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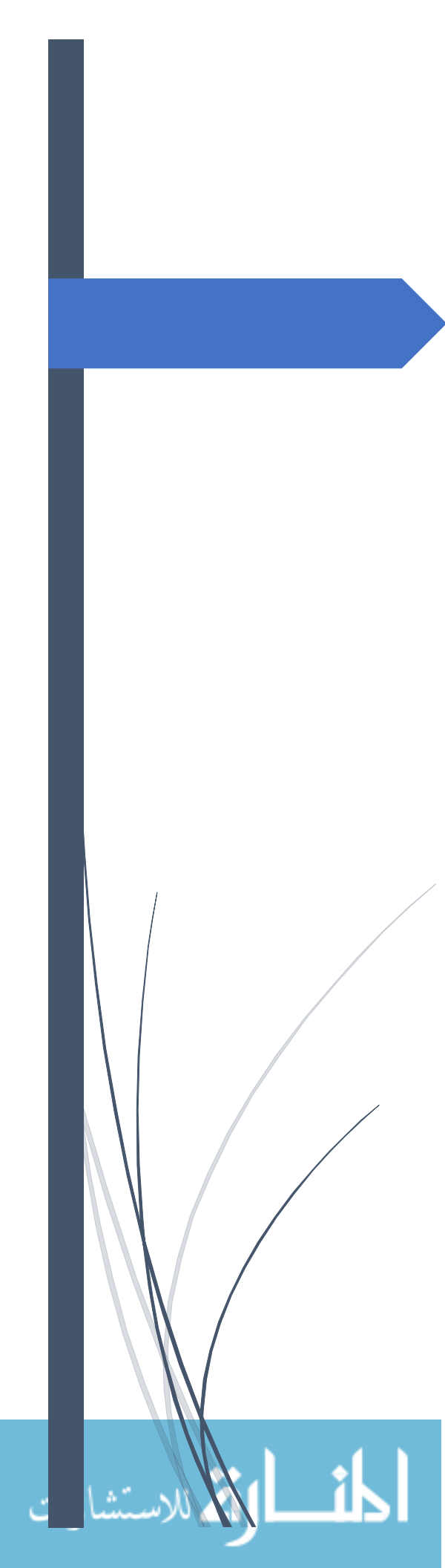
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Learning and Working Together: Invoking Systems' Change Through Inter-Organizational Collaborative Principles and a Learning Community Framework.

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THESIS

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Abstract:

Local communities face significant challenges such as increased inequality, immigration, and global climate change. In order to address these challenges whole cities have to innovate and learn together. In this thesis, I introduce the Learning Community (LC) model, a new way of collaborating and creating collective impact that emphasizes *learning*, alongside collective impact, as a central strategy to addressing complex social challenges. In a LC, members value the continuous pursuit of knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the flow of information and resources between academic institutions and practice groups. The value of learning is built into key structures and common processes. In this case study, I investigated the implementation and development of a LC in Waterloo Region focused on immigration and social inclusion. Documentation review, participant observation and semi-structured interviews were used to determine to what degree LC principles were already present in practice compared to those that were not (which a specific focus on the conditions that could enable or hinder the realization of LC principles). Specific activities studied include a creative problem solving "design lab," several quarterly learning team meetings, which are comprised of key agencies and individuals from across the community and Wilfrid Laurier University. Challenges and barriers related to the actualization of the LC were discussed, as well as implications for practice.

Keywords: Community collaboration, immigration, learning, community-university partnership, social innovation, systems change, learning community, refugee resettlement, collective impact

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List of Tables

List of Appendices

Table of Contents

Background and Rationale

The size, scale and complexity of social problems have increased considerably over the past few decades. From poverty, homelessness, food insecurity to climate change highly unidirectional, isolated approaches are no longer sufficient to identify and address interrelated and ever-changing problem drivers (Evans, Rosen, Kesten, & Moore, 2014; Westley, Zimmerman, & Patton, 2007). Such is what Rittel and Webber (1973) refer to as "wicked social problems." Complex systems science has been especially helpful in this regard, redirecting our attention to multi-causality (i.e., multiple causes to a single social-ecological problem), feedback loops (i.e., self-reinforcing phenomena), emergence and uncertainty (Meadows, 2008; Senge, 1995). Yet at the same time, the sheer immensity of considerations required to operate out of this new theoretical framework (i.e., complex systems science) can inundate researcher-practitioners with information overload, diminishing our capacity to enact social transformations. While collaborative solutions are needed to manage this complexity (Evans et al., 2014), linking such with an emphasis on *learning* can help capture the complexity and dynamic nature of issues faced, leading to the formation of adaptive solutions (Evans et al., 2014; Senge, 1995) and potentially greater impact (Plastrik & Taylor, 2006).

Collaborative approaches also mean making way for the inclusion of "non-experts;" both in the identification of social problems and the solutions used to address them (Wolff, 2010). Ensuring a diversity of perspectives also helps us to overcome traditional "top-down," paternalistic and deficits-focused approaches to problem solving that have seriously underperformed in many helping professions (Munger & Riemer, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005; Wolff, 2010); even letting health and mental health consumers fall through the cracks when these health service consumers have multiple service needs that cannot

be addressed by a single agency (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Allen, & Fahrbach, 2001). While embracing diversity in membership not only helps us attend to issues of equity and representation, it allows us to more comprehensively identify and address aspects of a social system that are failing people most affected by a social issue -whether it be poverty, homelessness, or immigration (Evans & Kivell, 2015; Wolff, 2010).

Despite the theoretical advances witnessed in wide-scale collaboration efforts (in the fields of public health, community psychology, social work, community development, etc.), many of the approaches used to address complex social issues remain in their infancy. We are still learning what collaborative approaches work best and the sort of structural properties and processes needed to make them most effective (Haines, Godley, & Hawe, 2011; Maton, 2006). Thus, leveraging a theoretical literature review and informed by LaFlamme (2008), this master's thesis first sought to establish what collaboration "theories exist, the relationships between them, while also revealing the inadequacy of current theories related to specific research questions" (p.6). The theories informing this research were collaborative models either seeking to or having the potential to create large-scale social change. Several models were reviewed to help the reader better understand the characteristics and qualities of collaboration that can (or have been used to) meaningfully address complex social issues. Once these models are reviewed, I then introduce the learning community model, which was developed by members of the Community Environmental Justice Research Group (CEJRG; including myself, the Centre for Community Research, Learning, and Action, and the Sustainable Societies Consulting Group). At its essence, the learning community is a collective impact model that foregrounds the role of continuous learning, reflection, experimentation and feedback at the level of a community. As per Kania and Kramer (2011), collective impact models seek to harbour long-term commitments by actors from

multiple sectors of society. These individuals and sectors are brought around a common agenda to solve a specific and intractable social problem - activities central to collective impact approach include shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities and ongoing communication. Further, in the learning community, continuous learning and experimentation is not only valued but integrated into key collaborative processes and structures. Together these processes, framing and structures coalesce to create innovative solutions to complex social issues (e.g., such as immigration, homelessness and poverty).

Yet, in order to further delineate the learning community from other forms of collaboration (as well as justify its creation or implementation through an exemplary case study), the initial literature review examined various collaboration models based upon their most salient features, such as their strengths, limitations and gaps. Then, I investigated the infrastructure, resources, supports and/or programs that could or have contribute(d) to the development of the learning community model within and across the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (WRIP) and Wilfrid Laurier University. As explained further below, WRIP is a cross-sectoral network addressing refugee resettlement needs in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. This case study examined existing resources, infrastructure and factors that exist within WRIP and Laurier to facilitate or hinder the actualization of the learning community. This process also helped us to determine the feasibility of the model (which was the first research objective of this study).

From a more practical standpoint, practitioners involved in this specific learning community (convening key actors from across the community and university) came together to a) improve solutions regarding immigrant/refugee settlement and/or refugee resettlement social services in the Kitchener-Waterloo region and b) enhance social inclusion outcomes among immigrant and refugee groups in the region (both of which are related to the second research

objective of this study). Further details of this newly formed partnership arrangement and partnership histories (between the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership and Wilfrid Laurier University) are discussed more below.

Literature Review Overview

Recognizing that the underlying purposes of collaboration models may shift from one to another, this literature review sought to examine the most prominent theories regarding collaborative approaches either used to a) solve complex social problems or b) have the characteristics and principles we believe are needed to solve them. While some collaboration models are designed specifically in efforts to create innovative products and services (within a business context; Phillips, 2003; Toiviainen, 2007), and others are used to address local community issues (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b; Nowell & Foster-Fishman, 2011; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006), a given model alone cannot (or does not aim to) create large scale social change. These shortcomings subsequently motivate many collaboration scholars to draw upon multiple collaboration models. So, (to reiterate) with this recognition of the diversity of (collaborative) models available, the purpose of this literature review then is to critically introduce and justify the need, employment and study of the learning community. While our learning community model was not directly derived from the literature review section below, my literature review sought to a) critically examine the characteristics and qualities of other collaboration models and compare them to the learning community (LC) while b) showing the LC's specific "value-add." As there is no literature on the LC specifically (although the term is often conflated with communities of practice– see Lawthom, 2011 for an example), our research team wove together and triangulated beneficial aspects of various collaboration models to illustrate, bolster and reimagine what collaboration might look like. Different from Adams, Brock, Gordon, Grohs and Kirk's (2005) "living" learning community, our LC also brings

together a wide variety of actors from across the community (citizens, stakeholders from non-profit organizations, municipal government officials, university stakeholders, etc.). Moreover, this LC additionally foregrounds the role of experimentation and creative solving processes as a vehicle for continuous learning, adaptation and growth needed to create effective action towards complex social issues.

Given community psychology's work in the collaboration area, consultation with experts in community psychology led me to focus my search terms on "community collaborations," "inter-organizational collaborations," and "community-university partnerships." Using PsychInfo and Scholars Portal databases specifically, I searched and read articles related to community collaboration and community-university partnerships (reading the most cited articles first) until I reached a point of "saturation," that is when articles were no longer providing me with any additional information. Given the significant volume of empirical literature in both these arenas, I limited my search to community psychology journals and journals in closely related fields-such as public health, community development and social work. For community-university partnerships, I also limited my search to systematic reviews. Journals included for community collaborations and community-university partnerships included the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (AJCP), *Journal of Community Psychology*, *Health Education and Behaviour*, *Journal of Public Health Management, Psychosocial Intervention* and *Environment and Behaviour*. All articles included had to be peer-reviewed, related to health promotion, and published in the past 17 years (2000-present day).

Similarly, consulting PsychInfo and Scholars Portal databases, I then conducted a review of the "learning organization" literatures. My review of the learning organization was motivated primarily in terms of the gaps witnessed in the community collaboration and community-

university partnership literatures-and I read until a point of "conceptual" saturation. Academic journals included in my review were: *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *Learning Organization*, and *European Journal of Innovation Management*. While situated in an organizational management perspective, the learning organization (LO; for a complete list of abbreviations used refer to Appendix A) evinces many of the principles needed to attend to underlying problem drivers within complex social systems-namely through an active and ongoing commitment to learning. LO's tripartite connection between reflective practice, learning and ability to enact radical transformations in complex, organizational systems (Thomas & Allen, 2006) justified its inclusion in this review. For practitioners' intentional, ongoing commitment to learning (over the longer term) has been seen as key to the creation of innovative solutions within business (Senge, 1995) and health promotion contexts (Evans & Kivell, 2015).

Once again motivated by the limitations of the (LO) literature, I turned to current empirical literature on communities of practice. Communities of practice (CoP) are a well-established approach that leverage collective social learning processes as a way to increase business performance (Wenger, 1998), even generating innovative solutions to issues faced in community psychology (Lawthom, 2011). CoP's ability to generate an appropriate repertoire of ideas, tools as well as collaborative processes and structures needed to enable systems' and social change (Meessen, Kouanda, & Musango, 2011) was particularly striking; and was consequently also included in this literature review. For purposes of brevity, I only reviewed the most authoritative articles (i.e., articles that have been cited 100 times or more), and similarly finished reading articles once "saturation" had been reached (Dohn, 2011).

With these considerations in mind, my theoretical literature review is as follows. First I discuss Peter Senge's (1995) learning organization, then community collaborations, community-

university partnerships, followed by communities of practice and our learning community. For the sake of clear communication, the models are individually presented below, elaborating upon each approaches' key concepts, purposes, strengths and limitations (the limitations discussed are also specifically in regards to how a given model may fall short of the characteristics needed to address complex social problems). Sequencing discussion of these collaborative models in this way helped us attend to the relationships between theories and limitations therein (LaFlamme, 2008), while subsequently justifying the creation, employment and study of our LC model.

Literature Review

Learning Organization

Key concepts and purpose. The field of Organizational Behaviour has given considerable attention to learning organizations (Argyris, 1999; Senge, 1995), demarcating their ability to generate innovative knowledge (Evans & Kivell, 2015) that translates into competitive advantage and business success (Phillips, 2003; Thomas & Allen, 2006). Although commonly agreed upon definitions of LO's remain elusive (Phillips, 2003), learning organizations seek to utilize organizational learning-by creating, integrating and apply knowledge in order to improve business performance (Thomas & Allen, 2006). Concerns for learning here are motivated primarily by a business's ability to adapt to changing social circumstances (adaptive learning; DiBella & Nevis, 1998) and shifting consumer needs. While innovations are seen as central to the maintenance and survival of business enterprises, innovations themselves are fostered only through an ongoing commitment to learning (key concept); at multiple levels (i.e., individual and organizational learning) and forms (double-loop learning; expansive learning; Engestrom, 1987; Senge, 1995). Part of the learning process also requires LO professionals to engage in what Senge (1995) refers to as *systems thinking* (a second key concept). Systems thinking gives rise to feedback loops (non-linear self-reinforcing phenomenon), the influence of organizational

structures on individual behaviour, and actions that address root causes rather than mere symptoms (Meadows, 2008; Senge, 1995).

Motivated by a wish to better understand the characteristics and qualities of learning organizations, Thomas and Allen (2006) conducted a meta-analytic review, revealing that LO's require: a) centrality of learning (at the level of the individual, which is synthesized, buffered and amplified through team work and commitment to learning at the organizational level), b) enabling structures (environments that allow for organizational learning processes), c) shared vision and goals (enabled by *effective leadership*), d) knowledge management platforms- (capturing implicit/tacit and explicit knowledge and organizational information), e) strategies for innovation. This break-down is not unlike Phillips (2003), who outlined similar characteristics, such as the need for a) willpower among those involved (for learning, changing organizational culture and practices), b) *effective leadership*, c) strategic thinking, d) open communication and dialogue, e) commitment to learning and development (i.e., continuous learning philosophy), f) innovation and inclusive decision-making (i.e., safe space for collaboration). In either case, the importance of learning (and leadership) is made central, as well as the settings and environments that enable it (learning) to evolve into higher, more transformative forms (Toiviainen, 2007). Expansive learning is a good example of this. Expansive learning works through practitioners' focus on current activities of an organization and ensuing "developmental contradictions." These developmental contradictions happen when practitioners acknowledge that (some of) their observations witnessed in their work environment (either their own observations or a colleagues) are irreconcilable (i.e., not explainable by) with their current knowledge base. This discrepancy eventually pressures practitioners to question their assumptions, re-analyze problem situations,

model and apply new understandings that better account for the discrepancies witnessed (Engestrom, 1987).

Strengths. LO's are especially relevant to this thesis project. LO's are well suited to examine predominant mental models within complex collaborative settings. Mental models can be defined as conceptual frameworks and perspectives from which we create understandings of the world and take action in it (Senge, 1995). Yet because these conceptual frameworks are rooted in deeply held beliefs and cognitive filters that are biased and skewed, opportunities for innovation and creative problem solving are stifled while promoting organizational inefficiencies instead (Evans & Kivell, 2015). Conversely, LO's create opportunities for individuals in collaborative contexts to question their assumptions (and deeply held beliefs) while also engendering new, adaptive ways to conceive of problems and solutions to them (Thomas & Allen, 2006). This is done namely through the bridging of explicit, implicit (i.e., preverbal, embodied) knowledge forms (Phillips, 2003) and the utilization of *reflective practices* (Evans & Kivell, 2015). In summary, it is this process of "expansive learning" that deserves greater centralization in the collaboration for social change literature. Expansive learning practices (i.e., developmental contradictions, reflective practices) enables practitioners to see discrepancies between changing environmental needs/realities and overarching systems' goals, leading to modification of their beliefs and behaviours, as well as institutional norms and practices (Senge, 1995). Recounting that complex social issues often manifest themselves in ever-changing environments (Meadows, 2008; Westley et al., 2007), with patterns of causes and effect that are often overlapping, interconnected and difficult to model (Bryson & Crosby, 2005) effective collaborative efforts seeking to create social change may wish to give more attention to these "higher" forms of learning and the settings that enable them (such as with LO's).

Limitations. Although organizational learning is clearly required to evoke innovation and change in complex organizational settings, LO's (as currently conceived) are inherently limited by their unit of analysis. That is to say that such "developmental contradictions" and expansive learning processes typically occur within an intra-organizational environment. Meanwhile, the potential benefits of learning or reflective practice at the level of a community remain unrealized. Secondly, by virtue of having LO's learning teams drawn from a specific organizational or departmental context, learning organizations appear to be at risk of failing to address issues related to diversity, representation and social power. Further, the inward facing (and insular) nature of LO's learning processes makes them susceptible to maximizing self-interest, rather than superordinate community needs. Fortunately, community collaborations are well positioned to address many of these aforementioned concerns.

Community Collaborations

Key concepts and purpose. Community collaboration (CC) enjoys a rich history in community psychology, public health and community development fields (Garcia-Ramirez, Paloma, & Suarez-Balcazar, 2009; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005); and consequently serves as a rich theoretical foundation for our learning community model. CC's are also well aligned with the post-Newtonian "new science," which emphasizes complexity and the interconnectedness of all entities (i.e., *thinking in systems;* Wheatley, 1994). CC's can be seen as a formal alliance of organizations, citizen groups who come and work together for a common goal, developing internal decision-making and leadership structures, strategies to improve collective responses to community issues (i.e., *collective orientation;* Butterfoss, 2007; Nowell, 2009). Wolff's typology of collaborative models places collaboration as the most robust version of coordinated bodies as compared to networks, for example. CC's key concepts (and activities) include information

exchange, coordination of activities, resource sharing and community capacity building (Wolff, 2010, p. 52).

CC's are known by several names: Community coalitions (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001a; Wolff, 2010), inter-organizational collaboratives (Menger, Stalones, Cross, Henry, & Chen, 2015; Nowell, 2009), inter-organizational partnerships (Retrum, Chapman, & Varda, 2013), and inter-agency collaborations (Cross, Newman-Gonchar, & Fagan, 2009). Yet all respond to the call for greater coordination and collaboration among human service agencies (Nowell, 2009) and service users (Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001) in order to advance community well-being (Barile, Darnell, Erickson, & Weaver, 2011; Cross et al., 2009; Evans et al., 2014) and systems change outcomes (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001b; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 2005). These kinds of approaches are gaining traction in neighbourhoods beset by marginalization (Korazim-Korosy et al. 2014) and in dealing with public health challenges more broadly (Pinto, 2009). CC's reputation for enhanced problem solving capacities (Haines et al., 2011) are evinced by its ability to weave together collective resources (in an era of resource scarcity; Evans et al., 2014; Wolff, 2010, p.45), reduce redundancies in efforts (Ingleby, 2007; Kania & Kramar, 2010; Nowell, 2009), and administer solutions that cannot be implemented by a single institution alone (Lank, 2006; Retrum et al., 2013).

To illustrate these points, consider the "MTN" and "Catalyst Miami" community coalition, which with the help of a 3-year Kresge Foundation grant brought together a variety of non-profit community organizations to address the root causes of poverty in Miami, Florida. In its first year of development, the MTN undertook a series of community dialogues with eighty people from 30 different organizations to build common understandings of poverty, as well as

build relationships and increase community buy-in (Evans et al., 2014). These discussions eventually led to the formalization of an executive committee that helped determine the coalition's main objectives, communication networks and intervention strategies. Another salient example includes an inter-organizational suicide prevention network that was created in Colorado. This inter-organizational suicide prevention network served as a "safety-net services network" (i.e., education, referrals, case management, recurring mental health services support) that significantly reduced the incident rate of suicide in the state (Menger, Stallones, Cross, Henry, & Chen, 2015).

Strengths. Recognizing community capacities as a driver for social change (Wolff, 2010) Foster-Fishman et al., (2001a) developed an integrated framework of the collaborative capacities needed for community collaborations to be most effective (following their review of 80 articles and book chapters). This resulting framework was broken down into four key concepts: a) member capacity, b) relational capacity, c) organizational capacity and d) programmatic capacity. Member capacity is evinced by building sufficient skills, (i.e., can perform required tasks) and knowledge among a wide diversity of individual members (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009). It is here that issues of attaining and maintaining diverse "non-expert" (community-driven) membership and a capabilities orientation becomes foregrounded (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Wolff, 2010). Active inclusion of "non-expert" members leads to increased coalition effectiveness (Balcazar et al., 1990) through the creation of more effective programs and public policy enactments (Cross et al., 2009).

Relational capacity is largely predicated on social capital theory (Putnam, 1995) and transactional costs theory (Williamson, 1979). Social capital has been referred to as the "glue that holds society together," (McKenzie, Whitley, & Weich, 2002) using interpersonal trust,

reciprocity within and between social networks/organizations to help facilitate collective action on (social) issues of concern (Kawachi, Kennedy, Lochner, & Prothrow-Stith, 1997). This collective action is made possible through the "capital" that is gained from reciprocal social exchanges, realized through increased and unprecedented access to resources and/or social support systems that are needed for individual and collective good (Nowell & Foster-Fishman, 2011). Consequently, relational capacity is a strong predictor of systems' change outcomes (Nowell, 2009), whereby high quality relationships are building blocks for effective action against intractable social problems (Evans et al., 2014),

Yet the maintenance of social ties (which is required for social capital to be built or sustained) also relies upon mutual feelings of trust, reciprocity, and ownership (in the collaborative partnership; Munger & Riemer, 2012); as the strength of these social ties largely predicts organizations' willingness to commit resources (i.e., financial, human, natural, social) or engage over the longer term (Nowell, 2009). If the costs of collaboration are viewed as too high, participants will be inclined to opt out (Williamson, 1979). Thus, relational capacity really means that members feel engaged in a satisfactory way, which requires equitable decision-making and opportunities for power-sharing (i.e., residents are engaged throughout planning, implementing and evaluation processes; Weiner et al., 2002; Wolff, 2010). Structural mechanisms that allow for shared governance and decision-making are also known to help develop and maintain *shared vision and goals* (Butterfoss et al., 2009; Wolff, 2010).

Organizational capacity (OC) refers to the attainment of sufficient resources, effective *leadership capacities* needed to effectively engage with a community collaborative network (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001a). OC also requires skills in conflict resolution, effective, persistent communication (Wolff, 2010) that fosters an orientation of continuous improvement and

monitoring of the collaborative system at large (Evans et al., 2014; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b). Lastly, programmatic capacity focuses on intermediate outcomes, programmatic needs and objectives that are culturally appropriate (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001a)**.**

Limitations. Despite Foster-Fishman et al.'s (2001a) robust typology, CC's typically fail to nurture or maximize all four of these aforementioned collaborative capacities. Such is reflected by the mixed overall effectiveness of community collaborations (Berkowitz, 2000), and evidence that many are falling short of a variety of public health and service delivery outcomes (Luque & Martinez, 2010). At the heart of these public health and service delivery failures include lack of sufficient community representation, meaningful participation and/or (both real and perceived) empowerment of community members (e.g., staff of non-profit agencies, citizens, etc.) within community collaborative processes (Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000). Other factors contributing to such mixed evidence include issues of measuring and influencing outcomes at a community level (Kreuter et al., 2000), lack of focus on inter-organizational collaboration as a whole (as the unit of analysis; Luke & Harris, 2007) and the difficulties of ensuring that the benefits for participating in collaboration processes continue to outweigh the costs (Kreuter et al., 2000; Wolff, 2010). Community collaborations focused on health and health systems change also report a) difficulties of parsing out cause and effect relationships, b) unrealistic expectations in the health outcomes strived for, and c) insufficient vehicles to implement key intervention tasks or activities (Kreuter et al., 2000).

Consequently, there is also a large gap in understanding how organizational and inter-organizational needs shift over time (i.e., from formation of a network to network maintenance-with exception to Munger and Riemer (2012) who provided a collaboration process model), which can simultaneously hamper CC's ability to survive over the longer-term (i.e., long-term

sustainability; Evans et al., 2010). Meanwhile, CC's recurring lack of attention to power dynamics (Evans & Kivell, 2015; Garcia-Ramirez et al, 2009; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005; Wolff, 2010), cultural differences (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009) and status divides (Korazim-Korosy et al., 2014; Wolff, 2010) frequently undermine CC's overall effectiveness.

While these aforementioned gaps in understanding are clearly about how to successfully engage with a diverse group of actors (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b; Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009; Nowell, 2009), other gaps (in understanding) include the kind of structural properties and collaborative processes that affect CC's performance (Barile et al., 2012; Maton, 2006). Together these gaps in understanding (as a whole), more broadly represent the learning challenges that need to be overcome if CC's are to become more effective.

Part of these learning challenges stem from the sheer volume of issues (Barile et al., 2012) faced by CC's. CC's requires a level of strategic planning that can be hard to sustain. For example, lead organizations alone often lack coalition building knowledge (Evans et al., 2014) and yet are tasked with deciding what organizations can or should participate, what operating values and principles will be devised, and how to connect and sustain networks that span organizational, regional and geographical boundaries (McGuire, 2002). More recent CC initiatives have thus created task forces (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009; Wolff, 2010), "T-teams" (Evans & Kivell, 2015) and inter-organizational collaborative protocols to better manage these complexities, helping lead agencies reduce conflict, and contribute to relational capacity building (Wolff, 2010). That is to say, that the design and employment of these T-teams and creative strategies also reflects some of CC's inherent strengths. While learning organizations leverage the strength of intra-departmental group processes, community collaborations operate from a size, scale and heterogeneity of perspectives that is much greater.

While promising in many respects, CC's limited effectiveness is partially due to its separation from (inter-) organizational learning and organizational learning literatures. This claim can be backed by Evans and Kivell (2015), who observed that many human service agencies (and the collaborations they are a part of) often view reflection and learning as an unaffordable luxury. Yet a lack of attention to "shared epistemologies of practice" (Schon, 1995) can lead CC practitioners to unwittingly reproduce detrimental organizational practices that remain unchallenged (Argyris et al., 1985). For these reasons, Evan's and Kivell (2015) have called on CC's to more actively embody a "culture of learning," and "critical community practices," (CCP's). These CCP's have three interlocking components, a) critical consciousness-which is about uncovering assumptions, values, dispositions and mindsets in order to buffer creative and analytical capacities of the group, b) critical theorizing-which is about Paulo Friere's (1970) praxis (1970; i.e., action, reflection and learning cycles), leading to better understanding of current situation and alternative pathways to the future, and c) critical reflection-which refers to collective reflection processes that enable organizational change and development (Evans & Kivell, 2015). In order to bring these practices to life, Evans and Kivell (2015) use the example of the Island Counselling Centre, which serves families and young people in crisis (such as those suffering from drug and alcohol abuse). While originally espousing a top-down and deficits-focused (clinical) orientation, the centre was also located in an impoverished community. Thus with the employment of CCPs, much work was done to shift attention away from individual psychopathology to a social determinants of health perspective that more readily scrutinizing the impacts of poverty on the local neighbourhood. In order to have a longer lasting impact on its clients, it eventually became recognized that the Island Centre

had to provide programming that specifically addressed SDoH, such as through youth leadership programs for example.

Thus, when the various aspects of the CCPs are combined (i.e., action-reflection cycles, collective learning and examination of mental models/assumptions), these can address several of the limitations inherent to CC's, while also engendering growth, learning and more agile responses to community issues (Evans et al., 2014). While intra-organizational processes are needed to affect inter-organizational outcomes and capacities (Evans et al., 2014), the learning "T-teams" so far employed have remained at the intra-organizational level (Evans & Kivell, 2015). Thus, (and as seen with LO's) it seems as if CCP's or reflective practices at the level of a community are rare.

Interventions for refugee mental health and wellbeing. Much of the advice provided by the CC literature is also highly applicable to refugee settlement and inclusion, which as previously mentioned is the specific content area of the LC being investigated in this master's thesis. Seminal articles by Prilleltensky (2008), Weine (2011), Miller and Rasco (2004) on refugee-focused interventions speak to the need of moving beyond intra-psychic/psychiatric, deficits-focused interventions towards multi-level/ecological and strengths-based approaches (i.e., pathways to personal and collective resilience). While individual/intra-psychic treatment can help refugees ameliorate suffering from the constellation of post-traumatic stress responses/disorders experienced *before* migration (pre-migratory stressors such as exposure to war-related violence), ecological approaches can help target the multitude of stressors (i.e., exposure to harassment and discrimination) and protective factors that impact refugees' mental health during and after their settlement into the host country (post-migratory stressors; Kim, 2016). As refugees' mental health and well-being status relies on both objective and subjective

indicators, ecological interventions are especially helpful in ensuring that objective, material goods are obtained-such as related to education, housing and employment (Prilleltensky, 2008). Depravation of material resources, due to hostile societal attitudes or discrimination or lack of access ultimately influence well-being status and have invoked arguments that refugees' well-being is at the same time significantly contingent on procedural and distributive justice concerns (Prilleltensky, 2008).

At the same time, the multiplicity of factors that influence refugee well-being status also exist by degree of scale: from personal, interpersonal, organizational/local and societal. At the societal-level, countries can implement immigration policies that ensure that adaptation processes allow families to stick together, or that the credentials of highly skilled, foreign workers are recognized (Prilleltensky, 2008). At the local/organizational-level, programming can be implemented to ensure that refugees are provided with the means to obtain "environmentally masterful experiences," such as through occupational training or secondary/tertiary language(s) programs (thereby overcoming language barriers; Miller & Rasco, 2004). Critical social science and community psychology perspectives have additionally argued for a) the need to consider the exploitative practices and precarious social conditions that surround the employment opportunities offered (Prilleltensky, 2008), and b) the intensification of psychosocial supports surrounding employment training programs (Garcia-Ramirez, Martinez, Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Albar, Dominguez, & Santolaya, 2005). When programs consider the needs of refugees participating, such as related to problems with language, memory or difficulties of working as a social minority (Kim, 2016), better subjective wellbeing often follows; such as through psychological empowerment (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2005). Aspects of psychological empowerment include professional self-concept, an internal attribution as reasons for

employment and a strong formal and informal social support network. Focusing on programmatic efforts that strengthen subjective wellbeing and psychological empowerment is particularly important, given that it can dramatically improve employment outcomes (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2005).

Thus in light of these multi-level, strengths-based approaches needed to address the multitude of stressors typically associated with post-migratory settings (Prilleltensky, 2008; Weine, 2011) and community collaborations offer a particularly robust platform. Only cohesive, coordinated action among multiple agencies and centres can address the multitude of objective and subjective stressors found in immigrant's "post-migratory" settings. These stressors include, but are not limited to: a lack of meaningful roles and opportunities (in new setting), poverty (Miller & Rasco, 2004), social exclusion, lack of access to educational and health-related services and problems adapting into the new setting (Weine, 2011). CC can call upon to utilize or rearrange pre-existing community resources/settings to promote healing and enhance the adaptive functioning of refugees at a population-level (such as by creating social capital and opportunities for mastery-experiences). While similar to CC in terms of the need for inclusive and equitable decision-making structures, and greater coordination between service providers and community members (Weine, 2011), refugee-focused interventions should also ensure that health and educational services are a) more readily accessible (Nazzal, Forghany, Geevarughese, Mahmoodi, & Wong, 2014) and b) culturally appropriate for the incoming/settled refugee population (Miller & Rasco, 2004; Weine, 2011). Thus, different authors urge scholar-practitioners to use mixed-method, inductive and ethnographic approaches in order to a) better understand cultural and contextual factors related to the stressors experienced by refugees, b) identify protective factors and mechanisms, leading to c) the creation, implementation and

maintenance of culturally-appropriate interventions, services and programs (Miller & Rasco, 2004; Weine, 2011).

Nazzal et al. (2014) are one of the few authors to provide an illuminating example of refugee resettlement projects that used a CC framework. In their implementation of their P&EI, New Refugees Services program" in Santa Monica, California, refugee advocacy groups help determine how mental health service dollars would be spent in the region. Advocacy groups also worked with funding agencies to determine the objectives of the CC initiative, and ensure that they were aligned with refugees living in the area (which were centralized around increasing accessibility of mental health services). Community partners were selected based on their ability to include refugees in strategic planning processes as well as their commitment to providing culturally-appropriate services to each of the nine distinct refugee groups in the region. Each community partner was responsible for the implementation and development of key activities in their own communities. Outreach activities worked to ensure cultural sensitivity (i.e., religious activities, cultural films), promote mental health awareness/normalisation of mental health issues and community engagement (i.e., community discussions and gatherings), while also specifically relating these back to outcome measures and the objectives previously identified.

While these efforts are commendable, there is still a paucity of research and evaluation work related to multi-level, strengths-based/CC interventions for refugees (Miller & Rasco, 2004; Weine, 2011). Such a paucity provides a great opportunity to implement and evaluate the LC model based on this subject matter. The LC's main principles are additionally well aligned with the recommendations put forth by Miller and Rasco (2004), Nazzal et al. (2014) and Weine (2011), specifically in regards to a) inclusive and equitable decision-making structures, b) coordination of efforts across social service sectors and community members, and c) as an

approach that allows community members/refugees (and spokespersons that advocate for them) to determine how and where intervention efforts (or resources) are focused.

Community-University Partnerships

Key concepts and purposes. While community-university partnerships (CUP's) share many of the same principles as CC's, CUP's seek to create partnerships between community organizations and university partners specifically (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). Curwood, Munger, Mitchell, Mackeigan, and Farrar (2011) define CUP's as "collaborations between community organizations and institutions of higher learning for the purpose of achieving an identified social change goal through community-engaged scholarship that mutually benefits those involved" (p.16). A strong emphasis is placed on eliciting mutual benefit, given academia's long history of exploitation and tokenistic involvement of communities in research settings.

CUP advocates seek to transcend these prior patterns of community engagement, as well as the old paradigm of "basic" research and are driven by practical needs instead (Haines et al., 2011). Research is motivated by its application to "real-world" (Travers et al., 2013), regional and local issues (Munger & Riemer, 2012). According to Jones et al. (2009), CUP's key concepts are a) respect for diversity, b) openness regarding goals, expectations of the collaborative, c) equality-where academic researchers are not valued over and above community partners, d) empowerment for those involved, and e) assets-based orientation (strengths-based), where issues are framed and understood within a larger context of community strengths, viewing areas for improvement within the collaborative as opportunities for capacity building (Guta et al., 2010; Spoth, Greenberg, Bierman, & Redmond, 2004; Suarez- Balcazar et al., 2005). To varying degrees, these underlying principles work to inform the structures, processes of the initiative

(Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001) and the roles, responsibilities, risks and rewards among those involved (Wolff, 2010).

Strengths. CUP's are viewed primarily as a vehicle for rectifying exploitative university histories. Such rectification is done by relinquishing the power of academic institutions over collaborative research projects (Jacobs, 2010; Jones et al., 2009). In order to realize the principles of equality, empowerment shifts are being made towards increased community control, shared governance and decision-making through all aspects of research (i.e., *intentional structures;* Munger & Riemer, 2012). The TransPULSE project is an example, which engaged trans communities throughout Ontario to better understand and address the impact of transphobia on social service provisions and related health outcomes for trans people (Travers et al., 2013). Here, all aspects of the research were designed in a way that maximizes community involvement, community control and opportunities for power sharing; community agencies were even able to initiate the research project, frame research questions and select their own academic partners (Travers et al., 2013).

These shifts that move towards greater community control also work through many carefully executed instruments and protocols. Scholars such as Jones et al., (2009) discuss the importance of creating memorandums of understanding, joint operations-protocols that directly empower community members. Understanding of the tools needed (and complexity of issues faced) by CUP's have also been conceptualized within distinct phases; with specific tools, protocols and characteristics featured in each (Curwood et al., 2011). From "plan, do, evaluate," (Jones et al., 2009), "entry into community settings, sustaining collaboration, realizing outcomes" (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) one systematic review of community-university

partnerships coupled a trans-theoretical stages of change model to more fully capture the developmental processes inherent (Munger & Riemer, 2012).

In the entry to community setting phase (of CUP's; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) much work is done to ensure diversity in membership and representation among those participating. Thus, this phase means inviting, as well as actively including a range of professional and citizen groups, expertise, skillsets and experiences into all collaborative efforts (Munger & Riemer, 2012). Careful attention to diversity is said to contribute to the long-term success of CUP's, namely by facilitating trust and mutual respect among participants (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). It is also said to control for biases among participating members in terms of how problems are analyzed and solutions are framed (Munger & Riemer, 2012). In the entry to setting phase, collaborative agents focus on selecting participants across a diversity of skillsets and experiences so that the collaboratives' understanding of the local community systems are enhanced - that is, its sociopolitical, economic and cultural bearings (Jones et al., 2009; Kelly, Ryan, Altman, & Stelzner, 2000). As seen in other collaboration models, *thinking in systems* perspective is also important in this context; allowing practitioners to situate their understanding of complex social issues within larger community systems-systems which allow for more fruitful analyses of community problems and the creation of more impactful solutions (Foster-Fishman, Nowell, & Yang, 2007). Other activities of the entry to setting phase include developing a shared vision, agreeing upon common goals, objectives and establishing ground rules for decision-making (Munger & Riemer, 2012).

Limitations. Once in sustainability/action phase, CUP scholars highlight the importance of ongoing attendance to group dynamics (Munger & Riemer, 2012), open and frequent communication (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Jones et al., 2009), and active commitment to the

community issue at hand (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). A culture of learning and reflective practices are additionally praised for their ability to monitor power differentials as they play out in group dynamics and decision-making (Munger & Riemer, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005).

While these highlighted aspects of reflection are a step in the right direction, the benefits of reflection and learning (as discussed in the CUP literature) are also somewhat limited. For example, reflective practices in CUP's seem to not link generative *processes* (processes that challenge and change the assumptions of stakeholders involved) to the creation of innovative solutions (to community problems). Lastly, given how CUP alliances are often framed within individual project and funding cycles (Jones et al., 2009), CUP's are also limited in their ability to maintain themselves *(i.e., sustainability)*. Thus, one of the major distinctions of the LC from a CUP is that the former seeks to tailor and provide university resources to community partners over a much longer time period.

Communities of Practice (CoP)

Key concepts and purpose. Cognitivist approaches to learning theory (Bandura, Piaget, etc.) enjoyed many years of domination (in regards to how we think about learning; Woolfolk, Winne, Perry & Shapka, 2010) until scholars like Vygotsky (i.e., zone of proximal development), Etienne Wenger, and Jean Lave (and many others) postulated the notion of socially-situated learning and settings for contextualized knowledge production (Hung & Chen, 2010; Meessen et al., 2011). Learning here was situated not within neuro-linguistic centres of the brain, but through "social learning systems" (Wenger, 2000) and where meanings and understandings were negotiated through social group processes (Wenger, 2007). Ongoing exposure through these groups was said to cultivate "practice" whereby individuals' participation in group processes and the reification of concepts mutually reinforce each other. Reification

refers to the construction of knowledge, facts, understandings that are imposed upon the world (McConnell-Ginet, 1989). For this reason, practices can be viewed as "shared histories of learning," (Wenger, 2007) from which understandings of best practices and group competencies emerge (Wenger, 2007).

It was this theoretical grounding in socially-situated learning that eventually gave way to CoP's (Wenger, 1988). CoP's seek to bring "groups of people together who share a common concern, set of problems and passion about a topic, while simultaneously deepening their knowledge and expertise in that area" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p.4). Moreover, those brought together typically share a common professional domain (e.g., surgeons, artists) (Wenger, 1998), and efforts are made to cultivate the sort of social relations, social settings and social contexts that enable effective learning (Lawthom, 2011). Learning here is viewed as inextricable from identity formation (Lawthom, 2011), which is created and sustained through (an ongoing) engagement in shared activities (Eckert & McConnell-Gint, 1999). While identity formation is central to social learning systems in general (Wenger, 2000), the shared activities featured in CoP's work to bind people together, garnering trust and a sense of belonging (Meessen et al., 2011).

CoP's key concepts include: joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire (Wenger, 2007). Joint enterprise is "what the CoP is about" (Meessen et al., 2011, p.2), that is, the social processes and activities (Wenger, 2000) that ensure relations of accountability (i.e., expectation that people show up to regularly scheduled meetings), while directing social energy into inquiries of interest (Wenger, 2007). Mutual engagement is about how the CoP functions (Meessen et al., 2011). Mutual engagement refers to the "regularly jointed activity" (Eckert, 2006), where meanings and understandings are deepened through meaningful dialogue and

reflective activities (i.e., praxis; Meessen et al., 2011). Such full and mutual engagement in the

CoP's "socio-cultural practices" is said to contribute to the mastery of skills while also

enhancing the capabilities of the entire group (Meessen et al., 2011). Shared repertoire is about

the capabilities that the CoP has actually produced (Meessen et al., 2011), and is consequently

the combined result of reification and participation processes (Wenger, 2007). It also refers to the

codification of resources, experiences, tools, language, stories and artefacts used (by a CoP) to

address a specific problem of interest (Wenger, 1998, 2000). Critical and ongoing reflection on

the resources, tools, that are produced (by shared repertoire) is said to invoke critical self-

awareness, which can help CoP's radically change course. As the patterns of (mutual)

engagement, participation and reification processes are marked by cycles of continuity and

discontinuity (in that the CoP's current understandings are not always salient with members'

experiences), CoP's are thereby provided with a couple of mechanisms that can challenge and

change their assumptions as they unfold over time (Wenger, 2007).

     Strengths. As discussed in organizational management circles, CoP's are seen as drivers

of innovation (Lesser & Storck, 2001), improved business performance (Wenger, 1988) and

enhanced business strategy (Wenger & Synder, 2000). Lesser and Storck's (2001) clearly

illustrate how a CoP can reach these goals through a multi-site case study, which analyzed CoP's

across a variety of business contexts (from pharmaceutical companies, software companies,

multi-national banking institutions). Their case study found that the pathways to improved

business performance stemmed from CoP's ability to a) decrease the learning curve for new

employees, b) reduce redundancy of efforts, c) generate innovative ideas for products and

services, and d) better and more quickly respond to consumer needs (Lesser & Storck, 2001).

After several years of prioritizing business contexts, CoP's are now beginning to show promise

in the fields of nursing (Valaitis, Akhtar-Danesh, Brooks, Binks, & Semogas, 2011) and health promotion (Lawthom, 2011).

Limitations. Nonetheless, CoP's (as currently conceived) serve a very specific function. While recognized as organic, self-organized entities (Wenger & Synder, 2000), CoP's are often contained within larger (and rigid) organizational hierarchies (Wenger, 1998). Despite claims that anyone can join a CoP and the need for heterogeneity of membership (Meessen et al., 2011; Wenger, 2007), participants are often brought together through their affinity to a particular profession or organizational mandate. Thus, generally speaking CoP's only bring a group of professionals together (Lesser & Storck, 2001), rather than a wider, more diversified community that comes together and learns. While newcomers can become familiar with the "expert-language" used in CoP's (Wenger, 2000), people will not commit to the CoP over the longer term if they do not feel connected to the expertise of the group (Wenger & Synder, 2001). Given that maintenance of access to the practice setting is key to formation of generative social processes (Pea & Sealy-Brown, 1991) and innovative solutions (Wenger, 2000), the extent and quality of innovations might be questionable when membership remains homogenous.

Efforts to decrease the level of homogeneity and insularity inherent to CoP's, have come through attempts to establish cross-(CoP) group linkages (Wenger, 2000) and creation of boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989). Lawthom (2011) provides an example of such cross-group linkages, where a CoP of community agencies and a university-specific CoP came together to reimagine community-engaged learning (CEL) programs. Yet navigating these boundaries requires highly skilled brokers (Lawthom, 2011; Wenger, 2000) and careful attention to power (Tennant, 1997) and conflict (Lawthom, 2011). Unfortunately, these boundary-crossing negotiations have more often led to defensiveness, misunderstandings (Wenger, 2000) and the

importing of perspectives and practices of one CoP onto another (Lawthom, 2011). In Lawthom's (2011) example, the academic CoP insisted upon creating academic journal articles, whereas the community-based CoP insisted upon creating easy-to-read magazines. Comparing and contrasting the benefits offered by CoP's to the CC's mentioned earlier is also fairly telling. While CoP's bode the importance of information sharing, experience sharing (Wenger & Synder, 2000) and the coordination of efforts, no explicit attention is given to capacity building in the ways discussed by Wolff (2010). Rather, capacity building is framed mostly in terms of the competencies gained for the CoP itself, with little thought given to wider citizen groups or community coalitions (as seen, CoP's often remain focused solely on their own needs). For these reasons, CoP's (as currently conceived) are ultimately limited by their operating unit of analysis and exclusionary forms of membership.

Nonetheless, there are some exceptions to these principles-and some work has illustrated how CoP's can be used to address complex social issues. Vibrant Communities, for example, is a multi-sectoral (CoP) network that spans across Canada (Born, 2008). Vibrant Communities was tasked with creating a comprehensive strategy that can reduce poverty for the approximately one million people who are affected by it across Canada. The approaches used were also catered to the specific needs and realities of individual municipalities. In 2002, the city of Hamilton, Ontario, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (HRPR) brought together key groups from the arts, social services, culture, recreation and environmental sectors. Interactive and recurring conversations with these groups led the HRPR to recast their definition of poverty beyond the low-income cut-off, now reconsidering the multiple, interrelated issues such as employment, food security, social inclusion and affordable housing. Next, the HRPR set its priorities on prevention (rather than alleviation), innovation, risk-taking and long-term change.

Moreover, the HRPR created several strategies (at multiple levels-systems', community and organizational) that the coalition believed could best promote socio-economic prosperity in the region. These strategies focused on creating a range of educational opportunities for adults at the local community college (Mohawk College) as well as early childhood education and care. Partnerships were formed with key agencies based around their ability to facilitate progress towards the targets identified. As expected from a CoP, the HRPR's also maintained a strong commitment to learning and reflection, which was embodied through the ongoing evaluation of the CoP's central activities. Evaluation meetings helped the group track progress and identify next steps. The impact of Vibrant Communities CoP was eventually revealed through its many successes: which included, but were not limited to the establishment of several new social services in low-income neighbourhoods, various partnerships at-risk schools, and the establishment of a variety of youth advisory committees. By 2007, $5.9 million dollars was invested in poverty-reduction efforts each year, and almost $1 million welfare dollars were allocated to 6,418 families throughout the Hamilton region. At the municipal policy level, changes were also made to a) reverse claw-backs beset upon families relying on welfare and to b) adopt a living-wage policy for the region.

Learning Community

In the summer and fall of 2015, members of the Community, Environment, and Research Group and the Centre for Community, Research, Learning and Action (CCRLA), and the Sustainable Societies Consulting Group developed the LC model in the context of a reading course on different approaches to social innovation. We identified 12 common "systems change" approaches commonly referenced in the social innovation literature. Our research group explored these in further detail via 3 hour weekly meetings, which took place over the course of the fall

semester of 2015. The PhD readings course consisted of three distinct phases: i) reviewing concepts, ii) synthesizing concepts and iii) critical analysis and model generation. In the first phase, we reviewed the concepts espoused: ranging from the concept of "prototyping" in design thinking (Brown, 2009) to multi-level interactions in complex systems science (Gunderson & Holling, 2002). In part two, we synthesized our understanding of the methods as our exposure and engagement increased. In part three, we filled in the "missing" content identified from the first phase. In this final stage, our research team collectively and inductively generated our LC model, based upon the elements (of a collaboration model) we felt to be critical. After analyzing and thematically sorting the individual components (and as previously mentioned), the research group devised our model into 5 superordinate clusters: *Learning community: lens, structure, process, practice and outcomes*, while creating a workable definition for each.

At its core, the learning community seeks to (and continues to) bring together community organizations, political decision-makers, funders, academics and those with lived experience around a complex social issue. This specific case study brought these actors together around the issue of immigration and social inclusion. Regardless of the specific project focus, the learning community places a central emphasis on learning-that is, an ongoing commitment to learning, reflection, experimentation and feedback, at the level of, and engagement with community (i.e., broad, cross-sectoral collaboration). In this case study, LC members met regularly to discuss critical learning and research needs from the broader Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (WRIP) and Laurier network. Throughout the course of several months, resources and opportunities began to be matched to the learning needs identified. With near two decades of cross-sectoral experience, WRIP (including its predecessors) brought forth considerable resources, as well as longstanding histories of collegial working relationships with the university

and an enthusiasm for learning. Nevertheless, it has been said elsewhere that university resources can significantly contribute to community change initiatives (when they are available). When properly connected and utilized, universities have a wealth of knowledge and expertise-particularly related to research and evaluation, which are often missing from social and community services. The aim of this thesis was to help fill the research gap, which this LC will hopefully continue to address in the months and years that follow. Another source of inspiration and principles derived for the learning community is the role of (and need for) innovation - where creative problem solving processes are used to create new social services, policies and programs that can better attend to the complex social issue targeted. Infrastructure for innovation continues to be developed at Wilfrid Laurier University and has been an integral part of this LC. As once research and evaluation products are produced and delivered, innovations can help LC practitioners understand, interpret and refine such products, services or "prototypes" that are used to address policy and practice needs (and as they change over time).

While many activities have been central to the implementation and development of the LC, two activities specifically informed this research project. These include the learning team meetings and the Immigration Partnership (IP) design lab. Each activity is described in more detail below.

Learning Teams: Meet four times (between September 2016 and March 2017) and were tasked with identifying the information (i.e., "learning") needs of the Immigration Partnership and its respective community agencies (More details of this partnership and major features of its work are discussed in further detail below). While certain core team members were originally anticipated to be responsible for overviewing and monitoring key activities related to the development of the LC, there was considerable cross-fertilization between learning team

members who did not take on such responsibilities and other learning community activities (e.g., such as the design lab). Now, eight months after the initial learning team meeting, the learning teams continue to be tasked with the challenge of how to best match available resources and opportunities at the university and opportunities with all (or some of) the learning needs identified. In early April 2017 results from this research project were presented to the learning team to synthesize findings and prompt subsequent strategic planning processes for the WRIP-Laurier LC.

Immigration Partnership (IP) Design Lab: In January 2017, community partners and Laurier faculty, staff and students came together to co-create innovative programs/solutions for delivering settlement and inclusion services. Immigration issues prioritized in the design lab were directly informed by "learning needs" identified by settlement service providers who participated in Fall 2016 term learning team meetings. The design lab ran monthly, for a total of four months. An internal Laurier grant was awarded to fund student teams to implement and test solutions that emerge from the design lab in collaboration with Immigration Partnership service providers.

To reorient the reader to this thesis and summarize the literature review mentioned previously, the learning community framework really brings together and approximates two previously divorced bodies of literature: community-oriented collaborations (i.e., CC's, CUP's), and learning-oriented collaborations (i.e., LO's, CoP's). Yet this model was also significantly grounded in social innovation scholarship, which was studied by our research team through a PhD-level readings course that took place during the Fall semester of 2015. Through the PhD readings course, we explored diverse conceptualizations of collaboration and the sort of innovative (i.e., creative problem solving) strategies that could make them more effective (in

their work towards social change). The learning community's (LC) framework was subsequently

broken down into *lens, structures* (how the LC is organized), *processes* (how the LC goes about

its work), *practices* (what is done in the LC from day to day), and *outcomes*. The table below is a

conceptual overview of the learning community model, whereas Appendix B contains workable

definitions of each component of the LC. For an overview of the similarities and differences

between our LC and the other collaboration models, Appendix C can be consulted.

<div align="center">Table 1. Conceptual Overview of the Learning Community model</div>
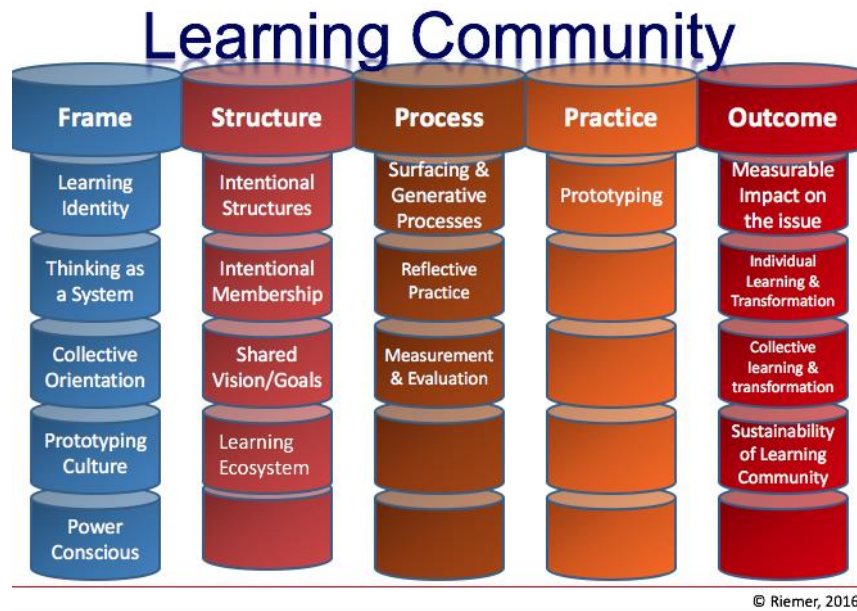
The LC's lens or frame refers to the central organizing principles and story line that are

present within the LC. Such principles provide meaning to its identity, which is also

communicated internally and externally. The frame of the LC is about how its members make

decisions, how they classify, organize and interpret issues they are dealing with. This entails a

learning identity, *thinking as a system*, having a *collective orientation*, fostering a *prototyping*

culture, and maintaining a *power consciousness*.

Learning identity is substantiated primarily by the LO (Senge, 1995) and CoP literature (Wenger, 1998, 2000), which clearly articulate the benefits of continuously pursuing knowledge, seeking feedback and experimenting. We add to this by incorporating the values of learning into the identity of collaboratives. The need for *thinking as a system* is well supported by the LO (Senge, 1995) and CC scholarship (Evans & Kivell, 2015; Nowell & Foster-Fishman, 2011). *Thinking as a system* underscores the importance of using a complexity lens in the diagnosis of social problems-conceptualizing their manifestation in terms of non-linear patterns of cause and effect and cyclical dynamics (Bryson & Crosby, 2005), and using mutually-reinforcing, well-coordinated actions to address them (Meadows, 2008; Westley et al., 2007). Consequently, *thinking as a system* enables collaborations to be better positioned to address root causes rather than mere symptoms (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007). CUP authors have also expressed similar aims and concerns (Curwood et al., 2011). As seen by Butterfoss (2007), Haines et al. (2011) and Nowell (2009) a *collective orientation* (i.e., emphasis on collaboration, co-creation over individual pursuit) works to improve community capabilities and the quality of the collaboratives' responses to local issues. With a *prototyping culture* (i.e., creative problem solving, ongoing experimentation) collaboratives work to uncover "shared epistemologies of practice" (Schon, 1995), which are the values and assumptions (of the group) that prolong the use of programmatic activities that do not meaningfully address the problems at hand (Argyris et al., 1985). *Power consciousness* seeks to acknowledge and address the influence of social power on collaborative processes and structures, which may be framed in terms of procedural (i.e., inclusive decision-making) and distributive justice (i.e., fair allocation of resources) concerns (see Prilleltensky, 2012). As power dynamics a) inevitably play out in collaborative group settings (especially when there is diversity in membership), and b) have so far been managed

poorly in CC's, LO's and CoP's (Garcia-Ramirez et al, 2009; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005; Wolff, 2010), the LC looks to anticipate and control for these dynamics-through carefully designed facilitation (processes) and collaboration structures.

The LC's *structures* are the latticework from which learning community's processes and practices are built. This foundation translates the components of the LC's lens or frame into practical strategies that allow the learning community to put its principles into practice. Thus, the learning community's structures include: *intentional structures, intentional membership*, *shared visions and goals,* and *learning ecosystem.* As seen in the CC scholarship, relational capacity is a strong predictor of systems' change outcomes (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Wandersman et al., 2005)-yet this not only requires diversity in membership but (ongoing) feelings of satisfaction, sense of efficacy and sense of belonging for those involved. *Intentional structures* accounts for this by providing opportunities for shared decision-making and power sharing (i.e., via creation of steering committees, works groups that form and disband as needed, employing strategies like consensus decision-making). The CUP scholarship is especially insightful in this regard, using a range of instruments and protocols that equalize power relations; such as by giving communities the power to determine research objectives (Jones et al., 2009) and select their own academic partners (Travers et al., 2013).

It has also been found (in the CoP literature) that a lack of diversity in membership often hampers collaboratives' ability to create innovative solutions (such as when you are only engaging with an expert group of practitioners; Allen, Stelzner, & Wielkiewicz, 1998; Wenger, 2000). This finding is similarly reflected in the CC scholarship, which sees increased membership diversity associated with increased coalition effectiveness (Balcazar et al., 1990). For these reasons, we also include *intentional membership,* which uses intentional processes and

tools (i.e., power mapping, stakeholder analysis, etc.) to continuously monitor diversity, representation and power concerns in the selection of, and engagement with LC members. Unlike the self-interests that motivate and drive LO's and CoP's, *shared vision and goals* supersedes but accounts for the interest of the LC's individual members. Such shared vision helps the LC to maintain *a collective orientation,* ensuring that the groups involved are primarily motivated by a desire to meet the needs of the community, rather than advancing the self-interests of a specific organization (LO's) or an expert group of practitioners (CoP's). *Learning ecosystem* also works to foster a *collective orientation*, by nurturing a web of relationships and resources throughout the multiple organizations and actors involved. Through the exchange of resources and opportunities for dialogue, capacity is also built into the broader collaborative arena-namely through the creation of social capital, trust and opportunities for enhanced learning. The *learning ecosystem* is also one mechanism from which the LC works to maintain its *shared visions and goals.*

LC processes are the means by which decisions are made and actions are taken. When built within the LC's structural framework, these processes serve to guide the cyclical movements of goal setting, decision-making, as well as action and reflection. Through these ongoing cycles, process is made toward the community's vision of social justice and wellbeing. Consequently, LC processes include *reflective practice, measurement and evaluation,* and s*urfacing and generative processes. Reflective practice:* scholarship on LO's (Senge, 1995; Thomas & Allen, 2006) and CoP's (Eckert, 2006; Wenger, 1998, 2000, 2007) highlight the importance of action-reflection (and learning) cycles, to deepen understanding of pertinent issues, and its wider sociopolitical bearings (Evans & Kivell, 2015). Consequently, *reflective practice* is also part of our LC, as it helps to identify leverage points that can alter underlying

organizational and inter-organizational dynamics. *Measurement and evaluation* is well cited in the CC literature, seen as a lever for organizational capacity building (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001a), through an ongoing commitment to improvement and monitoring of the collaboration at large (Evans et al., 2014; Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b). Thus similarly, the LC uses *measurement and evaluation* to identify benchmarks and track movements towards them, whereby data points are viewed as sources of learning as they continue to provide opportunities for knowledge production and growth.

Lastly, the importance of *surfacing and generative processes* is exemplified by Engestrom (1987) and Evans and Kivell (2015), in their description of expansive learning and critical community practices respectively. Such generative processes work to uncover underlying assumptions, biases that are no longer serving the goals and objectives of organizational or intra-organizational teams (Evan & Kivell, 2015). We see *surfacing and generative processes* as processes that nurture creative thinking, dialogue and alternative ways of viewing a given issue. Through facilitated dialogue and *intentional membership* participants use dissent and collective experience to challenge and reframe the collaboratives' knowledge of the problem at hand. While CUP's employ *reflective practices,* we expand upon this by including *surfacing and generative processes* as well; taken together it is easier to attend to power dynamics (Munger & Riemer, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) and help to create innovative solutions for the pertinent social issue. These solutions do not rest only on an individuals' or organizations' self-interest but the shared objectives, and, therefore, help the LC to maintain a *collective orientation* which endures over the longer term (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005).

By weaving together, combining the "best attributes" of these various collaboration models, we were (and remain) hopeful that the LC model (once employed) will become

increasingly useful in health promotion, community development and public health circles, as well as other universities and communities who are seeking to discover new ways of working together. We believe that such partnerships can considerably enhance understandings of complex social issues and the strategies that can be used to address them at a systems-level.

Yet, up to this point, the LC framework was purely theoretical, deductively derived from key concepts identified by a critical review of different bodies of literature. This study was the first to empirically study, track the development of the LC and determine the feasibility of the model in practice (based upon a comparison of the model against examination of the actual case site). The "case" that made examination of the LC possible came from an emerging partnership agreement between the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (WRIP – which is a network comprised of over 50 organizations in settlement, health, social services, business, employment and educational sectors located in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario) and several centres at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Formed in 2006 (which at the time WRIP was known as the Immigration Employment Network (IEN)), the IEN convened actors across Waterloo Region through a planning table and discussions to create a local immigration partnership (LIP). These discussions were driven by a need to reimagine the response (and create a community-based partnership) to the preponderance of refugee resettlement service needs in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. The development of the LIP was essential to the creation of this larger settlement strategy, and was formalized through a call for proposals issued by the Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) office in 2009. Soon after, the Community-Based Research (CCBR) helped develop a community action plan to create a strategy for the new LIP structure. After several community consultations, it became apparent that the mandates, objectives and goals of the IEN and LIP were considerably

overlapping; eventually leading both networks to become integrated into a single structure – what is now referred to as the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership.

Given this scope and history, the WRIP has also enjoyed rather extensive working relationships with certain agencies and actors affiliated with Laurier University. It is through these pre-existing ties, such as with Laurier International specifically (and one key staff member there who has sat on the WRIP's leadership council) and other community-based research centres on campus, that the manager of the WRIP approached Laurier's Social Innovation and Venture Creation (SIVC) and CCRLA, expressing great interest in utilizing research and evaluation infrastructure (as well as ever-expanding social innovation and social entrepreneurship infrastructure) on campus to support current and needed changes in the immigration service sector. While WRIP practitioners enjoyed their relationships with the university, many of the community-based research or social innovation/social entrepreneurship programs (or resources) on campus supporting immigration resettlement sector have not been strategically coordinated across centres or conducted at the scale required to meet the preponderance of immigration and resettlement needs. With the creation and implementation of the learning community (and the discussions that ensued), the stakeholders involved agreed that the learning community would be an appropriate vehicle to formalize these relationships further while also better matching university resources (as well as infrastructure and programs) to support WRIP community needs in a more comprehensive manner.

Various partners agreed that many needed changes (or learning needs – as depicted in the table below) for the immigration services sector could be best realized through engagement with the resources mentioned previously and adherence to our (learning community) model. From a research perspective, we hoped that this exemplary case study could also demonstrate how the

learning community may assist others in creating lasting and transformative change in their own communities.

Thus, this master's thesis studied the LC's most nascent (first and second) stage of development, while also assessing the currently existing infrastructures, resources and tools (as well as those emerging from WRIP's pre-established history) that could be leveraged to move the WRIP-Laurier system towards greater realization of the model. As seen below, the development of the learning community was conceptualized in three distinct stages.

Table 2. Developmental phases of the LC

Phase/ Timeline	Purposes
First Phase (June 2016-December 2016)	Identify community "learning needs" Create, begin learning team meetings Host first LC forum (June 2016) Begin Design Lab Activities
Second Phase (January 2017-April 2017)	Run Design Lab (January-April) Identify pertinent resources (financial, human, social, intellectual capital) of Wilfrid Laurier University that can be help meet the needs of the LC
Third Phase (April 2017-Onwards)	Call in, coalesce larger groups to align Wilfrid Laurier University resources and community/WRIP needs

Working with WRIP also provided us with an opportunity to develop and refine the LC based on the experiences of those involved (as revealed by exploring challenges and successes related to the realization of the LC's key concepts and activities). In its early development, the LC involved many partners from across Wilfrid Laurier University: such as the International Migration Research Centre, Laurier International, and Wilfrid Laurier University's Community

Service Learning (CSL) office. In partnership with the key agencies, and under the guidance of Dr. Manuel Riemer, I was responsible for empirically investigating this early (first and second) developmental phase of (and assessment of the case site against) the model.

My reasons for selecting WRIP-Laurier partnership as the LC case site were also in accordance with Miles and Huberman's (1994) typology for case site selection: opportunities for generalizability (i.e., partners are willing to implement the learning community in its entirety), desirability (i.e., enthusiasm and interest of partners), proximity (i.e., highly local), feasibility (i.e., given partners' desirability and proximity) and timing (i.e., partners wanted to start the project right away). The WRIP-Laurier LC case site was also exemplary by nature (as described by Yin, 1984), as Waterloo, Ontario is known for its longstanding collaborative spirit and dedication to innovation and excellence in both social and technological spheres.

Yin's (1984) recommendations for case site selection were also similarly reflected in the conditions that enabled Laurier's (and the LC's) partnership with WRIP: convenience, access, geographic proximity and personal prior contact (p.74). Prior to the LC, the WRIP has enjoyed close, personal working relationship with CCRLA, and much work was done over the past several months to initiate and maintain collaborative, collegial atmosphere between the WRIP-Laurier LC's many involved partners.

Methodology

Research Objectives

Given the discussion above, the key objectives of this current study were to:

1. **Test the feasibility of the learning community model**: This thesis sought to determine if, how and to what extent the various aspects of the theoretical LC model derived from the literature review could be realized in practice.

2. **Create social impact:** This case study sought to determine how the LC may help collaborative agents create agile and adaptive responses to immigration social service challenges in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. Through direct or indirect engagement with the LC, this research project also sought to positively (albeit indirectly) contribute to inclusion and wellbeing outcomes for immigrants and refugees living in Kitchener-Waterloo.

3. **Contribute to knowledge mobilization (KMb)**: This study sought to make the best practices in critical social science scholarship, social innovation and health promotion literature and related forms of scholarship more accessible and available to those who participate in the local LC (i.e., immigrants, community agencies, students).

Inferences regarding the feasibility of the LC model (first research objective) were subsequently determined by our research questions, which are outlined as follows:

Research Questions

1. Which aspect of the learning community model were present in the WRIP-Laurier learning community by Winter 2017?

2. How did the learning community develop over its first and second developmental phase?

Research Paradigm

As someone who engages in research for social change and believes that knowledge production (through research) is a highly, contextualized phenomenon, my research project was conceptualized, administered and evaluated through the critical theory paradigm.

Critical theory paradigm. The critical theory paradigm recognizes how contextualized meanings, specific economic and political circumstances shape lived experience (Case, Todd, & Kral, 2014) and exploit humankind (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, the critical theory paradigm foregrounds citizen/participant-driven action in the attainment of social transformation

against oppressive social conditions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Research processes herein paid close attention to power, and dialectical or "hermeneutic" interactions, seeing such as key "historically situated" forms of inquiry working to overcome ignorance, misapprehension and oppressive social structures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The critical theory paradigm was complementary to this master's thesis project for several reasons. Immigration and Refugee settlement agencies and the clients they serve encounter a significant level of subjugation and discrimination in society. Although we sought to validate the theoretical basis of our LC model, it was also practically-minded. Studying the development of the model through a case study approach helped document collaborative processes (e.g., design lab, learning team meetings, etc.) and structures that can be used to reduce the level of subjugation (and increased social service enhancements), oppression faced by newcomers in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. For example, the Immigration Partnership Design Lab (which is one central activity of the LC) intentionally brought together community citizens, refugees, university students and faculty in an egalitarian, creative problem-solving environment in order to build common understandings of refugee resettlement issues (issues that were specifically identified by the refugee resettlement sector) and solutions used to address them. Moreover, studying "dialogical" discourses inherent to our LC model and the examination of the WRIP-Laurier case site has helped to identify strategies that can be used to equalize power dynamics and systematically challenge the assumptions of all involved stakeholders (via *intentional structures, generative processes)*. Further, and in alignment with the critical theory paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) "expert" knowledge in the LC has not been valued above the experiential knowledge of those who are less "privileged" (as I interviewed an equal number of community and university partners). Community partners included front-line settlement workers

from various immigration supporting agencies (as well as agencies who support refugees but not exclusively) in Kitchener-Waterloo region, senior administrators of the WRIP and university partners included staff from key Laurier-affiliated organizations involved in the LC and university professors. A comprehensive, holistic examination of WRIP-Laurier case study sought to contribute to a) more accurate depiction of underlying social problems surrounding refugee settlement, as well as b) increased empowerment for those involved (such as community members and university students). In the months that follow from this study, we hope that the LC will create lasting, durable and generative solutions to refugee resettlement issues in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Lastly, as the critical theory paradigm orientates itself around contextualized meaning and socio-politically situated knowledge production (Todd, 2011), a case study approach was well-suited to study and attain these understandings. As I employed multiple, ethnographic approaches, these helped me to achieve a "thick description" of the case under study (Geertz, 1987).

Method. Overview.

In order to answer the first research question, qualitative interviews with key informants from the partnership and the university were conducted. In addition, I reviewed key documents pertaining to the history and present structure and processes of WRIP. Information from these sources were then compared to the theoretical model of the LC. For the second research question, I reviewed key documents from the learning team, participation observation field notes from the IP design lab as well as segments of the qualitative interviews specifically pertaining to new developments (e.g., opportunities, activities) for the WRIP-Laurier learning community. The data collection sources used to answer each respective research question are also summarized in the data matrix table below.

Table 3. Data Analysis Matrix

Research Question	Sub-Questions, Boundaries & Constraints	Data collection methods
1. Which aspect of the learning community model were present in the WRIP-Laurier learning community by Winter 2017?	What historical challenges have negatively impacted WRIP's functionality (outcomes, goals, indicators, etc.)? Laurier's functionality? What pre-existing infrastructure, assets, resources or programs exist in WRIP or Laurier to support the realization of the LC?	Qualitative interviews (N=10) Documentation review
2. How does the learning community develop over its first and second developmental phase?	What happened from the actual process? How were research q's generated from LC activities (i.e., IP design lab, learning team meetings? -Attendance to key, critical events, developmental milestones -Implementation of activities (frequency, quality) -How negotiations, conflicts handled (LC processes) Limit by six-month data collection period	Participant Observation Documentation Review

The section below is also organized by each research question, information pertaining to each data sources used for each research question are described in more detail below.

Research Question #1

Method. Qualitative Interviews.

A total of ten (N=10) key informant interviews took place between December 2016 and January 2017 with partners directly and indirectly involved with the WRIP-Laurier LC. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five community partners (N=5) and five university

partners (N=5) who were purposively selected (informed consent documents can be found in

Appendix D). All participants were diversely and strategically located throughout the WRIP-

Laurier network. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to an hour and forty-seven minutes, with

an average length of one hour and twenty-two minutes. While slightly modified for community

versus university partners, both sets of interview protocols (See Appendix E for an overview of

both interview protocols) asked participants about their own (as well as their constituent

organizations') a) roles and responsibilities, experiences of engaging in b) community-engaged

research/community service learning programs and/or c) social innovation and d) general

impressions of engaging with university or community partners (as well as key challenges and

perceived opportunities for the future. Given participants proximity to the learning community,

all participants were asked about their initial thoughts and impressions about the emerging LC

initiative.

Community partners interviewed included representatives from agencies (and

institutions) supporting immigrants and refugees throughout the Kitchener-Waterloo community.

University interviews included representatives from key organizations and offices at the

university affiliated with the emerging LC; speaking with representatives from organizations

involved in community service-learning curriculum, international student settlement/support, and

community-based research. While not an agency directly serving newcomers or directly

affiliated with Wilfrid Laurier University, a research associate from a community-based research

centre was also included and counted as a (the last of 5) "community" interview(s), given their

extensive and prior involvement in the research that helped create the WRIP.

Method. Documentation review.

Meeting minutes from five learning team meetings were captured, analyzed and included

in this study. These learning team meetings took place between September 26th, 2016 and March

20th, 2017. While a small core attended three or more learning team meetings, attendance

fluctuated for the rest of attendees. Nonetheless, most meetings featured a broad diversity of

participants, ranging from professors from the faculty of education, the faculty of arts, and the

faculty of science; to graduate students from a variety of arts and science disciplines, as well as

representatives of community organizations supporting refugees/newcomers and the WRIP. All

meeting minute notes were recorded verbatim.

<div align="center">Research Question #2</div>

Method. Participant Observation.

Participant observation field notes were taken, included and analyzed from two (N=2) out

of the four immigration and social inclusion (IP) design lab events planned for the Winter 2017

semester (conducted January 13th and February 10th, 2017). Hosted by a social entrepreneurship

institution at Laurier, the IP design lab (which was further described in the literature review)

convened two representatives of community agencies involved in the WRIP (both participated in

key informant interviews and personally identified as refugee or newcomer), several

undergraduate students who identified or did not identify with refugee/newcomer status and one

university professor. A single community citizen who identified as a refugee/newcomer also

participated in the second design lab.

I entered the IP design lab with what Padgett (2012) refers to as a "systematic, non-

judgmental stance," or what Fetterman (1989) calls an "open mind and empty head." I also paid

great attention to what Todd (2012) calls "systems regularities," - that is the behaviours and

interactions of participants and group facilitator in the setting (Padgett, 2012) and wrote down

concrete sensory details and the interactions between "members" of the host setting (Emerson,

2011). I switched between compulsive note-taking (i.e., "real time jottings"; Emerson, 2011,

p.40) with an active engagement in IP design lab activities (Padgett, 2012, p.113).

Ethnography's (participant observation specifically) also equipped me with an ability to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for how social capital is formed and maintained within the IP design lab setting (Case et al., 2014). Extensive conversations, corroboration of field notes between myself and the fourth-year undergraduate research assistant enabled me to dialectically integrate insights from the field into data used for this master's thesis.

Method. Documentation Review.

Documentation from the learning team meetings (as previously described) were also used to answer my second research question.

Analytic procedures.

Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. Meeting minutes, participant observation field notes were taken and digitalized immediately following each respective learning team meeting and design lab process. As mentioned, participant observation field notes were taken with a fourth-year undergraduate research assistant (RA). We corroborated and compared our notes to enhance consensus agreement (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and ensure greater (and overall) coverage of the systems' regularities, social-organizational norms (Case et al., 2014; Padgett, 2012, Rappaport, 2000) inherent to the IP design lab.

Next I read the interview transcripts multiple times, as well as meeting minutes, participant observation notes and listened, re-listened to the audio recordings of interviews in a holistic, unfocused manner. I also read the notes (e.g., memos) taken from each interview, while also compiling the self-reflective information pertinent to the meeting minutes and participant observation field notes. Through a combination of self-journaling processes, self-reflective and memo-taking processes I was able to track and compile my thoughts, feelings, hunches emerging from (and ensuring) my prolonged engagement with all of the textual material collected (Elliot, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999).

Such self-journaling processes continued throughout my entire analytic process (for an overview of my analytical procedure please refer to Appendix F) also assisting me with the development of inductively-derived "indigenous" codes and concepts (Patton, 1990, p.390). However, because this research project also sought to determine the degree of presence of the learning community framework (in the WRIP-Laurier network; research question #1), and consistent with analytical strategies typically recommended for case studies, the codebook (used for qualitative analysis) was also deductively imposed upon the data; I broke the LC down by over-arching category (e.g., learning community lens, structure, practice, process), concept (e.g., prototyping culture) and distinct propositions (e.g., dimensions) inherent to each concept's definition. As an example, the passage found within the definition for *reflective practice*:

"This constant cycle of action and reflection leads to continually deeper

understandings of the issues of interest and broader context."

This proposition was turned into the code "reflective practice – deeper understanding" and subsequently served as the definition for this respective code. The number of propositions associated with each label depended on the complexity of each concept/definition, with concepts propagated into as many as four propositions (e.g. intentional structures) to as little as one (e.g., measurable impact).

After creating the preliminary codebook, I met with members of my research team (who were co-creators of the learning community framework) to ensure accuracy, build consensus regarding the break-down of "all sensitizing" (and indigenous) categories, codes and propositions inherent. Then, I engaged again with all textual documents in an unfocused manner, which helped to ensure that other indigenous concepts could "emerge" organically from the text and be incorporated into the final version of the codebook. Upon completion of this final

codebook, I "manually coded" each interview transcript, meeting minute and participant observation field notes, writing the codes in the margins of each respective document. With special attention to internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity alike (Guba, 1978; Patton, 1990, p.399) and "best practices" for case studies (Thomas, 2011), codes were cross-referenced and compared within and across data collection sources (e.g., interviews, participant observation field notes, etc.) to ensure consistency and veracity of findings.

Prior to inputting all data sources and coded documents into the Nvivo 11 data analysis software program, I once again scrutinized all the codes selected for each passage of my data. Passages selected for a given code were meticulously compared against the original proposition/definition as well as other passages using the same code. This additional analytical step was iterative by nature and helped safeguard against over-coding and/or the improper allocation of codes (Forrester, 2010). Next, the indigenous concepts "barriers," "informal" and "formal" were queried against each respective code/concept. With aims to create exhaustive case records (Boblin et al., 2013; Patton, 1990, p.386), I tallied all incidents of quotes/cases illustrating each respective code coupled with each of the indigenous concepts previously mentioned (e.g., barriers, informal, formal). For example, learning ecosystem – capacity building was tallied for "formal," "informal" and "barriers." Such a process simultaneously assisted me in systematically seeking out and "testing" negative case examples – that is, examples that would test my own assumptions (or theoretical propositions), while enhancing validity and plausibility of findings (Padgett, 2012, p.191; Patton, 1990, p.463).

For instance, if I suspected that *collective orientation – balance of goals* was strongly present, examination and tallying of all barriers associated with the concept helped to ensure rival explanations (those contrary to my original predictions) were methodically sought out and

explored. Individual query results were also omitted from the final tally if they did not clearly

demonstrate an incidence of a given learning community concept or category (see Appendix F

for a chart summary of my analytical procedures).

Inspired by Stefancic, Tsembersis, Messeri, Drake, and Goering's fidelity assessment of

an innovative Housing First 'Pathways to Housing' program (2013), these case records provided

the foundation for a quantitative index system used to determine the "degree of presence" of the

learning community, that is how well the learning community case site compared to the ideal,

theoretical model. As a somewhat crude approximation of reality, degree of presence was

determined by the following formula:

Presence= Formalization(1) + Informal (.5) – Barriers (1).

As seen by this formula, each line of text that was "double-coded" with a given learning

community concept/dimension and the "formalization" code - these passages were tallied and

then multiplied by 1 (for example if there were 7 incidences of formalization with *collective

orientation's balance and goals* dimension, 7 would be multiplied by 1 to create a total sub-score

of 7). Query results for the code "informal" found with the respective learning community

concept/dimension (e.g., *collective orientation – balance and goals*) were tallied and multiplied

by .5 (e.g., 10 incidences of informal with *balance of goals* resulted in a total sub-score of 5).

The barrier sub-score was calculated similar to the strategy used for the "formalization score,"

except that the final tally was multiplied by -1 (and then subtracted from the combined total of

the informal and formal scores for each respective learning community concept/dimension).

While the use of this formula helped to create exhaustive individual case records for each

learning community concept/dimension (which, while not included in this thesis document are

available for review if requested), this procedure also helped to determine to what degree

different aspects of the LC model were present already in this early stage or had at least a strong

foundation within the existing structure and processes among the different partners for the LC.

Query results for barriers were also scrutinized to delineate instances where a given

phenomenon was realized after considerable (yet not insurmountable) struggle from instances

where a phenomenon could not be (or were not) realized at all (i.e., insurmountable struggle).

Several assumptions were also put forth which made the comparison of the learning community

framework to the learning community case site possible. These assumptions are summarized in

the table below.

Table 4. Summary of assumptions made for data analysis

1.	Hypothetical, contemplative responses indicated a lack (or lesser degree) of presence of a given learning community concept.
2.	Broad, vague challenges, such as those related to the difficulties of realizing LC concepts, ensuring benefit of community-based research, social innovation, community service-learning were interpreted as challenged experienced by key informants, first-hand.
3.	While the same quote could be used *across* multiple individual learning community concepts, they were only ever tallied once in relation to a given learning community concept (e.g., learning ecosystem – capacity-building)
4.	Challenges and barriers mentioned signaled issues realizing learning community concepts, thereby reflecting a) lesser degree of presence or b) no presence.
5.	The frequency of response for a given issue/topic indicated degree of importance or weight. That is, the more often an issue, strength or barrier was mentioned the more important it became.
6.	Concrete activities or sense of continuity or history regarding a given theme indicated some level of formalization of a given learning community concept.
7.	All phenomenon coded with or to a given learning community concept (or dimension) were assumed to have equal importance. No factors, phenomenon or histories associated (or coded) with a given learning community concept were presumed to be more important than others (see assumption number five for how importance or weightings of a given factor was determined).

Interpreting degree of presence: Using the formula previously outlined, which was

calculated for each learning community concept and propositions therein, scores ranged

theoretically from -101 to +101 (as this range represents the extreme ends of scores tallied for

each respective learning community concept and dimensions inherent). Ratings were offered at

five "levels," level one indicating not present at all and level five indicating a very strong

presence. This rating system provided the foundation from which the first research question was

answered and reported, and is summarized as follows:

Table 5. Legend for Interpreting "Degree of Presence" scores

Score	Rating	Description
-101 to -65.2	Level 1	Not present at all
-65.2 to -32.4	Level 2	Hardly Present
-32.4 to 0.4	Level 3	Somewhat Present
0.4 to 33.2	Level 4	Significantly Present
33.2+	Level 5	Strongly Present

Establishing the Quality of Data. I ensured the quality of data through multiple mediums,

namely by ensuring prolonged, intense engagement, an organized database, member checking,

corroborating evidence across multiple sources and reflexivity.

Prolonged, intense engagement. Insights from qualitative research scholarship (Padgett,

2012; Patton, 1990, p.194) and single site case studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008) foreground the

importance of prolonged, intense engagement in research settings. This helps to reduce social

desirability bias (in interviews), while also reducing distrust between stakeholders (Trickett et

al., 2011) through rapport building exercises (Kreftin, 1991). I ensured prolonged engagement by

attending every learning meeting (of our learning community) and design lab process over the

course of several months (from September 2016 to April, 2017).

Organized database: Nvivo 11, a qualitative data analysis software program was used to compile, store data and corroborate findings across multiple data sources (e.g., LC meeting minutes, LC events documentation, etc.). This helped to ensure that a comprehensive range of data were included in this study and analyses were rendered in a systematic, methodical way (Trickett et al., 2011). As a similar approach was used for the creation, collection and storage of case records (i.e., chain of evidence to determine the relative presence of LC concepts) are available for review if or when requested.

Member-checks: Preliminary results were presented to members of the learning team in the second week of April 2017. This meeting effectively served as a member-check process as all attendees provided feedback, confirmed and validated my findings. Moreover, participant observation field notes (taken from the IP design lab) taken by myself, the primary investigator, and the undergraduate research assistant were integrated into a single document; phenomena that was captured by both investigators gave further credence to the specific observations drawn, whereas the phenomenon captured by a single investigator helped to ensure that a greater breadth of observational material was included for review. Investigator's triangulation (Patton, 1990, p.187) was also obtained through active discussions/presentation of all individual case records, analytic summaries and preliminary results with my thesis supervisor.

Corroborating evidence across multiple data sources: Consistent with the recommendations of many case study researchers (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Boblin et al., 2013; Cousin, 2005; Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009), all analyses were conducted across multiple data sources; salient features and evidence for the conclusions rendered were most significant when case records included examples from more than one source (e.g., multiple interviewees, participation observation field notes and/or meeting minutes), thereby enabling greater

theoretical validation and validity of findings. Attending to areas of discrepancy (such as through attendance to negative cases, rival explanations; Padgett, 2012, p.191; Patton, 1990, p.463) and heterogeneity in perspectives (among those who actually collected the data; Patton, 1990, p.188) prevented me from a) quarantining my thinking to deductive fronts and b) noting instances where programmatic activities did not actually coincide with our LC model. I methodically tested and explored rival explanations through the case records built to tally and track the "presence" of learning community concepts.

Reflexivity. Extension documentation of field notes, data collection and data analysis (decision-making) processes helped to ensure my accountability to external audiences. Such an approach simultaneously provided me with an opportunity to critically examine how (my own) presuppositions impact all aspects of the research process (Cousin, 2005; Finlay, 2002). Meticulous journaling helped to keep my own social position in check while I collected, corroborated and analyzed data. Moreover, these reflexive processes helped to ensure that "indigenous" concepts and categories would emerge from the interviews and other sources of data, and were subsequently integrated into the codebook used to (qualitatively) analyze the data.

Results

Results Overview

At the beginning of this section I would like to note that the volume of the data, complexity of the LC model and the nature of the analysis conducted provided a significant challenge to succinctly summarize my findings within the space and time limits provided. For this reason, I have combined answers to both research questions within a single section, and remind readers to consult table 1, which contains a conceptual overview of the learning community model (which may help to further contextualize my research findings). While using a comprehensive case study approach, I gave the most weight to key informant interviews (e.g.,

community and university partners), given the richness of data emerging from their perspectives, experience and knowledge of their respective ecosystems (i.e., Laurier University and WRIP). Nonetheless, information from key informant interviews was also supplemented and compared with other sources of data (e.g., documentation review) to determine the presence of the learning community. Thus, the results presented below emerged from an examination of each stakeholder "type" (e.g., university staff, administrators, faculty, front-line refugee resettlement service workers, WRIP administrators, etc.) and an assessment of how their individual and collective histories and working conditions (both past and present) coalesced to affect the development and/or potential realization of the learning community.

For an overview summary of the results with full ratings and scores, consult Appendix G. Factors that contributed to the hindrance (barriers), formalization (and/or) informal realization of learning community concepts are described in more detail below (and summarized in Appendix H), with the most prevalent factors listed first, followed by less salient factors (i.e., factors mentioned less frequently). Further, the findings presented in this section are situated within each respective category of the learning community framework (i.e., learning community lens, learning community structure, learning community practice, process and outcomes). Each section starts with an overview table, listing the key concepts (e.g., learning identity, thinking as a system) associated with a given category (e.g., learning community lens). Each table includes the codes/dimensions (e.g., values learning, integrates learning, etc.) related to a given learning community concept (e.g., learning identity), with definitions for every code provided. Lastly, categories and codes that are more extensively discussed (i.e., using a greater number of illustrative quotes) reflect those with greater sophistication or nuance.

Category:	Learning community lens				
Concepts	Learning identity	Thinking as a system	Collective orientation	Power consciousness	Prototyping culture
Codes:	Values learning, experimentation Integrated learning into practice Flow of information	Collaborative system, relational Complexity thinking Non-linear approaches to problem-solving	Balance of goals Structures – equitable decision-making Maintenance of diversity	Social power – consciousness Social power – integrated into policies, structures Social power - action	Creativity – Encouraged, develops solutions Failures – creates new learnings/insights& scales solutions (+10)
Definition of codes:	**Values learning, experimentation:** The community clearly embraces learning in the way the members think of themselves and how they represent themselves to others. The value of learning is built into key processes and structures. **Integrates learning into practice:** The various members of the learning community integrate newly generated insights into their ongoing practice. **Flow of information:** The community continuously pursues knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the flow of information and resources are exchanged between/across academic institutions and practice groups.	**Collaborative system/relational:** The community's structures, processes, and practices are based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. **Complexity thinking:** System thinking is reflected in the way the community analyzes complex social issues as well as develops, implements, and evaluates social interventions that address those issues. **Non-linear approaches to problem solving:** Systems thinking focuses on cyclical dynamics rather than linear cause and effect.	**Balance of goals:** the learning community culture is based on collaboration and co-creation rather than competition and individual pursuit. Members of the learning community orient themselves toward shared goals and visions. They commit to integrating their individual goals with the common one as effectively as possible. **Structures – equitable:** Specific structures and policies that foster collaborative decision-making and actions are present (e.g., flat power structures). **Maintenance of diversity:** The strengths, experience, skills, and potential contributions of all members are appreciated and sought out in developing approaches to social change.	**Social power – consciousness:** A learning community understands how social power influences social processes and structures, including its own. It pays attention to power dynamics and implements intentional structures, policies, and processes that distribute social power in a fair way that maximizes the progress toward social justice. **Social power – integrated:** Power is considered in the way that innovative approaches to change are being conceptualized and developed. For example, an approach that results in a more equitable and fair distribution of power (e.g., by empowering marginalized groups) will be preferred over one that does not have such an impact. **Social power – action:** Members of	**Creativity – encouraged, develops solutions:** The learning community values and fosters creativity, innovation, and ongoing experimentation in developing strategies for addressing complex social issues and creating social change toward social justice and wellbeing. **Failures – creates new learnings/insights, scales solutions:** Within this [prototyping] culture, social actors feel safe to think outside of the box and try out innovative approaches that might fail but also have the potential for significant change. These innovative approaches are developed in a way that their potential "failure" is a learning opportunity that contributes to identifying the most effective, desirable, and efficient approaches in the end. They are also structured in a way (e.g., through a clear theory of change) so that successful cases can be scaled across the community and beyond.

				a group who lack knowledge of a topic or issue (for example one that will be debated in a meeting), necessary supports are allocated such as through a pre-meeting. Such opportunities will support practitioners where and when they are needed so that they can participate fully and in a more informed way.	

The learning community lens is the frame by which ideas, storylines are present within the broader network or community, it brings meaning to the learning community's identity, is an integral part to how communications and decisions are rendered. It also pertains to how individual and collective groups organize, classify and interpret the issues they are dealing with. The concepts integral to the LC's lens include *thinking as a system, collective orientation, learning identity* and *prototyping culture.* Among its central tenants, *thinking as a system* scored most highly, followed by prototyping, then *learning identity*; with collective orientation and power consciousness implemented the least. Both community and university practitioners were strong in their *complexity thinking,* easily able to discuss the complexities of refugee/newcomer-related (and inter-relatedness of) complex social issues, ascertaining trade-offs and synergies between pertinent interventions, programs, policies with their own individual and collective efforts to make a change. Consider the following example, where the WRIP member expressed the paradox between immigrants' need to find employment with a need for shelter and belonging.

> Because when it comes to employment and settlement, it's like the chicken and the egg thing. What comes first? In order to settle, you have to have employment in order to pay your bills, to be financially stable. Or to think of staying – if you don't have job you will not think of staying. But, to be able to find employment, you have to go home and have adequate access to laptop and desk, and a place to sleep and food. So, it is different and it

depends on individual stages... It's a lot of factors, it's not one factor. It's very complex.

- WRIP (staff) Member #4

Key informant interviews, also revealed a considerable history of a "convened" community system (i.e., *collaborative/relational system* – level 4 rating or "significantly present"*;* both for WRIP and certain organizations within Laurier). Reasons for this rating include WRIP's strong lineage of cross-sectoral relationships, which dates back to 2005, and was prompted by regional negotiations for an immigrant skills summit (circa 2005). Since this skills summit, actors from civil (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, the Region of Waterloo), community (e.g., refugee-facing organizations) and private (e.g., employment) sectors have worked together throughout Kitchener-Waterloo region, leading to unprecedented cross-sectoral linkages, and the creation of an immigrant employment network (IEN), the WRIP's predecessor. Consequently, this history of cross-sectoral exchange between businesses, community agencies, the regional government cemented a keen eye for community and provided the foundation from which many key informants involved in the learning community have since oriented themselves, approached decision-making and conceptualized their relationship with others. The respondent below speaks to the Immigration Partnership's rich history of cross-sectoral engagement, dating back to the immigrant skills summit and involving stakeholders from multiple walks of life.

> And that was part of our engagement strategy on this topic when we had the immigrant skills summit, 2005. Which was, in my opinion, a watershed of this cross-sectoral collaboration, right? And the outcome at the end of it, was the chamber of commerce stepping forward and saying, we need to launch an immigrant and employment network, and we as a chamber are willing to co-lead the next phase with CCBR in order to figure out what is this network is going to look like.   - WRIP (Researcher) Member #5

> This was not a special interest issue, it's not service providers alone that should be leading this initiative. It should be the community leaders leading this charge and having multiple stakeholders, multiple sectors of our society. Business, as well as immigrants as well as service providers. As well as educational institutions. As well as non-governmental funders, like United Way's and community foundations. We should all collectively take a responsibility for this.   - WRIP (Researcher) Member #5

Participants in interviews, learning teams and design lab processes overwhelmingly

valued experimentation and learning (as exemplified by a rating of 5; and shown by a

preponderance of cases where actors were seeking out knowledge/best practices informally

attending tables, working groups and/or inviting other agencies and individuals to do so). Yet,

the *flow of information* aspect of the learning identity most significantly hampered the learning

identity's overall score (for the learning identity category). The learning identity concept overall

also received a rating of 3 (translating into a rating of somewhat present), although it barely met

the threshold required to do so (score of -29.5). The two most salient factors contributing to a

reduced overall presence of a learning identity included a) discontinuity/loss of people and the

lack of formalized processes to facilitate knowledge exchange between WRIP's many groups,

such as its steering committees and leadership council. Further, the documentation review notes

below underscored the disconnection between WRIP's community action plan and strategic

planning processes. As seen below, Laurier also remained disconnected from these processes as

well.

> Learning team participants (one university participant and one WRIP member) spoke of
> the disconnect between emerging topics of interest between the community action plan
> and strategic planning processes. Want to more intentional weave together conversations
> at Laurier with important "side-conversations" happening in WRIP that are not yet linked
> to the community action plan or its concrete next steps.
>
>   -Learning Team Meeting Minutes, No. 2

The free flow of information also remained to be a significant hurdle among the learning

community's core learning team members (in its most nascent stage of development). Although

the participant below was speaking about the *practice* of information sharing, issues related to

the vision of information sharing (for the learning community) were abundantly clear.

> I was a little bit surprised at the last meeting that we had. There were some research that
> that hadn't been shared and there were other initiatives that seemed to be conflicting, and

two people were trying to do very similar type activities and it's exactly what the group was intended to mitigate. So, it was really interesting to me, it was like our fourth meeting I think as a table that that was when that sort of revelation, if work by one of the other group members came forward. So, it reminded me of the fact that people still aren't in that place where they are sharing forward.   - University (staff) Participant #5

Collective orientation received an overall score of 3.33 or a rating of "somewhat present," with most of its positive weight coming from the *balance of goals* dimension (level 4 rating). *Balance of goals* has been best obtained through well-established mechanisms (and governance structures) already inherent to the WRIP that ensure community representation and benefits (e.g., such as WRIP's steering committees to take decisive action on their own without needing approval from the leadership council). Other factors positively contributing to the realization for the *balance of goals* was WRIP's long established history of community engagement and municipal support in projects, which date back to projects emerging from (or informing the development of) the Immigrant Employment Network (IEN). While the key informants certainly described valuing collaboration and working in a collective way, they also indicated other priorities (expressed as work intensity, (questioned) ability to match or maintain other goals) can get in the way of this collective orientation.

> "So, I think it's kind of important to find a way to balance that so both parties can get something out of it. If it's a contract-based relationship, and they want something done, and they will pay students to do it, that's fine. But if a student is doing a thesis, and so it's their time they're putting into it if they can find a community partner they can work with and they have the community partners' interests and the student partners' interests match, that's great. But it can't always be matched. So that's the challenge."
> - University (faculty) Participant #2

The realization of a collective mindset (or orientation) across the WRIP-Laurier divide also appeared hampered by a disconnection between student interests and community needs.

> I mean there has been some collaboration, I will not say there hasn't, but not that what I think is needed. Because, 2 or 3 years ago we were invited to be one of the conferences at Wilfrid Laurier, and I think one of the issues, at least that I discussed, is this connection with research that students are doing. Because we receive a lot of requests from students

wanting to do some research on very specific things that are important for them, but are not for us.   -WRIP (staff) Member #3

The weakest concepts associated with collective orientation were *equitable structures* and *maintenance of diversity* (each with a level 3 rating). Factors positively contributing to *equitable structures* were that many practitioners lauded the LIP's/WRIP's ability to remain susceptible to community influence, and individual practitioners used intentional check-ins and community dialogue to remain transparent and communicative in their collaborative work. Yet, several sources of evidence highlighted the relevant difficulties associated – such as the complexities of facilitating a "community" response, information and knowledge gaps, the past histories of university/government-initiated collaborations and the power asymmetries that have continued to impact or even dictate the nature of relationships across the WRIP.

> And this is why the [central organizing body] is involved in hiring, because, I mean hiring everybody who is a staff from the Immigration Partnership. I mean we don't have input in that. Because everything is done through [central organizing body]. Yeah, we did have some experiences where we were not very happy with because it's through the [central organizing body]. I mean other places you will see, that they are very independent. They don't have to do anything through the [central organizing body].
> - WRIP (staff) Member #3

The realization of *equitable structures* (as an orientation) were also brought into question for the learning community as well, particularly given the clout afforded to the university to recruit and retain partners (and do so on its own accord).

> Yeah, because there is a danger in a way if you start from the university in initiating this learning community and it is sort of starting from scratch. And the university is putting together all these partners. That gives the university a lot of power.
> –University (faculty) Participant #1

Discrepancies were also noted among the type of community partners selected by or engaging with the university, as those with the "loudest voice" were thought to be more likely to be selected or engaged in community-university partnerships.

> What I've heard before is it's really only the big [community] groups or the people with the loud voices or someone who makes the news, where that pathway between them and the university is opened up. That there are in fact other people out there, other smaller groups that would love to have the support and partnership with the university. But they don't have an avenue to create that connection.   - University (staff) Participant #5

Maintenance of diversity - several activities (e.g., community consultations, community action plans) and governance structures inherent to the university and WRIP ecosystem displayed an ongoing commitment and desire to engage with diversity (e.g., both in terms of demographic characteristics and stakeholder types). This desire to engage with diversity was found across post-secondary institutions, coalitions addressing refugee/newcomer-related issues, and was exemplified by the "explosion" of engagement found in the WRIP within the past year. The community service-learning office of Wilfrid Laurier University also exhibited an ability to retain a considerable breadth of [community] partners.

> Between both campuses, we have about 300 community partners that we work with. They might be schools, they might be non-profits, they might be government-based programs those would be the partners that we would be working with. And one of the neat things that I have noticed in the three years with the program is that we haven't lost a lot of partners.   -University (staff) Participant #3

Central factors curtailing the *maintenance of diversity* in WRIP, Laurier and learning community activities (such as in the learning team meetings), were a) an inability to gain a larger perspective (due to the siloism of current governance structures such as steering groups, the level of homogeneity found across group settings, such as WRIP council) b) lack of understanding of partner needs, and c) discontinuity and loss of members participating. One key informant provided some keen insight into the reasons why discontinuity and loss of participants occurs (among community-based steering committees specifically).

> It's the job of the governance board to oversee the research, to set the parameters, to inform the agenda in a way that will meet the community needs. But I think in reality what often happens is that those boards become another job that people have to do. They don't really have the time to be fully engaged.   -University (faculty) Participant #2

While *prototyping culture* assumed an overall score of "significantly" present (level 4 rating) this was mostly due to the a) paucity of barriers to its realization (as seen from the high scores of both codes/dimensions) and b) the success of newly (i.e., within the past academic school year) implemented social innovation-related programs and infrastructure on campus, such as the design lab. Nonetheless, several difficulties persisted, such as a) the intractability of (systems) challenged faced, b) the notable lack of social innovation infrastructure in the Kitchener-Waterloo community, and c) resource constraints. Yet as seen from the quote below, both community and university partners revealed an insatiable desire to collaborate better and in ways markedly different from the past.

> While I've been here working with [name of key position within immigration partnership] we've had many discussions with different faculty at Laurier and others around challenges partners have faced with programs they've engaged with at the university, the many opportunities for collaboration that would benefit community organizations and the university and how we might bring those together.
> -WRIP (administrator) Member #2

In addition to the implementation of the IP design lab, several practitioners mentioned various emerging (albeit largely informal) social innovation projects – such as emerging through work with St. John's Greenhouse (University of Waterloo), the Mennonite Refugee Passport project, WLU's City Studio and VP office's innovative, experimental learning fund.

> The [name of refugee settlement agency] piloted that idea to see if that is something that could be useful or not. There was a student who was doing their placement, who was responsible to create that passport with our input. So, the approach itself was managed by the students involved ... she listened to everybody, interviewed everybody regarding the services that we do. Then created that idea, presented it to us, we reviewed that one. She presented it again, made the final version and then we piloted it. - WRIP (staff) Member #3

The overall rating of power consciousness was "somewhat present" (rating of level 3.33 overall). The most present aspect of power consciousness was *social power – action* (level 4), galvanizing resources where they are needed to support/build capacity (e.g., professional

development opportunities) for newcomers and/or university-affiliated stakeholders who are backing them. The least implemented aspects of social power were *social power - conscious* and the *social power - integration* (where social power conscious is integrated into key policies, programs and structures). Recurring and related issues included balancing multiple agendas, group power dynamic issues, questionable compensation and reward structures among stakeholders involved. Also culpable were unbalanced mandates and a perceived lack of accessible programs (e.g., professional development programs for or co-curricular content created with settlement workers). Such remained to be not only a challenge of the WRIP governance structure, community-university collaborations of the past, but an inherent challenge to the current learning community as well. For example, consider the quote below, where one participant questioned (or was at least waiting to see) WRIP-Laurier's willingness to take the necessary steps to ensure that community participants would become involved in co-creating research projects or teaching courses at the university.

> I've been a little concerned about the ability to invite or enable the community to be involved with the academic side of it or the research side of [the learning community]. How do we get community members into classrooms and co-teaching a course? I mean we have courses that are taught about immigration and refugees at the university. But how many community members are participating in that? What kind of reimbursement should be provided to community members for doing that? Will we be willing to do that? Or will contributions to the academic side of it only be done by faculty and researchers?
> - University (staff) Participant #4

Conversely, some of the most positively realized aspects of social power - consciousness were due to the LIP (Local Immigration Partnership)/WRIP pre-established history of systems champions and community-based steering committees (which have either been brought forward into the planning of the LC or created a legacy for it). Also, contributing to the presence of social power consciousness were Laurier's reputation as a social justice university (e.g., as seen through social justice-minded research centres, the presence of an office for diversity and equity,

public interest research groups, etc.) its many platforms for building student capacity (in relation to community-engagement, community-based research, etc.). Open-minded professors were also an important, albeit informal pathway to this. The WRIP member's quote below exemplifies the LIP's/WRIP's pre-established history of working with (social justice-minded) systems champions.

> So, we had the CAO of the region and he had his kind of cracker-jack staff person in his office, right? Being actively involved and figuring out, how we can internalize the new LIP into our regional structure? So, yes there's buy-in from the top but then the next step was when it became the LIP and now it's housed at the region. And (name of CAO) was a part of that, he was part of all the major decision-making. And he's a special person as well I think in understanding regional leadership but community ownership. And actually he's one of the biggest, strongest advocates within the regional government. Which is good when the top person is saying we are playing a leadership role, but this isn't ours to own, that this is really theirs, you know?   - WRIP (Researcher) Member #5

Category:	Learning community structure			
Concepts:	Intentional structures	Intentional membership	Learning ecosystem	Shared vision and goals
Codes:	Governance structures – created from emergent learnings Governance – bridge, build interests Commensurate activities Commensurate activities, decisions	Membership identification – deliberate, uses specific tools Membership select – diversity sought	Refining roles, responsibilities Evolution – consider social capital, culture Capacity-building	Deliberate processes/tools – generate vision Vision sustained via intentional membership Vision sustained – guides action
Code definitions	**Governance – created from emergent learnings:** The learning community operates through a set of networked groups and committees (e.g., backbone organization, executive committee, subcommittees, steering committee, advisory committee, working groups) that are formed	**Membership identification – deliberate, uses specific tools:** The members of the groups and committees that are formed in the context of the learning community are identified through a deliberate process, using intentional processes and tools (e.g., power	**Refining roles, responsibilities:** Thinking in terms of an ecosystem allows the learning community to identify its particular role among others pursuing a similar vision and where its goals and values might align with emergent opportunities in the broader arena.	**Shared vision – deliberate processes/tools generate vision:** Members of the learning community are committed to a shared aspiration of a desired future state. This vision supersedes but accounts for the interests of the member organizations and groups. Deliberate tools and strategies (e.g.,

and disbanded as needed based on emerging learning. **Governance bridges, builds interests:** Leadership within and between groups bridge and build interests, needs, and expectations across diverse stakeholders. **Commensurate activities:** Efforts are undertaken through the intentional creation of spaces for shared decision-making, shared power, ongoing and open communication, accountability, and shared measurement. **Commensurate activities, decisions:** Learning community groups provide clarity, consistency, and predictability while still encouraging creativity, flexibility, and adaptability. Decisions, processes, rules, roles, bylaws, policies, and practices of learning community groups and committees are also created and carried out on the basis of this framework.	mapping, social network analysis, stakeholder analysis) **Membership select – diversity sought:** Assessments are made to ensure sufficient coverage/participation in terms of diversity, representation and power (e.g., social and/or cultural characteristics, perspectives, access to power, roles, skills, expertise, knowledge, and lived experience) that are specifically relevant to the learning community.	**Evolution – consider social capital, culture:** Questions relevant to building a learning ecosystem include those related to culture, social capital, power, the flows of resources and authority, and the nature of relationships with large stakeholders (e.g., funders, government, universities). **Capacity-building:** A learning ecosystem exists when this web nurtures the learning community and its work. This acknowledges the complexity of the environments in which the learning community is working and the opportunities available to reach outward to build capacity in the broader arena	transformational scenario planning) can be used to generate this vision. **Shared vision – sustained via intentional membership:** Deliberate tools used to sustain or generate a shared vision are carried out in accordance with the principles of intentional membership and intentional structures. **Shared vision – guides action:** Shared vision provides guidance and inspiration for ongoing decisions, processes, and practices. From this vision, specific, attainable, and measurable goals are made and remade as learning emerges from action and progress.

The learning community structure is the latticework from which learning community processes, practices are built; it provides a foundation for which the LC frame translates into practical strategies while catalyzing its key values into action. The key constructs/concepts of learning community structure are: *intentional structures, intentional membership, shared vision and goals* and *learning ecosystem.* Scores from learning community structures indicated that intentional membership was most strongly present, followed by intentional structures, with learning ecosystem and shared values being present the least. *Diversity sought* was the single most realized dimension of intentional membership, and one of only three codes/propositions of

the entire learning community framework that received a perfect score (of 5). LC stakeholders

indicated a desire to engage with diverse others. Further, WRIP's/WRIEN's extensive history of

engaging with diversity was apparent through its use of community-based steering committees

and well-entrenched platforms for community engagement (e.g., consensus decision-making,

community forums, community action plans). Now with the increasing formalization of

relationships between WRIP key agencies and Laurier (with the WRIP-Laurier LC), engagement

with diversity has expanded beyond that seen in WRIEN/WRIP. This formalization has occurred

from collaborative projects emerging both through and beyond the LC initiative (e.g., Design

Lab, integration of WLU into WRIP's strategic plan). For example, one WRIP member's

recounted the central role of, and benefits to diversity (of actors) in the design lab experience.

> The design lab, boy I loved it. Amazing experience. You had all these diverse levels of knowledges and I thrive on looking at those intelligent university students around us. And I kind of forgot about that kind of life. You're full of energy and intellectual, cognitive brains along with the experienced and experts in the field working in one space. And here we are, we get stuck in our world of service-delivery and we have all these challenges, and we have all these brains around us. Why not use all those resources in our community with the learning opportunities we have? And the way you've come about us, and engaging in the questions, and I loved the exercise that (name of group facilitator) ran, it showed the spectrum even among the university students. It's kind of opens your eyes to whose where and what.
>
> -WRIP (staff) Member #4

Contrarily, while *deliberate uses of tools* still obtained a high rating of "significantly"

present (level 4 rating, score of 23), such was not nearly as strong as *diversity sought* (score of

101). This discrepancy was mostly attributed to the fact that engagement of broader sectors and

citizen groups were fostered through largely informal processes, such as reflective practices and

ad hoc/impromptu joining tables (which were the ones most often cited or used). One key

informant also mentioned how they used reflection to determine which working groups and

tables they should join to gain new information or stay abreast community issues.

> This is the challenging part…there are so many tables we can go to learn. And we have a staff of three. So, trying to choose the places to expend our energy and try to determine where we can learn the most in the most reasonable amount of time is a big part of what I do. It's really trying to figure out do we need to be at this table? Or is this one we need to pass on? So, is there a formal system in place? No, a lot has been about my intuition. It's.. okay I'll go to this table. This has been a good decision. Or sometimes I think this is not going to move us forward.   –WRIP (staff) Member #1

Reflection was also used as an instrument to determine gaps in membership and prompt

the invitation of new members (e.g., to WRIP steering group and council meetings, etc.).

> So that's the partnership role that we value, the reflective piece on what's happening in the community and gathering the data from all the partners that are coming to the table. And inviting more partners to come based upon all of our actual perspectives.
> - WRIP (staff) Member #1

Consequently, the biggest challenges to realizing the presence of *deliberate tools* were

limitations and underuse of intentional processes for recruitment and engagement, as well as

attrition/loss of participants. While completely overshadowed by formal and informal processes,

autocratic decision-making (within and beyond WRIP) and the nature of commitment (in WRIP

as well as the learning community) remained to be the largest hindrances to the realization of

diversity sought. As seen below, scheduling conflicts often barred participation, particularly

when events or meetings involved attendants from multiple organizations (such a constraint was

noted for both university and WRIP partners).

> Yeah, it's kind of a difficult situation. And sometimes we invite the workers. There are only two workers who are working at the library. We invite them to come to have a conversation to see what kind of issues they are dealing with. But they don't come often because their schedule is very different. And sometimes it's difficult to schedule their time with our time.   – WRIP (staff) Member #3

Discrepancies were also noted in the way that community members/agencies extended

invitations for university stakeholders in comparison to the way that university stakeholders did

for the community. For example, one participant felt that university stakeholders were often able

to participate in community events, while community members or agencies were invited to

participate in activities at the university less frequently.

> So, I think the sector has said yes send your students, send your researchers, we'll embed them in work that we're doing. We'll give them projects, they'll work on these projects, they'll be very helpful to our sector. But what have we said to the sector to say that we value your knowledge, your expertise in our environment?
>   – University (staff) Participant #4

Intentional structures received an overall rating of significantly present (or level 4 rating),

with this same rating obtained for each of its respective four dimensions: *governance structure –*

created from emergent learnings, governance structure – bridges, builds interests,

commensurate activities, commensurate activities leading to decisions. Impromptu joining tables

appeared to be the most significant, pervasive (albeit informal) mechanism contributing to the

presence of each respective dimension (of intentional structures). WRIP's pre-existing and well-

established governance structure cemented and formally realized several categories/concepts of

intentional structures. As seen from the two quotes below, WRIP's three pillars (e.g.,

work/employment, settle and belong) were created through extensive community-based research

projects, thereby affirming the "considerable" presence of *governance – emergent learnings* and

governance structures – bridge, build interests simultaneously.

> I was involved in the research that was done before the immigration partnership was born. Back in 2008, there was a community collective study that happened out of the [community research] centre and it was led by [name]. He was sitting on council to represent the needs of immigrants and refugees. And out of that, three task pillars were created – work, belong and settle. So, I was part of a large community group, then task groups until we ended up with those three pillars when the immigration partnership was born.   – WRIP (staff) Member #4

> If you're into this systems-change stuff, there is brilliance in being able to leverage existing structure and create a new structure that is even wider than it. I talked about five phases with the LIP [Local Immigration Partnership]. And I mentioned reimagining the LIP. Not that it was a negative bad thing that was happening, but it bumped it up to a new level and now with the LIP under its belt, it didn't coordinate the whole Syrian refugee

response. But it was the catalyst to creating a community structure. – WRIP (researcher) Member #5

The biggest challenges associated with *governance - emergent learnings* was the degree of siloism/separation between WRIP's working groups/pillars (thus feeding into the need for increased/more intentional communication and better connectivity across the three pillars). Also seen was a lack of (or discontinuity in) adequate representation among stakeholders, especially on the WRIP's council, and power dynamic issues. Both representation and power dynamic issues significantly contributed to decreased scores for *governance – bridge, builds interests.* Discontinuity and loss of individuals also affected both *governance – emergent learnings* and *governance – bridge, builds interests* equally. Disconnection and siloism between WRIP's working/steering groups also appeared to be a challenge, albeit one that had been taken up by a few key informants.

> How do we connect different groups we are working with to move an issue forward? Or to learn and change direction for this community? And that's not an easy task but I think that's a huge part of what we do. It's the connecting piece. So, we can do all we want by ourselves, but unless we have the relationships that can help bring other people to the table, or take information from the table that we are at and help change actions or program direction for another group, it's not going to have the same value.
> – WRIP (staff) Member #1

While also noting the discontinuity and information gaps between WRIP steering groups, another participant highlighted the power asymmetries that were perceived to be somewhat associated with WRIP's current governance structure.

> Of course it was vertical, and at one point it was about how do we make [the WRIP governance structure] more circular? As opposed to up and down. But what is the way we can have it be more dynamic?   – WRIP (staff) Member #3

Commensurate activities and *commensurate activities for decision-making* (the definitions for these codes are found in the table at the beginning of this section) represented the middle range of scores for the intentional structures category. Several tools and specific

communication strategies continue to be utilized within WRIP (E.g., consensus decision-making, community-based, community action plans), as well as by its constituent organizations (e.g., like databases for recruitment) and the university (e.g., through community service-learning programs, community-based research internship programs, social entrepreneurship programs). Group power dynamic issues/asymmetries, intensity of resource requirements, and underutilization of tools for common understandings were among the construct's largest barriers.

Shared vision and goals received a final rating of "somewhat present" (overall rating of 3.33). *Vision – guides action* was the strongest and most easily realized dimension (receiving a perfect score of 5), with a clear, collective vision motivating action with the WRIP as well as its subsequent emergence into the WRIP-Laurier learning community. WRIP's vision was found to be embedded within many of its daily activities, and realized through WRIP's continuous support for its various partnering agencies.

> Everything we do at the partnership is intended to move us towards the vision of it being easier for immigrants to settle, work and belong. I think of our work as the staff team supporting our community partners is kind of integral to ensuring that as we plan out the specifics of our actions, that we keep that vision in mind and work towards that goal and look for ways to demonstrate movement towards it.
> – WRIP (administrator) Member #2

As seen below, this sense of shared vision and mutuality brought forward into the learning community appeared to be heavily influenced by the region's (LIP's) long history of collaborative engagement, pre-dating WRIP and emerging from its days in the IEN (immigrant employment network).

> There's a sense of a common vision and a mutuality, and if my barn if our barn burns down, I will have people helping me, and I know if someone else's barn burns down, that it's my responsibility to help them.   – WRIP (researcher) Member #5

Consequently, the individual values of practitioners also percolated into the formation and early development of the learning community partnership.

> I think I bring a lot just from an individual values perspective. I think that probably drives most of how I've set up the [learning community] partnership.
>
>   - University (staff) Participant #5

Contrarily, and despite my original theoretical predictions, *deliberate processes and tools – generate vision* significantly lagged behind other dimensions of shared vision and goals, with enough barriers to drive the presence of the concept down to level one (and the overall rating of the entire category diminished along with it). Indeed, several strengths were noted, such as the well-established collective vision driving the WRIEN/WRIP partnership, the broad and inclusive mandates of its constituent organization and the presence of a community-engaged and social justice-minded university (all of which are current-historical infrastructure being brought forward into the learning community). Yet, several barriers persisted and substantially overshadowed the actualization of concrete tools that have been able to generate or sustain a shared vision (in the new learning community partnership). Some structural barriers included the intensity of resource requirements (needed to generate or sustain a collective vision), unresolved power asymmetries, and the jaded or unmet expectations of community partners. While these issues were also internal to the WRIP, such issues were seeped into the learning community, additionally coloured by community partners' previous history of working with the university.

> I think with any new initiative you are dealing with people who are already busy, overworked and don't have enough resources. To take on something you wonder if something needs to be dropped. And can the learning community demonstrate that through this model that there's enough benefit that contribute to the sector that can address some of those short-term loses? So, I think there is a lot of pressure on the learning community model to be seen as something different. Because I think most researchers and agencies that have dealt with other kinds of models – like community-based research, many are skeptical if it's anything different than that.   – University (staff) Participant #4

One key informant also expressed the consequences of a chronically unclear shared vision or mandate for the learning community. As the negative impact was believed to be

worsened given that stakeholders were coming together from multiple "ecosystems" (e.g., WRIP and Laurier).

> There are a lot of different duties and responsibilities. And sometimes the mandate is unclear, the directions are not clear and things can fall through the cracks. Because, you are dealing between institutions, you got different power hierarchies and different levels of awareness. I mean it can be quite complex because you are bringing together so many different ecosystems.   – University (faculty) Participant #2

Learning ecosystem also received a final score of 3.33 or "somewhat present." *Evolution – consideration of social capital, culture* and *refining roles and responsibilities* both retained a rating of 4. The former was catalyzed through the presence of systems champions, impromptu joining tables, working groups (or inviting others to do so) and desire to buffer and amplify the pre-existing relationship between WRIP's multiple partners and the university. Coalition building activities that created the LIP, the IEN were key vehicles to the realization of *evolution – considers social capital* (for the learning community)*,* as such processes invoke a considerable amount of trust and other characteristics typically found in cohesive group (or cross-sectoral) settings:

> But the level to which there was a response was a big factor of that, which was having the foundations of the LIP, the trust, the relationships and the practice of working together that enabled the type of response that we did have as a community.
>   – WRIP (researcher) Member #5

While retaining a relatively high score, *refining roles and responsibilities* largest barriers included too many roles and responsibilities and lack of clarity among the roles allocated. This lack of clarity remained apparent to the WRIP's current governance structure (e.g., role of the leadership council) as well as the emerging learning community:

> We have had a lot of conversations over the past few years as to where the decision-making responsibility lies, the nature of our various groups, unclarity about the leadership council and where decisions are being made - but that is not where decisions are being made, that is mostly an advisory body.
>   – WRIP (administrator) Member #2

> So that leads into challenges [for the learning community]. Because I think that that's something for people to really know - how they're going to participate, you know? And what's their responsibility?   – University (staff) Participant #3

Nonetheless, the barriers associated with these two aforementioned dimensions (of learning ecosystem) were pale in comparison to those found for *capacity-building. Capacity-building* faced so many challenges compared to formal and informal factors that the concept received a final rating of 2 (hardly present), while also bringing the average of the entire category (i.e., learning ecosystem) down considerably. Analyses confirmed the existence of various structural challenges, such as funding constraints, as well as funding directives that continue to incentivize and reward competition (in WRIP as well as the university). The question of LC's ability to match or maintain communal interests over the longer term was also (negatively) related to the realization of *capacity-building*. Other notable constraints included limited staff-student capacity and knowledge and information gaps. Some of the negative consequences associated with limited student training (for community service-learning projects) were herein and carefully discussed.

> The benefits that the partners get out of it [community service-learning programs] directly are very little. Because it's only a few hours per week. And, the students are not very well trained, so you have to almost try harder to find some simple work for them to do.
> -University (faculty) Participant #1

Also cited was the need to consider funding constraints and the relative lack of infrastructure available to support community-wide projects or initiatives.

> A challenge we are already seeing is there are many needs, but there's not that many opportunities yet at Laurier to work on those. And I think to really get it as a community-wide project, it will take some time and I think we will need to have some sort of support for that financially to really make that happen. So, building the infrastructure and the resources I see that as a challenge.   – University (faculty) Participant #1

The competitive nature of grant competitions and funding policies for community

partners in WRIP were also seen as a factor greatly contributing to vested, isolationist thinking

and (perpetual) disengagement from others.

> Immigrant-serving agencies have a form of funding that comes specifically from the federal government. And that funding is specifically linked to contracts that they get. And there is a competitive dimension to that. So, different institutions do have an element of separation and they want to protect that. They want to protect their own identity. There are times where they may not necessarily want to share their information with others who will hopefully be their partners when we are talking about a learning community. They become their competitors when it comes to securing those contracts.   – University (faculty) Participant #2

Despite the best intentions of practitioners involved, mechanisms that reward such

isolationist, competitive thinking threatened to enervate the outcomes, impacts and dreams of the

collaborative network.

> It's frustrating watching a community trying to work, to watch a network try and work together. And to know that they have all the potential, and they have all the capacity that they would need and all the skills and resources that they need, but they can't leverage those effectively to impact on an issue that they all very much care about.   - University (staff) Participant #5

Conversely, some of the current strengths of *ecosystem – capacity-building* included a

consistent breadth of players, some of the professional development opportunities that do exist

throughout Wilfrid Laurier University, WRIP and the extensive volunteer network already

present. Also noted, were some of the (largely informal) platforms that are currently being used

to facilitate connectivity, skill/expertise-building and knowledge exchange:

> We have this whole department of immigrant and employment services, also there are other (name of organization) that have similar programs within Ontario. We get together. We share best practices. We create strong foundations of policies, processes, procedures. We tap on each other's strength and expertise. And I do see a lot of value being added to the work that we are doing, being part of our organization.   – WRIP (staff) Member #4

Category:	Learning community processes		
Concepts:	Reflective practice	Measurement and evaluation	Surfacing and generative processes

Codes:	Links individuals to systems Fosters deeper understanding Empowers marginalized	Evaluation – clear use of benchmarks Evaluation – opportunity for growth, informs action-reflection	Mental models – challenged Mental models – develop, become clearer
Code Definitions:	**Links individuals to systems:** Reflective practice provides insight into the relationships between systems and individuals, including opportunities for the learning community to impact the system. **Fosters deeper understanding**: Within the learning community, progress is driven by intentional reflection while doing, which feeds back to influence what is done next. This constant cycle of action and reflection leads to continually deeper understanding of the issues of interest and the broader context. **Empowers marginalized:** Reflective practice leads to action that is more likely to be transformative because it identifies leverage points for altering underlying system dynamics and empowering marginalized actors.	**Evaluation – clear use of benchmarks:** To provide data and insights for reflective practice, concrete strategies are in place to identify benchmarks of progress and measure movement toward these points. **Evaluation – informs action-reflection:** All data are sources of learning that provide opportunities for growth, including insights that do not indicate forward movement or that fail to reach the expected level of gain. There are four elements of measurement and evaluation: setting benchmarks and defining indicators, establishing methods for tracking these indicators, carrying out analyses of the resulting data, and feeding the results or insights back into the larger process of action and reflection.	**Mental models – challenged:** Acknowledging that mental models directly contribute to current/status quo understandings and the resulting services and programs that do not adequately address the targeted social issue, the learning community uses creative problem exercises to critically challenge these mental models and the assumptions that support them. **Mental models – develop, become clearer:** Creative problem exercises look to gain a deeper understanding of the social issue targeted through an exploration of currently espoused mental models (e.g., constellation of belief systems, attitudes, and values). Through these exercises, and collective sense-making efforts and related discussions, individual and collective mental models begin to shift towards an understanding that more closely reflects underlying community needs and realities.

Learning community processes are about how decisions and actions are taken within the learning community initiative, utilizing cyclical movements of goal setting, action and reflection while catalyzing movement towards social justice and well-being. The three dimensions of learning community processes includes *reflective practice*, *measurement and evaluation* and *surfacing and generative processes*. While *reflective practice* retained the highest score across these constructs (level 4; and as originally hypothesized), *surfacing and generative processes*

and *measurement and evaluation* scores were appreciably higher than originally anticipated

(both constructs finishing with a rating of 3.5 overall).

Reflective practice's high score was associated with its relative lack of barriers to its

realization and a preponderance of both formal and informal capacities, platforms at the university

and WRIP that have enabled actors to engage in reflective activity. Within the *reflective practice*

concept, *links individuals to systems* and *fosters deeper understanding* were virtually tied

dimensions (level 4 ratings with scores of +24 and +25 respectively), while *empowers*

marginalized a distance third. Actors readily linked local developments to larger trends, larger

trends to local developments and individual organizational processes and programs to larger

WRIP-Laurier community efforts. Consider the following quote for example, in which one key

informant explores the link between community service-learning outcomes in conjunction with the

broader community engagement mandate of the university.

> If you could have some experiences that you are reflecting back on in terms of course content, you're going to learn the course content in a very different way …you are going to develop your personhood, your citizenship. Because you're getting out of the classroom, you're getting into the community...who am I going to be when I'm done school? Who am I going to be as someone who works? How am I going to participate in a life of a community I choose to live with? So it's all about engaging in that.
> - University (staff) Participant #3

Reflective practices have been enacted through the reflection-action planning strategies

associated with both WRIP and its predecessors, using intentional platforms like community action

plans to formally integrate and utilize reflection in WRIP's main activities and subsequent actions

taken. In fact, some key informants mentioned that these action-planning processes were so well

entrenched (to the WRIP) that they slowed down the "actions" taken considerably.

In more recent developments, one key informant mentioned how WRIP's community

action plan was just recently updated, directly informed by previous actions taken as a

collaborative. Such findings converged across the learning team meeting minutes as well, which noted how new developments with the WRIP-Laurier learning community were subsequently informing the latest iteration of the community action plan.

> So, through those conversations, the planning for the Immigration Partnership went throughout 2009 and 2010, there was a formal launch of the partnership at the beginning of 2011, with a community action plan in place, which has been updated one time. We are now in the process of updating it again. So, every few years, we look at the actions we set out …are they still the right ones and should be adjusting the way we collaborate in some way to reach our goals?   - WRIP (administrator) Member #2

> The [learning team/learning community] is assisting with developments/iterations of the community action plan, making the next steps for the partnership more tangible and concrete. The community action plan also just approved next step (plan for the next year or two) approved last week. This specific community action plan was used to intentionally think about how to foster linkages between the university and WRIP.
>   -Learning Team Meeting Minutes No. 2

Many key informants *fostered a deeper understanding* through their self-reflexive capacity and ability to self-examine. Several platforms for intentional feedback and reflection were also used to *foster a deeper understanding* (of community issues and realities)*,* both within the formal WRIP structure and programs (e.g., steering groups, strategic planning processes), courses and structures intrinsic to Wilfrid Laurier University (e.g., learning team meetings, Research/consulting infrastructure, ever-expanding community service-learning courses). While demonstrating an overarching desire to learn, one community practitioners displayed considerable modesty in their perceived level of understanding. As suggested below, such a conclusion was made possible through practitioners' self-reflexive examination.

> So, we've done this [collective learning], we have identified the issues and we are on the right track. Because this new practice/approach involves different parties that are working in the field, with you students. Working with others can be challenging, if you are not able to bring everyone around the table to the same level of understanding, because who am I to say that I know more than anyone else? How can I assess my own learning? And the moment I say I have learned something and I know something – oh boy, I come across something new to realize I did not know much. So, learning again is hard to determine learning progress. How do I learn and against what standard?   - WRIP (staff) Member #4

Two of the most significant challenges that hampered the realization of *reflective practice, deeper understanding* included a lack of time for reflection and a somewhat limited ability to understand ever-changing community needs and realities. Despite WRIP practitioners' wealth of knowledge regarding refugee/newcomer needs, the ever-changing realities of communities/clients significantly hampered practitioners' ability to (use reflection to) fully understand the situation or tailor their services accordingly.

> We want a cohesive study and understanding of where people's level of knowledge and competency should be at. It should be reflected by everybody around the room. And it's still going to be a way to go, because there is still a lot of unknowns, and new challenges coming everyday. I cannot just presume that we know what to expect. I really cannot. Even a 7 is a high number. Not because a lack of effort, not because the lack of knowledge, but it's because of the ever-changing environment and the elements that are impacting the whole movement of services, of immigrants and refugees.
>
> – WRIP (staff) Member #4

While the score for *Measurement and Evaluation* was modest as expected (rating of 3.5), several noteworthy projects have informed the continued implementation and development of the WRIEN, WRIP's predecessor, onto its current and subsequent formation into the learning community. Despite the dearth of research and evaluative capacity amongst WRIP's individual organizations and the need for greater information exchange between groups, organizations and initiatives, WRIEN's foundational work (that led to the formation of the current WRIP) centred on a developmental evaluation research program. And many efforts, initiatives and topical focus areas of the partnership have or continue to be informed by research and evaluation efforts as well. Research centres like the International Migrant Research Centre and the Centre for Community-Based Research (CCBR) have extensive working relationships with the WRIP's key agencies and consequently harbour significant knowledge regarding refugee resettlement issues in Kitchener-Waterloo region. Below, the informant speaks of the evaluation of a research

project that went on to create the WRIEN (Waterloo region immigration employment network),

utilizing community forums as a vehicle to communicate the study's findings and prompt further

community action.

> Even the evaluation of WRIEN unearthed a lot of challenges, right? It's not easy doing this kind of stuff. And WRIEN was teetering, right? Go, no go kind of thing … but it's people understanding each other, right? And understanding what's to happen next. And I think it was the evaluation that helped to expose that, so people could do something with it and the regional government would stand up at the community forum and say things aren't always working that well here.   - WRIP (researcher) Member #5

As seen below, community dialogues and forums with WRIP have served many

purposes, such as being used within various WRIP-focused, research studies. Community

dialogues and forums have served as vehicles for research and the somewhat presence of

measurement and evaluation in general. These findings are supported by the fact that community

dialogues have led to the "break down" of complex refugee/newcomer needs into "pillars," while

subsequently informing the development and governance structure of the modern day WRIP.

> I was part of the research that formed the immigration partnership. They give a series of community dialogues that brought together people from all walks of life to support newcomers as they come into our region and they broke it down into a series of topics. So, there was a group around employment, there was a group around leadership, there was a group around some other aspect of settlement, and so on. And we were part of leadership group if you will. And out of that research they formed a partnership.
> - WRIP (staff) Member #1

A few key informants also spoke of ongoing evaluation efforts being conducted at the

WRIP-level (thus further indicating some level of *measurement and evaluation*). Although

research and evaluation efforts remain sparsely distributed throughout this network and

haphazardly connected to research centres at the university, practitioners revealed a considerable

display of informal strategies used to facilitate knowledge production. Strategies such as ad hoc

check-ins and intentional platforms for action-reflection were used to determine which programs

might be working, not working and why. For example, one WRIP member below discusses the

use of a "news real" to facilitate new learnings and the uptake of knowledge regarding issues

affecting the immigration partnership. In other instances, feedback and reflection sessions, not

only facilitated new learnings but help drive the Immigration Partnership forward (e.g.,

evidence-based decision-making).

> And within that we include learning or other events that are related to various aspects of
> our community action plan and we draw together all the recent evaluations and studies
> and news articles that are related to the various activities of our community action plan to
> share with our partners to facilitate their own learning, awareness and development of an
> understanding of all of the different issues around the partnership.
> - WRIP (administrator) Member #2

Surfacing and generative processes retained a final overall rating of 3.5 (or somewhat

present), interestingly with *mental models – develop, become clearer* leading *mental models –*

challenged by over 36 points. Seminal research projects, such as "Voices for Change," which

coalesced into WRIEN, which subsequently prompted the modern day WRIP; catalyzed and

established several platforms for consciousness-raising, while also leaving a legacy of

experimentation and testing within the greater WRIP. In terms of individual actors involved,

self-reflexive competencies were found to be integral to a) the practitioners' ability to gain

deeper understandings, to b) have their *mental models - challenged*, to c) have enhanced clarity

about other partners' needs and/or underlying community realities. One WRIP practitioner spoke

to such consciousness-raising research that took place in the Waterloo Region in the early

2000's; which set a president for future research, evaluation efforts of the Immigration

Partnership as well as the overall level of community awareness regarding immigrant and

refugee settlement issues.

> And you know, starting with the consciousness-raising research back at the turn of the
> millennium, right? Around the year 2000, people didn't realize the connection between
> immigration, settlement with employment, people didn't even realize that this was an
> issue. With the popular image of taxi drivers with PhD's. Or even national consciousness,

right? So, part of our job in different communities throughout Ontario, including Waterloo was to put this on the radar of the community. - WRIP (researcher) Member #5

WRIP practitioners appeared to be committed to consciousness-raising not just on a professional level but at a personal level as well. This commitment was both evident and voluntarily gained through their own personal interactions with refugees and newcomers in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.

> People need to understand. So how do we make people understand what our learning should be? We all have a lot to learn. I picked up a Syrian family from a bus stop the other day and I learned more after ten minutes of being with them than I would have at any meeting. So that's what we need people to do.   – WRIP (staff) Member #1

The biggest challenge to *mental models - challenged* included a) willingness ability to think and act for the common good, b) faulty expectations, attitudes of actors/institutions involved and c) lack of awareness about pertinent/related social/organizational issues. A few WRIP participants indicated that there was some discrepancy between other WRIP practitioners' commitment to a common vision and action, contrasted with (some of) their actual behaviours.

Interestingly, a university partner posed a similar challenge to their colleagues at the university. This challenge was based on the recognition that university partners are coming to the newfound learning community partnership with considerably more advantage than the community or WRIP partners. He suggested that university partners' true commitment to a common vision (for the LC) would be displayed through their willingness to "sacrifice" or rescind some of their control over basic resources and grant opportunities.

> How do you make people willing to say okay, I'm going to cutback further on the resources and the services that I can access because I recognize that others are even worse off than I am? But if I'm going to take a cut, I'm going to have to change my lifestyle so that it's going to benefit somebody's whose even worse off than I am.
>   - University (staff) Participant #4

Speaking more broadly about society and culture, one WRIP member mentioned how

settlement workers are often caught in a vicious cycle of undertraining, lack of recognition, and

ineffective services; which is prompted in part by the fallacious views that society holds about

them.

> The other challenge is a lack of recognition to the hard work of settlement workers and
> agencies. Social workers are recognized. Settlement workers are not only social workers,
> but are working without recognition, with very complex client groups and their work
> requires different level of knowledge, competencies and expertise, but with no
> recognition. Without that recognition and proper training, it makes it even more
> challenging to recruit, train and maintain adequate and effective staffing and services.
>   – WRIP (staff) Member #4

Faulty expectations and attitudes were also pertinent students participating in community-

engaged programs/courses, who were not always willing to do the level of work required to

ensure community benefit. Similar attitudes seeped into Laurier's institutional culture as well.

The school's relatively homogenous student population (in comparison to other schools) worked

as an "excuse" to reduce the speed and intensity by which resources and services were being

offered to international students.

> Laurier up until this time has really been a beneficiary of the population growth of the
> GTA, it hasn't had to have international students. It hasn't had to change its culture and
> its programs to accommodate international students, which sometimes is a bit of a
> challenge, because it means that there is a little bit of a resistance to make some changes.
>   - University (staff) Participant #4

Contrarily, *mental models – develop, become clearer* were enacted through considerably

more formal and informal (actualized and established) vehicles (than *mental models –*

challenged); these included impromptu check-ins, engagement with diversity (such as through

WRIP steering committees and community forums), as well as the well-entrenched personal,

organizational development facilities that already exist on campus. Lack of awareness of issues

impaired this dimension of surfacing and generative processes as well, as did too many roles and

responsibilities for actors involved, and the difficulty of conceptualizing or implementing

solutions to systems' challenges.

Category:	Learning community practices
Concepts:	Prototyping
Codes:	Failures – embraced/learning opportunity Trial & Error – exhaustively explores options, commensurate with social justice concerns
Code Definitions	**Failures embraced/ learning opportunity:** Prototyping activities help individuals from the learning community learn from and embrace failure. **Trial & Error – exhaustively explores options, commensurate with social justice concerns:** Prototyping activities use intensive periods of trial and error that innovatively and exhaustively explore the potential range of benefits and limitations offered by a new approach, service, program, or strategy. Although learning through failure is a central value of the learning community, other principles espoused by the model (e.g., social justice) are never compromised for the sake of learning.

Learning community practice is about the routines, habits, rituals of individuals, groups

involved in the learning community; practices that lead to the production of innovative

policies, programs and interventions, what we otherwise refer to as *prototyping.* Prototyping

was further distilled into two underlying dimensions, *failures – embraced/learning*

opportunity, trial and error – explores options commensurate with social justice concerns,

with the former securing a level 4 score (significantly present) and the latter retaining a level

3 score (somewhat present). Each dimension faced few (to zero) barriers to its respective

actualization. The most pressing challenges related were inherent to *failures –*

embraced/learning opportunity, such as over-burdened schedules and a lack of infrastructure

in the community or the WRIP to support prototyping. One WRIP member discusses the

current state of the immigration partnership and its relative lack of infrastructure to support

prototyping.

> Interviewer: So we have talked you know about the use of research and evaluation we
> have talked a little bit about reflection ... I know with the learning community and the
> design lab, using different experimenting, prototyping processes to figure out ways to

solve of these problems.. has there been any of these approaches to help develop solutions to some of the issues that you, that you mentioned prior?

WRIP Member #2: With the kind of the bigger settlement systems-level challenge? I don't think we've gotten really far. And we've kind of restarted some approaches to get at some of that in the past year looking at shared tools among partners and make progress in helping non-settlement partners see their role.

– WRIP (administrator) Member #2

Such admission about the relative lack of prototyping infrastructure in the community

was additionally supported by one university member, who observed the following of the WRIP:

I don't think this whole idea around learning, experimentation, prototyping is very much present at all. Time for reflection is hardly found. There's no, yeah, employers are not given much time for that at all. It's all about doing, doing, doing, doing.

-University (faculty) Participant #1

Nevertheless, practitioners retained an ability to see the "silver lining" of programs

currently available, and revealed an enthusiasm for the current, ad hoc experimental processes

that do exist, as well as a significant desire to see more experimentation and prototyping

practices become those available in the community (e.g., WRIP agencies). Practitioners, such as

the one below, even went so far as to conceptualize the learning community's identity around

prototyping specifically.

I think this is what we want to achieve in the settling action group. I don't know if we'll be able to experiment because we don't have the opportunity. But I think the idea is to share that knowledge that every person at the table has and to come up with some ideas. That, I think has always been the purpose. Sometimes it doesn't work. But I think probably having the support of the university, we will be able to experiment and pilot those ideas.   – WRIP (staff) Member #3

Another WRIP member expressed considerable enthusiasm regarding the learning

community's ever-emerging infrastructure to support social innovation and prototyping.

So, it's an experiment. Let's do the experiment. I'm not afraid. I'm a risk-taker. And I don't see risk in this. I see learning opportunity, potential, innovation and I see study, and I see research and I am a believer in the results of this research.

-WRIP (staff) Member #4

Category:	Learning community outcomes			
Concepts:	Collective learning and transformation	Individual learning and transformation	Sustainability of the learning community	Measurable impact
Codes:	Emerges from practices Practices provide insight, Policy/program changes, enhanced resource distribution	Mental models – Expanded Mental models – self/professional development & advocacy	Benefits ensured Collective benefits – Enhanced commitment, culture of sustainability	Evaluation – clearly defined benchmarks, forms around complex social issue
Code definitions:	**Emerges from practices:** Collective learning emerges from the learning community's prolonged engagement in creative problem solving exercises, action-reflection cycles, and strategic planning processes. Together, these activities provide insights into the mechanisms, programs, and governance structures needed to effectively facilitate change and improvement on the social issue targeted. **Practice provides insights/program changes, enhanced resource distribution:** Changes in policies, programs and procedures help to redistribute resources, expertise, and knowledge to where they are most needed, thereby tailoring institutional systems to better address the target issue. It is through the insights gained, enactments of policy, and decision-making that learning and transformation are enacted at institutional and collective levels.	**Mental models – expanded:** Through individuals' ongoing participation in the learning community, such as their experiences engaging with a diverse group of individuals, members of the learning community directly and indirectly refine, expand, and evolve their assumptions, attitudes, and behaviours (i.e., mental models) pertaining to the social-organizational issue targeted. **Mental models – self/professional development & advocacy:** Changes in the mental models and learning of individuals involved helps to invoke changes in institutional settings, which can lead to the creation of and advocacy for new programs, policies, and practices. As actors begin to recognize the utility of new learning, gains related to professional development, self-efficacy, and competency are also more readily realized.	**Benefits ensured:** Because collaboration cannot sustain itself without benefitting those involved, the learning community continues to ensure that benefits are gained at individual and collective levels. **Collective benefits – enhanced commitment, culture of sustainability:** When benefits are continuously nurtured for the individuals and groups involved, the collective is then better positioned to cement and sustain its commitment to the social problem identified, and over the longer term. As these benefits are evinced at individual, group and collective levels and combined with a notable and sustained impact on the social issue targeted, this helps to reinforce and gradually instill a culture of sustainability amongst the broader learning community network.	**Evaluation – cleared defined benchmarks:** A learning community forms around complex social issues and pertinent community needs; in order to assess impact on these matters, the learning community has clearly-defined indicators of movement and means of measuring progress.

Learning community outcomes, which are about how the LC's processes, practices and structures interact and combine to create expected and unexpected benefits for individuals, groups involved and movement, progress on outcomes and indicators addressing the social issue targeted (e.g., refugee resettlement in Kitchener-Waterloo region). Concepts central to learning

community outcomes include *measurable impact on the issue, collective learning and transformation, individual learning and transformation* and *sustainability of the LC.* Given the nascent stage of the learning community, *measurable impact* retained the lowest score of the entire category (level 3), whereas all other concepts/constructs were tied in their degree of realization – each with a score of 4.

Recognizing that the learning community is still in its earliest stage, *measurable impact* faces a significant number of barriers moving forward; this includes a lack of organizational capacity to conduct research as well as the challenges and complexities of conducting large scale evaluations. Some key informants cited a lack of certainty/understanding of community benefits in current and previous community-engaged programs, research projects and coursework. Further, a recurring under-optimization of the LIP structure and time requirements for creating systems' change were also noted. In their discussion of collective learning processes (ascertained at working group tables and steering committee meetings), one WRIP member spoke about the due diligence that is taken via WRIP's purposeful inclusion of multiple voices (in sense making activities, etc.). Despite this due diligence, there was still much uncertainty (lack of evaluation) about the actual impacts of such collective learning processes.

> So, this is the process and I don't know if we are making decisions in a manner that is impacting any of the organizations or the operations of those organizations or the individual clients directly.   - WRIP (staff) Member #4

In cases where evaluation was used, one WRIP member mentioned how the actual impact of WRIP projects could be sometimes less than that hoped for.

> So, I don't see it as you know, necessarily as a negative example. But not as much positive but the line of impact didn't keep on going up, maybe it kind of plateaued. I don't know if it was a plateau, or if was a less progression.
> – WRIP (researcher) Member #5

Conversely, some factors positively contributing to a *measurable impact* included the presence of systems' champions, impromptu joining tables, emerging community university projects and need/desire for "good structures" to house and expand innovative programs that are being used to address refugee resettlement. One WRIP member spoke of the seminal role that leaders play in creating action and impact on issues related to refugee resettlement.

> So, while I think that while there is some of that in place for the immigration partnership and I would say that the council which sits above the three pillars, that piece of the leadership infrastructure is vital. And who's on that council is really important. So, if you're going to accomplish anything by having this whole collective, you need to have the leadership there who can facilitate action afterwards. - WRIP (staff) Member #1

Individual learning and transformation contained two underlying dimensions, *mental models – expanded* and *mental models – self, professional development and advocacy*. Both dimensions received overall ratings of 4 with engagement with diversity significantly and positively contributing to each respective domain. Nevertheless, *self, professional development* led *mental models- expanded* by over 12 points. The largest barriers pertaining to the presence of *mental models – expanded* included lack of awareness of pertinent social/organizational issues and a questionable ability to change stakeholder/partner perceptions. Some WRIP member were suspicious of WRIP meetings or awareness campaigns ability to change partners' perceptions or ways of relating to one another. The ways in which funding structures are set up and imposed upon individual WRIP agencies also contributed to difficult partner perceptions, leading to issues like myopic thinking and inaction.

> I don't think [the learning identity] is that strongly present. I think partners would like for it to be. But for many reasons, I don't think they have the capacity for it to be. I don't think they know how to move that forward. I think the desire is there because in the end, everyone wants to be successful in what they're doing. But, how do you actually go about doing that when many of our partner organizations, their funding model specifically urged them not to do that?   – WRIP (administrator) Member #2

Despite these challenges, many practitioners remained optimistic about the potential of the newfound learning community initiative. This optimism stemmed from a previous history of innovating and restructuring Waterloo region's LIP, as well as the current (and gradual) emergence of formalized professional development programs and infrastructure (supporting the settlement sector specifically) at Laurier. Unsurprisingly, supportive professional development infrastructure was also a significant and positive factor associated with *mental models – self/professional development*. Despite the significant number of barriers faced by WRIP, the regions' history of coming together infused great optimism in practitioners' regarding WRIP's current and future prospects.

> And what gives me hope is having seen how our community has responded at each chapter. What we're seeing with some of the leadership that we have now in our community for chapter six. And that gives me optimism.
> –WRIP (researcher) Member #5

While the level of community-engagement varied across the university, some university participants expressed the considerable enthusiasm of certain departments and faculty in becoming involved in community-engaged work or programs (directly or indirectly related to the learning community).

> So, I would say that [creation/use of community-engaged courses] is an opportunity, because we constantly encourage faculty to engage more with community partners and we've had some really neat partnerships with faculty in the seminary, and they seem more open to engaging with their partners. And we've had some every year, where faculty may want to engage with the community partners.
> – University (staff) Participant #3

Recognizing that this level of community engagement may not always change for certain faculty or university departments, one university member involved in the formation of the learning community remained optimistic about the prospects for heightened levels of connectivity and exchange within and beyond the university.

> And a university is a hub of multi-disciplinary exchange, if properly connected could really support communities to prosper and learn and grow.
>
> – University (staff) Participant #5

The biggest hindrance to presence of *mental models – self/professional development* were a perceived lack of skill or knowledge to participate in the learning community's various projects, stubborn attitudes and inability to balance the sheer volume and complexity of needs also prevailed across several key informant interviews. Some practitioners found that they lacked complete information about the learning community or knowledge about the exact or concrete ways that it would benefit their work.

Further, the requisite level of knowledge, understanding of the learning community's range of (limited) benefits appeared to require some sort of (largely unbeknownst) "acculturation" process. This was a requirement that was hampered by the multitude of needs and resource constraints already imposed upon many of those involved in the WRIP-Laurier learning community.

> You constantly have to acculturate new people into what we are doing. So, I think that's a challenge. And then, another challenge is that there are many needs.
>
> - University (faculty) Participant #1

As mentioned, *collective learning and transformation* retained an overall rating of 4 (significantly present), with the exact same rating achieved for each of its respective dimensions, *emerges from practice* and *practices provide insight into program changes, resource redistribution.* Very few barriers were present for either dimension. While conceptualizing and responding to changing community realities was noted, practitioners (especially those from WRIP) revealed an extensive number of formal and informal vehicles used to impart knowledge and collectively galvanize resources for transformative change. These vehicles were both internal to the WRIP network (e.g., functional communities of practice, continued evaluation efforts from

peri- and post-WRIEN) and exogenous to the network, using platforms like community forums,

learning conferences as opportunities for cross-fertilization and boundary-spanning knowledge

production. Some WRIP practitioners, such as the one below, expressed an interest in leveraging

the learning community infrastructure to augment and support *collective learning and*

transformation.

> So, we work with an external evaluation support. At times, having that directly on our
> staff we have that as a resource to our partners and certainly with the expansion of the
> learning community at Laurier, we are hoping it will help us increase and sustain that
> collaborative learning piece as we continue on this journey together.
> - WRIP (administrator) Member #2

This same WRIP practitioner spoke of their participation in various "learning

conferences" with faculty and staff at Laurier. Prior to the creation of the learning community,

this learning conference was used to exchange learnings and insights about the successes and

failures of WRIP (or its key agencies) in working with the university (as well as the university's

experience in collaborating with the community). Despite past failures, this informant appeared

to capture a collective sentiment (between Laurier and WRIP's agencies) that there was great

potential for improving the level of connectivity between the community and the university;

either expanding upon or renovating the structures used to collaborate effectively. Within the

WRIP, *collective learning –and transformation* appeared within WRIP's key steering groups as

well as in its concomitant conversations with WRIP's leadership council.

> Because, we are here sitting around this table, looking at this thing as a whole. That's
> why it takes a lot of time to bring people back to that state of mind and be more
> methodological in decision-making on what should be a priority and what shouldn't be.
> So, it might be a lengthy process, but a lot of learning happens through that.
> – WRIP (staff) Member #4

Sustainability of learning community featured two dimensions, *benefits ensured* and

collective benefits – enhanced commitment. While both dimensions received a final score of 4

(significantly present), *benefits ensured* led *collective benefits* by nearly 20 points. Balance of goals and interests was the single largest barrier across both dimensions. Ability to think/see/act for the collective over the longer term was pertinent to *benefits ensured* only, whereas lack of research/certainty of benefits was a factor chiefly associated with *collective benefits – enhanced commitment*. Another barrier faced by *benefits ensured* remains to be the intensity of resources required to provide or sustain safeguards for community-engagement and action (e.g., in community service-learning, community-engaged research projects, etc.). As mentioned by this university participant, even aligning the interests and goals of community-engaged courses with the needs of community partners remained to be a considerable challenge.

> Starting with the need of the community partner is another one, right? Like we ask them, what is beneficial for them? Which has its challenges sometimes with the [non-immigrant focused community-engaged] course, sometimes what they're interested in doesn't fit so well with the course content.   – University (faculty) Participant #1

In the cases that community benefits were ensured, this same practitioner spoke of the intensity of resource requirements needed (for safeguard mechanisms used) to ensure that student projects were of sufficient quality (for community-engaged course or research work).

> I typically do group project work and either myself or a TA would be supervising that. So, through close supervision we try to make sure there is a benefit by ensuring to some degree, quality. So, with the internship program with [research centre] the supervision is pretty intense, because there's a PhD student and a faculty member, right?
> – University (faculty) Participant #1

Self-reflexive competencies and sense of optimism about the learning community were also contributory factors that contributed to current presence of *benefits ensured*. Also contributing to this rating were a long-established history of reciprocity and community engagement (both internal and exogenous to the WRIP), established histories of collegial relationships and capacity-building between WRIP and organizations associated with Wilfrid Laurier University (IMRC, CCRLA, CSL office). As seen below, practitioners perceived ability

to shape/influence (and learn about) the learning community structure helped to retain their

optimism, and the current rating or presence of *sustainability - benefits ensured.*

> Overall, I just wanted to say how positive this [learning community] experience has been for me. And I think for colleagues on both sides. I think there's a real excitement about the potential, and I think there's also this realization that it's also really early. So, hopefully we can identify some low hanging fruit very quickly, and we can start showing some results from this work.   – University (staff) Participant #4

Some practitioners' optimism for the learning community were also (positively) coloured

by their history of benefiting from the work (or collaborative engagements) with the university.

> Being part of this [learning community] group has been a learning experience for us to take advantage of, right? As using the resources, working with the post-secondary institutions and working with the region is something that we have embraced and have evolved because of.   – WRIP (staff) Member #1

The greatest factors motivating and instilling *collective benefits – enhanced commitment*

was a clear sense of (higher) purpose, with tangible contributions made to such higher purpose.

Some practitioners saw collegial relationships, belief in mutually and individually beneficial

outcomes as central to practitioners' subsequent and continued engagement in the learning

community.

This sense of higher or collective purpose were additionally gleaned from sentiments

regarding the purpose and power of community-engaged coursework. A learning community

participant who instructs community-engaged courses found the pedagogy to be deeply enriching

for students at a personal and professional levels while at the same time of offering potential

benefit to community partners.

> For the students, what I've seen is that it's more motivating to learn about something and put effort into it if you feel like it's benefiting somebody directly. Rather than just doing it for the purposes of academic learning. So, I think that's the biggest benefit is to have that additional motivation and contribute to something meaningful while you learn. And I think that helps you grow as a professional.   – University (faculty) Participant #1

Documentation review found similar findings, citing the many benefits for stakeholders'

engagement in community-based research (in courses) at the university.

> [Name] teaches a PhD-level statistics course, school board had interesting data on student well-being, the school didn't really know what to do with it. This is one example of how to use research/student talent to create new/innovative solutions that are useful for service providers. This participant found such to be very motivating for students involved…. Many of these students have a lot to give, while also greatly enriching their own capacities. Some learning team meeting attendants didn't think that this platform would be an option 5 years ago.   -Learning Team No.1, Meeting Minutes

Nevertheless, some questions remain about the learning community's ability to endure or

remain sustainable. This question of sustainability is a question in terms of *collective benefits*

ensured – enhanced commitment. There is much uncertainty about how this learning community

will be able to instill or maintain a collective superordinate vision into the future. One of the

largest impediments to the realization or maintenance of *collective benefits ensured – enhanced*

commitment is the question of how the learning community will be able to successfully manage

or balance the goals and interests among partners over the longer term. Some key informants,

such as the one below, forewarned that these benefits for (community) partners involved ought to

be displayed within a relatively short time span.

> And I think those things sort of combine as a risk, that if the immigration partnership doesn't see value over this next calendar year, then I think they'd be out. Like you can only ask people who are very busy to attend meetings and talk to them about a thing that might happen for so long before they give up on it. So, we risk it just sort of fading out.
> – University (staff) Participant #5

As mentioned, many questions remained about how the learning community or next

phase of the WRIP will be able to establish and maintain its sustainability over the longer term.

> Now the challenge is, not how do we get people involved but how do we sustain it? In a productive way? In a way that needs to be sustained in a healthy way. Where there is mutuality between newcomer and host. How do we sustain it? That is a challenge that as a community we need to figure out.   – WRIP (researcher) Member #5

The pressure is on to maintain, balance and uphold the many needs and expectations of practitioners involved in the learning community. Many participants remarked on time constraints, resource constraints and overburdened schedules, which only heightened practitioners' vulnerability for leaving the learning community at or near the first sign of trouble.

Discussion

The list of considerations needed to successfully engage in community collaborations, community-university partnerships is extensive. And the results from this study indicated that the learning community is not different in that respect. While collaborative approaches are needed to meaningfully address complex social issues (Berkowitz, 2001; Connors & Seifer, 2000; Evans et al., 2014; Marek, Brock, & Savla, 2015; Munger & Riemer, 2012; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006; Westley et al., 2007; Wolff, 2010), the nuances and complexities of these arrangements increase considerably as they span boundaries across intra-, inter-organizational ecosystems, networks and settings (or peripheral, adjacent and core systems; O'Connor, 2007; Parsons, 2007). The findings from the LC case explored in this paper, and/or realization of the learning community model are consistent with this broader literature on inter-organizational collaborations, community collaborations and community-university partnerships, while also offering some key differences.

This discussion also recognizes the need for brevity with an appreciation for the complexity of findings. For this reason, the discussion is hitherto structured and presented by the factors that have most hindered (challenges to) and most facilitated (via existing strengths that can be leveraged for) the relative actualization of the LC (at this WRIP-Laurier case site). The reader should note that these factors are highly inter-related and nested at multiple ecological levels. For an overview of these factors and the LC concepts/dimensions related see Appendix I

(recognizing that this table is not exhaustive). To more fully realize the LC, one may seek to increase the amount of support and/or degree of formalisation for facilitating factors while also becoming more systematic in the strategies used to overcome or ameliorate hindering factors (which is an approach similar to Kurt Lewin's "force field analysis"; Wolff, 2010). Mixed-factors are also worthy of consideration, as they indicate the variables that have either been inconsistent and/or under-optimized in their ability to realize LC concepts (or the learning community by extension); and may thus require a higher level of discretion, persistence or innovation in the actual strategies used to make these factors more conducive to the enactment of LC concepts.

Framing the discussion in terms of facilitating and hindering factors is also consistent with the general systems science literature, particularly in their discussion of "leverage points," which are inherent to highly dynamic, non-linear social settings (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Meadows, 2008; Parsons, 2007; Senge, 1995; Westley et al., 2007). Recognizing the gaps between a desired "end-state" and the current state of the WRIP-Laurier LC system can help identity needed and well-tailored interventions to these specific "sweet spots." Leverage points are defined as intervention points that would create the biggest impact with the least amount of resources required (see Meadows, 2008; Foster-Fishman, 2007 for a more thorough description). These sweet spots or leverage points can be best utilized by a) prioritizing and dampening "reinforcing" feedback loops, b) strengthening "balancing loops" (Parsons, 2007) and/or c) targeting the factors that cut across (and influence) the most LC categories and concepts.

Taken together, these efforts will assist practitioners in their ability to streamline efforts, to conserve and utilize resources efficiently while also best positioning the WRIP-Laurier network to more fully realize the LC in practice. As these factors span across multiple ecological

levels, targeting multiple factors simultaneously may help ensure systems' change success (Cohen & Lavach, 1995; Nowell, 2009). Further, as many of the factors below can be contextualized within the complex adaptive social systems literature, such will be used to delineate the learning community from more traditional forms of collaboration.

Hindering Factors

The factors that may most greatly obstruct the full realization of the LC included: intensity of resource requirements, autocratic decision-making/power asymmetries (within and beyond intra-intergroup settings), ability to match, maintain or balance interests, needs and goals (over the longer term), information exchange and resource gaps as well as loss/discontinuity of people. Challenging attitudes/mental models, limited organizational capacity (both within WRIP and the university) and difficulty of solutions were also important, although those factors cut across LC's concepts and categories to a lesser degree. It should also be mentioned that some of the barriers identified below are historical artefacts (e.g., issues that have historically affected WRIP and Laurier) that exist within and across WRIP, Laurier and will likely need to be overcome by each respective institution in the months moving forward.

Intensity of resource requirements. The vagaries of funding shifts, funding loss are a well-known risk in the collaboration literature (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). Identifying, coordinating and pooling resources has been seen by some collaboration researchers as necessary ingredients for the development and implementation of effective strategies (Butterfoss & Kegler, 2009), evidence-based practices (Brown et al., 2010) and coalition success (Boyd & Peters, 2009; Harper, Kuperminc, Weaver, Emshoff, & Erikson, 2014). Systems resources (which includes human and financial capital) has also been found as one of four key levers for systems change (Foster-Fishman, 2007; Peirson et al., 2011). Other researchers have subsequently dubbed funding as a marker of a coalition's sustainability (Rog et al., 2014), particularly when

resources available are shared and based on reciprocal exchanges (Kawachi et al., 1997; Martin-Rodriguez et al., 2005; McMurray, 2006).

This study found that the amount of resources (e.g.., time, effort, energy, capital) needed to build and sustain membership and organizational capacity (as defined by Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b – involving skills development, research capacity) for the LC was substantial. The level of resources needed is extensive when considering the expansive set of skills and infrastructure needed to support and sustain existing (or desired) LC activities (e.g., professional course work, large scale research and evaluation capacity, training in community-based research, community service-learning, etc.). Without adequate funding, organizational innovations (for the LC specifically) are susceptible to failure or limitations in the durability, implementation or impact (Klein & Knight, 2005).

In summary, while such a shift from discrete to continuous social programs/interventions, from single-ecosystem (WRIP) to multi-scalar, multi-nested ecosystems (i.e., learning community) better promote systems' change outcomes (Foster-Fishman, 2007), they also require substantial upfront investments. The LC's demand on different sources of capital (e.g., financial, human capital specifically) may therefore extend beyond that required for "typical" or shorter-term (project-based) community collaboration or community-university partnerships. Such claim is supported by the fact that the intensity of resource requirements (e.g., time, effort, energy, capital) remains to be the single largest impediment to the realisation of LC concepts and categories (whereas in studies of coalition effectiveness, funding was either not listed or a less prioritized consideration). The results from this study indicated that considerable resources are needed to (better) deliberately generate a shared vision, to more intentionally (or continuously) select members based upon various diversity characteristics (i.e., *intentional membership* –

diversity sought), and for using non-linear approaches or tools addressing refugee resettlement issues (i.e., *non-linear approaches to problem solving*).

Current resource restraints (of the WRIP-Laurier case site) also imposed limitations on the LC's realization of categories and concepts related to continuous growth and learning (put another way you cannot learn as a collaborative without sufficient resources or investments). For example, building or maintaining infrastructure that allows for *prototyping* the *creativity - encouraged,* platforms that enable learning from or embrace failure (e.g., *prototyping – failures embraced, failures – creates insights*) require substantial and lasting budgetary supports beyond those currently offered. Current development efforts suggest that some of the issues are being broached through the preparation and submission of grants and plans to hire a central coordinator (for the LC). Nonetheless, as systems are often "richer" in resources than they first appear (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007; Kelly et al., 2000), the WRIP-Laurier LC may also wish to explore various untapped forms of social and human capital. Such may help to offset some of the concerns mentioned previously, while creating more effective actions toward refugee resettlement issues (Evans et al., 2014).

Autocratic decision-making, power asymmetries. Power asymmetries, group dynamic, resource inequality and control issues have been cited as one of the largest challenges in inter-organizational collaborations (Barile et al., 2012; Chavis, 2001; Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009; Munger & Riemer, 2012; Wolff, 2010), interdisciplinary collaborations (Korazim-Korosy et al., 2014) in the second phase of a three-phased developmental framework for community-university partnerships, (e.g. , *developing and sustaining collaboratives*; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) and systems change efforts more broadly (Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011; Peirson et al., 2011). Many authors have documented the list of difficulties of trying to find common ground (Nelson,

2001; Suarez 2005), particularly when you are involving multiple ecosystems, power hierarchies and stakeholder groups (Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009; O'Connor, 2007; Sylvestre, Cousins, Sundar, Aubry, & Hinsperger, 2008). Although *social power – consciousness* was somewhat present in this case study, the recurring issue of autocratic decision-making and power asymmetries was also found, which is consistent with this broader literature on collaboration typologies.

More specifically, autocratic decision-making and unresolved power asymmetries (within and across WRIP and the university) presented significant challenges to the realization of multiple dimensions of the learning community (such as *intentional membership - deliberate tools* and *diversity sought*, *collective orientation, structures – equitable* and *maintenance of diversity*). While the WRIP uses various internal mechanisms to facilitate community-driven decision-making (recognizing that hierarchal decision-making and authoritative leadership has been an issue for WRIP before), this study found that such either a) do not yet exist for the WRIP-Laurier learning community (and its multi-layered, ecosystems), or b) they have not yet been formalized to the same extent nurtured by WRIP exclusively. The results indicated that power asymmetries (within WRIP and Laurier) also hampered WRIP-Laurier practitioners' ability to understand (or learn) how to more effectively bridge, build interests (i.e., *governance – bridges, builds interests*) or to make policies, programs and structures (e.g., community service-learning programs, community-based research programs, hiring decisions for WRIP, etc.) more equitable (i.e., *social power – consciousness*).

As the WRIP continues to further embed itself into the WRIP-Laurier LC, community-governed funding sources and other tools can be used to ensure more equitable power arrangements (Jones et al., 2009). One such approach is through dialogically-informed,

"boundary critique" exercises. Boundary critiquing exercises can a) carefully outline, scrutinize these new system boundaries, they can b) question and (re-)negotiate considerations regarding the LC's framing of issues targeted and outcomes strived for (e.g., such as learning needs taken up by the IP design lab; Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007). Such exercises may help to diminish the prevalence, severity or threat of autocratic decision-making and power asymmetries apparent to (or potentially hampering) the current LC structure (Foster-Fishman, 2007; Midgley, 2000). Intentionally reorganizing decision-making structures to allow for greater WRIP/community organization control within the LC will help shift the system away from a "collaborative betterment" to a "collaborative empowerment" approach (Himmelman, 1996) and more equitable or trusting power arrangements in general (Chaskin, 2000; Foster-Fishman, 2007; Israel et al., 2003; Jones et al., 2009; Munger & Riemer, 2012).

Ability to match, maintain interests, needs and goals over the longer term. An inability to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders has been cited as a key challenge to community collaborations (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) and systems change interventions (Foster-Fishman, 2007). These challenges are usually amplified when you attempt to integrate multiple ecosystems and or network settings (O'Connor, 2007). Many difficulties stem from the work required to sustain members' belief in equal partnerships (Harper et al., 2004; Lawson, 2004), or their perception that the benefits will continue to outweigh the costs (Chinman, Anderson, Imm, Wansdermaan, & Goodman, 1996; D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005; Williamson, 1979). Similarly, complex adaptive social systems scholarship is often concerned with the (or discrepant) 'pay offs" accrued to agents and incidences where there is a discrepancy between "micro-behaviours," "macro-behaviours" and systems goals (Miller & Page, 2007; Parsons, 2007). For these reasons, there has been various strategies used to buffer the long-term

viability of collaboration networks (Evans et al., 2010; Munger & Riemer, 2012), through the creation of superordinate (community) goals and collective visioning exercises (Anderson-Butcher & Ashton, Nowell, 2009; Wolff, 2010). At the core of these strategies is an effort to align the behaviour of individuals with broader systems goals (Miller & Page, 2007).

The findings from this study are consistent with this broader systems' change, community collaboration and complex adaptive social systems scholarship - as a questioned ability to match or maintain interests, needs and goals was the third largest impediment to the realization of the learning community. Practitioners uncertainty about the ability of the LC to maintain or match interests specifically challenged the realization of multiple dimensions for collective benefits (*balance of goal & interests* and *collective benefits - enhanced commitment*), shared vision, intentional membership (– *guides action*)*,* social power (*consciousness*)*,* and *sustainability – benefits ensured.* Yet, a questioned ability to match or maintain communal interests negatively influenced the realization of *ecosystem – capacity-building* and *collective benefits – practice provides insight* as well. These findings suggest that collective learning processes are needed to determine a) where expertise, resources and supports may be best allocated in the broader WRIP-Laurier ecosystem and b) what kind of practices and policy changes (within Laurier and WRIP) can ensure the LC's optimal functioning.

Moving forward, the WRIP-Laurier LC may benefit from paying attention to "systems guides" (that is the respective norms, principles and goals of Laurier, WRIP and its constituent agencies and organizations). Continuous monitoring of systems guides can help determine opportunities of convergence and areas of discrepancy (with an emphasis on instances where these norms/systems guides of adjacent/overlapping systems are antagonistic or juxtaposed from one another; O'Connor, 2007). Actors from both WRIP and Laurier systems may benefit from

the) leveraging synergistic opportunities based on congruent "systems guides," while b) developing interventions in instances/arenas where they are incompatible (within and across the WRIP-Laurier LC). Specifically targeting areas that are incompatible for interventions has also been identified as an effective lever for systems change (O'Connor, 2007).

While this study found a few instances of discrepant system guides, recent implementation and development efforts (of the LC) indicate some progress on this matter. As LC practitioners have been generally accommodating of, and sensitive to other peoples' needs and concerns (e.g., especially in instances of disagreement and discord). Some efforts have been placed to ensure that LC members feel that they are a valued part of the LC community. Nevertheless, the LC may wish to continue to use or strengthen strategic or inclusive planning processes that can better aligns interests, visions and desired end goals of everyone involved (Foster-Fishman, 2007; O'Connor, 2007). Other potentially fruitful strategies could include the exploration of mechanisms that reward collectively-minded behaviour (e.g., reward of tenure track promotion policies, shifts to longer term CSL placements) and challenge isolationist, siloed behaviour (as these approaches have been identified as another effective lever for change or change in complex adaptive social systems; Foster-Fishman, 2007; Miller & Page, 2007).

Information exchange and knowledge gaps. Information and knowledge exchange has been cited as an essential ingredient of communities of practice (Wenger & Synder, 2000), Peter Senge's learning organizations (1995), and Himmelman's typology of collaboration structures (2001). Scholars in the interagency collaboration literature have also found tie strength (measured by frequency, intensity of relationships, emotional support, overlapping relationships) and network cohesion to be positive predictors of information exchange (Cross et al., 2009). Conversely, authors such as Suarez-Balcazar (et al., 2005) have discussed the extent difficulties

of keeping partners abreast large-scale community research projects. With respect to this case study's findings (dimensions of the LC related to information and knowledge exchange gaps specifically), the impact and function of information and knowledge exchange (gaps) appeared to be not as versatile with other collaborative typologies as it was with the LC – given the relationship found between information exchange and the (potential) ability to change the LC's governance structure(s) specifically. The relationship between these information, knowledge exchange and governance structures may thus be best contextualized through existing research on complex adaptive social systems, which also centralizes the importance of communication relays (Miller & Page, 2007). Parsons (2007) sees complex adaptive social systems as systems that involve interdependent webs of agents that continuously respond to and adapt to one another, invoking changes to their environment as well as their relationship with others.

Thus, one of the hallmark features of complex adaptive social systems is that "lower-level" components enact behavioural and structural changes at higher levels (Miller & Page, 2007; Parsons, 2007). So, while knowledge and information flows can influence the mental models (Minas, 2005) and behaviours of individual practitioners, exchanges of knowledge can lead to emergent systems outcomes and structures as well (Miller & Page, 2007; Parsons, 2007). Such findings also resonate with Minas (2005), in their study of an Australian mental health system (which he defined as a complex adaptive social system). Minas (2005) found that resource and knowledge exchange positively impacted organizational procedures, as well as the shape and structure of the hosting mental health system.

Results from this case study are consistent with such trends in the complex adaptive systems discourse, while subsequently elucidating the role of information flow/exchange (gaps) for the LC. Currently existing information and exchange gaps negatively impacted the realization

of *intentional membership – diversity sought* (which perhaps serves as a proxy for social capital bonding and bridging ties). As alluded to above, current information and knowledge gaps found in the LC case site presented barriers to the realization of more *equitable –* (social system) *structures* as well as *social power – consciousness* (that is the enactment of more equitable or social justice minded policies, programs and procedures in WRIP and/or Laurier). Framing knowledge and information exchange as a form of continuous adaptation and learning, one could see how current knowledge and information gaps (between groups, organizations within or across WRIP and Laurier) stymied LC practitioners' ability to more fully realize *learning identity – integrates learning into practice* as well as *evaluation – opportunity for growth* (e.g., creating opportunities for the LC collective to adapt or change course in directions or strategies used to work on refugee resettlement issues). Such findings are consistent with what Miller and Page, 2007 refer to "Right view" in their framework describing complex adaptive social systems, whereby agents react to information that influences (planned, impending), proximal and distal behaviours, as well as outputs and actions at a systems level.

Current information and knowledge gaps inherent to WRIP and Laurier presented challenges for the LC to more readily (or more fully) learn from failure (i.e., *failures – create insights*), issues or insights from organizational or inter-organizational management and/or community-engaged programs offered (i.e., community service-learning, community-based research internship programs, etc.). With such a strong need for continuous learning and information exchange (for the realization of multiple concepts/dimensions of the LC), this section thereby signals another point of departure for the LC in comparison to more traditional forms of collaboration (e.g., communities of practice, community collaborations, etc.).

Discontinuity and loss of people. It has been mentioned elsewhere that community collaborations struggle to maintain membership of "non-traditional" or community actors (Curwood et al., 2011; Munger & Riemer, 2012), and that more intentional mechanisms are needed to promote, sustain involvement while also reducing tokenism (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). These struggles to uphold such involvement are amplified by considerable geographical differences for involved stakeholders (McGuire, 2002), the high turnover rates typically found among community-based organizations (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005) and community-engaged students (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006). Such findings are consistent with the discontinuity/loss of people theme that pervaded through the LC case study. Many members, particularly community participants were inconsistent in the number and duration of learning team meetings and design lab processes attended. As these community participants arguably represented "non-traditional" actors in the ensuing LC activities, it was apparent either by concerns expressed by key informants or observations rendered (during learning team meetings or design lab processes) that special measures had not be taken to foster the retention and continued engagement of community practitioners. As a tangible example, all learning team meetings took place at the university, despite the far distance some community members had travelled to get there.

Such findings are worthy of consideration as initiatives that start "in the community" are likely to foster greater investment among everyone involved (Evans et al., 2001; Wolff, 2010). Unfortunately, this theme pervaded through WRIP as well, as certain stakeholders eventually left key positions in council and/or steering committees without capturing or retaining the knowledge of these people prior to their departure (thereby creating issues for leadership stability; Barile et al., 2012). Without retaining (or learning from) the diversity of knowledge across WRIP and

Laurier's various stakeholder groups, organizations and networks embedded, the LC finds itself at a relative standstill in its ability to actualize *governance structures – emergent learning,* to build upon or leverage existent social capital (e.g., *ecosystem – social capital*), or to contribute to capacity-building projects in zones, sectors or instances where they are most needed (e.g., *ecosystem – capacity-building*).

Challenging attitudes and mental models.

Overcoming mental models, attitudes and behaviours that are not conducive to collaborative engagement or learning has been of interest to scholars from diverse literatures, such as community collaboration, systems change and complex adaptive social systems. For example, Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) found that successful community collaborations require individual practitioners to overcome their (own and others) paternalistic and patronizing attitudes. In the systems science, scholars like Gray (2004), Foster-Fishman and Behrens (2007), Parsons (2007) have found differences in philosophies, worldviews and attitudes to be responsible for diminished systems' change outcomes. The complex adaptive systems discourse has also shed light on the function of social agents' mental models, which see such as predictors of subsequent behaviours, and something plastic enough to change if (and when) outcomes are not to their liking (Miller & Page, 2007).

These sort of mental model "problems" can be enduring by nature (Peirson et al., 2011), and their relatively ubiquity (that is mental models/perceptions that are not conducive to collaboration or learning) has led collaboration scholars to conceptualize trans-theoretical, readiness of change models (Munger & Riemer, 2012). While stubborn attitudes "only" negatively affected the realization of seven learning community categories/concepts, antagonistic or questionable mental models of systems practitioners may be a normative part of the WRIP-

Laurier LC systems' "deep structure." Theories like cultural historical activity theory (CHAT; Capper, Hill, & Wilson, 2003) also help to situate these findings at the level of agents (and their cognitive processes, knowledge and meaning production activities) that may elicit or predict antagonistic or selfish behaviours. Further contextualizing the mental and cognitive phenomenon of individual systems' actors within the larger social-ecological system of the LC, one could see how the constellations of attitudes, beliefs, expectations and values (i.e., mental models of key systems agents) reinforce "systems regularities," or behaviours that perpetuate the status quo (that is behaviours that prevent the fuller realization of the LC; Foster-Fishman, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Watson, 2011).

Given that stubborn mental models introduce challenges to the actualization of a learning identity (*integrates practice*), mental models (*challenged* and *expanded* and *self/professional development*), shared vision (*deliberate tools*), fuller realization of the LC therefore requires specific learning and cognitive processes to occur for LC agents. For example, the LC requires participants to exert a great openness to diversity and differences of opinion. It requires an inherent curiosity and desire to learn, as well as a considerable level of trust among everyone involved.

Moving forward with the LC, different tools may assist the collective in evoke changes in the inklings or attitudes of practitioners that are not conducive to larger WRIP-Laurier system goals. Introducing such changes in the individual inklings towards those that can become more commensurate with desired, collective end goals may lead to significant and lasting changes in the LC's "deep" structure (Parsons, 2007). With the gradual shift away from individualistic or siloed thinking, such will lead to the better realisation of LC concepts with transformative or second-order changes abound (Corrigan & McCracken, 1995; Gersick, 1991). Participant

observation data suggested that the IP design lab is one promising mechanism (for changing hindering perceptions/mental models of stakeholders involved), although the durability of its impact warrants further study.

Hindering factors summary. As seen, the key hindering factors that are challenging the fuller realization of the LC include a) intensity of resource requirements, b) autocratic decision-making/power asymmetries, c) matching needs and interests over the longer term, d) information flow/knowledge exchange gaps, e) loss/discontinuity of people, and f) challenging attitudes and mental models. While these were identified challenges, there were also a significant number of strengths, resources and supports that can be leverage to more fully realize the LC.

Facilitating Factors

The single largest and most powerful mechanisms for enabling the realization of the LC included: a) impromptu joining tables/flow of people across conversations, tables and working groups (or inviting other groups, initiatives and organizations to do so), b) concrete utilization of cross-sectoral collaboration tools (e.g., community action plan, consensus decision-making, community consultations), and c) the presence of systems champions/leaders. (Maintaining) engagement with diversity, self-reflective capacities of practitioners and sense of optimism were also positive drivers for the realization of LC concepts.

Impromptu joining tables, conversations and working groups or inviting others to do so. While mostly an informal mechanism, this factor facilitated the advancement and realization of more LC concepts and categories than any other factor. Such was a potent learning strategy used to successfully (help) instill multiple dimensions of *intentional membership (e.g., diversity sought, deliberate processes and tools), collective orientation* (e.g., *balance of goals, maintenance of diversity*), *learning identity* (e.g., *values learning and experimentation, integrates learning into practice)* and *intentional governance structures* (e.g., *builds upon*

emergent learnings, commensurate activities, bridges and builds interests). This factor was also positively contributed to *learning ecosystem – capacity-building, shared vision – guides action* and *social power – action.* Given that this strategy was mostly one of adaptation and discovery, the ubiquity of, and need for learning is once again highlighted.

One way to situate these above findings is to turn to social-ecological systems and complex adaptive systems scholarship – specifically the "cycling of resources" and "adaptation" dimensions (Kelly, 2000; Peirson, Boydell, Ferguson, & Ferris, 2011). Conversations with diverse others, sectors both through and beyond WRIP enabled the continual adaptation and adjustment of strategies, learnings and uptake of diverse knowledges (Parsons, 2007). Such uptake has directly and indirectly contributed to the creation of solutions for refugee resettlement and social inclusion issues in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. With the level of disconnection between WRIP steering committees noted, many WRIP practitioners attended working groups, learning conferences and communities of practice on their own accord. Although these strategies of individual practitioners were mostly informal, such helped WRIP practitioners to stay abreast pertinent community needs and issues (i.e., *collective learning – emerges from practice*). Further, individual agencies (informal) engagement with social innovation groups, community-engaged research projects and course work helped WRIP practitioners learn about new tools, trends in the education sector that could be useful in their own work (*learning identity – integrates insights into practice*).

Moreover, WRIP practitioners' continued participation in community-engaged projects and conversations has brought forth a strong legacy of engagement with interested and diverse "others." As it were exactly these type of strategies that led to the Voices for Change "conscious-

raising" research project of the early 2000's, the formation (and governance structure) of the

Immigration and Employment Network (IEN; i.e., *governance – bridges, builds interests*), the

creation of WRIP and the implementation and development of the current WRIP-Laurier LC

(i.e., *learning ecosystem – considerations of social capital).* Recounting Kelly's (2000)

definition of "cycling of resources" (e.g., which utilizes the potential and proactive

characteristics of the system such as through resource cycling, creation, distribution and

exchanges in order to achieve desired ends) conversations at working groups, (WRIP) steering

committees and tables continue to be used as a) opportunities to build membership capacity, to b)

determine who needs to be added to such conversations (*intentional membership - diversity

sought, deliberate processes and tools*), to c) capture, leverage and retain understandings of best

practices (regarding refugee resettlement), to d) effectively galvanize and integrate local

knowledge, expertise and resources where they are most needed, to e) better change and optimize

governance structures (*governance structures – emergent learnings*) and f) map out needed

trajectories of the IEN/WRIP/WRIP-Laurier LC's past, present and future.

Consensus-decision making, community action plan. Some scholars have claimed that

community coalitions using formalized processes such as consensus decision-making represent

the highest "rung" of collaboration (Cross et al., 2009). Consequently, tools like consensus

decision-making (and or WRIP's community action plan), the community action plan has helped

to (formally) enact a variety of LC concepts. Such includes multiple dimensions of *social power*,

collective orientation, shared vision, while also engendering thinking as a collaborative system

(e.g., *thinking as a system – collaborative, relational).* Consistent with the complex adaptive

systems scholarship, consensus decision-making may have thus served as a normative

mechanism, helping individual and systems actors learn the "rule following" behaviours

necessary for everyone's maximum benefit (Miller & Page, 2007). Yet such (consensus decision-making) tools also brought practitioners enhanced clarity about the interventions/strategies used to address such social and inter-organizational issues (i.e., *mental models – develop, become clearer*). Given the tripartite benefits of consensus/shared decision-making tools, enhanced understandings and better realization of the LC, this factor thus once again emphasizes the role of learning in the realization of the model. Also found was consensus-decision-making's ability to ensure the long-term sustainability of the collaborative partnership (given the positive association found between consensus decision-making and *sustainability – benefits ensured*). These findings are additionally consistent with the systems science literature, which discusses how shared decision-making mechanisms allow groups to adapt to ever-changing scenarios and meet the demands of multiple group members and group types (Briggs, 1999; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Nowell, 2009; Weiner et al., 2002; Wolff, 2010).

Nonetheless, and as alluded to before, these processes are mostly internal to WRIP and are not yet what Star and Griesemer (1989) refer to as "boundary objects." Moving forward, the WRIP-Laurier LC may wish to a) facilitate better cross-group linkages, b) more tightly couple/integrate the loosely connected system components (e.g., disconnected systems actors, organizations, etc.), c) better formalize decision-making structures at the nexus of Laurier and WRIP organizations and practitioners specifically (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007). Moreover, the WRIP-Laurier LC may wish to leverage the pre-existing shared/inclusive decision-making infrastructure of WRIP to support more effective collaborative change efforts (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007). Beyond findings from this research study, methods like ecological assessments may help the WRIP-Laurier LC unearth "below surface" systems components that can (or have

yet to) be leveraged to inform decision-making about the form, extent and intensity of change required to move the LC system towards a desired "end state" (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007).

Systems leadership. The findings from this case study are accordance with the broader literature that cites the central role of systems' leadership in successful community collaborations (Ansari, Oskrochi, & Phillips, 2009; DeCarolis, 1999; Donaldson, Lank, & Jane, 2005; Nowell, Izod, Ngaruiya, & Boyd, 2016) community coalitions (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001a; Nowell & Harrison, 2011), an ability bringing about change to complex adaptive social systems (Minas, 2005; Miller & Page, 2007; Nowell, 2009). Especially when the leaders utilize an empowering leadership style (Kumpfer, Turner, Hopkins, & Librett, 1993), systems leaders can permeate and (synergistically) influence all aspects of the coalition, galvanizing and retaining participation among members across it (Ansari, Oskrochi, & Phillips, 2009; Peirson et al., 2011). Framed another way, systems leaders may serve as embodiments of "systems regularities" that govern systems' behaviour by influencing and instilling learnings upon other individual agents – leading to more amiable actions for the various agents involved (Miller & Pager, 2007). In the coalition effectiveness efforts, systems leaders' have also been associated with coalition success, given how they can mobilize resources to where they are most needed (Luque & Martinez, 2010; Willumsen, 2006).

Commensurate with this aforementioned literature, leaders throughout the Kitchener-Waterloo municipality, those housed in the regional government, the immigration partnership and the university (e.g., such as and including the VP office) have helped enable (and set the ground work for) the realisation of several LC concepts, including *measurable impact, governance – bridge, builds interests,* as well as *learning identity – integrates learning into practice* (thus citing a role of systems leaders to realize multiple dimensions of social power, and

learning ecosystem (*considerations of social capital* and *capacity-building* specifically). Moving forward, a systems leader or champion for the LC specifically (such as one soon to be gained from/through the hiring of a permanent coordinator) may help ease power dynamic issues (as mentioned above), reduce misunderstanding across agents, as the WRIP-Laurier LC becomes further integrated (thus foregrounding the role of systems leadership and learning once more; Lawthom, 2011; Wenger, 2000). Continuing to leverage the charismatic and empowering leaders already present in WRIP and Laurier may help the LC better retain a collective vision while more greatly instilling some of the categories and concepts already mentioned (in this section; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993).

Matching and maintaining interests over the longer term. An inability to match or maintain interests over the longer term is a common reason why many inter-organizational collaborations or community-university partnerships fail or become unsustainable (Cross et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2009). Consequently, many authors have noted that inclusive decision-making structures are a key vehicle to collaboratives' long-term sustainability (by retaining the participation of diverse individuals; Butterfoss, Goodman, & Wandersman, 1996; Foster-Fishman et al, 2001; Garcia-Ramirez et al., 2009; Gottlieb et al., 1993; Wolff, 2010). Such findings are consistent with this research study. Nonetheless, an ability to match interests, needs and goals over the longer term was more strongly associated with *sustainability - benefits ensured* or the long-term viability/sustainability of the learning community (as per Cross et al., 2009's finding). These findings are also consistent with Appleton-Dyer and colleagues (2012) whose research on collaboration showed that stakeholders ought to be willing to compromise for the sake of harmonious arrangements and optimal functioning. Other authors have also found that synergistic coalition efforts improve access to federal and state-level resources (Wolff,

2010); which is consistent with the negative association found between (questioned) ability to match, maintain interests over the longer term with *learning ecosystem – capacity-building.*

Maintenance of and engagement with diversity. The maintenance of, or engagement with diversity has been associated with the success of community-university partnerships (Casey, 2008; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2008), community coalitions' sustainability (Balcazar et al., 1990; Wolff, 2010) and capacity to be innovative (Allen et al., 1998; Granovetter, 1982; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006; Wenger, 2000). Maintenance of diversity has also been found to promote systems' change outcomes (Foster-Fishman, 2007; Nowell, 2009). Further exploration and unpacking of the findings from this case study provides some additional insights as to how (and through what mechanisms) these systems changes might occur.

Maintenance of and engagement with diversity at this WRIP-Laurier case site was positively associated with clarified or enhanced understandings (i.e., *reflection - deeper understanding*) of pertinent social, organizational and inter-organizational issues (i.e., *mental models – develop, become clearer*); such was positively associated with mental models – *challenged* (e.g., challenging stakeholders' presumptions, constellation of beliefs, etc.) as well as mental models – *self/professional development* (gains). Therefore, this study is consistent with existent literature that highlights the relationship between engagement with diverse stakeholders and a deeper, more nuanced understanding of complex social issues (Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Christens, Hanlin & Speer, 2007; Foster-Fishman, 2007; Jones et al., 2009; Kelly, Ryan, Altman, & Stelzner, 2000; Luluquisen & Pettis, 2014, Wolff, 2010). At the WRIP-LC case site, such changes in practitioners' mental models and assumptions may have been acquired through the articulation, negotiation and synthesis of multiple problem perceptions, values and worldviews inherent (Korazim-Korosy et al., 2014; Marek et al., 2015; Midgley, 2000; Munger

& Riemer, 2012; Peirson et al., 2011). With the association between maintenance of diversity and challenged mental models in mind (e.g., *mental models – challenged*), complex adaptive systems once again serve a useful explanatory framework; as engagement with heterogeneous actors within these (complex adaptive) systems (Miler & Page, 2007) helped the systems generate new insights and new ways of operating (Parsons, 2007). One example of this emerged from the refugee sectors engagement with other industries throughout Waterloo region in their preparation for the immigrant skills summit (circa 2005). Such cross-sectoral engagement led to the subsequent idea for and formation of the Immigrant Employment Network (IEN).

Yet it was also found that the maintenance of diversity also helped to positively instill intentional membership - *diversity sought,* learning ecosystem – *capacity building* and learning ecosystem – *considerations of social capital* as well (which coalesces with existing scholarship on collaborative functioning – citing interpersonal relationships as key to collaborative success; Butterfoss et al., 1996). With this plethora of (aforementioned and positive) associations in mind, the maintenance of (or engagement with) diverse stakeholder groups have been integral to the (partial) realization of the learning community. Maintenance of (or engagement with) diversity's relationship to *mental models – develop, challenged* and *self/professional development* and *reflection – deeper understanding* indicates that engagement with diversity is a vehicle for deep learning (for the LC) on individual levels as well; whereas maintenance of maintenance of diversity's association with the realization of *ecosystem – capacity-building* and *ecosystem – considers social capital* signifies the role of diversity in eliciting learning at collective levels (e.g., such as by gaining knowledge of how to leverage existing assets in the community or directing those resources where they are most needed).

In the months moving forward, continued and purposeful identification of stakeholders, particularly at the periphery of WRIP/Laurier, and those unrelated to the LC or who have yet unclear relations to these initial systems designations (such as related to WRIP but not Laurier or vice-versa) may be useful (O'Connor, 2007).

    Sense of optimism, self-reflective capacities. Consistent with wider knowledge of systems' change scholarship (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007), reflective activities (conducted at a personal level) were associated with challenged and changed assumptions (i.e., *mental models – challenged, mental* models) and enhanced clarity about pressing social, organizational issues and realities (i.e., *mental models – develop, become clearer, reflection – deeper understanding*). These findings correspond with the literature on interdisciplinary collaborations, where positive attitudes and self-reflective capacity of individual practitioners and has been cited as key drivers for effective collaboration (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b; Korazim-Korosy et al., 2014). Such findings also resonate with the field of community psychology, as community psychologists are often asked to contemplate how peoples' own life histories influence and inform their attitudes, assumptions and beliefs that they bring to their work (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012). Nevertheless, given that sense of optimism, self-reflexivity enhanced the realization of *sustainability – benefits ensured,* mental models – *expanded,* mental models - *challenged,* mental models – *develop, become clearer,* reflection – *deeper understanding* this factor indicated a) the sort of qualities and characteristics that are needed to facilitate learning at an individual level, while b) illustrating the individual and intrapsychic factors that positively contribute to the realization of the LC. Interestingly, Parson's (2007) quote on actors/researchers within complex adaptive social systems exemplifies many of the findings here.

As our collective understanding of [complex adaptive social] systems have developed, researchers and evaluators increasingly realize that they cannot be totally objective and outside the system they are studying. As we open ourselves to new ways of relating to the system and purposes for doing so, we greatly expand our potential tools and methods and hopefully the depth of our understanding (p.408)

Facilitating factors summary. As seen then, the key facilitating factors that are positively contributing to the realization of the learning community are: Impromptu joining tables, conversations or groups (or inviting others to do so), community action plan/consensus decision-making, use of systems champions, maintenance of or engagement with diversity and sense of optimism, self-reflexive capacities.

Mixed factors

The most pervasive factors that were inconsistent and/or under-utilized in their ability to realize LC concepts included: platforms for capacity-building/professional development, realigning oneself with a collective vision and intentional/impromptu check-in's/communication pathways, reflective platforms/processes, and refining roles and responsibilities.

Platforms for capacity-building, professional development. Some scholars have said that the platforms, processes and structures that contribute to membership (particularly community membership) capacity-building (e.g., skills, knowledge development) are central to community coalition effectiveness (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Guta et al., 2010; Spoth, Greenberg, Bierman, & Redmond, 2004; Suarez- Balcazar et al., 2005;) or likelihood of success (Luluquisen & Pettis, 2014; Wolff, 2010). And the ubiquity, importance of membership capacity-building for the LC is consistent with this literature. At the same time, the ubiquity and importance of capacity-building to the LC helped to confirm our suspicion that the LC is different from other collaboration models, such as communities of practice, or Himmelman's (2001) networking, coordination or cooperation models (which does not discuss capacity-building for broader community or stakeholder groups). While ultimately beneficial, findings indicate that the number

and/or quality of platforms available to support membership capacity-building in the LC (both at the university and in the WRIP more broadly) is still below that needed (given the relatively low score/presence of *learning ecosystem – capacity-building*).

When actively utilized (and consistent with the broader community collaboration literature), platforms for (community, student, staff, faculty, etc.) capacity-building aided the realization of various learning community concepts – including *learning ecosystem – capacity-building, learning identity – integrates learning into practice, learning identity – flow of information, mental models – develop, become clearer,* and *mental models – self/professional development.* Although community collaborations often speak of capacity-building, much less cited is the association between professional development (what Foster-Fishman et al, 2001b refers to as "membership capacity-building") and the adaptation, uptake and implementation of new knowledges – particularly when enacted through changes in organizational, inter-organizational settings or procedures. The association found here then draws a novel association between the development of member capacity and learning, where skills gained help invoke changes to the WRIP-Laurier LC systems' structure. For example, certain WRIP members who participated in the IP design lab at the university are now in discussions about how to implement and formalize a similar process within their own agencies. Review of other recent archival records (from the learning team meetings) also indicated some other forward movement (for the LC) regarding platforms for capacity-building specifically. Discussions are underway regarding the planned implementation and design of community action projects as well as professional development courses (for settlement workers), which will be hosted at the university.

Retaining/aligning oneself with the collective vision. Building a common vision is commonly seen as one of the first prerequisites for coalition-building (Berrick, Frame, Langs &

Varchol, 2006; D'Andrade et al., 2016; Roussus & Fawcett, 2000; Wolff, 2010) and systems change success (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007). Such pathways to success may emerge from collective vision's ability to engender or contribute to organizational and inter-organizational capacity-building (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001b) and ability to foster mutually beneficial interdependencies across the collaborative initiative (Cross et al., 2009). When community interests and buy-in are present, such can contribute to enhanced attainment, mobilization of resources, as well as stronger implemented and enhanced programs (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001a).

As seen elsewhere (O'Connor, 2007) practitioners internal and external to the WRIP (within networks/systems spanning both systems, etc.) displayed a considerable challenge retaining a collective vision for the LC. The LC's actions may be most optimized and efficient when the actors within and across WRIP and Laurier are able to obtain further clarity about, and faith in LC's (specific and) collective vision. While some level of collective vision is enjoyed by WRIP, driving much of the work of its three steering committees and leadership council, practitioners' clarity about the LC's vision was much less apparent among the individual actors involved. Thus, in accordance with several other authors, collective visioning tools or exercises (within and across small group settings such as the learning team) may be needed to move the LC forward in a more mutually agreed upon way (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Munger & Riemer, 2012; Wolff, 2010).

Intentional check-ins and communication pathways. When utilized, intentional communication pathways helped facilitate the realization of multiple LC concepts. Agents involved in the LC attained some degree of success in leveraging communication networks/pathways to foster equitable decision-making structures (i.e., *structures – equitable*), to

better instill/contribute to the free flow of information (*learning identity – flow of information,* although this was largely internal to WRIP specifically), and to gain enhanced clarity or understanding of underlying community realities (*mental models – develop, become clearer*). Interestingly, lack of intentional communication pathways (in some instances) prevented (or presented challenges to) the fuller realization of *mental models – challenged*, which is in accordance with findings of Wenger (2007). Such findings are consistent with the complex adaptive social (CAS) systems literature, which notes how communication channels dictate systems' actors modelling or understanding of others (Miller & Page, 2007). In CAS, interactions and dialogue are viewed as mechanisms that can promote double-loop learning (Parsons, 2007). The found association between reduced communication channels and misunderstandings are also in accordance with Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) and Foster-Fishman (2001), who found that disrupted communication relays can reduce practitioners' understandings of cultural settings within and across community organizations (such as agencies involved in a complex community change effort).

Platforms for community connectivity and engagement were integral to *sustainability – benefits ensured,* which is commensurate with the existent literature citing the need for robust communication pathways as a vehicle to a collaborative's sustainability (Curwood et al., 2011; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Lawson, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Jones et al., 2009; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2006). Further, the positive association found between intentional communication pathways and *social power – action* is consistent with the broader literature mentioning how increased frequency of communication (that is clear, open; Briggs, 1999) enhances individual members' feelings of satisfaction and propensity for engagement (Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010). In summary for this section, intentional

communication pathways are not only a vehicle for the (fuller) realization of the model, but a means from which actors involved can and learn from one another and become more meaningfully engaged in actions related to the LC.

Platforms for reflection/reflective activities. While reflective platforms/processes were mixed overall in their ability to instill LC concepts, such was due to its under-optimization within WRIP, Wilfrid Laurier University and the WRIP-Laurier LC structure. Individual community agencies within the WRIP expressed some difficulty leveraging or formalizing reflective processes. And reflective practices within the university (related to the learning community specifically) appeared mostly limited to community service-learning course work, and to a lesser extent, community-based research projects (with exception to the emerging infrastructure developments of the IP design lab and social innovation/entrepreneurship curriculum). Nonetheless, in cases where *reflective practices* were used, it helped to empower "marginalized" actors (*reflection – empowers* for students, community agencies and staff), such helped actors to learn through deeper and more nuanced understandings of pertinent social, organizational and inter-organizational issues (*reflection – deeper understanding*; as consistent with Evans & Kivell, 2015; Meessen et al., 2011). As recursive thinking influences utility maximization, rule following behaviours and subsequent outcomes (Miller & Page, 2007), changes in understanding of inter-organizational or organizational issues also led to iteratively tested ideas. Specific attention was also given to how such iterative testing and experimentation could improve program outcomes and or implementation quality (Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Tseng & Seidman, 2007).

For example, reflective practices undergirded various platforms such as strategic planning processes, community service-learning curriculums/coursework and community-based

research programs (coincidentally reflective platforms were strongly related to the realization of *evaluation – opportunities for growth* as well as *intentional membership – diversity sought*). Such changes and testing cycles were partially apparent through WRIP structure as well; communities of practice, "news real" and community actions plans to change their plans and strategies based upon emergent learnings and past failures (recounting that constant change and adaptation based on feedback is another hallmark feature of complex adaptive systems; Plummer & Armitage, 2007; Parsons, 2007). Platforms for reflective practice at the nexus of the WRIP-Laurier LC remained mostly limited to the learning team meetings and the IP Design Lab however. Nonetheless, this case study was rife with examples and illustrations of how the Design lab process could pivot and correct actors' understanding of community needs and realities.

With these insights in mind, the benefit of platforms for reflection for the LC also appear commensurate with definitions of Friere's (1970) praxis (i.e., action, reflection cycles). Given the number of LC concepts that were positively associated with platforms for reflection (e.g., *governance – commensurate activities, reflection – empowers, reflection – deeper understanding, evaluation – opportunity for growth, intentional membership – deliberate*), platforms for reflection appear necessary for multiple forms of learning at both individual (*reflection – deeper understanding, reflection – empowers*) and collective levels (*governance – commensurate activities, evaluation – opportunities for growth,* etc.); not to mention, the fuller realization of the LC. With these associations in mind, reflective platforms also appeared consistent with what Behren's and Foster-Fishman (2007) refer to as systems change activities:

> "The processes and activities that promote improved functioning in the ways neighborhoods, communities, and contexts interact or operate, …seeking to improve, inform the development of systems if not creating new systems entirely." (p. 411)

Moving forward with the LC, practitioners involved would do well to continue to nurture, formalize and foster platforms for reflection (as well as make time for), as systems change activities have been called the "lynchpin" of collaborative success (Chuang & Wells, 2010; Harper et al., 2014). Systems change activities like reflective platforms are already proving to be promising and may help the WRIP-Laurier system continue to find or obtain resources (e.g., human, financial, etc.; Harper et al., 2014). To date, reflective platforms (e.g., learning team meetings) have helped enact new key developments, such as the impending integration of Laurier into WRIP's strategic plan as well as the creation and (pending) submission of grants that will used to target several issues raised by the LC. LC's newly developed three-year budget strategy provided some evidence that the LC is making considerable in-roads (in terms of fostering platforms for reflection). As this strategy outlined a plan to a) develop a more formal procedure for the learning team to follow, and b) develop a formal feedback process for research and coordination efforts for all LC projects.

   Refining roles and responsibilities. Many factors positively contributed to refugee/newcomer supporting agencies/actors' learnings about how to hone and refine their roles, responsibilities and respective "niche areas." Some influences include refugee resettlement sector's long history of engaging with one another in Kitchener-Waterloo region, as well as government ministries and the universities. There, actors and agencies have been able to work out and refine their respective responsibilities under and through various collaborative umbrellas, such as the WRIEN (i.e., Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network) and the WRIP. Despite this work, there remains a relative lack of knowledge regarding the function of WRIP's leadership council and questioning of who would be responsible for "holding" the LC; concerns that are worsened by the resource constraints and overburdened schedules already imposed upon

many of the participants involved (noting that the impending hiring of a permanent, central coordinator will help to address this issue). Consequently, the concepts and categories most negatively impacted by such lack of clarity or learning (about ones' own or other's roles and responsibilities) included *governance – bridges, builds interests, governance – commensurate activities, decisions* and *learning ecosystem – refining roles, responsibilities.* Resonating with studies put forth by Wolff (2010), Jones et al. (2009), Kania and Kramer (2011) the implementation of task forces, group protocols (both of which are now being formalized through the LC's learning team) and/or "backbone" organizations (as per collective impact typology) may promote greater cooperation and bring enhanced clarity (or learning) about the roles of individuals involved (as well as greater realization of various LC concepts just mentioned).

Mixed factors summary. As seen, the most pervasive factors that were inconsistent and/or under-utilized in their ability to realize LC concepts included: platforms for capacity-building/professional development, realigning oneself with a collective vision and intentional/impromptu check-in's/communication pathways, reflective platforms/processes, and refining roles and responsibilities.

Implications

This research project was foremost a contribution to the existent literature on collaboration models for social change and systems change. As many facilitating and hindering factors for the LC were theoretically grounded in complex adaptive social systems, coalition effectiveness, systems change and inter-organizational collaboration literatures, this study signifies a point of departure from the traditional inter-organizational and community collaboration forms of scholarship (which may not draw on these literatures to the same degree as the learning community). Two out of the four ecological principles from social-ecological systems literature (e.g., adaptation, cycling of resources; Kelly, 2000) were related to the

realization of various LC concepts; which findings suggests (through theoretical triangulation) that the LC model adds new features that are typically not highlighted in more traditional collaboration models – such as with community collaborations or community-university partnerships. Such features foreground the importance of continuous adaptation and learning, while subsequently demonstrating how collaborative structures can be used to facilitate learning (at individual, organizational and community levels). Although systems change, complex adaptive systems have been briefly discussed in the broader community psychology discourse (such as in 2007 in the American Journal of Community Psychology special issue on systems change – Parsons, 2007 or Hoffer, Bobashev, & Morris, 2009) this study was one of few to bring such constructs together with a renewed interest as well as within the context of a single innovative collaboration model for social change and systems change.

Second, the results of this research are also having a direct and immediate impact on the strategic planning processes used to buffer the learning community's ability to address refugee resettlement issues in Kitchener-Waterloo (for now, as well as into the foreseeable future). Others who are addressing complex social issues, who already have some level of social capital and history of cross-sectoral engagement, those who enjoy the presence of systems champions and community-engaged research or evaluation capacities may be also be able to tailor and leverage this new best practice, "learning-oriented" and "community-oriented" collaboration model in their own communities.

Third, this research project illustrates a significant capacity and need for expansion beyond the monolithic schools of thoughts and traditions of contemporary community psychology research and practice. Several scholars within community psychology have called for a need to enhance, drastically widen and expand the field's level of transdisciplinary and

interdisciplinary engagement (Birman, 2016; Brodsky, 2016; Korazim-Korosy et al., 2014; Maton, Perkins, & Saegert, 2006; Munger & Riemer, 2012; Wolff, 2014), and this research project was conceptualized and conducted in a similar vein. At its essence, the learning community is about seeking out symbiotic relationships, working with others across disciplinary siloes while also leveraging "best practice" insights (regarding collaborations for social change specifically) emerging from (but moving beyond) the field of community psychology. Yet it has also been about leveraging synergistic (and emergent) opportunities in currently existing, although not previously connected mesosystems to create a common change (Kloos & Johnson, 2017).

Interestingly, Kloos (2016) sees synergistic collaborations as a "unique ability to combine conceptual frameworks and practical skills to address human problems which disciplines have had limited success" (p.306). And yet from a theoretical perspective, such synergistic collaborations are at the core of what the learning community model is about - directly informed by the "best practices" of not just community psychology, but organizational behaviour, business management and social innovation as well (e.g., human-centred design). Such interdisciplinary scholarship both motivated and continues to inform our ability to reimagine solutions to complex social issues like refugee resettlement and social inclusion in the Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario area. As seen with this study, the diverse schools of thought have a wealth of theoretical constructs that may strengthen the study, impact and practice of community psychology, and the study of community collaborations specifically. Greater attention to organizational learning and creative problem-solving processes, particularly those conducted at inter-organizational (or community) level will help push the field further; leveraging the benefits of such processes, but at a scale somewhat larger than tried previously (Evans & Kivell, 2015). Such "shared

epistemologies of practice" (Schon, 1995) may help challenge and changes erroneous mental models and operating assumptions of social change practitioners across multiple, interlocking scales and ecosystems; leading to deeper understandings of underlying community realities (Argyris et al., 1985) and more effective, better tailored "systems change" interventions used to address them.

Limitations and areas for future research

Several limitations were inherent to this study. First, although this study collected rich data, all inferences made about the relative realization of LC concepts were limited to the stakeholders interviewed. The information contained within key informant interviews may not have encapsulated the totality of systems, procedures and activities that could have otherwise counted towards the actualization of LC concepts. Second, the method and formula used to tally and determine the relative presence of LC concepts/categories was conducted by a single researcher. While "check-ins" and meetings were used to test ideas and explore rival explanations, "investigator's triangulation" was mostly an informal process that could have used additional research team members in the analytic procedures rendered (those used to tally, track and determine which, and to what degree LC concepts were realized). This point is additionally hampered by the fact that the tallying for the relative presence of elements of LC principles reflected the responses of key informants (and documentation review findings), rather than an actual comparison against a pre-determined benchmark or standard (such as a fidelity checklist). With these considerations in mind, the ratings of presence scores found in this study lacked inter-observer agreement and may be lower in reality. Third, as interview participants exuded considerable enthusiasm, knowledge of, and buy-in for this project, social desirability and respondent bias may have affected their responses in unforeseen or unanticipated ways. Fourth, the method used for exploring negative case examples, rival explanations and journaling

processes (Appendix F) may have not been sufficient to completely rule out my own confirmation bias in the determination of all "presence" scores.

Fifth, the seventh assumption rendered for my data analysis – that all factors facilitating or hindering the realization of LC concepts were of equal importance, may not be an accurate reflection of reality. Sixth, single-site case studies are limited by their ability to "generalize" or transfer findings beyond the individual case selected (from the particular to the general); that is, the issue of external validity is herein raised as it is a limitation of single-site case studies in general (Bromley, 1986; Pavlova & Silbereisen, 2015); and their disproportionate rate of use in the study of inter-organizational collaborations more broadly (O'Malley & Marsden, 2008). Multi-site case studies should therefore study the implementation and development of the learning community, across a multitude of geographic, demographic and issue-oriented differences. Strategically leveraging the degree of diversity that antecedent conditions are met may also help further determine and explore the viability of the LC framework. This WRIP-Laurier case site would additionally benefit from another assessment, to be conducted at a later point in time to determine how the LC changes or becomes better able to realize LC concepts in practice.

Conclusion

This single-site, exemplary case study demonstrated the sort of mechanisms, processes and tools that are needed to create and sustain a learning community. While this list of considerations is extensive, and that there are many challenges others would likely face in their own attempts to actualize the model, this study provides some valuable insights into the sort of community and university assets that could be helpful. Some likely challenges include the need to a) galvanize (and sustain) various forms of capital (e.g., human, financial, etc.), b) find

mechanisms that can control or account for power asymmetries, c) continuously match interests, needs and goals while also finding tangible ways to d) compensate for attrition or loss of participants. Moreover, vehicles that challenge, or change practitioners' perceptions and tangibly contribute to organizational capacity and professional development are also needed. Some existent community resources that could be leveraged include shared decision-making structures, community/systems champions, active engagement in learning conferences, communities of practice, working groups and discussion tables throughout the community. Further, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved (e.g., such as by hiring a central coordinator), better formalizing communication channels and platforms for reflection can help the learning community become more fully realized in practice (see Appendix J for a summary of salient factors and key recommendations for the learning community).

Although this case study demonstrated a modest realisation of learning community concepts and categories, findings from both research questions indicated a remarkable adaptive capacity of the existent WRIP network. The adaptive capacity of the existent WRIP structure was so great that it thwarted our initial attempts to create a true "baseline" assessment (testing the model against the relative presence of LC concepts). As the extensive and established histories of cross-sectoral linkages, bonds, married with progressive, egalitarian values and presence of systems' champions have all contributed substantially to the (partial) realisation of the model. Laurier University has deeply entrenched community ties, enjoys strong social justice elements that pervade through its various institutions, organizations and practice groups. Nevertheless, learning community concepts, categories were disproportionately realised through the existent WRIP network. The lessons to be taken from this then are three-fold.

First, and most practically, if the university seeks to make itself to an "equal" contributor to the actualization of the learning community, it must further formalize, scale and extend the programs, initiatives and operations which are clear, contributory factors (i.e., community service-learning programs, community-based research internship programs, IP Design Lab). Yet many factors also threaten to push the "ideal" of the LC further from reality. These include a) the relative paucity of safeguards to ensure quality, student and staff training (for community-engagement, research and action), b) policies that incentivize and reward competition (i.e., grant and funding structures, tenure track promotion policies, etc.) , c) policies that do not neutralize power asymmetries within community-university relationships (i.e., lack of settlement sector representation or compensation to support settlement workers' participation in academic research or the creation and/or instruction of courses), d) structures and (non-collectively minded) actions that create mismanagement or disappointment in the expectations of stakeholders involved (i.e., insufficient intake/monitoring/mentoring processes for community-engaged students, ephemeral and/or discontinuous community-engaged programs). As mentioned by Parsons (2007) to make effective community and organizational systems change, the LC must intentionally leverage and bolster "fairly stable" aspects of the system (e.g., CSL programs, community-based research programs) while also supporting spheres of activity that are far from equilibrium (e.g., emerging learning team, IP design lab, social innovation programs, etc.).

The second lesson stems from a contrast and comparison of the research results with the "social status" of Wilfrid Laurier University. The university maintains its identity as a "social justice university," a forward-thinking and community-engaged university, as well as one of the only two "Ashoka Changemaker" campuses in Canada. Yet, despite this background, the university very modestly contributed to the realisation of LC concepts and categories. With these

considerations in mind, we are left wondering whether the LC is a viable collaboration models for other communities or universities that do not enjoy similar designations or pre-established histories. Especially without the aid of further research, communities and universities looking to utilize a LC framework in their work may likely require considerable antecedent conditions to be met first. University practitioners interested in using the model may find Curwood and colleagues (2011) discussion of university-readiness for community-university partnerships particularly helpful (e.g., contextual factors such as institutional, departmental and faculty readiness, commitment and motivations – that is collectivist mental models, requisite funding, infrastructure for data collection and storage, etc.). From a community perspective, these conditions could include a) strong, pre-established history of cross-sectoral engagement (e.g., such as those evinced by the Immigration Employment Network/WRIP), b) clear inter-organizational structures (e.g., community action plans, consensus decision-making protocols), c) the presence of systems champions with a clear, durable commitment to collective action (e.g., settlement sector partnership managers, chief administrative officers at the municipal government), d) desire for and formal infrastructure to support social innovation and learning needs (e.g., formalized partnership arrangements with schools of social entrepreneurship, central coordinating body such as learning teams and an LC systems' coordinator) and e) uniquely tailored and continuous creative problem-solving interventions and initiatives (such as enacted through human-centred design activities and principles.

Third, while the need for learning was central to the realization of many aspects of the LC model (or necessary to bring solutions to refugee resettlement issues), the need for learning also applies to the LC itself. As demonstrated, LC practitioners must display an openness to engage in processes of trial and experimentation, even before outcomes or benefits are in clear

view. Further, practitioners looking to engage in an LC must be critical of their own (and others)

perceptions that may discourage collaboration or collective learning processes. Thus, the

inevitable vicissitudes and uncertainties of the learning processes inherent (at individual and

collective levels) require that practitioners seeking to use the LC model are thoughtful persons

who are optimistic and engaged in some level of self-reflexivity. Moving forward, the self-

reflexivity capacities of individuals may help anticipate and retain the sort of qualities and

considerations needed to ensure the longevity and maintenance of the LC, as seen in these

concluding remarks by Christopher Adams.

> Nowadays, the process of growth and development almost never seems to manage to
> create this subtle balance between the importance of the individual parts and the
> coherence of the environment as a whole. One or the other usually dominates.

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Appendix A. List of Abbreviations

Community collaborations (CC)
Critical community practices (CCP)
Communities of practice (CoP)
Community-university partnerships (CUP's)
Learning organization (LO)
Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP)

Appendix B. Individual components of the LC model (with definitions)

1. ***The Learning Community's Lens or Frame:*** The frame refers to the central organizing ideas and story line that are present within the community, provide meaning to its identity, and are being communicated both internally and externally. The frame of a community is observable in how its members make decisions and act; how they describe their community in internal and external communication; and how they classify, organize, and interpret the issues they are dealing with. For learning communities, this includes embracing a learning identity, thinking as a system, having a collective orientation, fostering a prototyping culture, and maintaining a power consciousness.

   1A. ***Learning Identity:*** The community clearly embraces learning in the way the members think of themselves and how they represent themselves to others. The community values the continuous pursuit of knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the flow of information and resources between academic institutions and practice groups. The value of learning is built into key structures and common processes. The various members of the learning community integrate newly generated insights into their ongoing practice.

   1B. ***Thinking as a system:*** The community's structures, processes, and practices are based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. Systems thinking focuses on cyclical dynamics rather than linear cause and effect. This is reflected in the way the community analyzes complex social issues as well as develops, implements, and evaluates social interventions that address those issues.

   1C. ***Collective orientation:*** The learning community culture is based on collaboration and co-creation rather than competition and individual pursuit. Members of the learning community orient themselves toward shared goals and visions. They commit to integrating their individual goals with the common one as effectively as possible. Specific structures and policies that foster collaborative decision-making and actions are present (e.g., flat power structures). The strengths, experience, skills, and potential contributions of all members are appreciated and sought out in developing approaches to social change. The impact of individual efforts and actions are measured at a collective level.

   1D. ***Prototyping culture:*** The learning community values and fosters creativity, innovation, and ongoing experimentation in developing strategies for addressing complex social issues and creating social change toward social justice and wellbeing. Within this culture, social actors feel safe to think outside of the box and try out innovative approaches that might fail but also have the potential for significant change. These innovative approaches are developed in a way that their potential "failure" is a learning opportunity that contributes to identifying the most effective, desirable, and efficient approaches in the end. They are also structured in a way (e.g., through a clear theory of change) so that successful cases can be scaled across the community and beyond.

   1E. ***Power consciousness:*** A learning community understands how social power influences social processes and structures, including its own. It pays attention to power dynamics and implements intentional structures, policies, and processes that distribute social power in a fair way that maximizes the progress toward

social justice. For example, members of a group who lack knowledge of a topic that will be debated in a meeting, are given the opportunity for a pre-meeting where their understanding of that topic will be facilitated so that they can participate in the meeting in a more informed way. Power is also being considered in the way that innovative approaches to change are being conceptualized and developed. For example, an approach that results in a more equitable and fair distribution of power (e.g., by empowering marginalized groups) will be preferred over one that does not have such an impact.

2. ***The Learning Community's Structures:*** Structures provide the latticework upon which a learning community's processes and practices are built. This foundation translates the components of the lens or frame into practical strategies that allow the learning community to put its values into practice. Each of the following components of the structure, therefore, should reflect, to varying degrees, all of the framing values described above. The structures of a learning community are intentional structures, intentional membership, vision and goals, and a learning ecosystem.

   2A. ***Intentional structures:*** The learning community operates through a set of networked groups and committees (e.g., backbone organization, executive committee, subcommittees, steering committee, advisory committee, working groups) that are formed and disbanded as needed based on emerging learning. Leadership within and between groups bridge and build interests, needs, and expectations across diverse stakeholders. Efforts are undertaken through the intentional creation of spaces for shared decision-making, shared power, ongoing and open communication, accountability, and shared measurement. These groups provide clarity, consistency, and predictability while still encouraging creativity, flexibility, and adaptability. Decisions, processes, rules, roles, bylaws, policies, and practices of learning community groups and committees are also created and carried out on the basis of this framework.

   2B. ***Intentional membership:*** The members of the groups and committees that are formed in the context of the learning community are identified through a deliberate process. That is, the initiators and leaders of the learning community continuously use intentional processes and tools (e.g., power mapping, social network analysis, stakeholder analysis) to assess the criteria of diversity of representation and power (e.g., social and/or cultural characteristics, perspectives, access to power, roles, skills, expertise, knowledge, and lived experience) that are specifically relevant to the learning focus and the community. Based on that assessment the group uses specific strategies and policies to ensure that the identified diversity in voices is represented in the discussion, decision-making, and action of the learning community, committing to the fair distribution of power.

   2C. ***Vision and goals:*** Members of the learning community are committed to a shared aspiration of a desired future state. This vision supersedes but accounts for the interests of the member organizations and groups. Deliberate tools and strategies (e.g., transformational scenario planning) can be used to generate this vision, and should be carried out in accordance with the principles of intentional membership and structures described above. This vision provides guidance and inspiration for

ongoing decisions, processes, and practices. From this vision, specific, attainable, and measurable goals are made and remade as learning emerges from action and progress.

    2D. *Learning ecosystem:* The learning community is embedded in a broad web of relationships and resource flows that influence its functioning. A learning ecosystem exists when this web nurtures the learning community and its work. This acknowledges the complexity of the environments in which the learning community is working and the opportunities available to reach outward to build capacity in the broader arena. Questions relevant to building a learning ecosystem include those related to culture, social capital, power, the flows of resources and authority, and the nature of relationships with large stakeholders (e.g., funders, government, universities). Thinking in terms of an ecosystem allows the learning community to identify its particular role among others pursuing a similar vision and where its goals and values might align with emergent opportunities in the broader arena.

3. ***The Learning Community Processes:*** Processes are the means by which decisions are made and action is taken. When built within the learning community framework on a strong structural foundation, processes guide cyclical movements of goal setting, decision making, action, and reflection. Through these ongoing cycles, progress is made toward the community's vision of social justice and wellbeing. The learning community's processes are reflective practice, measurement and evaluation, and surfacing and generative processes.

    3A. *Reflective practice:* Within the learning community, progress is driven by intentional reflection while doing, which feeds back to influence what is done next. This constant cycle of action and reflection leads to continually deeper understanding of the issues of interest and the broader context. Reflective practice provides insight into the relationships between systems and individuals, including opportunities for the learning community to impact the system. This leads to action that is more likely to be transformative because it identifies leverage points for altering underlying system dynamics and empowering marginalized actors. This reflective practice is integrated into all aspects of the learning community, in diverse forms (e.g., member checks, sounding boards, artistic expression, formal reports on action and learning, etc.). The value of reflection and its central role in the learning community's identity is well articulated and understood within and beyond the community's membership.

    3B. *Measurement and evaluation:* To provide data and insights for reflective practice, concrete strategies are in place to identify benchmarks of progress and measure movement toward these points. A developmental mindset contributes to a progressive vision of achievement, such that all data are sources of learning that provide opportunities for growth, including insights that do not indicate forward movement or that fail to reach the expected level of gain. There are four elements of measurement and evaluation: setting benchmarks and defining indicators, establishing methods for tracking these indicators, carrying out analyses of the resulting data, and feeding the resulting insights back into the larger process of action and reflection.

3C. *Surfacing and generative processes:* Creative problem exercises look to gain a deeper understanding of the social issue targeted through an exploration of currently espoused mental models (e.g., constellation of belief systems, attitudes, and values). Acknowledging that these mental models directly contribute to current/status quo understandings and the resulting services and programs that do not adequately address the targeted social issue, the learning community uses creative problem exercises to critically challenge these mental models and the assumptions that support them. For example, rather than to attribute youth violence to high rates of poverty alone, a collaborative group may begin to incorporate feedback and stories from youth groups themselves-later to discover that a recurring lack of opportunities, inadequate mentors and supports most greatly contributes to the problem at hand. Through these exercises, and collective sense-making efforts and related discussions, individual and collective mental models begin to shift towards an understanding that more closely reflects underlying community needs and realities. Changes to these mental models are enacted through highly dynamic, emergent, and participatory practices.

4. ***The Learning Community Practices:*** Learning community practices are grounded in the routines, habits, and rituals of the individuals and groups engaged in learning community activities. Such practices are instilled into the learning community through actors' regular and recurring engagement, which helps to ensure that the learning community continues to produce innovative policies, programs, and interventions directed at the social issue targeted. Learning community practices include reflective practices and prototyping.

4.A. Reflective practice: Within the learning community, progress is driven by intentional reflection while doing, which feeds back to influence what is done next. This constant cycle of action and reflection leads to continually deeper understanding of the issues of interest and the broader context. Reflective practice provides insight into the relationships between systems and individuals, including opportunities for the learning community to impact the system. This leads to action that is more likely to be transformative because it identifies leverage points for altering underlying system dynamics and empowering marginalized actors. This reflective practice is integrated into all aspects of the learning community, in diverse forms (e.g., member checks, sounding boards, artistic expression, formal reports on action and learning, etc.). The value of reflection and its central role in the learning community's identity is well articulated and understood within and beyond the community's membership.

4.B. Prototyping (practice): Prototyping activities help individuals from the learning community learn from and embrace failure. Prototyping activities use intensive periods of trial and error that innovatively and exhaustively explore the potential range of benefits and limitations offered by a new approach, service, program, or strategy. Although learning through failure is a central value of the learning community, other principles espoused by the model (e.g., social justice) are never compromised for the sake of learning. For example, a poorly thought-out initiative that might jeopardize the well-being of community members could not be justified on the basis that it might yield learning; learning through failure must be planned insofar that risks of collateral damage are minimized.

5. ***The Learning Community Outcomes:*** The combination of and interactions among the learning community's structures, processes, and practices can lead to expected and unexpected benefits that will potentially endure for the various individuals and groups associated with the learning community. These impacts and outcomes will combat several issues associated with the target social problem, directly and indirectly. Peripheral benefits for individuals, groups, institutions, and/or the community might also be evident. With these considerations in mind, learning community outcomes include impact on the issue, collective learning and transformation, individual learning and transformation, and sustainability of the learning community.

5.A. Impact on the issue: A learning community forms around complex social issues and pertinent community needs; in order to assess impact on these matters, the learning community has clearly-defined indicators of movement and means of measuring progress. Although major impacts are usually distal in nature, progress can be assessed through gains in participation rates, improvements in social services or programs related to the social problem at hand, or other such indicators of change. Measurement of such elements is most effective when they are both qualitative and quantitative.

5.B. Collective Learning and transformation: Collective learning is a natural byproduct and consequence of the learning community's prolonged engagement in creative problem solving exercises, action-reflection cycles, and strategic planning processes. Together, these activities provide insights into the mechanisms, programs, and governance structures needed to effectively facilitate change and improvement on the social issue targeted. Changes in policies, programs and procedures help to redistribute resources, expertise, and knowledge to where they are most needed, thereby tailoring institutional systems to better address the target issue. It is through the insights gained, enactments of policy, and decision-making that learning and transformation are enacted at institutional and collective levels.

5.C. Individual Learning and transformation: Through individuals' ongoing participation in the learning community, such as their experiences engaging with a diverse group of individuals, members of the learning community are directly and indirectly encouraged to refine, expand, and evolve their assumptions, attitudes, and behaviours (i.e., mental models) pertaining to the social issue targeted. Changes in the mental models and learning of individuals involved helps to invoke changes in institutional settings, which can lead to the creation of and advocacy for new programs, policies, and practices. As actors begin to recognize the utility of new learning, gains related to professional development, self-efficacy, and competency are also more readily realized.

5.D. Sustainability of the learning community: Because collaboration cannot sustain itself without benefitting those involved, the learning community continues to ensure that benefits are gained at individual and collective levels. When benefits are continuously nurtured for the individuals and groups involved, the collective is then better positioned to cement and sustain its commitment to the social problem identified, and over the longer term. As these benefits are evinced at individual, group and collective levels and combined with a notable and sustained impact on the social issue targeted, this helps to reinforce and gradually instill a culture of sustainability amongst the broader learning community network. Nonetheless, given that the learning community centralizes the role of creative problem solving exercises and an experimentation with failure-where benefits

will not always be clear or immediate, these transitions towards a culture of sustainability occur through processes that are highly dynamic and non-binary.

Appendix C. Synthesis of collaborative frameworks, differences and similarities.

		Learning Organization	Community Collaborations	Community-University Partnerships	Communities of Practice	Learning Community
Lens/Framing	Prototyping Culture					X
	Thinking as a system	X	X	X	X	X
	Collective Orientation	X	X	X	X	X
	Learning Identity	X			X	X
	Power Consciousness		X	X		X
Collaborative Structures	Intentional Membership		X	X		X
	Intentional Structures		X	X		X
	Sustainability				X	X
	Shared Vision and Goals	X	X	X		X
	Leadership Capacities		X			X
	Learning ecosystem			X		X
Collaborative Processes	Reflective Practice (Praxis)	X		X	X	X
	Evaluation & Measurement		X	X		X
	Surfacing & Generative Processes	X			X	X

Appendix D. Informed Consent Document

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Wilfrid Laurier University
Department of Psychology
INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
Learning and working together: Invoking systems' change through inter-organizational collaborative principles and a learning community framework

Student Investigator: Brandon Hey, Thesis Supervisors: Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's thesis project in the Department of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, under the supervision of Dr. Manuel Riemer (Psychology) and Dr. Carrie Wright (Global Studies). Before you accept this offer, I would like to first further provide information in regards to this study.

The need for collaborative approaches to dealing with complex social problems are hardly controversial. In regards to immigration and refugee settlement, several stressors are interdependent, working to compound each other and leading to a multitude of outcomes that diminish the quality of life for those who rely upon immigration and settlement services. The need to understand how these stressors work to influence, compound and change immigrant and refugee health status thus places an additional need for learning (as well as collaboration) in order to meaningfully address refugee and immigration settlement challenges in Kitchener-Waterloo region.

While your participation in this learning community is an indication of your interest in collaboration and learning in attempts to address these issues, we are trying to understand what are the best structures and processes that can meaningfully facilitate collaborative learning (such as between the university and the community); and over the long-term. Thus, the purpose of my Master's thesis project is to better understand if, how and to what extent the learning community model can be implemented in practice.

For this purpose, I will be interviewing eight to ten participants following the learning community team meeting in Fall 2016. I hope to interview those same eight to ten participants again by MARCH 2017. All interviews will take place one-on-one with me, Brandon Hey and will last between 60 minutes and 90 minutes. Nonetheless, interviews are just one method I will employ and my entire data collection phase will end by March 2017.

BOTH PRE AND POST/FOLLOW-UP interviews will be audio recorded, and I will also take written notes. Later, I will transcribe the interview and remove any personal identifiers. Next, I will analyze the content of your interviews, converging findings across multiple data sources such as observational field notes and documentation emerging from quarterly meetings and design lab processes. Please note that although best measures will be made to remove personal identifiers from your quotations, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed with a relatively small sample. I will send you a copy of your transcript following the interview and ask you to review the quotations that I intend to use. This process will take place via email, so please note

that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while this information is in transit over the internet. I will ask for your feedback in a follow up telephone conversation. You may participate in the study even if you do not consent to the use of your quotations.

Only a few known risk factors are associated with your participation in this study. You will be asked questions about your own experiences working in collaborations, the learning team and/or design lab process. You will be asked questions about inclusivity, power dynamics, shared decision-making and opportunities for creative problem solving, all of which may evoke feelings of psychological discomfort. These feelings are normal and should be temporary. You may choose to end the interview at any time. If you experience any lasting negative effects as a result of participating in this study, I encourage you to contact me, Brandon Hey and/or KW Counselling Services (KWCS). KWCS can be reached at **(519)-884-0000.**

While there are many collaborative models available, some focusing explicitly on community collaboration, others focusing specifically on learning and reflective practices, no models have yet brought these types of collaboration together in a way that can meaningfully impact complex social issues like immigration and refugee settlement. By participating in this study you are helping us to better understand how this new collaboration model based on learning and community collaboration together can be implemented in practice.

All data collected during this study will be stored on a password encrypted computer, accessible only to myself (Brandon Hey) and members of my research team (i.e., supervisors Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright, and research assistant Andriana Vinnitchock). Hardcopy data including consent forms and contact information will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office. Personal information will be stored separate from research data. The de-identified data will be kept indefinitely, and may be analyzed again in the future as part of a separate project (i.e., secondary data analysis). All personal information will be deleted by me, Brandon Hey, by April 30, 2017.

Please feel free to send any questions or concerns you may have for this study to me at heyx5760@mylaurier.ca. You may also choose to contact my supervisors, Dr. Manuel Riemer by email mriemer@wlu.ca or phone (519) 884-0710 ext. 2982, or Dr. Carrie Wright by email cwright@wlu.ca.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB #5091), which is supported by the Research Support Fund. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Research Ethics Board Chair, Wilfrid Laurier University, 519-884-0710 ext. 4994 rbasso@wlu.ca.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you have the right to skip any question or procedure you choose. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you begin the study, but withdraw prior to completion, your data will be destroyed. Please note that participants will not be financially (or otherwise) compensated for taking part in this study.

The results of this study may be presented at conferences or published in scholarly journals. The results will be part of Brandon Hey's Master's thesis, and members in the Design Lab process as well as learning team quarterly meetings will receive a copy of the results. The results will be available for full review by June 30, 2017, at the time of the learning community's second annual meeting as well.

Yours Truly,

Brandon Hey
Graduate Student Investigator

CONSENT

I have read and understand the information/consent form. I have received a copy of the form for my records. I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will be emailed a copy of my personal transcripts, which will provide me with an opportunity to fully review and if needed, omit personal contributions made to analyses or results that emerge from this study. I understand that I will also be emailed a final research report prior to the creation of any publications that result from this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

QUOTATIONS

Do you agree to have your de-identified quotations used in any publications that result from this research, and understand that you will be given the opportunity to review the transcripts before they are used (if not, your quotations will be paraphrased)?

___Yes   ___No

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

Do you agree to participate in a follow-up interview, which will take place by MARCH 2017?

___Yes   ___No

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please complete the following information.

Name: _____(Print clearly)

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

DESIGN LAB-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION & DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Wilfrid Laurier University
Department of Psychology
INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
Learning and working together: Invoking systems' change through inter-organizational collaborative principles and a learning community framework

Student Investigator: Brandon Hey, Thesis Supervisors: Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright

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While your participation in this learning community is an indication of your interest in collaboration and learning in attempts to address these issues, we are trying to understand what are the best structures and processes that can meaningfully facilitate collaborative learning (such as between the university and the community); and over the long-term. Thus, the purpose of my Master's thesis project is to better understand if, how and to what extent the learning community model can be implemented in practice.

Part of this study is to conduct participant/process observation as well as documentation review of the design lab processes. This process will involve extensive documentation of conversations, group dynamics, behaviours as well as a review of all documents produced by the design lab over the course of its multiple sessions.

I will take written notes during each design lab activity, and review all documents produced by the design lab activities throughout its entire duration. Later, I will transcribe these notes without the use of any personal identifiers. Both transcribed field notes and documentations produced will be analyzed, and converged across multiple data sources such interviews.

Only a few known risk factors are associated with your participation in this study. Participant observation will help me to understand processes inherent to the design lab, and the learning community at large. You may feel uncomfortable while I complete my observations and take notes during the sessions. These feelings are normal and should be temporary. If you experience

any lasting negative effects as a result of participating in this study, I encourage you to contact me, Brandon Hey and/or KW Counselling Services (KWCS). KWCS can be reached at **(519)-884-0000.**

While there are many collaborative models available, some focusing explicitly on community collaboration, others focusing specifically on learning and reflective practices, no models have yet brought these types of collaboration together in a way that can meaningfully impact complex social issues like immigration and refugee settlement. By participating in this study you are helping us to better understand how this new collaboration model based on learning and community collaboration together can be implemented in practice.

All data collected during this study will be stored on a password encrypted computer, accessible only to myself (Brandon Hey) and members of my research team (i.e., supervisors Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright, and research assistant Andriana Vinnitchock). Hardcopy data including consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office. Personal information will be stored separate from research data. The de-identified data will be kept indefinitely, and may be analyzed again in the future as part of a separate project (i.e., secondary data analysis). All personal information will be deleted by me, Brandon Hey, by April 30, 2017.

Please feel free to send any questions or concerns you may have for this study to me at heyx5760@mylaurier.ca. You may also choose to contact my supervisors, Dr. Manuel Riemer by email mriemer@wlu.ca or phone (519) 884-0710 ext. 2982, or Dr. Carrie Wright by email cwright@wlu.ca.
This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB #5091), which is supported by the Research Support Fund. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Research Ethics Board Chair, Wilfrid Laurier University, 519-884-0710 ext. 4994 rbasso@wlu.ca.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you have the right to skip any question or procedure you choose. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you begin the study, but withdraw prior to completion, your data will be destroyed. Please note that participants will not be financially (or otherwise) compensated for taking part in this study.

The results of this study may be presented at conferences or published in scholarly journals. The results will be part of Brandon Hey's Master's thesis, and members in the Design Lab process as well as learning team quarterly meetings will receive a copy of the results. The results will be available for full review by June 30, 2017, at the time of the learning community's second annual meeting as well.

Yours Truly,

Brandon Hey
Graduate Student Investigator

CONSENT

I have read and understand the information/consent form. I have received a copy of the form for my records. I agree to participate in this study, and consent to the researcher attending and documenting the design lab sessions. I assent to the researcher's continued documentation, review and analysis of design lab processes. I understand that all data collected from the design lab will be de-identified from individuals' participating. I also understand that I will be emailed a copy of a research report, prior to the creation of any and all publications that result from this research.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Learning Team Meetings-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION & DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Wilfrid Laurier University
Department of Psychology
INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM
Learning and working together: Invoking systems' change through inter-organizational collaborative principles and a learning community framework

Student Investigator: Brandon Hey, Thesis Supervisors: Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's thesis project in the Department of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, under the supervision of Dr. Manuel Riemer (Psychology) and Dr. Carrie Wright (Global Studies). Before you accept this offer, I would like to first further disclose information in regards to this study.

The need for collaborative approaches to dealing with complex social problems are hardly controversial. In regards to immigration and refugee settlement, several stressors are interdependent, working to compound each other and leading to a multitude of outcomes that diminish the quality of life for those who rely upon immigration and settlement services. The need to understand how these stressors work to influence, compound and change immigration and refugee health status thus places an additional need for learning (as well as collaboration) in order to meaningfully address refugee and immigration settlement challenges in Kitchener-Waterloo region.

While your participation in this learning community is a testament to your willingness to collaborate and learn in attempts to address these issues, we are still learning what are the best structures and processes that can meaningfully facilitate collaborative learning (such as between the university and the community); and over the long-term. While we are confident about the overall theory of learning-focused and community-oriented collaborations, we still seek to see how the learning community works, and how it develops over time. Thus the purpose of my

Master's thesis project is to better understand if, how and to what extent the learning community model can be implemented in practice.

Part of this study is to conduct participant/process observation as well as documentation review of the learning team quarterly meetings. This process will involve extensive documentation of conversations, group dynamics, behaviours as well as a review of all documents produced by the meetings throughout the Fall 2016 and Winter 2017 period.

I will take written notes during each learning team meeting, and review all documents produced by the quarterly meeting activities throughout its entire duration. Later, I will transcribe these notes without the use of any personal identifiers. Both transcribed field notes and documentations produced will be analyzed, and converged across multiple data sources such interviews.

Only a few known risk factors are associated with your participation in this study. Participant observation will help me to understand processes inherent to the quarterly team meetings, and the learning community at large. You may feel uncomfortable while I complete my observations and take notes during the meetings. These feelings are normal and should be temporary. If you experience any lasting negative effects as a result of participating in this study, I encourage you to contact me, Brandon Hey and/or KW Counselling Services (KWCS). KWCS can be reached at **(519)-884-0000.**

While there are many collaborative models available, some focusing explicitly on community collaboration, others focusing specifically on learning and reflective practices, no models have yet brought these types of collaboration together in a way that can meaningfully impact complex social issues like immigration and refugee settlement. By participating in this study you are helping us to better understand how this new collaboration model based on learning and community collaboration together can be implemented in practice.

All data collected during this study will be stored on a password encrypted computer, accessible only to myself (Brandon Hey) and members of my research team (i.e., supervisors Dr. Manuel Riemer and Dr. Carrie Wright, and research assistant Andriana Vinnitchock). Hardcopy data including consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office. Personal information will be stored separate from research data. The de-identified data will be kept indefinitely, and may be analyzed again in the future as part of a separate project (i.e., secondary data analysis). All personal information will be deleted by me, Brandon Hey, by April 30, 2017.

Please feel free to send any questions or concerns you may have for this study to me at heyx5760@mylaurier.ca. You may also choose to contact my supervisors, Dr. Manuel Riemer by email mriemer@wlu.ca or phone (519) 884-0710 ext. 2982, or Dr. Carrie Wright by email cwright@wlu.ca.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB #5091), which is supported by the Research Support Fund. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Research Ethics Board Chair, Wilfrid Laurier University, 519-884-0710 ext. 4994 rbasso@wlu.ca.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you have the right to skip any question or procedure you choose. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you begin the study, but withdraw prior to completion, your data will be destroyed. Please note that participants will not be financially (or otherwise) compensated for taking part in this study.

The results of this study may be presented at conferences or published in scholarly journals. The results will be part of Brandon Hey's Master's thesis, and members in the Design Lab process as well as learning team quarterly meetings will receive a copy of the results. The results will be available for full review by June 30, 2017, at the time of the learning community's second annual meeting as well.

Yours Truly,

Brandon Hey
Graduate Student Investigator

CONSENT

I have read and understand the information/consent form. I have received a copy of the form for my records. I agree to participate in this study, and consent to the researcher attending and documenting the quarterly meetings. Moreover, I assent to the researcher's continued documentation, review and analysis of learning team quarterly meetings. I also understand that I will be emailed any and all data that contains personal information, with a full opportunity to omit such personal data from subsequent analyses and/or publications that result from this research. In addition to this, I understand that I will be emailed a copy of a research report, prior to the creation of any and all publications that result from this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E. Qualitative Interview Guides

<u>Community Partners Guide</u>

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us. The purpose of today's interview is to determine what processes, structures are already in place that can help facilitate the development and implementation of the learning community model between Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) and the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership (WRIP). This interview should take approximately 60 minutes to 90 minutes to complete. First we will talk about your own role in the partnership, followed by the key values, mission and goals of WRIP. Next, we will discuss the reasons for its formation, followed by questions regarding its governance and decision-making structure. Then, we will discuss questions regarding how the partnership has handled a recent challenge. After, we will discuss your past experiences collaborating with the university. Lastly, we will end the interview by discussing your understanding of the benefits, challenges and opportunities of employing the learning community model as a form of collaboration between WRIP and WLU. Any questions before we begin?

I would like to start with a few background questions. This will help me put your answers to the following questions into context.

Personal background questions
1. What organization or group are you affiliated with in regard to your membership in the WRIP?

       a. What is your current affiliation and position within this organization?

       b. How long have you been with this organization and in this position?

2. Please describe your role in the WRIP?

3. How long have you been a part of WRIP? In this role? Other roles in the past?

Values, mission statement & development of WRIP
4. What do you see as the key values that drive the work of the WRIP?

5. How would you describe the main vision and mission of WRIP?

6. How do you see your organization contributing to that vision?

7. As much as you know, can you talk to me about the founding of WRIP? How was it first formed and how has it developed since?

    Probes:

    a. Who was involved?

    b. Original purpose of WRIP?

    c. Processes used in its formation?

8. How has the WRIP developed since its founding?

    a. Impetus/factors contributing to WRIP's development?

    b. What factors were helpful in the development process?

Governance structure and decision-making processes of WRIP

9. Can you tell me a little bit about the structure of the current WRIP partnership? Who is involved?

    Probes:

    a. How are the members organized?

    b. Its various committees?

    b. Who are the members involved in decision-making?

    c. How is membership determined or made available? What is the process of gaining membership? What groups are currently represented? Any gaps?

    d. What type of positions are made available?

    e. Strengths of the current structure?

    f. Challenges of the current structure?

10. Can you tell me about the key processes of the WRIP? For example, how are decisions being made? How do different organizations work together on specific issues?

    Probes:

    a. Nature of decision-making processes?

    b. How, if at all, do decision-making processes change or develop?

    c. Consideration of social power in the decision-making process?

    d. Strengths of current processes?

    e. Challenges of current processes?

Significant challenges faced by WRIP

11. Please take a moment to think about a specific and major challenge that WRIP or its agencies have faced in the past or recently (at a systems and organizational-level). What was the nature of these challenges and how were they addressed? What role did learning play in all of this? Sub-questions: Can you tell me how the partnership approached the issue? How was it first identified? Who was involved in that? What different aspects of the issue were considered in determining the approach to dealing with the issue?

    Probes:

    a. Reflective processes? Benefits of reflective processes?

    b. Theories used?

    c. Best practices referred to? Use of research and evaluation? Benefits of research and evaluation?

    d. Use of testing prototyping/experimenting/piloting processes? Benefits of prototyping & piloting processes?

    e. In your experiences of working with various actors on this issue, how were different aspects and perspectives integrated and played out over time?

    f. How, if at all, has emergent learnings been integrated or utilized by the broader WRIP partnership?

Past experience collaborating with the university

12. Has your organization had any connections with Laurier or any other university in the past prior to forming the Learning Community? If so, can you please describe the nature of and your experience with these connections?

13. What is WRIP's past and current collaboration experience with Laurier and other universities? What are current connections between the Immigration partnership and the university that you know of? How, if at all, is the university involved in addressing challenges like the one you described? If not currently involved, what role do you see for the university?
> Probes:
> *a. Type of collaboration experience (e.g., CSL, etc.)*
> *b. Experiences in general?*

Learning community questions

14. What is your understanding of what a Learning Community is or could be?

15. What is your interest in participating in the specific Learning Community on Immigration and Social Inclusion?

16. How do you see the LC working to ensure maximum benefit to your organization and WRIP?

17. What do you see as potential challenges?

18. One key goal of developing a learning community is to create a shared learning identity. We define this as:

Learning Identity: "The community clearly embraces learning in the way the members think of themselves and how they represent themselves to others. The community values the continuous pursuit of knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the flow of information and resources between academic institutions and practice groups. The value of learning is built into key structures and common processes. The various members of the learning community integrate newly generated insights into their ongoing practice."

Reflecting back on our conversation, to what degree do you think a Learning Identity is currently present in the settlement sector and Waterloo region more generally?

19. Any other thoughts before we end this interview?

That concludes our round of questions. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with us today. Your responses will be pivotal in informing the implementation and development of the learning community model with WRIP and WLU.

University Partners Guide

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us today. The purpose of today's interview is to determine what processes, structures, resources and programs exist within the university to support the implementation and development of the learning community model between the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership and Wilfrid Laurier University. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes to 90 minutes to complete. First, we will talk about your roles and responsibilities within the university. Next, we will discuss what opportunities for community engaged learning currently exist among all members of the university (e.g., staff, students, faculty). Afterwards, we will discuss challenges, experiences and opportunities for the university's engagement with social innovation and engagement with the community. Lastly, we will discuss the learning community model-your interests in it, as well as its potential benefits and challenges. Any questions before we begin?

I would like to start with a few background questions. This will help me put your answers to the following questions into context.

Roles & responsibilities
1. What role or roles do you currently have at the university?
2. How long have you been in these roles?
3. What is your connection to the issue of immigration and social inclusion?

Community engaged learning opportunities and benefits
4. What current opportunities for Laurier students to learn about and be engaged with this topic of immigration and social inclusion are you aware of?
5. To the best of your knowledge, can you please describe what types of community-engaged learning and research currently exist at Laurier?

    Probe:
    a. *Learning*
    b. *Research*
    c. *Benefit for the students?*
    d. *Benefit for community partners?*
    e. *Benefit for faculty?*
    f. *Benefit for Laurier?*
    g. *Challenges faced?*

Experiences, challenges and opportunities of social innovation and the university's engagement with the community
6. What is your own experience engaging with the community? Can you give me examples?
7. From what you know, how is social innovation practiced and taught at Laurier?
8. Please describe the university's current practice of working with community organizations? What is the nature of the relationships? How are benefits for the community ensured?

9. What do you see as some key areas for improvement or exciting opportunities in regard to community-engaged learning and fostering social innovation?

Learning community questions

10. What is your understanding of what a Learning Community is or could be?

11. What is your interest in participating in the specific Learning Community on Immigration and Social Inclusion?

12. What specific activities have you planned that are or can be linked to the LC? Can you briefly describe these?
    a. Probe for the time plan and who will be involved

13. How do you see the LC working to ensure maximum benefit to Laurier and the WRIP?

14. What do you see as potential challenges?

15. One key goal of developing a learning community is to create a shared learning identity. We define this as:

Learning Identity: "The community clearly embraces learning in the way the members think of themselves and how they represent themselves to others. The community values the continuous pursuit of knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the flow of information and resources between academic institutions and practice groups. The value of learning is built into key structures and common processes. The various members of the learning community integrate newly generated insights into their ongoing practice."

16. Any other thoughts before we end this interview?

That is all of our questions. Thank you again for taking the time to speak with us today. Your responses will be pivotal in informing the implementation and development of the learning community model with WRIP and WLU.

Appendix F. Analytical Procedures Table

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   Identified    │
                    │    emerging     │                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  "indigenous"   │                    │   Refined,   │
                    │   concepts,     │                    │  Finalized   │
                    │   categories    │                    │   codebook   │
                    └─────────────────┘                    └──────────────┘
    ┌──────────────┐
    │ Read/Reread  │
    │ data sources │        ┌──────────────┐
    └──────────────┘        │              │        ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  Used self-  │        │   Informed   │    │  Met with    │
                    │  reflective  │        │ codebook via │    │ research team│
                    │ processes to │        │ imposition of│    │     for      │
                    │ track hunches│        │      LC      │    │ investigators│
                    └──────────────┘        │  framework,  │    │ triangulation│
                                            │  categories  │    └──────────────┘
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                                          ┌──────────────┐│ all data     │
                         ┌──────────────┐ │  Compared,   ││ sources      │
                         │ Scrutinized  │ │ tracked coding└──────────────┘
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    ┌──────────────┐     └──────────────┘
    │ Separately   │
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    │ "informal,"  │   │   Tallied    │   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
    │ "formal", &  │   │   results,   │   │  Input tally │   │  Finalized   │
    │ "barriers"   │   │ scrutinized  │   │ results into │   │  presence    │
    └──────────────┘   │ every passage│   │  presence    │   │  ratings     │
                       │ rendered to  │   │  formula     │   └──────────────┘
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Appendix G. Overview of summary results

Category/Average Rating	Theme/proposition	Degree of Presence/Rating	Actual Score
Learning Identity	Values learning	5	43
3.66	Integrates learning	3	-0.5
	Flow of information	3	-29.5
Thinking as a system	Collab. System	4	26
4.33	Complexity thinking	5	58
	Non-linear problem solving	4	11
Collective Orientation	Balances of goals	4	7
3.33	Structures - Equitable	3	-3.5
	Maintenance of diversity	3	-1.5
Prototyping Culture	Creativity encouraged, develops solutions	4	5
4	Failures - creates learnings/scales solutions	4	10
Power consciousness	Social power- consciousness	3	-11.5
3.33	Social power- integrated	3	-8.5
	Social power - action	4	9.5
Intentional structures	Govern structures - created from emergent learnings	4	5
4	Governance - bridge, builds interests	4	21.5
	Commensurate activities	4	11.5
	Comm. Activities - decisions	4	12.5
Intentional membership	Deliberate/uses specific tools	4	23
4.5	Diversity sought	5	101
Shared vision & goals	Deliberate tools	1	-101
3.33	Vision sustained - intent. Membership	4	5
	Vision sustained - guides action	5	36
Learning ecosystem	Refining roles & responsibilities	4	8.5
3.33	Evolution - consider social capital, culture	4	6
	Capacity-building	2	-51

Category		Description		
Reflective practice		Links individuals to systems	4	24
	4	Fosters deeper understanding	4	25
		Empowers marginalized	4	13
Measurement & Evaluation		Evaluation - Clear use of benchmarks	3	-6
Surfacing & Generative Processes	3.5	Evaluation - provides opportunity for growth/action-reflection	4	9.5
		Mental models - challenged	3	-18
	3.5	Mental models - develop, become clearer	4	18.5
Prototyping		Failures - Embraced/learning opportunity	3	-1
	3.5	Trial & Error - Explores options	4	6
Measurable Impact (3)		Evaluation - clearly defined benchmarks, forms around complex social issue	3	-4.5
Individual learning & transformation		Mental models - Expanded	4	6
	4	Mental models - advocacy/self/professional development	4	19.5
Collective learning & transformation		Emerges from practices	4	7.5
	4	Practices provide insights/policy program changes/resource distribution	4	1
Sustainability of LC		Benefits ensured	4	24
	4	Collective benefits - enhanced commitment	4	6

Appendix H. Detailed summary of results

Head theme	Sub-theme	Definition	Rating / Degree of presence	Barriers	Informal	Formal
Learning Identity	Values learning, experimentation (+43)	The community clearly embraces learning in the way the members think of themselves and how they represent themselves to others. The value of learning is built into key processes and structures.	Level 5	Difficulty of solutions/difficulty of integrating perspectives (9) Turning insights into action (5) Reactive evaluation (2)	Desire for evidence-based decision-making/clarity of next steps (24) Learning from past collaborative experience (11) Connecting with tables, groups, CoP's (10) Personal & Organizational value of learning (9)	WRIP-level research and evaluation efforts (3) WRIP council (2)
	Integrate learning into practice (-.5)	"The various members of the learning community integrate newly generated insights into their ongoing practice."	Level 3	Turning insights into action (8) Less than optimal structures (8) Information exchange between groups (7) Commitment to old ways of working (3) Lack of organizational capacity to process (3) Reactive evaluation (1)	Impromptu joining tables, inviting others (10) Desire to extend research/CSL offerings (7) Desire to better match interests (5) Desire to create better communication pathways (4) Presence of systems champions (2)	Research-informed, community-driven LIP structure (4) Community forums, working groups (4) Community-engaged courses, program evaluation offerings (4) Design Lab (1)
	Flow of information (-29.5)	The community's continuous pursuit of knowledge, feedback, and experimentation as well as the	Level 3	Information exchange between groups (31) Discontinuity/loss of people (16)	Ad hoc connections of community-university partners (19) Reimagining strategic action plan (12)	Professional development resources (6) Intentional communication pathways (6)

				flow of information and resources are exchanged between/across academic institutions and practice groups.		Lack of infrastructure/resources (15) Momentum loss/one-off projects (5)	Connecting to research/ best practices (5) Collaborating with social innovation groups (4)	Formalization of relationships (4)
Thinking as a system	Collaborative System/Relational (+26)	The community's structures, processes, and practices are based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation.	Level 4			Systems Fragmentation (5) Ability to retain collective vision & action (4) University-driven initiatives (2) Immensity of resource requirements (2) Two-tiered programs (2) Inadequate personas/personalities (1) Policy changes (1)	Desire to connect with diversity (6) Ad hoc connections to student groups, programs, research (3) Ad hoc invitations to attend events (1)	History of convening community system (21) Community-minded practitioners (7) Community-based decision-making (6) Explosion of engagement (4)
	Complexity Thinking (+58)	System thinking is reflected in the way the community analyzes complex social issues as well as develops, implements, and evaluates social interventions that address those issues.	Level 5			Difficulty of solutions (21) Vested isolationism (3)	N/A	Connecting local issues to national/global issues (27) Thinking about issues as a community (25) Tailoring interventions to needs of individuals (10) Tradeoffs & Synergies (10) Shift from isolated to holistic thinking (10)
	Non-linear approaches to problem-solving (+11)	Systems thinking focuses on cyclical dynamics rather than linear cause and effect.	Level 4			Incommensurate policies (2) Difficulty of solutions (2) Lack of resources (1)		Comprehensive care initiatives (7) Leveraging network to think/act iteratively & comprehensively (5) Employment readiness programs (3) Volunteer readiness programs (1)

Collective Orientation	Balance of goals (+7)	The learning community culture is based on collaboration and co-creation rather than competition and individual pursuit. Members of the learning community orient themselves toward shared goals and visions. They commit to integrating their individual goals with the common one as effectively as possible.	Level 4	Matching partner interests (community, university and student) (32) -Competition inherent (3) -Fair expectations (3) -Agreement on shared tools (3) Willingness to act for collective good (7) Intensity of work required (4) Loss of individuals (1)	Securing collective vision (15) Informal creation of safeguards (9) Impromptu conversations with prospective partners (4) Mapping individual & collective interests (3) Reiterating purpose (1) Positive regard for research/academia (1) Positive attitude towards challenges (1)	Mechanisms to ensure community representation and benefits (11) Collective effort of refugee employment network (10) Municipal/community-based support (10) Willingness to sacrifice for common good (8) Community-engaged university (2) SIVC operational strategy (1) LEAF's program (1)
	Structures – Equitable decision-making (-3.5)	Specific structures and policies that foster collaborative decision-making and actions are present (e.g., flat power structures).	Level 3	University/government-initiated collaboratives (9) Difficulty of facilitating community response (8) Information/knowledge gaps (5) Retaining collective vision (4) Lack of equity in decisions, supports (2)	Push for flat power structures (4) -Presenting research back to community (1) Formalization of decision-making structures (4) Interest in co-creation of curriculums (1) Putting in safeguards (1)	Intentional check-ins & dialogue (7) Structures susceptible to community influence (5) Consensus decision-making (3) Learning team (2) Community-initiated contracts/proposals (2)
	Maintenance of Diversity (-1.5)	The strengths, experience, skills, and potential contributions of all members are appreciated and sought out in developing approaches to social change.	Level 3	Inability to stay engaged/attend full session (15) Inability to gain larger perspective (6) -Due to power asymmetries (5) -Vested interests (4) -Uncertainty about needs (2) Lack of common language (1)	Desire to engage with diversity (10) Impromptu attending conversations/events (3) Acculturating new voices (1) Perceived ability to make a difference (1)	Pre-existing WRIP/IEN network (13) Collaborative CSL office/system (3) Social Innovation in the City (2) WRIP Steering Committees (2) Community consultations/community action plan (2) Design lab (2)

	Evaluation @ individual and collective levels					
Prototyping Culture	Creativity – Encouraged, develops solutions (+5)	The learning community values and fosters creativity, innovation, and ongoing experimentation in developing strategies for addressing complex social issues and creating social change toward social justice and wellbeing.	Level 4	Intractability of systems challenges (4) Resource, scheduling constraints (3) Relative lack of presence/infrastructure (3) Staying abreast changing community needs & realities (2) Individualized nature of (social innovation) projects (1)	Desire to collaborate differently (9) Greenhouse Social Innovation Incubation program (2) Emergent CSL course opportunities (2) Mennonite Refugee passport project (2) Viewing challenges as opportunities (2) Desire to further implement/extend design lab (1)	Implementation of design lab (5) -Stakeholder mapping/empathy mapping (1) City Studio (1) Enactus, MySojo (1) VP Office – Innovative, experimental learning fund (1)
	Failures – creates new learnings/insights, scales solutions (+10)	Within this [prototyping] culture, social actors feel safe to think outside of the box and try out innovative approaches that might fail but also have the potential for significant change. These innovative approaches are developed in a way that their potential "failure" is a learning opportunity that contributes to identifying the most effective, desirable, and efficient approaches in the end. They are also structured in a way (e.g., through a clear theory of change) so that successful cases can be scaled across the	Level 4	Resource constraints (1) Information/knowledge gaps (1)	Expansion of CSL opportunities (2) Emerging Design Lab processes (2) Sense of optimism/challenges as opportunities (2) Challenging erroneous perceptions (2) Examination of WRIP governance challenges & benefits (1) Re-thinking language requirements for jobs (1)	Systems' and policy challenges informed development of LC (6) Hospital systems' change informed WRIP approach (1)

| Power consciousness | Social power – consciousness (-11.5) | A learning community understands how social power influences social processes and structures, including its own. It pays attention to power dynamics and implements intentional structures, policies, and processes that distribute social power in a fair way that maximizes the progress toward social justice. | Level 3 | Multiple agendas/power dynamic issues (15)

Time & Resource constraints (11)

Ability to meet needs of community partners (11)

Information/knowledge gaps (8)

Willingness to sacrifice for common good (3)

Ability to meet needs of refugees newcomers (4)

Ability to sustain collective benefits (3)
  -Paternalistic funders (1) | Openness to integrate newcomers into opportunities (4)

Open-minded professors (2)

Strong group facilitation – Design Lab (2)

Refugee claimant support groups (2)

Recruitment: Public expressions of interest (1)

Desire to start with community needs (1)

Emergence of hybrid learners/students (1)

Engagement in politics/political advocacy (1)

Strong student volunteer base (1) | Presence of systems champions (9)

Platforms for building student/staff capacity (7)

Community-based LIP/steering committees (4)

Social justice-oriented campus & infrastructure (4)

Refining roles, responsibilities for community ownership (3)

Platforms for community input/ownership (3)

Social justice-oriented community agencies (2)

Intentional resource sharing (2)

Recruitment process for council (1)

Learning Team (1) |
| | Social power – integrated into policies, structures (-8.5) | Power is also being considered in the way that innovative approaches to change are being conceptualized and developed. For example, an approach that results in a more equitable and fair distribution of power (e.g., by empowering marginalized groups) will be preferred over one that does not have such an impact. | Level 3 | Inaccessible/burdensome mandates & programs (12)

Ability to facilitate community response/university-driven initiatives (9) | Desire for advocacy, engaging with diversity (8)

Student clubs/initiatives (2)

Using budgets to share resources (1) | Community-based LIP/WRIEN steering committees (5)

Consensus decision-making (2) |

	Social power –action (+9.5)	Members of a group who lack knowledge of a topic or issue (for example one that will be debated in a meeting), necessary supports are allocated such as through a pre-meeting. Such opportunities will support practitioners where and when they are needed so that they can participate fully and in a more informed way	Level 4	Power asymmetries in policies, programs & reward structures (20) Intensity of work/resource requirements (18) Lack of engagement among diverse stakeholders over longer term (11) Undertraining/misunderstandings in procedures/activities (10)	Desire for integrated, equitable approaches (25) Facilitated supports/supervisions (12) Impromptu inviting newcomers to events (5) Presence of system champion (5) Recruitment: Public calls of interest (2) Desire for professional development opportunity (1) Student refugee clubs (1)	Professional development opportunities (12) Pre-established community programs (12) -Employment network (4) Community-engaged scholarship/courses (5) Settlement services @ Laurier (3) Reiterating purpose (3) Inclusive governance framework (1) Inclusive social innovation pedagogy (1) Student groups (1)
Intentional structures	Governance structures – created from emergent learnings (+5)	The learning community operates through a set of networked groups and committees (e.g., backbone organization, executive committee, subcommittees, steering committee, advisory committee, working groups) that are formed and disbanded as needed based on emerging learning.	Level 4	Siloism of the three pillars (3) Loss of individuals (2) Need new structure (1)	Impromptu joining groups/tables (3) Reimagining the structure (1)	Community-driven response to Syrians (5) Research-informed three pillars (3) Leveraging old & new structures (2)
	Governance – bridge, build interests (+21.5)	Leadership within and between groups bridge and build interests, needs, and expectations across diverse stakeholders.	Level 4	Nature of commitment (Discontinuity/loss of people) (9) Lack of adequate representation (3) Power dynamic issues (2) Roles & Responsibilities (1)	Impromptu attending tables (12) Integrating learning community into strategic plan (2) Presence of system champions (2)	Comprehensive, inclusive LIP/WRIP structure (20) Three + one pillars for action (5) Social justice-minded campus/CSL office (3)

					Enthusiasm about learning community (1)	
	Commensurate activities (+11.5)	Efforts are undertaken through the intentional creation of spaces for shared decision-making, shared power, ongoing and open communication, accountability, and shared measurement.	Level 4	Underutilization of tools for common understanding (15) Demands placed on professionals/intensity of resource requirements (8) Group/Power dynamic issues (9)	Impromptu community conversations (8) Desire to engage with diversity (6) Desire for "home-grown" design lab/platforms for innovation (5) Strategic planning processes (2)	Recruitment tools & design lab processes (10) SIVC/CCRLA/CEL programs (7) Consensus decision-making, community forums (4) Holistic communications strategy (3) Community-based steering committees/community action plan (3) Pre-existing research infrastructure & programs (2) Calls for change (1)
	Commensurate activities - decisions (+12.5)	These groups provide clarity, consistency, and predictability while still encouraging creativity, flexibility, and adaptability. Decisions, processes, rules, roles, bylaws, policies, and practices of learning community groups and committees are also created and carried out on the basis of this framework.	Level 4	Balance of goals & interests (2) Discontinuity between efforts (2) Uncertainty about decision-making processes for LC (2) Burden of roles & responsibilities (1) Power asymmetries (1)	Desire for evidence-based decision making (1)	Community consultations, collective decision-making (13) Reflective discussions & activities (5) Expert facilitation, tables and task groups (2) Integrating WLU into strategic plan (1)
Intentional membership	Membership identification – deliberate, uses specific tools (+23)	The members of the groups and committees that are formed in the context of the learning community are identified through a deliberate process, using intentional processes and	Level 4	Attrition/loss of participants (8) -Power differentials (7) Lack of intentional processes (4) Time constraints (1)	Reflective processes (11) Impromptu invitations to attend tables/groups (6) Starting with community needs (2) Advocacy work (1)	Collaborative planning processes (8) -Integration of WLU into WRIP council (1) Consensus decision-making/community consultations (5)

		tools (e.g., power mapping, social network analysis, stakeholder analysis)				Democratic recruitment tools (5) Design Lab: Creative problem solving exercise (2) Intentional roles (2)
	Membership select – diversity sought (+101)	Assessments are made to ensure sufficient coverage/participation in terms of diversity, representation and power (e.g., social and/or cultural characteristics, perspectives, access to power, roles, skills, expertise, knowledge, and lived experience) that are specifically relevant to the learning community.	Level 5	Balance of goals: autocratic decision-making (46) Nature of commitment, maintenance of diversity (33) Uncertainty about future/knowledge information gaps (13) Roles and responsibilities (5)	Desire to engage with diversity (60) Emerging collective/collaborative projects (35) Ad hoc invitations to groups/tables (50) Social justice-minded, representative community organizations (4) Refugee-focused student groups (3)	Cross-sectoral, community-based steering committees & equitable infrastructure (47) Platforms for community engagement, feedback & inquiry (19) Formalization of engagement with diverse stakeholders (e.g., Design Lab processes, etc.) (14) Community-engaged university infrastructure (12) Presence of systems champions (10) Collective vision (9) Strong social justice campus (7) Targeted hiring & outreach processes (4)
Shared Vision & Goals	Deliberate processes/tools – generate vision (-101)	Members of the learning community are committed to a shared aspiration of a desired future state. This vision supersedes but accounts for the interests of the member organizations and groups. Deliberate tools and strategies (e.g., transformational	Level 1	Intensity of resource requirements (59) Mental model blocks, failed expectations (46) Power dynamic issues (41) Disconnect between groups/strategic planning processes (25) Sub-optimal LIP/WRIP structure (10) Lack of appropriate actors (8)		History of community-driven response and collective vision (34) Living in accordance with own values (23) Reimagined, broadened/inclusive mandate (22) Connecting expertise & information exchange (9)

		scenario planning) can be used to generate this vision.		Lack of professional development opportunities (8) Refining roles & responsibilities (7) Disconnect between policy & community needs (3) No time for reflection (2)		Platforms for soliciting community engagement, feedback (e.g., community forum, learning team) (7) Community-engaged, social justice university (6) Refining roles & responsibilities (4)
	Vision sustained – intentional mem. (+5)	Deliberate tools used to sustain or generate a shared vision are carried out in accordance with the principles of intentional membership and intentional structures	Level 4	Multiple agendas & mandates (5) Suboptimal LIP structure (1)		Starting with community needs/voices (6) Community response to Syrians (3) Network-driven support for partnership evaluations (1) Broadening of mandate (1)
	Vision sustained – guides action (+36)	Shared vision provides guidance and inspiration for ongoing decisions, processes, and practices. From this vision, specific, attainable, and measurable goals are made and remade as learning emerges from action and progress.	Level 5	Unclear mandates (4) Balance of goals and interests (1) Lack of action (1) Too many roles, responsibilities (1)	Ad hoc invitations to groups/tables (1) Use of community-minded consultants (1)	Mandates guide programs/actions (17) Shared mandate/maintenance of collective vision (14) Community response shaped WRIP structure (7) Proper allocation of resources (4) Values-informed WRIP pillars (1) Inclusive community action plans (1) Creation of Immigrant Employment Network slogans (1)
Learning ecosystem	Refining roles, responsibilities (+8.5)	Thinking in terms of an ecosystem allows the learning community to	Level 4	Lack of clarity for roles & responsibilities (11) Too many roles, responsibilities (11)	Aligning own efforts with common vision (17)	Intentionally refining, clarifying roles and expectations (25)

		identify its particular role among others pursuing a similar vision and where its goals and values might align with emergent opportunities in the broader arena.		Difficulty of acculturation (3)		
	Evolution – consider social capital, culture (+6)	Questions relevant to building a learning ecosystem include those related to culture, social capital, power, the flows of resources and authority, and the nature of relationships with large stakeholders (e.g., funders, government, universities).	Level 4	Discontinuity/Loss of people (9) Willingness to be community-engaged (4) Need for greater community leadership, buy-in (1) Need for permanent, enabling structures (1)	Impromptu joining tables/groups (8) Desire for enhanced community connectivity (7) Emergence of hybrid students (1)	Presence of systems champions (6) Pre-existing collaborative system/history (4) Diversity/social justice mandate of Laurier (1) Exhaustive volunteer network (2)
	Capacity-building (-51)	A learning ecosystem exists when this web nurtures the learning community and its work. This acknowledges the complexity of the environments in which the learning community is working and the opportunities available to reach outward to build capacity in the broader arena.	Level 2	Funding or funding directive issues (24) Matching/maintaining communal interests over the longer term (21) Limited student-staff capacity (20) Information/knowledge exchange issues (17) Lack of professional training options (15) Discontinuity/Loss of people (10) -Underutilization of human capital (6) Limitations of current educational curriculum (4) Nature of commitment/involvement (3) Turning insights into action (2) Feeding projects into one another (1)	Seeking out professional development opportunities (19) Improving communication relays (14) Creation of new community-oriented initiatives (14) New grant applications (6) Presence of systems champions (3) Power consciousness of learning community (2)	Consistent breadth of players (15) Existing, innovative professional development programs (10) Recruitment tools and volunteer infrastructure (10) Platforms for community feedback and involvement (9)

				Infrastructure requirements (1)		
Reflective practice	Links individuals to systems (+24)	Reflective practice provides insight into the relationships between systems and individuals, including opportunities for the learning community to impact the system.	Level 4	N/A		Local developments inform larger trends (11) Larger trends inform local/personal developments (7) Organizational planning/programs linked to community system (6)
	Fosters deeper understanding (+25)	Within the learning community, progress is driven by intentional reflection while doing, which feeds back to influence what is done next. This constant cycle of action and reflection leads to continually deeper understanding of the issues of interest and the broader context.	Level 4	Lack of understanding underlying needs/realities (5) Lack of time for reflection (4)	Willingness to self-examine/engage with diversity (17) Examination of policy impacts (1)	Platforms for intentional feedback/reflection (25)
	Empowers marginalized (+13)	Reflective practice leads to action that is more likely to be transformative because it identifies leverage points for altering underlying system dynamics and empowering marginalized actors.	Level 4	Underutilization of community input (2) Domineering systems leaders (2)	N/A	Platforms for reflection and capacity-building (16) History of presenting back to the community (1)
Measurement & Evaluation	Evaluation – Clear use of benchmarks (-6)	To provide data and insights for reflective practice, concrete strategies are in place to identify benchmarks of progress and measure movement toward these points.	Level 3	Lack of community-org research capacity (9) Community and community-engaged program benefits unexamined (5)	Early efforts to match research, evaluation services with community needs (5) Well-aligned organizational objectives & mandates (1)	WRIP-level evaluation supports (e.g., community surveys) (3) Previous WRIP developmental evaluation research (2)

	Evaluation – provides opportunites for growth, informs action-reflection (+9.5)	A developmental mindset contributes to a progressive vision of achievement, such that all data are sources of learning that provide opportunities for growth, including insights that do not indicate forward movement or that fail to reach the expected level of gain. There are four elements of measurement and evaluation: setting benchmarks and defining indicators, establishing methods for tracking these indicators, carrying out analyses of the resulting data, and feeding the resulting insights back into the larger process of action and reflection.	Level 4	Limited research and reflective capacity (13) Need for greater cross-fertilization and information sharing (4)	Impromptu/ad hoc check-ins, feedback processes (11) Desire to convene entire system (6) Emerging evaluation initiatives (2)	Platforms for intentional action-reflection, research-informed LIP actions (17)
Surfacing & Generative processes	Mental models – challenged (-18)	Acknowledging that mental models directly contribute to current/status quo understandings and the resulting services and programs that do not adequately address the targeted social issue, the learning community uses creative problem exercises to critically challenge these mental models and the assumptions	Level 3	Willingness/ability to act for common good (18) Faulty expectations & stubborn attitudes (17) Lack of awareness about issues (14) -Poor communication channels (3)	Desire to create safeguards/consciousness-raising platforms (8) Self-reflexive competencies (6) Refining roles & responsibilities (2)	Platforms for consciousness-raising (26)

		that support them.				
	Mental models – develop, become clearer (+18.5)	Creative problem exercises look to gain a deeper understanding of the social issue targeted through an exploration of currently espoused mental models (e.g., constellation of belief systems, attitudes, and values). Through these exercises, and collective sense-making efforts and related discussions, individual and collective mental models begin to shift towards an understanding that more closely reflects underlying community needs and realities.	Level 4	Lack of awareness about issues, faulty judgments (18) Too many roles and responsibilities (2) Need to create new, inclusive narrative (2) Difficulty of solutions (1)	Engaging with diversity (12) Self-reflexive competencies (12) Impromptu check-ins, communication relays (8) -Hard conversations (2) Encouraging professional development (4) Refining roles & responsibilities (1)	Prior experimentation and testing of LIP (9) WRIP Steering committees/community forums (7) Personal, organizational development facilities – WLU (3) Design Lab facilitation (3)
Prototyping	Failures – embraced/learning opportunity (-1)	Prototyping activities help individuals from the learning community learn from and embrace failure.	Level 3	Over-burdened, busy schedules (1) Lack of (community) infrastructure for prototyping (3)	Testing fit of clients/participants with programs (1) Seeing positive benefits of program limitations (3) Seeing positive benefits of prototyping (2)	
	Trial & Error – exhaustively explores options, commensurate with social justice concerns (+6)	Prototyping activities use intensive periods of trial and error that innovatively and exhaustively explore the potential range of benefits and limitations offered by a new approach, service, program, or strategy. Although learning through	Level 4	N/A	Ad hoc desire for experimentation, prototyping (8)	Formalization of design thinking processes (2)

		failure is a central value of the learning community, other principles espoused by the model (e.g., social justice) are never compromised for the sake of learning.				
Measurable impact	Evaluation – clearly defined benchmarks, forms around complex social issue (-4.5)	A learning community forms around complex social issues and pertinent community needs; in order to assess impact on these matters, the learning community has clearly-defined indicators of movement and means of measuring progress.	Level 3	Uncertainty about impacts/challenge of evaluation (7) Lack of organizational capacity (3) Under-optimized LIP structure (2) Time required (1)	Need for good structure/innovative programs (3) Emerging community-university projects (2) Impromptu connecting at tables, meetings (2) Presence of systems champions (2)	Pre-existing LIP work, policy impacts (4)
Individual learning & transformation	Mental models – Expanded (+6)	Through individuals' ongoing participation in the learning community, such as their experiences engaging with a diverse group of individuals, members of the learning community are directly and indirectly encouraged to refine, expand, and evolve their assumptions, attitudes, and behaviours (i.e., mental models) pertaining to the social issue targeted	Level 4	Lack of awareness/ability to change perceptions (15) Balancing too many needs (2)	Engaging with diversity (14) Curious, optimistic practitioners (14) Refining roles & responsibilities (2)	Formalizing research, design thinking, professional development infrastructure (6) Innovating LIP structure/supportive leadership (2)
	Mental models – self/professional development & advocacy (+19.5)	Changes in the mental models and learning of individuals involved helps to invoke changes in institutional settings, which can lead to the	Level 4	Lack skills or knowledge to participate (6) Balancing too many needs (3) Refining roles & responsibilities (3)	Supporting professional development infrastructure (13) Engaging with diversity (8)	Existing research, community-engaged infrastructure (8) Presence of systems champions (6)

		creation of and advocacy for new programs, policies, and practices. As actors begin to recognize the utility of new learning, gains related to professional development, self-efficacy, and competency are also more readily realized.		Stubborn mental models (2)	Desire/openness to learn (8)	Established community organizations (3) Voices for Change – Advocacy (2)
Collective learning & transformation	Emerges from practices (+7.5)	Collective learning is a natural byproduct and consequence of the learning community's prolonged engagement in creative problem solving exercises, action-reflection cycles, and strategic planning processes. Together, these activities provide insights into the mechanisms, programs, and governance structures needed to effectively facilitate change and improvement on the social issue targeted.	Level 4	Changing community conditions (1)	Desire for explicit outcomes and objectives (1)	Continued evaluation efforts (pre/post-WRIEN (4) Functional communities of practice (2) Design Lab practices & processes (1) Previous learning conferences/community forums (1)
	Practices provide insight, Policy/program changes, enhanced resource distribution (+1)	Changes in policies, programs and procedures help to redistribute resources, expertise, and knowledge to where they are most needed, thereby tailoring institutional systems to better address the target issue. It is through the insights gained, enactments of policy, and	Level 4	Uncertainty about future (3) Balance of goals & objectives (2)		Research-informed LIP (WRIP) structure & Community engaged programs (5) Previous LIP success in driving policy change (1)

		decision-making that learning and transformation are enacted at institutional and collective levels.				
Sustainability of LC	Benefits ensured (+24)	Because collaboration cannot sustain itself without benefitting those involved, the learning community continues to ensure that benefits are gained at individual and collective levels.	Level 4	Balance of goals and interests (13) Ability to think/see/act for the collective over the longer term (10) Intensity of resources for safeguards (9)	Sense of optimism (10) Self-reflexive capacity (2)	History of reciprocity in community engagement (16) Clear learning outcomes (10) Platforms for community feedback and engagement (8) Community-minded contracts & negotiations (16)
	Collective benefits – Enhanced commitment, culture of sustainability (+6)	When benefits are continuously nurtured for the individuals and groups involved, the collective is then better positioned to cement and sustain its commitment to the social problem identified, and over the longer term. As these benefits are evinced at individual, group and collective levels and combined with a notable and sustained impact on the social issue targeted, this helps to reinforce and gradually instill a culture of sustainability amongst the broader learning community network. These transitions towards a culture of sustainability occur through processes that are highly	Level 4	Balance of goals & interests (6) Lack of research/certainty of benefits (4)		Clear sense of [higher] purpose (9) -Tangible contributions to higher purpose (6) Sense of optimism (1)

		dynamic and non-binary.				

Appendix I. Discussion Factors Chart: Hindering, facilitating and mixed factors

Negative Factors Chart

Factor	Factors negatively related to the presence of learning community categories/concepts
Intensity of resource requirements (-12)	- Intentional membership – deliberate tools - Collective orientation – balance of goals - Thinking as a system – collaborative, relational - Thinking as system – non-linear approaches to problem-solving - Failures – create insights - Creativity – encouraged - Social power – consciousness - Social power – action - Governance – commensurate activities - Shared vision – deliberate tools - Prototyping – failures embraced - Benefits – ensured
Autocratic decision-making, power asymmetries (-10)	- Shared vision – deliberate tools - Collection orientation: Structures – equitable - Collective orientation: Maintenance of diversity - Social power – consciousness - Social power – action - Governance – builds, bridges interest - Governance – commensurate activities - Governance – commensurate activities, decisions - Intentional membership – deliberate - Intentional membership – diversity sought
Matching interests, needs, goals over the longer term (-10)	- Collective benefits - practice provides insights - Collective benefits – enhanced commitment - Collective orientation – balance of goals - Social power – consciousness - Governance – commensurate activities - Mental models – expanded - Benefits – ensured - Learning ecosystem – capacity-building - Shared vision – intentional membership - Shared vision - membership – guides action
Information flow/exchange gaps (-8)	- Structures – equitable - Learning identity – integrate learnings - Learning identity – flow of information - Evaluation – opportunity for growth - Failures – create insights - Social power – consciousness - Intentional membership – diversity sought

	• Shared vision – deliberate tools
Loss/discontinuity of people (-7)	• Learning identity – flow of information • Collective orientation – maintenance of diversity • Social power – action • Governance – emergent learnings • Governance – commensurate activities • Evolution – consider social capital • Ecosystem – capacity-building
Stubborn attitudes/faulty mental models (-7)	• Learning identity – integrates into practice • Social power – action • Shared vision – deliberate • Evolution – social capital • Mental models – challenged • Mental models – expanded • Mental models – self/professional development
Limited organizational/community capacity (-5)	• Evaluation – clear benchmarks • Evaluation – opportunity for growth • Measurable impact – clearly defined • Learning identity – integrates into practice • Failures – embraced/learning opportunity
Difficulty of solutions (-4)	• Learning identity – values learning, experimentation • Thinking as a system – complexity thinking • Thinking as a system – non-linear approaches to problem-solving • Prototyping culture – creativity encouraged

Positive Factors Chart

Factor	(Positively) Related to the presence of learning community concepts
Impromptu joining tables, conversations, groups (or inviting others to do so) (+15)	• Intentional membership – diversity sought • Intentional membership – deliberate processes • Thinking as a system – collaborative, relational • Collective orientation – balance • Collective orientation – maintenance of diversity • Collective learning – emerges from practice • Learning identity – values experimentation, learning • Learning identity – integrates learning

	- Learning identity – flow of information - Governance – emergent learnings - Governance – commensurate activities - Governance – bridge, builds interest - Learning ecosystem – evolution – consider social capital - Shared vision – guides action - Social power – action
(Desire for, use of) community action plan, consensus-decision making (+13)	- Collective orientation – maintenance of diversity - Collective orientation – equitable structures - Collective orientation – balance of goals - Social power – action - Social power - integrated - Governance – commensurate activities - Governance – commensurate activities, decisions - Shared vision – guides action - Shared vision – deliberate - Learning ecosystem – capacity-building - Sustainability – benefits ensured - Mental models – develop, become clearer - Intentional membership – deliberate processes, tools - Thinking as a system – collaborative, relational
Systems champions (+9)	- Mental models – self/professional development - Learning identity – integrates learning - Social power – consciousness - Social power – action - Governance – builds, bridges interests - Measurable impact - Intentional membership – diversity sought - Learning ecosystem - Evolution – considers social capital - Learning ecosystem – capacity-building

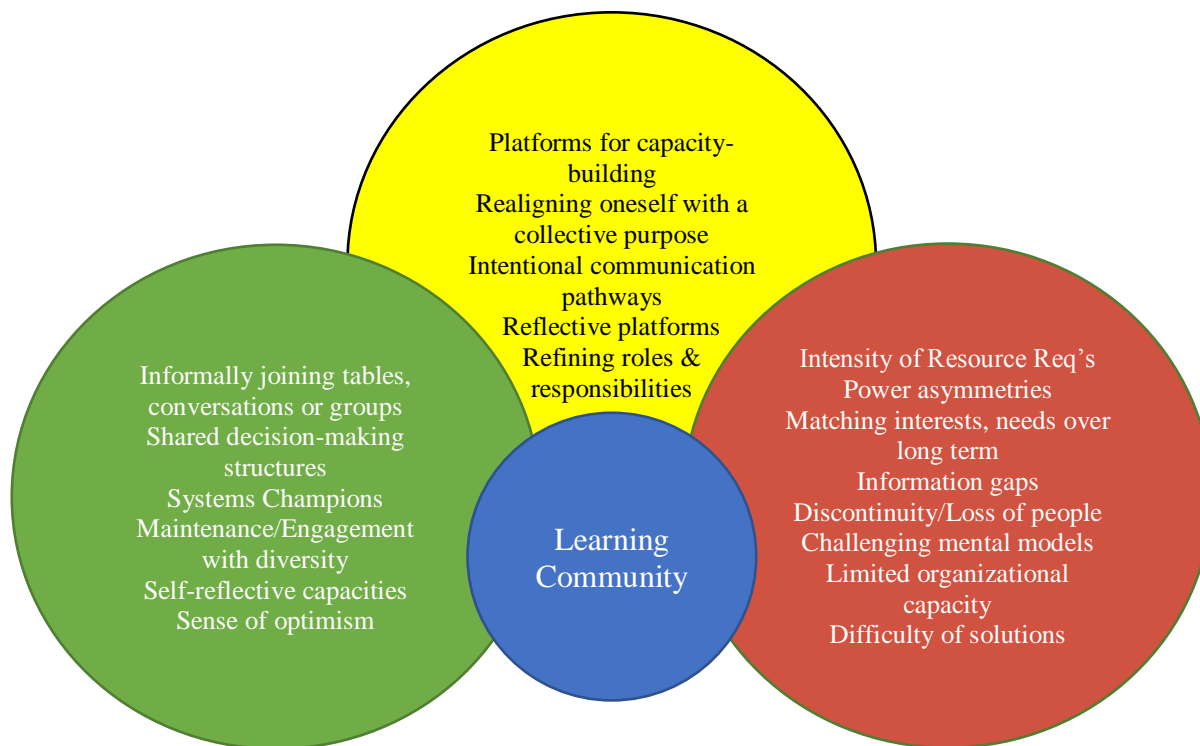|	• Reflection – empowers marginalized
(Maintenance of) Engaging with diversity (+9)	• Collective orientation – maintenance of diversity • Governance – commensurate activities • Social power - integrated • Intentional membership – diversity sought • Learning ecosystem – capacity-building • Learning ecosystem – social capital • Reflection – deeper understanding • Mental models – develop, become clearer • Mental models – challenged • Mental models – self/professional development
Self-reflective capacities (+4)	• Reflection – deeper understanding • Mental models – challenged • Mental models – develop, become clearer • Sustainability – benefits ensured
Sense of optimism (+4)	• Failures – creates insights, learnings • Mental models – expanded • Sustainability – benefits ensured • Collective benefits – enhanced commitment

Mixed factors chart

Factor	Factors both positively (+) and negatively (-) related to presence of LC concepts
Platforms for capacity-building/professional development (+8, -1)	• Social power – consciousness • Social power – action • Learning ecosystem – capacity-building (+, -) • Learning identity – integrates learning into practice • Learning identity – flow of information • Mental models – develop, become clearer • Mental models – self/professional development • Shared vision – deliberate tools

Retaining/aligning oneself with a collective vision or higher purpose (+7, -5)	• Mental models – challenged (-) • Learning ecosystem - refining roles, responsibilities • Thinking as a system – collaborative, relational (-) • Collective benefits – enhanced commitment • Sustainability – benefits ensured • Collective orientation – balance of goals (+, -) • Structures – equitable (-) • Social power – consciousness (-) • Intentional membership – diversity sought • Shared vision – guides action • Shared vision – deliberate tools
Intentional/impromptu check-ins, communication pathways (+6, -2)	• Collective orientation – structures equitable • Mental models – develop, become clearer • Mental models – challenged (-) • Learning ecosystem – capacity-building • Social power - action • Sustainability – benefits ensured • Learning identity – flow of information • Intentional membership – deliberate tools (-)
Reflective platforms/processes (+5, -3)	• Governance – commensurate activities • Reflection – empowers marginalized • Reflection – deeper understanding (+, -) • Evaluation – opportunity for growth (+, -) • Intentional membership – deliberate Shared vision – deliberate tools (-)
Refining roles & responsibilities (+3, -4)	• Social power – consciousness • Governance – bridges, builds interest (-) • Governance – commensurate activities, decisions (-) • Intentional membership – deliberate tools

	- Learning ecosystem – refining roles (+, -) - Mental models – develop, become clearer (-)

Appendix J. Discussion Overview Chart

Platforms for capacity-building
Realigning oneself with a collective purpose
Intentional communication pathways
Reflective platforms
Refining roles & responsibilities

Informally joining tables, conversations or groups
Shared decision-making structures
Systems Champions
Maintenance/Engagement with diversity
Self-reflective capacities
Sense of optimism

Learning Community

Intensity of Resource Req's
Power asymmetries
Matching interests, needs over long term
Information gaps
Discontinuity/Loss of people
Challenging mental models
Limited organizational capacity
Difficulty of solutions

Key Recommendations:
- Continue to explore various forms of available (yet untapped) social and human capital
- Have university partners participate in WRIP council meetings and become more fully integrated into WRIP's strategic plan
- Pay close attention to changes in commitment levels, misaligned interests or ambitions
- Incentivize and reward collectively-minded behaviour across LC
- More intentionally coordinate community-based research, service learning and social innovation efforts. Further build upon, expand and ensure greater continuity of these programs.
- Continue to discover other initiatives, programs or opportunities that could fit into the LC; more tightly bound such activities with a specific monitoring or coordination system
- Use collective visioning exercises to create/capture underlying essence of LC
- Leverage shared decision-making tools found in WRIP