

A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE FIELD OF ADULT LEARNING

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
METHODOLOGY	4
SECTION A: REVIEW OF EXISTING THEMATIC AREA KNOWLEDGE	6
<i>Databases Searched.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Key Terms Searched</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Citizenship, Governance, and Justice</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Community Development.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Co-operative and Sustainable Economy</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Environment and Transportation</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Health and Aging.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Inclusiveness</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Literacy, Schools, and Universities.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Multiculturalism and Diversity.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Spirituality and Churches.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Technology and Workplace.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Research Institutions, Organizations and Networks:</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Researchers.....</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Existing Funded Research Programs.....</i>	<i>68</i>
SECTION B: EXISTING INDICATORS/MEASURES OF KNOWLEDGE.....	70
SECTION C: GAPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE AND RESEARCH CAPACITIES	72
<i>Suggested Lines of Enquiry.....</i>	<i>75</i>
SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, EXCHANGE, AND DISSEMINATION	77
SECTION E: COMPARISONS AND PROGRESS	79

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE FIELD IN ADULT LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

As one prong of a broad-ranging review of the state of the field in adult learning, our team investigated the theme area “learning communities” which involved conducting an extensive review of existing sources of knowledge related to our theme area (including the academic and professional literature, governmental reports and documents, research centers and organizations, practice-based research organizations, research funding bodies). On the basis of this review, we investigated existing indicators and measures currently used to assess the state of the field related to learning communities. As well, related to these indicators, we identified significant gaps in the theories and practices of the field of adult learning related to our theme area. Finally, based on our review, we have identified several promising lines of future research that can begin to address gaps in our current knowledge about learning communities.

It is our general finding that, at the precise juncture that learning theorists are rapidly deepening their understanding of the ways adult learning is inextricably entwined in community life, communities, themselves, are undergoing unprecedented assault from a range of global forces like consumerism, individualism, privatization and urbanization. Despite ominous warnings by social scientists like Robert Putnam (2000), who records a twenty-year decline of community connection and cohesiveness in North America, the “learning community” remains a rather under-theorized concept in the field of adult learning. Current trends in the field lean strongly towards understanding the learning of individuals (especially how to prepare individuals and organizations to meet the imperatives of an increasingly competitive global economy) and not towards understanding of learning in community. Of the very few instances of research and practice that do aim to improve community functioning, most do so in terms of the overarching needs of the global economy (prepare the community to perform in a competitive international marketplace) and not in terms of the community, itself. Thus, even in view of newfound and scientifically credible information about the importance of community health for adult learning and despite increasing evidence of the negative impact of recent political-economic developments on community, we have noted a general paucity of theories and practices related to adult learning and community in the field of adult learning.

This, we maintain, is a perilous situation. Contemporary learning theorists point out how, as a community weakens, its members are deprived of the trusting interpersonal bonds that lie at the very crux of our capacity to learn as human beings (Wenger, 2004). Similarly, 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, ultimately,

economic asset: the capacity of its citizens to participate fully in learning together in communities of practice.

The notion of “learning communities” is particularly problematic when it comes to identifying indicators and measures of knowledge that can help establish positive directions for future research in relation to the theme. While insight into the connection between learning and community has a long history in adult learning theory and research, learning theorists are just now in the process of specifying ways that human learning and community are intertwined. As well, recent research is beginning to clarify the different qualities communities must possess to best support human learning. These earnest and well-considered efforts to better understand the needs of learning communities are in the very earliest stages of articulation. Although the results of this research to date is extremely important (perhaps, given the consequences of neglecting learning in communities, even crucial), it has not yet developed to the point where it can positively assert criteria to measure the development of knowledge in the area. For certain, the systems of indicators, measures and benchmarks against which stakeholders currently assess adult education research and practice are inappropriate for learning communities as these measures were developed in relation to individualized notions of adult learning. A range of other measures of community health (like Putnam’s social capital index, or measures of tolerance, life satisfaction, care or belongingness) might eventually help guide further research.

In fact, it may well be that the prevailing interest of many state funded organizations (like the CCL) to identify indicators and measures of knowledge in order to better guide “accountable” decision making by government officials and policy makers (what Michael Powers [1999]¹ describes as the “audit explosion”) may, itself, be directly at odds with the whole notion of learning communities. According to Michael Apple (2004), contemporary efforts by the “managerial state” to impose corporate management practices (benchmarking, indexing, auditing) more broadly on the social realm “constitute a dangerous shift in our very idea of democracy from ‘thick’ collective forms to ‘thin’ consumer driven and overly individualistic forms” (p. 614).² Reframing the citizen from active democratic participant to tax payer (demanding fiscal accountability) or service consumer (demanding satisfaction) presumes a specific, individualized and, ultimately, manageable notion of human learning. It could well be that the key thing about learning communities is that they defy objectification and managing. Rather than relying on outside experts to define objective and measurable indicators of effective or progressive forms of learning community, it may be that the defining feature of learning communities is that they are the context within which people, themselves, work together to define what is important to think and to do.

As we have struggled to develop this report and to respond to comments and criticisms, we have come to understand, more deeply, the great value of examining the ways contributors to the literature of adult learning are attempting to grapple with the notion of

¹ Power, M. (1999). *The audit society: rituals of verification* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

² Apple, M. (2004). Schooling, Markets, and an Audit Culture. *Educational Policy*, 18, 4, 614-621.

learning communities. Almost inevitably, any serious attempt to understand learning communities forces a critical engagement with dominant trends in our society to render learning an act of individual consumption open to technocratic management and control. Our assertion, in the conclusion of this review, is that it is imperative that we engage in an ongoing search (research) into the nature and value of learning communities as our top priority, not by reason of any measurable indicator or index, but simply because it is through this search that we can play our part in the emergence and development of powerful democratic forms capable of resisting the predations of global economic and state institutions.

METHODOLOGY

Unlike other theme areas, “learning communities” is not a term that identifies a definitive body of theory and practice in the field of adult learning. In fact, the direct literature related to the term “learning communities” in the field is fairly sparse. Even so, it is our contention that the theme “learning communities” constitutes a crucial component of this state of the field review as it points to a powerful and longstanding perception in the field of an intrinsic connection that exists between adult learning and community life. The difficulty, however, is that, as important as this insight is, for much of the 20th century, it flowed against the broadest currents of research and practice developing in the field of adult learning. For the most part, the field of adult learning was and continues to be dominated by individualistic and cognitivist adult learning theories and practices. The dominant social interest animating the field has been to find ways to enhance the capacity of the individualized learner to carry out the varied social roles of modern society (typically cast in fairly economic terms). As a result, the connection between community and adult learning has not received the strong support in the field as more mainstream themes, not because it is unimportant, but because it has run against the interests of dominant social forces.

As a consequence of the rather subterranean status of viewing learning and community as related, rather than expecting to find a preponderance of explicit theory related to our term in the field of adult learning, we anticipated that we would have to search for clues of its presence in a much broader research arena. To help us in this task, we decided early on to collect data in ten areas:

- Citizenship, Governance and Justice
- Community Development
- Cooperative and Sustainable Economy
- Environment and Transportation
- Health and Aging
- Inclusiveness
- Literacy, Schools and Universities

- Multiculturalism and Diversity
- Spirituality and Churches
- Technology and Workplace

We thought that these ten areas were fairly representative of different sectors within which community research and practice were most active. In the process of gathering information we felt addressed the general theme of learning communities in these areas, however, we began to discern a more nuanced picture of the ways the term “learning communities” underpins research and practice in the field. A key distinction that began to emerge was the extent to which the connection between learning and community was explicitly recognized, theorized and/or subjected to specific inquiry in the various literatures. Further deliberation led us to distinguish four criteria that we began to use to categorize the literature we were amassing.

- Learning and community not explicitly linked
- Learning and community explicitly linked but with limited connection
- Learning and community inherently linked but not explicitly theorized
- Learning and community inherently linked and explicitly theorized

In addition to the larger and overall neglect in the field of the importance of “learning communities,” our more systematic search of the literature began to reveal a more nuanced picture of this larger gap. We report these findings in Section C of this report.

SECTION A: REVIEW OF EXISTING THEMATIC AREA KNOWLEDGE

In Section A, we begin our review of the existing thematic area knowledge. We have divided Section A up into four main parts. The first is an overview of the databases that we have searched for literature in the area, and the key terms we searched for, along with how those searches were conducted.

The second part, is a literature review of research in the field, commentaries on this research, editorial remarks on the policies and politics of learning communities, nation, and provincial reports, and finally international research on the theme area.

The third part investigates research organizations, programs of practice that develops research, and networks of organizations that deal with “learning communities.”

Finally, the fourth part investigates existing funded research programs, and research agendas, as well as researchers in the field that have not been identified through the review of literature, or research organizations.

DATABASES SEARCHED

The databases searched include:

- The “Novanet” Catalogue, which incorporates the Atlantic School of Theology, Dalhousie University, Saint Mary’s University, Mount Saint Vincent University, University of King’s College, Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Nova Scotia Community Colleges, University College of Cape Breton, and St. Francis Xavier University.
- ERIC
- CBCA Education
- Academic Search Primer
- ProQuest
- SocINDEX
- JSTOR- Arts and Sciences Collection
- Web of Science
- Library of Congress (USA)
- National Library of Canada

- Thesis Canada
- CASAE Thesis database
- Specific Collections of the University of Toronto, and the University of Alberta.

These databases were selected for several reasons. First, researchers chose databases that would be most likely to provide materials that they could access and review. Given that the research for this component of the study was conducted at a smaller university, the researchers had to be selective about using databases that might turn up interesting but inaccessible materials. Because interlibrary loans were not possible given the research timeframe, researchers primarily searched for monographs using Nova Scotia’s interuniversity library system, Novanet. Second, as this review focused on the state of the field of adult learning in Canada, priority was placed on searching for Canadian materials in Canadian databases. Third, researchers searched large comprehensive databases like Academic Search Premier, Proquest, Web of Science and ERIC as these provide ready access to a growing number of on-line documents and resources. In total, these databases reference more than 10,000 academic journals and millions of academic articles. Forth, the researchers chose these databases for their strong reputation as reliable sources of relevant and credible academic research.

KEY TERMS SEARCHED

Utilizing the databases above, the terms searched include our key categories:

Citizenship, Governance and Justice, Multiculturalism and Diversity, Inclusiveness, Environment and Transportation, Health and Aging, Community Development, Cooperative and Sustainable Economy, Literacy, Schools and Universities, Spirituality and Churches, Technology and Workplace.

To define these categories in a manner more specific to the project, they were searched as subjects, titles, abstracts, keywords and texts, where available by specific search functions. In addition, the method included isolating multi-term texts in quotations to locate exact phrases. They were also searched in the databases in conjunction with the terms “Learning”, “Community” and “Canada.”

For example, the term “health” was searched using the functions “*and Community and Canada.*” As well as “*health and learning or community and Canada.*” The phrases used in conjunction with the key terms (i.e. “learning”, “community”, and “Canada”), were also prioritized in different and sequential order in the various searches. This allowed for the identification of different priorities within the research to be identified. As the capacity of the databases allowed, the search strings were used to focus the research from the broad terms, to narrower ones. The use of the identifier “Canada” in the search string as different

fields, also allowed the identification of research done in Canada, about Canada, or by Canadians, depending on the placement and the function of the search. The term was simply removed and searches were carried out in the same method, when identifying international work.

In the following review of the literature, we have cited samples of our findings. It is important to note that these samples are some of the most pertinent findings for our field. Although all of our findings are not represented here because of weaker connections to the field, the number of samples in each category is a good representation of the percentage of the total field that we have found.

CITIZENSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND JUSTICE

The key words citizenship, governance and justice were a particularly fruitful area in which to explore the notion of learning communities in the literature. For instance, an important insight held by many commentators on notions of citizenship is the deep connection between civic engagement and the development of capacities for learning in community. In Canada, an important contributor to our understanding of how community learning is connected to capacities for citizenship is Michael Welton (2001; 2002). Other commentators like Schugurensky and Myers (2003), Martin (2003), Benn (2000) and Van der Veen (2003) demonstrate how community development can be achieved through community learning processes leading to active citizen engagement. Other commentators like Osborne (2004) discuss how schools can foster citizenship by engaging students in community learning processes. Importantly, some of the most explicit writing on the inherent connection between learning and communities appears in this literature. Authors, here, are expressly concerned with the ways globalization and neo-liberalism has diminished the notion of the citizen. Commentators like Welton offer fine insights into how learning communities issue a deeply radical challenge to contemporary forces of global domination.

Interestingly, the key term, governance was not linked in any substantial way to discussions of community learning. The governance literature in Canada deals mostly with how to development bureaucratic and community-based governance structures. Only rarely is learning discussed in anything but an individualistic fashion.

Justice, on the other hand, particularly issues like community policing, contain many references to learning in communities. For example, efforts to establish systems of community policing and restorative justice (particularly in aboriginal communities) as described in Chacko and Nancoo (1993), Dickson-Gilmore and LaPrairie (2005), and McKenna (2000) has fostered the development of learning communities oriented to fostering new forms of policing and social justice

.Amer, E. (1980). *Yes we can!: how to organize citizen action*. Ottawa: Synergistics Consulting.

Benn, R. (2000). The genesis of active citizenship in the learning society. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 32(2), 241.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

“Community development” is a very rich area of research and practice that focuses on the transformation and/or conservation of certain qualities of community. It is in this area of research that we begin to encounter an explicit and theorized treatment of the concept of learning communities. In particular, Canadian research by Faris (1998, 2001, 2003), the British Columbia Ministry of Community Development Cooperatives and Volunteers (2000), and Sokal, (2003), have brought the importance linkage between adult learning and community development to the forefront. Of this Canadian research, Ron Faris seems to have been one of the most active researchers in the field. We feel that one of the strengths

of Faris' work has been the ability to make his work relevant to a broad area, all the while deepening the link between learning and community:

“neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities and regions in which the concept of lifelong learning is explicitly used as an organizing principle and social goal. The learning resources of the community are mobilized to foster environmentally sustainable economic development and social inclusion.” (Faris, 2003)

Notable in Farris' quotation are the ties to environmental sustainability and economic development, the many levels of community (i.e. neighbourhoods to regions), and the emphasis on social inclusion and social goals of lifelong learning. Farris also stresses the need to “explicitly” use lifelong learning as an organizational tool.

In Canada, there also seems to be an emerging field of research that is beginning to make linkages between inner-city life and learning communities. We have seen Begoray, Sutherland & Sokol (2005), Sutherland & Sokal (2003), and Dillon (2004), use the concept to understand the challenges of urban life.

In the section on community development, we can find the work of other researchers that also are making the connection of learning communities. Castle & Estes (1995) use the term to enhance an aspect of performance, but Duke (2004), ties the concept to adult learning explicitly.

Given the research done on the subject, we felt it necessary to include the research that has been done on the development of university and college learning communities. Gillespie (2001), Given (1999), Harlacher & Gollattschuck (1992), and Howser (1998), all have published work on this subject. The nature of the work is somewhat tricky to classify. While we have included a separate section on the notion of learning communities in Schools and Universities, the university will often take on a different meaning of community than that of a school. Work on University learning communities can often encompass many facets of life that school learning communities don't. Because of this, there occurs an overlap that happens between the two sections.

There is also important work about Community Development in this section that has great ramifications for learning communities but does not specifically use the term. This literature includes contributions from such researchers as Lotz (1970, 1977, 1998), Lotz & MacIntyre (2003), Lotz & Welton, (1997), and Wharf (1978, 1992). Some of the work gives us regional (Lotz, 1970), or historical (Lotz & Welton, 1997) Canadian perspectives that provide valuable context to the field. Likewise, Warf's (1978, 1992) research has provided us with important insights about the nature of community.

There exist a number of important government documents in this area as well by the Rural Secretariat (2001), as well as the government of Saskatchewan (1995, 1996).

The area of Community Development also contains important international research on learning communities. Notably, Longworth (2005), as well as the Learning Communities Network (1996). Longworth's work on Learning Communities has been notable in Europe.

As well, Wenger (1998) offers a particularly widely used theory, “communities of practice,” that has great relevance to the “learning communities” concept. Wenger’s concept of communities of practice, can be seen referenced and used as a basis for studying learning communities (i.e. Barton & Tusting, 2006). Wenger stresses that the entity he refers to as a community of practice is something that allows us to understand that our community connections are a central aspect for human learning processes. Wenger’s community of practice allows us to understand that community is not simply limited to a geographical place (i.e. a city or housing complex), but is derived at by understanding that our practice through learning creates community. With this understanding, we are able to use the term “community” in a tangible tangeable manner. It also helps us to accomplish two important steps. First we are able to account for things such as online communities, and communities of interests that are not easily understood by their geographical constraints. Second, we are able to offer explanations of community that take into account lifelong learning that is not simply an aspect of community, rather it is the generative mechanism for community. An important aspect to remember about a community of practice is that Wenger asserts that learning is a “negotiation of meaning” (p. 72) amongst the members. By stressing the communicative aspect, it allows us to understand that an entity such as on-line community “is not defined merely by who knows whom or who talks with whom in a network of interpersonal relations through which information flows” (p. 74). Rather the community is a negotiation of meaning amongst participants in the community. Wenger asserts that this understanding emphasizes our “mutual relationships” (p. 76), and “joint enterprise” (p. 77) within community. Wenger’s explanation of the concept of participation and community is an important insight to balance ideas of structure and agency. This interplay between structures and our agency in community is also an aspect that is explored by British author, Margaret Archer (2000).

Cole (1996), Donald (2001), and Tomasello (1999) examine how communities have been able to develop through acts of human learning. Tomasello is of significance in understanding learning communities, because of the work that he has done to show that our ability to learn is a derivative of our participation in community. In this way, community is not an ancillary notion to the concept of human action and interaction. Rather, community is a generative mechanism for human learning.

Tomasello bases his argument of human cognition in a unique blend of social science research and evolutionary theory. He details how humans have needed community (and culture) to develop learning capacity both as a history of humans and across lifespan development. In detailing the history of human cognitive development, Tomasello illustrates that our social structure (i.e. community) has generated in large part our cultural learning tools. That is to say, our ability to form specific communities through social organization, has allowed for the development of communities of practice through learning. Tomasello also details how across human developmental processes, we gain the ability to learn as we first engage in communities. This research is important when considering that learning communities, indeed all acts of cultural learning are generated by the structure of community.

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CO-OPERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

This section deals with the ramifications that economy has on a learning community. There are two important points of focus in this section: “community economic development” and “co-operatives.” The notion of community economic development (CED) has been driven by research by Urban Affairs Canada, Clarke, (1981), De la Mothe, (2003), Kassirer, (1997), Newman, (1986), Perry, Fontan, Lewis, (1993), Roseland, (1992), and Shragge (1997).

In the area of co-operatives, we can see important Canadian research by the Co-operatives Branch (1998), Ward-Whate (1994), and the Worker Ownership Development Foundation (1985). We will see a great deal more resources on workers cooperatives when we study the research organizations in the second part of Section A.

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ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

The area of Environment and Transportation seems to lack formal research to address learning communities. In Canada, Taylor (1995) addresses the subject area. Internationally though, we can also consider Bowers, (2001), and Chatterjee, (1999), for the importance of their research. The issue of Environment is very important to the subject of learning communities, and as we will see in the latter part of Section A, there is a lot of work being done on a community and organizational level to further and deepen our understanding of the implications of learning communities for environmental movements.

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HEALTH AND AGING

The issue of Health and Aging, as it pertains to learning communities, can be seen in a few different areas of specialization. One of those is community nursing as exemplified by the research of Stamler, (2005), Stewart, (2000), and Vollman, (2004). Learning communities also are addressed as part of the research on “Healthy Communities” (JMD Health Systems Research, 1996), and “Active Communities” (Robichaud, 1991).

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INCLUSIVENESS

In the area of “Inclusiveness”, there are really two types of inclusiveness that the research addresses.-. The first is the issue of geographical proximity. This is the nature of remote communities and actual physical barriers to the participation of communities. The second type of research deals with the cultural barriers for participation in a community of

practice. In the first section, Bersch, & Lund (2002), DeSanctis, Wright, & Jiang, (2001), and McMullen, & Rohrbach. (2003), all deal with geography and remote Learning communities.

In the second category, we can see the work of Bulach, Brown, & Potter, (1998), and Larrivee, (2000) direct research to caring learning communities. Also dealing with the destruction of cultural barriers to learning communities, is Ehrlich, Wilson, & Goal (2001), and Moreno, (1990). Notable international research includes, Howard, & England-Kennedy (2001), and Chin, & Carroll, (2000).

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LITERACY, SCHOOLS, AND UNIVERSITIES

Most of the research that is explicitly called “Learning Communities,” can be found in the two categories of “Literacy, Schools, and Universities,” and “Technology and Workplace.” Early on, the British Columbia Department of Education (1975) was using the term “Learning Communities” to address the community college system in that province. More recently though, the Calgary Board of Education (1998) has also used the term. The term has often taken on the meaning of something that is instituted as a means to enhance professional development such as Blaisdell & Cox (2004), Boyd (2005), Caine & Caine (2000), Camp & Gilmour (2005), and Carpenter, Dublin & Harper (2005). Similarly, the term has been used to describe new teaching techniques like Allen, Cary & Delgado (1995), Bailey (1999), and Moreno (2004).

We can see research take on different aspects of learning and community in this section as well. For instance, Aspin (2000) uses the terminology to describe the community that involves lifelong learning (i.e. the formal school setting), as well as integrating the community at large into schools. As an example, he explains that, “Schools can provide an important cultural venue for engagement in cultural and artistic pursuits. Schools are in a position to promote the widest possible participation in cultural life, and this will be of major assistance in the aspiration and commitment to create a better integrated community. It is to make possible and promote such an integrated community that schools must develop more accessible cultural and artistic programmes” (p. 79).

We can see a number of research projects that make an attempt to account for learning communities to act as tools for inclusion and emancipation within school and university settings. Included in this is the work of Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes (1998); Eby & Gilbert (2000); Novizk, Kress & Elias (2002); Dockendorf (2004); Petrone (2004); and Laidlay (2005). We feel that this research is of the utmost importance for proceeding with research in the field. As Blaisdell & Cox (2004) describe, learning communities help display a “high 'interest and caring' as well as a deterrent to feelings of malaise and marginality” (p. 147). Both aspects of displaying interest and caring, as well as deterring marginality are important for Canada as we move forward with a diverse and multicultural society.

As with the later section on workplace learning communities, we would point to an unfortunate trend in the research on learning communities. This trend is the separation of the term “community” from Wenger's (1998) idea of community of practice, to the mechanistic and pre-determined idea of community as a tool to necessitate a certain outcome of learning. This trend is unfortunate because community is separated from being a generative mechanism of all cultural learning, to become a tool that we can use as an option to aid specific learning outcomes. For instance, Brower & Dettinger (1998) claims that communities “must stand for something, meaning they must have a boundary that defines who is and is not a member” and that we must “create communities that have strong identities without being elitist, that are defined by their goals and missions rather than by who they exclude” (p. 16). Put in these terms, the idea of community is separated from its organic and ontogenetic place in learning.

As we will see in the section on Technology, Davis & Sumara (2001), identify this latter use of “community” as something that is a complicated entity and not a complex entity, like

a city neighbourhood. In many cases, these uses of the term “Learning Community” also fail to deal with many of the social complexities and injustices that can afflict complex communities.

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MULTICULTURALISM AND DIVERSITY

In the section on Multiculturalism and Diversity, we see some of the research specifically on learning communities begin to be drawn out. In Canada, we can refer to Clague's (2004) work on diversity in online learning communities as a starting point for further Canadian research as it pertains to technology and diversity in Learning communities. Internationally, Boyle-Baise (2002), Gregory (1997) Gutierrez (2002), Nieto, (1999), and Ortiz (2000), all provide an important theoretical basis for Canadian work to build upon. Also, of international importance is Duke (2004), in conjunction with Great Britain. Dept. for Education and Skills and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, for England and Wales, provide interesting comparative international research into learning communities.

Boyle-Baise, M. (2002). *Multicultural service learning: educating teachers in diverse communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Clague, J. E. (2004). *What can educators do to better accommodate culturally diverse learners in online learning communities?* [microform]. Ottawa: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada.

- Duke, C., Great Britain. Dept. for Education and Skills., & National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales). (2004). *Learning communities: signposts from international experience*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.
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- Gregory, E. (1997). *One child, many worlds: early learning in multicultural communities*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Gutierrez, K. D. (2002). Studying cultural practices in urban learning communities. *Human Development (Karger)*, 45(4), 312-321.
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- Ortiz, A. M. (2000). Expressing cultural identity in the learning community: opportunities and challenges. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning* (82), 67.
- Pierce, K. M., Gilles, C., & Barnes, D. R. (1993). *Cycles of meaning: exploring the potential of talk in learning communities*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.
- Prawat, R. S. (1992). From individual differences to learning communities – our changing focus. *Educational Leadership*, 49(7), 9.

SPIRITUALITY AND CHURCHES

There has been some effort to explore the concept of learning communities within the context of spirituality and churches such as by Campbell (2000), and Harris (2001). There has also been a movement within the United Church of Canada (1994), to develop learning communities. For more on this see the “Existing Funded Research Programs” section at the end of Section A.

- Bauerochse, L., World Council of Churches., & Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland. (2001). *Learning to live together: interchurch partnerships as ecumenical communities of learning*. Geneva: WCC Publications.
- Campbell, D. G., & Alban Institute. (2000). *Congregations as learning communities: tools for shaping your future*. Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute.

- Dumestre, M. J. (1995). Postfundamentalism and the Christian intentional learning community. *Religious Education*, 90(2), 190.
- Everist, N. C. (2001). Connecting the learning community and vocation in the public world. *Religious Education*, 96(3), 294-309.
- Harris, B. A. (2001). The power of creating a spiritual learning community. *Adult Learning*, 12(3), 22.
- Huberman, S. (2004). From good to great: how to create Jewish learning communities of excellence. *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, 80(2/3), 175-179.
- Lanser-Van Der Velde, A. (2004). The church as learning community, a comprehensive guide to Christian education by Norma Everist Cook. *Religious Education*, 99(2), 200-203.
- Sutcliffe, J., World Council of Churches., & World Lutheran Federation. (1974). *Learning community*. Nutfield: Denholm House Press [for] the World Council of Churches.
- United Church of Canada. Division of Ministry Personnel and Education. Candidature Committee. (1994). *Learning in community: an invitation to ministry* (Rev. ed.). Toronto: Candidature Committee, Division of Ministry Personnel and Education, The United Church of Canada.
- Vogel, L.J. (1991). *Teaching and learning in communities of faith: empowering adults through religious education* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

TECHNOLOGY AND WORKPLACE

In the last “key terms” section, we see the second of the most prevalent sections of research. The term “Learning Community” is often used to describe either the formation of the idea of community in cyberspace Bain (2004), Buckingham (2003), Russell (1999), and Tu (2004), or deal with access to remote communities Chang (2003), Chen (2003), and Grice (2003). As computers and cyber networks have risen both in popularity as well in number, this category has gained popularity for researchers. Because these cyber networks have gained popularity, it has offered a challenge to people who have been doing research and conceptualizing the idea of community. In many ways, the concept of community in cyberspace has been a benefit in both understanding the concept of community, as well as tying learning back to the concept. As Chen (2003), points out, networked learning communities have a number of desirable features such as “fostering a sense of belonging and appreciation for the rituals of a group” (p. 1).

One thing that is concerning in this area of research in particular, is the tendency to treat the idea of learning communities as planned, static, or controlled entities. For example, Barabs, Kling, & Gray (2004) divide the idea of learning communities up and classifies them as one on of task based, practice based, or knowledge based. Canadians Davis & Sumara (2001), identify that this type of thought often relies on the separation of community from a “complex” entity to a “complicated” one. The difference being that complicated entities are the sum of their parts. As such, if people treat learning communities that are complicated entities that they can construct for the attainment of specific goals, they often will fail to account for the intricate nature of human relationships. Davis & Sumara argue that learning communities are complex entities. This means that rather than being the sum of their parts,

learning communities can have properties and aspects that will emerge from them that are irreducible to their parts.

As with all of the research done on learning communities, we would highlight the need to research emancipatory education. As Contu, Grey & Ortenblad (2003) illustrate, research on learning often assumes that implicit in the term 'learning' is something that is always good or just. Their research points out that we often uncritically assume the concept of learning and accept it as a fetish for progress. This is not always the case however. In fact, the term 'community' is also often mustered uncritically. Lost on some of the research is the fact that the quality of learning and community is something that should be researched and considered as well.

Allee, V. (2002). *The future of knowledge: increasing prosperity through value networks*. San Francisco: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Argyris, C., and Schon, D. (1978). *Organizational learning: a theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Arias-Hernandez, R. (2004). Learning communities that build appropriate technology. *World Futures: The Journal of General Evolution*, 60(1/2), 81-90.

Baim, S. (2004). Blogs help create learning community. *Online Classroom*, 5.

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Barlow, D. (2005). On common ground: the power of professional learning communities. *Education Digest*, 70(8), 76-77.

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Bauman, Marcy (1 December). Online learning communities. *Output -Education Computing Organization of Ontario*, 21-22+. Retrieved November 7, 2005, from CBCA Education database.

Brown, John Seeley and Duguid, Paul (2000). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

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Caverly, D. C., & MacDonald, L. (2002). Techtalk: online learning communities. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 25(3), 36.

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- Chenail, R. J. (2004). When Disney meets the research park: metaphors and models for engineering an online learning community of tomorrow. *Internet & Higher Education*, 7(2), 107-121.
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- Davenport, T., and Prusak, L. (1998) *Working knowledge: how organizations manage what they know*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (2001). Learning communities: understanding the workplace as a complex system. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*(92), 85.
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- Gahagan, J. (2004). What they're reading: web communities for learning community work. *About Campus*, 9(4), 30-32.
- Galura, J. A. (2004). *Engaging the whole of service-learning, diversity, and learning communities*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: OCSL Press at the University of Michigan.
- Garvin, D. (2000). *Learning in action: a guide to putting the learning organization to work*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Garrick, J. (1998). *Informal learning in the workplace: unmasking human resource development*. London; New York: Routledge.
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- Jacobs, N., & McFarlane, A. (2005). Conferences as learning communities: some early lessons in using back-channel technologies at an academic conference: distributed intelligence or divided attention? *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 21(5), 317-329.
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- Lock, J. V. (2002). Laying the groundwork for the development of learning communities with online courses. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 3(4), 395.
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- Luppigini, R. (2003). Categories of virtual learning communities for educational design. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* 4(4), 409-416.
- MacLachlan, D. T. (2005). *Exploring self-direction in an online learning community* [microform]. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada/Bibliothèque et Archives Canada.
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- Morrison, S. (2000). *Media and milieu: exploring the foundations of learning community* [microform]. Ottawa: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada.
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- Newman, A., & Smith, M. (1999). How to create a virtual learning community. *Training & Development*, 53(7), 44.
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- O'Neill, M. J. (2004). *Learning communities and mind technologies a construct for online course design and delivery* [microform]. Ottawa: National Library of Canada/Bibliothèque nationale du Canada.
- Orey, M., Koenecke, L., & Crozier, J. (2003). Learning communities via the internet ã la epic learning: you can lead the horses to water, but you cannot get them to drink. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 40(3), 260.
- Palloff, R. M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace: effective strategies for the online classroom* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
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- Sakomoto, T. (2002). Educational reform based on e-learning: the establishment of an international web-based learning community. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6(2), 156-171.

- Sandelands, E. (1998). Creating an online library to support a virtual learning community. *Internet Research*, 8(1), 75.
- Santovec, M. L. (2004). Virtual learning communities lead to 80 percent retention at WGU. *Distance Education Report*, 8(8), 4.
- Scharff, C., & Brown, H. (2004). Thinking through computing: the power of learning communities. *Computer Science Education*, 14(4), 297-320.
- Schlegel, B., & Eastmond, D. V. (2004). Electronic learning communities: current issues and best practices. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 5(3), 219-222.
- Schwier, Richard A, Daniel, Ben, McCalla, Gordon. (1 October). Social capital in virtual learning communities and distributed communities of practice. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*, 113-139. Retrieved November 7, 2005, from CBCA Education database.
- Seelan, S. K., Laguette, S., Casady, G. M., & Seielstad, G. A. (2003). Remote sensing applications for precision agriculture: A learning community approach. *Remote Sensing of Environment*, 88(1/2), 157.
- Sierra, C., & Folger, T. (2003). Building a dynamic online learning community among adult learners. *Educational Media International*, 40(1/2), 49.
- Senge, P. (1994). *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Currency/Doubleday.
- Teo, H.-H., Chan, H.-C., Wei, K.-K., & Zhang, Z. (2003). Evaluating information accessibility and community adaptivity features for sustaining virtual learning communities. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 59(5), 671.
- Thompson, S. C., Gregg, L., & Niska, J. M. (2004). Professional learning communities, leadership, and student learning. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 28(1), 35-54.
- Tosko, M. (2005). Online collaborative learning communities: twenty-one designs to building an online collaborative learning community (review). *Booklist*, 101(18), 1703.
- Tu, C.-H. (2004). *Online collaborative learning communities: twenty-one designs to building an online collaborative learning community*. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited.
- Turner, R. (2001). Using technology to create a scientific learning community. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 78(6), 717.
- Vaughan, N. (2004). Technology in support of faculty learning communities. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning* (97), 101-109.
- Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, V. J. (1999). Sculpting the learning community: new forms of working and organizing. *NASPP Bulletin*, 83(604), 78.
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- Wiesenberg, F. P., & Willment, J.-A. H. (2001). Creating continuing professional online learning communities. *Adult Learning*, 12(1), 5.

Wilson, J. D., Cordry, S. A., & King, N. (2004). Building learning communities with distance learning instruction. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 48(6), 20-22.

Zhu, E., & Baylen, D. (2005). From learning community to community learning: pedagogy, technology and interactivity. *Educational Media International*, 42(3), 251-268.

RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND NETWORKS:

For a state of the field review, we also reviewed Research Institutions, Organizations, and Networks that are dealing with topics that are important to the topic of learning communities. In reviewing the institutions' publications, we have included a wider range and scope than in the literature review section. This is important for two reasons. First, it allows us to see how much of the organization's attention is turned, either explicitly or implicitly, to the area of learning communities. Second, it allows us to understand the capacity for publication by the organization in the subject area.

The selection of organizations, as in literature for this review, is a somewhat delicate process. Because of constraints on the length of the report, as well as time, we focused on many of the larger scale organizations. This approach is problematic though, while we used some of the largest scales of organizations in the report, we recognize, we will miss some of the best examples of learning communities.

In reviewing the work done by these institutions, we feel that while there is little using the exact term "learning community" (for an example of an exception see: Makhoul, A. (2004). *Learning communities in the Monashee*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Makhoul, A. (2004). *Whistler-Mount Currie learning community's project*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Office of Learning Technologies. (1998). *Models of community learning networks in Canada*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies & Canadian Community for Economic Development Network. (2002). *Best practices workshop on learning communities*. Report of the skills and learning engagement workshop at the Canadian community economic development conference, Winnipeg, September 26, 2002. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.) there is, nonetheless, none the less, a great deal of pertinent research to learning in communities, and the relationship that learning has to community. Here we would point to the work of A. Makhoul ((2004). *Lillooet is learning*. & (2000). *Engaging students and communities: Voices from Nova Scotia*.), in providing examples of specific instances of learning in communities.

It is also worth noting that there is important work on building and sustaining community in Canada (Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2002). *Learning from the journey: Reflections on the Rebuilding Communities Initiative* by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. & Nozick, M. (1992). *No place like home: Building sustainable communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development) for example.

There is also a large amount of work that focuses on the general idea of community which relies on learning such as: Simpson, A. (2001). *Opening dialogue, opening minds: Encouraging citizen engagement*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy; Torjman, S., & Leviten-Reid, E. (2003). *Comprehensive community initiatives. / Initiatives communautaires intégrées*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy & Canadian CED Network. (2003). *Towards a new agenda for communities*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

In examining the organizations, it was also important to note the existing networks, and partnerships, as it allows the Canadian Council on Learning to identify existing networks and capacity of the organization to partner on specific projects.

Action for Neighborhood Change

<http://www.anccommunity.ca>

ANC describes itself as unique learning initiative to create and sustain healthy communities. In collaboration with the United Way, it has chosen to start initiatives in the cities of Surrey, Regina, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax. Its goals include:

- To build the capacity of individuals, families and neighbourhoods;
- To strengthen the responsiveness and coordination of policy and program strategies while addressing issues such as personal security, substance abuse, health, housing stability, learning and skills development, and literacy. (<http://www.anccommunity.ca/AboutANC.html>, retrieved, Nov. 3/05)

Partners for the ANC include, the United Way, Tamarack, the Caledon Institute for social policy, and the National Film Board.

ANC has identified strategic action research, as a priority to learn to improve living conditions for communities. ANC's primary goal is focused on action research, but also provides some resources of formalized research. In addition to linking research by the Caledon Institute, Action for Neighborhood Change also distributes other research that is relevant to their field. The research is relevant in the discussion of community development and learning.

Some examples include:

- Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2002). *Learning from the journey: Reflections on the Rebuilding Communities Initiative by the Annie E. Casey Foundation*. (Annie E. Casey Foundation).
- Chrislip, D.D., & Larson, C.E. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference*. (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).
- Connolly, P., & Lukas, C. (2002). *Strengthening nonprofit performance: A funder's guide to capacity building*. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation).
- Connor, J., & Kadel-Taras, S. (2003) *Community visions, community solutions: grantmaking for comprehensive impact*. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation).
- Kretzmann, J.P., & McKnight, J.L. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. (ACTA Publications).
- Ray, K. (2002). *The nimble collaboration: Fine-tuning your collaboration for lasting success*. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation).

Caledon Institute of Social Policy

<http://www.caledoninst.org/>

The Caledon Institute was established in 1992, as a private, non-profit institution with charitable status. The primary funder for the organization is the Maytree Foundation. The Caledon Institution is dedicated to research in social policy in Canada. The Institute seeks to investigate and inform a “new architecture for social policy.” The institute focuses on the areas of: community capacity-building, social services, social spending, income security, employment services, and health.

The Caledon Institute is also partners with projects such as Tamarack’s “Vibrant Communities” project, as well as with the Action for Neighbourhood Change.

Their research varies from op-ed pieces, to technical research books. The institute has won awards for its publications in the categories of knowledge brokering as well as public discourse. The Caledon has a mass of publications that vary in scale as well as subject. This includes literature specifically on learning communities, as well as subjects that are important for the broader discourse of social policy. The Caledon Institute has an important role in Canada when it comes to the discussion and influence of public policy. This role could be vital for the CCL, as it considers the dissemination and implementation of its research in the field of Adult Learning, and more specifically, “Learning Communities”.

The Caledon Institute’s research and publication capacity in relation to learning communities is reflected in the following titles:

Battle, K. (1993). *Missing a chance for a solid punch at poverty*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Battle, K. (1995). *Government fights growing gap between rich and poor*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

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Canadian Co-operative Association

<http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

The CCA is a non-profit, co-operative that serves a leadership role for Canada, in the development and sustainability of co-ops and credit unions. This work is done on a national and international level.

The Association publishes a number of resources that pertain to community development through the establishment of locally owned initiatives.

Canadian Co-operative Association. (2003). *Opportunities for co-operative health provision in rural, remote and northern aboriginal communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Co-operative Association.

Canadian Co-operative Association. (2003). *Producer adaptation to the new agriculture: application of the co-operative model to changes in market specifications, regulation and service access*. Ottawa: Canadian Co-operative Association.

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Canadian Co-operative Association. (2001). *Agricultural adaptation: A co-operative approach*. Ottawa: Canadian Co-operative Association.

Canadian Co-operative Association. (2001). *Aboriginal co-operative in Canada: Current situation and potential for growth*. Ottawa: Canadian Co-operative Association.

The Canadian Community Economic Development (CED) Network

<http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/home.asp>

The CED Network, is a charitable non-profit network that is made up of CED member institutions and individuals. The CED Network hosts a directory of Canadian CED member institutions from across Canada.

The Network also focuses energy on initiatives such as a National Policy Council, a Co-operative development Initiative, and a Pan-Canadian Community Development Learning Network.

The CED Network also publishes a number of resources and research pieces in their field.

Canadian CED Network (2004). *A research report on the role of social economy in new media*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2004). *Concerns with administrative procedures of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2004). *A literature review on social inclusion and CED*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2004). *The art of advocacy: a handbook for non-profit organizations*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *CED Funding and delivery in Canada*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *Development of federal tax credits to support community investment in Canada*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *Human capital development in Canada: closing the gaps*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *Towards a new agenda for communities*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *Profile of CED in Canada*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2003). *An inventory of provincial and territorial government support to CED in Canada*. Victoria: Canadian CED Network.

Canadian CED Network. (2002). *Investing in Canada's communities: CCEDNet's policy framework*. (Victoria: Canadian CED Network)

Canadian Council for Social Development

<http://www.ccsd.ca>

The Canadian Council for Social Development (CCSD) is one of Canada's long standing not for profit organizations, dedicated to the promotion of social policy. Founded in 1920, the CCSD's mission is

to develop and promote progressive social policies inspired by social justice, equality and the empowerment of individuals and communities. We do this through research, consultation, public education and advocacy. Our main product is information. Our sources of funding include research contracts, the sale of publications and memberships, and donations.

(<http://www.ccsd.ca/aboutus.html>, retrieved, Oct. 30/05)

The CCSD offers statistics research in the area of poverty, welfare and income levels in Canada. The CCSD also works to develop initiatives in the areas of social architecture, voluntary sector development, and social services. The CCSD also involves itself in capacity network building in the areas of Social Data, Community Crime Prevention, Social Welfare, Disability Research, Cultural Diversity, and Social Inclusion.

Research projects related to learning communities by the CCSD include:

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (now Imagine Canada). (2004). Cornerstones of community: Highlights of the national survey of nonprofit and voluntary organizations (NSNVO). www.nonprofitscan.ca/research_at_CCP.asp?page=NSNVO#section2

Cracks in the foundation, community agency survey 2003 www.city.toronto.on.ca/depts/pdf/cns_survey_report.pdf

Howarth, R. (2003). Shaken foundations: The weakening of community building infrastructure in Toronto - Impacts of a five-year core funding freeze on Toronto's community-based social service organizations. (Toronto Neighbourhood Centres). www.TNC-Shaken-Foundations-June-03.pdf

Scott, K., & PIKE, D. (2004). *Funding Matters ... For our communities: Challenges and opportunities for funding innovation in Canada's nonprofit and voluntary sector*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Smith, A. (2003). *The dance: Seeking, administering and accounting for funding in the volunteer sector*. (Muttart Foundation). www.muttart.org/download/smith.pdf

The Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria. (2005). *The caring community: Accounting for the impacts of provincial government changes community reconstruction project final report*. www.communitycouncil.ca/resources.php

The national survey of nonprofit and voluntary organizations (NSNVO). www.ccp.ca

The satellite account of nonprofit institutions and volunteering. www.vsi-isbc.ca

Publications include:

Abele, F., Graham, K., Ker, A., Maioni, A., & Phillips, S. (1998). *Talking with Canadians: Citizen engagement and the social union*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Burns, J., Lenko, S., & Balthazar, H. (1989). *Resources for self-help: Materials held by NVOs in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Canadian Council on Social Development. (1986). *Community-based health and social services*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Church Council on Justice and Corrections, & Canadian Council on Social Development. (1989). *Family violence in a patriarchal culture: A challenge to our way of living*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Jackson, A. (2000). *Why we don't have to choose between social justice and economic growth: The myth of the equity/efficiency trade-off*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Jackson, A., & Sanger, M. (2003). *When worlds collide*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Jackson, A., Schetagne, S., & Smith, P. (2002). *A community growing apart: Income gaps and changing needs in the city of Toronto in the 1990s*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

McLaughlin, M. (1987). *Homelessness in Canada: The report of the national inquiry*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Miller, S., & Miller, D. (1988). *North American self-help resource catalogue*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Nozick, M. (1992). *No place like home: Building sustainable communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Powell, M., Faghfoury, N., & Nyenhuis, P. (1988). *Fostering public participation: A brief discussion and selected annotated bibliography*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Robichaud, J.B., & Quiviger, C. (1991). *Active communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Ross, D.P., & Usher, P.J. (1986). *From the roots up: Economic development as if community mattered*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Social Action Commission. (1987). *From the grass roots: A critical critical consciousness approach to social justice in P.E.I.* Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Splane, R. (1996). *Seventy-five years of community service to Canada: The Canadian Council on Social Development 1920-1995*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Waller, I., & Weiler, D. (1984). *Crime prevention through social development: An overview with sources*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Ward, J. (1989). *Organizing for the homeless*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Weiler, R. *et al.* (1990). *Safer communities*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

The Canadian Research Alliance for Community Innovation and Networking (CRACIN)

The Canadian Research Alliance for Community Innovation and Networking is a National alliance among academic researchers, the Federal government, and community groups. The alliance is working with the government departments responsible for the “Connecting Canadians” program. The Alliance explores issues such as the sustainability

of community networking initiatives, and how these networks can enhance social capacity.

The primary goal of the Alliance is to document and assess how information technology capacity can contribute to local learning contexts. With this capacity, the Alliance is also examining how communities can connect together to strengthen social and cultural capacity.

Community Economic Development (CED) Institute

<http://www.uccb.ca/CED/>

The Community Economic Development Institute is housed at the University of Cape Breton.

The Institute offers multimedia resources on CED, as well as research published by the Cape Breton University Press.

- Foster, M., & Davis, B. (1995). *Regions at the crossroads: Strategic development case studies for the new economy*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Lotz, J. (1998). *The lichen factor: The quest for community development in Canada*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Lotz, J., & Macintyre, G.A. (2003). *Sustainable people: A new approach to community development*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Macintyre, G.A. (1995). *Active partners: Education and local development*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Macintyre, G.A. (Ed.) (1998). *Perspectives on communities: A community economic development roundtable*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Macleod, G. (1997). *From Mondragon to America: Experiments in community economic development*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.
- Neal, R. (1998). *Brotherhood economics: Women and co-operatives in Nova Scotia*. Cape Breton: Cape Breton University Press.

Coady International Institute

<http://www.coady.stfx.ca/>

The Coady International Institute is a part of St. Francis Xavier University, in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The institute was developed from Rev. Dr. Moses Coady's Extension Department of the University in 1928. Along with Coady's cousin, Rev. Jimmy Tompkins, the two men helped establish, co-operatives, and the "people's school", most commonly known as the "Antigonish Movement".

Today, the institute focuses on community development in the areas of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), Microfinance, Peacebuilding, Community Based Resource Management, Advocacy, and Knowledge Networks.

The Institute conducts some of its own research into these areas (see below). Perhaps one of the Institute's strongest areas, though, comes through its global knowledge networks. The institute is truly an international leader in the field of learning and community development. The Coady Institute is planning to develop web-based networks for its global partners. These networks could be invaluable for the CCL and the dissemination of knowledge and best practices on an international level.

- Cameron, C. (2005). *Empowering communities by applying community health impact assessment*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.

- Coyle, M. (2001). *People first: Pursuing a just economy*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Foster, M., & Mathie, A. (2001). *Situating asset-based community development in the international development context*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Gladkikh, O. (Ed.) (2002). *Democracy and active citizen engagement: Best practices in advocacy and networking*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Lee, N. (2004). *Microfinance, Economic justice and citizen capacity: The case of SEWA bank*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Mathie, A. (2001). *Including the excluded: Lessons learned from the poverty targeting strategies used by micro-finance providers*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Mathie, A., Cunningham, G. (2001). *From clients to citizens: Asset-Based Community Development as a strategy for community-driven development*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.
- Okafo, D. (2003). *From Prigogine to Freire: Attending to non-linearity in complex, online, social organization in ICTD design*. Antigonish: Coady International Institute.

The Maytree Foundation

<http://www.maytree.com>

The Maytree Foundation, which was established as a charitable foundation in 1982, is dedicated to the building of strong civic communities in Canada. The organization does this by addressing the issues of poverty and inequality. The Foundation involves itself in the identification, support and funding of organizations that advance these goals.

The Maytree Foundation “believes that there are three fundamental issues that threaten political and social stability: wealth disparities between and within nations; mass migration of people because of war, oppression and environmental disasters, and the degradation of the environment” (<http://www.maytree.com/About/about.html>, retrieved Nov. 2/05).

To counter act these beliefs, the Maytree Foundation adheres to the principle that communities have the potential to solve their own problems. Following this, the Maytree Foundation has developed special initiatives to meet these ends. They are:

Diaspora Dialogues. These dialogues engage Canadians with narratives of people who have migrated to Canada.

The Funders' Network on Racism and Poverty. This network is designed to provide a learning community for Canadian grantmakers. This community provides grantmakers resources on building capacity to affect social change, and disseminate information through the network.

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). This council helps to establish and strengthen the ties of community for newcomers, for the purpose of employment.

The Maytree Foundation also developed special programs such as:

Capacity Building and Management Training

Leadership and Diversity Programs

Financial Assistance for Immigrants and Refugees

The Foundation is currently partnered with Tamarack, The Caledon Institute, The Boreal Institute, The Public Justice Restoration Centre, and Naomi Alboim.

The Maytree Foundation has divided their research and publications into six categories. They are: Access to Professions and Trades, Cities and Immigration, Grantmaking, Immigrant Settlement, The New Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Refugee Policy. The Mayflower Foundation also provides distribution for some of the Caledon Institute's Research, as well.

Mwarigha M.S. (2002). *Towards a framework for local responsibility: Taking action to end the current limbo in immigrant settlement* - Toronto. Toronto: The Maytree Foundation.

The Maytree Foundation. (2001). *Strengthening newcomer communities: A dialogue for change, session proceedings*. Toronto: The Maytree Foundation.

The Maytree Foundation. (2001). *Who should get in? Rethinking immigration priorities, Halifax, session proceedings*. Toronto: The Maytree Foundation.

The Maytree Foundation. (2001). *Who should get in? Rethinking immigration priorities, Toronto, session proceedings*. Toronto: The Maytree Foundation.

Office of Learning Technologies

<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/topics/lxt-gxr.shtml>

The Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) is a part of the Federal Government's Social Development Canada (SDC), department. SDC is responsible for strengthening Canada's social programs. Its mission is:

To strengthen Canada's social foundations by supporting the well-being of individuals, families and communities and their participation through citizen-focused policies, programs and service. (http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/sd/about_us.shtml, Retrieved, Oct. 25)

They address their mission by:

- Reducing barriers and facilitating access to opportunities;
- Investing in people and strengthening communities;
- Delivering seamless, innovative and responsive service, both internally and externally;
- Working with federal partners, other governments and communities;
- Supporting our employees;
- Serving Canadians with integrity and commitment.

(http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/cs/comm/sd/about_us.shtml, Retrieved, Oct. 25)

The OLT also offers a number of initiatives that include:

- The Community Learning Networks (CLN) Initiative
- New Practices in Learning Technologies (NPLT) Initiative
- Learning Technologies in the Workplace (LTW) Initiative
- Research in e-Learning Initiative

The research and publications of the OLT, reflects its work in these initiatives.

Canadian Community for Economic Development Network. (2002). *Best practices workshop on learning communities. Report of the skills and learning engagement workshop at the Canadian community economic development conference, Winnipeg, September 26, 2002.* Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Ekos Research Associates Inc. and Lyndsay Green & Associates. (1999). *The impact of technologies on learning in the workplace.* Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Greenall, D., & Loizides, S. (2001). *Aboriginal digital opportunities addressing aboriginal learning needs through the use of learning technologies.* Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Groupe Comunicom. (1998). *New learning technologies and media in Quebec: Profile and posting of the main stakeholders.* Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Murray, D. (2001). *E-Learning for the workplace: Creating Canada's lifelong learners*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Office of Learning Technologies. (1998). *Models of community learning networks in Canada*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Office of Learning Technologies. (2003). *Policy conversation on future directions for community learning networks*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Reddick, A., & Boucher, C. (2002). *Tracking the dual digital*. Ottawa: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Office of Learning Technologies.

Roberts & Associates for the Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations and the Office of Learning Technologies and the Human Resources Partnerships Directorate, Human Resources Development Canada. (1999). *Professional development and learning technologies: Needs, issues, trends and activities*. Hull, Quebec: Public Works and Government Services Canada.

See also: Social Development Canada

Social Development Canada

http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/redirect_hr.html

For information on Social Development Canada, see the section on The Office of Learning Technologies, above.

Offord, D.R., Lipman, E.L., & Duku, E.K. (1998). *Sports, the arts and community programs: Rates and correlates of participation*. Ottawa: Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, Human Resources Development Canada.

Hatfield, M. (1997). *Concentrations of poverty and distressed neighbourhoods in Canada*. Ottawa: Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, Human Resources Development Canada.

Willms, J.D. (2003). *Ten hypotheses about socioeconomic gradients and community differences in children's developmental outcomes*. Ottawa: Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, Human Resources Development Canada.

Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement

www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Tamarack is a Canadian Institution founded in 2001. The goal of the organization is to engage Canadians in community learning and leadership for change. Stated in their words, their mission and objectives are:

“Our mission . . .Tamarack engages citizens in inspired action as they work and learn together on behalf of their communities to create and realize bold visions for the future.

We believe . . . in the transformative power of community.

We believe . . . in the value of social capital. The strength of our relationships with our families and neighbours has a direct, measurable, positive benefit on our sense of well-being and on the economic health of our communities.

We believe . . . in the promise of community engagement. Citizens working together in meaningful decision-making, taking leadership, drawing strength from each other and from their diversity of perspective and knowledge, create higher quality solutions and strengthen an overall sense of community responsibility. The whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

We believe . . . that to teach is to learn, and to learn is to teach. There is nothing more powerful than an organic learning system that brings together critical components of a community, to learn from and teach one another, to uncover knowledge in both success and even in failure, and to use that knowledge to effect positive and lasting change for all.

We hope . . . to contribute to a continual, national, learning circle. Our expertise in community engagement and specific guiding strategies helps facilitate engaged citizens to learn and to lead, to develop the tools needed to build and nurture healthy communities, and through Tamarack, make available that knowledge to other communities across the country.”

(<http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g1s2.html#belief>, retrieved Nov. 1, 2005)

Tamarack defines its role as a clearing house for information pertaining to community engagement. Tamarack has two major initiatives that are currently being undertaken that are specific to learning communities. The first is their “Vibrant Communities” initiative. This initiative aims at engaging citizens to collaborate, and learn together as a means of poverty reduction. Vibrant Communities has four key approaches to this end:

- “- Comprehensive local initiatives aimed at poverty reduction;
- Grassroots collaboration involving all sectors of the community in these initiatives;
- Identifying community assets and putting them to good use in poverty-reduction efforts;
- A commitment to learning, change and sharing our learnings – whether they are the product of our successes or failures.”

(<http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g2s1.html> retrieved Nov. 1/2005)

Second, Tamarack operates a Learning Centre, which offers online workshops, discussion boards, and “tele-learning” which allow resources to be shared across Canada. The workshops are places that Tamarack can share some of the research that has been done in the area of community engagement. Some of the workshops include:

- Urban Canada
- Jane Jacobs: Dark Age Ahead
- Leaders and leaderful communities
- What is a Vibrant Community?

Some of the additional online seminars that are offered by the institution include:

- The Canada We Want
- The Unique Needs and Roles of Canada's Large Cities
- Cities: Needs, Challenges, Opportunities
- Complex Systems Organizing
- Dynamic Community Engagement
- A Canada Fit for Children
- Creating the Kinds of Communities We Want
- Social Enterprise Growth
- Fundraising: Raising Funds, Finding Friends to Realize Bold Community Visions
- The Poverty Matrix

Tamarack offers other resources on research in the field of community engagement (i.e. models, health, environmental restoration, poverty reduction, policing, and crime prevention). They also offer strategies for community based involvement in, multi-sectored collaboration, asset building, comprehensive thinking and action, learning & change, and fundraising & Friendraising.

Tamarack operates on funding from various Foundations as well as private, community, and business partners.

As an organization, Tamarack has a great capacity for network building as well as the dissemination of information to communities. The organization has dedicated a great amount of effort to the development of the practices of information dissemination. This network capacity is of great importance in engaging communities with many of the resources that exist and are to exist through the CCL.

RESEARCHERS

In addition to the research that we have seen in other parts of Section A (i.e. the Literature Review as well as the Research Organizations), there are a number of researchers that have conducted research in the area of learning communities.

In the section on Researchers, as well as on Existing Funded Research Programs, the people and programs represented were chosen because the work that they were doing was explicitly focused on learning communities or represented an organization with the capacity for broad reaching implications for Canadians. The researchers and research programs listed here are people and programs that have not been included in the other aspects of our report, but are vital to the state of the field.

Dr. Darlene Clover

Dr. Susan Moisey, Athabasca University: Focusing on Open Learning, and Virtual Learning Communities for adults with developmental disabilities.

Bernie Slepko, St. Catharines, Ontario: Worked with “A Coalition for Self-Learning” on the publication *Creating Learning Communities*.

Larry Sackney, University of Saskatchewan; Keith Walker, University of Saskatchewan; Coral Mitchell, Brock University. Created the project “Building Capacity for Learning Communities: Schools that Work”. The project investigated the practices of schools that were successful in building capacity for developing learning communities.

Gary Hepburn, PhD, Acadia University: Studied “Facilitating a Virtual Learning Community in a Hybrid Post-Secondary Course”.

Stephen Downes: Studying E-learning communities and how Learning Communities use Learning.

Research Affiliates from UCCB's CED Institute

Ken Boyce, Consultant, Halifax, NS

Daniel Bunbury, PhD, North Sydney, NS

Leo J. Deveau, Independent Researcher & Freelance Writer, Wolfville, NS

Patrick Dunphy, Community Development Specialist, St. Catharines, ON

Catherine Ann Fuller, NS Office of Economic Development, Sydney, NS

Ariel Harper, Co-ordinator, CED Centre, NSCC, Truro, NS

Jim Lotz, Senior Research Fellow, CED Institute, Consultant & Author, Halifax, NS

Reuben Murphy, Nanuk Corporation, Hopedale, NF

Richard Provan, Dept. of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development, Arviat, NT

Jack Quarter, PhD, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Dale Shuttleworth, PhD, Executive Director, The Centre for Community & Economic
Renewal

Catherine Young, Manager, Internal Communications, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

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EXISTING FUNDED RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Identifying Inclusive Models of Lifelong Learning in Canada

The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML), has been administrating a National Literacy Secretariat project which is studying community learning groups. The groups they are studying are ones which are accessible to people, regardless of their education and literacy level. Researchers on the project include Guy Ewing, Tracey Mollins, Janice Brant, and Arthur Bull.

The funding was accessed through a National Literacy Secretariat development grant.

A Virtual Learning Community for Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

Athabasca University developed this research project in Feb. 2002, through a grant from the Office of Learning Technologies.

Learning Communities in the United Church

The United Church has developed grants to establish church learning communities that:

- discern and support existing effective models of continuing education for communities of learners
- develop further community learning opportunities
- provide funding for a limited number of learning communities
- analyze exemplars of continuing education (already in existence throughout the church)

The grants are coordinated through the Faith Formation and Education Unit of the church.

Rural Advanced Community of Learners (RACOL)

This project establishes a learning network to remote northern Alberta communities. Partners include The University of Alberta, The University of Calgary, and the Alberta Institute of Technology. The project was funded by CANARIE.

Virtual Veterinary Medicine Learning Community (V2MLC)

This project establishes a learning community for Veterinarians. It was established by the Ontario Veterinary College and the University of Guelph, through a grant from CANARIE.

Upper Skeena Learning Community Partnerships

In 2001, HRDC funded this project \$300,000, through the Office of Learning Technologies. The objective was to provide a learning network to Upper Skeena Region residents.

Building a School's Capacity as a Learning Community

Through Brock, and The University of Saskatchewan, this grant researched what elements can transform a school into a learning community. The funding was provided by SSHRC.

Community Learning Networks Initiative

The CLNI, is a contribution initiative that supports community based pilot projects that show innovation in using networks to improve adult learning in Canada. The initiative is coordinated through HRSDC.

Best Practices Workshop on Learning Communities

This workshop, was action research conducted in Winnipeg during the National Community Economic Development Conference, and was co-sponsored by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network and the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program, HRDC, and the Government of Manitoba.

SECTION B: EXISTING INDICATORS/MEASURES OF KNOWLEDGE

As we noted in the introduction to this report, only recently has the insight into the connection between learning and community received explicit and sustained attention in the field of adult learning. Because it is a newly developing body of theory, to date, there exists little in the analysis of the measurement of knowledge for research in the field.

As anyone who has done a reasonable amount of community development work will attest, measuring the knowledge base of a learning community can be very problematic. Given that what counts as valuable learning is often determined within the meaning frame of the community, how is it that one would set out to measure knowledge about a complex community? This, in turn, points to the larger problem of understanding or defining what counts as a healthy community or to form indicators about it (or, in turn, indicators about research).

As Davis & Sumara (2001) point out, one of the common mistakes people make when considering a concept like the “learning community” is to treat it as a “complicated” entity when it might be more appropriate, instead, to treat it as a “complex” entity. Whereas, viewing an entity as “complicated” means seeing it as isolatable from its surrounding world, reducible to its working parts, and relatively closed and predictable, viewing it as “complex” means acknowledging its inherent inseparability from its surrounding context, constituting more than the sum of its parts, and relatively open and unpredictable. Davis & Sumara (2001) point out that, seeing communities as complex (and not complicated) entities, may be the first step to understanding them. Often, in workplace and school literature, learning communities are posited as complicated entities subject to manipulation and control. In these contexts, the call for learning communities among students, staff, or teachers means something very different than it does in the broader context of human settlement. The things one might use to indicate the successful establishment of a complicated entity like a workplace community (carefully pre-established parameters and outcomes, for example) would likely be very different than indicators a community, itself, might determine to assess the value of its own knowledge and practices. Complex notions of learning communities acknowledge their inherent unpredictability and uncontrollability. Rather than being subject to external measure, learning communities play an active role in their own evaluation. This includes, importantly, the learning community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to researching and supporting learning communities!

Thus, the notion of the learning community challenges the very prospect of identifying external indicators and measures from which we can assess the value of research and practice in the field. Unlike objects of the physical sciences that can be isolated from surrounding factors, analyzed into component parts, and then systematically manipulated and controlled (treated as complicated), learning communities insist on playing an active role in their constitution, analysis and treatment. It is very difficult for an external agent (like the writers of this report) unilaterally to determine the value of a learning community without actively involving the community in an ongoing, collaborative learning process about what might count as valuable.

On an international scale there have been some efforts to conduct reviews of the literature on learning communities (for Australia see; Morris, R. (2005). Learning communities: A review of literature. Retrieved Nov. 5/05 from, <http://www.oval.uts.edu.au/publications/0132morris.pdf>). There has also been an “Indicators Project” in Europe which operates as a stakeholder audit of identifying the characteristics of learning organizations (see www.ulie/dllo/eucen/NLquanda.doc). The project though, focuses its attention on the organizational level.

Herein lays another problem with establishing a measure of knowledge in this area. Many of the activities that constitute or are constituted by a community, do not exist as a “boundary object” (Wenger, 1998), that can be passed from one community of practice to another, or even within the community itself. The result is that community knowledge is often protected (for better and for worse), from being something that can be easily transferable or extrapolated from community experience. Like informal learning contexts, knowledge, experience, and research of, and by a community, is not always something that can be assessed through the accumulation of the artifacts of learning (such as research).

This dilemma of establishing what constitutes a knowledge base for learning communities is not an insurmountable one. While it may be that we will never have a comprehensive measurement tool to evaluate a community (and who would even *want* to attempt to do so), we can still examine indicators of the strength of learning, and community bonds. Perhaps it is the complexity of community and the constant interplay of its parts, which give communities both the resiliency, and the resistance to measurement.

These indicators of community strength can perhaps be identified, by re-examining the key-terms, and some of the indications that most influence how they make up a community.

SECTION C: GAPS IN THE KNOWLEDGE BASE AND RESEARCH CAPACITIES

Through an analysis of the research that exists in the field of learning communities, we can make a number of assessments about the gaps that exist in the Canadian and even international knowledge base. The first is a quantitative assessment of existing research in different key categories. This is done simply by analyzing the research along arbitrarily “horizontal” divisions of subject area. For example, while there is substantially more research in the area of “literacy, schools, and universities” (the formal learning aspect of learning communities), there is a dearth of information on how the concept of a learning community could further understanding and action in the area of “environment and transportation.” On this horizontal scale, there is no assessment of the type of research, but we can make assessments from this as to which fields have focused their traditional research agendas on the area. It really comes as no surprise that in an area such as learning communities, the areas in which the research has been focused has been in the formal learning contexts and the area of technology, which, in itself, is constantly focusing on new progressive concepts.

We have employed the terms “horizontal” and “vertical” to describe aspects of the review of the research. On the horizontal level, we looked to identify some of the categories that the literature may be separated into. While these categories are not arbitrary, they are simply a framework created by us to understanding some of the subsections we can identify the different types of research. The so-called vertical categories (as explained below) provide us with a framework to evaluate the research as to its ability to critically understand the quality in its effort to understand the complex relationship of learning and community. That is to say, the vertical categories allow us a qualitative framework to evaluate the gaps in research on learning communities.

The key areas in which the research has been most neglected on a horizontal, quantitative scale has been in the areas of “Governance and Justice”, “Multiculturalism and Diversity”, “Inclusiveness”, and “Environment and Transportation.”

These areas have the potential to provide important insight and research for the theme of learning communities. These categories are a direct reflection on learning communities and the cultural and social barriers that can sometimes hinder the function of socially just communities. The issues of citizenship, diversity, and inclusiveness are all important determinates of the ways in which citizens are able to participate in accepting learning contexts and communities. These accepting learning contexts are crucial for the development of adult learning in Canada. The issues of environment and transportation also play important roles for the theme of learning communities. The ability of a community to be aware of the natural environment and operate in a sustainable manner is not only important for the maintenance of communities, but also for the ability to learn about the world in which we live.

The assessment of knowledge gaps cannot be measured solely on a quantitative scale though. As we have seen in Section A, when we investigate a community, we cannot simply

examine what qualities are *in* a community, but we must investigate the qualities *of* a community. This maxim extends also to the research about learning communities. We would propose two other factors must be considered for a qualitative assessment of the research.

The first, is that we must assess the research on the issue of learning communities and emancipation. As we have seen in the key term sections of “Literacy, Schools, and Literacy”, as well as in “Technology and Workplace”, the term “Learning Communities” is often either mustered uncritically, or only pertaining to planned communities. These planned communities such as professional development communities, operate on a teleological basis, and require the community to be manipulated in a way in which complex communities do not operate. This means that properties of emergence and complexity escape the research on these types of community.

The second factor came about when we identified a key distinction that began to emerge from an analysis of the research. This was the extent to which the connection between learning and community was explicitly recognized, theorized and/or subjected to specific inquiry in the various literatures. Further deliberation led us to distinguish four categories that we have begun to use to sort and analyze the literature, institutions and programs that we have identified, on a qualitative scale. The four categories are:

- 1) *Learning and Community not Explicitly Linked*: Literature, institutions and programs that make *no explicit* connection between learning and community but that, in their practices, either enhance learning as part of a community building process or draw on learning as a way to enhance community functioning. This is a vast and variegated field of theory and practice that extends from discrete and deliberate community development projects to the broadest reaches of everyday community life. Research in this category deepens our understanding of the diversity and complexity of community development processes and provides important information about learning communities.
- 2) *Learning and Community Explicitly Linked but with Limited Connection*: Literature, institutions and programs that recognize the important connection between learning and community but that do not explicitly acknowledge the *intrinsic situatedness* of human learning in community. While research in this category embraces an individualistic view of human learning (learning is a process by which the individual acquires knowledge, skills, attitudes and sensibilities), it also holds that the community context is a key factor impacting human learning and that learning is an important factor influencing community growth and development. The proponents of this research are primarily adult educators and community developers who are committed to improving individual learning and community functioning.
- 3) *Learning and Community Inherently Linked but not Explicitly Theorized*: Literature, institutions and programs that strongly recognize the intrinsic situatedness of human learning in community, that reject individualized notions of adult learning, but that does not focus on articulating an explicit, deliberately theorized and/or systematically researched account of the relations between learning and

community. Research in this category typically aims to deepen our understanding of the processes and strategies that enable and constrain community-based human learning. Its proponents are adult educators and researchers keenly attuned to the impact of power relations on community-based learning processes and whose interests are in the engagement of learning communities in practical/political emancipatory actions.

- 4) *Learning and Community Inherently Linked and Explicitly Theorized*: Literature, institutions and programs that contain an explicit, deliberately theorized, and/or systematically researched account of the relations between learning and community. This research aims to deepen our understanding of human learning as a process inextricably bound to our participation in communities. While still in formation, research in this category has developed rapidly over the past decade. Its primary proponents and contributors are university adult educators, researchers and learning theorists, particularly those with strong interdisciplinary expertise in contemporary learning theory.

What is interesting about the qualitative analysis of research through a “vertical” analysis is then coming to terms with what aspects or qualities of the different categories then allow the investigation of the phenomenon of a learning community. If we start at the first level, we can find a varied and deep pool of research that is done pertaining to communities. This information, while it does not deal specifically with learning, is very important to the knowledge base of learning communities. The first level research offers a type of macro look at communities. This scale is broad enough to encompass some of the larger influences on communities (i.e. globalization), and the breadth of factors that can make up a community i.e. health, environment etc.

This, so called first level research, also allows for the influx of theory into the discipline of adult learning for other fields. This is useful in considering both the ramifications that various other fields may have for learning communities and, conversely, how the field of adult learning may influence other disciplines. While it may not explicitly theorize the link between learning and community, it may provide important research into the theory of communities in general. Another importance of the first level research is that the importance of community may begin to be re-established in our discipline that has suffered from a move away from the understanding of “lifeworld” and communicative practices to a cognitive and technical understanding of learning that can be manipulated for forces of market production. This move has also changed the metaphor for which learning is understood. The metaphor becomes a “banking” concept of learning, in which knowledge is transferred to a learner, instead of a dialectical and dialogical relationship of knowledge that constitutes and is co-constituted by a community of practice.

The second and third categories, describe research that links the idea of learning and community, but is limited in its attempt to do so.

Finally, the fourth level of research encompasses that which recognizes that human knowledge and learning is constituted within the previously mentioned community of practice. In addition, this research attempts to theorize this connection through all of its complex components. It is this type of research that will enable us to deal with the

opportunities and challenges that arise from the complexity of a community. This research will begin to understand community as a place of human dwelling and learning, as well as forming the cultural bonds that provide resiliency and stability for interaction and as Jane Jacobs one called it “random social intercourse.” As is clear of a review of the existing research, this level of research is desperately needed.

These vertical categories are an extremely useful way to identify, gather, and analyze data; to identify and assess existing indicators/measures of knowledge; and to identify gaps in the knowledge base. For example, the different categories have already pressed us to broaden our search of the literature in ways that are different than we might have done otherwise. To find information to fit category one, for instance, we have searched for research that does not *explicitly* link learning and the community but that contains important practical and contextual information about the relationship between these terms. To find information to fit category four, on the other hand, we have searched for research buried more deeply in specialized contexts in the social sciences than educators might typically pursue.

The categories prompted us to try to identify the most abstract and theoretical contributions to our understanding of learning communities as well as the broader, more practical and action oriented contributions. They enable us to see how it is rather unfair to assess the need for further research in just one dimension. We are hoping to be able to make definitive statements of ways new research initiatives can improve our understanding of learning communities and our ability to support their development.

In our assessment, one of the key gaps that persist in the field of adult learning has been its failure to integrate important advances in contemporary learning theory, which in recent years has deepened its understanding of the ways human learning and community are entwined. The field of adult learning remains deeply mired in “complicated,” individualistic, and cognitivist theory of adult learning. For the most part, and perhaps in recent years even increasingly, the field is linked to the imperatives of the global knowledge economy. Its primary purpose is interpreted to be to enhance the capacity of adult learners (usually individually but sometimes in groups) to adapt to rapidly changing roles and social conditions of a competitive global economy. While a complicated learning theory is adequate for this narrow and instrumental purpose (it opens social and cultural contexts to technical and bureaucratic mechanisms for building social order), it is not sufficient to support everyday cultural learning processes that transpire within the horizons of complex communities of practice. Without the buttress of contemporary cultural learning theory, community development initiatives (particularly those in category one, described above) have difficulty articulating the value of the cultural learning processes they support.

SUGGESTED LINES OF ENQUIRY

To address these gaps, CCL should consider funding interdisciplinary research initiatives that explore the implications of contemporary learning theories, particularly those that investigate the ways human learning is connected to community life.. While it is important to fund this kind of initiative in the full array of specific “horizontal” research areas, it is also important to fund research that can begin develop the entire theoretical edifice of the field to include more robust formulations of adult learning that are currently present. This more

foundational research is deeply needed at this juncture to provide tools to support learning communities currently under siege throughout Canada.

Possible research questions may take into consideration:

- What is the nature of the relationship between community and learning?
- In what ways does the development of community contexts help or hinder learning?
- In what ways does the development of learning contexts help or hinder community?
- How does research in this field help the quality of life in Canada.?
- How does research in this field help the quality of life around the world?
- In studying this area, how are we able to better understand learning and communities?

SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, EXCHANGE, AND DISSEMINATION

One of the major challenges that face the Adult Knowledge Center and the Canadian Council on Learning, is the implementation and dissemination of knowledge in the various research areas. One of the focuses that we took when researching the existing research organizations was to detail their existing research capacities and areas of focus.

This task returned various results, as some of the organizations were limited in their direct capacity for the dissemination of knowledge (through publication capacity) but was constantly engaging communities on a direct level i.e. Tamarack. On the other hand, there are institutions like The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, which is capable of amassing vast amounts of publications but often vary in the subject matter to a vast array of social policy issues.

Regardless, there are many avenues, forums, and opportunities to mobilize knowledge about learning communities. The five major categories that we have identified are:

Government Networks. The Federal government has a number of resources and agencies that are currently in place, and are dealing with learning communities, and related issues. They include the Office of Learning Technologies, as well as Social Development Canada.

National Non-profit Networks. There are a number of non-profit organizations that we have reviewed in Section B, that currently are forming various partnerships and networks. These networks are allowing both the resources and knowledge dissemination capacities to be augmented. These cross-organization partnerships that we have already detailed include the organizations of Tamarack, Action for Neighbourhood Change, and The Caledon Institute of Social Policy. These networks can provide important pre-established resources for the Canadian Council on Learning. More importantly, though, the fact that these networks exist show both the capacity, ability, and willingness to collaborate with other national institutions involved with issues pertaining to learning communities.

University Networks. These University networks include CRACIN, as well as traditional academic linkages. They also include the specialized institutes which are dealing with issues of community development such as the Community Economic Development Institute, The Coady International Institute, and the Center for Sustainable Community Development.

Journals and Informal Publications. As we have seen in the research on literature, there are a number of Canadian journals and informal publications that can be utilized for the dissemination of research pertaining to learning communities. These Informal publications can be seen in the review of Research organizations, and the journals are identified in the review of the literature.

Community Development and Community Learning Networks. Some of these resources that operate on a regional or community scale, must play an integral part in the sharing of knowledge with Canadians. These grassroots resources are often difficult to identify, and often ignored, due to their integration into the everyday lives of citizens. They can often be identified through databases of likeminded organizations like the Canadian CED Network's found at www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/directory.asp, or a directory of community groups from the federal government at:

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/epb/sid/cia/comm_deve/ngo.shtml&hs=cyd

SECTION E: COMPARISONS AND PROGRESS

While good progress is being made as a result of interdisciplinary work in the social sciences towards developing a clearer sense of the ways human learning processes are related to the social and cultural contexts we inhabit, these advances have yet to be incorporated in any significant or lasting way into the theories and practice of the field of adult learning. When they are, it is our belief that they very well could move the concept of “learning communities” from the margins of the field into its very center.

As we have seen in Section B, understanding how learning communities function has not been a major focus in the history of Canadian adult learning. This does not mean that there isn't any progress being made though. Because the very nature of community interaction does not always lend itself to being identified by research or literature, a more dynamic measure can be examining some of the groups that are formed by communities to develop social, cultural, and learning bonds. Currently, in Canada, we have a number of national organizations and networks who are well equipped to deal with local community contexts, and partner with other organizations, to take action on local challenges. Indeed these groups can play an important role for communities, and the Canadian Council on Learning, on developing local and national networks. If the organizations and networks, operate as learning communities, Canada has the opportunity to develop citizens that form the deep learning bonds that are crucial for a resilient participation in society.

It is our feeling that to make substantial progress, our deep theoretical understanding of a just and dynamic learning community must be explored more fully, as well as participation and support for the organizations and networks that work within these local learning community contexts.