



LESSONS IN LEARNING

Welcome to
lessons in learning

September 7, 2005

Introduction

The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) is pleased to launch **Lessons in Learning**, a regular electronic publication for anyone interested in the progress of learning in Canada. We believe that Canadians have a thirst for information about what works in learning - from an independent, reliable and ongoing source of research and analysis. **Lessons in Learning** will address the issues Canadians want and need to know about; issues that can make a tangible difference in their lives and in the lives of members of their community.

Our goal is to make **Lessons in Learning** accessible and relevant to all readers – whether policy makers, educators, researchers, parents or learners – by providing the information they need to make informed decisions.

This introductory issue outlines the approach that CCL will use to select topics for **Lessons in Learning**.

CCL's vision and mandate

The task that drives us on at CCL is the need to make a positive difference to the learning lives of Canadians.

CCL has a clear vision for learning in Canada: a society in which all citizens have access to high-quality learning opportunities throughout their lives, regardless of where in Canada they live.

To achieve this vision, CCL will provide evidence for sound public policy and sound personal decisions in the field of learning. Education and learning lie at the heart of a civil, prosperous and democratic society. The opportunity to learn throughout the lifespan is essential to the quality of life of individual Canadians, to the social and economic success of the communities in which they live, and to the integrity and continuity of a distinctive Canada.

CCL will work with energy, urgency, and originality to accomplish its mandate by:

- Informing Canadians of the state and progress of learning in Canada.
- Promoting a Canada-wide culture of learning, working with a wide range of partners.
- Encouraging and facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge among all those involved in advancing learning across the country.

CCL will reach its objectives in a number of ways:

- Our five Knowledge Centres will become indispensable, national centres of reference for lifelong learning: *Adult Learning* (Atlantic Canada); *Early Childhood Learning* (Quebec); *Work and Learning* (Ontario); *Aboriginal Learning* (Prairies and Territories); and *Health and Learning* (British Columbia/Yukon).
- Partnering with governments, educational institutions, Aboriginal, labour, non-governmental and private sector organizations and others to help identify and evaluate learning issues that are important to them.

- Establishing international partnerships to inform Canadians of the most promising educational practices and policies to be found anywhere in the world.
- Providing Canadians with relevant information on learning; information that will be pertinent to individuals, communities, employers, workers, and organizations to make learning programs and policies more effective for Canadians.

Format of lessons in learning

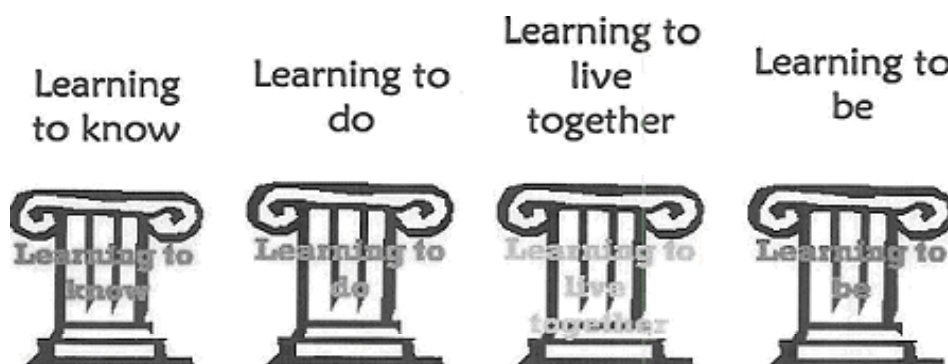
Lessons in Learning is designed to inform readers and exchange knowledge on a wide range of learning issues, in a clear and concise manner.

While each issue will focus on a specific learning challenge, collectively they will cover all phases of learning, from early childhood through to the workplace and beyond. More than simply report on research findings, we will attempt to address the implications of the research. We will identify:

- The Learning Challenge: A brief definition of the issue and why it is important.
- What do we know? A summary of current evidence.
- So what? What are the implications for learners?
- Now what? Conclusions about next steps to improve outcomes.
- Useful links: Links to sources of data used in the article, related research in Canada and abroad, and any other useful resources.

Education and learning are essential to prosperity, but also to civility and democracy, and this philosophy will influence the topics addressed in **Lessons in Learning**. Our approach follows the framework established by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1993. The commission's mandate was "to study and reflect on the challenges facing education in the coming years and to formulate suggestions and recommendations ...which can serve as an agenda for renewal and action for policy-makers and officials at the highest levels".

Under the leadership of former European Commission President Jacques Delors, the commission developed a model, now known as the Delors Four Pillars of Education, which is outlined in the commission's final report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, published in 1996.



The commission determined that striking a balance among these four pillars would enable individuals to achieve their full potential as citizens.

Learning to know “is concerned less with the acquisition of structured knowledge than with the mastery of learning tools;” it focuses on “learning how to learn by developing one’s concentration, memory skills and ability to think”. Delors also emphasizes that “the process of learning to think is a lifelong one,” so this pillar relates to the workplace as well as to early childhood and structured learning (formal education). But learning to know underscores the value of study for its own sake, and not simply for the acquisition of marketable skills.

Learning to do on the other hand is very closely associated with the acquisition of marketable skills and occupational training. It seeks to answer: “How do we adapt education so that it can equip people to do the type of work needed in the future?” Both an individual’s and a nation’s prosperity depend on innovation and productivity, which in turn require skills and attitudes that extend well beyond technical competencies, to encompass interpersonal skills and creative and innovative aptitudes.

Learning to live together acknowledges the importance of social cohesion, in fostering and maintaining a prosperous society over the long term. Delors concludes that “education should adopt two complementary approaches. From early childhood, it should focus on the discovery of other people... In the second stage of education and in lifelong education, it should encourage involvement in common projects. This seems to be an effective way of avoiding [or resolving] conflicts. One of education’s tasks is both to teach pupils and students about human diversity and to instil in them an awareness of the similarities and interdependence of all people.” **Lessons in Learning** will explore the complementarity between learning to live together and learning to do – our collective productive capacity.

Learning to be recognizes that “the aim of development is the complete fulfilment of man - as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer”. **Lessons in Learning** will examine those practices and experiences which enable the individual to flourish while advancing the common good.

It is not CCL’s intent to link every article in **Lessons in Learning** to one of the ‘four pillars’. However, we do intend to take a balanced approach that reflects all aspects of learning, and to illustrate the inter-relationships among the four pillars in successful approaches to learning systems, models and practices.

Most important, **Lessons in Learning** will address learning issues that can make a difference to Canadians’ lives and to their communities. We hope that you will enjoy Lessons in Learning and that you find the articles thought-provoking and useful.

Watch for the first issue of **Lessons in Learning** on September 14, which will salute the annual ritual of return to school with an examination of research regarding class size.