FOSTERING LEARNING AND EDUCATION IN PLANNING PROCESSES
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Abstract

During any planning process, knowledge, information, and experiences are shared among planning participants. However, planning literature is largely silent about how such learning and education occur during planning processes, how learning and education can be fostered to further the short- and long-term goals of planning, and how planners can help deepen and enrich learning experiences. This thesis explores opportunities and barriers to fostering learning and education in community-based planning. Learning is defined in this thesis as experiencing, sharing, and reflecting on knowledge while education is defined as the intentional creation and promotion of learning experiences.

Through an exploration of education literature, definitions and key aspects of learning and education are described. Planning literature is then explored to determine how learning and education are conceived by planning theorists and practitioners and where gaps in knowledge exist. On the basis of these explorations, a framework is developed for assessing how planners incorporate and promote learning and education in processes they lead or design. The framework is applied to a case study of a neighbourhood planning process in Vancouver, which included participant observation and interviews with planners and community members who participated in the process, as well as to interviews with other planners in Greater Vancouver. Interviewees’ thoughts on opportunities and barriers to incorporating learning and education effectively within planning processes are analysed. By integrating observations, interviewees’ comments and insights, and the literature on learning, education, and planning, a set of principles is developed for fostering learning and education in community-based planning. These principles relate to reflection and discussion, prerequisites to learning, and strategies for designing participation processes. The principles are summarised in a checklist that can be easily used by planners and others. Suggestions are offered for further research on learning and education in community-based planning.
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Chapter 1: The Problem of Learning and Education in Planning

It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours.

-- Paulo Freire 1970:96

What is planning? What do planners do? These are questions that every planning student and planning practitioner must address, and the answers seem, increasingly, to be multifaceted. Planning, as a field, seems to be broadening. This is promising, because drawing on other disciplines is what planning has always been about – since its beginning as a melding of health and social sciences, architecture, and engineering to its present interdisciplinary status with connections to many academic planning programs – and because interdisciplinarity can make planning richer and stronger. However, it is also a challenge, because it leaves planners, particularly new planners, with some uncertainty as to what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to work and communicate with people.

Communication. Perhaps that is the heart of it: planning today is inherently dialogical – it is about working and communicating with various publics or interests to create a new path. But when planners work with multiple publics, how can they know that everyone is on the same path, even in the end? How can they know that everyone is discussing the same thing, even if they are using the same words? How can planners discuss new topics and bring new ideas forth without becoming “the experts”? How can planners listen to these multiple publics and bring their ideas into planners’ work? How can planners get members of these multiple publics to listen to each other?

While several subfields of planning and planning theorists discuss these issues, I believe the answer is based in something that I have seldom found explicitly or consciously discussed in planning circles: learning and education.

Learning and education, for both the planner and these multiple publics, is an important part of planning which increasingly involves members of the public. In planning that involves members of multiple publics, every participant comes to the table with some knowledge and learning that other members of the public have not had access to. This may be knowledge of how other community members feel about an issue, it may be knowledge of how and where
traffic, water, or crime flow through and operate in a community, it may be specialised knowledge of alternative traffic calming, stormwater management, or social planning issues and methods, or it may be knowledge of who the community leaders are. This may be knowledge based on living in a community for years, it may have been gained as a member of a marginalised community, it may be based on years of working as an activist, or it may be based on someone’s own professional knowledge.

During a planning process, as people work together, this knowledge is shared. Planners may foster and support this, or they can ignore it and let it happen without their attention and effort. In either case it will happen to some extent. However, planners can support this learning and help foster community member’s growth, as well as their own. By supporting learning, discovery, and opportunities for reflection, planners can help deepen and enrich the learning experience. Planners can also focus the learning process and can intentionally bring their own knowledge to the table and share it with the public and other practitioners. This can be especially important when specialised knowledge or behaviour change are involved. However, planners can bring their knowledge to the table in a way that is supportive of the public and responds to their needs, or planners can bring knowledge to the table in a way that tells people that they are “the expert” or have an agenda that will not respond to the community’s needs.

This thesis is an exploration of how planners can foster and support learning and education in planning in a manner that is sensitive to the various needs of multiple publics. In this thesis, when learning and education are discussed they refer to learning that occurs as a by-product or result of various planning processes that involve members of multiple publics, be they professionals, community leaders, politicians, interest groups, the general public, etc. When planning is discussed, it refers to community planning, particularly community-based and collaborative planning. Nevertheless, this thesis can be applied to any work that planners do that involves working with any public – be it other professionals, politicians, or the general public.

**Problem Statement**

As public involvement becomes an increasingly important part of planning, planners are confronted with the necessity of promoting information exchange, learning, and education. To work together to provide advice, set directions, build capacity, or transform ideas and change behaviour, the public, politicians, and planners must create many shared understandings. Successful community-based and sustainability planning rely on a community’s ability to create
these shared understandings and make wise decisions about its future and how it wants to achieve that future. As such, learning and education take on increasing significance within planning projects that involve the public — whether they are community-based, collaborative, or simply utilise community feedback. Information provision and community education can be used to achieve both short-term planning goals (such as finishing a given planning project) and long-term planning goals (such as building shared understanding, a more knowledgeable populace, and creating the future contained in policy and long-range plans).

Unfortunately, it appears that while planners frequently accomplish the community outreach and the information provision necessary to attain short-term planning goals, more holistic community education and learning frequently seems to fall by the wayside. In addition, learning and education are not consciously emphasized and are often omitted from community planning programs. This has clear implications for the long-term effectiveness of planning. It may even have implications for the short-term effectiveness of planning, particularly if the public is not provided with enough good information in a manner that enables people to process it and give accurate, knowledgeable feedback and provide planners with the information needed to build a viable, sustainable plan. It also has implications for planners if they do not allow themselves to learn from the public and develop their professional knowledge.

**Thesis Goal**

The goal of this thesis is to examine the status of learning and education in planning practice and elements necessary for successfully fostering learning and education in planning. This thesis further assesses why, in the course of planning projects, planning participants frequently only achieve shallower levels of learning, and the intentional promotion of education and learning drops by the wayside. This thesis proposes and tests a framework for how education and learning could be and are incorporated and implemented in community-based planning and develops a set of implications and recommendations for successfully fostering education and learning in planning.

**Definitions**

While the ideas of “learning and education” and “community-based planning” are discussed in more detail in chapters two and three, I feel that it is necessary to briefly define “education and learning” and “community-based planning.”
Learning and Education: Learning and education are creative, interactive processes that involve actively experiencing, sharing, and developing knowledge. During learning, knowledge is discovered and reflected upon. Learning and education occur across a continuum from rote memorisation and rehearsal of information to processing and understanding information in a way that makes it ‘our own’ and changes perceptions of the world. Learning and education are about both the product and the process: how learning occurs can be as important as the information transmitted. Intentional education for long-term change aims to reach the deeper levels of learning (making knowledge one’s own) and often takes a comprehensive, integrated approach with learning as a lifelong experience (see Blacker 2001, Doyle 2001, and Chapter 2).

Community-based Planning: In community-based planning, citizens are asked to participate in planning their communities. How this should be done is open to wide interpretation, but community-based planning can be defined as processes where: 1) citizens have a strong voice – one that is heard from early on in the process and is involved through various methods that go beyond public hearings; 2) citizens have a role in making decisions; 3) communities work with government, and sometimes with the private sector, through collaborative partnerships; 4) the planning conscientiously builds capacity and may take an asset-based approach; and 5) the planning, or at least the public participation components, should occur in the community (based on Municipal Art Society n.d. and State of Minnesota 2004). Community-based planning is also generally considered to emphasize learning, education, and information-sharing (Community and Rural Development Institute 2004 and Municipal Art Society n.d.).

Research Objectives

This thesis analyses:

1) how important planners feel education and achieving deeper levels of learning (beyond mere information provision) are;

2) what type of education and learning a sample of planners would like to engage in and promote, what they actually engage in, and the methods of outreach involved;

3) how these activities fit into a theoretical framework of education and learning in planning, as developed from literature on education and planning;

4) what the barriers are to successful education and learning in planning; and

5) how planners address education and learning and if their efforts to do so are successful, as viewed by practitioners and participants.
Further, based on a compilation of this analysis, the thesis concludes with a checklist of elements of successful education and learning in community-based planning practice.

**Approach and Methodology**

This thesis begins with an overview of both education/learning theory and planning theory as they relate to the topic of education and learning in community-based planning. The education literature review is focused on elements or aspects of education and learning, informal education, and methods or activities that are relevant to planning yet promote deeper levels of public involvement, mutual learning, and capacity building. The planning literature review is focused on planning methods that involve planners and/or community members in learning, education, or mutual learning, that enhance capacity building or public involvement, and that enable or promote community-based planning. These two bodies of knowledge are then integrated to create a framework of elements for successful education and learning in community-based planning.

To test the framework, to determine if the points are useful for a discussion of learning and education in planning, and to further develop the framework, it was used to help analyse interviews with planning practitioners in the Vancouver region. Interviewees were asked questions to assess their views about how learning and education relate to and are promoted in planning practice. They were also asked about the activities they engaged in during their practice and how those activities promoted learning and education. Many interviewees discussed barriers to education and learning in community-based planning, as well as elements for success. To further develop an understanding of learning and education in planning and test the usefulness of the theoretical framework, it was used to analyse a community planning case study. The case study concerned a Community Vision neighbourhood planning process being conducted as part of the City of Vancouver’s long-range planning initiative, CityPlan. The Community Vision process actively involves education and learning, even though education and learning are not the goal or primary concern of the program. This thesis discusses observations of several major components of the Community Visioning process, interviews with members of the public who participated in the process, and interviews with planning practitioners who worked on the Community Vision. These investigations provided valuable information about how education and learning occur during a planning process, activities that promote education and learning, and the challenges, obstacles, and barriers to education and learning in planning.
The application of the analytical framework to this research provides insight into the possibilities and problems inherent in promoting learning and education in planning. Based on this analysis, a set of implications and recommendations for successfully promoting learning and education in community planning is presented. The implications take the form of a checklist that can be easily used by a variety of planning practitioners.

It is important to note that I approached this thesis as a planner with a background in cognitive and educational psychology. In addition, I have experience as an educator, particularly as an environmental educator and a visual art teacher. This thesis is informed by my background knowledge of psychology and effective educational methods, as well as by experiences I had working as part of a team of Master's student planning consultants conducting a neighbourhood planning project in Kamloops, British Columbia. My personal observations and revelations as an observer at CityPlan Community Visions and other planning projects also inform this document.

Thesis Structure and Content

This thesis is an analysis of what learning and education are and how they can add to the field of planning. Chapters 2 and 3 contain an exploration of learning and education theory and methodology, as well as how these are related to planning theory. Chapter 4 contains a theoretical framework for thinking about how learning and education can be a part of successful community-based planning practice. Chapter 5 is a discussion of the methodology used in this thesis; this chapter also contains background information about CityPlan, the case study discussed in later chapters. Chapter 6 is an analysis, based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter 4, of interviews with planning practitioners and CityPlan Community Vision planners and participants. Chapter 7 is a discussion, based on information gathered from interviews, observations, and the literature, of how education and learning can and do occur during community planning. Recommendations for incorporating learning and education in planning processes are presented in chapter 8 along with implications of this thesis and reflections on this research.
Chapter 2: Understanding Learning and Education

When people lack a critical understanding of their reality, apprehending it in fragments which they do not perceive as interacting constituent elements of the whole, they cannot truly know that reality.

-- Paulo Freire 1970:104

Learning is about people, individually or collectively, coming to understand the reality in which they live. When people process and build upon that understanding, they can create a new reality, a new future. But how does learning occur and what does it involve? How can people build or foster learning? How does learning happen outside the classroom? Further, why should planners discuss education and how does it relate to their work with the public?

This chapter provides an introduction to the concepts of education and learning, and addresses these questions. It is written to provide individuals with little or no background in the fields of education and psychology with an overview of education and learning theory. Through a discussion of how various theorists define education and learning, it provides the definitions of learning and education used in this thesis and an elaboration on several key aspects of learning and education. It also presents information about methods and activities that promote learning. Finally, this chapter provides a discussion of informal education. Throughout this discussion, attention is paid to how the concepts relate to planning. Thus, the survey is focused on learning and education as they are relevant for a discussion of mutual learning and informal education outside the classroom.

1 This survey is focused by my own ideas, based on my previous studies and work in psychology and education. Further, it discusses some of the more radical and progressive theories of education and learning, such as the ideas presented by Paulo Freire (1970), Donald Schön (1983), Tony Jeffs (1990), and several informal education theorists, rather than being confined to the more widely accepted, yet restricted ideas of education and learning presented in most introductory education and psychology textbooks. This survey is based upon theory that can be found in several disparate yet related fields: the philosophy and sociology of education; the philosophy and practice of informal education; sustainability education and environmental education; and cognitive, developmental, and educational psychology.

2 As a result of this focus, the chapter discusses informal education but only briefly touches upon formal education (the education that is generally thought of as occurring inside the classroom). It also discusses community education rather than focusing on issues specifically related to child, youth, or adult education.
Education and Learning: What Do They Involve?

Education and learning are interactive processes that involve actively experiencing, sharing, and developing knowledge (Doyle 2001) through discovery and reflection. Education and learning occur across a continuum from rote memorisation and rehearsal of information to processing and understanding information in a way that makes it ‘our own’ and changes perceptions of the world. Transformative experiences and experiential learning can be an extremely important part of educational experiences that reach the deepest levels of learning because in these experiences knowledge becomes one’s own. Learning and education are about both the product and the process (Doyle 2001 and Mahoney 2001): how learning occurs can be as important as the information transmitted. Intentional education for long-term change aims to reach deep levels of learning, often by using a comprehensive, integrated approach with learning as a lifelong experience. As Freire writes (1970:72), “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”

However, education and learning are inherently value-based: people educate about the things that are important to them, either as individuals, institutions, or societies. Freire (1970) revealed how those in power use social and educational systems to reinforce their power by passing on information that supports them, by invalidating knowledge that runs counter to their interests, and by inhibiting true thought and reflection. Such an idea has a parallel in Forester’s idea, which is discussed in Chapter 3, of the powerful sometimes perpetuating misinformation to maintain their power. In contrast to this, while acknowledging that education and learning are value-based, this thesis refers to learning and education that are acts of mutual discovery, where the line between ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ is blurred or non-existent. Educators work with people, not for them or on them (Richardson and Wolfe 2001). Here, education is a dialogical action that promotes cooperation, unity, organisation, and cultural synthesis (Freire 1970), as well as critical thinking, creativity and critical thinking. For educational (and other) practitioners, learning also involves reflection on and development of their practice (Mahoney 2001).

Throughout the above discussion, learning and education are referred to as one concept, but there is a difference between the two. Learning can be thought of as an outcome, but it is also the process of experiencing something, reflecting or thinking about it, and coming to new understandings. This may happen consciously or unconsciously, but the same processes occur (Doyle 2001). Other processes involved in learning include conversation, thinking, decision-
making, and democracy (Mahoney 2001). Learning can occur anywhere at any time, by any means. In contrast, education can be thought of as a process that intentionally fosters learning. In other words, educators work so that people learn (Doyle 2001).

Much of what is referred to as “education” in popular culture is really a perpetuation of Freire’s concept of “banking education.” In banking education, students are the receivers of knowledge bestowed upon them by a “knowledgeable” teacher (Freire 1970). It is assumed that the professional gives while the client takes (Richardson and Wolfe 2001). This type of education is paternalistic and belittles the knowledge that the “student” already possesses. I believe that this popular idea of education is why, when I began my thesis research and told people that I was studying education in planning processes, many people responded in a reserved manner, or even shied away from the topic. People seem to feel much safer when I speak of “learning.” Nevertheless, I prefer to continue speaking of education because this term represents the intentional fostering of learning that I argue is needed in planning. I also choose to speak of “learning” because much of what occurs in planning is currently an unintentional by-product of the process. Thus I speak of “education and learning” together throughout this thesis.

**Key Aspects of Learning and Education**

A review of education and learning literature reveals key aspects of learning and education, many of which were referred to above. This section describes several of these aspects in greater detail.

*How we educate depends on our perception of the nature of knowledge.*

Three main schools of thought describe education and learning as occurring through the transmission of knowledge, by drawing out knowledge that already exists inside the learner (based on past lives or knowledge that inherently belongs to humans), or drawing out knowledge that is based on our experiences (Doyle 2001). Freire (1970) describes education through transmission when he discusses the “banking” concept of education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Students “patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” information that the teacher “deposits” in their minds for “receiving, filing, and storing.” “Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire 1970:72). Carl Rogers calls this traditional education the “jug and mug theory”: “the teacher is a jug full of knowledge and the student is an empty mug. The teacher, or jug, pours knowledge into the learner, or mug, and the learner accepts it” (Rogers 1990 in...
Richardson and Wolfe 2001: 8). Alternately, education can be based on learning that we gain from interacting with the world. Freire’s “liberating” education is based on acts of cognition, not transferrals of information (Freire 1970). Another way of thinking about this kind of learning, is that we have experiences which we reflect upon (either by going back over events and recalling important details, by attending to or connecting with feelings, and/or by evaluating and re-examining experiences), and thus learn from (Boud et al. 1993 in Doyle 2001). In this system of education, students are teachers and teachers are students. “No one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world” (Freire 1970:79-80).

This latter type of learning which is drawn out and developed from our experiences is the type of learning that is discussed in the remainder of this thesis. It is also what informal education and education and learning in planning are based upon. There are two main reasons for this: first, ideologically, when planners work with the public, communicative and radical planning theory tells us that we are not the “experts,” but rather, the public has valuable information which planners need to learn, and vice versa. Second, this type of learning focuses the process of learning on events and how people experience them, it enables sharing of knowledge and the learning process, so that learning can happen in groups as well as being an individual endeavour, and it enables the educator to use a range of approaches to promote learning (Doyle 2001).

The locus of control in learning and education should be shared.

As is discussed above, different schools of thought attribute control of the educational process to different actors. At one extreme, Freire (1970) discusses how the state (or the powerful) can control knowledge and education to keep the masses subservient; in such a case the powerful hold all the control and the masses feel that they have none. At the other extreme, Freire and others discuss an educational system where the lines between teacher and student disappear and education becomes an act of dialogue where both actors hold control of the learning process. While many love to critique such a post-modernist vision, particularly when it comes to formal education, this view offers some important insights. First, students have

One example of such a critique is exemplified by a discussion of teaching about history in a formal setting. How can students learn about history if the teacher does not ‘teach,’ if the teacher is not an ‘expert?’ First, it is important to realise that students have their own knowledge, built through experience, their own versions of history, and their own questions. But the teacher also has important knowledge. Both groups are ‘experts.’ Both can share the knowledge they have, but decisions about what topics can and should be discussed, what questions asked, and who can speak should be developed through a dialogue and partnership between all parties. In the lower academic grades, the Montessori
important and valuable knowledge, abilities, experiences, and motivation to contribute to any learning exchange (Richardson and Wolfe 2001). Second, people learn by interacting with the world. Third, learning is inherently dialogical. Finally, and most importantly if any of these other lessons are to be realised to their full extent, some power over the educational process must be given to the student. This is particularly true in any informal education process (see discussion below), where creating a mutual, shared learning environment is even more critical and central to the process. Moreover, when we are dealing with adults who are participating in learning about and/or creating something that directly impacts their lives, as we are in planning, these lessons must be observed with even more rigour. As Schön (1983:302) writes, the client must be “an active participant in a process of shared inquiry.”

**Learning is a process and a product.**

The process through which people learn influences what we learn, how well we learn, and how we can use what we learn. This simple statement reveals the duality of learning: it is both process and product. Formal education, or academic learning, tends to focus on *what* people learn – the product. Informal education, on the other hand, tends to focus on relationships – the process (Doyle 2001). Both conceptions of learning are important. One reveals the importance of thinking about end products, how they can be used, what the goal in promoting learning was, and how having access to knowledge or information affects people’s lives. The other conception reveals the importance of the relationships people build, the words they use, what is involved in the processes they are part of, the ways people grow and develop, and the experiences they have. This dual nature of learning and what it entails becomes increasingly important as this discussion proceeds.

**Learning occurs at many levels along a spectrum.**

Many scholars in education and psychology have come to see learning as part of a continuum, or spectrum. Learning can take place at many levels, from rote memorisation and rehearsal of information to processing and understanding information in a way that makes it ‘our own’ and changes the way we see the world. One such spectrum of learning, proposed by Saljo, includes five categories (Saljo 1979 in Doyle 2001:6-7):

1) *Knowing a lot*—a quantitative increase of knowledge; getting information
2) *Memorising*—storing information that can be reproduced

method, where students have much control over when, how, and what they learn, is a good example of shared inquiry.
3) *Gaining facts, skills and methods* that can be registered and used when needed

4) *Making sense or finding meaning* by relating pieces of knowledge with one another and the world

5) *Understanding the world in a different way*—comprehending reality by reinterpreting knowledge

Learning can take place at each of these levels, and not all learning needs to penetrate to the deepest levels of understanding: in many cases simple memorisation is enough. However, for the kinds of learning that lead to paradigm shifts, and thus are necessary for the move to a more sustainable society or an alternative future, planners need to achieve the kinds of learning reflected in Saljo’s categories 4 and 5. The “deeper levels of learning” referred to in this thesis are the higher levels of learning found in categories 4 and 5, and to some extent level 3.

*Learning is facilitated by engagement and experiential education.*

Engaging the learner in what they are learning is key – we can all think of times when our mind wandered in class or in a conversation. Did we learn anything in these instances? Engagement takes this idea one step further. If people are engaged in what they are learning, then they are more likely to remember it longer, process the information, and achieve deeper levels of learning. One of the best ways of engaging people is to involve them in what they are learning, often through some activity. The idea of experiential education builds on this. When people have an experience, sometimes they reflect upon the experience, which leads them to a process of theory making. At this stage people make connections to ideas or theories they already have, and may change or develop their theories to fit the new experience. Generally, the learner then tests their theory in practice. All of these stages may happen at once, or they may also be broken down into further stages, but this four-step model of experiential learning is a good start (Blacker 2001).

People can learn from any experience, but most of the time they don’t really think about or reflect on an experience. Although there are theories, no one really knows why people choose to reflect on only certain experiences. However, this knowledge of the experiential learning process can be used to enhance the educational experience. The key to experiential learning seems to be triggering reflection. Good ways to trigger reflection include supervision, self-assessment, making recordings/journaling, assignments, asking and responding to questions, and engaging in study groups or other dialogue (Blacker 2001). Some reflection may occur while a learner is in the middle of an experience, while other reflection may occur after the fact. Schön
(1983) refers to these stages as “reflecting in action” and “reflecting on action.” While both are important, reflecting on action allows people to think in a more deliberate manner and explore greater possibilities. Such reflection is a key part of developing and evaluating professional practice (Blacker 2001).

**Learning is facilitated by active learning experiences.**

This idea is similar to engagement and experiential learning. People are naturally curious animals, so if a teacher places someone in a room and deposits or “shares” information, they are less likely to learn, to remember, to learn deeply, and to be inspired to learn than they are if they are posed a problem. If learning is active, participants can discover answers for themselves through reflection or involvement in some activity, preferably one that is hands-on. Cognitive theory also states that when learning involves activity and reflection, people access more than one kind of memory; thus they have a better memory of the experience.

**Learning can build on one or more intelligences.**

Howard Gardner (1999) developed a theory of multiple intelligences. According to Gardner, rather than thinking of one kind of intelligence – the kind of intelligence people usually think of when they think of a mathematical genius – there are many kinds of intelligence. Gardner’s intelligences are: verbal-linguistic; logical-mathematical; bodily-kinesthetic; visual-spatial; musical; interpersonal; intra-personal; and naturalist. To continue the genius example, a mathematical genius such as Einstein has very high logical-mathematical intelligence while a musical genius such as Beethoven has extremely high musical intelligence, an artist such as Raphael has extremely high visual-spatial intelligence, and a dancer such as Mikhail Baryshnikov has extremely high bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. People can be incredibly intelligent in any of these “multiple intelligence” areas, yet be lacking in others.

In terms of learning and teaching, Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences has many uses, two of which are particularly relevant here. First, people may be very good at one or more ways of knowing, so educational experiences should tap into several ways of knowing to engage different learners. Second, when education taps into multiple intelligences, the information or skills being learned is encoded more strongly in the brain and there are more cognitive linkages to that information. Thus, if educational experiences are developed to reach and utilise more than one intelligence, they will reach more learners and reach them more effectively because learners will develop a stronger memory of what is being learned.
Learning is influenced by the environment in which it occurs.

Because education and learning are social processes as well as individual ones, the social and physical environments in which they occur are influential. Education, particularly informal education, frequently makes use of and takes inspiration from the environment in which it occurs. Social, emotional, cultural, and political environments, in particular have vast effects on what is learned and how that learning occurs (Mahoney 2001).

Learning has short-term and long-term effects.

Some of what people learn impacts us predominantly in the short term. A student may cram for an exam in university; a professional may attend a conference and remember fifty new names, a schedule, and how to get around a new city; someone may hear some bit of gossip and repeat it; or a homeowner may learn just enough to get himself through some process safely, like having a contractor remodel his house. In each of these cases the person is likely to remember the information for some short period of time and then forget about it as soon as the information is no longer needed; it may even be permanently forgotten. Other things people learn have long-term effects. A student may decide to study a subject in university, major in it, and pursue it as a career; a citizen may learn about some concept, such as sustainability, that changes the way she thinks and behaves; or a resident may learn about the people and physical environment in her community and use that knowledge every week for twenty years.

It is difficult to say whether any given piece of knowledge that is learned will have a short-term or a long-term impact. A person generally determines that themselves through their reflection on and use of the knowledge. However, if educators want people to remember something in the long-term, they can relate it to something else that is already significant enough for the learner to remember in the long-term. Educators can also use methods that promote active, experiential, or transformative learning, and they can encourage the learner to reflect upon the information at a later time. Knowing whether information needs to be recalled in the short-term or long-term can save both educators and learners effort and can help educators choose methods that are more effective for the type of learning desired. Thus, it is important for learning partners to distinguish between the two kinds of learning and to be clear about their goals.

Educational interventions need clear goals and objectives.

It is almost always a good idea to be clear about what one is trying to accomplish. Being clear about goals helps people not focus their efforts where they are not needed, it helps people
expend resources more wisely, and it increases efficiency. Clarity also increases efficacy, particularly in learning, since people can only learn and remember a very limited amount of information at any given time. Further, people can only access a limited amount of information at any given time. Finally, clarity about goals in an educational process helps learning partners decide what background information to collect and bring to a process. It is important to note, though, that goals and objectives can always change, particularly if they are developed collaboratively between partners in a learning process, rather than by one ‘teacher’ who maintains the given goals and objectives rigidly.

The attitudes and values of the educator affect the learning process.

Attitudes and values of educators or facilitators affect not only the learning process but also what is learned (see discussion of learning and education as a value-based activity, above). An educator’s commitment to conversation, dialogue, and a conversational spirit is also critical (Doyle 2001). To cultivate a conversational spirit, an educator must encourage qualities such as openness, hope, critical enquiry, humour, curiosity, and compassion (Doyle 2001). An educator’s moral sense, or ethics, play an important role in how the learning process occurs, the goals of the process, and the kinds of information or misinformation that are made available to participants. Some of the values held by educators include respect for others, the promotion of well-being, truth, democracy, and justice (Doyle 2001). Educators also need to be willing to take the time to talk and listen, to reflect and think proactively, to learn for each other, and to be aware of opportunities (Mahoney 2001). Educators need to be able to “make room” in their minds to think about the world as it appears to the people they are working with...To do this, an educator needs to be able to recognise and manage her own opinions and feelings so that they do not get in the way of trying to understand where another person is coming from (Crosby 2001).

Education and learning take time.

Reaching the deeper levels of learning generally takes more time. This is because reaching deeper levels of learning can involve activity and experience, but also because learning involves reflection. Further, developing a methodology and set of techniques to achieve the type of education and learning one wants, about the information one wants, takes time. If one is involved in education where students hold some power over the process or where questioning is encouraged, learning can take even longer – but it can also be richer. If learners are rushed, they cannot hear as much, reflect as much or learn as much. People frequently underestimate how
long learning really takes, so in an educational or learning process, it is always wise to leave “too much” time available.

**How Can Educators Foster Deeper Learning?**

Given this information about how learning occurs and the elements of learning, it is possible for educators and other interested parties to create a picture of how to foster deeper learning and learning experiences. Of course, an important question to ask is, “What level of learning do planners want to foster?” As has been shown, to achieve long-term impacts, deeper levels of learning are generally necessary. While these long-term impacts and deeper levels of learning are not always necessary, much of the work that planners engage in is designed to achieve long-range alternative futures. As such, it is important to discuss how to foster deeper learning, if it is desired. At the same time, it is important for planners to engage in serious reflection about what type and level of learning they would like to foster, since the methods described below require more time, energy, and other resources.

An old proverb says, “Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me, I understand.” This is one of the fundamental tenets of education: involving and engaging students in the educational process promotes deeper understanding and learning. Experiential learning and interaction further capitalise on this idea. Relating new learning to student’s previous knowledge is also quite effective, since it allows us to “hook” new knowledge onto old knowledge, and thus give it a place to “hang onto” a mind. Further, connecting to pre-existing knowledge can promote interest in a topic or build on pre-existing interest in that topic or a related one. Taking an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to learning builds on these same access points for learning. In addition, newer schools of educational thought tell us that there are many ways to learn and many forms of knowledge beyond the traditional forms of knowledge. Learning through dialogue, or social learning, is one of these, as is learning through experience or activity. Others include bodily-kinesthetic knowledge, oral or verbal knowledge, analytical knowledge, and technical knowledge. Involving other ways of knowing in our practice builds its learning possibilities and power, as does taking a lifelong learning approach. Further, transformative learning experiences by definition promote deeper learning; transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world (Morrell and O’Conner 2002).

*Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes*
Educators have historically used some of these principles in the classroom and are beginning to use others. This is especially true in alternative formal education settings or special schools. However, informal and non-traditional educators tend to use transformative learning experiences or involve other ways of knowing, as well. In fact, some of these methods evolved out of environmental education, visual arts education, and performing arts education. Less formal and non-classroom learning experiences tend to call for alternative methods. Further, informal educators have to be inventive when working with non-standard groups, such as at-risk youth or adults. Informal education and methods used by informal educators are discussed in the following section, since they are particularly relevant for learning and education in a planning context.

**Informal Education: How Is Learning Outside the Classroom Different?**

In one way, informal education can be understood as education that is not formal. When asked to think of what defines formal education, people frequently think of a location or setting, such as a school building or a university. People may also think of learning that emphasises the end result, the product, rather than the process. Mahoney (2001) adds one more distinction between formal and informal education: working styles. In a formal setting, there is generally more of a differentiation between “student” and “teacher,” individuals’ attitudes and behaviours are more formal, and their style is more focused and concentrated on learning a particular piece of knowledge – often one that the educator has defined as important.

But informal education is more than this. Mahoney (2001) lists a number of points that tend to define the work of informal educators. First, most of the people that informal educators work with are from a given local area. Second, when informal educators engage with people, the daily life of individuals and groups is the main focus. Third, the approach informal educators take to working with people is informal or relaxed; informal educators tend to be approachable, friendly, open to talk, and have a sense of humour. Fourth, rather than simply focusing on pieces of knowledge, for informal educators learning can include becoming more confident, organised, expressive, or more skilled in practical subjects. Mahoney adds that informal educators are not informal without “care or reflection” – they enter into their work with an aim of educating in an informal way.

Informal educators, because their work is so informal and involves so much dialogue, need to be particularly aware of how their opinions, feelings, and attitudes affect the people they
work with. One of the main ways informal educators can extend themselves and create space for others to discuss and reflect upon their experiences is to engage in the “work of attention”: informal educators must work against the inertia of their own minds, against their preconceptions, agendas, and the idea that they already know what someone will say or needs (Crosby 2001). The work of attention involves “observing, thinking, listening, and exploring in an effort to appreciate the other person’s perceptions and experiences” (Crosby 2001:56). Figure 2.1 is a reproduction of Jeffs and Smith’s ideas of what informal educators do and how they interact with the world.

**Figure 2.1: Informal Educators**

Informal educators enter

particular
social and cultural
situations

with

personal but
shared ideas of the
good

an ability to think critically,
and reflect-in-action

a disposition to
choose the ‘good’ rather
than the ‘correct’
a repertoire of examples
images, understandings and
actions and

an understanding of
their identity and role

They encourage
dialogue
between, and with,
people in the situation

out of which may come
thinking and action

This affects
those situations,
the individuals concerned,
significant others
and the educators themselves

(Jeffs and Smith 1990:19, Figure 1.1)
Informal education is about building relationships and being aware of opportunities. To help build relationships, educators need to be aware of how they interact with others and what affect this has. Reflecting on how well she relates to others enables an educator to develop her practice (Mahoney 2001). Such reflection can include thinking about different approaches the educator might use to work better with different people (Mahoney 2001), and how she can adapt her style to different situations. Adapting a style to suit a situation means watching for opportunities, observing situations and people to determine what might work best. It also means thinking about how the environment can be used as a tool for our work. As such, informal educators generally need to think about their approach and what they will say before making contact (Mahoney 2001). Looking for opportunities may also mean that informal educators do not rigidly follow rules, but adapt them, or at least try to figure out how following or enforcing a rule can be turned into an opportunity for dialogue and/or learning. Again, it is important to remember that educators work with people, not for them or on them (Richardson and Wolfe 2001). In the following chapter, many of these ideas are shown to be present in planning literature.

How Is Education Related to Planning?

It may already be apparent that, due to the work community planners do and the kinds of learning and education that planners promote through this work, community planners belong in the category of “informal educators.” To make this relationship even more apparent, it is possible to review three questions that Mahoney (2001) states can be asked to determine whether an informal activity is educational. These questions and the possible answers are very telling when viewed in light of what community planners do when they work with people.

First, the educator (or planner) should ask, “How did I get there?” Informal educators do not just “happen” to be around, but rather have intentionally placed themselves in situations where they then intervene as appropriate. Second, educators (or planners) should ask, “What did I do when I intervened?” Informal educators intervene in processes, frequently to help find common ground because when people find common ground they begin to learn about, and work with, what each person brings. Informal educators use many approaches and observations, but these are not coincidental. They are brought by the educators to enhance the learning experience and educators carefully select their approaches and observations as they reflect-in-action. Third, educator (or planners) should ask, “What tools did I use?” Informal educators bring many
different tools to bear in an educational experience. These may be a topic, a TV, a map, a situation, or something entirely different, but what is most important is that an informal educator is aware of the many processes that are involved in learning and recognises how a tool can be used to access one of these processes. Being aware of processes and techniques allows educators to introduce different angles into a discussion (Mahoney 2001:20-21).

Each of Mahoney’s questions and answers about how an informal educator behaves apply to community planners. Readers familiar with planning may also have noticed that throughout this chapter there were references to concepts found in planning, such as shared inquiry, or the “expert” phenomenon, and reflecting-in-action. Theorists, such as Donald Schôn, who are known in planning circles were also mentioned. This relationship becomes clearer through the discussion of planning theory in chapter 3, but the preceding discussion has laid the foundation for such a discussion. By defining learning and education, discussing some more pressing philosophical concerns, and discussing key aspects of learning, this chapter has given a basic overview of what learning and education are and how the concepts are used in this thesis. From this, lessons have been drawn about how to foster learning; these will later be discussed in a planning context as ways to promote more effective communication, discussion, and learning for planning processes. Finally, through a discussion of informal education, this chapter has made the first part of the case for why education is relevant to planning. The following chapter extends this argument and demonstrates how learning and education can be fostered through planning and used to support planning. Understanding how education and learning are relevant to planning and understanding some of the intricacies of how learning works would be of great benefit to planning, since this literature, which was merely skimmed in this chapter, is so rich and diverse.

4 However, Crosby (2001) cautions educators to avoid an over-reliance on techniques or programs. These can be a way for educators to avoid dealing with new and uncertain situations, if the program or technique is blindly applied in the same manner in different situations.
Chapter 3: The Concept of Learning in Planning Literature

Planners shape not only documents or information, then, but also citizens’ access to information, their understanding and interpretation of such information, and their ability to participate effectively in political processes affecting their lives.

-- John Forester 1980:275

Finding explicit discussions of learning and education in planning literature is a difficult proposition. In many ways the literature is sadly lacking when it comes to a discussion of education and learning. For instance, when education is mentioned in planning literature, the discussions tend to be brief or non-existent and rarely reach a conceptual level. Further, when education is discussed in more detail, a narrow definition of education is used. In such discussions, education seems to be defined as information provision, and is often confined to technical knowledge that flows from planners to the public. In contrast to how education is defined in this thesis and the discussions in the previous chapter, such an understanding of education is extremely narrow. Further, the question of how to implement or achieve educational or learning objectives is largely ignored. In other ways, however, the planning literature is rich with discussions that yield important insights for the topic of education and literature in planning. In some ways, this contrast is one of an explicit discussion versus an implicit discussion – a dichotomy that is carried into the framework presented in Chapter 4 and the fieldwork discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 8.

The literature that implicitly, and sometimes even explicitly, discusses education and learning can be further divided by the type of insight it offers. First, some planning literature yields insights into important conceptual and theoretical considerations related to education and learning. Such background discussions can be found in public involvement, communicative planning, and capacity building literature, which make important contributions to the field of learning and education in planning by introducing the topic. Public involvement literature discusses the nature of planning and reasons for public involvement and education. Communicative planning literature provides a conceptual background for education and learning in planning. Further, scholars such as John Forester and Judith Innes discuss the nature and role of information in communicative planning. Forester (1982), in particular, discusses information, the planner’s use of information, and misinformation as they relate to planning and
power in planning. Innes (1998) discusses how information, as it is processed through communicative planning, leads to new understanding – which can be interpreted as learning. On a related note, Innes’ work on consensus building and communicative rationality is also concerned with the planning process as a learning process (Innes 1996). Finally, capacity building literature, such as the work of Lackey and Dersham (1992), discusses planning as an empowering process whereby the public can learn information and skills that enhance individuals’ and groups’ capacities for citizenship and civic engagement.

Second, some planning literature yields insights into methods, techniques, and activities that make for more effective planning. Much of this literature stems from public involvement, and is thus concerned with promoting effective participation in planning processes. Similar to the discussion of methods used in education, public involvement literature has important insights about choices planners can make to facilitate public involvement and effective ways to structure public involvement initiatives that can be effectively extrapolated to education and learning in planning. For instance, Wendy Sarkissian’s (1994) ideas about creative community participation methods are based on principles that promote deeper engagement and learning. Going beyond principles gleaned from the education literature, the work of such scholars as Brody (2003), Glass (1979), and Thomas (1995) provide invaluable information about how to design effective public involvement processes. All of these theories and techniques are particularly valuable when combined with literature on effective methodologies for education and learning.

Third, much planning literature yields insights into the process of planning. For instance, planning scholars have given planners an understanding and appreciation of social learning and mutual learning. These ideas have further led to an appreciation that learning may occur through participation in planning processes. These ideas about kinds of learning that occur through a process are obviously useful to our discussion. Further, much work has been done on how conflict can derail planning processes (or occasionally be healthy for them), and how to overcome or move beyond conflict through negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution techniques. Since conflict can easily inhibit any opportunity to engage in the deeper reflection that is needed for learning to occur, these discussions of conflict have great relevance to a discussion of education and learning in planning.

A final area of the planning literature is concerned with current work that is being done in the field of planning that is concerned with education and learning. Such work is limited in amount and nature. Much of it is concerned with the use of new technologies in planning,
outreach to schools or youth and planning in public education curricula (Graves 1999; CIP n.d.; Mahood 2003), public awareness programs (FCM-CH2M HILL 2000, 2002; McJannet 2003), and communications theory (Holland 1999; Sarkissian and Perlmut 1994). This work is not largely based in learning or education theory. In contrast, a related field that has emerged over the past ten or so years is education for sustainability, which has some of its roots in environmental education, but is based on a much larger body of work (see Sterling 1996). The field of education for sustainability is solidly and richly based in educational theory and practice, but it has not been taken up by many community planners (an exception in discussed in McJannet 2003) and thus remains the purview of environmental non-governmental organizations and environmental educators.

The following chapter explores these and other ideas and others relevant to learning and education in planning through a discussion of these diverse divisions of planning literature. It is important to note that this chapter is not intended to be a full survey of each of the topics covered, but rather an exploration of the topics as they relate to education and learning. The bodies of literature that are thus explored include capacity building, public involvement, consensus building, communicative planning, power and politics in planning, current planning work that involves education and learning, and the reasons for promoting education and learning in planning process. Each section begins with a discussion of relevant literature and concludes with lessons. These lessons are the basis of the framework presented in Chapter 4.

Capacity Building

The field of capacity building is concerned with drawing on a community’s assets to solve problems and improve and/or maintain community well-being and quality of life. Assets can include skills, knowledge, leadership, social networks, a sense of efficacy, and even a culture of openness and learning (Simpson et al. 2003). Some scholars and practitioners even equate capacity building with education and learning. After all, if capacity building is a process of building an individual’s existing knowledge, skills, and other assets, then learning – both individual and community – must occur. Such learning is thought to include technical skills, information acquisition, knowledge of group dynamics and group behaviour, knowledge of political power structures, and personal skills such as self-reliance, personal responsibility, and respect for diverse positions (Lackey and Dersham 1992).
Capacity building can occur spontaneously through participation in community or community development/planning activities, or it can be promoted and fostered by various community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, or governmental institutions. Numerous scholars have found evidence of asset development, or learning, occurring through participation in community development activities. In one study on learning during community development, Lackey and Dersham (1992) found that participants learned much about human behaviour, understanding of government and politics, and skills for working with groups such as discussion techniques, human relations, leadership skills, goal setting, and conflict resolution, without practitioners even trying to promote learning. The process of community development is as important as the product, because participation builds capacity in communities, in part by leading participants to learn important skills and knowledge. As Lackey and Dersham point out, by paying attention to which skills and knowledge are needed in a community and intentionally promoting those through community development process, practitioners can assist communities with capacity building and empowerment.

There is a drive for communities to take responsibility for their own development, but if this is to be the case, then communities must feel empowered to take charge and they must be empowered – they must have the capacity and the skills – to do so, to make their future (Simpson et al. 2003). Finally, they must have support: institutions must not create unreasonable pressures on the time, personal energy, finances, and other resources of individuals (Simpson et al. 2003). Other important reminders that emerge from capacity building literature include the fact that participation is driven by need and awareness and requires knowledge and skill acquisition, all of which take time, effort, and engagement to develop; thus they require ongoing support (Simpson et al. 2003). Finally, learning as part of capacity building is particularly effective because it is experiential learning, which makes the process of internalising the lesson much more effective; this power should be capitalised on, not frittered away or ignored.

Public Involvement

A movement in the latter part of the 20th century to democratise public decision-making has led to an entire body of literature concerned with public involvement. This field of study has been driven by a need to work with people who very much want to participate in decisions that affect them. As Thomas (1995:1) states, “contemporary public managers must know how to work with all kinds of publics, from individual citizens to small community groups, to large
national public interest groups.” This need has led to a search for effective ways to work with the public, but it has also led to much writing, by the likes of Sherry Arnstein, Paul Davidoff, John Forester, John Thomas, and Wendy Sarkissian, about why public involvement is necessary, about the contested ground of decision-making, about how planners can work with and for the public while dealing with complex issues of power, conflict, reluctant institutions and regulations that work against true public involvement and collaboration, and about when and how to involve the public.

A discussion of public involvement must always begin by answering the question of why planners do public involvement at all. The two main answers seem to be that public participation is ethical and that public participation is pragmatic (Perlgut 1994). On the ethical side, to achieve a strong democracy, those who have much at stake in any decision should be consulted and involved in that decision; in addition, participation gives people a voice who otherwise would not have one (see Perlgut 1994, Thomas 1995, and Arnstein 1969 for some discussions). On the pragmatic side, people are increasingly demanding to be part of decisions, so to achieve support or to achieve sustainable programs or policies, practitioners must involve people; the idea that public involvement helps make a stronger plan is a corollary of this idea (see Perlgut 1994, Thomas 1995, and Burby 2003 for some discussions). Different reasons for engaging in public involvement can translate into different involvement methods, and thus have vast implications for education and learning. Asking why planners are engaging in public involvement tells us much about why planners are engaging in education and learning processes, how much planners really want to promote long-term, or deeper learning, and what planners want people (and themselves as practitioners) to learn about.

Sherry Arnstein’s discussion of a public involvement continuum is important here. Arnstein (1969) conceptualised citizen participation, or public involvement, as a ladder of participation: at the bottom rungs the public has little power, while at the top the citizen has the most power in determining the end product of the process. The levels of the ladder are:
This deconstruction of public involvement reveals much about how education can occur as part of planning. If the ideas that Arnstein presents in her ladder of participation are extended to a discussion of education in planning, then at the level of manipulation, people are placed on advisory boards for “educating” – to engineer their support, are placed on committees for “information gathering,” or “public relations.” Thus, education, or at least information provision, is said to be involved in the process, but this is certainly not the kind of education and learning that creates any lasting impact on an individual. This thesis suggests that if planners want to achieve long-term change, they should strive to reach deeper levels of learning; thus, in such cases this kind of “education” is a waste as well as a sham. Similarly, at the level of informing, too often the emphasis is on one-way flow of information, not on mutual learning, and there is no idea that the public has any kind of useful knowledge that planners or politicians need or want to learn about. While Arnstein does not discuss education or information provision at the upper levels of her ladder of participation, one can postulate that education as part of partnership, delegated power, or citizen control would be similar to mutual education and learning with emphasis placed on the knowledge and expertise that members of the public have. One can also project that much more real learning would take place at these levels as people participate in community development – as was discussed above in the context of capacity building. Thus, while there are greater opportunities for education and learning, particularly deeper levels of education and learning, at the higher levels of public involvement, the relationship is not exactly linear: education can happen during nonparticipation and tokenism, but it can also happen at the level of citizen power. Similar to Freire’s work, Arnstein’s ladder is also a powerful reminder that education can be used to manipulate people.

Based on this, what role do education and learning play in public involvement? One answer is that some education is necessary for effective public involvement: Participants (both
community members and practitioners) must know what others mean by terms and ideas they discuss, what information they base their thoughts and opinions upon, and how the process they are engaging in works. It is also important to consider whether the education and learning is designed to occur for the purposes and duration of a given project or whether it is designed to occur for longer-term goals as well. One of the main limitations of the public involvement literature is that while information provision to enable participation is mentioned, what happens to this information, how participants process it, and how it is used are not discussed. In the public involvement literature, education or information provision occurs for participation – to enable it. It does not seem to be valued for other reasons. In addition, in this body of literature, information is generally seen as flowing from practitioners to members of the public, not from the public to practitioners or even between different publics in more than a marginal way.

An emerging area of public involvement literature does discuss the fact that progress in dealing with issues is dependent on social and policy learning by planners and stakeholders (Burby 2003). Such learning can involve lessons about communities' problems, adaptations of goals or methods to local circumstances, and insights on and suggestions for policy instruments. Public involvement and the sharing of information and understanding that follows from this can have impacts on the strengths of plans, but it can also have longer-term effects: “in the process of generating, diffusing, and agreeing on information, new ways of thinking about issues can gradually become embedded in planners' and stakeholders' consciousness.” (Burby 2003: 35).

In the area of methods and techniques, public involvement literature does make numerous other contributions to a discussion of learning and education in planning. To begin, the literature reveals how to design an effective process or program. Decisions that must be made include choices about the following (combined from Brody et al. 2003, Burby 2003, Glass 1979, and Thomas 1995):

1) Administration: practitioners must decide how much authority to share, how much public involvement to engage in, and how to staff involvement efforts;
2) Objectives: practitioners must decide whether to exchange information, educate citizens, build support for a project, seek citizen's preferences, or grant them influence over the final product or process;
3) Timing: practitioners must decide when to start encouraging public involvement;
4) Targeting: practitioners must decide whom to involve (which stakeholders);
5) Techniques and methods: practitioners must decide which approaches to employ;
6) Information: Practitioners must decide what types of information and dissemination processes to incorporate in participation activities.

Glass (1979) states that techniques should be carefully selected to follow from objectives. Different techniques, whether they are unstructured (techniques that lack structure, where planners have little control over what is produced, such as drop-in centres and neighbourhood meetings), structured (techniques where planners help construct the setting and the participants, such as advisory committees and review boards), active (processes where participation occurs through a well-developed and defined process, such as ranking tasks or community mapping), or passive (structured processes citizens have no direct contact with planners or other citizens, such as surveys) may support different objectives to different extents (adapted from Glass 1979). While a more detailed discussion of techniques and their impacts is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that the choices practitioners make have far-reaching effects on participation and learning, similar to how the attitudes, values, and choices educators makes affect the learning process. Techniques that are selected should depend on the setting and the publics involved. In addition, similar to the principle of using multiple educational methods to promote deeper learning, using more than one public involvement technique helps reach more and different groups. More complex techniques are less likely to reach more marginalised groups, who are already under-represented (Sinclair 1994).\footnote{See Burby (2003) and Sinclair (1994) for further discussions of the specific impacts that planner’s choices have on participation. Sinclair also gives a detailed discussion of involvement techniques such as types of groups, the characteristics of groups, sampling methods, observation methods, publicity techniques, displays, site offices, and media releases. Thomas (1995) provides further discussion of different involvement techniques.}

Finally, a major benefit of public involvement is that it facilitates successful implementation. Processes that involve a wider range of stakeholders produce stronger plans that are much more likely to be implemented (Burby 2003). While this is partially due to wider public support for plans, which results from a larger number of people being involved and feeling that their voices were heard, it could be argued that this greater implementation success is also related to the education and learning that occurs during public involvement. As people learn new information and ideas, as they learn about others’ viewpoints, and as their very attitudes change, they are more likely to support plans. Such an idea is very similar to that of consensus building, which is also related to learning.

Consensus building is based on participants having the same access to the same information, all of which should be communicatively rational (Innes 1996). Communicative
rationality requires that all stakeholders are equally empowered, fully informed, and conditions of ideal speech are met – statements must be comprehensible, scientifically true, and offered by those who can legitimately speak and who speak sincerely (Innes 1996). In addition, participants must become informed about one another’s interests in order to create options, develop criteria, and make decisions about which all can agree. Consensus building, then, is a learning process: participants must have good, accurate information, which they then process, analyse, and combine in new ways to come to decisions. In fact, participants in consensus building exercises learn about more than one another’s interests. They also learn about the process of negotiation, about compromise, and even about working with groups effectively. And hopefully they are able to extract lessons from the process that they can use in the future.

**Communicative Planning**

Patsy Healey (1997) partially based her work on communicative planning on the idea that all forms of knowledge are socially constructed and that individuals learn about their views through interaction. Thus, planning is a “social process through which ways of thinking, ways of valuing, and ways of acting are actively constructed by participants” (Healey 1997:29). Through these communicative processes, then, as people participate in planning processes, they construct new ways of thinking – they learn. John Forester (1999) discusses “participatory rituals” through which people learn about each other before solving problems; but by learning about each other, people learn about their own problems. These ideas show that the seemingly unimportant unstructured processes and moments wherein different planning process participants (whether these are community members or practitioners) meet each other and chat before settling down to work are as important, if not more so, than ‘getting down to work.’ Through these participatory rituals people learn and lay the foundations upon which later learning will occur.

Communicative planning theory also provides an important reminder that information, both formal and informal, enters into the public sphere and public decisions by ways other than decision makers and planners consciously deciding to employ the information as they weigh alternatives and make choices. Information becomes gradually embedded in the minds and understandings of members of the public and practitioners (Innes 1998). In addition, many kinds of information are used besides formal analytical reports: knowledge and reasoning takes many
forms, including storytelling, creative expression, experiential knowledge, images and representations, and intuition (Healey 1997 and Innes 1998).

It seems that the role that this information plays is quite significant, as well, perhaps more so because it is so all-pervasive and difficult to describe. Innes (1998:55) found that information given to and used by policy makers “influenced not so much in decisions, but in the institutions and practices through which policies came into being; and not so much the explicit opinions, as the mindsets and assumptions of the policy actors.” In other words, information, particularly the all-pervasive information gained through communicative “rituals of learning,” is insidious. However, this information only becomes “intellectual capital,” or shared knowledge if there is much talk about the meaning of the information, its accuracy, and its implications; information is only influential if it represents a shared understanding created through communicative action with concerned parties (Innes 1998).

Thus, planners cannot ignore the important role played by informal discussions, as well as discussions surrounding information that has been introduced by planners or by others. If planners wish to help people learn and process information to their satisfaction, they need to facilitate communicative acts. Knowing about the many roles that planners play in communicative practice is helpful here. Planners can design processes and new institutions, sometimes as initiators, but more often by working with stakeholders. Planners can also find and present formal information, answer questions, or identify experts with different political perspectives, but in this role planners must deal with critical challenges from participants. Planners can prepare documents, such as memoranda, issue papers, and even drafts of negotiation documents to spur conversation, provide focus, and move the process along. Planners can also help staff processes as mediators, facilitators, consultants, and committee chairs (Innes 1998). In each of these roles planners can find a space to enhance the education and learning experiences, both structured and unstructured, intentional and unintentional, of participants.

In recent years, the importance of local knowledge in decision-making has also begun to appear in planning literature. Healey’s (1997) theory of communicative planning was partially based on the idea that communication, knowledge and reasoning take many forms, which is similar to the concept of local knowledge. Based in anthropology and international development literature, local knowledge is information based on first-hand experiences and observations; information linked to a specific place, culture, or identity group; dynamic and evolving knowledge; and/or ‘expert’ or ‘technical’ knowledge developed by local peoples without
professional credentials or ‘expertise’ (based on Coburn 2003). International development, anthropology, environmental planning, and public health literature have begun to stress the important contributions that local knowledge can make to decision making, and that local knowledge can even challenge expert knowledge for importance and depth. Community participation in planning, through which local knowledge has a voice, is putting pressure on planners to find new ways of combining scientific expertise with the insights from local knowledge (Coburn 2003). Coburn notes that while much planning literature has recognised the knowledge of communities, particularly in the form of narratives or storytelling, almost no planning literature reveals or discusses the important technical insights that community members can offer. Such an appreciation of local knowledge shows how important it is that planners learn from members of the public, and how important it is that members of the public learn from each other during planning processes. Of course, if processes are structured such that local technical knowledge is ignored, then opportunities for learning are vastly limited.

Power and Politics

John Forester (1982) offers a different insight into the role of information in planning: that information is a source of power in the planning process. Forester emphasizes that planners need to understand how information may be a source of power, but also recognise what types of misinformation planners and the public might face. In his view, information is a source of power because practical action and effective citizen participation are dependent on it. Of more interest to this discussion, though, is how information, and thus education and the learning process, can be mismanaged and manipulated, and how power and politics set the agenda for what may be discussed.

While some misinformation may be necessary and inevitable, structural, organisational, and political barriers may unnecessarily and systemically distort the information that the public uses to shape their opinions and actions (Forester 1982). Forester states that “if information and communication in the planning process are not 1) clear and comprehensible; 2) sincere and trustworthy; 3) appropriate and legitimate; and 4) accurate and true, then to that extent, may the participants in the planning process be misinformed, or, possibly, manipulated” (Forester 1982:71). These four conditions of communication represent four vulnerabilities of informed action: 1) the vulnerability of people’s comprehension of issues; 2) the vulnerability of the trust with which planner and citizen listen to one another and to others; 3) the vulnerability of the management of consent [to false claims of legitimacy]; and 4) the vulnerability to
misrepresentation of the 'facts' of feasible alternatives, possible actions, costs, benefits, or risks (Forester 1982:72). Because education and learning rest on a foundation of information (both official and unofficial), they share these vulnerabilities and their related conditions of unmanipulated communication.

Forester’s main recommendations for counteracting misinformation follow directly from the vulnerabilities. He suggests such things as weeding out jargon, calling attention to important issues which participants may not otherwise notice, calling upon counter-expertise when necessary, promoting criticism or debate, politicising the process to promote democratically structured, publicly aired political argument, and working to inform people earlier rather than later (Forester 1982). In addition, there are many other practical, well-developed responses, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

This discussion illuminates two other important points related to how power and politics affect the political process. First, there is the attitude that an institution has towards sharing information, allowing debate, and promoting learning. The “Decide-Announce-Defend” and “Decide-Educate-Announce-Defend” models of planning demonstrate this idea. If an institution is not open to public involvement and communication in the planning process, then any efforts to promote education and learning will likely be confined to the shallower ends of the spectrum. A wish to keep all power to itself and the political environment are generally a large part of an institution’s decision to take the DAD or DEAD approach to planning. Second, power and politics can exert a strong influence over what may be discussed and what may not be discussed in a planning process, even when the process is supposedly ‘open.’ In addition, politics can determine the approach taken to public involvement, as is shown in Chapter 6 through one Vancouver planner’s description of two different City Council’s approaches to public participation. Politics also have a large impact on the terms of reference, or scope of a project. This can have a large impact on education and learning, because many important topics can be taken off the table, and many suppositions can be made that severely limit opportunities for learning. Finally, political will can dictate what solutions or topics may be discussed, particularly in great detail, and what solutions are viable. An example is a City’s approach to sustainability or greenhouse gas emissions; depending on a City politician’s attitude towards the issue, whether they feel it is open for discussion as part of a planning process, and what solutions they are willing to entertain, avenues for education and learning may be open or closed. In many ways, a planner, whether working for a province, a municipality, an educational institution, a private developer, or a non-governmental organisation, must have some political
mandate in order to discuss a topic. In Chapter 6 several practitioner’s suggestions for dealing with this issue are discussed.

**Current Planning That Involves Education and Learning**

In contrast to the theoretical contributions of capacity building, public involvement, and communicative planning literature, current planning writing and research that deals explicitly with learning and education tends to be concerned with applications for planning. There is little or no explicit discussion of a theory of learning and education in planning. Rather, the application of elements of learning and education in planning seems to have generally taken a narrow view of what education is and applied it without delving into the larger body of education theory and practice. Further, current literature applies this understanding to limited areas that are peripheral to the topic of this thesis. Such areas include the use of technology, mass communications and outreach (Sarkissian and Perlgut 1994; Holland 1999), public awareness programs (FCM-CH2M HILL 2000, 2002), youth education (Graves 1999; CIP n.d.), and environmental planning or mitigation.

The areas of technology, mass communications and outreach, and public awareness, while interesting areas for research, serve a supportive function to a discussion of learning and education in community planning. It is true that these three areas can open up new possibilities for education and learning, but these possible avenues for exploration and growth rest on a larger body of principles and questions, which are the true substance of this thesis. For instance, while understanding public awareness and outreach, social marketing, and how to educate the larger public on issues serves a learning and education function, discussing the intricacies of how to “price” or “place” a service effectively or discussing how the public responds to such messages when they contain planning-related information does not further the larger discussion of how to build a framework for fostering learning and education in planning.

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6 Some examples of particularly effective public awareness programs created by planning departments are regularly published in the FCM-CH2M HILL yearly best practices reports. Some particularly good examples include the Kamloops, British Columbia ‘TravelSmart’ and ‘WaterSmart’ Programs (FCM-CH2M HILL 2000), the York, Ontario ‘Water for Tomorrow Student Education Program, (FCM-CH2M HILL 2002), the Cambridge, Ontario ‘Where Does My Water Come From and Where Does It Go?’ Program (FCM-CH2M HILL 2000), the Surrey, British Columbia ‘Environmental Extravaganza!’ Program (FCM-CH2M HILL 2000), and the Whistler, British Columbia program ‘Whistler, It’s Our Nature’ (FCM-CH2M HILL 2002 and McJannet 2003).

7 Knowing how to maximise opportunities for communication, whether those are through visual displays and graphics or through television and radio, is an important skill for planners, since the resources (e.g., attention, time, and money) that both planners and their audiences can spend on this are limited.
Other, more formal ways of providing education about or through planning include planning outreach to schools and youth, and the field of education for sustainability. Promoting learning while involving youth in planning processes is similar to promoting learning while working with adults. The main differences are with reading and comprehension levels that information is geared to, with attitude or approach, and with the ‘slickness’ of marketing and publicity materials. Planning outreach to schools can include integration in high school or elementary curricula and can be concerned with issues ranging from urban design and urban form (Graves 1999; CIP n.d.) to community development and administrative concerns (CIP n.d.) to education for sustainability (Sterling 1996; EC 2002; McJannet 2003). Education for sustainability formally and intentionally brings education into the planning process through discussions of sustainability. While education for sustainability provides some important reasons for including education and learning in planning, it also adds to the fabric of theory for how education and learning can be part of planning. Planning can support education for sustainability by promoting community engagement and bringing thinking about sustainability into new areas of people’s lives – by integrating learning about sustainability into process and end product. Finally, because it has its roots in the environmental education movement, education for sustainability adds to the catalogue of effective techniques and approaches for promoting education and learning in planning. Techniques used in education for sustainability include experiential education (see Chapter 2), transformative learning, integrating separate pieces of knowledge, and emphasising the ability to ask good questions. Of the current planning work that concerns education and learning, education for sustainability makes the greatest contributions to this thesis, through its emphasis on integration – both of planning with people’s lives and of separate pieces of knowledge – and techniques for promoting learning.

Interested planners can refer to Sarkissian and Perlmutt’s (1994) book, which contains several articles on communication and outreach techniques, or Holland’s (1999) thesis, which discusses the theory and technique of mass communications for planners.

While there are additional considerations, this subject is better dealt with elsewhere. Mahood (2003) provides an example of a non-governmental organisation involving youth in planning in his case study of a sustainable transportation advocacy group. The collaboration produced a set of frameworks for youth-led sustainable transportation activities and strategies. These can be used by groups or integrated into high school curricula.

Professional organisations such as the Canadian Institute of Planners and the American Planning Association have made efforts to structure independent lessons that can be easily incorporated into existing elementary school curricula. Box City (Graves 1999) provides lessons on built form while A Kid’s Guide to Building Great Communities: A manual for planners and educators (CIP n.d.) provides lessons on the elements of great communities.
What Are Planners Educating For?

In Chapter 2, the discussion of learning and education shows that it is important to determine what educators are educating for, since the answer to the question, “What am I educating for?” determines much about the educational process. Educators must ask such questions as: Is the goal of the educational process to learn skills or abilities through the learning process, or is the goal to learn some substantive piece of information? Is information being learned for the long-term or the short-term? What values influence the format and substance of the educational process? What values, beliefs, and attitudes influence the questions asked and the answers accepted?

Based on the planning and associated theories discussed in this chapter, some new questions can be added to this list: Who is invited to the planning table? Whose knowledge is considered legitimate? For what purposes is this type of knowledge considered legitimate? How do power, politics, and conflict influence the information provided, questions asked, and answers reached? To what extent and how should the public be involved in planning? All of these questions can be summed up in one major question: What are planners educating for when they engage in planning processes?

The most important answer to this question is that what planners are educating for depends on the planner and the process. However, there are other considerations and possible answers, as well. To begin, one very simple answer, based on the discussion of communicative acts, dialogue, and participation, is that learning is what a good planning process is about. In order to produce a good plan with any kind of consensus, people must learn about others’ ideas, opinions, thoughts, and the information those are based upon – whether it is technical, experiential, or based in literature, and whether it is public or personal. Participants, both planners and community members, also need to learn about the processes they are engaging in, the immediate physical environment and their larger physical environment (whether those are neighbourhoods and cities or provinces and countries), their social and political environments, and numerous other factors, depending on the process. This learning can be intentionally promoted or may happen unintentionally, and it flows not merely from practitioner to public and vice-versa (mutual learning), but between members of the public, as well. If this learning is intentionally promoted by a person or group, it can be called education. Thus, one reason planners engage in education is to gain enough knowledge to complete a process, usually to complete a plan or a policy document: Planners educate for effective participation. This kind of
education goal helps planners choose strategies to achieve desired outcomes. Planners can also engage in education to learn about others, the diversity of people they are surrounded by and their thoughts and opinions. Thus, planners engage in education to learn about their environments: human, social, political, physical, and ecological. A corollary of this is that planners educate and seek to learn to challenge current or out-of-date thoughts, to actively create new realities. Further, planners can engage in education and learning to promote long-term or long-range change.

Related to this idea is education for sustainability. The concept of education for sustainability is built upon the idea that to plan and live in a sustainable manner people must make connections that are difficult to see, particularly given the disconnected, non-interdisciplinary nature of the present formal educational system (Huckle 1996). Thus, it is necessary to support sustainable practices and sustainability initiatives through education and community engagement. As Environment Canada’s Framework for Environmental Learning and Sustainability states, it is important that the larger public “understand issues regarding the environment and sustainability, that they develop the skills required, and explore the attitudes and motivation needed to make informed choices, to consume wisely, to ask good questions, to question the answers, and to take meaningful actions if we are all to participate in creating a sustainable future” (EC 2002:2). Thus, education for sustainability must be community-wide in scope. Everyone should and can be involved in community education for sustainability, including community groups, governments, the private sector, all levels of the formal education system, non-government organizations and individual learners and their families (EC 2002:2). Only by engaging the larger public and involving them in the changes that must take place can the kind of widespread change that is necessary occur. Community engagement, mobilisation, buy-in, and support are necessary to achieve social sustainability, and thus true sustainability. When planners engage in education to promote sustainability, or some other long-term goal, they are educating for a better world and for long-term change.

As in the case of education for sustainability or for long-term change, planners can also have education goals that go beyond a given planning process or project. During implementation, for instance, learning must occur about people, environments, and implementation methods or options in order to develop a new future. This goes beyond simply completing a plan or policy, because in implementation, new obstacles and challenges are frequently encountered. In fact, facing such challenges or obstacles and overcoming them is a learning process because participants have to adapt and change their previously-acquired

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knowledge to account for new factors. If planners engage in education to support learning during implementation, they must focus on many levels of learning.

Briefly, then, education is always for something, and the determination of what that is lies in the decisions of the planner, as well as the requirements of the process. Planners educate to learn about and choose strategies to achieve desired outcomes and they educate for participation. Planners educate for equality and to achieve greater democracy in planning. Planners educate to learn about their environments and to challenge assumptions and thoughts about how the world is constructed. Planners educate for implementation and to reach long-range goals. Planners also educate for change and to assist in the process of building a more sustainable world. In sum then, planners educate to grow and develop, individually and as a community.

Towards an Understanding of Learning and Education in Planning

The information presented in this chapter has moved this thesis beyond one discussion of principles of learning and education and one discussion of planning. This discussion has begun to integrate these two streams. However, some possible confusion may exist because in certain areas there is considerable overlap between learning/education and planning. The two most obvious confusions are between “learning and education” and “public involvement” and between “learning and education” and “capacity building.” To begin with the distinction between “learning and education” and “public involvement,” public involvement is a planning term that is closely related to learning and education, but each concept is concerned with some matters that the other is not. Public involvement can occur at many levels, from the weak, sham levels of participation that Arnstein labelled “nonparticipation” and “tokenism” to the higher levels that Arnstein labelled “citizen power.” Even when citizens are involved at these higher levels, though, it cannot be assumed that learning and education are occurring. While it is almost certain that some learning will occur during any kind of public involvement, this learning is not necessarily at a very high level and may be at the lower levels of “knowing a lot” or “memorising” (see page 14). While this learning is good, if learning and education are not focused on specifically, then opportunities to maximise substantive learning and process learning are lost. Opportunities to pass on specific information are also lost. Further, in public involvement there is not necessarily any emphasis on multi-directional learning between participants and planners, participants and participants, and others. Public involvement is about
finding ways to engage people in the planning process while learning and education are about constructing meaning and understanding inside and outside of that planning process. Some planners may really be discussing learning and education when they speak of “public involvement,” but separating the two fields is useful, since the greater precision of using two terms and recognizing two separate disciplines opens up possibilities for different types of learning and education inside of almost any given level of public involvement. This distinction also allows planners who wish to foster certain types of learning to draw on different public involvement techniques.

Stating the distinction between “learning and education” and “capacity building” is more difficult, because in many ways, these two concepts are identical. Capacity building is a process of building an individual’s existing knowledge, skills, and assets. By this definition, if planners intentionally foster participant’s learning of information or skills, or even if they promote opportunities for network-building, then they are engaging in capacity building. One can even stretch the concept of capacity building to include educational or public awareness campaigns about planning issues because these campaigns build people’s knowledge. Perhaps the best way to understand the difference between capacity building and learning and education is that capacity building can be seen as a reason for engaging in learning and education. As an end rather than the means to achieve that end, the capacity building literature does not focus on mechanisms that help people think about something and come to a new understanding of it, as learning and education does, nor does most capacity building literature discuss developing knowledge in an interactive manner, although similar concepts are involved. Further, learning and education, as they are discussed in this thesis, are multi-directional, such that they flow back and forth between planners and participants and between participants, as well as any others involved in the planning process. Capacity building literature does not generally discuss the importance of building the capacity of the planner. In addition, much capacity building literature speaks of asset building and gaining knowledge and abilities in areas, such as understanding government and politics or human relations, that are not frequently considered part of learning and education. Further, capacity building literature focuses extensively on networks and support systems, as well as on whole communities, both of which are elements that greatly increase our understanding of community development but are not generally considered part of learning and education.

To complete this understanding of what learning and education is in the context of planning, it is important to define learning and education in planning practice. The following
definition is based on the definition of learning and education given in Chapter 2, as applied to planning, as it is presented in this chapter:

Learning and education are interactive processes that involve actively experiencing, sharing, and developing knowledge. Learning and education are about both the product and the process: how learning occurs can be as important as the information transmitted. During planning, all participants in the planning process, be they community members, planners, politicians, or others, can be involved in learning and education. Learning and education can occur through the process of planning (e.g., participants can learn skills such as how to run a meeting or how to run a budgetary process and planners or politicians can learn about how community networks operate and how to work with these networks). Learning and education can also be a product of the planning process (e.g., community members can learn about types of traffic calming, planners can learn about a community’s needs, or both can learn how they can help each other). Learning, or thinking about something and coming to a new understanding, can occur anywhere at any time, whereas education can be thought of as a process that intentionally fosters learning. In planning, learning and education can be consciously fostered by anyone involved and may occur at different levels during different points in the planning process. This learning and education can have short-term goals, such as finishing a given planning project, or long-term goals, such as building shared understanding or creating the future contained in policy and long-range plans. Learning and education involve people and occur more effectively when people can extend what they learn to other parts of their lives or relate new information to other concepts. Intentional education for long-term changes often uses a comprehensive, integrated approach with learning as a lifelong experience.

This chapter has shown that planning has much to add to a discussion of education and learning. Education and learning enable groups to develop new solutions and reach consensus. Planning also has much to say about how education and learning are part of increasing the capacities of communities, particularly when processes conscientiously involve learning information or skills that communities need access to. Learning in planning processes is not unidirectional, or even bi-directional. Rather, learning can be thought of as a polygon, or a many-sided shape, where practitioners learn from the public, the public learns from practitioners, members of the public learn from each other and there are as any points to the shape as there are participants in the process. Information flows back and forth along each connection. This idea of a “polygon of learning” has particular significance due to the importance of local knowledge,
both non-technical and technical. Adding to this growing understanding of learning and education in planning, public involvement theory reveals much about structuring a successful process and choosing appropriate techniques, lessons that can be applied to education and learning. Public involvement theory also yields important insights into the relationship between public involvement, education, and manipulation. By combining information gained from these discussions of education theory and planning theory, this chapter has begun to shape an understanding of learning and education in planning. The following chapter extends this understanding and the lessons reviewed above into a framework for fostering learning and education in planning processes.
Chapter 4: Finding Learning and Education in Planning: A Framework

There are numerous similarities, but also differences, between planning theory and education and learning theory. Theories of capacity building, public involvement, consensus building, and communicative planning have much to say implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, about education and learning. However, if we are to begin explicitly discussing education and learning in planning, the theories related to that field have even more to offer us in terms of insights into what education and learning can and should be, as well as techniques for more effective education and learning. This chapter integrates these two bodies of literature into a framework for assessing how planners incorporate and promote learning and education in community-based planning processes they lead or design. The framework serves as the starting point, or “frame” for the analysis, found in later sections of this thesis, of learning and education as they occur during the practice of planning.

This analytical framework postulates that there eight key elements necessary for successfully fostering learning and education. These elements are presented through questions that may be asked of planners or about planning processes. Each question has three or four component questions that elaborate on the point and raise issues drawn from education or planning theory. These key questions and their components are framed for an analysis of how education and learning are incorporated and fostered in planning processes or in a planning department’s activities. Because planning departments generally initiate planning processes, the framework implicitly refers to planners as initiators of education and learning in planning processes. However, the framework is also based on a supposition, supported by both the planning and education and learning literature, that any learning and education program should be created in collaboration with the community in which the planning department is working. It is also important to note that these eight main questions are ordered, so later questions tend to rely on how earlier questions were addressed. As such, goals, objectives and organisation should reflect values; content, techniques, and methods should reflect goals and values; and delivery and outreach should reflect techniques, methods, goals, and values.

Each of these key questions also contains an implicit recommendation: it is important to formulate overall context and values, to formulate goals and objectives, or to organise the process to effect education and learning. The literature reviewed in the preceding chapters has
yielded preliminary answers to some of the key questions: ideas for how planners and planning participants might define education and learning, important characteristics of goals and objectives, and principles for how a process may be organised effectively. Such ideas, or starting points, are reflected in the sub-questions found below. However, for some of the key framework questions, answers or elements that support the recommendations are less clear: the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 has not revealed exactly what the barriers to learning and education and planning are or what are the most useful techniques and methods. As such, the discussions of these framework points, the sub-questions that follow them, and the analysis found in later chapters of this thesis are more exploratory. The eight key framework points and their components are as follows:

1) Formulating Overall Values and Context

How does the planning department or individual define and value education and learning, community inclusion, and community knowledge in planning? How do they place these values in the context in which planning will occur?

To lay a foundation for further involvement of education and learning in planning processes, an organisation must establish its values with regards to education and learning in planning. Values may be agreed upon and understood implicitly, but this leaves much more room for confusion and misunderstanding than an explicit agreement. Developing a supportive overall context for the inclusion of education and learning in the planning process further clarifies matters. Here, key considerations are:

- What is the planner’s role in facilitating education and learning during the planning process? And the participant’s?
- To what extent do planners, their department, and/or community members enter into planning with the intent of promoting education and learning?
- How do the values and beliefs of the department affect the content, the process structure, the topics, and the attitude of the department or individuals that are part of the planning process? How does the political climate affect this?
- How do planners value learning and education? How do they think of knowledge?
2) Formulating Goals and Objectives

*How has the planning department or the individual planner set goals and/or objectives (for) involving education and learning in the planning process?*

By formulating clear and explicit goals and objectives, an organisation can better understand how to proceed through a planning exercise. Goals and objectives should reflect the department’s and community’s values and needs, and they should influence methods, techniques, content, and delivery and outreach. Considerations are:

- To what extent are the goals and objectives for education and learning explicit or implicit? Are they clear?
- How do the goals and objectives match the intent of the program: to intentionally foster education or to promote general learning in a less intentional way; to achieve short- or long-term learning; and to learn information for use in the given process or to be able to extend knowledge beyond the given process?
- How are the goals and objectives set to promote types and levels of education and learning that are appropriate and feasible for the given planning project?

3) Organisation of the Process

*How is the planning process organised and administered in a manner that facilitates education and learning?*

Developing a clear and reasoned approach to organising a process that promotes education and learning is key. While decisions in this area are generally made within an organisation, a planner who is engaging in community-based planning should review some of these decisions with the community, even if they cannot be negotiated.

- What formalised guidelines does the department have for involving education and learning in the planning process?
- To what extent are planning processes staffed with planners who have expertise in and knowledge about education, learning, and communication?
- How are planning processes structured and organised to facilitate public involvement and education and learning? How is enough time allocated to the process to facilitate public involvement and education and learning?
4) Determining Content

What is included as the content of the education and learning component of the planning process?

It is critical that an organisation understand that determining the content of a process that involves learning and education is an inherently value-based process. Some processes may only value “expert” knowledge while others value the knowledge that local people and professional staff bring. Again, transparency and open discussions of the content, how decisions about content were made, and what information content is based on are critical. Important issues are:

- How is local/community knowledge, not just planners’ or technical knowledge, valued and legitimised? To what extent are multiple intelligences and ways of knowing utilised and accepted as providing valuable information? Which ones? In what manner(s) is learning seen as mutual and/or multi-directional?
- How is dialogue and/or the process seen as part of the education and learning ‘content’?
- To what extent is there a dedication to providing information in a clear, appropriate, well thought-out manner? How do departments or individuals respond to others’ requests for clarification?
- To what extent is there a dedication to providing all of the information necessary for informed planning? Under what circumstances?

Note: This includes information about the process and decision-making procedures, background issues/project context, project scope, options and their consequences, and connections between issues.

5) Determining Techniques and Methods

What techniques and methods have been chosen to promote education and learning in a manner that reflects the goals of the planning process and the department’s or community’s values?

Determining techniques and methods means deciding what process to use, whereas delivery and outreach are concerned with how these are implemented during the planning process. Techniques and methods should be chosen carefully, as they can determine what issues and concerns are mentioned and what is discussed or not discussed. Techniques and methods can also determine the types or levels of learning and education that are possible. In deciding upon techniques, important considerations are:
• What methods and techniques are individuals using to promote different kinds of education and learning? To create space for community members to share their knowledge?
• Which techniques and methods are more successful? Less successful? Which methods help achieve deeper levels of learning?
• How are less formal means of achieving learning, such as dialogue and “participatory rituals” used in the planning process? How do individuals see these less formal techniques and methods as promoting education and learning?
• To what extent are techniques chosen based upon appropriateness for the setting, the publics involved, and the goals?

6) Conducting Delivery and Outreach

*How is delivery of the planning process conducted in a manner that promotes engagement of the community and deeper education and learning?*

As mentioned above, delivery and outreach are concerned with how techniques and methods are implemented. In conducting delivery and outreach, there are further chances to promote education and learning or to hinder them. Key considerations are:

• How is the process delivered in such a way that it creates space for all participants (planners and the community) to discuss and reflect?
• How are processes delivered to create better opportunities for education and learning, knowledge sharing, and reflection?
• How does the planning project attempt to reach many diverse groups? Which ones?
• How and when is the delivery adapted to the environment (physical and social)?

7) Continuing Education and Learning Through (to) Implementation

*How do education and learning continue through (to) implementation?*

Planners continually face challenges with regards to implementation, particularly since they do not always have the opportunity to continue working with a community through the completion of a project. However, planners can influence implementation, to some extent, by influencing how the final report or plan produced through the planning process is written. If education and learning do not explicitly continue through implementation, an enormous opportunity to complete the learning process is lost. Key considerations for implementation are:
• To what extent are mechanisms provided for follow-up with the community? For sharing with others the information and knowledge obtained during the process?
• What opportunities are there for continuing community involvement through implementation? For continuing planners’ involvement?
• What support mechanisms are there to help community members and planners continue to learn new information and from each other through the implementation process, rather than stagnating?

8) Identifying and Overcoming Barriers

What possible barriers, obstacles, or challenges to education and learning in planning have the individuals involved in the planning process identified and what are some ways to overcome these barriers?

Barriers, obstacles, and challenges to education and learning in planning abound. To improve chances of success, a department needs to develop an understanding of which ones they may face, preferably before beginning a process. Key considerations are:
• What do individuals involved in planning feel are the barriers, obstacles, and challenges to education and learning?
• How do they overcome these barriers, obstacles, and challenges?
• How has the individual or the department decided to deal with conflict and/or politics and power such that they do not adversely affect open participation and education and learning in the planning process?

These eight key points and their components yield a starting point for an analysis of learning and education in planning and how such learning may be intentionally fostered in a manner that supports planning exercises. While the framework is based on a synthesis of the theories reviewed in previous chapters, it is posed as a series of questions at least partially because the literature does not always yield answers to the questions: the literature sometimes merely tells the reader that these are important questions to ask. The following chapters of this thesis ask and answer another question: Is the analytical framework proposed herein valid and useful for discussing how learning and education occur during planning and how to foster these? To determine the usefulness of the framework and to further develop it, the framework questions were applied to a case study of neighbourhood planning, which included participant...
observation and interviews with planners and community members who participated in the process, as well as to interviews with other planners. The following chapter discusses the methodology used in this empirical research.

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**Figure 4.1: Summary of Framework for Learning and Education in Planning**

1. How does the planning department or individual define and value education and learning, community inclusion, and community knowledge in planning? How do they place these values in the context in which planning will occur?

2. How has the planning department or the individual planner set goals and/or objectives (for) involving education and learning in the planning process?

3. How is the planning process organised and administered in a manner that facilitates education and learning?

4. What is included as the content of the education and learning component of the planning process?

5. What techniques and methods have been chosen to promote education and learning in a manner that reflects the goals of the planning process and the department’s or community’s values?

6. How is delivery of the planning process conducted in a manner that promotes engagement of the community and deeper education and learning?

7. How do education and learning continue through (to) implementation?

8. What possible barriers, obstacles, or challenges to education and learning in planning have the individuals involved in the planning process identified and what are some ways to overcome these barriers?
Chapter 5: Methodology and Research Design

Rather than assuming a world of simplicity and uniformity, those who adopt the qualitative approach generally picture a world of complexity and plurality. It is the richness and subtle nuances of the social world that matter and that the qualitative researcher wishes to uncover.


When this research began, I quickly found that theory would play a larger role in this thesis than I had anticipated. Coming to an understanding of what this meant for the writing and research of this thesis proved challenging for a number of reasons. First, it quickly became apparent that I would need to create a new theory of education and learning in planning, which meant pulling together two disparate bodies of literature with little guide but my own knowledge of the subjects – one of which I had not exercised in such depth in years. Second, creating a theoretical framework that worked at both philosophical and analytical levels but was simple enough to be useful for interviewing research participants proved difficult. Third, as the empirical research undertaken for this research came into focus, it was obvious that the research would be qualitative, which was a challenge for me, as my background in academic research is quantitative. This discovery meant that while my understanding of research design and rigour was solid, I had to undertake considerable research and mental struggle to identify a research methodology and analytical approach. This chapter discusses the methodological approach I elected to take, the empirical research design for this thesis, data collection methods, and analytical approach. Finally, it presents background information on CityPlan, the case study for this empirical research.

Methodological Considerations

Education, learning, and planning are all inherently dialogical, creative processes: they are generated through the interactions of people in all their unpredictability and diversity. Because this research is based on the exploration of two dialogical and creative processes, it had to be explored carefully, with sensitivity, and with a qualitative approach. The decision to make this research qualitative proved simple: It is difficult, even almost impossible to investigate creative, generative phenomena quantitatively without losing significant amounts of information. In addition, the processes under investigation are inherently dialogical. Dialogical
processes are difficult to investigate in a quantitative manner and such a procedure leads to the loss of much valuable information and insight. The use of a qualitative approach was further bolstered by the fact that John Forester – one of the planning theorists whose work this research most closely resembles – uses a qualitative research approach based on the use of story and narrative in planning practice to analyse the craft of planning in *The Deliberative Practitioner* (Forester 1999). Forster's approach to his research was influential for other decisions made in this thesis.

In addition, there were practical reasons for choosing a qualitative methodology. As Stake writes, quantitative research seeks to provide explanations (how an effect is related to a cause), while qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon (Stake 1995 in Newnham 2004, 45). As this thesis seeks to understand a process, it belongs in the domain of qualitative research. Further, among the reasons Patton (2002: 33) gives for choosing qualitative research are: 1) asking questions about people's experiences, 2) studying a person in the context of his or her social/interpersonal environment, and 3) research where not enough is known about a phenomenon for standardized instruments to have been developed. This investigation fits into all three of Patton's categories. Further, this thesis is a descriptive study: it provides a profile of persons, events, or situations (in this case a neighbourhood planning process, planners activities and philosophies, and a phenomenon), whereas an explanatory study would endeavour to establish causal relationships (Robson 1993 in Newnham 2004, 40). For all of these reasons, a qualitative approach is ideally suited to my study.

**Design Considerations**

In part because of the topic of this thesis, as well as because of its impact on the design of this research, it is necessary to briefly discuss what I believe to be the nature of knowledge. I believe that knowledge is not something "out there" waiting for us to discover it. Instead, it is something that emerges as a result of an interaction between an individual and another person, an object, or an idea. While others may disagree, particularly where scientific knowledge is concerned, I submit that what people "know" to be true is dependant on their location in time, space, and society. A person may discover some fact, but she will always interpret it or use it in a manner that makes it an emergent property of her interaction with the world. This relationship between people and knowledge is even more apparent in the cases of learning, education, and planning. Learning and education grow and evolve as individuals speak with and listen to other
people, as they observe a phenomenon, as they read or view a new document or art object, and so on. Planning is also a result of the interaction between many forces. As many planners have said, “There is no one right answer. There are many right answers, any one of which may be the end result of this process.” As a result, the manner in which people learn during a planning process, the manner in which that, in turn, affects the planning process, and the substance of what people learn are constructed during the process. The knowledge generated could be entirely different given a different interaction between different people or circumstances.

In many ways, the constructed, or emergent nature of knowledge is central to this research, since the empirical portion of this research was based upon interactions between me and other people and upon my observations of the interactions between people. In an effort to account for this factor, I carefully constructed the design of this research to include emergent design flexibility (see below). In addition, during each part of my research I listened for what was the same, as well as what was different – what new thing this person or this circumstance was telling me that I needed to incorporate into my theory, my results, or my design.10

During my research I used several bodies of literature to develop a framework for fostering learning and education in planning. This framework guided my empirical research, but it primarily served as a starting point for loosely-structured discussions with planners and community members. As new ideas emerged through discussions or observations, I maintained the “openness to adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change” that emergent design flexibility dictates (Patton 2002: 40). Due to this flexibility, I was able to develop a richer understanding of learning in planning by looking for new relationships that were not part of the original theory of learning and education in planning. As I conducted my empirical research, I discovered whole new areas that I had not considered and deepened my understanding of how the aspects that had previously been theorised could operate in reality.11

Nevertheless, providing structure was still important, though, since this research topic is one that planning practitioners and participants are generally not used to discussing. This duality is discussed further on page 57.

Grounded theory is based on the idea that theory is developed inductively from an investigator's research, rather than deductively from the investigator’s ideas, readings, and pre-existing knowledge. (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Patton 2002) When I began this research, my pre-existing knowledge of learning and education steered the development of a basic theory of how learning and education occur during planning and how to foster them. In addition, it was only after I had developed a preliminary theoretical framework that I began any empirical research. However, my empirical research guided the development and refinement of my final theory. Thus, while this research uses some of the principles and methods, it is not truly grounded theory.

Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes 50
Patton discusses two other design strategies, both of which were followed in this research, that are central to qualitative research: naturalistic inquiry and purposeful sampling. Naturalistic inquiry entails “studying real-world situations as they unfold naturally,” is non-manipulative and non-controlling, and maintains “openness to whatever emerges” (Patton 2002: 40). While this commitment was particularly adhered to during observations of planning processes, it was also followed during interviews. During observations and interviews I further followed the emergent design flexibility principle by “avoiding getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness and pursuing new paths of discovery as they emerge” (Patton 2002, 40). My sampling strategy was purposeful in that my case study and interviewees were selected because they were “information rich and illuminative” (Patton 2002, 40).

Empirical Research Design and Analysis

In order to provide an overview of how planning practitioners see learning and education being incorporated into planning in theory and practice, I conducted interviews with a variety of planners in the Vancouver area. Because planning can be broken into many categories, with associated processes,\(^\text{12}\) each of which has its own opportunities and constraints, I spoke to a wide variety of planners. These included planners working in the fields of long-range planning, current planning, social planning, housing planning, parks planning, sustainability planning, environmental planning, and First Nations’ land use planning. Most planners I interviewed worked for the City of Vancouver in some capacity, although one worked for another municipality and two were consultants. Both consultants worked regularly with governmental bodies. (See Figure 5.1 for a description of interviewees.) These interviews provided a broad view of planning in the Lower Mainland and context for my case study.

To gain a deeper understanding of learning and education in planning, I also conducted case study research. Following one planning process yielded great insight into the process of learning during planning and provided an abundance of information. The City of Vancouver’s CityPlan was selected for the case study. While CityPlan is not representative of planning processes because of the particular design of its public involvement process, it was selected

\(^{12}\) Planning is widely seen as being divided into two large categories: long-range/policy planning and short-term/development planning. Long-range planning is concerned with determining how stakeholders want a city, a neighbourhood, etc, to look at some point in the future, usually in five to twenty years, while development planning is concerned with applying the long-range planning principles to development decisions that are made today. Planning can also be divided into topic areas such as planning for sustainability, social planning, environmental planning, community development planning, international development planning, and economic development planning.
because as a case it was information rich and illuminative. CityPlan offered a better opportunity to observe learning and education in planning than most other processes of which I am aware. To study the CityPlan process I observed one neighbourhood planning process for a period of five months. When that consultation process ended, I interviewed CityPlan planners and community members who participated in CityPlan workshops.

**Data Collection Methods and Procedures**

Patton (2002: 40) states that there are four main qualitative data collection and fieldwork strategies: collecting qualitative data; direct personal experience and engagement; emphatic neutrality and mindfulness; and attention to processes as reflections of dynamic systems. Each of these strategies was employed during data collection. First, the data collected was entirely qualitative. As Patton (2002:47) writes, “Qualitative data describe… They capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tell a story.” The data I collected included people telling stories about their experience, people reflecting upon these experiences, my stories of what I observed and reflections on what those

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>P1</td>
<td>CityPlan planner</td>
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<td>P2</td>
<td>Public involvement professional</td>
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<td>CityPlan planner</td>
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<td>CityPlan planner</td>
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<td>P5</td>
<td>Parks planner</td>
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<td>P6</td>
<td>Planner in social and long range planning</td>
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<td>P7</td>
<td>Housing planner</td>
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<td>P8</td>
<td>Planning consultant in sustainability planning</td>
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<td>P9</td>
<td>Planning consultant in environmental planning and policy</td>
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<td>P10</td>
<td>Planner working in current planning/ development planning</td>
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<td>P11</td>
<td>CityPlan planner</td>
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<td>C1</td>
<td>Community member, retired</td>
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<td>C2</td>
<td>Community member, architect</td>
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<td>C3.1</td>
<td>Community member, civic activist</td>
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<td>C3.2</td>
<td>Community member, civic activist</td>
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<td>C4</td>
<td>Community member, community advocate/motivator</td>
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<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Community member, planner</td>
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observations might mean, and passages from documents. Collecting these stories and reflections involved going into the field but keeping an open mind – seeking “vicarious understanding without judgement by showing openness, sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness” (Patton 2002: 40). In my investigation I was also mindful of system and situation dynamics and recognised that change and growth were ongoing processes. It is interesting that many interviewees remarked that our discussions were learning processes and helped them see their planning practice or the planning process in which they were engaged in a different light.

The data collection methods employed were document review, semi-structured interviews, observation, and personal experience. The documents reviewed were largely from the City of Vancouver and pertained to public involvement strategies generally or to CityPlan public involvement in particular. These shed little light on the subject of learning and education in planning. They were primarily of use because they evidenced a lack of information: these documents almost never explicitly or implicitly discussed learning and education. The interviews were a more profitable source of information. Three categories of people were interviewed: planners working in the Vancouver area (called “planners”); planners working for CityPlan (called “CityPlan planners”) 13; and community members who participated in neighbourhood planning for CityPlan (called “community members”). In total, 17 people were interviewed: 7 planners, 4 CityPlan planners, and 6 community members. Interviewees were selected based on two factors: 1) they represented a range of occupations and/or experience and 2) they seemed information rich. Each interview was face-to-face and lasted 1-2 hours. I found it necessary to speak to every interviewee at some length about the phenomenon being studied, since most people, be they planners or community members, are not familiar with this topic. The remainder of each interview was semi-structured. While I had a list of primarily open-ended questions that I loosely followed during my interviews, I tended to let conversations flow and primarily used the questions as a guide for myself. Frequently, interviewees spoke about topics I wanted to discuss before I asked about them, which validated my framework and questions. On occasion interviewees took the discussion in new directions and brought up issues I had not thought about. New ideas also frequently emerged as a result of the discussion that likely would never have occurred to either the interviewee or me otherwise.

13 The category of “planners” does not include planners who worked in the City Plans Division at the City of Vancouver. The latter are differentiated by the term “CityPlan planners” because they comprise a specific subset of the population.
Observation was another data collection method I used. As part of my case study, I attended workshops conducted for a CityPlan Community Vision and observed the process. As I attended the workshops I began to participate in them, at the CityPlan planner's request. While my participation happened by chance, it became a valuable source of information because through my participation I gained additional insight into what community members were thinking and feeling as they participated. This helped me later in my interviews, and also helped me build relationships with community members that I interviewed. However, my participation made it difficult to collect detailed notes. Rather, during workshops I kept lists where I jotted down insights and particularly significant observations. After workshops, I used the agenda packets from workshops as refreshers for note-taking about the activities that occurred during the workshops. Further observations were based on my own experiences with planning outside of the CityPlan case study. During the time that I conducted my empirical research, I also was engaged in a community planning studio for which I worked as a planning consultant for a neighbourhood planning project in Kamloops, British Columbia. My experiences in Kamloops with creating and running a planning process and generating a neighbourhood plan were influential in shaping my initial thinking about my thesis and provided additional insight as I conducted and analysed my empirical research.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analytical framework presented in Chapter 4 was applied to the interviews with planners, CityPlan planners, and community members to yield implications. However, because the framework was exploratory, I found it important to keep an open mind and look for ideas in interviews that were not contained in the framework. To this end, it was significant that several critical new ideas had already explicitly emerged during interviews. To further this, transcripts of interviews were carefully read to ensure familiarity with each person's language, thought pattern, and story. Transcripts were then read and coded for discussions of learning and education. Notations were made of instances where interviewees talked about each framework point, as well as instances where interviewees discussed new or different ideas. These notes

14 While I was a participant as well as a researcher, this thesis research cannot be considered Participatory Action Research (PAR). In PAR, the researcher and the community work together as researchers in shared inquiry; together they define the problem and identify solutions. This kind of collaboration was not part of this research. In addition, the researcher typically takes a more active role than I took and attempts to effect change within the organisation or process. While a PAR approach would have been interesting and yielded valuable insight, it was not practical given time and expertise limitations.
were then compiled and similarities and differences were identified. Chapter 6 is based on this analysis. I found it useful to maintain a distinction between the data obtained from these interviews and my own observations and insights. Thus, after interviews were analysed, observation notes and insights from CityPlan and other planning processes were reviewed. These were combined with information gained from the previously-analysed interviews and used as the basis for Chapter 7, which is a discussion of how education and learning can and do occur during community planning. Finally, the information gained from all stages of this research was combined to create a set of recommendations for fostering learning and education during planning processes.

Case Study: CityPlan

In 1992, the Vancouver, British Columbia, City Council initiated the process of creating a long-range plan for the city. Over the following three years more than 20,000 people participated, to various degrees, in developing CityPlan. CityPlan, as ratified by City Council, contains themes, or “directions” to guide Vancouver’s future growth. The CityPlan directions are: strengthen neighbourhood centres; increase the variety and affordability of housing; define neighbourhood character; improve safety and better target community services; diversify parks and public places; increase the number and choice of jobs in the city; reduce reliance on the car; improve the environment; create a vibrant central area; and involve people and redirect resources. These are generally grouped into four categories: 1) “City of Neighbourhoods”; 2) “Sense of Community”; 3) “Healthy Economy-Healthy Environment”; and 4) “A Vibrant Central Area.” (City of Vancouver 2004a)

In 1997, the Community Visions Program was launched to bring CityPlan to the neighbourhood level. For each Community Vision, two or three city-defined neighbourhoods are combined to work together with a team of planners for two years to create their visions for the future based on CityPlan directions and the community’s needs and aspirations (City of Vancouver 2004b). Each Community Vision results in a document that shows how the CityPlan directions will be applied to that neighbourhood. This is developed through a four-step process that uses extensive outreach to: 1) identify community needs, ideas, issues and opportunities for the CityPlan directions; 2) create Vision options and directions; 3) ascertain broad community opinion through voting on preferred options and directions; and 4) attain City Council endorsement of the final Vision. Subsequently, the community works on setting priorities for
Vision implementation. For each step there are specific tasks to achieve the goals of the Vision process, as shown in Figure 5.1: CityPlan Community Vision Schedule: Steps Schedule (City of Vancouver 2004c).

**Figure 5.1: CityPlan Community Vision Program – Steps Schedule**

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<td>Staffing, data, maps, materials, preparation</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2: Creating Ideas</strong></td>
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<td>Prepare, hold, transcribe creative workshops</td>
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<td>Create, distribute Choices Survey</td>
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<td>Organise, code, enter Survey data</td>
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Note: timing of steps is adjusted as needed to accommodate vacation periods when public participation is not feasible.
Due to time constraints, an entire Community Vision process could not be followed by me, so communities that were entering Step 2: Creating Ideas were identified. A community (Riley Park-South Cambie) entering Step 2 was chosen because Step 2 is an excellent opportunity to observe learning and education in action. While it would have been better to follow the entire Community Vision process, I adapted by speaking to planners involved in various phases of different Community Visions and by interviewing several community members who had been involved in the Riley Park-South Cambie Community Vision from the beginning of Step 1. Riley Park-South Cambie was an ideal community to work with, in part because I lived nearby and was already very familiar and comfortable with the neighbourhood. Since the Community Vision planners wanted me to participate rather than merely observe, having a good working knowledge of the neighbourhood was important for my effective participation. This familiarity also helped me establish a greater degree of rapport with the community members with whom I worked.

The community events that are part of Step 2 are a “Visions Fair” and a series of workshops. The Visions Fair is an open house that begins Step 2. At the Fair, community members can learn about CityPlan directions and add hopes, needs, values, ideas, and opportunities to the information that the CityPlan planners have already collected. This information is then brought to a series of 11 workshops organised around specific themes where more detailed work occurs on each topic in order to create ideas and possibilities that will then be turned into Vision options and directions. The workshop topics for Riley Park-South Cambie were: neighbourhood centres, services, housing (2 workshops – needs and options), transportation (2 workshops – traffic and alternative transportation), character and public places (2 workshops – public places and the look and feel of the neighbourhood), large sites, environment and cleanliness, and safety. Both community members and planners bring a great deal of information to each event. The Vision process deeply values community member’s knowledge, and they are seen as ‘experts,’ along with the planners. Workshops, in particular, are designed to draw information out from residents and apply it to problems. This makes the workshops excellent opportunities for learning. In addition to community members bringing different information, the CityPlan planners bring a wealth of information, some of it in the form of “Fact Sheets,” which provide both general information about the community and more detailed information for each workshop.
As the selection of the quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the research discussed in this thesis is intended to reveal the richness and nuance of a phenomenon. This chapter has presented the methodologies chosen for this endeavour: qualitative inquiry, emergent design flexibility, naturalistic inquiry, and purposeful sampling. Utilising these methodologies, observation and semi-structured interviews were applied to investigate the phenomenon under study. The approach taken to data analysis responds to complexity, plurality, and nuance. The people interviewed and observed during this research challenged old ideas and helped generate new ones as they spoke and interacted. In the following chapter, several of these new ideas become apparent.
Chapter 6: The Planning Participants’ Stories

So my choice of cases – or planner’s accounts of their practice – is both selective and suggestive, quite deliberately and practically biased toward experiences and judgements that point to positive possibilities: positive because they enhance learning, or respect… I have chosen cases precisely because they do not reflect business as usual; they reflect real possibilities of what planning might yet be.

-- Forester 1999:11

This chapter tells a story. It is a story, told largely through planners’ and community members’ own voices, of how learning and education can and do occur during planning. The small stories of this chapter – those stories that each individual tells – reveal much about how planners and community members view planning, learning, and education. They also reveal much about the individuals who were interviewed. These stories were not chosen as selectively, or rather as exclusively, as Forester’s, for they are supposed to tell about business as usual for these planning participants. That being said, both the interviewees and the researcher selected the stories told herein deliberately. Interviewees all brought their own language, concerns, and backgrounds to the research process. Thus, a planner who worked extensively with facilitation and mediation spoke extensively about learning through dialogue and learning compassion for other people’s ideas and a community member who is an activist spoke extensively about power and how it affected learning opportunities in the planning process. These choices shaped these findings, and are referred to in the discussion of limitations of this research found in Chapter 1.

The empirical research presented in this chapter was designed to do two things: 1) to reveal the factors that promote learning and education in planning and 2) to test whether the analytical framework presented in Chapter 4 is a useful starting point for a discussion of learning and education in planning. The data analysis found in this chapter begins these processes, which are continued in Chapter 7 with a discussion of this analysis. During data analysis several aspects of learning and education in planning that were not covered in the framework emerged. However, I determined that these new points were, in reality, sub-points under the original eight framework points.¹⁵ As such, it was possible to organise this chapter

¹⁵ Examples include placing “integration of the planning process” under the category of “organisation” and placing aspects of “interest and engagement” under the category of “delivery and outreach.”
around the original eight framework points (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7). In each section, general findings based on interviews with planners are reported first. These general findings contain planners' observations about points and subpoints found in the original theoretical framework, as well as observations about any new subpoints that emerged. Most sections of this chapter also contain a separate discussion of CityPlan in which findings specific to the case are discussed. In some sections, due to the nature of the topic discussed and the considerable overlap of interviewees' comments, the discussions of general planner interviewees' comments and of CityPlan interviewees' comments are conducted together.

This chapter is designed to be an analysis of interviewees' own thoughts and stories. As such, my own observations are not included in this section, but are discussed in Chapter 7. Chapter 7 is a synthesis of the analysis found in this chapter, together with my observations, findings from the literature, and factors discussed in the theoretical framework. This chapter proceeds through the analytical framework in the order that its elements are presented in Chapter 4. Thus it begins with a discussion of how interviewees value learning and education.

Formulating Overall Values and Context

*How does the planning department or individual define and value education and learning, community inclusion, and community knowledge in planning? How do they place these values in the context in which planning will occur?*

In terms of valuing learning and education, all interviewees – planners, CityPlan planners, and community members – spoke in a remarkably similar manner. Interviewees said they placed a high value on learning and education as part of the planning process, although some had difficulty with the words used in this thesis. As one planner said:

> Generally, “education” for me is a word which is bounded in institutions and to a great degree in social control... When you talk about learning, I think you’re onto something, but the planner needs to have a genuine curiosity about where people are coming from and not presume to know the answer when they’re entering into community planning.”

(P10)

This statement is evocative of Paulo Freire’s ideas about education’s uses for social control, as discussed in Chapter 2. Other interviewees had not thought about “learning” and “education” before, but referred to “public process,” “participation,” “public involvement,” “dialogue,” or “understanding” when they spoke of what is called learning and education in this thesis. These examples of differences in interpretation of terms, as well as one planner’s strong concerns about the term “education,” speak to the importance of planning teams (which may include...
community members) coming to agreement about what terms mean in the context of a given planning process.

Confusion of language meant that interviews had to be conducted carefully, with frequent clarification, and with attention to semantics. It also made it quite difficult to ascertain whether planners, their departments, and community members entered into planning with the intention of learning and promoting education. While such intentions were difficult to gauge, planners seemed generally interested in learning and even consciously promoting education when they engage in a planning process. As one planner stated:

_I view it [learning and education] not just narrowly as bureaucrats or planners going out and educating the public, education is happening with colleagues, it’s happening with politicians, it’s happening with people from community agencies and interest groups, and then just regular neighbourhood planning exercises. So I think that it happens at all levels.... Implicitly, I think that even if planners aren’t conscious of it, [learning and education] has to be there, otherwise your process is doomed to failure because, for example, if we’re talking about an issue like trying to get support or consensus for an issue, if there isn’t a shared understanding of what the issues are or the pros and cons of the options, then you either just have rubber stamping or token participation, or you have people going off the deep end because they don’t understand. You need the education and shared understanding in order to make an informed decision and to have a shared ownership of a decision._ (P6)

This planner’s use of the term “shared understanding” speaks to another component of interviewees’ values for learning and education. Planners frequently spoke of mutual learning (planners learning from the public while the public learns from planners) as being an extremely important part of how they thought about learning and education. Another planner, speaking about how learning occurred during a very contentious planning project, discussed the same concept of shared understanding:

_We had to learn where the community was coming from and what they wanted out of this project. We had to help the community learn what our interests were and what other elements the community was interested in._ (P7)

However, several planners felt that the extent of mutual learning and education depended on a number of variables. One planner stated:

_[The level of learning and education] does vary by type of planning and by type of planner. Each planner brings their own self— their background, values, and personality. Some planners just do the plan and only do as much process as they have to to get the plan done, but others are much more process-oriented. So the first variable is the type of planner. The second variable is the type of plan. The third variable is time, the point in the process that this occurs at. Earlier on there might be a different process of doing education and different objectives, so you have to do lots of education. But after a couple years you may be looking at a much higher level [of knowledge]._ (P6)
Another planner felt that learning and education depended on the type of planning process:

*Some issues don’t need a lot of other people understanding what the other person thinks. Some plans, due to the jurisdiction of the players at stake and involved, who cares... Realistically the kinds of issues that you or I need to know about regarding to the port, we don’t need to spend an enormous amount of time educating each other. We don’t need to spend an enormous amount of time dealing with folks to understand what the potential maritime policy is regarding some agenda that might have to do with the size of cranes or the size of containers for a port, for example. Now if it’s noise, or it’s risk, or it’s some kind of hazardous product coming into the port that might cause some accident that could kill everybody in the adjacent neighbourhood, well that’s a different issue. So some issues require a lot of mutual education, some do not.*

*Where the implementation actor is singular or very limited, or has a very close relationship with a couple other ones in the jurisdiction and resources to match, and the issue is fairly obscure and individualised to that actor, you don’t need a lot of education. Where the issues are complex, multi-faceted, multiple players are involved, and multiple players are going to be required to implement a good solution to that plan, then you need more education. Sustainability falls into the latter [category] almost every single time... Some projects require a lot more education [of the players] than others.* (P8)

This quote is interesting for an additional reason besides understanding a different planner’s perspective on the place of mutual learning. Planner P8 felt that learning and education, while valuable parts of planning, should be placed in the context of the planning taking place. Other planners expressed similar sentiments when they spoke of levels of education and learning varying by type of planning (such as current planning versus long-range planning) or level of public involvement.

Whenever mutual learning occurred, though, planners felt that their role in facilitating learning and education was to provide context and information, provide information about the process, facilitate – but not manage – learning, and to help with the planning process by diffusing conflict, providing methods to promote learning and education, and helping community members see opportunities for further learning. They thought that community members should provide their knowledge and expertise and that planners’ and community members’ roles include paying attention to each other, being open to hearing about other people’s lives and experiences, and learning from each other. While community members did not generally speak to this matter directly, their relevant comments seemed to support these assertions by planners. Finally, several planners discussed the importance of having organisational leaders who value and support learning and education in planning. Without this support, it is very difficult for learning and education to occur.
CityPlan

The CityPlan program and the people who engage in CityPlan say they deeply value learning and education. One CityPlan planner spoke of the value participants place on learning and education:

*We’ve found that the people on these [CityPlan implementation] committees, at least the chairs, the vice-chairs, they value education and learning and they want to learn more. And they want their committee members to learn more. And they want the residents to learn more.* (P3)

This deep appreciation for and dedication to learning and education can also be seen in the fact that no fewer than nine community members volunteered to be interviewed for this thesis for approximately one and a half hours when they had already given up almost every Saturday for three months to participate in the Community Vision (additional community members wrote notes about their experiences or spoke to me briefly before or after workshops). These community members valued learning from planners, learning from experiences, and learning from each other. For community members, learning from other community members was extremely important. In every single interview with a community member, the interviewee discussed how amazed they were by how much their fellow community members knew and how much they valued learning from them.

CityPlan planners shared deep values for learning and education. As one planner said, “For us, our learning from the community is very significant [for our understanding]” (P11). Another said, “The intention is not to impart knowledge and facts... At every stage it’s a reflective exercise on the part of all those involved” (P4). Further, there is a strong value for mutual learning in CityPlan:

*Really it’s a two-way thing because usually we’re learning more from the community than they’re learning from us, because we have access to a lot of learning information, but we don’t necessarily have the learning information that a person living in the community experiences.* (P11)

These planners also spoke of their role in facilitating learning and education in planning. As one said,

*Certainly education and learning should be part of community-based planning, but the most important thing is mutual learning and that we’re understanding from each other. In the same way the public learns from each other, you’re a part of that process, you’re imparting your own understanding and so-called knowledge to people and hopefully you’re engaging around that.* (P4)

This planner went on to discuss how planners contribute information to the planning process:

*There’s certainly information we can impart to people around the reality they find*
themselves in and paint something of a picture of the choices that might be available to them... We’ve made some choices about what to present to the public. The information is the best we know and can present to participants... There is this element of imparting information to people in order to better make a decision. (P4)

One of the significant characteristics of the manner in which CityPlan planners spoke of learning and education in the planning process is that they place learning and education in the context in which it occurs. This trait of identifying context and thinking, in a detailed manner, about how to foster learning and educational experiences appropriate to that context is one of the things that distinguishes CityPlan from many other planning exercises described by planners in this study or experienced by me. CityPlan planners determined what they needed to learn from community members, what community members needed to learn from them, and what other kinds of learning would be beneficial to the planning project. Then they incorporated these ideas into their goals and objectives for the planning process.

**Formulating Goals and Objectives**

*Has the planning department or the individual planner set goals and/or objectives (for) involving education and learning in the planning process?*

During interviews, planners were asked whether they included education and learning as explicit or implicit goals and objectives in their work, or not at all. The response was predominantly negative: almost no interviewees reported that their department or that they themselves set explicit goals and objectives for including education and learning, as such, in their work. However, many of interviewees did believe that they had explicit goals and objectives that were closely related to education and learning, such as public involvement, or goals to promote components of education and learning:

*Certainly we talk about the public involvement principles...[Education and learning] is more implicit. We don’t talk so much about education – it’s about outcomes. And one of the outcomes is for the public to have an adequate understanding of what it is that they need to understand in order to be able to respond effectively. (P2)*

Two interviewees stated that they had explicit learning and education goals for some programs. Interestingly enough, both of these planners stated that learning and education were more important in contentious situations and the examples they gave of setting explicit learning goals dealt with contentious situations. For example:

*In some instances it’s quite explicit and even part of a strategy or a policy that there’s a whole awareness component. The multiculturalism policy is a case in point. From the word “go,” we knew that we couldn’t ram this [policy] down people’s throats. You really need to focus on awareness, so there was a focus on awareness raising. (P6)*
In addition, many interviewees stated that they implicitly included education and learning as goals and objectives for their work, largely due to their tendency to include related concepts as explicit goals. Related concepts that were part of explicit goals included: ensuring that the public has an adequate understanding of what they need to know (3 responses); understanding; awareness raising; communication (3 responses); learning about each other’s opinions to reach common ground; learning about other cultures as part of multicultural initiatives; involving people in decision-making; and planners and participants working together collaboratively. As such, goals related to learning and education were concerned with communicating with the public and/or establishing that the public had the awareness or understanding of basic information that the planners felt they needed.

No planners indicated that the goals of education and learning matched the intent of the planning program. The closest any discussions came to such an idea is referenced above where P2 links her goal of promoting awareness of public involvement principles with the intent of ensuring that the public “have an adequate understanding of what it is that they need to understand.” In addition, no planners indicated that goals and objectives were intentionally set to promote types and levels of education and learning that are appropriate and feasible for a given planning project.

**CityPlan**

CityPlan is different from many other planning processes in that the CityPlan Community Visioning program does have explicit goals that are particularly relevant to learning and education. One planner discussed what two of these goals mean for Community Visions:

*This program...has an underlying principle that’s a CityPlan principle that says that one of our goals is to find ways to engage people in decision-making and plan making. Finding new ways for them to do that is an explicit part of that [goal]. (P1)*

*The goal of having active neighbourhood groups who know by the end of the process how to interact with the City better is a clear goal of this program that we state right at the beginning. We say, “Look, as outcomes of this process we have all of these things around policy, but we also have a goal of getting neighbours talking to neighbours.” So it’s learning in a different way, learning who you live with, how people get along with each other, and how people get along with the City. When we sell the program, if you will, or introduce the program in the community, we come in with that statement as part of our mission. (P1)*

These goals not only support the objectives and intent of the CityPlan Community Visioning program, they also give planners a mandate and help planners identify methods to achieve the goals. The types of learning and education promoted by these goals are both appropriate and
feasible for this planning project (CityPlan). There are also implicit goals for learning and education in CityPlan. One planner said:

*The education/learning goals are ones that go two ways. One, we want to give people the opportunity to learn about City issues and processes, City information. So that as they’re giving, which is the second part of it, as they’re giving us advice they’ve got their own content, which they live, they’ve got. If they haven’t gotten it before, they’ve got some information about the issues and constraints that the city’s facing.* (P11)

In contrast to these implicit and explicit goals, though, I was also told when I began my case study (as well as several times during the research process) that it would be interesting to see how I worked with and investigated the Community Vision process since “learning and education are not the primary goals of CityPlan” (P11). While this statement does not contradict the importance of the aforementioned goals in supporting learning and education, it does point out the peculiar status given learning and education by planning departments.

**Organisation of the Process**

*Is the planning process organised and administered in a manner that facilitates education and learning?*

As shown above, planners felt that learning and education were not generally intentional parts of the planning process. As a result, planners do not appear to organise and administer planning processes specifically to facilitate learning and education. However, interviewees were able to draw on their experiences with other aspects of planning process and their less-intentional facilitation of learning and education. The findings in this section are primarily based on these assertions.

At a basic level, several planners felt that the organisation of the planning process needs to be adapted for the type of learning and education needed, depending on the type of plan or policy being created, the point in the process, and the people they are working with or involving in the planning process. In addition, all planner interviewees were asked questions related to how planning processes were or should be structured and organised to facilitate public involvement and learning and education. Process structure characteristics that were mentioned included allowing time for dialogue and discussion, keeping good records, and designing the process such that information is given back to the community. As one planner said, “The decision-maker is obliged to not just be pulling information from the public, they’re obliged to be giving something back. In the same way that researchers in traditional ecological knowledge are obliged to not just take, but to return information” (P9). Such information includes what was
gathered from the community, information about how planners processed that information, and new information or information from other communities.

Another organisational issue is having staff with expertise in education and learning. No planner stated that they felt completely comfortable with or knowledgeable about this area and several planners mentioned that they need more expertise in this area. As one planner said,

"I should probably know a lot more about communication and education... I don't know enough about those things to integrate it into the public involvement part. So I should at least work with people who have that knowledge."  (P9)

Some planners stated that processes need to be staffed with the skills necessary for the type of learning and education that is being promoted, as the following quote discusses.

You need the skills to play the educational role. If you don't have those skills, then that would be a barrier. You may be able to muddle through, but you may not be as effective as you would like. The skills needed depend on the type of education or the kind of vehicle you want to use. For instance, if you're going to be going the more static kind of education such as brochures or a report, you need to have good written communications skills and probably and graphic skills. If you're talking to groups of people, open houses, engage in meetings, you need good verbal communication, also group facilitation, group process skills are important. And then I think you just generally need to have good people skills.  (P6)

Other skills needed include a good understanding of how to work with the public, good people skills, and knowledge about issues and how to deal with them. In addition, planners need to have access to people with knowledge about communication and education.

One interviewee worked extensively training staff on public process. While this interviewee does not work directly with learning and education, her comments reveal much about how an organisation can successfully train its staff in methods for public process.

Primarily I am a staff resource, and I want them to understand a lot of things. I want them to be aware that the City has principles that guide public involvement. I want them to know that we have tools available to help them do a better job with public involvement, and I want those who have to do public involvement to have a better understanding than that, to buy into the principles, to have a good understanding of the tools and how they can be useful to them and not just a bunch of regulations, and to know that there is training they can get, that they have peers that can help them if they're in need of talking through something. So it's a fairly high level of comprehension that I want from the staff that actually do public practice.

[In my work,] I am contacting managers, putting together working groups in the different major service areas – planning, engineering, and parks – to work out a strategy to engage staff. And that includes a number of possibilities. They have access to the workforce, it's partly a matter of making sure they know that the tools, raising their awareness of our guiding principles, orienting them to the tools, explaining why public involvement is good – it never hurts to refresh your values – and, as I say, giving them an orientation to the tools and trying to ensure that those who could use it take the
training. We do offer a training module that goes with the Public Process Guide. It lasts two days and includes a half a day on diversity, that’s become so important in our city—knowing how to work in a diverse community. With respect to staff, that’s pretty much it. You have to engage the cooperation of a couple of people in a department and do some strategising. You engage the different departments differently. The CityPlans division would have somewhat different needs than the sewers branch in Engineering. (P2)

These lessons can easily be extended to learning and education in planning. For instance, in training staff, it is important to pay attention to their needs for promoting learning and education, and provide them with information based on those needs. Giving staff tools is important, but so is orienting them to guiding principles and values for learning and education. Finally, having knowledgeable people that staff can go speak with to discuss problems, ask advice, or receive training is incredibly valuable.

Finally, two interviewees’ (a planner and a community member) comments touched on a new topic: integration of the planning process. The planner referred to this area when she discussed processes that were poorly organised for learning and education:

In the species at risk planning, there are different agencies involved and they have communication, they have recovery planning consultation processes, and they have education on species at risk. Those are three separate things, and they should all be intertwined. It’s ridiculous to do them separately: to do communication separate from consultation, separate from education. They should all be intertwined, in my view. So at some kind of consultation event you’d have the education material relevant to the species at risk and you’d be applying your communications knowledge to the process. So in the municipal setting...you should be learning about city hall at the same time that you’re giving input, [and] you should have whatever written material there is about how you can have input into the municipal decision making in some kind of ongoing way, rather than just the current process. (P9)

This planner’s insight reveals how information related to a planning issue or process could be easily integrated with the various facets of a planning process with profound results. It also reveals how separate facets of a process should be integrated to facilitate learning and education.

CityPlan

In response to questions about organisation, one CityPlan planner stated:

In the work that gets to be more community-based, I think we do a better job of laying out the process around which we want to get engaged. So in the Community Visions process, we know in advance what the range of CityPlan topics are, and it’s a really good, strong structure. It enables us to be really clear about what it is we’re going to talk to people about. And the workshop, which is a structure that has been run through many communities now, it’s also a structure that has proven itself to work, from the perspective of past participants, staff, and public. It has tended to be deeper, both in the amount of information we provide and the amount of information we share, and

Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes
certainly in the amount that we demand from our participants in terms of coming back to the workshops over and over. The other side of it, I think, is that it's one of the first programs that I've been involved with that has an underlying principle that's a CityPlan principle about saying that one of our goals is to find ways to engage people in decision-making and plan making, and finding new ways for them to do that is an explicit part of that. (P1)

This statement is interesting in several respects. First, it demonstrates how goals can lead to decisions about organisation, methods, techniques, and the type of content for a planning process. Second, this quote demonstrates some characteristics of processes that can facilitate deeper learning and education: strong, tight structure, preparation, and clarity.

Community member interviewees also offered insights related to organisation of process. As one community member said,

Unfortunately there is a gap between specific pieces [of the Community Vision process]. This [gap] leads to learning stopping and we [community members] forget about what's going on. Then how do you keep it [learning] going or start it up again? They shouldn't stop the process for so long [several months]. (C2)

Another community member also had problems with this gap in the Community Vision process, particularly since no conclusions had been reached when the process halted and information produced before the break would be used after the break. Community members also recommended that planners should get different groups to work together, should get in touch with strong community leaders and have them help planners with information and organisation, and need to be careful about giving participants time to take in and process information. Many participants expressed particular frustration with being given too little time to absorb information or read fact sheets (handouts with background information about workshop topics). The community members also recommended that the information from various segments of the planning process be integrated with one another and that transitions between segments occur smoothly.

**Determining Content**

*What is included as the content of the education and learning component of the planning process?*

Interviewees displayed great openness to what can be considered the “content” of the learning and education component of planning processes. Every planner stated that two-way, or mutual learning was important to planning processes and that they valued local or community knowledge. They saw themselves as contributing substantive and process knowledge while they
saw community members contributing knowledge about their situations, be they
neighbourhoods, social landscapes, or regions, and their experiences. One planner stated that
community members sometimes had other, more technical, knowledge to share. Almost no
planners discussed dialogue and process as part of the content of planning processes. One
planner who did discuss process as part of content spoke of her experiences with First Nations
land use planning:

*We've done four or five of these land use plans for their traditional territories. A lot of
them don't know much about their traditional territories, so I think that's one of the most
important things. In some cases it's difficult to say how useful the plans will be because
they're putting forward their vision for land that they don't have title to, the kind of
ownership that we recognise, so it's kind of iffy how much influence the plans will have,
but on the other hand they learn so much about what the values of their territories are, it
probably helps build momentum towards successful land claims. And also just for the
youth who've lost touch with their traditions, it's an opportunity for them to learn from
their elders, which are a focus of getting information. Or if they're scattered, they learn
more about who they are as a people. For example, working with the ___ people, whose
territory is ___ some of them didn't even know that they should own ___, and others, I
wouldn't say that they've rediscovered that they're native, but they've been reconnected
with their community and their roots through the process, and I think that's important.

And then in every process, I would hope that people would learn one another's
perspectives. I really feel quite driven in my practice to help people be more
compassionate to each other's interests. I don't know that I have explicit techniques for
that; it's more in my facilitation style. I sort of draw that out, partly by recognising the
strength of feeling I'm hearing and legitimising it, and hopefully the other people in the
meeting or process also take on that sense of recognition of one another's perspectives.*

(P9)

Planners did widely express a dedication to providing the information necessary for a
planning process in a clear, appropriate manner. One planner stated:

*The onus is on civic staff to provide information, context, and to try to provide it in plain
language so it can be understood. You can't just say, 'If they don't understand, it's not
our problem.' You have to provide clear information they [the public] can understand.*

(P2)

Planners had highly varied ideas about the amount and nature of background information,
process information, and information about the issue or problem. Sometimes planners stated that
one of the main factors regulating the amount and type of content was the political reality of
planning. As one planner said,

"In order to have real understanding and education and increasing awareness about
issues, implicit in that is that you want an informed public. But if you're Joe Blow
Noxious Industry, you might not want that." (P6)
Another planner expressed the same sentiment when he told me that sometimes a planner has to say, "We cannot talk about that today, and the reason why is because, and what we're here to talk about today is x," and then give participants a way to work with those limitations to discussion (P8). In contrast, another planner spoke of an occasion when politics opened up an area for discussion that otherwise would have remained closed:

When I first started in, the City had just adopted a multicultural policy, and we were one of the first municipalities in British Columbia that had. There was a lot of questioning among staff, I guess politically the politicians endorsed it, but I don't know that a lot of thought was given to it, and then there was the community. There was a sense of, "Why's the city doing that?"... So there was a lot of education, and the focus of it was really on staff. (P6)

CityPlan

Both Community Vision planners and community members saw local knowledge as an extremely important component of Community Vision planning. In discussing knowledge and information used during Community Visions, one planner had this to say:

The product that emerges from the workshop is at a general enough level that you don't need very much factual information. A lot of what we do is informed by the sense that it's people's understanding and experience of their neighbourhood that is really critical here, not the studies we've done, not the census Canada information. That we're searching for people's experience on the ground. (P4)

Community members all felt that there was an excellent inclusion of community knowledge in the Community Vision process and stated that they learned an enormous amount from other community members; some even said that they "had the deepest learning experiences" (C5) or learned more from other participants than they learned from the planners. One community member stated that she felt that she was able to share her own knowledge and help others see past stereotypes about the poor and residents of social housing. She found that hearing other residents speak about what she had taught them was one of the most rewarding experiences during the Community Vision.

Community members and planners cited formal and informal dialogue as one of the largest contributors to knowledge exchange and learning during the Community Vision. In addition, community members felt that they learned an enormous amount through the process of engaging in the Community Vision, an opinion that CityPlan planners shared. Both groups of interviewees frequently mentioned the process skills and understanding that community members gained by working with groups as part of the content of the workshops. Interviewees discussed how participants learned through informal and formal interactions that were part of the process and gained skills that they could use outside of the Community Vision. Such skills
that were mentioned by interviewees included facilitation, creative problem solving as a group, group management, self-management, how to manage a discussion, and “how to work with difficult people (C4)”. Thus, learning during Community Visions was seen as process-oriented as well as substantive.

In terms of substantive information, CityPlan planners demonstrated a strong commitment to providing planning process participants with all available information. One planner discussed the importance of providing this information and how it affects the planning process:

*What we’re trying to do is make sure that as much factual information as we have is available to everybody. An example of that is the toolkit we made for CityPlan, where we made sure the information in there was factual information. What that really did was it freed people up for the values discussion and learning. Well, it did two things. One, people didn’t have to go out themselves and find out what the population of a neighbourhood is – they didn’t have to waste their time with that – and the information was there if they wanted it. And then they knew where to go to get it, so in an information and learning sense, people learnt where to go to get this information. But more than anything else, the important point was not around education, but about freeing people up to discuss, “What does this mean to me? To my community?” I know in some programs I’ve seen where people are arguing about the basic facts, you never get to using that education, those facts, so what we try to do is make sure that there’s factual information so that people aren’t arguing about the validity of the information – that’s factual. Then they can move to using and applying the information. You might call that more of a learning experience. (P11)*

During the Community Vision process, such background information is made available to participants in CityPlan through “fact sheets” that give information on worksheet topics. Fact sheets are made available at workshops: they are spread out on a table and community members can pick up (and read) the sheets they are interested in. Frequently during the Riley Park-South Cambie Community Vision there were 10 – 20 double-sided sheets available at each workshop, most of them new. Planners seemed uncertain about the extent to which this information was used by workshop participants, but expressed a commitment to making it available, regardless, so that participants have access to the same information the planners have. One planner had this to say about providing information:

*You can produce all the information and make it available to people and they choose. The whole basis of making the fact sheets is that if people really want to get into it they can go into the fact sheets. If they really want to get into it further, they can go into the references that are made in the fact sheets. (P4)*

While all planning process participants appreciated that this information was there, as one interviewee expressed when she said, “I kept the sheets so that I can look at them and refer
to them later” (C4), every community member interviewed said that they did not have time to read the fact sheets before the workshops began. While the information was not necessary for workshop participation, many residents expressed frustration, as this resident did:

_I didn’t have the chance to read as many fact sheets as I would have liked. I know that there was interesting information on them, and it probably would have made the exercises better, but there were so many people to talk to and there were too many fact sheets. They were really good when I read them. I wish I’d gotten to read more before the workshops._ (C2)

Community members did not seem to know how to make use of the information on fact sheets or that it was background information, and they did not know how to sort through all the fact sheets that were provided. One interviewee mentioned using the fact sheets when he was trying to “pin down a specific fact,” and many seemed to feel that if they had been able to read the information on fact sheets then they would have been able to participate more effectively. This example shows that, while providing “all the information” is good, planning participants need to be given information about how to use the information they have been provided. Community members also need to know what type of information or knowledge will be necessary for participation.

Further, while community members were generally happy with the information provided to them, they felt that 1) they needed more information and 2) it needed to be provided in a clearer manner. Community members wanted more policy and City planning context information, more information about the planning process, more information about the planning department structure and politics, and more information to do the tasks assigned at workshops. In addition, they felt that the information they received was not always provided in a clear manner or a manner that was easy to understand; this was particularly true of process and context information. One Community Vision participant stated, “I didn’t have any problem understanding the process and city policies, but I’m very community minded. For first timers it would be hard and they need [to provide] more information.” (C04) As this suggests, while CityPlan planners showed a dedication to open and varied content, community members were not always happy with the content of the community vision. Much of this unhappiness as related to the manner in which information was presented to them, a topic that is related to the discussion of techniques and methods found below.
Determining Techniques and Methods

Have techniques and methods been chosen to promote education and learning in a manner that reflects the goals of the planning process and the department's or community's values?

This discussion of techniques and methods is constrained by the fact that no interviewees specifically stated that they chose planning methods or techniques to promote learning and education. However, through the course of the interviews it became clear that several planners connected the methods they chose with their goals for the process – some of which were related to education. Because of this relationship between planners’ goals or intentions and the methods they chose, questions about methods were asked after interviewees had become comfortable talking about the topic of learning and education. Further, planners were asked to reflect on how the methods they chose were good opportunities to promote learning and education or how they hindered it. Community members were asked to reflect on the methods used during the community vision and talk about what was good or bad about them, particularly related to opportunities for learning and education. Because there was considerable overlap, the methods mentioned by planners, CityPlan planners, and community members are combined in this section.

Most planners stated that there were constraints (which are covered below in the section on barriers) to choosing the methods to use, but they tried to choose ones that would best meet their goals, usually while involving the public as much as possible. As one planner said,

You're going to get a richer, deeper understanding through a deeper process, but that's not always practical or possible on all issues. There's a continuum of mechanisms [that can be used to achieve understanding during process], as well as a spectrum of learning. P6

Another planner stated:

You use the tools that would be most effective for the type of outcome needed. And you have to, of course, keep an open mind about even your outcome. One of the great beauties of CityPlan, and unusual for a process, is that staff didn't go out to the community with a preconceived set of objectives or a preconceived plan of any type. They just went out, plunked themselves down, and said, "OK, how do you want your neighbourhood to look for the next 25 years?" Believe me, that is very unusual. Most planning is in response to proposed development applications. CityPlan is very unusual... A lot of processes are more constrained than that; staff going out to the community have to be reasonable. [But] that doesn't mean that if they find something unexpected developing that they can't go back and rethink it and go back and reallocate funds inside their department. P2

In this statement, P2 presents several aspects of choosing methods for learning and education in planning processes: determining what will be most effective for the planning and learning
outcomes needed, looking at resources available, listening to the community and the community’s needs, and adapting processes and methods as new opportunities or problems emerge during the process. The following list is a compilation of all interviewees’ ideas of tools and methods that are used during the planning process and their ideas of how these methods promote learning and education. Comments that different groups – especially community members – made are included where applicable.

Techniques and Methods for Learning and Education in Planning

Setting the Stage:

Building Relationships: Planners stated that relationships help break down barriers and open the door for learning and spoke of how they used relationships. CityPlan intentionally offers many opportunities for relationship-building. Community members spoke of using this method with other community members and with planners. Community members felt these relationships helped them teach each other about elements of the neighbourhood, challenge stereotypes, and exchange information. “Learning from fellow residents” was one of the highlights of the process for every community member.

Meeting Groups in Their Setting: CityPlan planners discussed how meeting community groups in their own setting gives planners great access to groups and can help ensure that certain populations are reached. This technique, which is used extensively in CityPlan, is good for raising general awareness of a project. However, when meeting groups in this manner, planners are confined to the group’s time and agenda. Community members did not mention this technique.

Outreach to Marginalised Groups: Planners can promote involvement of marginalised groups through translation, language-specific groups, offering transportation, and recording audio tapes about the plan and process for the visually impaired. However, one CityPlan workshop participant who is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and English, said that translation of words and concepts can be problematic and that language-specific groups can leave participants feeling isolated and unsure of what is happening in the rest of the process. They want to hear what others are saying.

Employ a Communications Strategy: One planner and one CityPlan planner said that employing a communications strategy can organise and integrate different facets of a
process. This can help planners present information at the appropriate time and in a manner that is useful to community members.

**Public Involvement Methods:**

**Public Meetings:** Both planners and CityPlan planners stated that public meetings are a way of getting information out to a lot of people and several planners mentioned that they also are very transparent and allow everyone to hear all positions and interests. However, they can be very contentious and frequently participants do not listen to each other. Thus, most planners did not feel that public meetings are a particularly effective method for education and learning.

**Information Presentations:** Two planners spoke about information presentations. Both stated that they can provide much information and give participants points of reference. However, one planner stated that presentations can be seen as very one-sided or biased, can be very dry, and can be counter-productive in some settings, such as Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

**Open Houses:** While planners and CityPlan planners felt that not much dialogue goes on at open houses, they are opportunities for people to obtain information and talk to agency representatives, and the public has the opportunity to express their opinions. However, comments are not necessarily based on deliberate, reasoned thought and open house attendees do not have to listen or reflect, in which case learning would not occur at a very deep level. Some planners felt that open houses were an effective method for education and learning, while some did not. Community members generally found the open house to be a good introduction to CityPlan (i.e., a lot of information was provided and the open house started people thinking), but felt that they engaged in much more learning and education during workshops.

**Workshops:** Planners and CityPlan planners spoke extensively of workshops as good for understanding, sharing, discussions, and creating options – and thus as great opportunities for learning and education. However, one planner stated that workshops are too short for much consensus-building. Two planners felt that workshops can be problematic because participants must be comfortable working in groups. Community members spoke very highly of workshops as learning experiences. They particularly enjoyed workshops where activities were varied and there was enough time to comfortably complete all activities.
**Round Table Discussions**: Two planners mentioned that round tables give community members a chance to share their own knowledge and opinions in a setting where everyone can hear them, and thus are good opportunities for learning.

**Field Trips and Walking Tours**: Field trips are used for several Community Vision workshops. CityPlan planners and two other planners spoke of walking tours as providing real-world experience of an issue that allows participants to see the issue or information and discuss it. Because field trips and walking tours are interactive, they are an excellent opportunity for learning. Community members spoke very highly of walking tours. They felt that walking tours gave them numerous opportunities to share their own knowledge, as well as opportunities to learn from others and think about or apply what they learned.

**Small Group Work**: Similar to workshops, small group work is a good opportunity for community members to share their own knowledge and interests. CityPlan planners mentioned that while this makes small group work an excellent opportunity for learning and education, the number of participants is limited and participants must be comfortable in this setting. Community members enjoyed small group work and felt that it was an excellent opportunity for dialogue and learning, but found that sometimes less vocal community members were overpowered (see next item, facilitation)

**In-group Facilitation**: Community members felt that having facilitators for workshops or small group work helped the learning process because more voices could be heard. Some community members preferred having facilitators chosen from the community members that comprised the group while others preferred having external facilitators.

**Report-Outs From Group Work**: Community members felt that report-outs after group work were an excellent opportunity for learning and education because they allow participants to hear the perspectives of other groups. Community members appreciated the fact that they could hear other community members, rather than planners, speak about planning ideas and felt that this made report-outs more engaging learning experiences. However, community members also recognised that report-outs can be poorly organised or managed, can be very long, and at times limited information is given about a group’s discussion.

**Informal Chatting**: Several planners and CityPlan planners said that providing opportunities for informal discussion promotes learning because community members have the opportunity to speak with one another and with planners. Thus, community
members can share their own knowledge. Community members were extremely enthusiastic about the opportunities for informal chatting that were built into the Community Vision. One community member said, "Most of what I’ve learned [during the Community Vision process] was from conversations afterwards" (C3.2).

Non-Verbal Participation: One planner and two CityPlan planners mentioned that having alternative opportunities for participation, such as non-verbal participation by providing post-it notes for written comments, can ensure wider participation and result in a greater quantity of more diverse information. Thus, such methods promote learning, particularly for people who are typically less vocal.

Computer-Based Participation: Several planners cited computer- or internet-based communication and participation methods, which they felt could reach a wide audience and provide a plethora of information to community members. Planners liked these methods because people can use these methods at will, and they can be fun, interactive, engaging, and even game-like. However, one planner dismissed websites, saying, "only the geeks go there, but you have to have them." In addition, two community members complained that providing fact sheets on the internet did not work because people must have computer, internet access, and be computer literate to access these.

Community Stewardship Groups: One planner discussed how creating a community stewardship group for discussion, advising on a project, or overseeing a process and its implementation is an excellent opportunity to promote learning, education and diverse discussions. However, this planner noted that community stewardship groups can be biased or contentious and care must be taken to ensure that all or most other community groups or factions are represented.

Paper-Based Methods:

Fact sheets: Fact sheets are used extensively in the Community Vision process. All CityPlan planners spoke highly of fact sheets because they can provide background about the planning process and information about the issues involved; they are a good way to get a lot of information out to the community. However, one CityPlan planner and two community members expressed concerns about whether some of the information on the fact sheets can be considered "facts." In addition, every community member said that while they knew the information was good and useful, they had never or rarely had the time to read the sheets, particularly before participating in workshops.
**Visual Methods:** Several planners and CityPlan planners mentioned visual methods, such as bringing sketch artists to discussions (creating a mini design charrette), visual preference surveys, maps, sketches, and charts. They felt that these methods help participants see things differently, don’t require written literacy, and build interest, as well as provide an alternate way of communicating, when that is needed. Four community members mentioned that they particularly enjoyed using visual methods as part of CityPlan because these methods allowed them to see things or express themselves differently.

**Conceptual Maps:** Two community members commented that they had difficulty understanding some of the complex information that planners provided and recommended providing conceptual maps of principles or processes. They felt that conceptual maps help reach participants who do not understand long descriptions of these principles or processes and can thus improve accessibility and comprehension.

**Surveys:** In the Community Vision process, community opinion surveys are structured so that they present background information, options, consequences, and choices together in one document. These surveys have a wide outreach and connect actions or choices with consequences. CityPlan planners felt that this type of survey can be very educational but also felt that if surveys are not done well, they can be confusing and frustrating. Community members who reviewed Community Vision surveys and CityPlan planners stated that these surveys are difficult for some community members to use because they present much complex information.

**Transcribe Information:** One planner and two CityPlan planners said that transcribing all the information that planners get from participants and providing this information back to the community shows people that planners listened to what they said and confirms that the process was reflective. The planner also said that this is a good way for community members to hear other participants’ opinions and interests, and thus is educational. No community members discussed transcription.

The above list is extensive, but several planners noted that they find it important to have a variety of methods available so that they can choose methods that are appropriate to their needs, the audience or people involved, the setting and the resources available. Most of the methods that planners mentioned in interviews are reviewed in this list, along with the ways in which planners felt that they promoted learning and education and problems they had experienced while using these methods to promote learning and education. While community
members did not experience every method discussed above, a general lesson can be drawn from those they did comment on: community members prefer methods where they can engage with the information being provided and/or share their own knowledge. While other methods serve other planning purposes, community members’ feelings with regards to methods that promote learning and education seem clear. One additional factor is that community members appreciated a diversity of methods. While several community members mentioned this factor specifically, it also emerged from the interviews because different community members liked different approaches. In fact, planners noted that they had to be creative and use alternative methods to reach community members. These final factors are also part of the following discussion of delivery and outreach methods.

**Conducting Delivery and Outreach**

*Does delivery of the planning process occur in a manner that promotes engagement of the community and deeper education and learning?*

Planners had much to say about approaches to delivery, although they did not label their comments as being concerned with delivery, per se. Rather, these comments tended to occur primarily in the context of methods and techniques and secondarily in the context of values for learning and education or during examples of how they promoted learning and education through their own work. Again, because of the considerable overlap between different interview groups, in this section the interviewees’ observations are combined. Comments concerning conducting delivery and outreach tended to fall into two groups: 1) creating space for discussion and reflection and 2) delivery and outreach techniques that create better opportunities for learning and education. These two groups are discussed below. They are followed by a brief discussion of lessons learned from CityPlan.

**Creating Space for Reflection**

One group of comments was concerned with delivering a process in a manner that creates space for all participants to discuss and reflect. Creating such space sets the stage for learning and education because it frees the dialogue and allows new information to be heard. Further, when people are comfortable (but not too comfortable), they are in a better position to engage in learning than if they are, for example, defensive. Planners and community members recommended the following:
Encourage participants (and professionals) to listen to one another: planners and community members recommended delivery methods such as having a facilitator; stressing that people will always hear something new in every discussion; using “mirroring” techniques when speaking (reflecting a participant’s language back to them); using deep listening techniques; and employing the Witness Ceremony¹⁶.

Talk about interests, not positions: planners recommended getting people to speak about their interests and how a project could support their interests.

Bring together diverse groups or community factions: planners and community members felt that this creates a more interesting discussion with more viewpoints; further, planners felt that all (or almost all) stakeholders needed to be involved and to know that they were involved.

Promote discussions about participant’s perspectives and the perceived symbolism of actions: two planners felt that this was an important step related to discussing interests.

Create opportunities for informal discussions: planners and community members felt that much learning occurred during informal discussions, particularly since many felt these are where people feel freer to share their ideas.

Shaping Delivery and Outreach for Learning

Planners, CityPlan planners, and community members also had numerous ideas about delivery and outreach techniques that create better opportunities for learning and education, as well as knowledge sharing and understanding. These included:

Use community resources: this brings more people to participate in the process and allows more voices to engage in dialogue.

Have groups manage themselves: i.e., a working group can pick its own leader or community leaders can manage groups, but planners or outside facilitators should not necessarily facilitate; this allows community members to build skills. It can also create a more interesting dialogue, since community members are often more willing to contradict each other than planners are (P11).

Ensure that all voices are heard: this brings more voices, viewpoints, and other information into the discussion.

¹⁶ In the Witness Ceremony, the leader selects two or three people to act as “witnesses” during the discussion. The witnesses are given some token to indicate their status. Witnesses listen during the discussion; at the end of the discussion they tell the group what they heard. Sometimes the leader chooses particular witnesses because they are people who do not listen, are very positional, etc. (P9)
Have flexible formatting and adapt to participants’ needs: this is particularly helpful if, for example, a good discussion is happening during a workshop or participants want more time to engage in informal discussion; allowing such activities to continue can result in better learning exchanges.

Structure workshops and other events to allow for passive contributions: all participants are not comfortable in large groups or other settings, so methods such as writing on post-it notes instead of participating verbally can increase participation and the diversity and depth of ideas given.

Have opportunities for participants to provide their own ideas and be creative: all participants do not learn or participate to their greatest ability in traditional manners.

Have opportunities for participants to write down their own comments because others rephrase comments and ideas are lost unintentionally.

Create opportunities for informal discussion: opportunities may be part of formal planning sessions and planners can create or encourage community groups to hold less formal discussion groups or coffee klatches for participants to discuss issues and information.

Be very clear about the purpose of the exercise and avenues for participation: participants appreciate knowing their options and what will be done with the information they produce; having access to such information helps participants gear their ideas and recommendations to the intended product.

Make the planning process more interactive: interactive exercises keep participant interest and help participants learn.

Make links between different workshops and/or different subject matter.

Connect consequences to choices/options, as in the Community Vision survey.

Average content for participants’ literacy level and technical knowledge/background so that information can be understood by most of the audience. This allows the information to be used later on in a process.

Use visuals.

Find ways to keep interest and engage participants: help participants learn how the project could benefit them; find “hooks” to catch interest and draw community members into the planning process; involve people in projects where they can see fairly immediate changes based on their participation (or create opportunities for immediate impacts in
long-range planning); get participants to work with groups with whom they do not usually work.

CityPlan

Many of the aforementioned delivery and outreach methods were used as part of the Community Vision process, which was able to retain participant interest and foster deep levels of learning. When community members were asked about their deepest learning experiences during the Community Vision and what factors made those learning experiences so powerful, each person mentioned several of these delivery methods. Ones that were frequently mentioned included ensuring that all voices are heard, both through wider outreach – especially to more marginalised groups – and by managing the discussion; bringing together diverse groups; creating opportunities for informal discussions; being clear about the purpose of an exercise and avenues for participation; having flexible formatting; and using visuals. Several community members also mentioned the need for wider outreach to get more people involved. A related perceived need was bringing planners and/or the bureaucracy closer to neighbourhood residents; community members suggested creating neighbourhood planning storefronts. Other needs included greater direction for groups and clarity of instruction, as well as more facilitation. However, two community members mentioned that at times they felt that they were being steered in certain directions; as one interviewee said, “Sometimes I feel like a schoolchild at these things [workshops]” (C3.2). Thus, while directions about how to participate, the steps to a process, or the purpose of an exercise are good, feeling as though one’s opinions or conclusions are being steered is not beneficial. Finally, several community members stated that they were unclear about the purpose of the workshops they had participated in and how the information collected would be used; process participants had few ideas what the next steps were. While related to delivery methods and direction, this final comment is also related to the need to be clear about implementation and how participant involvement can continue.

Continuing Education and Learning Through Implementation

How do education and learning continue through (to) implementation?

Most questions asked as part of interviews were focused on the process of creating a plan and interviewees did not stray from that vein, so most planners did not speak about implementation. While planners’ involvement in implementation is usually quite limited, two planners, three CityPlan planners, and one community member spoke of creating mechanisms
for follow-up with the community and the importance of this for continued learning and education. These interviewees felt that the views and information given to decision-makers and planners need to be fed back to community members in order to facilitate learning. When information is fed back to the community, the community gets to hear what other participants have said and can learn from those comments. One planner suggested that community members can help planners share this information with the rest of the community, thus expanding opportunities for learning and education further. The community member who spoke on this topic suggested providing the community with a summary of what was achieved during or through a process.

One CityPlan interviewee works with community members on implementation. The interview with that planner touched on numerous ways that implementation can involve community members and promote learning and education. According to interviewee P3, in CityPlan, community members participate in implementation through communities that are organised around Community Vision topics such as process, transportation, community issues, greening, and parks. This CityPlan planner discussed how information sharing and learning occurs through these groups as community members discuss new ways of doing these things:

So this [traffic subcommittee] is a group of people who get together with engineers. They discuss mainly new ways of doing things. And they use resources that they bring to the table, that the engineers bring to the table... So they find resources through the planners, through the engineers, sometimes they bring them to the table because quite often in committees like this you get activists. And they learn together and they share information. They are always moving towards an action. What they do is they use these kinds of resources.

So this is the kind of level of learning that’s occurring. Mainly it’s between staff, the residents, merchants, and service providers together in a group. And they share, and they learn together, and they talk about solutions – and sometimes they bring their own resources, from the City, from the community, to the table to talk about how they can do things differently, how they can solve problems differently.

There’s another level of learning going on. It’s offered to the CityPlan committees and their subcommittees... What they [City Council] did in 2003 is they gave money to these CityPlan committees. They [the CityPlan committees] have $60,000 a year for six communities... They can use the money for communication, outreach, and we’ve stretched it to training. So whenever there are workshops or programs, usually offered by the City Program, or something happening at the University, then that information goes out to the committee, and they decide how many people they are going to send. When John Forester was here four groups sent people, so there were 13 people there at $200 per person... Then they bring it back to the committee and share the information with people who couldn’t go to that forum. Then they also went to the City Program session on the design features of green buildings... So now they’re better informed when
they’re sitting at the table with the developer. Now they know what they’re talking about. They know more about it than I do. (P3)

Interviewee P3 also stated that the committees learn process skills through the implementation process; such skills include conflict resolution, facilitation, and knowledge of how to run meetings. Committee members try to share the information and skills they learn and their approaches to solving problems with other committees and with the community, which creates further opportunities for learning and education, for both sharers and receivers of information:

They [the neighbourhood CityPlan Committees] decided that every six months these groups [the neighbourhood CityPlan Committees] have a “Pan-Vision Meeting” where they all get together so they can share and they can discuss common issues and concerns. Last time they all had transit and safety. So they talk about ‘what are you doing about Translink? Do you have anybody on the advisory committee? We need someone on an advisory committee.’ When these groups meet, that’s when they decide how they’re doing to divvy it [the Council funding] up. ... That’s [also] where they talk about the importance of training. We’ve found that the people on these committees, at least the chairs, the vice-chairs, they value education and learning and they want to learn more. And they want their community members to learn more. And they want the residents to learn more. (P3)

Staff members facilitate these efforts by supporting the committees, making them aware of training opportunities, and facilitating discussions about spending money and sharing knowledge with the community. In the process, planners engage in learning and education, as well. In fact, as P3 stated above, implementation committee members sometimes “know more about it [a topic] than I do.”

The example of CityPlan’s implementation program shows that planners can continue to foster opportunities for learning and education through the implementation process. While all planning processes do not have the option of keeping a planner working with the community, planners can discuss implementation with community members. Planners can also discuss how to continue learning and education through to implementation and can write elements into the plan that help continue learning and education through the process of implementation.

Identifying and Overcoming Barriers

Have the individuals involved in the planning process identified possible barriers, obstacles, or challenges to education and learning in planning and ways to overcome these barriers?

All of the planners and community members interviewed were able to identify numerous barriers to learning and education in planning. Again, because of the frequent overlap of interviewees’ comments, what follows is a compiled list of the barriers the seventeen
interviewees discussed, along with solutions – where they were provided. It is important to note that not all barriers have solutions because interviewees were not always able to give them. In addition, at times interviewees said that something was true for their planning department, but if this were not the case, that would be a major barrier. Some particular lessons from the CityPlan case study are discussed at the end of this section.

Barriers to Learning and Education

Barriers to learning and education discussed by interviewees included:

Commitment and Dedication: Barriers to learning and education include a lack of commitment and dedication to: 1) an informed public; 2) dialogue at all levels – community, professionals, department management, and City Council; 3) dealing with difficult issues or involving the entire public (e.g., not dealing with multiculturalism or poverty and/or choosing not to actively involve marginalised groups); and 4) public involvement and learning. No solutions were provided as interviewees stated that they did not experience these problems.

Openness: Barriers to learning and education include a lack of openness to new ideas. Political constraints; fear of the unknown; and people’s perceptions, prejudices, and agendas can prevent openness to new ideas, lead to a lack of communication, and inhibit willingness to learn or the ability to hear new information. Solutions included using conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation skills; creating an atmosphere where people can feel comfortable; and knowing the political context so that planners and community members know where to apply pressure and where to work around it.

Depth of Public Involvement: A major barrier to learning and education is limited or shallow public involvement, such as in planning that is regulatory or fast-paced. In these cases there are fewer opportunities for learning on all sides – planner, community, politicians, and developers – and involvement becomes more of an exercise in information provision. The only solution provided was to try to incorporate learning and education into the public involvement that exists as much as possible. One planner also mentioned that he found regulatory planning to be an excellent opportunity for learning and education, provided the public could be involved sufficiently, because these types of planning capture peoples’ interest due to their impact on peoples’ lives (see Engagement, below).

Accessibility of Process: Barriers to learning and education included inaccessibility of a planning process to participants, usually due to language (lack of translation), literacy level, time constraints, disabilities, belonging to a non-Canadian culture with different norms for
participation, and discomfort working with groups. These characteristics may mean that community members cannot get to events or are not able to participate fully in events if they are able to attend. Thus, they cannot share their ideas and experiences, they do not have the ability to learn from others, and others do not have the opportunity to learn from them. Solutions include having planners design the planning process and events for alternative means of participation. Interviewees also stated that planners should try to keep the needs of marginalised populations in mind while designing a planning process (e.g., transportation, translation, alternative-language events, taking written questions at public meetings, good facilitation, and providing opportunities at workshops to share knowledge using post-it notes rather than speaking – see sections on Techniques and Methods and Delivery for more information).

**Accessibility of Information:** Barriers to learning and education include providing information that is generally unusable by participants because it is too dense; it is written with technical language or at a reading level that is too high; there is too much information; or participants have no time to read the information. Solutions include averaging reading level to be accessible to most participants; telling participants how to prioritise their reading of the information provided (e.g., what information is necessary for participation, what information they should read later, and how they can access more information); and only providing a reasonable amount of information during the process (but indicating how more information may easily be obtained).

**Engagement and Interest:** Barriers to learning and education include getting community members engaged in the planning process generally and maintaining their interest and engagement in particular processes or events. At a basic level, engagement is a prerequisite to learning; deeper engagement facilitates deeper learning experiences. Solutions include having different opportunities for community members to get engaged in the process, being creative about what these opportunities are, and being creative about how to gain people’s interest. In addition, using the information community members provide in an obvious manner helps community members feel they have valuable information and knowledge and furthers their interest. Finally, current planning activities (e.g., re-zonings and development proposals) can serve as a hook for getting community members interested in and engaged in planning, since it is in these activities that the public can see the most immediate impact.

**Limited Resources:** The most frequently mentioned barriers to learning and education include limited resources. Planners specifically mentioned lack of money or time to do the type of planning processes that facilitates learning and education, such as extensive, deep public
involvement and consensus-based exercises. Time pressure can also be a result of the nature of the planning process (regulatory vs. policy or long-range planning) or a result of competing demands on planners and community members’ time. One planner did point out, in the context of working with committees who were trying to allocate funding for training workshops, that having limited amounts of money was not completely negative: it forced the committees to think about their priorities and “invest” wisely. Other resource limitations, such as staff expertise and having appropriate staff, are discussed below.

**Staff Expertise:** Similar barriers to learning and education were lack of adequate training for staff, staff with appropriate skill sets or backgrounds, staff who are “experts” that others can consult, and information about what staff should be doing or considering. In addition, two planners mentioned lack of inter-department transfer of knowledge due to the discipline-specific, departmental nature of government as a barrier to their own learning and to their ability to facilitate learning and education for community members. Solutions included identifying staff with expertise in communication and education, ongoing training of staff to enhance or develop these skills, hiring consultants with relevant expertise to help departments, and devoting resources to public involvement and/or learning and education. One planner mentioned that having a dedicated person who helps departments with public involvement and learning and education is beneficial, as well.

**Staff Temperament and Personality:** Several planners mentioned that another barrier to learning and education is finding staff who possess a natural interest in learning and education. One planner mentioned that the homogeneity of planners as a profession is a barrier to learning and education. Several planners stated that finding the right people for this is easier in a larger organisation; otherwise, cultivation of these characteristics seems to be the best solution.

**Staff Attitude:** Significant barriers to learning and education include a negative attitude to incorporating learning and education in planning, an attitude that planners would not hear anything new through consultation, a lack of willingness and enthusiasm for public involvement and learning and education, and a perception that “doing it right” takes more time and effort. While many planners mentioned these as barriers, solutions were limited. Ideas mentioned included persuasion through discussions and presenting evidence that incorporating learning and education into processes and enhancing public involvement leads to better plans; persuasion that professionals will always hear new things if they listen; and enhancing professionals’ deep listening skills.
**Participant Attitude:** Both planners and community members felt that barriers to learning and education included a lack of participant (this could be either community members or planners) interest in the process, a belief that one has the only correct ideas, a scepticism towards planning and planners, and an unwillingness to listen and learn. Solutions included drawing participants into discussions and using deep listening, consensus-building, conflict-resolution, mediation, and facilitation techniques.

**Implementation:** Most planners did not discuss implementation or did not discuss it in much detail. However, challenges mentioned included ensuring that plans and policies were brought into the world and acted upon and the tendency of people who participate in implementation to come and go from year to year. Implementation is discussed in more detail above.

**Power and Politics**

Planners were also asked how they deal with conflict and/or politics and power such that they do not adversely affect open participation and education and learning in the planning process. One planner had this to say about power and politics:

> There’s no question that power and politics, they’re fundamentally shaping what you can discuss. And if they’re fundamentally edited, then the learning that would go along with that dialogue is edited. What the challenge for the planner there, is to try to be conscious for themselves and their team, behind closed doors, of what you can and can’t discuss, and then try to understand what the real probable negative impacts of that could be.

Then you try to do some analysis, and usually that’s intuitive, you’re all think right there, live, and try to come up with a plan around it to short-circuit, to circumvent power structures where they exist. Otherwise, you make it really clear that you’re just doing what you’re told. You try to make the audience understand where to put their expectations, because that’s an insult, not to meet someone’s expectations, so you lower their expectations at the start. You say, “We cannot talk about that today and the reason why is because, and what we are here to talk about today is x. For those of you who really want to talk about that issue, we’ve set up a table here for you to talk about that issue. And we understand that that is an issue. I don’t think that anyone here says that’s not an issue, and nobody here is going to presume that you should agree with the decision that was made yesterday or last week. For those of you that really have to talk about that, there’s that table and we have a facilitator there who’s going to try to help make it more applicable to the discussion we’re having today.”

So you essentially shape the nature of the dialogue, so that the way that power and politics have shaped the dialogue don’t make it all that difficult. So you try to get around it where you can, and where you can’t you try to be as clear as possible what the terms of references for that discussion are. (P8)
Thus, while interviewees listed a number of ways political reality and constraints can interfere with learning and education, they were slightly less able to identify solutions to those barriers. The main solutions seemed to be 1) knowing the political reality one is working in so that one can adapt to it or find ways to work around it and 2) being clear with everyone – other professionals, community members, and other interested parties – what was on the table for discussion.

Conflict

In response to questions about conflict, planners did list a number of ways conflict and contentiousness can hinder learning and education in planning. An example is this planner’s struggles working in a contentious environment:

Contentiousness can be a hindrance because people become pretty entrenched in their views. People take positions and they don’t budge from them. They often don’t really make as much of an effort as they can sometimes to see the other side. So definitely it involves a lot of work, a lot of dialogue, and people still stay polarized. (P7)

However, most planners also stated that conflict can actually be beneficial to education and learning. One planner discusses this dual nature of conflict in the following quote:

And then there’s issues like group homes, where you do lots of work getting the policies into the City. We were getting it from both sides. There were people from non-profit societies saying that they could just go wherever they wanted and didn’t have to be nice to their neighbours, to your NIMBY kind of communities. So there’s an education component where you’re trying to educate the societies and the advocate groups that they’re not apt to get very far if they take on a really confrontational style, but also educate the community and some of the agencies that are worried about these kind of things that there are people in our society that have to live somewhere and we can’t ship them all off to another community, and there’s legislation that says that small-scale group homes can’t be precluded by zoning. So we try to bring in good-neighbour policies and approaches... I think it’s an example of education, though, because you’re trying to educate the different groups about the perspectives of the other parties and bring them together, and at the same time maybe provide some education about why people have to be in group homes in the first place and why it’s not appropriate to send kids off to some desert island and starve them to death. (P6)

Another planner spoke of the characteristics that create conflict that is good for learning versus bad for learning:

I actually think that in many respects, the conflict actually improves the learning because people are bringing different views to the table... I think that actually conflict can be beneficial – conflict in a situation where it’s a more workshop kind of thing, not a public hearing where people are just yelling and screaming at each other and no one is listening to each other anyway. At the end of the day, it’s not set up as a learning experience, it’s set up as a “I’m going to make my point and I don’t care much what your point is anyway.” There’s not much learning going on there. But certainly when
you've got a group discussing around a table and they're not at war over it, it brings different perspectives to the table and conflict in those perspectives, then there's lots of learning.

Thus, if conflict or contentiousness do not get out of control, they can actually provide an additional opportunity for learning as people come to understand others’ viewpoints and interests, and as participants work towards a solution. Other solutions discussed include bringing in good community leaders, who can help their peers see all sides of the issue; educating people about the idea under discussion and the positions surrounding it; and educating people about how to deal with conflict.
Chapter 7: Towards an Understanding of Learning and Education in Planning

If we do not understand the fuller promise of participatory process [to promote learning], we will be likely to shape the deliberative occasions of community meetings, workshops, retreats, mediated negotiations, and participatory research efforts in needlessly restrictive ways.

-- John Forester 1999:130

Tell me, I forget; Show me, I remember; Involve me, I understand.

— Chinese proverb

Based on the analysis of interviews with planners and the CityPlan case study found in Chapter 6, the analytical framework for learning and education in planning has emerged as substantially helpful in assessing how planners can and do incorporate and promote learning and education in processes they lead or design. Several new points were uncovered through research and several other points were not discussed, but the framework, as presented in Chapter 4, seems to be a useful tool for discussing learning and education in planning. Thus, with a few modifications for new findings, the framework can be used in a normative fashion to help planners foster learning and education in planning. This chapter discusses these new findings, as well as several other points that emerged strongly during analysis of the empirical portions of this research. The chapter then proceeds to revisit the theoretical framework, integrating findings from the empirical research analysis with observations. In Chapter 8 these points and key lessons are translated into a set of implications for fostering learning and education in community-based planning processes.

Given their origin, the findings discussed in this chapter are quite interesting. While every interviewee or person observed was an “expert” on the topic of learning and education in community-based planning in the sense that they experienced learning and education both through the planning they engaged in and as lifelong learners, no one interviewed markets themselves as an expert in learning and education in planning. Almost every interviewee’s first contact with this topic was when I first wrote or spoke to them about participating in this research. It is telling that, at the end of interviews, almost every interviewee referred to the
conversation just completed as a “learning experience” that helped them see planning or their practice in a new light. Thus, rather than answering questions based on previously-generated expert knowledge, interviewees were able to participate in this research and generate a significant body of information largely because they have experienced the subject matter and were able to reflect on their experiences. This both limits the findings presented in this chapter and the previous one and makes them richer.

**Characteristics of Interviewee Responses**

With respect to responses, it was quite interesting that the responses of all planners interviewed were quite similar. Many of the differences between other planners’ responses and CityPlan emerged based on looking at the case study as a whole; actual planners responses were frequently almost identical. However, I do not think that this would necessarily be true of a wider sampling of planners, and certainly not of a wider sampling of development professionals. This assertion is supported by the experiences of the public involvement trainer’s comments (see chapter 6) about the differences she experienced when training different development professionals. I believe that planners’ responses were so similar because all of these interviewees engaged extensively in public process. In addition, that public process was usually intensive, tended towards public involvement (not manipulation or formulaic “consultation”), and was frequently similar to collaboration. When there were differences between CityPlan planners’ and other planners’ comments, they generally were related to elements of the CityPlan process that are not shared by many other processes. Many of these differences were related to the implementation of CityPlan process designs. While CityPlan was the only case study for this research, through numerous applications it has been carefully crafted and refined to reflect goals related to learning and education throughout its structure.

In addition, the discussion of the CityPlan case study benefited from participants’ reflections on the process. While planners may have believed they were fostering learning and education, community members did not always find that this was the case or felt that planners did not go far enough. It is also interesting to look at how differently community members and planners viewed some issues, such as mutual learning. Community members immediately and explicitly stated that they learned an enormous amount from other community members during the planning process. In fact, most said that they really almost learned more from each other than they learned from the City of Vancouver representatives. In fact, referring to the amazing
depth of knowledge he found around the discussion table and the intensive sharing of information that ensued, one interviewee stated, “We almost created a parallel process” (C2). Thus, community members saw learning as being what I term a “multi-directional process”: learning flows back and forth between planners and participants (two-way or mutual learning), but it also flows between community members and other participants (the additional directions).\textsuperscript{17} Planners invariably said that learning was “mutual” or a “two-way process” and elaborated upon this to say that planners learn from participants and participants learn from planners. While planners are not blind to the third dimension, they do not seem to explicitly label it in their minds. When I spoke of a third dimension (knowledge flow between participants) during my later interviews with planners, they invariably expressed surprise and interest.

Creating a Deep Philosophy of Learning

The preceding discussion, particularly related to interviewees’ ideas about learning and education, shows that responses to interview questions were as telling for what they missed as for what they discussed. Generally speaking, when the planners interviewed discussed learning and education, they stated that they valued learning and education in planning but they spoke vaguely about how they valued it, what it meant to them, what it meant to their department, and what it meant in the context of planning processes. Planners also spoke of learning and education as something that happened to help community members learn what planners felt they needed to know to participate in the planning process. In other words, planners often spoke of how they could educate the public about planners’ interests, not of learning and education in planning as a process where people engage in discovery and educate themselves. There was little discussion of the value of promoting participant reflection, of developing deep personal understandings, of learning in the sense of discovery, of fostering complex understandings and an understanding of complexity, of learning in the sense of sharing and personal growth, of creating an atmosphere that welcomed learning, of giving participants the freedom to be creative. Planners’ ideas and language grew much richer and more precise when they spoke about methods for promoting learning and education in planning.

This is not to say that planners do not value learning and education and these aspects of it – I would guess that the truth is the opposite. Rather, it is to say that most planners did not...

\textsuperscript{17} In reality, one could say there are an exponential number of directions, since as people learn from each other during the planning process they pass this new knowledge on to others.
have a deep philosophy of learning and education in planning. They had not generally come to personal or shared understandings of their values for learning and education and its place and possibilities in the context of planning. If learning and education are to be successfully fostered in planning processes, planners need to first think about and develop an understanding of learning and education as deep, rich processes with numerous possibilities that include fostering a sense of discovery, creativity, and complex understanding. Further, planners need to create a deep philosophy of learning and education that values reflection and creates a welcoming atmosphere that is integral to learning and planning.

**Prerequisites to Learning**

In addition to the need for a deep philosophy of learning, several other points that emerged from the analysis can be considered prerequisites to learning. These are not exactly components of a planning process that fosters learning and education, but rather should or must be addressed before a process that involves participants begins. In a manner similar to that discussed above, if these points are not addressed, then learning and education will not happen as effectively as they could otherwise.

*Shared Understanding of Principles:* Establishing where learning and education or information originate and how they flow between people are important prerequisites to fostering learning and education because they shape how the process is designed and where time is allocated. Creating a good foundation upon which to build and promote learning was one of the weakest areas for planner interviewees. There were few formalised discussions of values, definitions, the players involved in learning and education, intentions, and goals or objectives. Individuals need to have their own understandings of what is meant by different terms (such as "learning," "education," "public involvement," and "capacity building"), their intentions or goals, and how they think of knowledge flow. It is also extremely important, though, that groups of planners who work together agree upon such principles. Otherwise, there is confusion of language and thought as well as confusion of design. Creating this shared understanding of principles is based upon planners’ philosophies of learning and education in planning and their personal understandings of what learning and education entail.

*Relationships:* Interviewees frequently mentioned relationship-building as an important prerequisite to learning and education. Reflecting on observations of the CityPlan case study, I realised that every time people speak to each other, some kind of relationship is involved. If
information is to be trusted and thus faithfully used, the relationship must be a trusting one and
the parties must know something about one another. In cases where an information-giver was
mentally handicapped or was seen as having a powerful agenda (such as the representative of a
development company who attended several workshops), the information provided was handled
carefully and scrutinised. In other words, people rarely take information at face value or as the
entire truth. Rather, they examine it through filters, which are based on the knowledge of each
other built through relationships. In a very different sense, relationships can help foster learning
and education because they promote involvement and help participants challenge each other
without getting into arguments or fights. In addition, the relationships that community members
build with other community members can be a very powerfully learning experience, in and of
themselves.

Engagement and Interest: Several interviewees highlighted the need to find “hooks” to
draw participants into the planning process. Finding “hooks” is really about engaging people’s
interest, something that is even more difficult if the people already feel powerless or
disenfranchised because of previous experiences with planning, politics, and power. Participants
need to feel they have the power to have some impact; they also need to feel that they can
contribute. This important prerequisite to involvement led to the realisation that I had missed an
important point when the theoretical framework was created: engagement and interest.

Engagement and interest are prerequisites to learning because no one will learn about
something if they are completely uninterested in the subject or if their attention and mind are not
engaged in it. Thus, planners must find ways to interest and engage community members.
Community members need to be aware of the planning process and be interested enough to get
involved. Interest needs to be stimulated to a point where community members actually get
involved in the process and invest enough time and energy that they engage in learning.
Community members also need to be engaged or aware enough of the process that they
understand what the issues are and why they are important. Community members naturally have
an understanding of these issues and are naturally interested when they see planning having an
immediate impact on their lives, such as in development or regulatory planning. Thus, it would
seem that if people can be engaged and involved in this kind of planning, then it is natural for
learning to occur about such matters as planning context and the long-term impact of decisions.
In such an example, participants can see the impacts of their actions and are more likely to
participate again and become even more knowledgeable; this is merely supposition, but it builds
logically from interviewees’ statements and my observations.
**Political Support or a Mandate:** Political will and political mandates can have enormous power: they can force/bring forth a learning and education experience or setting, but they can also hinder or halt learning and education opportunities. Planners noted the need to be aware of their political context so that they can think about how to deal with these political problems. This also highlights the fact that politicians are another participant in the learning and education component of planning processes: planners need to view politicians, developers, and others with this type of political power as another public to whom they must tailor stakeholder involvement and learning and education initiatives. A related note is that the insulation of decision-makers, bureaucrats, and planners and/or difficulty accessing these players can lead to less mutual learning and less interplay of knowledge, thus hindering learning and education. The other side of this equation is that political will can be enormously beneficial to planning processes and can create learning and education opportunities. One planner cited Council passing a multiculturalism resolution as creating enormous opportunities for education in an area he had previously been unable to engage. A second planner cited a change of Council, which allowed her to engage with community members more deeply around certain issues. This change of Council also allowed her to give more support to the community groups with whom she was working.

**Participant Feelings of Efficacy:** Several community members expressed frustration with the impact of power and political will on planning and learning, usually because community members are the ones with the least power and the least ability to change things or adapt when politics becomes involved in planning. On a related note, several community members stated that planners need to help community members feel they have information that planners think is valuable – both local, experiential knowledge and more technical knowledge. It also emerged from interviews that participants feel very strongly that they want to contribute to the process, which means that planners need to make it obvious that participants are contributing. When participants contribute information or time, they want to see that it is used, even if during that use it is found to be incorrect or a better idea supplants it. While having power or a feeling of efficacy are not prerequisites to learning, having both certainly help people engage more deeply in the planning process.
Valuing Information

Information and the ways that it is valued and used emerged as one of the most significant factors in fostering or inhibiting learning and education in planning. Some of the ways in which information is gathered or processed, such as the use of “participant knowledge” or how to plan in the face of incorrect information, can almost be considered prerequisites to learning and education in community-based planning. Others, such as information loads, are considerations that must be dealt with during the planning process. But each of these, if addressed poorly, can lead to poor processing and use of information during the planning process and even faulty planning based on incorrect or partial information.

Participants Knowledge: Local knowledge is widely seen by planners as extremely significant for planning, but wider “participant knowledge” is not often included in the equation. Traditionally, community members are seen as bringing “local,” or experiential, knowledge to processes. It emerged from interviews and observations that planners need to move to an understanding of community members as bringing “participant knowledge,” or a combination of experiential, technical, and professional knowledge, to processes. While the distinction is difficult to make, planners did not seem to speak of community members as experts who could teach other community members or experts who were knowledgeable about matters wider than their specific community – matters such as principles or practices of transportation planning or mixed-use developments\(^1\). In contrast, during observations of Community Vision workshops, I saw numerous examples of participant knowledge at work as architects, community organisers, and planning consultants who attended workshops as community members brought information and experiences to bear that made invaluable impacts on the planning process. In a different community planning process, which took place in Kamloops, British Columbia, participant knowledge and skills were used as larger parts of the planning process when a local writer became involved in the process and began writing freelance articles about the project for the local paper, when the leader of the local Business Improvement Association helped with economic aspects of the project, and when an engineer gave input on the plan. As a result of the contributions of participant knowledge, other participants learned more than they would have

\(^1\) The two times community members were mentioned as having important information beyond local (i.e., community) knowledge were by CityPlan planners. In one case an implementation planner spoke of committee members who are activists bringing information to committee meetings. In the other case another CityPlan planner spoke of the knowledge participants sometimes bring to planning processes.
known otherwise and participants who made contributions engaged in deeper learning experiences.

**Incorrect Information:** Another concern is that the information upon which planning is based can be incorrect. Neighbourhood planning may be based on data from Census Canada that is incomplete or long-range, large-scale land use plans may be based on biogeoclimatic surveys that do not take climate change into account. In addition, information users frequently make assumptions or analyze data in ways that can extend these errors. While information users such as planners need to make certain that their data is as accurate as is possible and/or feasible, they must realize that having completely accurate current information or projections is not always possible. In an uncertain context, for learning and education to occur during planning, planners need to be open to being challenged about the information they present. In addition, planners must be willing to accept others’ ideas of the facts, which also means that they must be willing to be wrong.

When planners provide information as part of a process, many planners said that this information should be as value-free as possible. However, obtaining value-free information can be a struggle – as it was when the CityPlan division developed its toolkit of information – and even if that is accomplished, it can still be open to interpretation due, for example, to bias in the data collection process. In a related vein, two interviewees highlighted the need to create a shared understanding of information during the planning process. In many cases, coming to a shared understanding of the facts can help later planning because when these facts are used during later points of the process, they do not have to be established or disputed on the spot. In addition, during the process of coming to a shared understanding relationships are built (see above). In some planning processes, considerable time and energy is devoted to building a shared understanding of information between all parties.

**Openness:** Being willing to be wrong has a larger relevance than merely accepting information inaccuracies; in fact, to engage in learning participants must be willing to be wrong about their beliefs and understandings. This is related to another prerequisite for learning and education: openness. In order to learn, all planning participants – planners, community members, and others – must be open to new ideas, to new perspectives, to new ways of doing things. This openness is a mindset that must be fostered, but there are also process elements that

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19 I will not deal with the matter of how to plan for change and uncertainty here, as that is beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, here I am only concerned with how to promote education and learning in planning when we have access to incorrect or incomplete information.

*Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes*
can contribute to openness or hinder it. Atmospheres of confrontation can be extremely
counterproductive to learning and education because confrontation tends to make people
defensive, which then makes them less likely to be open to new ideas. In contrast, feeling
comfortable can facilitate learning: When people are comfortable in a setting and do not feel
anxious, nervous, or defensive, they are more open to new ideas. This is particularly important
in extremely value-based processes, where it is easy for participants to get defensive, rather than
being open to different perspectives or ideas. In such situations, being creative about the
methods used to promote learning and education is extremely important.

**Information Loads:** Another finding is related to the information made available.
Generally, planners seem to believe that for the sake of transparency, to give everyone access to
the same information, and to give people the necessary background, they should make as much
information available as possible. The problem with this approach is that the receivers go into
information overload, do not know what to do with all of this information, and frequently
become frustrated. If planners choose to make a lot of information available, particularly at
planning events, they need to make certain that participants understand what to do with it.
Participants must understand what the information will be needed for, that they are not expected
to read or know all of the information, and that they are free to take as much or as little of it as
they like. That being said, merely throwing all the information that planners have available out
to the public may not be the best option; a more effective way to handle information is to give
participants options for the amount of information they want and to give them an idea of the
priority or importance of it. If information is given out and is necessary for participation in the
process, participants should be made aware of how it will be used and planners must allow more
than enough time for participants to read/review the information and digest it. Conversely, if
information will not be needed for participation and if for reference or for later use, participants
should be made aware of that. Finally, information must be packaged in plain language that is
easily understood by participants. When information concerning the process is provided, it must
be even clearer than other information that is given out.

**Background Information:** Community members who were interviewed made it very
clear that they wanted to receive information about policy and governmental and/or planning
department structure and politics, not merely substantive information related to changes that are
planned (such as information about crime statistics and community-based safety promotion or
traffic accident statistics and traffic calming methods). While some of this information was
provided, community members did not find it particularly clear and it was generally only
mentioned once. Thus, such information should be presented in two or more ways (such as in verbal/written format and with a conceptual map) and should be presented several times or provided as take-home information. Having access to this type of information allows community members to integrate their understanding, to know what is possible, to take their theorising from the abstract to the concrete, and generally promotes deeper learning and strategising, as well as a feeling of efficacy.

**Background Knowledge:** Finally, it is extremely important to be aware of the background and experience expected of participants. Several community members and planners made comments related to the backgrounds necessary for participating in programs. In particular, several Community Vision participants stated that they had less trouble understanding the process and context because they were already knowledgeable about community development. In contrast, I was told by these interviewees and other Community Vision participants with whom I spoke informally that it was difficult to understand the process if you had little community development background or were new to Canada. Planners need to not only be aware of these varying backgrounds needed for participation, but also need to design processes to help community members who do not have these backgrounds. It is also important to be aware of the skills and comfort levels required of participants and to design to accommodate other skill and comfort levels.

**Integrating a Process**

Integration of both the planning process and of discrete pieces of knowledge emerged as one of the most significant new points discovered through empirical research. As discussed below in the framework section on organisation, CityPlan has a strong, integrated structure that helps planners provide deeper amounts of information and allows planners to ask participants to learn more and provide deeper information. It does this by providing discrete moments for different educational processes, but also integrating those processes into one unfolding educational story. By integrating the separate pieces of the planning process into one larger narrative, the CityPlan process is able to unfold information and the learning process over the period of a year, as well as over smaller, more discrete time segments. By integrating parts of the planning and public involvement process, information and knowledge are integrated as well. Another example of integration was provided by an interviewee and concerned integrating elements of "species at risk" public consultation. In the interviewee's opinion, the currently
separate pieces of communications, recovery planning consultation, and education on species at risk should be integrated so that they occur simultaneously (this example is discussed on page 67). While such integration seems relatively simple and logical, it can have dramatic results for learning and education. Integration of the planning process helps participants see relationships, integrate knowledge, and produce better responses. Further, integration of pieces of information and process elements enhances continuity of process.

**Applying Knowledge**

Community members also bring information in from outside the planning process and take the information they learn with them when they leave the planning process. While community members do this intuitively, planners can, and should encourage this, as it improves the information available and facilitates learning and education. When people experience overlap between different parts of their lives it makes it easier to access knowledge or skills. Further, applying knowledge from the planning process to people’s lives outside the process extends the circle of influence – or learning – to a much wider group of people. When information is brought in from a wider circle, the information and experience available for use in the planning process becomes wider, as well.

During the Community Vision process, it frequently struck me how knowledgeable participants were about technical items such as traffic calming, architecture, and stormwater management. After observing this phenomenon for weeks, I realised that there were two main reasons for this extensive background knowledge that often rivalled my own. First, Vancouver is an excellent study area during everyday life because there are so many examples of these elements. In Vancouver one can find extensive traffic calming, architectural variety, examples of alternative stormwater management, and numerous development projects. Seeing these every day allows residents to accumulate knowledge, which can then be applied to planning processes. Second, it soon emerged that there were a number of professional planners, architects, or developers who attended the Community Vision as neighbourhood residents. When these professionals joined groups, they provided a “resident expert” to whom the group could turn for answers. At the same time, though, these resident experts were not seen as outsiders and were not seen to have agendas in the same way that CityPlan planners were. These two findings have led me to understand how information, experiences, and skills from outside the planning process can have enormous impacts inside the planning process. While it would be difficult to replicate
the second finding in planning processes, if planners can identify ways for participants to bring their outside planning, architectural, transportation, and development knowledge into the planning process, it would enhance learning and education enormously.

**Designing a Participation Process**

Planners have become experts at designing public processes (and debating about how to design them), but these processes do not make the most of opportunities for fostering learning and education. It is true that the primary goal of the vast majority of planning exercises is not learning or education, but most of the findings of this research can be easily integrated into almost any planning process with little effort. And this little effort can have large results for participant learning and education – both long- and short-term – and thus large impacts for the effectiveness, appropriateness, and power of the plan or policy. This thesis suggests that learning and education can be easily integrated into almost any public involvement process, given appropriate methods, for while planners seem to relate learning and education to deeper public involvement process (at least in the interviews conducted as part of this thesis), this does not have to be the case. Even in less intensive public involvement, planners can use principles for fostering learning and education in their methods and techniques. For example, in any process planners can make an effort to recognise community members’ technical and professional expertise; create opportunities for dialogue and participatory rituals; package information so that it can be used and understood; and/or provide policy and political background information.

This section suggests principles for selecting and designing public involvement methods and techniques that foster learning and education. These principles are based in interviewees’ suggestions and observations of planning processes mixed with recommendations from education and learning theory. Such information from education theory was what I found that planners lacked the most. While planners interviewed had a solid understanding of learning and education as it is discussed (in a limited fashion) in literature on collaborative planning, capacity building, and public involvement, few of these planners have much understanding of educational or cognitive psychological theory. Referring back to Chapter 2, then, the following principles incorporate elements such as multiple intelligences, flow of process and information, interactivity, principles for gaining and sustaining interest, principles for engaging and involving
participants, scale and size of groups, and clarity. Principles for selecting and designing public involvement methods and techniques that also foster learning and education include:

Create opportunities for personal discovery and reflection.
Create a welcoming atmosphere for diverse participants, their knowledge and contributions, sharing, and learning.
Design for multiple ways of knowing and learning, such as visual intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, naturalistic intelligence, good and bad inter-personal intelligence, experiential learning, transformative learning, conceptual learning and applied learning.

Design interactive processes where participants interact with information, the setting/environment, and each other. Examples are information exchanges/conversations between planners and community members, field trips, and community mapping.
Engage and involve participants, both in terms of interest and action.
Share locus of control between planners and community members.
Create alternative participation opportunities, particularly for other cultures, and other comfort levels. Cultural examples include working with participants who are loath to question authority figures, cultures where different sub-groups have different roles and/or levels of power, and other languages/different levels of fluency and understandings of words. Examples of working with comfort levels include people who cannot do public speaking or do not have group-work skills or abilities.

Give participants the freedom to be creative.
Use a mixture of methods to keep participants interested, draw out different information, share different types of information, and promote different types of learning.
Use small groups when appropriate and/or along with other methods.
Promote discussion, both formal and informal.

Ensure that process and information flow or unfold. The planning process can almost form a ‘story’ that unfolds over time and makes coherent sense in participants’ minds.

Ensure clarity of planning process structure, make the structure obvious, and make certain everyone knows how to navigate it.

Relate information and planning process results to participants’ lives by showing participants how this project impacts their lives and/or can promote their interests.
Allow time for processing and absorbing information, not just hearing it. Allow time for discussion – formal and informal – which aides information processing and absorption.
Integrate disparate pieces of information to make relationships and systems clear. Pay particular attention to the information presented at different point in the process.

Promote process learning, both skills and ideas/information.

Ensure clarity of information and presentation.

Use "hooks" to engage people's interest in the planning process.

Look for opportunities for learning everywhere.

The past several pages have drawn out, discussed, and synthesised lessons from the empirical research with information gained from observations and a review of relevant literature. This discussion included new points that emerged through the analysis found in Chapter 6, namely the importance of interest and engagement, integration, design of the consultation process, and setting the stage for learning. In addition, considerations related to information and the ways it is valued were discussed because they emerged as an important and much-disputed topic during analysis. Finally, two other points were discussed because during analysis it emerged that they were the sources of confusion and misinformation: applying knowledge to external environments and designing a participation process. In particular, while many important points and insights emerged during interviews, the topic of designing a participation process that fosters learning and education was confused during analysis by a lack of solid education theory. Thus, the list above was created. Together, these new points, qualifications, and clarifications have led to the creation of the following section, in which the theoretical framework is revisited in light of these considerations.

Revisiting the Framework

While none of the findings of the preceding portions of this thesis contradict the theoretical framework for learning and education in planning, they do necessitate revisiting it. As discussed above, several findings from the empirical research discussed in Chapter 6 led to the creation of new points that need to be included in the framework. In addition, these and other findings from the empirical research make it important to reflect on the literature covered in Chapters 2 and 3 in order to gain additional insight into processes at play or ways in which to capitalise upon interviewees’ observations and enhance learning opportunities further. Finally, several of these findings can be further enhanced by combining them with insights gained from my own observations and experiences. This revised, or revisited, framework leads directly into a set of implications for fostering learning and education in planning processes.
Create and Agree Upon Definitions and Values for Learning and Education in Planning.
Place Them in the Planning Context.

Interviews suggest that this is one point that planners or planning departments rarely follow. First, while planners valued learning and education, they largely did not appear to have or were not able to articulate deep personal philosophies of learning and education in the context of planning processes. Further, few planners and fewer planning departments had agreed upon their values or had concrete, pre-established definitions for learning and education in planning. The department that came the closest to having established consensus about learning and education and how to foster them within the context of their brand of planning was the CityPlan division. It is difficult to say how this semi-articulated consensus was reached, but several factors are clear: 1) the discussion was partially sponsored when City Council approved the original CityPlan Directions, which included goals relevant to learning and education; 2) leadership within the department places a strong value on learning and education; and 3) community planning departments such as CityPlan tend to attract planners with a certain philosophy of planning, which supports both the creation of personal philosophies of learning and the discussions necessary for achieving consensus on this point. This being said, it is not impossible for departments without these characteristics (a mandate/goals that promote a discussion or action, interested leadership, and supportive staff) to achieve some form of consensus, it simply requires more work. Further, it is certainly possible for all planners to create personal philosophies of and values for learning, education, reflection, and the sharing of knowledge. However difficult it may be to begin a discussion and come to some type of consensus about any of these points, once values, a definition, and ideas about how learning and education should occur in different planning contexts have been decided, the case of CityPlan shows that it is much easier to actually go about fostering learning and education in planning.

The empirical research on this issue also shows, quite forcefully, the importance of clarifying the meaning of words used. If one person speaks of “public involvement” while the other speaks of “learning and education” but they both mean the same thing, the conversation can be quite frustrating for both parties. In addition, if the meanings of words are not clarified, intricacies such as those found at the end of Chapter 3 in the discussion of the differences between “education and learning,” “public involvement,” and “capacity building” will be lost. In another important distinction of terms, the empirical research showed that it is critical to facilitate, not manage, the learning and education process. Participants can tell the difference and most do not appreciate having their learning “managed” for them. Finally, the empirical
research shows that more attention needs to be paid to the multi-directional nature of learning in planning. If planners do not think explicitly about how other players in the planning process learn from each other, and include such considerations in their definitions, values, and contextualisations, then they will not address or foster multi-directional learning as well as they could.

**Set Goals and Objectives for Fostering Learning and Education in Planning.**

The empirical research shows that while many planners have goals for learning and education in planning, these goals tend to be implicit, rather than explicit. The problem with such implicit goals is that they can lead to confusion of both thought processes and methodology or methods. This can become an even greater problem when implicit goals related to components of learning and education (such as awareness raising, communication, or collaboration) are thought of as goals for fostering learning and education. The explicit goals in CityPlan, particularly those very closely related to planning and education, seem to be a factor in the program’s successful promotion of learning and education. While there were few findings related to what factors lead to creating successful goals for learning and education, it seems reasonable to assume that factors traditionally considered in goal setting should be applied here. Such factors include setting goals with an appropriate scope and setting goals that are feasible within the constraints of a project. In addition, there were no empirical research findings related to matching goals to the intent of the planning program, so it is unclear whether this is a meaningful distinction. However, it seems logical to maintain this distinction, since methods/techniques and content follow from goals. In fact, this type of coherence was an important need revealed by the empirical research: to facilitate learning and education, each stage of this framework should follow from the others such that the planning process can be thought of as an unfolding story that takes participants (both planners and community members) through a learning process (see immediately below for further discussion).

**Organise and Administer the Planning Process to Foster Learning and Education.**

To facilitate learning and education, planning processes should have strong, clear, integrated structure and organisation. The CityPlan case study and interviewees’ comments show that this structure should integrate the different parts of the process to create a coherent process where opportunities for learning and education are more visible. In Community Visions, background work by planners working in city hall and with certain neighbourhood groups sets
the stage for a large “Visions Fair,” or open house, where a considerable amount of information is presented to community members and initial information is gathered. Then a series of workshops with smaller groups of community members allows deeper learning and education to take place as more and deeper information is provided and processed by all parties. This information is then further processed and turned into a survey that connects choices that community members can make with the consequences of those choices. The survey is then passed out to the community. Looked at in its entirety, the Community Vision process is a learning process that provides discrete moments for different educational processes, but also integrates these processes into one unfolding educational story. Thus, in CityPlan a strong, integrated structure helps planners provide deeper amounts of information and allows planners to ask participants to learn more and provide deeper information. Integration of the planning process helps participants see relationships, integrate knowledge, and produce better responses. Integration should be done during the creation of a planning process, not as an afterthought.

The empirical research yielded further insights into how to structure a planning process to foster learning and education. Such structure elements included: design the process such that information from that and other communities and from planners or politicians processing of that information is given back to the community; create a tight structure with few time gaps – or create opportunities for continued participant involvement or find ways to keep information fresh if breaks of longer than a few weeks occur in the process; maintain clarity of process for all involved; have disparate groups work together in a manner similar to interdisciplinary teams; and adapt the organisation of a process for the type of learning and education needed depending on the type of plan or policy being created, the point in the process, and the participants. Finally, planners need to allow time for dialogue, information processing, and reflection. While most planners mentioned that learning takes time, they still did not seem to provide enough time at the right points in time for optimal learning. In particular, time needs to be allotted for processing information and needs to be provided relative to types of content.

The Content of Learning and Education in Planning Includes Process Learning, Dialogue, Participant Knowledge, and Substantive Information.

As discussed above, planners need to recognise that participants bring what I call “participant knowledge” to planning processes, not merely “local knowledge.” In other words, participants bring a combination of experiential, technical, and professional knowledge with them. Content also needs to be seen as including dialogue and process, which was done well in
the CityPlan case study. In CityPlan, there are opportunities for participants to learn about matters (such as governance or their community) other than the direct subject matter of the plan and to expand their skill sets. Dialogue is extremely important for learning as it allows time for processing information, relating information to that already possessed, and it allows participants to make knowledge their own. Further, dialogue allows time for knowledge exchange. In addition, attention needs to be paid to multi-directional learning and education. Community members in CityPlan found learning from other community members to be some of the most powerful and deep learning experiences of the process. To promote other types of content learning, planners could try to replicate elements of these learning experiences, such as deep discussions, mutual sharing, and personal relationships.

Finally, information provided to participants needs to be concerned with policy, with background information on the political context of the planning process, and with substantive information about the changes planned and background on those changes. This information needs to be provided in a well-thought-out manner. Information provision must be carefully designed so that participants are not overwhelmed with information but know how the information they receive can and should be used. Participants should also receive information about how to obtain more information. Special attention must be paid to the clarity of information, and it should be averaged for literacy level, interest, and background/technical knowledge of participants. More than enough time should be allowed for participants to read and synthesise any information that is provided. Finally, any process information provided must be even clearer than other information and must be repeated.

Select Methods and Techniques to Foster Learning and Education and Support Goals.

It was clear from interviews and observations that goals for learning and education differ with the nature and aims of the different planning projects. In order to foster learning and education, methods and techniques should be selected with an eye to what is appropriate for the planning project and planning environment, as well as what promotes deeper learning. Several factors to consider include choosing methods that: are appropriate to the setting; are appropriate for the participants; planners can use and know how to use; are feasible within the constraints of the project/process (such as time and money available); are appropriate for the short- and long-term goals of the project. In addition, while some or most methods are chosen before a planning process starts, planners need to be willing to re-think the process, techniques, and methods if necessary. Most techniques and methods that facilitate learning and education are part of public

Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes
involvement, but others set the stage for learning and education to occur. Methods and techniques for setting the stage include building relationships with participants (in the widest sense of the word this can include community members, other professionals, politicians, etc); raising awareness of the project, what it entails, the end results, and how those results will be used; conducting outreach to marginalised groups; promoting interest and engagement in the project (here it helps to employ a communications strategy); and creating space for participatory rituals, particularly once the planning process has begun (see also p. 75).

During public involvement, planners should think about the general positives and negatives of different methods, but should also try to be creative and have multiple techniques available for use. To foster learning and education the following methods, which are based on the principles discussed above on pages 102-3, are useful. This list is not exhaustive, but is provided to help planners begin thinking about how these principles can be applied.

- Engage different types of learning by using different techniques such as taking field trips, engaging in mapping exercises, using interactive displays such as dot boards or post-it-notes, using visuals, having opportunities for participants to draw information, and having discussion/focus groups; all of these methods can be used at a single open house or a single workshop, etc.

- Use the element of surprise to keep participants engaged and guessing about what will come next. As Forester wrote, “Participants learn from the surprises that their participatory rituals make possible” (Forester 1999: 131). These surprises can be as simple as meeting someone different or learning some intriguing new bit of information.

- Give participants the opportunity to “see” information in action and/or relate the information they hear about through the process to their lives. This could be done by taking a walking tour or by taking pictures of the participants’ neighbourhood, city, or region and using those on boards or in Power Points to illustrate points or ideas.

- Use mapping projects, either in workshops/open houses or by having community members do mapping as “homework.” Participants can use maps to locate problem areas and/or assets, and maps can be used to show social phenomena or physical phenomena. Maps can also be drawn to show visions or possibilities, to show the past, or to show the present. It helps to have maps started or to have some marks made on the paper already, since often participants feel intimidated to “be the first one.”
Get schools or community groups involved and find ways for them to use the information or solutions that are generated through the planning project. These groups can also help generate this information. For example, a group could create a community map or could gather information on broken streetlights or drainage problems. Groups can also present this information to larger participant groups.

Use visual methods of communication and information provision. These can include maps, pictures, and graphs, as well as other means.

Have facilitators for groups. These facilitators can be outside facilitators, can be people that the groups select, or can be community leaders.

Create opportunities for discussion, both formally in large groups, formally in small groups, and informally. Create opportunities for participatory rituals, where possible. This can be as simple as having a snack table and free chairs scattered around a larger meeting or open house or having break times during workshops.

For more examples readers can refer to the data analysis on pages 75-9. It is important to recognise that different methods and techniques have their own place. Fostering learning and education successfully does not necessitate “deep” or extensive public involvement. Learning and education can occur as successfully at a short series of well-designed open houses and public meetings as they can at extensive workshops and intensive public exercises that are poorly designed for learning and education. However, it is important to note that community members prefer methods that are designed and delivered so that they can engage with the information provided and share their own knowledge.

Conduct Delivery and Outreach to Foster Learning and Education.

While selecting techniques and methods is concerned with designing a process by determining which techniques and methods to use, conducting delivery and outreach is concerned with how these techniques and methods are implemented during planning. Improper delivery can almost lead to a negation of good methodology. (A teaching example would be a teacher who has good knowledge of her subject and has designed good lesson plans but has no classroom discipline, an insulting tone with her students, and gradually begins conducting classes in name only. Eventually, almost nothing is learned.) Poor outreach, particularly to marginalised groups, further hinders learning. This research has yielded several suggestions for conducting delivery and outreach that supports and fosters learning and education.
First, at a basic level, planners need to adapt their delivery of programs to the social and physical environment in which they work. An example of this was related by one planner when he told of using a Power Point presentation in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside and then followed it with a question and answer period where he simply began by saying, “So what do you think?” During questions, the audiences took the planners to task for the many grievances of the community and paid no attention to the subject matter of the current planning. The planner suspected that if he had designed and delivered the elements differently, the entire episode would have gone more smoothly. While this is also an example of a poorly selected method, the method may have been necessary and I suspect that this planner was correct about the error of his delivery – particularly about the use of an unstructured question and answer period. Second, planners need to be careful about maintaining an attitude that supports learning and education and being seen to have this attitude. Such an attitude includes openness to new ideas, respect for participant’s opinions, support for learning and education, and an attitude that in every experience they will hear something new and learn something. In the example from the Downtown Eastside, it would have been very easy to take the attitude that there was nothing to hear that the planner didn’t already know, which would have hindered the planner’s own learning about the community and how to work with it, as well as had other negative repercussions. Third, planners need to connect disparate pieces of information, points in a planning process, and consequences with choices. By creating an environment in which nothing is abstract, everything is connected, and ideas are made concrete, better learning occurs.

In addition, through delivery planners need to create space for participants to discuss and reflect. Delivery approaches here include: encourage listening; facilitate discussions (or have other facilitators); discuss interests, not positions; discuss participants’ perspectives; create opportunities for and encourage informal discussion; encourage participation by marginalised groups and people who are uncomfortable with standard methods of participation. Through delivery, planners also need to create opportunities for better substantive learning and education. Delivery approaches here include: use community resources; ensure all voices/perspectives are heard; have flexible formatting and adapt to participants’ needs; allow for passive contributions of information; be clear about purpose of the exercise and how information will be used; promote more interactivity; average content for technical background and literacy level; use visuals; keep the interest and engagement of participants. Finally, through delivery planners also need to create opportunities for better process learning and education. Delivery approaches here include: have participant groups manage themselves; let participants be creative; create and
promote opportunities for formal and informal discussion; be clear about the purpose of the exercise and opportunities for participation. Above all, delivery is about creating space for participants to feel comfortable learning, creating space for participation and for all voices to be heard, and adapting to the planning environment.

**Continue Fostering Learning and Education During Implementation.**

While planners often have limited opportunities to engage in the implementation of a plan, even if no staff resources are involved in implementation planners can still foster learning and education during implementation by discussing this with participants and helping them generate ideas for how to continue learning and receive the support they need. This might include identifying ways for those involved in implementation to gain the substantive information they need; to do this planners can give participants resources, connect them with networks, and make them aware of opportunities. This may also include creating follow-up with the community and finding ways to bring information from other groups, from other players such as the government or developers, or from analysis back to the community. It is also important to identify how planners and community members will be involved in implementation and creating opportunities for collaboration and community involvement. Support mechanisms for community members and others involved in implementation also need to be identified, as do opportunities for feedback from community members to governmental or developmental bodies that are in charge of implementation.

**Identify Barriers to Learning and Education and Ways to Overcome Those Barriers.**

Through this research, numerous barriers and ways to overcome these barriers were identified. In most cases, solutions are obvious: if there is a lack of commitment to something, it needs to be discussed, why it is important, and how it will be dealt with. As such, solutions are not always explicitly discussed. Barriers to learning and education include:

- Lack of commitment and dedication to an informed public, dialogue, learning and education, and dealing with difficult issues. While this can be difficult to deal with, discussion of these matters and why they are important can be helpful, as can support from senior staff or politicians.
- Lack of openness to new ideas. This can be difficult to deal with, but discussions about this may be helpful.
Limited or shallow public involvement and poor use of limited learning and education during limited public involvement. While interviewees frequently mentioned these, as discussed throughout this chapter, it is the latter that is really the problem: limited public involvement does not need to be a barrier to learning and education. If there is limited public involvement, learning and education opportunities simply need to be better designed.

Inaccessibility of a planning process to participants, usually due to language, disability, or background. To address this, planners need to be familiar with participants and possible barriers and make every effort to include marginalised groups.

Inaccessibility of information. To address this, planners need to be aware of the audience for information and make every effort to tailor information for the audience. Issues such as translation also need to be addressed.

Lack of community engagement and interest. To address this, when planners suspect that this will be a problem they need to pay particular attention at the beginning of a project to outreach to community groups and leaders. Planners can also create communication strategies to design plans for dealing with this.

Lack of staff learning and education know-how and expertise. To address this, staff with appropriate backgrounds should be identified. A short summary of this thesis, with implications checklist, can also be found in Appendix A.

Limited resources, particularly time and money. If more resources are not available, this is not necessarily bad since prioritisation, particularly when done with other planning participants, can be a learning experience. Planners can also identify in-kind resources and make use of community resources – of course, establishing relationships helps with this.

Lack of inter-departmental discussion and knowledge-sharing. To address this, efforts should be made to share information and build relationships between departments. It can help to start with small things.

Inappropriate staff temperament and personality. While this can be a major barrier, efforts should be made to ensure that staff who do community development planning and public involvement have an interest in these subjects. In other cases, senior staff or political commitment, staff training, and discussions may help.
o Negative staff attitude. This can be a major barrier, but senior staff and/or political commitment, staff training, and discussions may help.

o Negative participant attitude. Efforts should be made to build relationships and draw participants out. Even small things can be very important.

o Lack of support from senior planners and politicians. This can be a major barrier, when it exists. Planners can attempt to facilitate opinion change by discussing how learning and education further long-term, as well as short-term goals (see Chapter 8).

o Lack of political mandate. If politicians or employers have not put a topic on the table for discussion, it can be difficult to address with the community. Transparency about what can and cannot be discussed as part of the process is important here (see also discussion of power and politics below).

Particular attention was paid to two other possible barriers to learning and education in community-based planning: conflict and power and politics. Through empirical research, it emerged that conflict is not always negative for learning and education. An example of conflict that is positive for learning and education is a well-executed debate, in which there is definitely conflict but that conflict allows many opinions and ideas to be discussed. In a planning context, one interviewee gave the example that sometimes more learning occurs when two community members discuss an issue than when a community member discusses it with a planner because community members are willing to tell each other that they are wrong and talk about other ideas, whereas planners are frequently loathe to imply that a community member is incorrect. Thus, conflict can be beneficial to learning and education as long as it does not get out-of-control and people do not stop listening to each other. In terms of power and politics and how they affect learning and education, it emerged that they can powerfully shape discussions, and thus opportunities for learning and education. Planners must be aware of how power and politics are shaping any particular discussion, minimise their impact on the discussion, and finally be transparent about the impact that power and politics have had on the discussion. Planners should make other participants aware of what is and is not on the table for discussion, why this is so, and how they can discuss those issues that are not on the table for discussion.

Through this discussion of the literature, interviews, observations, and other insights, an understanding of how learning and education can and do occur in planning has emerged. In addition, ideas about how to better foster learning and education during planning processes have begun to solidify. In the following chapter, these ideas have been shaped into a set of
implications for the successful promotion of learning and education during planning processes. The following chapter also addresses such important issues as why planners would want to promote learning and education.
Chapter 8: Fostering Learning and Education in Planning:
Implications and Reflections

It is interesting that the vast majority of discussions of learning and education that are situated within the discipline of planning are implicit discussions. As a result, there seems to be confusion about what learning and education mean and what fostering them entails. Some of this confusion rests in what I would call a larger societal confusion about what learning entails, what constitutes knowledge and intelligence, what being an “educated person” means, and what education is. Further, some of this confusion rests in the implicit and partially-articulated nature of a discussion that has only looked at a few aspects of learning that captured some planning scholars’ interest, but ignored the rest of the field. While it has not provided an exhaustive review of education theory, this thesis has looked at the wider body of learning and education theory, situated them within societal discussions of their meaning, and has extracted information about how to foster deeper learning. Further, it has pulled this information into a larger discussion of planning in order to make the implicit explicit.

This thesis has combined these two bodies of theory to create a framework for fostering learning and education in planning. After using this framework to assess how planners incorporate and promote learning and education and thus testing the framework, it emerged that several additions needed to be made. Adding these points yielded a revised framework that can be used in a normative fashion by planners who wish to foster learning and education in their planning practice. Chapter 7 provides a discussion of these new points and the new framework. The implications of this research, as discussed in Chapter 7, relate to reflection and discussion, prerequisites to learning, the valuation of different knowledges, strategies for designing participation processes, and other framework points. To make the process of fostering learning and education easier, the results from that discussion of fostering learning and education during community-based planning have been summarised into a list of implications for planning practice. These implications have been shaped into a set of principles for the successful incorporation of learning and education into planning processes (see below). In addition to presenting this checklist, this chapter discusses the importance of explicitly discussing learning and education in planning, the limitations of this research, and my reflections on this research.
Implications for Planning Practice

While learning and education are not the focuses of most planning processes, promoting them can help planners better achieve their long- and short-term planning goals and can result in a better product and a more informed public. Learning and education can also complement other public involvement, outreach, and information provision strategies. The implications of this research for planning practice are written so that they can easily be translated into recommendations and incorporated into these pre-existing planning processes. They can also easily be incorporated into new processes where education and learning are more explicit elements or goals. The implications, or principles for fostering learning and education in planning, are presented as a checklist, which can be found on the following two pages. The checklist may be easily removed and made into a double-sided handout. The creation of this checklist was recommended by an interviewee who felt that providing an easily-used tool would help planners foster learning and education in planning.

The implications are grouped by type and range from philosophical considerations to design considerations to delivery methods. When beginning to intentionally promote learning and education as part of a planning process, planners do not need to feel that they must utilise every one of these principles. Rather, these should be viewed as a general guide. In addition, learning and education are inherently dynamic processes that must be adapted to the particular setting in which they occur. Thus, any of these principles must be implemented with professional judgement and adapted to the situation. Finally, because these principles are presented in abbreviated form, if the reader would like more information about any of these items, Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7 of this thesis may be of assistance, depending on the question.
Implications for Learning and Education in Planning Practice

Values and Context:

☐ As an individual, consider what learning and education mean to you, both personally and professionally. Consider how you feel they should be fostered and the role they can and should play in planning processes.

☐ As a group of planners, agree upon how you define and value learning and education. Agree upon how these values can and will be implemented in various planning contexts.

☐ Discuss who participates in learning and education in planning (planners, community members, etc) and how that affects the process.

☐ Together with community members and other participants, discuss how learning, education, reflection, and/or discussion will play a role in a specific planning process.

☐ Adapt learning and education goals, methods and techniques, and delivery to the type of plan, the timeline, the resources available, and the groups and culture(s) involved.

Goals and Objectives:

☐ Think about how learning and education can help achieve the larger objectives of a planning project. Set explicit goals and objectives for learning and education during processes.

Organisation:

☐ Think of learning and education as processes that unfold and occur over time. Figure out which moments in the planning process are most appropriate for which types of learning or information. Integrate and organise the planning process so that these learning points unfold over time to create a larger learning process.

☐ Ensure coherence of structure: delivery should reflect methods and techniques, which should reflect goals and objectives.

☐ Make certain that the planning process structure is clear, easily understandable, and has few time gaps of more than a few weeks.

☐ Create and allot time for dialogue, information processing, and reflection.

Staff:

☐ Staff planning process with planners who value learning and are familiar with principles and methods of learning, education, communication, and public involvement.

☐ Give planners access to other staff with expertise in learning, education, communication, and public involvement. Provide opportunities for training and professional development.

☐ Provide staff with information about how to promote learning and education in planning.

☐ Gain senior staff and political support for fostering learning and education in planning.

Content

☐ Recognise participants' technical and professional knowledge as well as participants' local knowledge of their community/environment.

☐ Include process learning and opportunities for learning skills.

☐ Provide background information on policy and political/planning department structure.

☐ Ensure that information is clear, particularly process information.

☐ Ensure that participants know how to use the information provided, what information is useful for the process, what is reference material, and how to access more information.
Method and Techniques:
- Design the process to promote reflection and creation of personal understanding.
- Share locus of control between planners and community members.
- Engage multiple types of learning and knowing by using a variety of techniques.
- Create formal and informal opportunities for discussion in groups of different sizes.
- Create opportunities for participatory rituals.
- Design interactive processes.
- Engage and involve participants. Use "hooks" to engage interest in the planning process.
- Give participants the opportunity to "see" information in action. Relate the information and planning process results to participants' lives and interests.
- Promote process learning of both skills and ideas/information.
- Use visual methods of communication and information provision.
- Use small groups when appropriate, along with other methods.
- Have facilitators for groups.

Delivery:
- Adapt delivery to the social and physical environment and to participants.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere for learning. Maintain an attitude of openness to new of different ideas and opinions.
- Acknowledge that in every exchange there is something new to be learned.
- Connect and integrate disparate pieces of information and points in the process.
- Connect choices made during the planning process with their consequences.
- Create formal and informal space for discussion and reflection.
- Ensure that all voices are heard (through facilitation, outreach to groups, etc).
- Create non-traditional opportunities for participation and contributions of information.
- Be flexible. Allow for complexity.

Implementation:
- Design opportunities to continue learning and education through implementation
- Create opportunities for following-up with the community and returning information
- Discuss with community members how they can be involved in implementation; create opportunities for collaboration between community members and implementation actors
- Create support mechanisms for participant involved in implementation, such as connecting them with networks, identifying resources, and helping find ways to access information

Barriers:
- Develop an understanding of barriers to learning and education in planning, particularly related to a particular planning context.
- Develop ways to overcome these barriers.
- Use conflict in a positive manner. Use conflict resolution techniques to help avoid out-of-control conflict. Help participants keep listening to each other and thinking about interests.
- Determine how to deal with the influence of power and politics over the process and topics that are open to discussion. Maintain transparency and accessibility.
The Importance of Studying Learning and Education in Planning

While the preceding implications and principles will help planners foster learning and education, it is true that learning will happen during planning processes, no matter what planners do. After all, as one interviewee said, “Public process is about learning, no matter what – unless you get into a room and don’t say anything. People are sharing points of view, so it’s never anything less than that” (P04). Why, then, should planners pay attention to this research? Why should they follow these recommendations? Why should they worry about promoting learning and education during planning processes?

There are many answers, but they begin with the idea that learning and education can be fostered for short-term and long-term goals. In the short-term, planning process participants learn information that helps them participate in the planning process and even provide better information. Participants may extend this information, even in the short term, into other portions of their lives, but then it begins to become a different type of learning that planners may or may not have considered. When people take information out of a planning process and bring it into their own lives, they are engaging in longer-term learning. Planners can make use of this propensity of people to grasp and use new information and to learn throughout their lives by passing on information or skills that fulfil long-term planning goals (such as a having a populace that is more knowledgeable about government). In turn, for planners short-term learning (e.g., learning about a community or environment, about specific problems, or about solutions to these problems) is also necessary for their professional participation in and facilitation of the planning process. When this short-term learning becomes longer term, it can help planners develop professionally by building better process skill or increasing their inventory of possible solutions to problems. It can also further their own personal growth.

In either short- or long-term planning, if planners wish to make certain that they are doing a good job and maximising the potential of the planning process, they must consciously attend to the learning and education that occurs as part of the process. Otherwise planners can end up with participants saying, “I know they said it, but I really don’t know what it was,” as interviewee C4 said, about such critical information as principles underlying the plan or how the planning process works. While learning and education are important for these types of short-term processes, consciously attending to learning and education is critical for long-term planning and creating change. It is in long-term planning and attempts to create alternative or
desired futures that the importance of learning and education are most apparent. If planners wish to create long-term change, such as a more sustainable future, then they must make certain that people have the information that is necessary to influence beliefs and actions. Further, they must make certain that people take that information in in deep ways that promote behaviour changes and even paradigm shifts. They can also try to help people obtain the skills and networks necessary to create these alternative futures. As has been shown, promoting learning and education in planning processes can facilitate all of this.

In addition, learning and education can occur more or less effectively, more or less deeply, and can have more or less impact on people’s lives outside of the planning process. If learning and education are pursued actively and planners use strategies to promote learning and education, then they can occur to a greater extent. Focusing more consciously on promoting learning and education can also help with democratizing planning because it gives more people more knowledge and, if done well, gives more people more of a voice. A focus on learning and education can broaden discussions, as well as make them deeper. Promoting these ideas helps fight bias in planning. For these reasons, one of the prerequisites to true learning and education in planning is a dedication to an informed public and open dialogue.20

Further, focusing on learning and education gives planners access to better information in several ways. First, it can help ensure that planners hear from more people about issues that are important to them, and it can help ensure that these positions or interests are well thought out. Planners and decision-makers also frequently complain that they always hear the same things again and again through public involvement. While this is partially a result of a self-fulfilling prophecy, focusing more attention on learning and education can help create a more informed public. If the public is more informed generally, as well as specifically about the question at hand, then they can tailor their comments more to the current issue or they can help planners and decision makers understand the reasoning behind their positions. However, just

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20 A related question, which a community member brought up in an interview, is: What is the difference between manipulation, propaganda, and education? If there is to be a true dedication to learning and education, it is important for planners to at least consider this question. In many ways, the answer lies in the ideas behind Sherry Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation: where there is a dedication to truth, dialogue, and really involving the public as collaborators in a process, there are education and learning; where this is not true, there may be propaganda and manipulation – although not always. Propaganda is defined as “information or publicity put out by an organisation or government to spread and promote a policy, idea, doctrine, or cause.” If learning and education are conducted in such a manner that multiple perspectives are made available and community knowledge is incorporated, then the propaganda problem can likely be avoided. Finally, education and learning should be, at the very least, mutual, such that planners learn from community members, as well.
putting up a poster containing the necessary information is not enough to achieve this kind of understanding, on all sides – there must be a more explicit focus on learning and education and a deeper process. This reasoning also helps us begin to see how focusing more attention on learning and education can lead to a better plan. If the people involved in plan-making have a better understanding of the pertinent information, then they can provide better information and feedback in turn and can help bring information into the process that was previously overlooked. Further, if people truly understand each others’ interests, not merely their positions, then there is a better chance of reaching consensus over the final plan – which yields a more socially and institutionally sustainable plan. Finally, if planners choose to consider learning and education important components of the planning process, consciously focusing their attention on this topic allows planners to draw from a large and incredibly rich body of literature and knowledge: education and learning.

Limitations Of This Research

Conducting this research proved to be an interesting process, for while I received much encouragement, I also had to deal with some fairly serious limitations to what I was able to research. First, learning and education are not the focus of planning initiatives and are usually not even secondary or tertiary goals. I became engaged in CityPlan as a case study because it contains more extensive community-based planning than much of the planning done in the lower mainland of British Columbia. In addition, as discussed in this thesis, CityPlan has a number of goals that are closely related to learning and education. Nevertheless, during my research I had to make a careful study of processes and look for what was going on under the surface. During interviews I also had to probe planners and community member’s thoughts extensively. As such, this research is very much a result of my intellectual and social interaction with people. Nevertheless, I believe that the findings of this research are accurate and replicable because I was careful to speak to interviewees and participants about the connections I made. However, because I elected to study a very specific planning process that would yield numerous insights, it may not be as easy to study learning and education in other types of planning processes. In fact, many planners indirectly referred to this when they spoke of barriers to learning and education in planning. In addition, while I initially intended to interview a variety of planners with different working styles and philosophies, I also needed to interview reflective practitioners. During interviews, it emerged that all of the planners interviewed has similar
philosophies of planning and public involvement. This means that this research is not truly representative, although interviewing a variety of planners who work in different fields did yield more insight than merely interviewing urban-oriented community development planners.

While it is obvious that this research occurred in a North American planning context, during my research I found that this had enormous implications for my topic. Not only is the North American planning context particular, it is supportive of community involvement in planning. In addition, in a North American context the public wants to be involved in and aware of planning and governmental processes and there is a culture that supports lifelong learning. As I conducted the research upon which this thesis is based, I came to realise just how powerfully culture – including the characteristics mentioned above as well as others – affects how learning and education are incorporated into, fostered, and conducted during planning processes.

Two examples make this relationship clear. First, I have found through conversations and interviews that planners working with other cultural groups form subsets of thought around learning and education in planning. In particular, I found that planners who work extensively with First Nations generally have deeper philosophies of learning and education in planning and are more experienced with promoting it in everyday practice. They, and I, attribute it to the philosophies and values of the bands they work with and the bands’ desires to learn in and through everything and build capacity. In a counter-example, I have had conversations with participants in Mandarin-speaking Community Vision groups, including extensive conversations with a Chinese colleague who is fluent in both Mandarin and English and participated in Mandarin-speaking Community Vision groups as a community member. This colleague, in particular, has found that learning and education are not as pervasive in the Mandarin-speaking sessions for several reasons including translation, the approach taken to presenting information and the manner in which several topics are grouped together (my colleague stated that is seemed to be an opinion-seeking exercise, rather than a learning experience), and a culturally-based unwillingness to question authority and/or engage in dialogue about what authorities seem to state as facts. The planners in these Mandarin-speaking groups are primarily the same as those in the English-speaking Community Vision sessions I attended, and yet the experience is very different. These two examples illustrate the diverse ways that the culture of planning participants, both community members and planners, affect the process of fostering learning and education in planning. Cultural factors also influence the larger possibilities for the kinds of learning and education that participants accept and how learning and education can occur.
other words, not only is this research culturally-based, but planners must be aware of the culture they are working in and must adapt to it.

In another vein, interviews and observations were concerned with planner-community member interactions, not planner-planner, planner-professional, or planner-politician interactions. As such, this research is written primarily about planner-community member interactions and secondarily about community member-community member interactions. It would be interesting to extend this research to other relationships. Similarly, most examples and interviews found in this thesis are from a municipal or neighbourhood planning perspective, which further limits this research. However, the interviews that were conducted with non-municipal and non-neighbourhood planners yielded almost identical results as the other interviews. Thus, I believe that this research can be extended to the larger field of planning.

Finally, this thesis presents general recommendations for fostering learning and education based on a limited set of research. All of this points to the fact that this research is preliminary and exploratory. There was little pre-generated theory concerning learning and education in planning upon which this thesis could be based. This thesis was written as an exploration of a field that deserves more research.

The exploration undertaken in this thesis is broad. There were many fascinating directions in which I could have taken this research, particularly in the areas of sustainability planning and environmental planning. However, as I explored the issue, I found that the larger context for such a study was missing and that one of the underlying bases for learning and education in planning was a commitment to planning with community members. Through this research, I found that planning is a fertile field for developing learning and education because the philosophies of many planners closely mirror the philosophies behind learning and education. Through this research I also came to realise that while some types of planning, such as CityPlan Community Visioning may be easier processes within which to foster learning and education, they are not the only or even the best places for it. As one planner said, learning and education should be fostered in all kinds of planning, particularly in those that grab people’s attention and deal with the here and now. In addition, learning and education do not only have a place in intensive public processes – they can occur quite effectively in well-designed less intensive processes such as open houses or public meetings. What matters is a commitment to learning and education and having the tools necessary to implement a process that promotes learning and education. (To provide planners with such tools, a précis of this thesis can be found in ...
in Appendix A; it contains major points from this thesis as well as the recommendations checklist.) By reviewing relevant literature and extracting lessons from both planning and education theory and practice, creating a framework for learning and education in planning, and using that framework to analyse learning and education that occurs during planning processes, this thesis has been able to formulate a set of tools for fostering learning and education in planning.
Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Catherine Buckham, Planner II, City Plans Division, City of Vancouver
Mary Ann Code, resident
John Foster, Senior Social Planner, City of Burnaby
Doug Friesen, resident and Senior Consultant, Context Research
Julia Gardner, Principal, Dovetail Consulting, Inc.
Varouj Gumuchian, resident
Mark Holland, Principal, Holland Barrs Planning Group
Ned Jacobs, resident
Ben Johnson, Housing Planner II, City of Vancouver
Nancy Largent, Public Involvement Coordinator, City of Vancouver
Ann McAfee, Co-Director of Planning/Director of City Plans Division, City of Vancouver
Randy Pecarski, Planner, City Plans Division, City of Vancouver
Piet Rutgers, Director of Planning and Operations, Park Board, City of Vancouver
Lisa Schwabe, resident
Ingrid Steenhuisen, President, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
Anonymous
Anonymous
Appendix B: Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes: A Summary

As public involvement becomes an increasingly important part of planning and diverse stakeholders become involved in decision-making, planners are confronted with the necessity of fostering shared understandings, information exchange, intellectual and social growth, and learning experiences. However, planning literature is largely silent about how such learning and education occur during planning processes, how learning and education can be fostered to further the short- and long-term goals of planning, and how planners can help deepen and enrich learning experiences. In addition, it appears that during planning practice while planners frequently accomplish the community outreach and the information provision necessary to attain short-term planning goals, more holistic community education and learning frequently seem to fall by the wayside. This has implications for the short- and long-term effectiveness of planning and limits the potential that planning has to effect many types of change.

By examining education literature, planning literature, through interviews with planners, and through case study observation and interviews, elements necessary for successfully fostering learning and education in community-based planning are identified. Opportunities and barriers to fostering learning and education in planning processes are also identified. This document, which is a summary of the thesis *Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes*, by Diana Smith, presents key findings from this research. This summary is geared to planning practitioners and other parties interested in fostering learning and education. It begins with a description of key elements of learning and education based on education and planning literature. Key research findings are then summarised, followed by key implications of this research.

**Key Aspects of Learning and Education**

In this thesis, learning and education are defined as: *Learning and education are creative, interactive processes that involve actively experiencing, sharing, and developing knowledge. During learning, knowledge is discovered and reflected upon. Learning is both product and process: how learning occurs can be as important as the information transmitted. Education is the intentional creation and promotion of learning experiences.*

Based on a survey of education literature, key aspects of learning and education are:

1) *How we educate depends on our perception of the nature of knowledge* (where it originates, how it is developed, who participates in developing it, and how they participate).
2) *The locus of control in learning and education should be shared.*
3) *Learning is a process and a product.*
4) *Learning occurs along a spectrum* from: knowing a lot → memorising → gaining facts, skills, and methods → making sense or finding meaning → understanding the world in a different way.
5) *Learning is facilitated by engagement and experiential education.*
6) *Learning is facilitated by active learning experiences.*
7) *Learning can build on one or more types of intelligence.*
8) *Learning is influenced by the environment in which it occurs.*
9) *Learning has short-term and long-term effects.*
10) *Educational interventions need clear goals and objectives.*
11) *The attitudes and values of the educator affect the learning process.*
12) *Education and learning take time.*

Based on a survey of planning literature, several additional considerations are clear. First, neither “public involvement” nor “capacity building” is the same as “learning and education.”
Public involvement is closely related to learning and education, but learning (to some extent) can occur at any level of public involvement, from tokenism to citizen power. Public involvement is about finding ways to engage people in the planning process while learning and education are about constructing meaning and understanding inside and outside of that planning process. On a related note, capacity building can be seen as a reason for engaging in learning and education. As such, capacity building is concerned with some issues that learning and education is not necessarily concerned with, and learning and education is concerned with are concerned with some issues, such as the flow of learning back and forth between planners and community members, that capacity building is not necessarily concerned with.

As a further consideration, in planning learning and education are seen as mutual, multi-directional processes through which everyone present shares important information and experiences and engages in learning. Knowledge flows back and forth through every connection between planning participants (planner-community member, community member-planner, community member-community member, politician-planner, etc). It is also important to note that process learning, not merely product (or substantive) learning, is a particularly important part of learning during planning processes. In addition, in planning learning and education can consciously be fostered by anyone involved and may occur at different levels during different points in the planning process. This learning can have short-term goals, such as finishing a given planning project, or long-term goals, such as building shared understanding or creating the future contained in policy and long-range plans.

Research Findings

To gain a deeper understanding of how learning and education function as part of planning processes and the opportunities and barriers to fostering learning and education, empirical research was conducted for this thesis. Seven planners from the Greater Vancouver area were interviewed about learning and education in their planning practices. These planners worked in diverse areas of planning from social planning to parks planning to land use planning to sustainability planning. A case study of the City of Vancouver’s CityPlan was also carried out. I followed one Community Vision (CityPlan’s neighbourhood planning process) for a period of four months and attended workshops with community members. Following the completion of that phase of the Community Vision, six community members who had been involved in the Vision and four CityPlan planners were interviewed. The results from those interviews and my observation were analysed with the framework I created for assessing learning and education in planning processes. The results from this analysis are grouped into five categories: 1) the status of learning and education in planning; 2) prerequisites to learning; 3) how information and knowledge are valued; 4) designing a participation process; and 5) barriers.

Status of Learning and Education in Planning

All interviewees expressed a deep value for learning and education in planning. However, for many interviewees the interviews conducted for this thesis were the first time they had discussed the topic of learning and education in planning much or at all. In addition, during interviews, some interviewees used different terms, such as “participation,” “public involvement,” “public process,” and “dialogue” to refer to what is called “learning and education” in this thesis. Other interviewees readily used the terms I discussed, but a few interviewees had problems with the word “education.” This confusion of language and the differences in interpretation of terms was indicative of a larger confusion and lack of reflection concerning learning and education as part of planning processes. It also spoke of a lack of personal and/or shared understandings of values for and the place of learning and education in planning. A similar confusion arose with regards to “mutual learning.” Many planners independently spoke of mutual learning when asked about how they valued and viewed learning and education, but when probed spoke of mutual...
learning as a two-way exchange of information between planners and community members. In contrast, community members spoke of learning occurring between community members, as well as between planners and community members. Many community members felt that they learned the most from other community members. Finally, most planners and planning departments lacked explicit, clear goals for achieving learning and education in planning processes.

**Prerequisites to Learning**

Interviews and observation revealed several important points that must be addressed before a process that involves participants begins, if that process is to successfully foster learning and education. The first of these prerequisites to learning is establishing shared and personal understandings of principles such as values and definitions for learning and education, the players involved in learning processes, and how information flows between players. The second of these prerequisites is building relationships. In order for information to be exchanged and in order for that information to be trusted and used, a relationship – particularly a relationship of trust – is involved. The third major prerequisite is creating engagement and interest in the planning process, since no one can learn if their attention is not engaged. Finding “hooks” to draw participants into the planning process is an important part of engaging people. Finally, the fourth major prerequisite to learning is identifying political support or a political mandate. Planners need to have an awareness of their political context and how it supports or hinders learning, education, information, and topics available for discussion.

**Valuing Information**

How information and knowledge are valued and involved in learning and education emerged as another major finding. During my research, I found that it is important that planners acknowledge participants’ technical and professional knowledge, not only their experiential and place-based local knowledge. Planners made extensive use of participants’ technical and professional knowledge, as well as their place-based knowledge during processes observed during this research, but many planners only explicitly acknowledge and plan for making use of participants’ place-based knowledge. Through this research, promoting process learning, particularly learning through dialogue and learning skills, was shown to be another important component of the content of planning processes. In terms of substantive information, it emerged that while planners express a desire to provide participants with all or most of the information available, planning participants need to have that information load managed: participants need to know how to use information they are provided, what information is needed for the process, and they need to be given enough time to process information they are given. Finally, maintaining openness to new ideas and a willingness to be wrong about own beliefs and understandings was shown to be an important part of involving learning and education in planning.

**Designing a Participation Process**

In order to create a participation process that promotes learning and education, several points emerged as particularly significant. First, creating opportunities for reflection and personal discovery is critical because learning is the process of gaining new information, reflection on it or processing it, and making it one’s own. Second, creating opportunities for dialogue and participatory rituals allows participants to bring their knowledge to process and share it. Third, making use of multiple ways of knowing and learning allows participants to learn in many ways, including ones that are appropriate for them, and learn in a deeper manner. Finally, integrating the planning process and discrete pieces of information aids learning and information processing.

**Barriers**

Six major barriers to fostering learning and education in planning processes emerged from this research. First, poor attitude on the part of any planning participant can be a major barrier. This includes lack of commitment and dedication, and/or lack of openness to new ideas. Second lack of accessibility of the planning process and information to all participants, particularly
marginalized groups, can be a barrier. Third, lack of resources such as money and time can be a barrier. Fourth, lack of trained, knowledgeable, and appropriate staff who have an interest in and aptitude for fostering learning and education can be a barrier. Fifth, conflict can be seen as a barrier. Finally, power and politics can be a barrier to learning and education in planning due to the manner in which they can shape and constrain the process, information available, and topics available for discussion.

Implications

While learning and education are not the focus of most planning processes, promoting them can help planners better achieve their long- and short-term goals and can result in a better product and a more informed public. Numerous implications for fostering learning and education in planning processes have emerged from this research. The following section highlights the three most important implications: 1) creating and agreeing upon definitions and values and placing these in a planning context; 2) recognizing that content includes process learning, dialogue, participant knowledge, and substantive knowledge; and 3) selecting methods and techniques to foster learning and education and support the goals of planning. These implications and others are included in a checklist of the implications attached to this summary.

1) Values and Context:

Planners need to individually develop definitions, values, and an understanding of the roles of different planning participants for fostering learning and education during planning. Planners then need to discuss, together with other planners, values for learning and education and how they will play a role in various planning processes. Third, planners need to discuss, together with planning participants, how learning, education, reflection, and discussion will play a role in a specific process.

2) Content:

Planners need to recognise and incorporate participants’ technical, professional, and local knowledge. Planners also need to include process learning and opportunities for learning skills as part of the planning process. In terms of substantive information, planners need to ensure that information is clear, particularly process information. Planners also need to ensure that participants know how to use information provided and how to access more information.

3) Methods and Techniques:

Planners need to design process to promote reflection and creation of (deep) personal understandings. Planners also need to create formal and informal opportunities for discussion and dialogue as part of processes. Planners further should engage multiple types of learning and knowing by using a variety of techniques. Finally, planners should design interactive processes, since people learn best when they interact with people, environments, and information.

Learning and education can complement other public involvement, outreach, and information strategies. By understanding how learning and education function and how these can be part of planning processes, planners can easily incorporate elements that lead to deeper learning into even abbreviated public involvement processes. To achieve these tasks, though, planners need to have reflected, for themselves, on the concepts of learning and education and come to an understanding of how to foster them during planning processes they lead or design. Two items of interest to practitioners wishing to apply this research are attached: 1) a framework for assessing how planners incorporate and promote learning and education in processes they lead or design and 2) a checklist of implications for successfully fostering learning and education in planning processes. As planners read and reflect on this material, it is important for them to consider why they are undertaking fostering learning and education and what this can tell them about how to foster learning and what are the most appropriate ways to foster learning.
Checklist of Implications for Learning and Education in Planning

Values and Context:
☐ As an individual, consider what learning and education mean to you, both personally and professionally. Consider how you feel they should be fostered and the role they can and should play in planning processes.
☐ As a group of planners, agree upon how you define and value learning and education. Agree upon how these values can and will be implemented in various planning contexts.
☐ Discuss who participates in learning and education in planning (planners, community members, etc) and how that affects the process.
☐ Together with community members and other participants, discuss how learning, education, reflection, and/or discussion will play a role in a specific planning process.
☐ Adapt learning and education goals, methods and techniques, and delivery to the type of plan, the timeline, the resources available, and the groups and culture(s) involved.

Goals and Objectives:
☐ Think about how learning and education can help achieve the larger objectives of a planning project. Set explicit goals and objectives for learning and education during processes.

Organisation:
☐ Think of learning and education as processes that unfold and occur over time. Figure out which moments in the planning process are most appropriate for which types of learning or information. Integrate and organise the planning process so that these learning points unfold over time to create a larger learning process.
☐ Ensure coherence of structure: delivery should reflect methods and techniques, which should reflect goals and objectives.
☐ Make certain that the planning process structure is clear, easily understandable, and has few time gaps of more than a few weeks.
☐ Create and allot time for dialogue, information processing, and reflection.

Staff:
☐ Staff planning process with planners who value learning and are familiar with principles and methods of learning, education, communication, and public involvement.
☐ Give planners access to other staff with expertise in learning, education, communication, and public involvement. Provide opportunities for training and professional development.
☐ Provide staff with information about how to promote learning and education in planning.
☐ Gain senior staff and political support for fostering learning and education in planning.

Content
☐ Recognise participants’ technical and professional knowledge as well as participants’ local knowledge of their community/environment.
☐ Include process learning and opportunities for learning skills.
☐ Provide background information on policy and political/planning department structure.
☐ Ensure that information is clear, particularly process information.
☐ Ensure that participants know how to use the information provided, what information is useful for the process, what is reference material, and how to access more information.
Methods and Techniques:
- Design the process to promote reflection and creation of personal understanding.
- Share locus of control between planners and community members.
- Engage multiple types of learning and knowing by using a variety of techniques.
- Create formal and informal opportunities for discussion in groups of different sizes.
- Create opportunities for participatory rituals.
- Design interactive processes.
- Engage and involve participants. Use "hooks" to engage interest in the planning process.
- Give participants the opportunity to "see" information in action. Relate the information and planning process results to participants' lives and interests.
- Promote process learning of both skills and ideas/information.
- Use visual methods of communication and information provision.
- Use small groups when appropriate, along with other methods.
- Have facilitators for groups.

Delivery:
- Adapt delivery to the social and physical environment and to participants.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere for learning. Maintain an attitude of openness to new of different ideas and opinions.
- Acknowledge that in every exchange there is something new to be learned.
- Connect and integrate disparate pieces of information and points in the process.
- Connect choices made during the planning process with their consequences.
- Create formal and informal space for discussion and reflection.
- Ensure that all voices are heard (through facilitation, outreach to groups, etc).
- Create non-traditional opportunities for participation and contributions of information.
- Be flexible. Allow for complexity.

Implementation:
- Design opportunities to continue learning and education through implementation.
- Create opportunities for following-up with the community and returning information.
- Discuss with community members how they can be involved in implementation; create opportunities for collaboration between community members and implementation actors.
- Create support mechanisms for participant involved in implementation, such as connecting them with networks, identifying resources, and helping find ways to access information.

Barriers:
- Develop an understanding of barriers to learning and education in planning, particularly related to a particular planning context.
- Develop ways to overcome these barriers.
- Use conflict in a positive manner. Use conflict resolution techniques to help avoid out-of-control conflict. Help participants keep listening to each other and thinking about interests.
- Determine how to deal with the influence of power and politics over the process and topics that are open to discussion. Maintain transparency and accessibility.
A Framework for Fostering Learning and Education in Planning Processes

This framework integrates education theory with planning theory to create a framework for assessing how planners incorporate and promote learning and education in processes they lead or design. It is framed as a set of eight questions, with related sub-questions, that planners or planning departments can ask of planners or about planning processes. It is important to note that the eight main questions are ordered, so that later questions tend to rely on how earlier questions were addressed.

1) Formulating Overall Values and Context

How does the planning department or individual define and value education and learning, community inclusion, and community knowledge in planning? How do they place these values in the context in which planning will occur?

To lay a foundation for further involvement of education and learning in planning processes, an organisation must establish its values with regards to education and learning in planning. Values may be agreed upon and understood implicitly, but this leaves much more room for confusion and misunderstanding than an explicit agreement. Developing a supportive overall context for the inclusion of education and learning in the planning process further clarifies matters. Here, key considerations are:

- What is the planner’s role in facilitating education and learning during the planning process? And the participant’s?
- To what extent do planners, their department, and/or community members enter into planning with the intent of promoting education and learning?
- How do the values and beliefs of the department affect the content, the process structure, the topics, and the attitude of the department or individuals that are part of the planning process? How does the political climate affect this?
- How do planners value learning and education? How do they think of knowledge?

2) Formulating Goals and Objectives

How has the planning department or the individual planner set goals and/or objectives (for) involving education and learning in the planning process?

By formulating clear and explicit goals and objectives, an organisation can better understand how to proceed through a planning exercise. Goals and objectives should reflect the department’s and community’s values and needs, and they should influence methods, techniques, content, and delivery and outreach. Considerations are:

- To what extent are the goals and objectives for education and learning explicit or implicit? Are they clear?
- How do the goals and objectives match the intent of the program: to intentionally foster education or to promote general learning in a less intentional way; to achieve short- or long-term learning; and to learn information for use in the given process or to be able to extend knowledge beyond the given process?
- How are the goals and objectives set to promote types and levels of education and learning that are appropriate and feasible for the given planning project?

3) Organisation of the Process

How is the planning process organised and administered in a manner that facilitates education and learning?

Developing a clear and reasoned approach to organising a process that promotes education and learning is key. While decisions in this area are generally made within an organisation, a planner who is engaging in community-based planning should review some of these decisions with the community, even if they cannot be negotiated.

- What formalised guidelines does the department have for involving education and learning in the planning process?
• To what extent are planning processes staffed with planners who have expertise in and knowledge about education, learning, and communication?
• How are planning processes structured and organised to facilitate public involvement and education and learning? How is enough time allocated to the process to facilitate public involvement and education and learning?

4) Determining Content
What is included as the content of the education and learning component of the planning process?
It is critical that an organisation understand that determining the content of a process that involves learning and education is an inherently value-based process. Some processes may only value "expert" knowledge while others value the knowledge that local people and professional staff bring. Again, transparency and open discussions of the content, how decisions about content were made, and what information content is based on are critical. Important issues are:
• How is local/community knowledge, not just planners' or technical knowledge, valued and legitimised? To what extent are multiple intelligences and ways of knowing utilised and accepted as providing valuable information? Which ones? In what manner(s) is learning seen as mutual and/or multi-directional?
• How is dialogue and/or the process seen as part of the education and learning 'content'?
• To what extent is there a dedication to providing information in a clear, appropriate, well thought-out manner? How do departments or individuals respond to others' requests for clarification?
• To what extent is there a dedication to providing all of the information necessary for informed planning? Under what circumstances?
Note: This includes information about the process and decision-making procedures, background issues/project context, project scope, options and their consequences, and connections between issues.

5) Determining Techniques and Methods
What techniques and methods have been chosen to promote education and learning in a manner that reflects the goals of the planning process and the department’s or community’s values?
Determining techniques and methods means deciding what process to use, whereas delivery and outreach are concerned with how these are implemented during the planning process. Techniques and methods should be chosen carefully, as they can determine what issues and concerns are mentioned and what is discussed or not discussed. Techniques and methods can also determine the types or levels of learning and education that are possible. In deciding upon techniques, important considerations are:
• What methods and techniques are individuals using to promote different kinds of education and learning? To create space for community members to share their knowledge?
• Which techniques and methods are more successful? Less successful? Which methods help achieve deeper levels of learning?
• How are less formal means of achieving learning, such as dialogue and “participatory rituals” used in the planning process? How do individuals see these less formal techniques and methods as promoting education and learning?
• To what extent are techniques chosen based upon appropriateness for the setting, the publics involved, and the goals?

6) Conducting Delivery and Outreach
How is delivery of the planning process conducted in a manner that promotes engagement of the community and deeper education and learning?
As mentioned above, delivery and outreach are concerned with how techniques and methods are implemented. In conducting delivery and outreach, there are further chances to promote education and learning or to hinder them. Key considerations are:
• How is the process delivered in such a way that it creates space for all participants (planners and the community) to discuss and reflect?
• How are processes delivered to create better opportunities for education and learning, knowledge sharing, and reflection?
• How does the planning project attempt to reach many diverse groups? Which ones?
• How and when is the delivery adapted to the environment (physical and social)?

7) Continuing Education and Learning Through (to) Implementation

How do education and learning continue through (to) implementation?

Planners continually face challenges with regards to implementation, particularly since they do not always have the opportunity to continue working with a community through the completion of a project. However, planners can influence implementation, to some extent, by influencing how the final report or plan produced through the planning process is written. If education and learning do not explicitly continue through implementation, an enormous opportunity to complete the learning process is lost. Key considerations for implementation are:

• To what extent are mechanisms provided for follow-up with the community? For sharing with others the information and knowledge obtained during the process?
• What opportunities are there for continuing community involvement through implementation? For continuing planners’ involvement?
• What support mechanisms are there to help community members and planners continue to learn new information and from each other through the implementation process, rather than stagnating?

8) Identifying and Overcoming Barriers

What possible barriers, obstacles, or challenges to education and learning in planning have the individuals involved in the planning process identified and what are some ways to overcome these barriers?

Barriers, obstacles, and challenges to education and learning in planning abound. To improve chances of success, a department needs to develop an understanding of which ones they may face, preferably before beginning a process. Key considerations are:

• What do individuals involved in planning feel are the barriers, obstacles, and challenges to education and learning?
• How do they overcome these barriers, obstacles, and challenges?
• How has the individual or the department decided to deal with conflict and/or politics and power such that they do not adversely affect open participation and education and learning in the planning process?
List of References


