative – to the benefit of all.

The pioneering Natural Step project of the Resort Municipality of Whistler – a learning community and partner of the 2010 Olympics – will be among the innovative initiatives to gain an international spotlight during the world games. Eco-literacy will be a major challenge in the coming decades, especially in the rapidly growing cities where most of the Earth's people live.

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[52] Dr. Leone Wheeler, RMIT University, is working with colleagues in both Hume City and Mt Evelyn regarding aspects of these evaluation issues. See Wheeler, L. et al, 2005, <u>Hume Global Learning Village Learning Together Strategy: 20042008, Evaluation – A Report on Progress to Date</u>, Hume. http://www.lcc.edu.au/lcc/go/home/pid/124

Citizenship:

Learning communities and cities are the incubators of democratic citizenship. The home and the school, voluntary associations and the faith communities – all are the venues where democratic values and skills are learned.

It is at the community level that the communitarian view of democracy is best understood; simply put, no democracy can survive where citizens insist upon their rights but do not accept their requisite responsibilities. Learning cities have, since ancient Athens, been the places where civic literacy and learning are constantly informed, refreshed and sustained by conversation and action about both one's democratic rights and responsibilities.

The creation of a Social Justice Charter and an associated Citizens' Bill of Rights in Hume Learning City is a leading-edge example of the current concern for active citizenship and social inclusion that are crucial issues in multicultural learning cities.

The effective use of community service-learning within communities is well-documented – as is its effect on the civic learning of the students engaged in the initiatives.[53] Such citizen apprenticeship of students, regardless of age, may well be one of the most important contributions to building community capacity and ensuring a sustainable democracy for the future.

D. What is the Difference?: A Summary

A "Learning City" is not an attractive but largely empty slogan. Rather it is a city that has learned new ways of suffusing the organizing principle of lifelong learning through the policy and practice of all five sectoral partners. Hence the learning resources of all five community sectors are mobilized in response to the constant change and challenges of the emerging knowledge-based economy and society. Such a comprehensive and integrated approach is on one end of a continuum that contrasts with the polar opposite – some conventional communities in which comprehensive, coherent and systematic promotion of individual and organizational learning are largely absent and short-term, siloed thought and action predominates (see Appendix #2: Towards a Learning City: A Continuum).

Learning occurs in every community, but the explicit use of the concept of lifelong learning as an organizing principle and social/cultural goal that informs the analysis, planning, and implementation of sectoral and cross-sectoral partnerships and collaborative strategies is the essential and distinguishing feature of a learning community.[54]

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[53] See "Civic Literacy" section of Faris, R., 2006, Learning Cities Annotated Bibliography, Vancouver Learning City Initiative, Vancouver. Pp. 18-19. The UK National Curriculum now includes service-learning provision; over five million U.S. school students and some 500 American universities and colleges engage in service-learning activities.

[54] Candy, J., 2005, Town Planning for Learning Towns, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Flinders University, Adelaide.

Almost all communities have the rudimentary social and human capital – and past and present learning initiatives – that can be built upon. Key readiness criteria – willingness to learn how to form sustainable partnerships within and among all community sectors, and how to foster the learning participation of all community members – make a critical difference if the lifelong learning journey a city commits to is to be successful. These criteria are, in fact, the key success determinants that both British and Canadian experience has verified.[55]

Based on an assessment of learning communities in other countries, we know that becoming a learning city:

- provides a coherent, integrated and comprehensive approach to the lifelong learning necessary for individuals and communities to face the ever-changing challenges of the knowledge-based economy and society of the 21st century;
- makes it easy for all people to learn and continue learning, in a variety of ways;
- places learning at the heart of community capacity building and development;
- fosters early learning and the literacy, including learning how to learn, as the foundations of a lifelong learning strategy;
- celebrates, and inspires enthusiasm for, continuous learning of all;
- values what exists and uses existing learning resources but seeks to constantly develop deeper understanding and identify new ways of doing things;
- enables increased pathways between the formal learning (education) sector and the non-formal (workplace, community and not-for-profit sectors) through active partnerships;
- uses and builds human and social capital, including the multicultural values and knowledge base of aboriginals, as well as recent immigrants;
- promotes social inclusion – i.e., those previously marginalized can, through active learning, end dependency relationships and contribute to their communities;
- uses learning technologies as tools to acquire the full range of literacy and learning for all, to establish intra- and inter-community networks to share common concerns and best practices;
- commits to a vision and strategy with immediate impacts and long-term consequences;
- invests in learning that brings lifelong benefits to both individuals and their communities – i.e., investment in formal education and non-formal learning has been proven to be the best means of combating poverty, increasing overall health, and eliminating social exclusion.[56]

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[55] Faris, R. and W. Peterson, 2000, Learning-based Community Development: Lessons Learned for British Columbia, Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives and Volunteers, Victoria; Faris, R., 2001, The Way Forward: Building a Learning Nation Community by Community, discussion paper prepared for the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, Toronto.

[56] Keating, Daniel P. and Clyde Hertzman, 1999, Developmental Health and the Wealth of Nations: Social, Biological and Educational Dynamics, The Guildford Press, New York.

7. Vancouver; A Choice of Futures:

Vancouver city has a wealth of social, cultural, economic and environmental assets – including substantial learning resources – that can be mobilized as it prepares for the emerging global knowledge-base economy and society.

Its diverse multicultural nature will enable it to draw upon the strong learning traditions of new Canadians from South-East Asia to the Middle East, as well as use the comparative advantage of a wealth of linguistic skills and familial links in a global economy.

Its rich cultural and artistic resources ensure a creative potential the envy of most cities. Its libraries, museums, science centres, educational institutions and neighbourhood houses are among the nation's best. Voluntary and community associations enrich every neighbourhood. The city has, by any measure, substantial human and social capital. An emerging new economy based on knowledge and learning, and which enables citizens to participate and contribute, will create a sustainable future for this world-class city.

The City government has been recognized as a Canadian leader in policy, planning and practice in such fields as the arts and culture, the environment and the drug abuse strategy[57].

Vancouver can become recognized as the most socially inclusive; culturally exciting; environmentally sustainable; and economically advanced city in the world. Political will, a shared vision, and a generous spirit that transcends the sectoral silos and mobilizes all the learning resources of this unique place are the intangible assets that can ensure a successful Vancouver Learning City Initiative. The choice is ours.

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[57] See the Vancouver City website regarding commitments in an array of policy areas. For example, "A Sustainable City"; and "City Principles of Sustainability" are found at:
http://vancouver.ca/sustainability

APPENDICES

1. A LEARNING CITY MATRIX: Examples of How a Community's Sectors Contribute to Achieve Shared Objectives

Purposes	*Civic Learning*	*Health Promotion*	*Economic Development*	*Environmental Sustainability*	*Rural/Urban Development*	*Social/Cultural Development*
SECTORS						
CIVIC - municipal government	* Citizen apprentices * Youth Advisory Council	* Community drug abuse strategy	* Farmers' Market	* Green Belt initiative * Sustainable social housing projects *Local organic agricultural co-op	* Development of a Learning Quarter	* *Tall Ships Festival* * *Learning Festival*
ECONOMIC - private to social enterprise	* Union shop steward training * Bd of Trade Election Forum	* Occupational health strategy * Migrant worker literacy	* Supply chain training strategy * Individual learning plans * Workplace literacy projects	* *The Natural Step City* strategy * Architects' Forum on sustainable design *Value-based Business Assn	* Vision 2020 initiative	* Artists' marketing co-op *Single Mom's catering company
PUBLIC - libraries, museums - social/health agencies	* Library series on Rural-Urban Issues	* Community Early Learning Coalition *Seniors Centre health literacy	* Workplace health & safety program *Life Skills training	* Museum historical mapping project	* Library Learning Hub project	* Quality of life survey *Library Mother Goose program
EDUCATIONAL - K to 12 - post-secondary institutions	* College all-candidates meeting * School restorative justice program	* Student nurse community practicums	* Co-operative education projects	* Student river restoration project	* College urban planning seminar	* University International Students' Fair * Intergenerational service-learning
VOLUNTARY/ COMMUNITY - civil society	* Community leadership training	* Night Youth basketball	* Disabled Assn food prep co-op	* Environmental movement lecture series * Community organic gardens	*Multi-faith social housing,	*Multi-cultural festival * Family literacy *Faith Community kitchens

2. TOWARDS A LEARNING CITY: A Continuum

⇐ **Learning City** *- Towards an Ideal -*	*Conventional City* ⇒ **- A Variable Beginning -**
ECONOMIC	**SECTOR**
PROACTIVE PARTNERS IN A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY ▪ literacy, learning how to learn, team and thinking skills provide a comparative economic advantage ▪ social and human capital is valued, added to, and used for comparative advantage ▪ learning is seen as an investment ▪ learning is seen as a social process that results in a comparative community advantage for economic development ▪ innovations are supported by interactive learning among learning organizations within the community ▪ economic and education partners share their training resources with each other and the community ▪ larger firms share training resources with their supply chain ▪ most firms foster individual learning plans	REACTING TO ECONOMIC CHANGE ▪ literacy and learning are ignored as fundamental to a strategy for managing economic change ▪ social and human capital is unrecognized and largely untapped ▪ education is seen as a cost ▪ learning is viewed as an individual activity solely for individual economic benefit ▪ innovations are isolated and viewed as competitive threats by others in the community ▪ companies and education often compete: there is often little or no community access to resources of either ▪ supply chain training is sporadic or non-existent ▪ few, if any, firms offer individual learning plans
CIVIC	**SECTOR**
CIVIC LITERACY & ENGAGEMENT ▪ fosters learning within and across all its department policies and practices e.g., community policing; restorative justice; police recruit job shadowing of youth workers; Youth Council ▪ enables student service-learning opportunities that enhance youth leadership and civic literacy ▪ joined-up problems are dealt with by joined solutions across government portfolios	PUBLIC APATHY & CYNICISM ▪ civic government is viewed in competition with school and recreation board initiatives ▪ civic learning resources (expertise and facilities) are largely untapped in terms of youth leadership and civic literacy ▪ joined-up problems of under-education, ill-health, poor housing, etc. are dealt with by government departmental silos

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PUBLIC	**SECTOR**
A PROACTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR ▪ library, museum, social and health agencies are partners that sometimes play a lead role in providing learning opportunities e.g., IT or health literacy ▪ not-for-profit sector is supported to provide service-learning and other voluntary learning opportunities	REACTING TO CHANGE ▪ library and other public sector providers are seen as supplemental to education sector provision ▪ public sector is seldom adequately aided to support community service-learning and other voluntary activities
EDUCATION	**SECTOR**
NEW EDUCATION ▪ both formal and non-formal sector learning resources are mobilized ▪ many pathways are created within and between formal and non-formal learning sectors in a coherent, seamless system ▪ learning is seen as the common denominator of education/training ▪ education is viewed as an important partner in production and distribution of learning ▪ the education system builds partnerships with the other four community sectors ▪ literacy and learning how to learn provide foundations for life-span learning ▪ the education system provides community service-learning opportunities at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels ▪ health determinants and brain research informs preventative learning strategies to save costly remedial education, health, criminal justice, and social programs	OLD EDUCATION ▪ education is seen as sole provider of learning ▪ the formal education system has few links to the non-formal learning sectors, particularly the community ▪ education is viewed as prestigious and training is devalued ▪ education is seen to have a monopoly on the production and distribution of learning ▪ the education system has few, if any, links with the other four community sectors ▪ weak literacy & learning skills widen gap between under-educated minorities and the educated dominant society ▪ the education system provides few, if any, community service-learning opportunities at any level of schooling ▪ there are few preventative learning strategies and access to quality early health and learning opportunities is either limited or non-existent

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VOLUNTARY	**SECTOR**
VOLUNTARY LEARNING SECTOR ▪ voluntary service provides opportunities for both volunteer learning and enriching social capital ▪ pathways between voluntary service and paid employment are systematically developed ▪ volunteers are well-trained members of quality provision teams	VOLUNTEERISM ▪ volunteerism is seen as a means of reducing delivery costs ▪ volunteerism is employed to replace paid employment ▪ volunteers may or may not be adequately trained
LEARNING	**TECHNOLOGIES**
LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES: A TOOL ▪ local lifelong learning strategy developed with learner smart cards to facilitate learning for all ▪ universal local, public access to learning technologies and training for networking within and among communities	A DIGITAL DIVIDE ▪ incoherent, sporadic, and unequal learning opportunities are provided with chief benefits to an educated elite with access to learning technologies ▪ limited public access to learning technologies with little networking/training beyond the community
OVERALL	**CONSEQUENCE**
OVERALL GOAL ▪ the development of a lifelong learning culture is a community goal	OVERALL RESULT ▪ some individuals promote lifelong learning values and life styles