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Editors

Lifelong Learning, Participation and Equity

Springer

LIFELONG LEARNING, PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

Lifelong Learning Book Series

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Aims & Scope
"Lifelong Learning" has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as their major theme for address and attention over the next ten years.They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained.

The *Lifelong Learning Book Series* aims to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the domain of Lifelong Learning. It further aims to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

The volumes in this international Series are multi-disciplinary in orientation, polymathic in origin, range and reach, and variegated in range and complexity. They are written by researchers, professionals and practitioners working widely across the international arena in lifelong learning and are orientated towards policy improvement and educational betterment throughout the life cycle.

Lifelong Learning, Participation and Equity

Edited by

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PREFACE

LIFELONG LEARNING, PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY

The themes of this book, "Lifelong Learning, Participation and Equity", have national and international relevance. Across the international arena it is now widely accepted that a commitment to lifelong learning is vital to the individual, the community, the state and the nation if the goals of economic advancement, social inclusion and personal fulfilment are to be achieved.

In the past decade the demands of the knowledge economy, the changing nature of jobs, technological advance and globalisation have been occurring contemporaneously with changes in society, in family relationships and an ageing population. The convergence of these factors poses considerable challenges for the future and engages both governments and individuals. Of particular concern is the widening gap between those people who have the knowledge, skills and resources, including financial, personal and educational resources, to access the opportunities and goods of the knowledge economy and learning society and those whose lack of knowledge and skills and resources place them increasingly at the margins of society. This edited collection addresses those concerns.

The authors who have contributed to this book highlight the importance and the difficulties of providing lifelong learning for all. A special feature of this book is the provision of examples of good practice that engage learners. These examples, drawn from a range of countries, demonstrate the many ways that learning opportunities can be provided for all people, especially for those people in regional, rural and economically disadvantaged communities, who may be experiencing limited success in mainstream education.

The authors address lifelong learning across the lifespan – schooling, technical and further education, universities, adult and community education. Their research will contribute to the emerging international debate on the optimal policies, strategies and approaches needed to achieve lifelong learning for all.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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Patricia Cartwright, Senior Lecturer at Australian Catholic University, has a particular interest in lifelong learning, critical literacy and pedagogy, values education and

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Malcolm Skilbeck is a Director of Connell Skilbeck International Education Consultants. Jointly with Helen Connell, he is currently researching the teaching career in Australia with particular reference to teachers' professional learning. He was formerly Vice-Chancellor of Deakin University in Australia and Deputy Director (Education), OECD, Paris.

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INTRODUCTION

JUDITH CHAPMAN, PATRICIA CARTWRIGHT
AND JACQUELINE MCGILP

A major problem in many countries is that schools, universities and other traditional learning institutions are not providing for the educational needs of all members of the community. In many communities, particularly in regional, rural and disadvantaged areas, there are only limited options for people to undertake learning. Limited participation in learning has the danger of reinforcing people's alienation from mainstream education and from participation and inclusion in social institutions and economic and community life more generally. This book addresses the challenge of identifying effective ways of accommodating the learning needs of all people and in so doing achieving the goals of lifelong learning for all. The aims of the book are:

- To provide the reader with a range of conceptual, analytical and empirical studies of lifelong learning;
- To clarify conceptual, policy and practical issues relevant to the relationship between lifelong learning, participation and equity;
- To examine the role of government and other agencies in the community in enhancing the provision of learning and in fostering participation and equity;
- To examine the most effective ways in which learning opportunities can be provided for all people, particularly for those people in regional, rural or disadvantaged communities who have not experienced success in mainstream education; and
- To identify implications of recent conceptual, analytic and empirical work for public policy, particularly in regard to the provision of education, participation in learning, community building, social inclusion and equity.

The book is designed to address the needs of policy makers, educational administrators, educators, researchers, graduate students of education and members of the wider community concerned with (1) the identification and clarification of key policies and practices in the domains of lifelong learning, participation and equity; (2) the analysis of the concepts, values and arguments underpinning policies for lifelong learning, particularly as they pertain to the concern for participation and equity; and (3) examples of good practice, particularly in regard to approaches to learning across the lifespan.

SIGNIFICANCE

The various chapters contained in the book address a serious social and economic problem currently being experienced in countries around the world. This problem is the predicament of a large number of people, particularly early school leavers, whose skill base is limited, who have been alienated from mainstream education, but who need to undertake further study, or to acquire new skills.

In the last decade the topic of lifelong learning has assumed immense importance in the policies and practices of a number of international agencies, national governments and institutions of learning. An increasing number of governments, policy makers and decision-makers has concluded that a lifelong approach to learning should be instituted and deployed as one of the main lines of attack on some of the major economic and social problems which need to be addressed in the twenty-first century.

The shift to a global, knowledge and information based economy and society, with its concomitant need for a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce, require that all people have adequate skills and a sound initial education, and can therefore reap the benefits brought about by increased opportunities. However, for people without these skills, the challenges are immense. Such individuals are under significant pressure to acquire new skills and knowledge or face increasing marginalisation in economic and social life. Particularly vulnerable are those people who, for a variety of reasons, have dropped out of mainstream schooling. They have need of alternative education options, and opportunities to re-enter the field of education and training. Especially at risk are people living in relatively disadvantaged areas or more remote rural communities, where it is probable that there are fewer resources or opportunities available for engagement in lifelong learning.

In disadvantaged, rural or regional communities many people have only limited options to undertake further learning. Many of these communities lack the infrastructure necessary to meet the learning needs and encourage ongoing learning of the broad spectrum of people. As a consequence, education providers other than

mainstream schools are being asked to provide courses. Such providers, however, are not always structured, equipped or resourced to cater for their learning needs.

In discussions concerning the provision of lifelong learning and its relationship to participation and equity, a debate is emerging internationally on the need for a new strategy for learning provision and a new approach to innovation and change that is more flexible than previous approaches. Multi-agency, community-based approaches, framed around the concept of 'networks of learning', are among those approaches being considered.

In a rapidly changing, globalised society and economy, lifelong learning is fundamental to the ability of people to prosper. Opportunities for people to update their existing skills and acquire new ones are essential for all citizens. This publication is designed to contribute to the achievement of the goals of lifelong learning by better informing policy makers, educators and members of the community who are seeking innovative and successful strategies for operationalizing lifelong learning for all.

CONTENT OF CHAPTERS

The point of departure for the first chapter of the book, 'Education and Equity: Perspectives from the OECD' by Tom Schuller, is the education–equity relationship as a multi-dimensional and dynamic policy issue. Interactions include the possible trade-off between equity and efficiency and the tensions between the claims of different groups for support on equity grounds. Schuller presents some examples of approaches to measuring the relationship, from within the OECD and the European Union. The key argument is that we need a range of research approaches to cater for the multi-dimensional nature of equity considerations. He points out that there is no doubting the prevalence of highly inequitable patterns in respect of access to education; practice within education; and the distribution of costs and benefits, but he maintains, we almost always need to look for different and complementary kinds of evidence in order to get a proper purchase on the issue.

In Chapter Two, Richard Bagnall examines 'Ethical Issues in Lifelong Learning and Education'. Lifelong learning, he argues, entails a conception of ethics as action characterised by the skilled and situationally sensitive application of informed humane commitments, including those of a commitment to constructive engagement in learning, to oneself and one's cultural inheritance, to others and their cultural differences, to the human condition and its potential for progress, to practical reason and its contribution to bettering the human condition and to social justice. Such a conception presents a number of important tensions in the learning of ethical knowledge, particularly those between the universality of the humane commitments

and the situatedness of ethical action, between the categorical nature of ethical skill and the demand for situational sensitivity, between the deliberative ethical reasoning needed in the early stages of ethical skill development and the intuitive responsiveness of more highly skilled ethical action, between the experiential nature of ethical skill learning and the potential risks involved in such learning, between ethical progressivism and respect for cultural traditions, between individual and collective rights and duties, between the tolerance of ethical differences and difference as intolerable and between self interest and a commitment to the welfare and interests of others. The form of these tensions and their implications for lifelong learning programmatic activity are discussed particularly as they relate to the themes of participation and equity.

In Chapter Three, 'Participation in Learning: Why, What, Where and How do People Learn?' Malcolm Skilbeck addresses a number of critical educational questions relevant to lifelong learning, participation and equity. Questions such as: What are the incentives to continue learning for students who perform poorly at school, do not receive family encouragement and support, and find satisfaction in low- skilled, low-paid employment or perhaps anti-social behaviour? What are the incentives for adults to learn especially if they may be over-burdened with debt, and living in very difficult family situations? What triggers are most likely to set individuals firmly along learning pathways that bring satisfaction and success? Skilbeck argues that to better promote and target lifelong learning we have to understand why, what, where and how adults learn. He points out that there is in the literature a wide consensus on learning conditions and features of 'good practice', yet division over what is to count as 'worthwhile learning'. In the tradition of adult education, a high ranking is given to freedom, choice, self selection, self pacing to unstructured (as well as structured), episodic, incidental learning and to life experience as subject matter. Skilbeck argues that lifelong learning, particularly as it relates to adult, community and further education, may now need to build on this, giving emphasis in study programs and learning projects to depth, breadth, continuity, the development of cognitive perspectives and schema, to recognisable criteria for assessing learning and to standards of attainment.

Veronica McGivney in Chapter Four, 'Attracting New Groups into Learning: Lessons from Research in England' provides an analysis of policies and measures introduced in England with the aim of increasing and widening participation in education and training. She points out, that despite the plethora of initiatives and schemes deployed to bring a wider mix of people into learning, overall participation patterns remain stubbornly resistant to change. In most parts of the country, poorer,

less qualified and older adults continue to be poorly represented in post-16 learning opportunities. Participation in organised learning is still largely determined by a person's social class and economic and occupational circumstances. Moreover national surveys show a decline rather than an increase in adult participation in recent years, especially among those in the bottom socio-economic groups. McGivney argues that there are a number of reasons why, despite all the rhetoric and initiatives of the last decade, wider participation in organized learning has not yet been achieved. Among other reasons, this is because of a failure to invest in essential pre-engagement outreach activities and a continuing reluctance to learn from the lessons of earlier research as well as from the good practice that already exists, especially in adult and community learning. She profiles some examples of effective practice drawn from her own research and identifies the features that account for their effectiveness in engaging previously resistant groups in organised learning.

In Chapter Five, 'Together for a Change: A Partnership Approach to Individual and Community Learning', David Beck explores a particular approach to lifelong learning as a means to social inclusion, which combines work experience and University level education. The context of the work is an inner city area of Glasgow which experiences many of the common features of areas of deprivation—high unemployment, low take up of post-compulsory education, poor health and high levels of poverty. Beck considers a series of inter-related elements that work together to offer the possibility of sustainable individual and community learning. These include: partnership between University, Government and the Voluntary Sector; addressing the needs of learners by tailored support; blending the roles of learner and worker; having a clearly thought through and articulated set of values; linking of formal and informal learning; linking individual and community learning; and linking theory to practice. He focuses on a one-year linked employment and education project, which took long-term unemployed people, many with no formal educational qualifications, and trained them as Community Development Workers. The project provided a context where they were able to develop the practical and critically reflective skills that they required, not only to understand and work within the communities of which they were part but also to support other community members, through a process of informal education, to understand and work within their community. Beck concludes the chapter by considering the link between this approach to education and the development of social capital within marginalized communities.

In Chapter Six, 'Lifelong Learning for All: The Challenge to Adults and Communities' Malcolm Skilbeck develops a framework of key concepts and strategies for the emerging needs and future development of lifelong learning, with particular

reference to adult and community education in Australia. Skilbeck argues that challenges and opportunities for the education of adults need to be viewed in light of a range of social, cultural and economic changes. These affect everyone's life, albeit in different ways, some highly disruptive. They make demands on and pose dilemmas for education policy makers and providers. They also open new avenues for governments, enterprises, institutions and voluntary bodies, as for individuals, to improve and strengthen community-wide learning. Issues arising in these complex changes are varied and demanding, whether in personal life, employment, or community, state and national affairs. It is this changing, challenging environment that necessitates a fresh look at policy and provision of education of all kinds and at all stages of the life cycle, from infancy to old age. The established structures and sectoral divisions which, whatever their merits in the past and their continuing functionality, are not sufficient for the provision of lifelong learning for all.

In Chapter Seven, Tom Karmel and Davinia Woods address an aspect of lifelong learning of interest to policy makers concerned with the ageing of the population. This relates to the potential of lifelong learning to increase labour force participation of older age groups. The logic is that lifelong learning assists in maintaining productivity and employability, and hence will assist the labour market engagement of older persons. The chapter looks at the extent to which older persons in Australia participate in formal education and training and the extent to which this participation affects engagement with the labour market.

The challenge of 'Overcoming Barriers that Impede Participation in Lifelong Learning' is explored in Chapter Eight by Judith Chapman, Jacqueline McGilp, Patricia Cartwright, Marian de Souza and Ron Toomey. This chapter draws upon research undertaken under the auspices of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board of Victoria, Australia. The lessons learned from the research are discussed and recommendations are put forward which highlight: the need for an integrated 'whole' community approach to regional development and lifelong learning; networks as a reform strategy in the operationalization of lifelong learning; and the need for coherence and clarity in the articulation and implementation of a vision for adult and community education in the overall provision of lifelong learning for all. Proposals for action are put forward which include: ways of increasing people's educational participation in rural settings; ways of overcoming personal, societal, geographic and structural barriers to participation; and ways of articulating a vision, mission and identity for lifelong learning in rural and regional settings.

The theme of lifelong learning provision in rural areas is considered further in Chapter Nine, 'Men's Learning in Small and Remote Towns in Australia' by Barry

Golding. This chapter explores the gendered nature of adult learning in small, rural and remote towns in Australia. Golding argues that while gender segmentation has long been recognised in education that segmentation has seldom been studied other than from a perspective that assumes it is women and girls who are missing or disadvantaged in learning contexts. This is despite the historic under-representation of men in adult and community education and emerging evidence of problems for some boys in some school-based learning contexts. The chapter uses recent data from surveys and interviews with adults in small and remote towns to examine what learning men are currently doing or would do, and how learning might be configured to meet their particular learning interests and preferences.

In Chapter Ten, 'The Generation In-Between: The Participation of Generation X in Lifelong Learning', Richard Rymarz looks at lifelong learning from the perspective of 'Generation X', those born between 1960 and 1980, who have been described as the generation in between two powerful population cohorts. Rymarz argues that hitherto much attention has been given to how adolescents and young adults construct meaning in their lives. At the other end of the spectrum Baby Boomers have had a profound influence on how discussion of lifelong learning proceeds and this reflects their position and status in both academic circles and in the wider culture. Members of Generation X, on the other hand, do not have the same influence and have been further disempowered by public policy that stresses the commodification of learning and work. Rymarz asks: What contribution do members of Generation X have to make to the discussion about the participatory nature of lifelong learning? In this chapter, he argues that the search for meaning amongst Generation X is shaped by factors such as the lack of adherence to a meta-narrative in a culture that is well described by the constraints of postmodernism. A particular challenge is to move the discussion beyond lifelong learning as ongoing training, an endeavour that Generation X are very well versed in, and toward a view that engages Generation X in the search to become more critical and reflecting members of an open society.

In Chapter Eleven, 'Youth Transitions to Work and Further Education in Australia', Johanna Wyn explores issues that are raised by young people's transitions for the lifelong learning policy agenda. The importance of lifelong learning to educational policy is linked to two concerns. One is the economic imperative for lifelong learning posed by new economies, rapidly changing workplaces and the need for workers with particular dispositions and skills. The other is the challenge posed by new inequalities, and the role that lifelong learning will play in promoting social cohesion. This chapter focuses on the ways in which these concerns are being played out in the Australian economy. Wyn describes current patterns of youth transitions through further education and employment and summarises the policy context for post-compulsory and lifelong learning in Australia. These patterns reveal inequalities in access to and participation in further education based on socio-economic status. The

effects of these inequalities are exacerbated by the 'disappearance' of the 'middle' between low-skill and high-skill jobs. Drawing on findings from the Australian Youth Research Centre's Life-Patterns study, she discusses young people's experiences of transition into further education and beyond and their changing approaches to education and work. The evidence from this study suggest a mismatch between educational policies that frame education within an 'industrial' model, focusing on economic outcomes, and the ways in which young people are 'using' education. Young people's 'learner identities' and their uses of education provide an important but neglected focus for educational transformation.

In Chapter Twelve, 'Schools and Lifelong Learners', Jennifer Bryce focuses on the school years as a time when the foundations for future learning are laid. Drawing on the findings of a national study conducted by the Australian Council of Educational Research, she puts forward recommendations for the ways in which schools can be more effectively oriented to providing lifelong learning for all by: focussing on information literacy; stressing certain values, dispositions and attitudes; stressing skill sets beyond the 'basics'; acknowledging the significance of self concept and self regulation in learning how to learn; and acknowledging the importance of teachers as facilitators and role models of lifelong learning.

Carolyn Broadbent, Jill Burgess and Maureen Boyle in Chapter Thirteen examine ways of 'Helping Address Disadvantage through Community-based Learning Projects'. This chapter addresses the question of how to assist young people to acquire lifelong learning skills and to develop a positive outlook on their future when they may live in families where there are difficulties with poverty, violence, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, psychological illness and social isolation. These are important issues worldwide, given that the impact of this type of social and emotional dysfunction often results in young people failing to achieve their optimum educational potential. Difficulties experienced by these young people, including depression, bullying, and other social or emotional problems, are some of the complex educational and social issues that must be addressed. A critical analysis of current research on students' learning highlights the advantages of community-based learning models, including learning in groups and effective home–school partnerships. These have been shown to be effective in developing and sustaining positive educational outcomes, deeper levels of engagement, and a stronger sense of self-efficacy in young people. Recent research and initiatives are based on the growing awareness of the connectivity between health and education in promoting the overall wellbeing of young people within the community and society more generally. Within this context, this chapter identifies and describes a number of community-based innovative projects as

examples of enriched learning experiences for various groups of young people and their families. A major aim of these projects is to build supportive communities of learning that not only provide opportunities for the development of specific skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but also generate interest in learning as a lifelong process and inevitably build more equitable outcomes for all.

In Chapter Fourteen 'Lifelong Learning and the Arts: The Arts are not the Flowers, but the Roots of Education' by Susan Crowe, a curriculum response to widening participation is given. Crowe argues that in all cultures, the Arts provide an important way of expressing and representing ideas, emotions, values and spiritual beliefs and as such are grouped as a key learning activity. The Arts are experienced through the use of the senses and engage both feelings and the mind. They share a special capability of penetrating to the very core of human existence and have the potential to deal with every aspect of life from light hearted and humorous to disturbing and profound. In our primary schools today, Crowe argues, the Arts should assume a particular significance as student learning can be both in and through the Arts. If we do not give children the opportunity to encounter the cognitive, physical, social and emotional experiences offered in the Arts, many of them will not reach their full potential. The Arts reach children in ways that often teachers cannot. It is through the Arts that many of our students are able to discover a sense of their own identity and that of the community in which they live. It is through the Arts that children acquire knowledge and social and personal skills which, in turn, enable them to become lifelong learners. If we can reach children and their style of learning through the implementation of Arts programs in our primary schools, then we give them opportunities to think creatively and flexibly, to generate ideas and solve problems, to express thoughts and feelings, to take risks, to celebrate difference and to participate in individual and group activities which give them access to even further learning.

In Chapter Fifteen, 'Lifelong Learning, Family Learning and Equity', Mal Leicester begins with a conceptual analysis of concepts relevant to this book's themes of lifelong learning, participation and equity and briefly considers the implications of this analysis for both epistemological and educational questions. The concepts which are analysed include the central one of 'lifelong learning' and additionally: 'family learning,' 'adult education' and 'widening participation'. Family learning is part of the UK initiatives to widen participation through lifelong learning. 'Lifelong learning' she argues, is a chameleon, taking its colour from the ideological orientation of the particular advocate who is promoting or endorsing lifelong learning in a particular context. 'Family learning' is analysed as itself a Wittgensteinian 'family resemblance' concept. Thus both 'lifelong learning' and 'family learning' are seen to be context dependent and culturally variable terms. An exploration of 'widening participation'

allows us to assess how far UK Government initiatives in lifelong and family learning have succeeded in reaching previously unreached learners. The conceptual analysis of the first part of the chapter throws light on the conception of knowledge presupposed by lifelong and family learning. Leicester argues that this conception of knowledge adds epistemological weight to the ethical imperative for more equal opportunities to lifelong educational participation. Finally, since the philosophy of education should be rooted in educational practice and should seek to illuminate that activity, the chapter concludes in more practical mode by drawing out of the discussions some general principles for such equitable educational practice.

In the concluding chapter of the book, Chapter Sixteen, Judith Chapman reviews the major problems, issues and trends that have been addressed in the various chapters contained in this publication and attempts to put forward an agenda for improved policy and practice in the field of lifelong learning.

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

This collection of chapters sets out to provide insights to scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and students of lifelong learning. The collection has been made possible through the contributions of a wide range of individuals and organizations. The inspiration for this work resides in the policy concern for lifelong learning, participation and equity exemplified by the Government of the State of Victoria, Australia, and Minister Lynne Kosky. We thank them for their leadership and concern for social justice. In offering our appreciation we would like to highlight our gratitude to Professor Peter Sheehan, Vice-Chancellor of Australian Catholic University who in his support for the creation of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, provided an organizational base for dialogue, research and writing in the field of lifelong learning, particularly in the Australian context. We would also like to pay tribute to the scholars and practitioners who contributed to this volume and to the Adult, Community and Further Education Board of Victoria which provided support for the project work that underpinned this publication, and to the teachers and students who participated in the research. We are especially grateful to Mas Generis for her role in the preparation of the manuscript and to the members of the Management Committee of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Australian Catholic University who have advised on the program of work.

EDITORIAL BY SERIES EDITORS

This volume is a further flowering from the *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, which was jointly edited by David Aspin, Judith Chapman, Yukiko Sawano and Michael Hatton, published by Springer (formerly known as Kluwer Academic Publishers) in 2001. In the *International Handbook* we laid down a set of agenda for future research and development, analysis and expansion, strategies and guidelines in the field of lifelong learning. It had become clear that the domain of lifelong learning was a rich and fertile ground for setting out and summarising, comparing and criticising the heterogeneous scope and remit of policies, proposals, and practices in its different constitutive parts across the international arena. Certainly the scholars, researchers, policy makers and educators with whom we discussed these matters seemed to agree with us that each of the themes that were taken up in individual chapters of the original *International Handbook* would merit separate volumes of their own – to say nothing of the other possibilities that a more extended mapping, analysis and exploration of the field might generate.

This volume is an outcome of the important issues that were raised in the *International Handbook* pertaining to lifelong learning, participation and equity. It is the work of Judith Chapman and two of her colleagues at the Centre for Lifelong Learning ACU, Patricia Cartwright and E Jacqueline McGilp. The work brings together a range of authors from across selected OECD countries, who examine the impulse towards lifelong learning from the point of view of those seeking to analyse and explore its potential for increasing participation and equity for learners across the lifespan. Particular attention is paid to those learners as yet unreached by traditional institutions of learning and those from disadvantaged settings, especially in rural locations. The authors are concerned to alert their readers to the point that lifelong learning policies, structures and activities can become a forum for non traditional learners to work alongside other participants in educational and cultural institutions and associations to press forward an agenda that promotes all learners' interests and needs.

Their argument is based on the contention that a concentration on the imperatives of lifelong learning will allow all seeking to advance their learning, equal rights of access, participation and equity. This in its turn will advance and extend the range of

opportunities for all people to achieve personal fulfilment, economic advance and social inclusion, and increase their participation in the institutions of democracy. The authors maintain that current policies of lifelong learning have the responsibility to offer useful solutions that take into account the realities of all learners, especially those who are in any way disadvantaged in educational participation and access. The present work is an argument to show why and how lifelong learning participation and equity might be brought about; it does so by concentrating on and distilling lessons from the experiences of policy makers, academics, researchers, educators and community members, committed to seeking to benefit from the availability of learning opportunities in settings of all kinds.

Judith, Patricia and Jacqueline have done all of us a signal service in the preparation of this book. Their analysis locates the arguments and explorations of the themes of lifelong learning, participation and equity in a thoroughly informed, complex and sophisticated set of theoretical and practical considerations. This is where the diverse backgrounds and experiences of the range of authors are so fruitful for and helpful to the achievement of the wider emancipatory agenda of lifelong learning.

I am pleased that this important work helps carry forward the agenda of the Springer Series on Lifelong Learning. I thank the anonymous international reviewers and assessors who have considered the proposal for this work and reviewed each chapter of the final Manuscript and who have played such a significant part in the progress of this work to completion. I trust that its readers will find it as stimulating, thought-provoking and controversial as we who have overseen this project and its development have found it: we commend it with confidence to all those working in this field. I am sure that this further volume in the Springer Series will provide the wide range of constituencies working in the domain of lifelong learning with a rich range of new material for their consideration and further investigation. I believe that it will encourage their continuing critical thinking, research and development, academic and scholarly production, and individual, institutional and professional progress.

March 2006   David Aspin

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION AND EQUITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE OECD

TOM SCHULLER

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present some equity-related thinking which derives from the work of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The aim is not to give an overview of all the different relevant OECD work, but to deal with just some of the different dimensions of this complex issue. I take as my point of departure the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of the issue, which is such that any single approach cannot capture its full complexity. I focus on some selected aspects; provide some examples of approaches to measuring several of these aspects; and conclude with some remarks on the nature of evidence that might be drawn upon to inform policies to promote equity. The key concluding argument is that we need a range of research approaches to cater for the multi-dimensional nature of equity considerations. This is not as banal a remark as it may appear, for it implies some hard choices about what may be appropriate for any given task as a research or analysis tool. There is no doubting the prevalence of highly inequitable patterns in respect of access to education; practice within education; and the distribution of costs and benefits. But we almost always need to look for different and complementary kinds of evidence in order to get a proper purchase on the issue.

OECD's work on equity and education has a number of different strands. A basic general component is the gathering of descriptive statistics that enable us to build up a picture of the distribution of access to and (more partially) benefits from education, and to develop trends on these aspects. The annual *Education at a Glance* (EAG) is the major output vehicle for these statistics, which include enrolment and expenditure figures, by different sectors, broken down on a limited number of different variables. Gender routinely figures, but other variables of interest to equity analysts do so less frequently, e.g. on social class or ethnicity.

One particular project within the statistical agenda has a specific equity emphasis: the collection of data on students with special education needs, due to disability or disadvantage (OECD/CERI, 2004b).

Secondly, there are comparative analyses of educational outcomes, within which equity appears as one dimension. The high-profile PISA project has made social background a major theme in its analysis of the performance of 15-year olds, using it as an independent variable affecting educational outcomes (e.g. OECD, 2004a). Equity also figures to a greater or lesser extent in country reviews of educational policy, for example in examining the attainment of disadvantaged students.

Thirdly there have been, over the years, analytical activities that have had equity as their specific focus. In 2003 the Education and Training Division launched a thematic review addressing the 'dimensions, causes and policy responses' in relation to equity.

Fourthly, specific projects relating to a given sector or topic may contain elements which are strongly equity-relevant without equity necessarily being the explicit focus of the work. Current analysis of early childhood education is one example of such a sectoral approach.

Necessarily the data are mostly quite broad-brush – the higher the level of comparison, the more imprecisions and even imperfections are bound to appear. It is important to emphasise that as policy analysts we see both statistical and other work as above all enabling a more informed and constructive debate to take place, rather than as in any sense a definitive statement of relative national positions in some equity league table.

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ISSUE

Equity in education is a long-running topic that has provoked a huge literature, ranging from extensive politico-philosophical discussion at a macro-level (e.g. Sen, 1992) to detailed empirical analysis of particular policy initiatives (e.g. Bjorklund, Edin, Fredriksson, & Krueger, 2004). At a very general level the continuing concern with equity reflects the fact that for all the expansion of post-compulsory education and the implementation of a multitude of policies designed to improve equality of opportunity and outcome, major gaps persist between social groups in access and attainment. Some policies and interventions have had an impact, linked to broader social trends, notably in respect of gender; but the education systems of most OECD countries are far from satisfactorily meeting equity goals, and, even in

those countries generally considered to be at the forefront on this issue, significant challenges persist.

The *multi-dimensionality* of the issue is obvious as soon as we begin to investigate the differential impact which educational policy has on different social groups. I do not propose to discuss here the conceptually tricky relation between equity and equality (see e.g. Hutmacher, 2001; Levin, 2004; OECD, 1997). But whichever of these two is given precedence (conceptually or politically), the challenge still remains of analysing the ways in which policies may impact to increase equity along one dimension (e.g. gender) whilst possibly decreasing it along another (e.g. social class or age) in some kind of approximate zero-sum game; or, by contrast, may act in complementary fashion to improve the position of more than one disadvantaged group, in a positive sum. Judgements on the former interaction will depend on what weightings are given to the different dimensions, e.g. whether it is considered more important to increase equity between sexes or between classes where there is some trade-off between the two, but also on what the perceived interactions are between them. Capturing these interrelationships is no easy task. Despite many efforts we have no agreed overall framework for doing so; it is a moot point whether such a framework is possible or even conceivable, or whether we should instead confine ourselves to talking explicitly about specific aspects of equity rather than attempting any overall assessment.

A further complicating factor is the fact that the equity impact of education changes, depending on what time horizon is adopted, and whether we are able to build in broader social shifts. The OECD's thematic review rightly calls for a life-cycle systemic methodology, to include ways in which performance in one sector may improve or weaken that in another. This is what I mean by the need for a *dynamic* approach, though possibly diachronic would be a better label. A given educational initiative or policy may have an immediate effect which increases equity significantly on one or more dimensions, but this effect may change over time. This is relevant when we address cumulative disadvantage or inequity, where initial failure is compounded by subsequent exclusion, and measuring the trajectory of (in)equity is a significant challenge; intergenerational equity is especially important here (Feinstein, Duckworth, & Sabates, 2004). But it applies also where an apparent gain in equity may later come to be seen to have had negative effects.

Thus there are two basic kinds of interaction that have to be handled in dealing with equity. The first, regularly cited in the literature, is the possible trade-off between equity and efficiency (see e.g. Demeuse, Crahay, & Monseur, 2001). Such a trade-off most notably occurs where public or private investment in one form of education appears to yield a higher rate of return if it is directed towards groups

who already do well out of education. But it is important to bear in mind that putative trade-offs are often highly contentious (e.g. on age, where payback periods are commonly but tendentiously used to argue against investing in education for older people); and, more importantly, inequity may itself generate inefficiencies when a broader picture is established, for instance where a long tail of underqualified people acts as a drag on overall performance, including that of those who continue to accumulate skills and qualifications. Results from PISA suggest there is, if anything, a positive relationship between average performance of students and social equity (see Fig. 1).

Secondly, there may be tensions between the claims of different groups each of which has a prima facie case for support on equity grounds. This operates at different levels. The interaction between gender and class is one prominent example, where middle-class women make progress in higher education participation, but working-class men do not. The outcome is to enhance gender equity, but exacerbate class inequity. Within a single dimension there may be similar trade-offs. If we again take social class and higher education, it is perfectly possible for one previously underrepresented or under-achieving social class group to benefit from a particular measure, but with the consequence that another such group finds itself in a relatively even worse position. Arguably this has been the case with some of the recent attempts to extend access to higher education (Galindo-Rueda & Vignoles, 2003). Some of the lower socio-economic deciles may gain greater access, for instance when a higher proportion of the children of

Figure 1: Relationship between mean and social background

Source: OECD (2001) Knowledge and skills for life, Appendix B1, Table 2.3a, p.253.
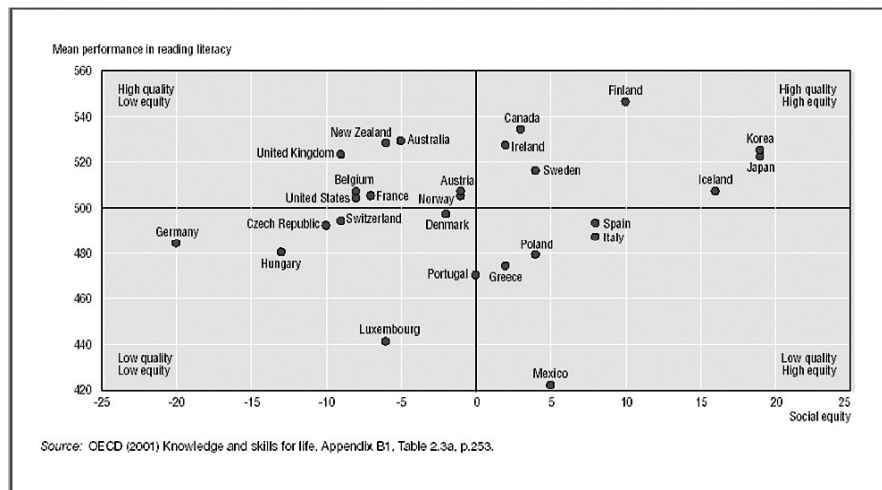
lower nonmanual families are able to enrol. But this then results in a still wider gap between nonmanual and manual representation overall. For those who do not benefit, their relative position is in fact worsened: being amongst the 80% of the population who do not have access to higher education is a better location than being among the 60% or still more so the 40% who do not. Because education is at least partially a positional good, improvement in the participation of one group necessarily affects others in ways that might not always point in the same equity-enhancing direction. When it comes to job applications, one person's improved qualification moves them ahead of someone else. Even if we acknowledge that of course the labour market is not fixed and there is not a simple zero-sum displacement effect, the stronger the sorting function is, as a component of education's effects, the more there are losers as well as winners. These are difficult issues to handle, politically and analytically.

One final introductory point concerns the balance between more or less objective and more or less subjective measures. Recent work for the European Union includes student perceptions of how fairly they are treated as one indicator of an equitable system, alongside a battery of more objective measures, some of which are discussed below. One question is how valid such measures are in themselves, and what weighting is to be attached to them. Yet they have a salience that derives from wider understanding of the significance of individual feelings of confidence when it comes to effective learning for both adults and children. But on top of this is the more general issue of the *legitimacy* of the system in the eyes of its clients or more widely. Such legitimacy refers both to the criteria used to measure quality and performance, and to the outcomes of a given system. Legitimacy is not only question of how students (and their associates, e.g. family members) feel themselves about how equitably they are treated by the system, but how far this impinges on the public support given to the system. This is particularly relevant in an age when indicators and league tables (local, national or international) are increasingly used to inform public debate on the quality of educational provision.

EQUITY INDICATORS

This section gives information and brief comment on indicators which have been or might be used to measure equity in education internationally – first for OECD countries, and secondly for the European Union.

A. CERI/OECD

My colleagues Tom Healy and David Istance recently contributed an overview of international indicators on equity and learning (Healy & Istance, 2001). They categorise the indicators as follows:

- intra-group dispersion, e.g. in child or adult literacy or mathematics levels, using TIMSS or IALS data;
- regular indicators on inter-group differences, e.g. intergenerational, gender;
- occasional inter-group measures e.g. on regional variations, SEN, minority languages.

Healy and Istance identified the following as key areas for further indicator development:

- Access to pre-school or early childhood education and care;
- The importance of schools in mediating outcomes for different groups;
- The interaction between family and social background and student learning outcomes;
- The impact on equality of public subsidies to students at the post-compulsory and especially at the tertiary levels;
- The socioeconomic position of tertiary students;
- Adult learning, including informal learning.

They conclude by proposing the following three-way framework for the development of descriptive comparative indicators that would contribute to policy thinking within a lifelong learning context:

a) *Cross-sectional educational and learning inequalities in access/outcomes in different countries*. This would enable us to look across countries and compare how equal opportunities are, and how well certain groups fare in different national contexts.

b) *Trends in cross-sectional inequalities over time in different countries*. This would enable us to track the growth or decline of inequalities over time, and whether certain groups were getting progressively left behind.

c) *Life-cycle patterns of inequality for particular groups of cohorts.* This would seek to capture the dynamics of change over the lifecourse,

including contrasts within countries between these over-time measures and the snapshot information that dominates.

Healy and Istance point to two major methodological challenges, both of which I would strongly endorse. The first is that of gathering information on informal as well as formal learning, especially comparatively. Informal learning is regularly identified as important, especially when attempting to establish the overall distribution of learning opportunities, but equally regularly ignored by policy-makers and researchers alike (Coffield, 2000). Secondly, there is the difficulty of compiling data over the lifecycle, either actual or synthetic. The desirability of longitudinal data is very evident (I return to this below when considering different types of evidence).

Both the list of desirable indicators and the framework dimensions provide a further agenda for discussion.

B.   A European Union Approach

An alternative framework may be merging from some recent European Union work intended to generate a set of system-wide indicators of equity. This is a planned attempt to encompass a full range of measures, going beyond schooling and inputs, and to apply them across a number of countries. The European Group of Research on Equity of the Educational Systems (henceforth EGREES) has put forward some useful typologies in their proposals for equity indicators. First, they distinguish between the following:

(i)   discrepancies between individuals in the skills or qualifications obtained;
(ii)   inequalities between groups; and
(iii) the notion of a threshold below which no one should fall, irrespective of how far this threshold is below mean or modal attainment levels or those of the top achievers.

The first two categories immediately raise questions about what levels of dispersion or inequality are regarded as acceptable. Their theoretical inspiration is from Rawls. The third category, which draws on Sen's notion of capabilities, raises a different order question of what standards are set for such a threshold. The EGREES team goes on to offer a matrix, with these three categories as one axis and a list of possible indicators as another. The list falls under four headings (the full list is given in Annex A):

   (iv)   contextual, including economic, social and cultural inequalities;
   (v)   inequalities in the educational process (quantitative and qualitative);
   (vi)   internal results, in terms of skills, personal development and careers;
   (vii)   external results, i.e. the effects of inequalities.

The framework developed provides a reasonable basis for discussion of how viable and effective a comprehensive indicator approach can be. The team goes on to bring together available data for each of these indicators across a range of European countries. Their next step is to attempt to aggregate the results. I do not reproduce the actual outcomes here, since they are acknowledged to be provisional and based on patchy data. For what it is worth the summation is that in some countries there is a consistent pattern of equality/inequality across all three basic criteria (individuals, groups, threshold), with Finland and Sweden having consistently low levels of inequality and Germany and Belgium consistently high levels, whilst others show a more mixed picture – for example Switzerland, with few people falling below the given skills threshold, but high levels of inequality between social groups. The issue here is not to point to the predictable problems of adequacy and comparability of data, but to highlight in particular the difficulty of weighting and aggregating the indicators and their results. Readers might like to use the list in Annex A to construct their own weightings, and to consider how far their own data would enable them to apply the framework.

ILLUSTRATING DIMENSIONS

Enrolment and Expenditure

I turn now to some simple instances of data on enrolments and expenditure by different educational levels to illustrate the argument above on multidimensionality. The point is not to deny that there are clear overall patterns of continuing inequity, but to argue that there is very often more than one kind of evidence required to make proper assessments of the extent of inequity and the kinds of measures that might be used to combat it. I conclude each short section with an issue that merits some further debate.

    i.   As noted earlier, one of OECD's basic statistical-gathering exercises is to provide enrolment rates at different levels across OECD countries, published in *Education at a Glance*. This shows up, of course, inequalities between countries, for instance in the proportion of the 15-19 population which continue to be students, full- or part-time. It is not worth reproducing the whole table here (see

OECD, 2003b, Table C1.2), but I draw on it simply to illustrate some of the issues identified above and to reflect on what, if anything, such variation can tell us about equity within countries. Almost all countries have enrolment rates of over 70% for the age group, the highest figures belonging, not surprisingly on the whole, to those countries where compulsory schooling extends to age 17. Excluding Mexico and Turkey, the range runs from Belgium and Germany with 91.0 and 89.4% of all 15-19 year olds participating respectively, to New Zealand and Portugal with 73.0 and 73.3%. Clearly the higher the enrolment rates the smaller the proportion of the age group that is excluded. A system with high rates, such as Belgium or Germany, could fairly be called more inclusive. But does this make it more equitable? Not necessarily, since although more of the population remains in school the significance of exclusion for the remainder is correspondingly intensified. The smaller the proportion excluded, the higher the degree of such intensity. Whether there is a simple linear relationship between these two is an interesting and widely neglected question that would be worth investigating.

ii.   The figures for 30-39 year olds are of course very different. Five countries – Australia, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK – have over 10% of this age group enrolled, but the OECD country mean is 4.8 and many countries have only one or two per cent participation in this age group. The same picture broadly holds for the 40-49 age group, though at reduced levels. The figures suggest that these countries offer more chances for adults to return to education, a classic index of more equal opportunity through greater access to lifelong learning. We would of course need to see which sections of the population take up this opportunity to judge the equity impact, since despite efforts to the contrary the dominant pattern is for more educated people to take more advantage of later opportunities, and to establish what the significance is for individuals of finishing their initial education earlier than the norm. Under this heading one interesting question is whether support for students who re-enter education later in life without many qualifications should be higher – on the grounds of equity, if they are indeed to come from less advantaged backgrounds, or also possibly on efficiency grounds since they will generally be relatively highly motivated. The answers to this will depend strongly on what kinds of assumptions are made in estimating returns to education at different points in the lifecourse (see e.g. OECD, 2001, Ch. 4).

iii.   The figures for enrolment below the age of five vary hugely. Given the importance of early childhood education for later life chances, we might expect such variation to give us clear guidance on later inequalities, with higher enrolment rates at this stage linked to less inequality later on. But they do not – Spain, France and Belgium, which lead the list on this dimension, are not conspicuously equitable

countries, generally or in educational achievement. Naturally this is in part because formal enrolment for very young children is obviously only one form of possible provision. But this logic, whilst easily accepted for this age group, is applicable more generally – certainly into the primary sector, and arguably towards the end of compulsory schooling. In other words, the results when it comes to equity are often a matter of the quality of provision, and the articulation between formal education and other provision, more than direct enrolment figures. But we need to go beyond saying just that quality matters as well as quantity, important though this is. One significant question is why there is so much more focus on participation than on what actually happens as a result of participation. The answer is a mix of the methodological difficulties inherent in analyzing outcomes, especially over time; the greater political salience of simple participation figures; and the vested interests of educational providers in restraining the definition of outcomes to those set by the formal system.

iv. Let's turn to the input side. Chart 1 gives data on relative expenditure by educational level. Most countries spend significantly more per student year on tertiary than secondary and primary education. Given that access to tertiary education is more limited, this is from the equity point of view a constraint, and may seem to be a classic instance of a trade-off between equity considerations on the one hand and spending adequate amounts on developing high quality human capital on the other. Such a trade-off will not be turned into a positive sum game unless access to tertiary education is equalized (and not even then, as even if it is equalized by social class, gender, ethnicity etc, it will still be restricted). This is part of the whole very topical debate on student funding, with the contentious proposals that students should bear a higher share of tertiary costs. (It is worth noting that even where the tertiary/other differential is relatively low, as in France, the implication of this may not be at all favourable to the equity issue; overall spending on universities in France is low, but within the tertiary sector it is highly differentiated, with over twice the average level of per student public expenditure going on the elite *grande ecoles* to which access is very skewed)[1]. Here there is a difficulty of dynamics, as the returns to education at any given level will be likely to decrease as more people acquire qualifications at this level. One consequence may be that disadvantaged groups are persuaded to invest by the expected returns, only to find that the returns now flow only to qualifications further up in the educational hierarchy. Tracing the patterns of returns to learning and how these changes over time would be very valuable.

CHART 1

Chart 1 **Differences in expenditure on educational institutions per student relative to primary education (2000)**
Ratio of expenditure on educational institutions per student at various levels of education to expenditure on educational institutions per student in primary education, multiplied by 100

□ Tertiary education ■ Secondary education □ Pre-primary education
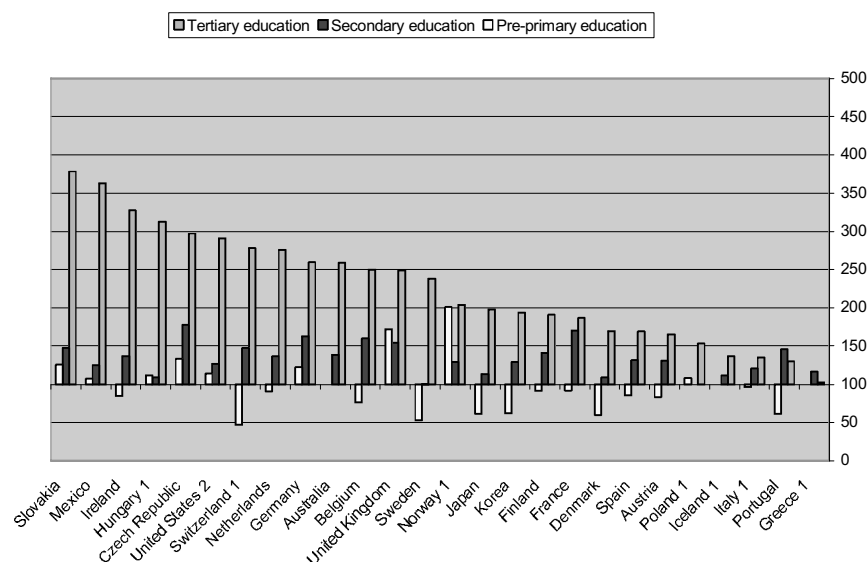
Notes: A ratio of 500 for tertiary education means that expenditure on educational institutions per tertiary student in a particular country is 5 times the expenditure on educational institutions per primary student.
A ratio of 50 for pre-primary education means that expenditure on educational institutions per pre-primary student in a particular country is half the expenditure on educational institutions per primary student.
1. Public institutions.
2. Public and independent private institutions only.
Countries are ranked in descending order of expenditure on educational institutions per student in tertiary education relative to expenditure on educational institutions per student in primary education.
Source: OECD (2003) Education at a Glance, Chart B1.3, p. 188, and Table B1.1. See Annex 3 for notes
(www.oecd.org/edu/eag2003).

v. Chart 2 further illustrates the multidimensional nature of equity issues. How do we construe the upward arrows that show differences between two age groups in respect of attainment of upper secondary education?   Clearly some countries, most notably Korea but also Greece and Spain, have made very fast progress in raising the overall educational level of their populations. Their arrows are impressively long, and show these countries overtaking others – Korea going to the head of the table, Greece overtaking Australia, Spain streaking past Poland: a boon for the accelerating countries – but not necessarily for the 45-54 year olds, whose experience has probably not grown at the same rate as the younger generation's qualification levels.   Here the interesting questions concern both internal legitimacy – how do different generations feel about the relative impact of

CHART 2

Chart 2. **Percentage of the population that has attained at least upper secondary education[1], by age group (2001**
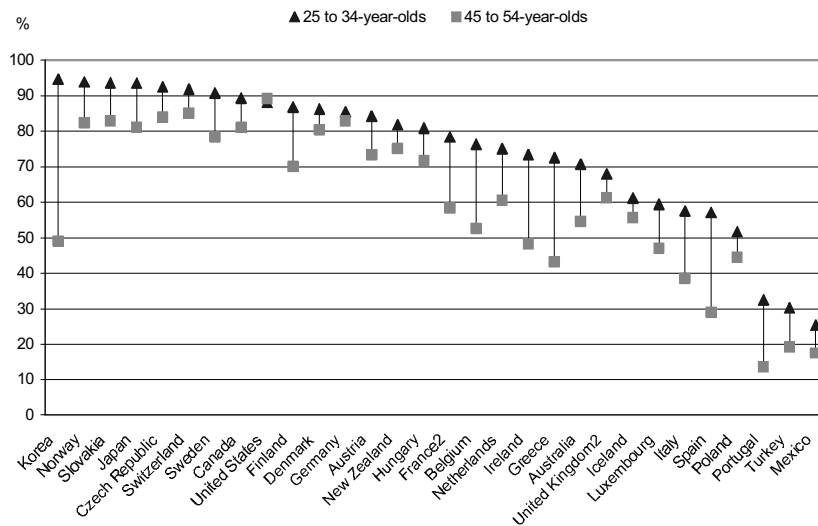
1. Excluding ISCED 3C short programmes.
2. Not all ISCED 3 programmes meet minimum requirements for ISCED 3C long programmes.
Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25 to 34-year-olds who have attained at least upper secondary education.
Source: OECD (2003) Education at a Glance, Table A1.2 p. 37. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2003).

these trends on their social and labour market positions – and the political use which is made of changes in league table comparisons?

Gender and age are a particularly dynamic intersection. Table 1 shows the dramatic change over time in gender patterns of attainment. The trend is by now very familiar, with women now exceeding men in upper secondary graduation rates in 15 out of 16 OECD countries where total upper secondary rates can be compared. This is impressive; but whilst it may be psychologically comforting for the older generation of women to know that such progress has been made, it does little materially for their labour market chances or, in itself, for their access to educational opportunities later in life. The position of younger males is now attracting considerable attention, not unreasonably. But whilst awareness of demographic trends is quite high, it is usually focussed on the medium term future and its implications for current younger generations (who will not be many enough to fill the workspaces nor rich enough to pay for eldercare), and often does not extend to matching up the claims of older people with fewer qualifications [2].

Table 1. Percentage of the population having attained at least (2001)			
		Upper secondary education	**University level**
Age group			
55-64	Men	50	12
	Women	38	6
25-34	Men	72	16
	Women	72	16

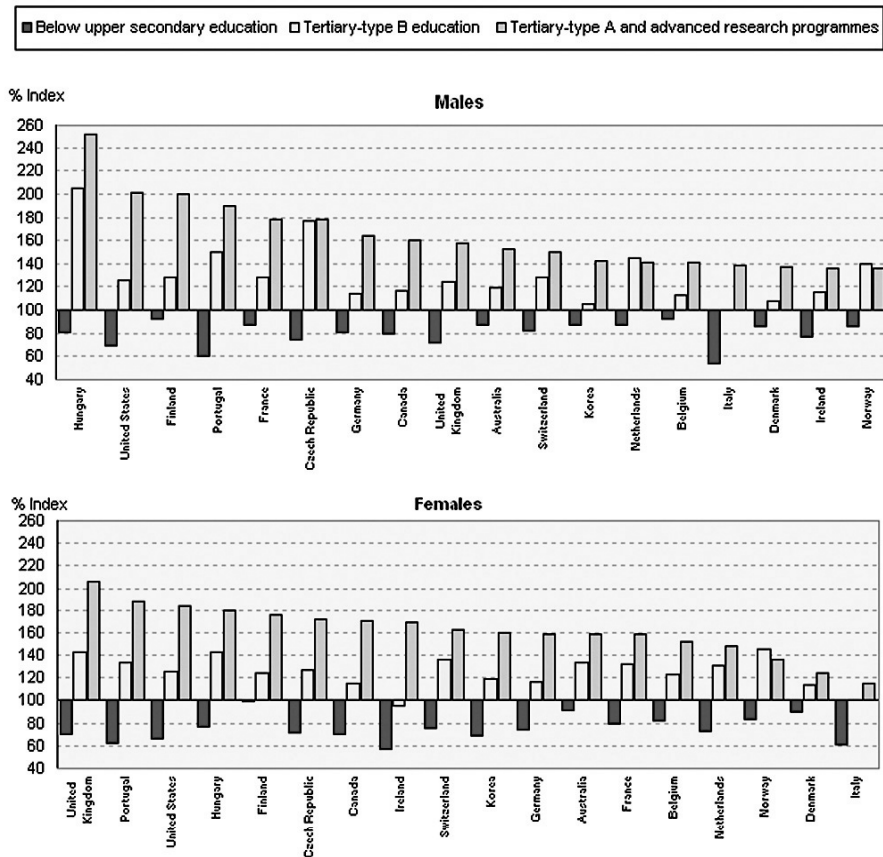*Source*: OECD (2003) Education at a Glance

Returns to Education: Financial and Social

Those associated with education, and even those who have no direct interest, tend to assume that the higher the rate of return to educational investment the better. This appears self-evident, and so it is on one front. It means a more persuasive case can be made to Finance Ministries, and greater satisfaction for the student and the provider (with possible exceptions, e.g. where teachers see their ex-students proceeding immediately to earn multiples of their own salary). Chart 3 shows the returns to different types of education in different countries. In general the figures demonstrate strong private returns to education.   Some of these are quite spectacular, for instance the returns to male graduates in Hungary and female graduates in the UK, in both cases from more academic institutions. But there is a paradox here: returns to a given level of education have to be measured by reference to the level below, with the consequence that the higher the rate of return the greater the level of inequality implied. Returns to qualifications have generally increased as wages for those without any qualifications have stagnated or even fallen in absolute terms. Should our pleasure at high returns always be dimmed by this consideration? Surely not, but aiming for the highest returns may not be quite as straightforward a policy target as might at first appear.

It is worth adding that our evidence on returns to education is sparse even when it is restricted to pecuniary returns. One area on which much more research is needed is the returns of a non-monetary kind, notably in terms of mental and

CHART 3

Chart 3. **Relative earnings with income from employment (2001)**
By level of educational attainment and gender for 25 to 64-year-olds (upper secondary education =100)

■ Below upper secondary education   □ Tertiary-type B education   □ Tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes

Countries are ranked in descending order of relative earnings for the population having attained the level of
tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes.
Source: OECD (2003) Education at a Glance. Table A14.1, p.157. See Annex 3 for national data sources
(*www.oecd.org/edu/eag2003*).

physical health (see e.g. Hammond, 2003). Public and private investment in
education has many other effects beyond those relating to the labour market or
productivity. There are strong associations between levels of education and better
health, as well as higher levels of civic participation and other social benefits (see
Behrman & Stacey, 1997; Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brassett-Grundy, &
Bynner, 2004). But we know little about how big the actual impact is; nor –
significantly from the equity point of view – how these benefits are distributed.
There is some analysis of how, for adults, the effects vary according to qualification

level – in other words, whether the effect on, say, one's health of participating in education as an adult is stronger for those with no or few qualifications than it is for highly qualified people (Feinstein, Hammond, Woods, Preston, & Bynner, 2003). But it would be interesting to know in much more detail about the distributional effects – how the social benefits of different forms and levels of learning are spread across different social groups.

There is a further aspect to this question of estimating the benefits, and that is how far they are to be measured solely in terms of benefit to the individual and how far in terms of benefit to the wider community, however that is construed. Figure 2

Figure 2: The Benefits of Learning. Source: Schuller et al (2004)
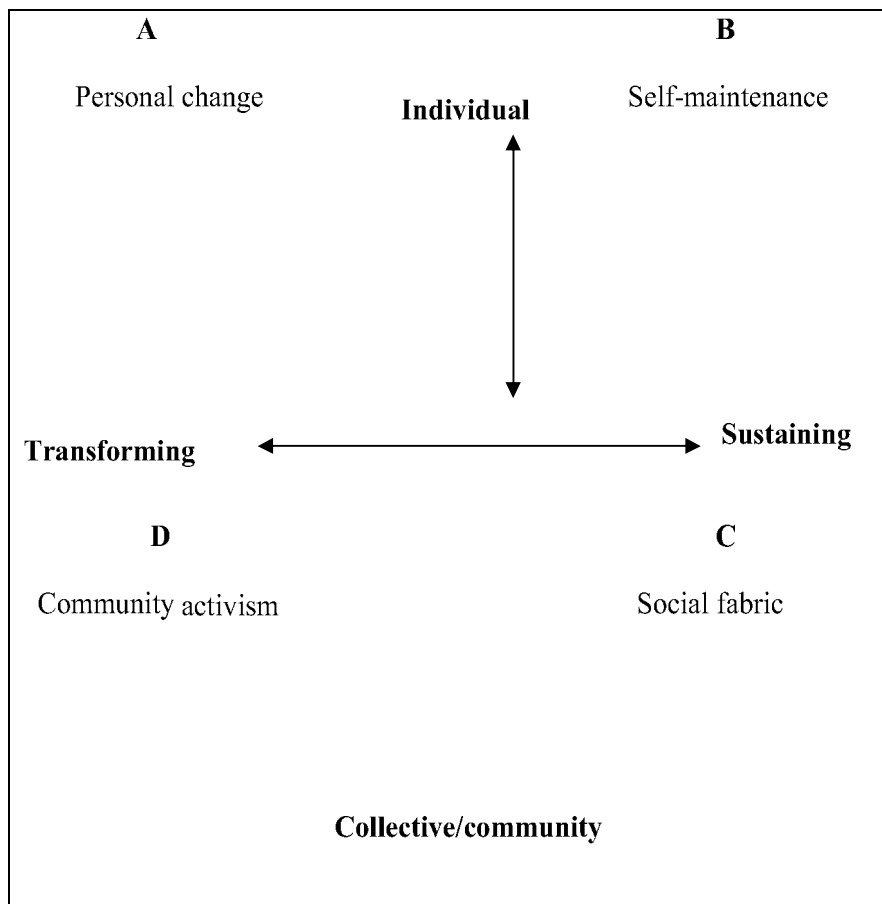
Source: Schuller et al (2004)

reproduces the matrix we developed as part of our work on the wider benefits of learning (Schuller et al, 2004, Ch. 2). It is designed to illustrate how these may be brought into a single framework. A key feature of this matrix is that it draws attention to the way education can act to enable people to sustain their wellbeing, to maintain it (individually or collectively) in the face of the strains and stresses of everyday life. This presents epistemological and methodological issues of measurement, since such effects are, by definition, counterfactuals – what might have happened if the person concerned had not taken part in education – but if we are considering how best to measure the effects of education on equity we need some such tool.

'EVIDENCE': WHAT COUNTS (AND WHAT DOESN'T)?

Thus far I have indicated the kinds of evidence that the OECD gathers in relation to equity; discussed two approaches (an OECD and an EU one) to indicators and overall frameworks; and used some very straightforward examples of data to raise issues of interpretation and suggest an agenda for further work. All this has been intended to promote discussion of how we should handle the multi-dimensionality and the dynamic nature of the equity issue. I turn now, briefly, to the issue of what might or might not count as evidence. This is a specific topic on which we are currently working in CERI, and one that has considerable relevance to the equity issue.

There is a growing political drive to base educational policy more solidly on systematic evidence. In the US this has been extensively debated over the past few years (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). One central concern is often expressed by contrasting the effectiveness of educational research with research in the health field, especially in relation to randomised control trials (RCTs) as a methodology with particular claims to rigour (Campbell, Fitzpatrick, Haines, Kinmoth, Sandercock, Spiegelhelter, & Tyrer, 2000). Other countries are not yet as explicit in their concerns, and have significantly different approaches to what counts as rigorous research, but the trend towards strengthening the educational evidence base is widespread [3].

These moves in part reflect a dissatisfaction with the extent to which educational research as a body has contributed to actual improvement in the delivery of educational services (including the achievement of greater equity), as

well as a more general trend towards closer accountability of public services. They also signal a concern with the knowledge foundations of education: a sector which has as one of its major functions the generation, dissemination and transmission of knowledge does not demonstrably incorporate knowledge management into its own practices (OECD, 2003c). Our current project is designed to bring out the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to generating and using evidence for educational policy, including equity-related policies and interventions.

The pressure for research to provide a stronger evidence base is generating significant debates and tensions, within the research community and beyond. One such tension is the familiar one of academic autonomy, and the extent to which policy-driven research entails a compromise of intellectual integrity. I am not concerned with that here, but with the sometimes contentious epistemological issues which follow from competing claims as to what constitutes rigour in the context of educational research. There is space here only for a schematic account

The National Research Council report groups the kinds of question which might be put to educational researchers into three categories: descriptions of what is happening; analysis of what causes what; and understanding the how, the mechanisms through which causal effects show themselves. Levin (2004) identifies three basic types of policy goals in the equity context:

- measures intended to encourage participation;
- changing the way institutions provide education;
- changing broader social and economic conditions.

He lists a number of policy levers within each category, e.g. financial and non-financial incentives, support services within and outside education; new programmes, credentials and delivery agents; and legal measures to discourage discrimination. Applying the NRC categories to this list generates a matrix of possible questions; the issue is to decide what might count as adequate evidence in each case.

Secondly, there is a set of possible criteria for assessing the rigour and relevance of evidence-based policy research methodologies:

- *Causality*: to what extent does the research method provide valid estimates of the causal effect of an intervention?
- *Explanation*: to what extent does the research method explain how or why the causal effect is happening?

- *Transportability*: how far is the evidence such that the results can be applied to most or all the relevant field in different settings of time and space?
- *Stability*: will the evidence be reasonably stable over time in its application?
- *Validity*: does the research use instruments that measure what is intended to measure?
- *Variability*: to what extent does the research method involve or permit variation in the type of intervention?

It is important to emphasise that not all evidence-based policy research types will or can meet all of these criteria fully. The framework's value depends on the extent to which it enables some kind of evaluation to be made of the different types, and their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Thirdly, there is a set of questions about the process over time of the gathering and use of different forms of evidence. At a general level this may involve consideration of the interaction between qualitative and quantitative forms of evidence. But even where particular status is given to one form of evidence, it may need to be embedded in a sequence of steps, without which its claims may be severely weakened. Thus Moore, Graham and Diamond (2003), in a closely argued defence of RCTs, specify that a full-scale trial should be preceded not only by explicit promulgation of the causal reasoning involved, but also by a range of primarily qualitative methods of formative evaluation such as focus groups, observation and case studies; they stress, in other words, the interdependence of different research methods. It is worth applying a similar line of argument to other, perhaps very different, kinds of evidence in order to move towards some more common understanding of how they are best used.

Finally, the use and validation of evidence will depend to a large extent on the complexion of policy-making: how 'policy' itself is conceived of within the relevant community (national, international or more local), and who are understood to be the essential stakeholders. This will vary significantly according to the different political traditions involved.

In short, I am arguing:

    a)   it is important and healthy to maintain an active debate on what constitutes rigorous and meaningful research that might be helpful to policy and practice; this should include reflections within the

educational research community on where its own current strengths and weaknesses lie;

b) one can acknowledge the need for strengthening a particular area, or using more of a given methodology, without giving complete primacy to it;

c) the key to productive research will be an approach which achieves two basic goals;

d) a successful matching of methodology to issue; and

e) fruitful interaction over time between different methodologies.

These are general remarks, but they apply directly to research on equity and education. In the case of equity, the impact of some interventions can be evaluated through tightly controlled experimentation, and it will often be useful at least to begin by considering whether such an approach is possible; but many of the broader equity issues will not be amenable to experimental approaches, and other methodologies will therefore be called for. In other words, I finish as I began, by stressing the multidimensionality and the dynamic nature of the problem, and therefore the need for this to be reflected in any portfolio of research approaches. The key is both triangulation – the deployment of different methodologies to address a given issue – at all levels; and the continuing accumulation and testing of evidence from different sources.

NOTES

[1] See Aghion and Cohen (2004) for a discussion of the tension between, democratisation and equality   in the expansion of French higher education.

[2] The following quote poignantly illustrates the policy of challenge of including age in equity considerations, especially when it intersects with another dimension, that of rurality:

"… rural educational outcomes are low (44 perdent of the rural population has less than basic vocational education) and have been for some time. While the steps outlined there to improve resources at the local leveland make curricula in non-academic streams more appropriate should be helpful, effort also needs to concentrate on practical adult education. Here making smallholders more aware of opportunities for expanding their holdings or of leasing would be useful. Labour mobility is strongly correlated with educational attainment. *For future generations this is important although for those currently on the land there is no obvious policy solution"* (OECD's Economic Review of Poland, April 2004, my italics).

[3] In the UK, an early act of the incoming New Labour government in 1997 was to set up three research centres, directly funded by the Department for Education and Skills, with the remit of generating evidence on which policy and practice might draw directly: one deals with the Economics of Education (http://cee.lse.ac.uk); one with the Wider Benefits of Learning (www.learningbenefits.net); and one explicitly with evidence-based

policy and practice, the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk)

Note: The views expressed in this chapter are the views of the author and not the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.

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ANNEX A

This section includes the twenty-nine indicators devised with a view to judging the fairness of European educational systems. Each indicator is presented on facing pages: the graphics and tables are found on the right-hand page, while the comments and technical notes are opposite, on the left-hand page. At the bottom of the left-hand page, the coloured boxes indicate the EU States Members for which Equity Indicators have been built. The indicators drawn from the *European pilot survey on sentiments of fairness at school* are distinguished from the other indicators by a coloured page background, due to their experimental nature. In the upper right-hand corner, a letter and two numbers identify the indicators. The letter refers to the four main categories used to structure the vertical access of the matrix of indicators, organised as follows:

A.	**Context of inequalities in education**	
	1. Individual consequences of education	
	1. Disparities in income and access to employment	30
	2. Social advantages of education	32
	2. Economic and social inequalities	
	1. Inequalities in income and poverty	34
	2. Economic security inequalities	36
	3. Cultural resources	
	1. Level of education of adults	38
	2. Cultural resources of 15 year-old students	40
	3. Cultural practices of 15 year-old students	42
	4.Aspirations and perceptions	
	1. Professional aspirations of 15 year-old students	44
	2. Students" criteria of fairness	46
	3. Students" general opinions about fairness	48
B.	**Inequalities in the education process**	
	1.Quantity of education received	
	1. Inequalities in schooling expectancy	50
	2. Inequalities in education spending	52
	2.Quality of education received	
	1. Perception of support from teachers according to 15 year-old students	54
	2. Perception of the disciplinary climate according to 15 year-old students	56
	3. Segregation	58
	4. Students" perception of being treated fairly	60
C.	**Inequalities in education**	
	1. Skills	
	1. Inequalities in results/skills	62

CHAPTER TWO

ETHICAL ISSUES IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION

RICHARD G. BAGNALL

LIFELONG LEARNING

The agenda of the lifelong learning movement for the worldwide transformation of social reality into lifelong learning cultures would seem to be emerging as one of the more spectacularly successful social movements in recent history. Lifelong learning is now institutionalised in the mission statements, policies and practices, not only of educational organisations but also of organisations in the corporate world, in the development plans of cities and towns and in the educational policies of governments and government instrumentalities.

The lifelong learning movement that has driven and which is identified with this triumph began in earnest in the early 1960s with the decision of the UNESCO to make lifelong education (as it was then termed) "the 'master concept' for all its educational planning" (Wain, 1987, p. 35). True to that vision, it has now anastomosed into a range of hegemonic programs, including those theorised variously as 'learning organisations', 'learning communities', and 'learning cities' (Longworth, 2003; Walker, 2001).

Those different emphases nevertheless cohere in the lifelong learning movement. That coherence is exemplified in the international plethora of lifelong learning policies and in publications such as the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, the Pergamon international handbook, *Lifelong Education for Adults* (Titmus, 1989), the more recent Kluwer *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning* (Aspin, Chapman, Hatton, & Sawano, 2001), the edited volumes by Field and Leicester (2000) and by Holford, Jarvis and Griffin (1998) and the recently launched series of books on lifelong learning to which the present volume belongs. It is evidenced in a number of common dimensions articulated or presumed in lifelong learning advocacy, policy and programming, especially for the purposes of the present chapter the following:

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1. That learning is a human engagement that is important both throughout the lifespan and throughout all life tasks (Wain, 1987). It is not an engagement that can or should be confined to formal learning in preparation for adult life or for certain life tasks. Neither is it an engagement that can or should be confined to recognised institutions of education or training. Rather, it is and should be truly life-long and life-wide (Delors, 1996).

2. That knowledge is socially constructed (Winch, 1963). Knowledge—the immediate goal and end of learning engagements—is understood in lifelong learning theory as being the particular product of cultural traditions and perspectives. It portrays realities and presents alternative ways of engaging with them through those perspectives.

3. That learning is culturally embedded and interpersonal in nature. It is, in other words, irremediably contextualised or situated and is, in that sense, experiential in nature (Lave & Wenger, 1991). What an individual has learned is thus seen as being grounded in his or her experience. Education, then, should recognise this reality in constructing learning engagements that both build on prior learning and recognise the contextual importance of the educational intervention (Hager, 2001).

4. That learning is a holistic matter, involving the individual learner as an organic and dynamic whole, as a person—his or her feelings, intuitions, spirituality, fears, aspirations, hopes, denials, health and wellbeing, as well as his or her understanding, attitudes and skills. Learning, in other words is a humanistic endeavour (Rogers, 1969). Each individual is importantly seen as being a unique product of his or her learning and as being of value in virtue of that uniqueness. Lifelong learning theory thus places a premium on the recognition of individual diversity and rights.

5. That learning is importantly adaptational in nature (Kozlowski, 1995). I have identified this elsewhere as the adaptive progressive sentiment of lifelong learning theory and advocacy (Bagnall, 2001). It seeks through adaptive learning, liberation from deprivation, poverty and dependence.

6. That learning is importantly developmental and progressive in nature (Longworth & Davies, 1996). This I have identified elsewhere as the individual progressive sentiment (Bagnall, 2001). It seeks through lifelong learning, liberation from ignorance (through individual enlightenment), from dependence (through individual empowerment), from constraint (through the individual transformation of perspectives), or from inadequacy (through individual development).

7. That learning is importantly democratic in nature (Walker, 1992). This I have identified as the democratic progressive sentiment of lifelong learning theory and advocacy (Bagnall, 2001). It seeks through lifelong learning, liberation from inherited authority of all forms, whether autocratic, oligarchic, theocratic, or whatever, and from oppression, servitude and poverty, in the creation of a truly civil society through participative democratic involvement.

8. That learning is an individual attainment, transferable across contexts. It is knowledge that an individual may take to any situation or event and that may have application in diverse situations (Candy, Crebert, & O'Leary, 1994). This dimension also implies that bodies responsible for assessing and credentialing learning have a duty to recognise prior learning in their assessment (Skilbeck, Connell, Cave, & Tait, 1994).

9. That education for such learning should be constructed as the facilitation of learning and that access to appropriate such education is a human and democratic right and one for which educational providers and governments should be held accountable (Ball, 1990; Ranson, Rikowski, & Strain, 2001). Important here is the principle that educational access should be equitable (Ferrier & Selby-Smith, 2002).

ETHICS

Those common dimensions of the program articulated through the lifelong learning movement may be seen as suggesting a particular conception of applied ethics. Firstly, it is evident from the foregoing dimensions of the lifelong learning movement that ethical action is predicated upon humankind carrying forward a number of informed humane commitments, particularly the following.

1. A commitment to constructive engagement or participation in learning, which involves one in seeing each of life's events as a learning opportunity from which valued learning outcomes may be drawn and which may be manipulated to enhance the quality of those learning outcomes. It involves one in recognising and enhancing the learning opportunities immanent to all of life's engagements—effectively as seeing life *as* a learning engagement. With respect to the learning potential of an event, it involves one in making the best of any situation in which one finds oneself—in pragmatically accepting and building upon each situation. The nature of valued learning here—whether as process or

as outcome—is constrained by the humane commitments here noted. It embraces, though, a wide church. This commitment draws most strongly on the first dimension of lifelong above (the lifelong and life-wide nature of learning), but also on the second and third dimensions, which identify the socially constructed nature of learning outcomes and the culturally embedded nature of learning engagements. Its scope is indicated particularly by the dimensions numbered five through seven, which identify the adaptational, developmental and democratic nature of learning.

2. A commitment to oneself and one's cultural inheritance, which involves one in accepting and respecting oneself as a person of value and in seeing one's cultural inheritance—including its language, meanings and values—as worth preserving, celebrating and advancing. It draws most strongly on those dimensions of lifelong learning that identify its socially constructed, culturally embedded and holistic nature (numbers two, three and four). Presupposed here is the centrality of learning in the formation of individual and collective identity.

3. A commitment to others and their cultural differences, which involves one in respecting other persons and cultures as valued ends in themselves, not, or not merely, as opportunities to advance one's own interests. It involves one thus in respecting the differences that other persons and cultures present in comparison with one's own identity and culture. Like the immediately preceding commitment, it is grounded strongly in dimensions two through four. It also, though, draws strongly on the democratic nature of learning (dimension number seven), which presupposes the intrinsic value of others and otherness in learning, cultural development and identity formation.

4. A commitment to the human condition and its potential for progress, which involves one in seeing humanity, its nature, culture, context, limitations and possibilities as worth while, as worthy of advancing and enhancing and able to be so. The flourishing of humanity and the progress of the human condition are thus accepted as intrinsically valuable—as good—and, of course, as being achievable through human learning. This dimension draws most strongly on the adaptational, developmental and democratic dimensions of lifelong learning (five through seven above), although it presupposes the socially constructed, culturally embedded and holistic nature of learning (dimensions two through four).

5. A commitment to practical reason and its contribution to bettering the human condition, which involves one in seeing instrumental thinking, based on empirical evidence and experience, as valuable in the project of human betterment. Included here is empirical science in its various manifestations, but also informed and evidence-based policy and action much more broadly. It is grounded most strongly in the adaptational nature of learning (dimension number five), which foregrounds instrumental rationality as a means to developmental ends.

6. A commitment to social structures that give persons control over their own destinies, which involves one in valuing processes, policies and relationships that encourage individuals and collectivities to take responsibility for their own actions. Individual and collective autonomy is thus valued over heteronomy or dependence. It flows particularly from the holistic and democratic dimensions of lifelong learning (four and seven), which presuppose the value of individual and collective responsibility and hence also of social structures that enhance it. It derives also, though, from the last-noted dimension, which calls for educational opportunities that will facilitate individual and collective development— development that necessarily involves enhanced autonomy.

7. A commitment to social justice, which involves one in valuing the fair distribution of cultural goods, particularly here learning opportunities and resources. It thus involves one in valuing equitable and appropriate access to educational opportunities and to the recognition of learning attainments. It draws particularly on the holistic–humanistic and democratic dimensions of lifelong learning and that which constructs education as equitable access to structured learning opportunities (four, seven and nine). It also, though, builds strongly on the eighth dimension, which sees learning outcomes as individual attainments transferable across situations and hence as calling for the equitable recognition of prior learning.

8. A commitment to the non-violent resolution of conflicts, which involves one in working through differences in ways that avoid harm to others. Acknowledging the reality that individual and cultural differences frequently present conflicting agendas, courses of action and outcomes, in which a straightforward tolerance of the difference is not a practicable or a coherent option, some resolution or adjustment of the difference is necessary. This commitment informs those situations. It derives also

particularly from the holistic–humanistic and democratic dimensions of lifelong learning (four and seven).

These commitments are presumed to be of a general and universal kind. They are taken as goods in themselves—as qualities that define what it is to be a good person, organisation, community, city, society or other social entity. And they are taken as interdependent instrumental means to the end of attaining and sustaining the good individual or social entity. They also indicate, derivatively, what it is to do the right thing. To be intelligently committed to social justice, for example, is to act in such a way that it characterises one's actions and those of one's communities. These commitments are 'informed' in the sense that they are grounded in an understanding of their meaning and place in society—an understanding that is both theoretical and experiential and one without which an individual could not be intelligently involved in the lifelong learning project. They define important characteristics of the good individual, the good community, organisation, city, society or whatever. And they define also important qualities of human conduct necessary to attain and sustain those states of affairs. They are 'humane' commitments in that sense and may thus be seen as individual, community, organisational or societal *virtues*. The lifelong learning movement may be understood, then, as presupposing in this extended sense an ethic of virtue—an aretaic ethic. Such an ethic stands opposed to both ethical egoism (Nietzsche, 1967) and fundamentalism (Preston, 2001). An egoistic focus on doing whatever is in one's own best interests is clearly contrary to the ethical commitments enunciated here, as is a fundamentalist, self-righteous rectitude and intolerance of difference.

Secondly, the lifelong learning movement clearly recognises the contextualised nature of ethical action. The foregoing dimensions of lifelong learning focus strongly on ethical sensitivity and responsiveness to individual, collective and situational differences. They recognise knowledge as being constructed in particular cultural contexts. They recognise the value of the individual as an entity of value in and of itself. They recognise the value of cultural differences and of responding to the diverse empirical contingencies of lived circumstance. They recognise the value of sharing and negotiating meaning. And they recognise the value of individual aspiration, situation and attainment through learning and more broadly through life's events. In all of this diversity, the lifelong learning movement presupposes that the universal lifelong learning commitments—the humane virtues characterising the lifelong learning

movement—will be brought to all life's engagements in ways that are sensitive and responsive to the situational differences.

Thirdly, and finally, the lifelong learning movement presupposes a conception of ethical knowledge as progressive—developmental throughout and across life's situations, both lifelong and life-wide. It is seen as a socially constructed and situated quality or capacity of an individual to act appropriately. Appropriateness here is with respect to the lifelong learning commitments, which demand sensitivity and responsiveness to the particularities of the diverse situated events of human experience. Appropriateness is seen also as a progressive quality or capacity to act. It may be understood, in other words, as a life *skill*.

Human action and culture informed by such a conception of ethics is thus characterised by the skilled and situationally sensitive application of humane commitments. It is a conception of ethics that is grounded in Aristotelian ethics (Bagnall, 1998)—a conception argued by Alasdair MacIntyre to be the only true, sustainable and coherent approach to ethics and as that to which contemporary society must return if it is to correct the current descent into the new dark age of liberal individualism (MacIntyre, 1981). It has informed the work of other contemporary ethicists, most importantly here that of Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1990; Flyvbjerg, 1991) in their focus on ethics as a skill. Taken together, those workers present a conception of ethics that is transcendent in its commitments, situated in its responsiveness to contingent reality and individual in its capacity as a human skill.

This conception of applied ethics takes ethical knowledge to be culturally constructed, rather than it being a natural and universal property of the human condition. It understands ethical knowledge as something that is learned from and through the cultural contexts of its construction, rather than as a product of intuition or emotional disposition.

It sees the extent to which ethical knowledge is evidenced in action as a (variable) matter of degree (as well as of kind), rather than as a property that is either present or absent. Ethical knowledge is thus understood as being open to being progressively developed in an individual, into what we would consider to be ethical expertise (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1990).

It recognises ethical action as a situated outcome of what a good person is and aspires to be (or what a good society, etc. is and aspires to be). Ethical action is thus both evaluated and justified on that basis. It is in that way outcomes-focused, but not in the sense of being directed to specific action goals or outcomes. Its outcomes-focus, rather, is in the sense of ethical action being evaluated in terms of

the extent to which its effects or outcomes measure up to the standards expected in the ethical commitments in any given context.

As a skill, ethical knowledge is the skill of recognising and appraising ethically demanding situations; of identifying possible ethical issues; of identifying alternative courses of action, the resources needed for their implementation and their likely effects; of identifying the interests of those who stand to be affected by one's alternative courses of action; of explaining one's situation to others; of negotiating realities with others in cases of misunderstanding or lack of awareness; of appraising the effects of one's actions and those of others; of learning from the experience of others; of bringing past experience to bear on current situations in all of the foregoing tasks; and of undertaking them with situational sensitivity and responsiveness.

So conceptualised, ethical knowledge is seen as being knowable—learned— primarily through contextualised, guided practice and critical reflection on that practice and through modelling good practice (Dreyfus, Dreyfus, & Athanasiou, 1986; Proctor & Dutta, 1995). It clearly also, though, depends on descriptive or theoretical knowledge. The sort of descriptive and theoretical knowledge informing skilled ethical action is centrally not a knowledge of principles, rules or precepts of ethical action. It is rather a knowledge of possible ethical issues or concerns; of alternative courses of action and their demands and consequences; and of the likely expectations, interests, values and beliefs of those who stand to be affected by the alternative courses of action.

In their phenomenological account of ethics, the Dreyfuses have argued for the applicability of their five levels of skilled performance: those of the novice, the advanced beginner, the competent, the proficient, and the expert (Dreyfus, Dreyfus, & Athanasiou, 1986). Novice performance involves the situationally unresponsive and analytical application of ethical rules, precepts or maxims in a detached and non-perspectival manner. Advanced beginner performance involves a limited situational responsiveness in an otherwise similar manner. Competent performance introduces the selection of an ethical perspective and some involvement in the outcome of action. Proficient performance introduces the adoption of an experience-based ethical perspective and involvement in intuitively understanding the action taken. Finally, expert performance sees decision-making occurring intuitively, with involvement in (identification with or commitment to) all aspects of the engagement and its outcome. The main focus of skill development in this sequence is from the detached, context-free application of precepts, through deliberative, analytical decision-making to select a plan for each event, to intuitive, committed, situated action based on experience. Radically

novel situations that cannot be recognised and acted upon in the manner of an individual's skill level, or that lead to failure, are evaluated through deliberative rationality—effectively involving a situated regression to lower skill levels. In this developmental sequence, ethical reasoning plays an important role in ethical action. It is, though, a much more limited role than that in highly deliberative approaches to ethics such as utilitarianism (Smart, 1973) and ethical rationalism (Baier, 1958), where ethical reason or rationality is central and indispensable to ethical action. Here, ethical reason is seen as playing a progressively diminishing role in parallel to the development of ethical skill, but as remaining important particularly in critically evaluating radically novel situations and the ethical value of action taken in them.

Ethical knowledge and action as it is here understood stands opposed to codes of conduct. Codes of conduct seek to universalise ethical precepts. In contrast with the foregoing aspects of ethical knowledge as a skill, codes of conduct construct ethical knowledge: (1) as universally applicable within the community of practice for which they are intended (rather than as situationally responsive); (2) as absolute and invariable (rather than as a matter of degree); (3) as imperative knowledge to be applied in practical contexts (rather than as the situationally skilled application of humane commitments); (4) as knowable through study of the code and brought to individual practice (rather than being knowable, developed and learned through guided practice); (5) as evidenced in action that is evaluated and justified with respect to the codified precepts (rather than with respect to the good); and (6) as encouraging commitment to the code (rather than to a life lived according to the commitments). The various aspects of skilled ethical performance are not addressed in codes of practice. The descriptive and theoretical knowledge informing skilled knowledge and expertise are rarely mentioned in such codes.

More generally, ethical knowledge and action as it is here understood is opposed by contemporary approaches to applied ethics as rule-governed behaviour. This opposition applies to those (non-consequentialist) approaches in which the rules are expressed as duties (Darwall, 1977) or as rights (Locke, 1960). It applies also to those (consequentialist) approaches in which the rules are expressed as algorithms for the calculation of ethical outcomes. Most notably here, of course, is utilitarianism, which in varying ways and degrees is so influential currently in decision-making (Singer, 1979).

Ethical knowledge and action as it is here articulated is also opposed to tribalistic and the contemporarily important neo-tribalistic approaches to applied ethics (Maffesoli, 1988). In these approaches, ethical commitment is focused on or limited to particular categories of persons and cultural realities: one's family,

organisation, interest group, ethnic group, social class, or whatever (Maffesoli, 1996). Others are of lesser ethical value or of no ethical value. Such approaches to ethics run counter to the universal ethical commitments of the lifelong learning movement.

Conceptions of ethics as empathising with others (Verducci, 2000), as a love for others, in the sense of agapé (Fletcher, 1966), as relating to others in 'I–Thou' rather than 'I–it' relationships (Buber, 1965), or as caring for others (Noddings, 1984) all capture important aspects of ethical knowledge and action as it is here articulated. Clearly, though, they are insufficient descriptions of it. The ethical commitments recognised here, on their own, embrace a much wider realm of cultural realities than those of other persons.

ETHICAL LEARNING

Such a conception of applied ethics—as action characterised by the skilled and situationally sensitive application of humane commitments—has a number of implications for its learning within a lifelong learning framework.

Firstly, here, we may note that ethical learning is importantly grounded in ethical practice. Ethical knowledge as a skill is essentially knowable largely from and through actual or simulated performance of the knowledge. It is therefore necessarily learned through practice and its associated activities, such as modelling, in actual or simulated contexts that capture the complexity and richness of ethical action. Ethical precepts, principles, rules and axioms, which may be learned through educational instruction, inform the ethical decisions of the novice but, above that level, they play a diminishingly important role to the point that, in the higher skill levels, it is learning from experience that informs normal ethical practice as a skill. The learning of ethical commitment is no less dependent on learning through everyday involvement in events in which such commitment is practiced and informs the culture of the events. It is learned through immersion in communities of practice where such commitment is valued and modelled by valued others. Ethical precepts may therefore be expected to be educationally valuable in ethical development largely only for the very young and for those immediately recovering from profound memory loss. For higher skill levels, they may also be helpful, though, in evaluating ethical action after the event and hence in learning from the experience of radically different events where some degree of failure has been experienced.

The practice-based nature of ethical learning is linked to its situated nature. Skilled ethical responsiveness to new events, though, is limited by and to the

range of that experience. To be skilled across a broad range of ethically demanding situations implies prior experience of events over that range. The less rich the ethical learning from a diversity of events, the more coarsely and hence insensitively will be the categorisation of events and the responses to them. Educationally, then, there is an imperative to enhance the range and richness of ethically challenging events experienced and critically reflected on by learners. Approaches to education that may best contribute to such learning are those of process drama (O'Neill, 1995) and possibly virtual simulations through electronic gaming. Process drama would seem to be the most direct and authentic approach to simulation here. It also allows readily for interactive lived engagements with others in the process and for guided critical reflection after the dramatic event (Bundy, 1999). E-mediated simulations are certainly most appropriate for learning through situations in the increasingly important field of electronic engagements. However, the level of sophistication required of electronic games in this field of learning would render their development a highly costly venture and one that would require a very high end use in comparison with the relatively low cost of process drama. E-gaming, though, is much less expensive to operate for each learner once development has been undertaken, although this may be off-set by its limited flexibility.

Individual or group learning through case studies—such as through the study of historical accounts of experience, novels, films, plays, and so on (Kekes, 1993)—would seem to have potential for ethical learning in sensitising learners to possibly important ethical differences and as a source of precepts for reflecting critically on ethical performance outcomes from radically different ethically challenging events. At face value, though, case studies would seem not to provide the degree of learner engagement in events that is implied by the learning of ethical skill at or above the level of advanced beginner. Such learning engagements may, though, have general utility in learning precepts at the novice skill level. It may also be valuable in maintaining and strengthening ethical commitment, through either positive or negative instances.

Ethical commitment would seem to be most vulnerable to diminution or loss through gradual, progressive erosion of ethical commitment in one's cultural contexts, whether actual or virtual. Radical erosion is more likely to be experienced as negative—providing an oppositional strengthening of individual commitment in the face of such erosion. Educationally, then, radically negative case studies may be valuable in enhancing ethical commitment. Radically positive case studies, on the other hand, are more likely to be experienced as unattainable.

While they may not diminish commitment, they are unlikely to enhance it. Mildly positive case studies, though, may be expected to be more enhancing.

Being situated and grounded in practice, ethical learning as a skill is subject to refinement and extension in every situation in which it is used. It is thus truly lifelong and life-wide (Delors, 1996). The learning of ethical skill through such situated engagements involves—consistent with the nature of ethical action itself—learning activities that are outcomes-focused. The degree of ethical success from the (learned) development of ethical skill will importantly be ascertained against the general expectation defined by the ethical commitment within the learning context.

Learning through ethical experience is the essence of learning ethical skill at all but the level of the novice. Higher levels of ethical skill involve the use of categories with which any new event is identified and from which is derived an action plan or course of action. Since those categories and their selection are based increasingly on ethical experience, there is a clear learning imperative to experience as wide a range of such events as needs demand. And since the critical evaluation of individual events of ethical experience is important to learning from the experience of each event, meta-skills or cognitive strategies (Gagné, 1977) involved in such evaluation are indicated as learning needs. Through appropriately organised simulation and guided reflection on action, education at any stage in life may enhance the development of ethical skill.

Interestingly, ethical expertise (and, to a lesser extent, also proficiency) may be seen in a sense as a barrier to responding appropriately in new situations, since it involves the intuitive categorising of and responding to newly experienced events on the basis of prior experience. The more limited the diversity of situations embraced by that experience, the more dysfunctional may be the intuitive categorising and responding. On the other hand, from a learning perspective, such events may be valuable, since learning from critical reflection on one's errors is such an important part of developing ethical skill. Beyond the skill level of novice, ethical skill learning necessarily involves the making of ethical errors. The risks involved in making such errors in real life, though, can be considerable—a point that calls for educational interventions that allow errors to be made in the development of ethical skill in relatively risk-free simulations, through the use of process drama and virtual engagements using educational gaming and such like.

The role of ethical theory in the development of ethical skill would seem to be primarily that of providing a conceptual framework for the development of meta-ethical-learning skills or cognitive strategies. It may also provide learners with the

theoretical understanding with which to evaluate moral education, propaganda, and their own ethical learning. For teachers in particular, the study of ethical theory may provide the conceptual frameworks through which to structure their teaching of ethical skill. The oppositional relationship between ethical knowledge and codes of conduct or contracts (whether sectoral or situational) argues for the need for education that raises awareness of that relationship, of its consequences for human action and of how to work with those consequences in an ethically informed manner. This would involve at least guided practice in events involving such opposition and structured reflection on practice and action in such events. It presents also another role for ethical theory. However, the study of ethical theory is unlikely to impact directly on the development of ethical skill or commitment.

The earlier-noted commitment of lifelong learning to the construction of education as the facilitation of learning and as a human right for which educational providers and governments should be held accountable implies, in the context of this analysis, that lifelong education should embrace appropriate ethical learning. It implies that ethical learning should be a matter of curricular concern in lifelong learning advocacy, policy and programming, that learners have a right to such learning opportunities as they need them throughout life, for example when confronting radically new and ethically challenging situations, and that educational providers and government agencies should be held accountable for the provision and the quality of such learning opportunities.

ISSUES IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND EDUCATION

However, engaging in that programmatic responsibility may be expected to highlight a number of issues arising from the conception of ethical knowledge and action argued here to be entailed by contemporary lifelong learning theory. Those issues may be understood as *tensions* inherent to the conception of applied ethics as action characterised by the skilled and situationally sensitive application of informed humane commitments. Eight such tensions are here outlined, although these may constructed in different ways and thereby also variously aggregated or subdivided.

1. The tension between the universality of the humane commitments and the situatedness of ethical knowledge and action. On the one hand, lifelong learning theory presents the humane commitments as universally applicable: across cultural and other situational differences. On the other

hand, ethical action is necessarily situationally or contextually responsive and thus situationally sensitive and informed. Lifelong learning theory thus requires universal commitments to be used in a situationally sensitive manner. Any erosion of the humane commitments to enhance situational responsiveness will open action to charges of ethical or cultural relativism. Conversely, any more particular specification of the ethical commitments as rules or codes of conduct applicable across contexts will stand to limit situational responsiveness and therein to reduce the ethical quality of action taken in accordance with the rules or codes. The development of ethical skill thus requires the development of an understanding of and sensitivity to these limitations, without which action will be compromised.

Derivatively, in educational interventions, there is the tension between the learning of applied ethical theory—particularly that of lifelong learning ethics—and the learning of ethical skill. On the one hand, applied ethical theory is seen as universally applicable; on the other, ethical skill can only be developed in a situationally-sensitive, informed and responsive manner. The level of ethical skill development will be limited by the learner's knowledge of each particular situation, but his or her knowledge of ethical theory (including the humane commitments) is trans-contextual or transcendent across situations. The two aspects of ethical knowledge thus present very different, indeed opposed, learning demands. Any confusion of the two aspects, or any erosion of one by an over-emphasis on the other, may be counter-ethical in its learning outcomes.

2. The tension between the categorical nature of ethical skill and the demand for situational sensitivity. The learning of ethical skill is situated, but the application of that learning is generalised across a category of ethically similar or like situations. Without such generalisation, the learner is ethically constrained to act in only a very limited range of cultural events. However, the greater the degree of generalisation, the less the sensitivity of the action to ethically significant differences across situations. Ethical skill must thus be learned in particular situations and applied to others, but ethical action also demands situational sensitivity in the application of ethical skill—a sensitivity that diminishes with the extent of generalisation. The development of ethical skill thus presents conflicting demands between, on the one hand, its refinement through repeated application or practice in like situations and, on the other, extending its

range of through exposure to novel situations to which generalisation is inappropriate or should be limited.

3. The tension between the deliberative ethical reasoning required in the early stages of ethical skill development and the intuitive responsiveness of more highly skilled ethical action. The learning required for skill development at the lower levels of skill development, and for working within ethically novel situations, includes the learning of deliberative, rational, logical routines or algorithms to guide the process of assessing the ethically significant features of the situations, identifying and weighing up the value of alternative courses of action, obtaining the information necessary to do so, taking the indicated action and evaluating its consequences (Baier, 1958). In contrast, at higher levels of skill development, action is increasingly intuitive and the learning involved is thus diminishingly deliberative and consciously engaged in. There is thus tension between these two learning demands—both over developmental and across developmentally simultaneous situations when radically novel situations are encountered by an ethically skilled individual.

4. The tension between the experiential nature of ethical skill learning and the potential risks of such learning. While the development (the learning) of ethical skill demands learning events that are highly authentic and culturally embedded, the adverse consequences of errors from ethically flawed actions in such events would appear to be correspondingly high. The more naturalistic a learning event, the higher the potential risk. Entirely uncontrived (natural) events may be ideal for the refinement of ethical skill, but the consequences of ethically inappropriate action may be severe. There may thus be a tendency to be conservative and situationally insensitive in the face of radically novel situations—and hence to limit the opportunity to develop new ethical skill from and appropriate to those situations. The diversity of human nature and culture indicates that the development of ethical skill needs to be a truly lifelong and life-wide engagement. The provision of educationally contrived situations—such as through the use of process drama—to accommodate even a significant part of such learning is thus clearly out of the question. Responding effectively to this tension is thus a major challenge to ethical learning.

5. The tension between ethical progressivism and respect for cultural traditions. On the one hand, lifelong learning theory calls for a commitment to the progressive development of individuals and cultural

entities through lifelong learning. On the other hand, that theory calls for cultural traditions to be valued and cherished—both in oneself and in others. Clearly, there will be many situations when new learning conflicts with tradition, particularly when tradition works to perpetuate or contribute to structural disadvantage or to constrain educational provision or access in a manner that is contrary to the informed commitments, through the exercise of traditional authority or power. In all such situations, the learning of situational sensitivity will be inherently conflictual. The learning of some ethical skills, in other words, will be in conflict with the learning of others, both sets of which will be ethically informed by lifelong learning theory. Learning how to work within this tension presents a major challenge for lifelong learning theory.

6. The tension between individual and collective rights and duties. On the one hand, lifelong learning theory presents a number of humane commitments to the development of individuals. Individuals are seen as having a right to appropriate learning opportunities. On the other hand, there is a strong commitment to equity of access to those opportunities. Individuals are expected to make the most of their situation and inheritance and yet if their situation and inheritance inequitably advantages them, others are seen as having rights to a redressing of the inequity. The collective commitments in lifelong learning theory are thus in strong tension with the individual commitments. Again, here, we see the learning of some ethical skills potentially in conflict with the learning of others—presenting an important challenge to the further development of lifelong learning theory.

7. The tension between the tolerance of ethical differences and difference as intolerable. On the one hand, lifelong learning theory calls for differences in other individuals and cultures to be respected and accepted as part of the rich tapestry of human existence. On the other hand, it calls for a commitment to the humane commitments themselves, without which humanity is diminished and potentially threatened. In other words, there are limits to the tolerance of difference, beyond which the tolerance of difference is increasingly counter-ethical. If there were to be defined a point at which the tolerance of difference becomes unethical, it would be that beyond which living according to the humane commitment was threatened by the difference in the other. It could be, for example, any action by another to limit social justice, to resolve conflict in a violent manner, to avoid responsibility for his or her actions, or to limit human

achievement. Importantly, though, all such points are recognisable only in situated events, where conflicting imperatives are weighed to determine the ethical limits to tolerance in an appropriately democratically participative manner. Ethical learning is thus presented with the task of learning the skills and sensitivities to inform such judgements and actions.

8. The tension between self-interest (ethical egoism) and a commitment to the interests and welfare of others. On the one hand, lifelong learning theory contains strong elements of ethical egoism, required, for example, making the best of any situation, in valuing oneself and one's cultural inheritance and in taking responsibility for one's actions. On the other hand, there are strong elements of altruism in lifelong learning theory in, for example, the commitment to social justice and to the non-violent resolution of conflicts. To construct all the ethical demands of lifelong theory as entirely explicable in terms of enlightened self-interest is to fail to capture the richness and depth of that theory's commitment to the generation and maintenance of universal social good. While systems of reward and punishment may be generated within such a theoretical framework to capture the dimensions of that good, they will be unavoidably, reductive, formulaic and, ultimately, thereby contrary to the theory itself. Lifelong learning theory and its realisation in ethical action thus demands acting and learning within this tension, rather than through its resolution.

DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals the importance of ethical skill learning *within* realistic cultural contexts. To the extent that ethical learning is thus located, it cannot be separated intelligently from ethical action. The tensions of ethical action within a lifelong learning cultural framework thus become the tensions of ethical skill learning.

This analysis does not seek to offer solutions to those tensions. Indeed, it is questionable whether any such solutions are desirable. As I have argued elsewhere (e.g., Bagnall, 2004, 1999), living and working within such tensions is much more congruent with the contemporary cultural context of epistemic and cultural ambiguity than is any action to transcend or overcome them.

In the same vein, the existence and importance of these tensions should not be interpreted as a ground for rejecting contemporary lifelong learning theory.

I would wish to argue the contrary case—that the existence and importance of the tensions is an important expression of the relevance of that theory to the contemporary cultural condition.

What clearly is indicated by this analysis is the need for much more theorisation and experimentation of *ways* of working within the tensions and of learning to do so. To inform lifelong learning programmatic policy and action, the sort of research, development and scholarship that is indicated is clearly that with a focus on critical case studies in which the richness of context, action and the consequences of action is portrayed and evaluated in an integrated (holistic) and situationally sensitive manner. Through such studies our knowledge of possibilities, opportunities and possible situational relationships may be raised and sensitised.

The analysis presents lifelong learning theory and advocacy as an essentially normative project. As such, it seeks to create and perpetuate cultural realities that have certain ethical properties—those defined in this case by what I have articulated here as the humane commitments. As such, lifelong learning theory is irreducibly political and ethical. The centrality of ethics to the lifelong learning project needs to be better recognised in analysis, critique, research and development.

The implications of this analysis for lifelong learning policy and regulation are clearly for policy that opens up opportunities for and encourages the flourishing of a diversity of situationally sensitive programmatic responses. They are not for the regulation or the detailed specification of accountabilities, but for the legislating of broad, facilitative guidelines and supportive mechanisms grounded in the humane commitments.

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CHAPTER THREE

PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING: WHY, WHAT, WHERE AND HOW DO PEOPLE LEARN?

MALCOLM SKILBECK

UNDERSTANDING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ADULTS PARTICIPATE AND LEARN

Understanding barriers and incentives to learning requires us to consider people's interests and motives, their conceptions of what learning entails and the benefits it brings, as well as their personal, domestic, economic and social circumstances. No general theory of learning has been produced to encompass this very large and diverse set of considerations. Individuals and circumstances differ and there are random elements at play. Still, why people choose to learn, what and how they learn and conditions that facilitate learning are important to know about, together with knowledge of the barriers and inhibiting factors which exist in society at large as well as in individual lives. Lowering or removing barriers such as cost, or ready access to facilities of good quality, of course highly desirable, but may not be necessary in all cases. Many people overcome or pass around barriers and surmount adverse conditions. An insurmountable barrier to one person or group may be scarcely noticed by another. For this reason, fine-grained analysis of the conditions that inhibit or foster learning is required. Generalisations must be tested against circumstances.

There are two complementary approaches in strategies designed to increase participation in learning: (1) to assist in removing or lowering barriers and improving environmental conditions as required; (2) to build up a better understanding of why people choose to learn, what they choose to learn, how they organise and conduct their learning and where learning takes place.

The nature, purposes, values, procedures and effects and conditioning factors of learning are too large and diffuse to be reduced to a few simple principles. There are rival schools of thought and conflicting views about the conditions and

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procedures that best support learning. However, some initial generalisations about learning will help to clear the ground before we proceed further:

- People differ widely in their interests, motivation, needs, ways of learning; there is no single way and no royal road;
- Learning is a defining, fundamental condition of human growth and development not an optional or incidental function of life;
- There are qualitative differences in forms and types of learning, calling for different kinds of judgements about conditioning factors effectiveness, value, significance and so forth; and
- Learning is affected by a variety of physical and social factors and by policies (resourcing, facilities etc) but equally or even more by the immediate 'lifeworld' or environment, its stimuli, 'feel', 'tone', feedback, challenges and rewards.

While, despite more than a century of research and theory building in the domain of learning, we cannot be confident in all cases about the learning outcomes of specific strategies and procedures, it is worth considering the general factors that, from research and experience, appear to facilitate learning. A US study, for example, identified—as previous overviews of this kind have done—favourable conditions and factors, as relevant to older as to young learners (Figure 1). Notable for its absence from the US list is 'financial factors'. Sometimes (if incorrectly) assumed to be not relevant for school age learners, these are a major consideration for many adults.

Figure 1: Factors Governing Learning

• Physical factors (e.g. state of health, nutrition)   • Psychological factors (e.g. self confidence, motivation to learn)   • Social factors (e.g. support from family, peers, congenial group setting for learning)   • Educational factors (e.g. relevance, level of difficulty of learning task, quality of learning environment).   (National Research Council, USA, 1999)

There will always be exceptions to any set of general conditions (for example, some people in a poor state of health nevertheless achieve significant learning outcomes; some people learn quite well in isolation…). However, many studies and reports dealing with adult learning endorse the above mixture of common

sense, experience and scientific inquiry, and they further elaborate the favourable (or inhibiting) conditions.

System-wide policies and strategies aimed at facilitating and fostering adult and community learning are strong to the extent that they treat these conditions and factors as sources of overall goals and general criteria on the one hand and, on the other, have in place procedures for gathering data and remedying defects in any one of them. In practice, however, goals and policies frequently overlook the functional aspects of policy coherence. For example, in Australia the Victorian Government's strategy paper *Growing Victoria Together* identifies health together with education as a priority, but does not address the links between them. There is also a tendency to believe that a greater quantity (personnel, resources, service points, etc) will overcome difficulties. Not to dismiss this tendency, it is nevertheless necessary to ask whether the quality and useability of what is provided are receiving equal attention. Research projects relating the more general factors to actual conditions and their interrelationships in the specific settings for adult learning will assist in the fine-tuning of policy and practice.

WEAKER AND STRONGER SENSES OF 'TO LEARN'

In considering what we mean by 'learning' in the formulation 'lifelong learning for all', let us take two points in the continuum of definitions of 'learning'. Learning has been defined in adaptive terms as any change of behaviour in an organism in response to an external stimulus or inner impulse. Organisms seek immediate satisfaction and avoidance of pain, threats or danger: they learn *to* adjust their behaviour and learn *through* adjusting their behaviour. In this sense, learning is living and living is learning. To live is to learn and inasmuch as humans, like other forms of life, are organisms that interact with their environments they develop coping behaviour and capacities to grow. Learning is not something over and above daily life but is necessary for life to continue. In Darwinian terms learning is adaptive behaviour necessary for individual and species survival. This conception is echoed in such expressions as 'learning from life', 'learning from experience'. This is learning that is unstructured, not under direction other than inner direction or proximate external force and is often episodic, or transitory. However, in terms such as 'reflection on experience', 'reconstruction of experience' and 'ways of knowledge and experience' much richer and more complex concepts of learning are embedded, as we see below.

Programs for adult, community and further education or learning often seem to start from and may build on learning that meets people's immediate wants and interests, in the emphasis they typically give to the informal and non-formal, that is, to learning that is lightly structured or unstructured in its settings and processes—to the episodic, to the self-initiated and the self-directed. So-called 'just in time learning' in the workplace is task oriented in a specific setting but may have no further purpose than meeting an immediate need. Relevant as all of these are in developing strategies, it should be noticed that adult education researchers, analysts and theorists have tended to suggest themes or methodologies which do structure learning in rather more systematic ways. Those responsible for programs have erected structures that imply sequence and increasing complexity: there are extended courses and programs as well as episodes.

In various ways, the episodic, the incidental and the 'just in time' are being linked in an identifiable, purposive and sustained process, such as developing a capability for independent living, or implementing a career plan, or studying a field or topic in depth, or carrying an industrial process beyond solving the problem at hand. The formations may incorporate assessment and certification. Structures are also built around themes for reflective inquiry, or an enduring condition of critical consciousness. Goals are set, such as community development, or career enhancement or mastery of a lengthy sequence of tasks that require systematic learning, over time, of well structured content.

In such ways, adult educators are deploying concepts of learning which involve conscious purposes, higher order mental processes and complex interactions among cognitive thinking, dispositions, values, emotions, behaviour and environmental circumstances. This is learning guided by the ideals of depth of understanding and the systematic development of knowledge and competencies. While episodic learning and highly specific skills training will continue to play a large part in the repertoire of adult and community learning activities, there are good reasons in today's knowledge society to address more substantial, sustained, systematic processes of learning. In this way, adult educators are giving closer attention to the knowledge processes and the kinds of understanding that underpin systematic learning in depth.

The concept of lifelong learning for all embraces both the formal structures and processes of school, college and university, strategies for sustained, in-depth

learning and all that goes under the names of just-in-time, episodic, non-formal or informal learning. Many of the traditional boundaries are being crossed, especially as learning pathways are being created to enable learners to progress from an initial 'return to learning' to advanced courses leading to recognised qualifications.

The term 'andragogy' has been applied as a kind of umbrella for teaching and learning procedures. The aim is to integrate a variety of approaches common in the fields of adult education, with theories drawn mainly from psychology and sociology, to establish a reasonably firm body of knowledge about adult learning and principles to guide learners and teachers. Rather than commitment to any single standpoint or theoretical position, the andragogy movement as it developed in the 1970s was a timely reaction to largely a-theoretical and frequently ad hoc practices and arrangements in the field. It was also designed to achieve a measure of intellectual rigour that would enable adult education to compete better in the quest for status and resources.

A leader of this movement, Malcolm Knowles, postulated characteristics and needs of adult learners whom he sought to distinguish from children (and andragogy from pedagogy). Knowles said that as people mature, their self concept moves from dependence towards self direction, an accumulating body of experience serves as a resource for their learning, learning readiness connects with their social roles and they seek knowledge for immediate application in solving problems (Knowles, 1996). In setting forth conditions for what he defined as 'superior learning', Knowles made a constructive challenge to practitioners to set high standards, for themselves and students (Figure 2).

Although he sought to draw a line between pedagogy (schooling, essentially) and andragogy, Knowles appeared not to notice that both the learning needs and the conditions that he postulated were in most respects identical to those advanced in the long tradition of educational—and pedagogical—reform. This would not matter except that an unhelpful dichotomy was thereby established between different forms, levels and settings of education. It may be noted, too, that these 'superior conditions' make little reference to continuity and depth. Nevertheless, the work of Knowles and other supporters of the andragogy movement have assisted in drawing out qualities and standards to be sought in the continuing education of adults.

Figure 2: 'Superior Conditions of Learning'

- The learners feel a need to learn;
- Learners feel supported—by colleagues, family, employers etc;
- The learning environment is characterised by physical comfort, mutual trust and respect, mutual helpfulness, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences;
- Learning time is flexible and convenient;
- The learners perceive the goals of a learning experience to be their goals;
- The learners accept a share of the responsibility for planning and operating a learning experience, and therefore have a feeling of commitment toward it;
- The learners participate actively in the learning process, as individuals and in groups;
- The learning process respects, is related to and makes use of the experience of the learners;
- The learners have a sense of progress towards these goals;
- Pathways to other educational opportunities are available;
- Learning is not inhibited by financial anxiety; costs are manageable.

(After Knowles, 1996; and Shuttleworth, 1998)

'Andragogy' attracts less attention now than in the 1970s and 80s, partly because it was soon realised that 'andragogy' is an element of sound educational practice regardless of the age of learners. Also, interest has shifted to broad goals and procedures for lifelong learning, and concern has arisen over resources, planning and organisational matters. It is arguable, however, that the lifelong learning movement is in need of, if not a return to 'andragogy', then a more thoroughgoing analysis of modes and forms of learning. Employment training and re-training provides one avenue for inquiry—and source of research funds - but there are others. Knowles and his fellow adult educators of the mid to late twentieth century on the whole assumed face-to-face teaching. The rapid growth of distance education, the advent of the new communication and information technologies, and the scale of industrial training pose new challenges in teaching and learning.

The scope of the different strands of the rationale for lifelong learning does not appear to have been matched by a broad, deep analysis of learning itself or the domains of knowledge, experience and understanding into which adults are to be encouraged or supported to enter. Instead, there has been an accretion of requirements and aspirations with a strong orientation towards knowledge and skills of immediate application in the workplace on the one hand and leisure on the other. This tendency does of course address important issues, but is inadequate as a means of mapping the scope and structure of lifelong learning, hence of the future development of adult and community education.

If, as Jarvis says, 'Learning is possible whenever human beings do not take their experiences for granted, and when people seek to respond to any disjunction that occurs between their experiences and biographies' (Jarvis, 1997, p. 126), it may be asked, where does or might the learning response *lead to*, once critical awareness has been triggered? Jarvis's initial answer is rather schematic: that learning is a process of transforming experience into specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotion and the senses. He adds that this undifferentiated transformation is facilitated in periods of rapid social change, hence the emergence, now, of the 'learning society'. But the learning society may fall short of humanistic and democratic ideals that, together with the communitarians, Jarvis argues, are a necessary enrichment and require such procedures as 'participative dialogue' and 'moral relationships'.

Jarvis elaborates the transformative process, adopting a concept of education from the work of philosopher Richard Peters:

- The transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it;
- Development of knowledge, understanding and cognitive perspective; and
- Willing, voluntary participation by the learner.

These references to knowledge, understanding, cognitive perspectives and 'worthwhile' link Jarvis's approach to a long line of thinkers who treat learning—and knowledge itself—as reflective, critical, reconstructive of beliefs and values, as structured by traditions of inquiry and by progressively growing bodies, forms and fields of knowledge. As defined by Peters and his colleague Paul Hirst, 'worthwhile' infers standards—criteria of value and, usually, well established fields and forms of knowledge, understanding, expression and communication

(Dearden, Hirst, & Peters, 1972; Peters, 1966). 'Fields' may incorporate, for example, a broad grouping of linked subjects—as in 'studies of the environment' or 'multi-arts', a broadly defined set of issues—such as 'risk factors in nursing practice'—or a way of life, as for example 'life on a nineteenth century goldfield' or 'the changing small town'—or a related set of abstractions, like 'ideas about probability'.

Overall, this is an approach that has the potential to affect conceptual and practical integration between more advanced informal/ non-formal and formal education and to overcome barren intellectual dichotomies and uneasy power relations between sectors. Not all worthwhile learning will be grounded in established 'cognitive perspectives' or pre-existing structures. Room is needed also for the disjunctions that Jarvis referred to, for the unexpected, disturbing and dissonant. This requires imagination and creative situations of which art galleries, studios, workshops and museums are prime sources. The learning process entails both deconstruction, the dis-assembly of prior beliefs and expectations—and construction, in an active search for new meanings, as in the stories of Borges, or projects of the artist Xu Bing (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Art of Xu Bing

> 'He has discovered how to lead people to learning about their own natures by confronting them with unexpected situations. For example, museum visitors are drawn to read a text the artist has put on display, only to find the text is impossible to read. His audience is forced to reconsider their assumptions about the value and reliability of the written word. Or he may invite them to experiment with calligraphy, which they assume to be Chinese, but they eventually discover it to be English written in a new style.'
>
> (Erickson, 2001)

The 'learning as life' approach remains a strong, continuing theme in current thinking, as does, in some quarters, a preference for maintaining distinctions between formal provision and what lifelong learning should be aiming for. Thus, for Williamson, 'full development of lifelong learning presupposes a dense network of effective provision from childhood to old age, which is imaginatively conceived to be qualitatively different from all existing provision' (Williamson, 1998, Introduction). He warns against focusing the debate on the contexts of formal education and employment training and, although he discusses the role of knowledge and reflection, including moral inquiry, in his lengthy disquisition on

the episodic nature of settings for learning, and the conditions facilitating it, gives scant attention to the formation and growth of knowledge and understanding: 'people learn at work, in the community and through their ordinary participation as citizens in the political and cultural life of their society. They learn through their experience of being human beings who suffer, who grow old, who are bereaved but who also enjoy their pleasures and find all sorts of life-enhancing fun' (p. 29).

This is not in dispute, but what and how do they learn and what criteria are to serve for evaluating the learning and for carrying it further? Listening to music, for example, is a form of enjoyment and the listener can become informed about composers, compositions, instruments and performers. The experience is enhanced and deepened if the listener learns about melody, rhythm, harmony and other formal components, about tone colour, texture and ways of achieving effects. Performance, together with historical and aesthetic analysis, provides further dimensions and layers. These set directions for continuity and development of learning through music, beyond 'ordinary participation'.

On cable television, a fashion channel presents a non-stop kaleidoscope of design motifs, a visual feast but with virtually no effort to establish principles through classification and analysis, and no text. With Victorian thoroughness and seriousness of intent, Owen Jones in his acclaimed and immensely influential *Grammar of Ornament* classified decorative motifs by historical and cultural periods. In the accompanying text he and others analysed design principles. What is the connection? The television program could be regarded as sheer entertainment, or as a 'starter to inquiry'—in which Jones' work or a contemporary analysis would eventually feature to lead the learner into an understanding of trends and principles. It is not a case of 'Owen Jones versus cable' but of reflecting on their different uses in an educational process.

Williamson alludes to 'more coherent strategies to secure sustainable futures for modern society' (p. 31). The learning society, he says, 'needs a civic society to nurture it' (p. 103). Beyond these contextual points, he does not develop his ideas about either coherent learning strategies or what is to be learnt in the qualitatively different provision for lifelong learning. He does, however, set forth conditions, which considerably extend those cited earlier in this chapter. Successful learning occurs, he says, where people:

- Can participate actively by setting goals and methods;
- Are valued, taken seriously and where, as a result, trust develops;
- Feel confident they can ask questions and challenge the views of others without fear of humiliation and reprisals;

- Are supported to articulate their questions and points of view;
- Encouraged to listen and communicate in the group;
- Helped to understand their failures and improve their metacognitive awareness and strategies;
- Helped to become more aware of how others learn;
- Can see the immediate, positive consequences of their learning;
- Experience the joy of personal growth and a deeper understanding of what interests them;
- Experience themselves as agents, as being able to determine their own fate; and
- Are able to influence the decisions that shape their lives (Williamson, 1998, pp. 198–199).

Such a list of criteria tell us not just about 'conditions' but also what adult learning in fact *is*.

Reference to 'metacognitive strategies', 'deeper understanding', and the self as agent points towards complex cognitive structures and processes and away from episodic, unstructured learning and simple behavioural change. Also implied are teaching strategies that can be overlooked when the emphasis is sharply on the learners' interests and self-direction. While the learner constructs knowledge, there is still, for adults as much as children, a role of 'teaching for learning' (Biggs, 1991; Hirst & Peters, 1970, ch. 5 Teaching).

The reason for citing Williamson at some length is that his views are widely shared. They are commonly attested in the literature as among the teaching desiderata for fostering, facilitating and encouraging adult learning. Grounded in the experience of adult educators they may be taken as setting reasonable standards against which provision and practice should be judged, allowing for local variations.

Meeting these conditions and moving in the directions proposed requires considerable expertise by teachers and study organisers, and a degree of theoretical as well as practical knowledge. Not presented as a systematic theory of learning, 'conditions of success' nevertheless evoke or presuppose knowledge of what learning is, how it occurs and appropriate settings for it—for example, how groups cohere, work collectively and learn as a group, the mechanisms of confidence building and self esteem, the development of competence in communication, problem solving, cognitive and metacognitive strategies, the role of feedback and reinforcement of insight, and constructivist theories of knowledge. While not requiring mastery of the research and theoretical

underpinnings, competent practitioners do need a sufficient understanding, and an ability to marshal, many different sorts and sources of knowledge. Since there is also an expectation of self-directed learning, learners themselves need this too.

For robust policies and action programs for lifelong learning we need to be clearer about the application of common principles and sets of conditions to different kinds of learning and different bodies of subject matter. The value of procedural principles set forth in the literature cited above is to serve as clear guidelines about which, nevertheless, judgements have to be made according to circumstances. They are not conclusive or prescriptive, but suggestive and advisory, beacons to what the field itself defines as 'good practice'. Further progress in developing and implementing strategies of lifelong learning will depend on our ability to establish a stronger research and analytic culture than exists at present. We need to know more about how and why adults learn and we need more systematic bodies of research-based knowledge to underpin practice. On this basis, we can work towards a greater professionalisation of the whole service, including the continuing professional development of teachers, tutors, course organisers and evaluators—their learning.

LEARNING AS A DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS AND AS PROBLEM SOLVING FOR ADULTS AS WELL AS CHILDREN

What is not apparent in much of the recent and current discussion about the conditions affecting learning is a longer-term developmental perspective. The focus on informal and non-formal learning, on courses and study independent of qualifications and of formal settings, inevitably gives an impression of bittiness which is inconsistent with the idea of continuing, lifelong learning even when, as is often the case, learning episodes are commended for 'providing a start', 'leading on', etc. At issue is what they are the beginning of, or start for. Writer Catherine Cookson, at the age of 86, makes the point that while time for new beginnings may be running out, the mind is still active (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Catherine Cookson (Age 86) on Time to Grow

'…time is galloping away now… The pity of it is, my mind at this stage is clearer than at any period of my life, and I long for time, long time, the time of childhood, in which to expand and grow again.'

(Cookson, 1992)

The clarity of Catherine Cookson's mind at age 86 is not a chance circumstance, but a result of disciplined, structured mental activity earlier in her life as a writer. Breadth and depth of understanding are the result. With adults, as much as children, single items or episodes of learning do of course play a role—as already mentioned, there are highly specific tasks to master, techniques to learn, skills to acquire and so forth. Not all learning can or need be part of long, sequential chains. However, learning episodes become more meaningful and useful when ingrained in a continuing process of development and growth. As a result, they are better understood—through learners establishing and extending connections and relationships—and more capable of being transferred or used in settings other than those in which they were performed or acquired.

How relevant is the concept of developmental strategies to acquiring skills? Even when a skill or technique is mastered for a specific application, there is an overall adjustment of an individual's repertoire of capabilities and it is 'fitted in'. New possibilities arise and there are further openings for a deepening and broadening in the cycle of continuing learning. Much has been made of this in the literature of skills training including the notion of generic skills that, not context specific (but applicable in several different contexts), are generative: they lead on to further learning opportunities and applications. Generic skills have depth and breadth and multiple applications that are valued in today's labour market. They are not end points but bases for further growth. Similarly, principles and concepts acquired and analytic frameworks can—and need to—be constantly shaped and modified through further study, reflection and application. However, where there is no structure, where no pathways are defined or accessible and where there is no apparent need to continue, the learning does not proceed further, or stays at the same level.

Literacy and literacy skills development serve to illustrate the importance of continuity and development. Literacy is not a single level of achievement recognised in the possession of a fixed set of skills. Instead, it is a continuum with relevance to a very large, increasingly complex body of personal and social functions and fields of activity. Low levels of literacy denote disabilities and handicaps and high levels a capacity to overcome them.

Learners can and should be continually progressing and extending themselves—from the level of rudimentary glimmers of understanding, simple skills, and isolated facts, from vagueness and confusion, towards clarity and more complex competencies and deeper understanding. Applied to adults, this lifelong learning idea of continuing growth and development is a challenge to much of what is presently available. Also, it flies in the face of traditional views about

plateaus, rigidities and declining powers, and folk nostrums: that young brains are moist and fluid whereas old brains dry up, that the mental arteries harden, or that old dogs can be taught no new tricks. Once seen to be constraining, as early as the third decade of life, the ageing process is no longer accepted as an explanation for inability or reluctance to continue learning.

The idea that all can and indeed should continue learning throughout life is itself an incentive to overcoming our limited knowledge of adult learning processes and the narrowness and paucity of learning pathways—a consequence of treating the existing formal system of education, with its pathways and hurdles, as the model. Progression over the lifecycle toward acquiring knowledge and skills, grasping relationships, establishing operational principles and rules, making systematic comparisons, evaluating and handling abstractions is inhibited so long as these are lumped together in a single track, on the model of academic education. One unfortunate consequence has been that many people in adulthood feel intimidated, lack self-confidence or have accepted the imprint of school failure (Gooley, 2001). The lessons to be learnt from formal education are not of these negative kinds, instead they are those of continuity, and breadth and depth in learning and well structured ways of organising knowledge and conducting inquiry.

THE CONCEPTS OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND WAYS OF LIFE AS STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING

Failure at school has many causes and is not our direct concern here. However, one consideration that is relevant is that schooling success too often reposes on a limited repertoire of capabilities. The UNESCO International Commission for Education in the Twenty-first Century urged all countries to value more diversity in learning—for adults and children alike. Continuity, breadth and depth of learning—constant themes in the present analysis—do not depend on just one kind of knowing, one form or field of knowledge. The Commission, in identifying four pillars or types of learning, challenged educators in both the formal and non-formal sectors, and learners throughout the lifecycle, to widen their horizons: learning to know; learning to live together; learning to be; learning to do.

Fresh thinking about the nature of intelligence provides a cue as to how we can at one and the same time strengthen and deepen concepts of adult learning and edge further along the road to universal participation. For more than a century, a unitary concept of intelligence has been dominant in education and psychology, at

times treated as a genetically limiting factor in learning and an explanation for endemic socio-economic inequality (Fischer, Hout, Janowski, Lucas, Swidler, & Voss 1996; Hernstein & Murray, 1994).

Although there has always been an understanding that a single quotient or measure (IQ) drew together a variety of human capabilities, in the testing regimes that have grown up logical reasoning and an ability to handle abstraction have been to the fore. In developmental psychology, the growth over time of human powers from early childhood into late adolescence has also been seen as a progressive development of logical and reasoning powers (Flavell, 1963; Piaget, 1977). These tendencies have privileged linguistic facility, mathematical reasoning and speed of response, which, dominant in school curricula, timetables, examinations and tests, inevitably disadvantage many people lacking these but possessing other talents and attributes.

During the past two decades, interest in a broader view of intelligence, has grown among educators and psychologists, including the work of Howard Gardner and associates at Harvard University (Gardner 1999a, and 1999b). They have postulated a model of eight different kinds of intelligence of which linguistic and logical-mathematical are but two. Although not operationally tested, or indeed testable in the manner of what might be termed 'IQ intelligence', and not forming a consistent system of categories, these 'multiple intelligences' as they are termed are of interest in a discussion of adult learning. Gardner argues that all people possess all eight intelligences but some with greater potential for growth than others. All are capable of being cultivated, extended and applied, in some measure or other, over the life span. The eight 'intelligences' are:

- Linguistic;
- Logical-mathematical;
- Musical;
- Spatial;
- Bodily-kinaesthetic;
- Interpersonal;
- Intrapersonal; and
- Naturalist.

The last, 'naturalist', requires some explanation since it refers to a kind of environmental sensitivity, possessed for example by botanists, florists, gardeners, farmers, geologists and others, and an ability to categorise and make use of different features of the environment.

There are difficulties with the theory of multiple intelligences. For example, what Gardner calls 'intelligence' includes what might equally be termed lifestyle or even culture in the sense of ways of life, modes of expression. However, Gardner's work has been found to have heuristic uses in broadening curricula and diversifying teaching, learning and assessment at the school level. It helps to set directions, since for each of the eight there is a broad repertoire of forms and fields of knowledge (science, movement studies, human relations theory, etc.) and organised bodies of professional knowledge and capability. 'Intelligence', teaching and learning may thereby be closely linked with many different types of knowledge and capability and with ways of life. Another way of thinking about these cognitive strategies, modes of thought and ways of life is to adapt the classical concept of *arete*, or perfection, of which in the modern age there can be many forms. The key point is not an abstract mental process, but a way of life, a body of practices that can be engaged in, reflected upon, refined, and treated as a source of values, ideals and purposes in living.

For adult and community education there are many leads here, in planning study programs and building on the open points of entry to study and 'return to learning' that are so important for adult learners. From one perspective, building on these initial starting points can and does result in passages toward more advanced courses, to the formal sector and so on. Learners need a developing capacity to construct their own maps of knowledge, understanding and skill and to be able to do so in one or more of the fields ('intelligences', 'ways of life') in which they have talent and interest. The models of 'multiple intelligences' and 'ways of life' are of value for curriculum development and the establishment of more coherent learning pathways for adults in underpinning the knowledge society/ knowledge economy.

THE HEARTH, WORKPLACE, STUDY CIRCLE AND COMMUNITY AS SETTINGS FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Even for non-formal adult education, learning has generally and typically been associated with classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and similar, which have a dedicated educational or instructional purpose. In contemporary society this is changing. The home is a significant base, not only for experiential, informal learning (and children's homework). Due to the pervasiveness of correspondence-based distance education and, now, the new information and communication technologies, the home has become a study centre and a nexus in e-learning study circles for adults. 'Space free/ time free' learning enriches the concept of 'hearth

and home' as a domain of organised learning for all age groups. Domestic architecture, house design, furniture and equipment have yet to embrace the potential or to meet the needs of the adult learner, beyond the mere provision of office-derived work-stations and their accoutrements. Much more design effort has gone into new learning settings for schools, colleges and universities than the home, the work place or the community centre. The community as a setting has already been discussed but mention should be made here of the growth of multi-purpose community and learning centres (Gooley, 2001; Skilbeck, 2001), Internet cafes, libraries, club rooms. Studies of workplace and community settings for learning have focused on the kinds of learning opportunities and tasks rather than the lived space and the impact of the settings although there are, now, purpose-built multi-urban renewal or rural development projects of which sites for learning are integral parts. An example is the Lindholmen Centre for Knowledge in Gothenburg, Sweden, which provides technology-rich space and facilities for secondary school and tertiary level students, adult learners, unemployed workers and those in need of retraining (Stuebing, 1995, pp. 127–131). Multipurpose centres are emerging in Australia, for example in Victoria and Queensland, with facilities for schooling, tertiary education and various forms of adult and community education on a single site.

There is a large volume of literature on occupation-related learning both within the workplace and in specialised institutions, including open and distance learning from which principles of good practice have been derived (McCollum & Calder, 1995) (Figure 5).

Incentives in the work place are a major issue: incentives to employers to provide as well as for all staff to learn. Whereas the investment argument is recognised, for many employers cost is more of a concern, fortified by a widespread belief that workers supported to learn are liable to be poached or to seek avenues elsewhere. The workplace as a site for learning, work as a source and stimulus for learning and improved working life capabilities have all featured in several years of data collection and analysis in OECD studies of employment and labour market changes.

Several conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing discussion of learning:

- There are many different conditions, circumstances and sites that favour or provide opportunity for adult learning, that motivate people and encourage them to continue learning. Policy makers, program designers, agencies and institutions, teachers and learners themselves need to draw fully upon them. There are substantially more of these resources/sites for learning in the community than are actually used or used well;

Figure 5: 'Good Practice' in Occupational Learning

- High level support for and recognition of the value to the individual and enterprise alike of occupational education;
- Recognition of prior learning of diverse kinds;
- Definition of pathways from occupation-specific to other educational opportunities;
- Adequate and flexible learning time including both full and part-time study opportunities;
- Use of experienced industry professionals as tutors;
- A range of student support services combined with minimal bureaucratic administration;
- Manageable costs;
- Use of multiple sources and media;
- Opportunities for self-determination and self-direction of learning;
- Recognition of the value of both 'just-in-time' learning and longer term approaches;
- Focus on conditions of application;
- Establishment of clear standards including progression (e.g. competency standards).

(*McCollum & Calder, 1995; also Hager & Gonczi, 1996; Hirsch & Wagner, 1995; OECD 1994a, 1994b, 1996, 1999, 2003*)

- Participation in adult learning is very uneven both across and within countries – younger adults and those with higher educational attainments and in higher skill jobs are the most actively engaged;
- Learning is of many different types, from adaptive behaviour to advanced cognitive mapping, problem solving and critical analysis. There are sound reasons to shift more adult and community education in the directions of generic, systematic, structured, sequential learning while retaining a strong element of episodic or short-term learning;
- Upgrading skills and targeting particular groups are favoured in policies. Nevertheless, the concepts of 'multiple intelligences' and 'ways of life' are liberating in that they open up a wide variety of avenues, pathways, procedures and modes of learning; and
- Developments in distance education provision, together with rapid advances and wide availability of communication and information technology, provide opportunities for greatly increased time free/space

free learning; e-learning, still in its infancy, will greatly expand as a medium for adults at home, in the workplace and in a variety of informal settings.

FROM SCHOOLING TO ADULT LEARNING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: A MISSING CURRICULUM?

Whilst the major themes of this chapter are centred on the so-called non-formal sector, 'adult learning' is generic, encompassing the highly structured programmes of universities and colleges as well as the very diverse kinds of learning in the home, workplace and community. By contrast with formal education in schools, colleges, universities and similar institutions, informal and non-formal learning might seem to lack a curriculum as that term is ordinarily used. Indeed for many people working in the field of adult and community education the very notion of 'a curriculum' is anathema, smacking as it does of the regimen of formal education, schooling, set standards and requirements and examining, together with attendant frustrations, disappointments and institutional dominance. To raise the issue of a curriculum for non-formal adult education is not only to enter the domain of controversy, it is also to bring into question much of existing practice including the organisation of study and funding.

The term 'curriculum' can very easily give rise to misunderstanding. Commonly used to refer to an organised course of study, there are layers of meaning to disentangle: curriculum can denote the guided or structured experiences of learners, a program of learning activities designed to achieve specified ends, a process of learning which unites goals, values, learning activities and associated assessments. Curriculum analysts have distinguished the intended curriculum from the experienced curriculum, and pointed to ways in which the learning experiences are fundamentally conditioned by the learning environment, the practices and values of teachers and by what the learner brings to the learning situation by way of previous knowledge, experience, language and so forth.

To invoke the idea of 'curriculum' is not to prejudge the issue of specific learning requirements, situations and settings, or styles of teaching. Rather, it is to raise the issues of the scope of learning and the structures that might best serve the kinds of learning discussed above. An inquiry into 'the' curriculum (or 'the missing curriculum') of adult, community and further education is a way of exploring issues of content, style, mode, settings, purposes and outcomes of learning. In order to conduct such an inquiry it is useful to draw upon maps and models and these are addressed later in this chapter.

For adult and community education as a field there is no sense of a core, or common strands of learning, no distinctive institution or set of institutions laying down formal requirements for certificate, degree or diploma, no unified, professionalised, systematically trained teaching force, no set requirements for entry to and completion of study and no overall framework specifying sequential learning and anticipated learning outcomes. For many people, these features are among the virtues of the tradition of adult education. Reaction to the unsuitability or unavailability of formal study opportunities for many learners, or their lack of access to them, their inconvenience, restrictive entry requirements and so forth all go a considerable way toward explaining the demand for non-formal adult education and the diverse study methods commonly in use.

For reasons given in the previous paragraphs, it might seem that the quest for a 'missing curriculum' would be fruitless, not to say irrelevant. However, it would be incorrect to infer that the relatively unstructured field of adult education lacks a curriculum or, rather, a multiplicity of curricula. Underpinning the great array of courses, programs, learning environments, goals and requirements—from the learning tasks and processes of single one-off sessions to lengthy certificated courses with syllabuses, required study, assignments, texts and other sources, and formal assessment—are curriculum assumptions and principles (ACFEB, 1999; Bradshaw, 1999). There are several differences to note between curriculum in the formal and non-formal sector. Curriculum as designed and specified in schooling, or in award bearing programmes in further, technical and higher education, is a clear, recognised staple, a scope and sequence model of learning tasks, goal directed with many common elements for learners and with broadly specified learning outcomes, standards and ways of assessing them. Even when a greater range and diversity of subject matter is introduced, as in the upper secondary and tertiary levels, or through projects, self-chosen topics etc, institutional settings and requirements, to say nothing about common elements in pedagogy and in the subject matter itself, all tend towards complex structures and lengthy sequences not always found in adult and community education.

It is a question now and for the coming years as to whether the emergence of national qualifications frameworks, competency standards in the professions, recognised providers and other regulatory moves, which enable 'recognition' and facilitate structured, segmented learning beyond the traditional institutional setting will or indeed should lead to a more systematic, structured approach to adult learning. A further question is whether the creation of stronger, more definite curriculum frameworks would be to the advantage of adult and community

education in gaining recognition and improved funding, as well as a better understanding of its value.

Not to be lost sight of in moves that may be made toward more structure, including formal qualifications, is that adult education has always been about educational value added, not fixed standards of performance (Bagayoko, 1997). Pre-defined outcomes required for qualifications run another risk as Kennedy pointed out in the UK review of further education that she chaired: 'Since funding has been related to successful outcomes, namely qualifications obtained by students, there has been a tendency for too many colleges to go in pursuit of students who are most likely to succeed' (Kennedy, 1997, p. 3).

A fundamental principle in adult education has been, and remains, that provision should be demand driven, with the minimum possible constraints, (and these mainly financial), on how demand is to be met. This is not to deny some important structural elements: provision is influenced by the priorities and experience of providers, by funding, by facilities, by the availability of expertise and, at a more basic level, by what is deemed to be 'appropriate', 'reasonable', 'suitable', 'realistic' and so forth. 'Demand' is not the same as 'individual preference'.

The scope of content in adult education, of what may be studied and learnt by adults in our society, is enormous. Since universities, colleges and schools—and industry—are also providers of education to adults, the scope of content includes what they offer, in addition to the ad hoc, short course, experiential learning available through adult programs in the community. Despite the different traditions, and ways of organising and financing the education of adults, content analysis must ultimately address a mixture of formal and non-formal provision and must proceed in a way that acknowledges the huge diversity that exists in practice.

This point can be illustrated in considering the concept of 'the learning society'. A learning society, as we have seen, values learning, encourages it, and finds every opportunity to foster, facilitate and support a multitude of forms and types of learning. This is sometimes hypostatised into a principle of society as a learning organism, which adapts, changes and evolves through systematic reflection on and analysis of itself: it aims to change, grow and develop through educational processes and methods, thereby moderating force, chance or the market and its 'invisible hand'. In neither sense of the term 'learning society' are there any limits to learning—anything may be learnt since the content is life itself and the ways of learning are as numerous and varied as human nature and social

organisation make possible. Nevertheless, we need ways of examining the value and significance of the learning that characterises the learning society. Decisions must be made about what to support, foster and encourage. Curriculum frameworks are a way of entering the discourse and reaching decisions.

The point then is to find ways to map this vast, amorphous, open-ended domain of curriculum. How might a start be made? Two kinds of answer to this question will be considered here: first a policy–administrative–management–documentation answer; second, a student–employer–community answer.

First, the policy–administrative–management–documentation approach. The emerging field of inquiry and action that is lifelong learning needs to be better documented and analysed, articulated and clearly understood, if sound policies are to be put in place and due recognition (financial resources included) accorded its value. Who the actual/potential learners are; who the providers are or might be; what resources are available and are needed are among the topics to be addressed. Equally, we need to get handles on the educative value of what is being taught and learnt, on learning outcomes, on where there is need for change and on how learning is to be fostered and facilitated. We need better analytic tools, and more substantial rationales in addressing content and process issues. For example, how sound are the grounds whereby funding is made available for some subjects or topics but not others? How are we to distinguish in non-trivial ways between 'socially useful' or 'employment related' and 'leisure' or 'private' interests? Which aspects of the education of adults are being neglected or under-valued? There are in practice ground rules; many will need to be rethought and principles stated, as we develop the underlying rationale of lifelong learning for all. The task is to transform adult, community and further education from a relatively fragmented, under-funded, very loosely structured mix of state and voluntary initiatives and responsibilities into a coherent, powerful system which meets the educational needs of the whole population, throughout the life cycle.

The second approach is student and user-centred. Students and users need better pathways, guidelines and connections among disparate kinds of learning. The knowledge-based society requires more systematic, applicable knowledge, so that communities, groups and individuals can exercise more control over their affairs. Better maps, ways to make sense of experience and chart future directions will empower students and users, equipping them to make choices of value to them. For such reasons systematic curriculum planning and development is just as important for adult learners outside the formal education institutions as those within it.

WAYS OF MAPPING A CURRICULUM OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Frameworks for Curriculum Analysis

Taking a broad view of the field of adult and continuing education, of lifelong learning and of the diverse streams of knowledge, inquiry and deliberate action that feed into it, we can establish at least three different frameworks for, or methods to use in analysis of what is being taught and learnt and what may need to be in the future. These frameworks may be thought of as ways to map or structure learning, hence teaching, or as orientations for assessment of what has been taught and learnt and evaluation of outcomes. They are:

- Disciplines of knowledge, ways of knowing and understanding, realms of meaning;
- Socially and economically useful knowledge and competence; and
- Individual perfection, growth and development of the person, the self.

For each there are distinctive but overlapping methods of inquiry, criteria and tests of value and significance. Different traditions of inquiry and analysis underpin each of them, but may be closely related to one another—they are not disjunctive. For example, much of the discussion about disciplines of knowledge tends to connect them to logical structures in academic subjects (mathematics, history etc) and with the formal requirements of educational institutions and examining bodies. This is to treat knowledge as if piled into a set of silos— discrete structures and methodologies. It is one, very important perspective, but it is not the only one. If we take the student's perspective, i.e. the educational uses of knowledge, we may find that while the logical structure remains intact, it is cast into another frame—perhaps that of socio-economic utility or personal growth. Curriculum analysis is not the same as drawing logical distinctions between forms and fields of knowledge but has to include such contextual considerations as learner interests and motives, settings and applications and uses of knowledge. From the perspective of the learner, curriculum is a map—of one or more domains of knowledge and experience. But it is also a technology—tools, techniques and strategies for entering the domains and progressing within them.

The point is not to produce a map of knowledge but to find ways of organising learning that respect logical distinctions, contents, contexts and the interests and perspectives that learners bring and wish or need to develop through

study. The ways in which educational tasks may be variously arranged according to the interests and needs of learners is particularly relevant to adults who can often choose to opt out if the course or study program does not suit them.

For some people well-defined disciplinary knowledge has an intrinsic interest or is necessary for professional practice and enrichment. Others may be seeking more eclectic knowledge and practical capability, with social or economic utility in mind. Still others are engaged in a quest—spiritual, emotional, religious, philosophical—to better understand themselves and attain a more fully integrated personality. In short, while there are formal distinctions between the three models or frameworks for curriculum analysis, there is a common discourse that enables us to treat them as facets of a larger whole, namely the substance and processes of what we understand by education. Curricula of whatever form are ways of mapping this whole and providing learners (and teachers) with directions and cues.

The three frameworks or approaches may thus serve as both ways of analysing and organising learning programs and tasks—a provider perspective— and as a means whereby learners may, through reflective analysis of what they are learning and why, develop greater coherence and depth in what might otherwise seem a rather unsystematic or fragmentary approach. The three curriculum frameworks proposed are programmatic and organisational on the one hand, and experiential on the other.

For each of these three ways of analysing and organising curricula, there is a justification that ties it back to the initial rationale for lifelong learning. There are implications for the way provision is determined, organised and funded; and there are consequences for the ways of learning and teaching in specific programs.

What is the significance of all this for adult and continuing education? Without lessening the much valued diversity and flexibility in providing programs and responding to demand for highly specific topics, systematic curriculum analysis can overcome the sense that the field of adult and community education often conveys - of a great miscellany of unrelated courses, catalogue-type listings and activities, recreations and hobbies: esoteric pursuits and private interests intermingled with job training or upgrading.

For purposes of public policy as well as greater analytic rigour, we need to rethink traditional ways of structuring demand by both students and teachers— learners alike—for access and learning opportunities. Once embarked on study, students benefit from guidance in order to better map study programs, develop sequences and establish connections including connections leading ultimately from an initial 'return to learning' into courses and programs in technical and

further education and university or into in-depth interest in a broad field of knowledge or experience. Providers and teachers can benefit, in the design and provision of programs of study to which discrete courses and learning episodes contribute. A strong intellectual element of practical use can be built into the initial training and continuing professional development of adult and community educators, trainers and all those responsible for providing courses and programs of study.

Disciplines of Knowledge, Ways of Knowing and Understanding, Realms of Meaning

While adult education has not been their primary concern, philosophers and educational theorists in analysing structured, disciplinary knowledge, experience and realms of meaning, have drawn attention to features that are of considerable interest in conceptualising lifelong learning. First, they have shown distinctiveness and diversity in logical structures, modes and methods of inquiry, ways of representation and uses and applications of knowledge. Second, they have demonstrated the importance of structures, organisation, coherence and sequence in acquiring and using knowledge. Third, they have emphasised the need for care and rigour in analysis of ways of thinking and the values of distinctive bodies of subject matter in fostering different kinds of understanding and modes of thought. Fourth, they have shown that it is possible to analyse discrete courses, teaching and learning episodes and quite diverse bodies of content in such a way that teaching and learning become more penetrating and coherent. During a particularly fruitful period of inquiry and debate, the broad outlines of a general theory of curriculum knowledge were drawn (Hirst, 1972; Phenix, 1964; Reid, 1961).

Since the 1970s and mainly in specialist journals (e.g. Educational Philosophy and Theory, Educational Theory and Curriculum Inquiry), the theory debates have been strongly shaped by post-modernism and constructivism, both of which have privileged the dynamics of the logic of inquiry and the interpretations of individuals and groups over a more static view of subject matter. Apart from a handful of scholars and studies, the domain of curriculum theory and adult education has gained little from interchange. Each would benefit: curriculum theory discourse from an encounter with the gritty reality of adult education; and adult education practice and policy from an infusion of challenging theoretical constructs.

Social and Economic Competence; Education Geared to Working Life

Social and economic competence and professional training are for such purposes as determining courses of action appropriate to meeting needs, solving problems, working in groups, achieving a measure of control, delivering a service, managing processes and situations, resolving issues and conflicts and bringing about an amelioration of situations of deprivation. Whereas highly structured, disciplined knowledge organised according to theoretical principles is, more than ever before, a resource to be drawn upon in these practical endeavours, it is not sufficient. 'Know how' must be sought as well as 'know that' and 'why'. The practical endeavours surrounding 'know how' themselves provide data and insights for the theoretical knowledge structures. The practical competences that are required are informed by disciplined knowledge but also by experience in the field. The field is sometimes thought to be just that of employment, hence vocational education, but it is just as much a field of social, community and family life, of interpersonal relations regardless of the setting. The strengthening of social structures, social relations and community well-being require practical competence, judgement, perceptiveness, insightfulness and well thought out values. Numerous statements about desirable competence have been prepared in different countries, mainly by vocational and adult educators. The point is not to treat them prescriptively but as an indication of what to look for in designing courses and other learning tasks and assessing their value (Figure 6).

Social and economic requirements vary greatly according to people's professional roles and interests, their lifestyles and the different uses they expect to make of their knowledge and capability. Since there is a great deal more at stake than technical or discursive knowledge—communications, interpersonal skills, values and attitudes, a range of practical aptitudes and capabilities and varieties of experience—curricula for professional, social and economic competence must be rich, varied and robust. There are situational and experiential starting points for analysing the kinds of competence people need in interpersonal relations, and their roles as workers, citizens and economic actors.

Great emphasis has rightly been placed on the economic requirement for skills and knowledge for employment—job preparation, flexibility, career development and so forth. The cultivation of generic skills and competence as distinct from highly specialised job-specific skills has been a focus of innumerable programs that attract public subsidies. Necessary as this is, it is clearly insufficient since, as we have seen, economic competence—the ability to understand and act in economically informed ways—entails much more than job training and

Figure 6: Personal and Social Competence

Personal competences are:
- Realistic self-confidence;
- Development of comprehension and judgement;
- Recognition of the relevance of one's mental attitudes;
- Imagination;
- Perceptive faculty;
- Ability to 'structure';
- Ability to deal with conflicts and to solve problems;
- Working virtues: concentration; patience; carefulness; perseverance.

Social Competencies are:
- Ability to co-operate;
- Ability to communicate;
- Ability to grasp overlapping personal and professional connections;
- Responsibility (in relation to work, environment, health, etc.).

(Pflueger, 1992; Based on experience of the Pedagogical Institute (PAS) of the Public Adult Education Centres Association in the Federal Republic of Germany, p. 42.)

retraining. For reasons already stated, such competence can no longer be the preserve of a small minority of specialists. Every adult is some kind of economic actor in societies where economic issues affect practically every domain of life. Similarly, social competence and active citizenship are a challenge to everyone, whether in interpersonal and intergroup relations in the work place, in the home, at leisure and in a variety of civic and community settings. Professional training and retraining are increasingly governed by criteria and standards that inform course design and content. In evaluating the worth of much that goes under the name of training it is necessary to inquire about its relevance and quality, to the labour market but also in the broader perspective adopted here.

Course catalogues for adult and community education contain numerous examples of study opportunities related to social and economic competence and professional life. The issues raised here are, first, whether we can be satisfied that there is sufficient attention to sequential, coherent systematic study which has a

clear developmental thrust and, second, whether we have for adult and continuing education rigorous ways of mapping and evaluating learning in these domains.

Personal Knowledge and Capability … Self Realization

In his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey drew a line between the natural sciences and the humanities, developing a program for the 'analysis of human life' in which the concept of understanding was central. 'Understanding', to simplify a complex idea, meant for Dilthey awareness of and insight into everyday life, or 'lived experience', and it is the development of this that constitutes the human sciences. While Dilthey believed that written language was the highest expression of mental life and understanding, non-verbal phenomena were for him as significant as verbal ones.

Dilthey is but one figure, albeit a highly influential one, in a galaxy of thinkers and practitioners extending to the present day, searching for relationships between patterns of knowledge, ways of knowing and lived experience—Marx, Dewey and Habermas among the theoreticians, Williamson among the adult educators. Such endeavours to explain what it is to understand oneself and everyday life and to find ways to interpret human experience, are also the target in adult and community education of study circles, courses, projects and reading materials (Shuttleworth, 1998). In adult and community education they may be all too inadequately described as 'recreational', 'social', 'cultural', 'personal interest' and so forth. Some of these activities have a rather idiosyncratic character; others are flagged as 'alternative life style'. There may be a tendency to treat them as incidental to the mainstream and there is often a funding distinction between them and what is categorised as economically and socially useful. Public policy targets in recent years have been directed much more towards technically advanced knowledge, technological proficiency, workplace skills and at particular groups designated as needy, mainly on socio-economic grounds.

By contrast, one of the motives for adult education throughout its history has been the quest for personal fulfilment—self-realisation, a sense of personal worthwhileness and knowledge as liberating for both the individual and the community. It is paradoxical that, in the resurgence of interest in adult learning, through moves toward lifelong learning, this motive should be overshadowed by the economic imperative for a highly skilled—and reskilled—workforce and a parallel concern to shore up social stability.

In the prevailing calculus of practical utility and the consequent concentration of public resources on the achievement and maintenance of a *productive society*

there has been a noticeable lessening of interest in how the *good society* is to be constituted. Teasing out the contemporary meaning of 'learning to love what is good' features less than discourses on useful knowledge. This is notably true of large tracts of public policy where the difficulty of achieving common ground on what a high quality of life for all might mean in ethical and cultural terms is one reason for reluctance by governments to enter into what are undeniably complex and controversial areas. Political parties in opposition find it easier to dash into this territory if only by way of criticising the direction and limitations of government policy. But there are other explanations: the shift towards secular values, increased prosperity and leisure time in which to enjoy readily available entertainment, combined with economic insecurity and the dependence of economic growth on constantly increasing expenditures by households.

Of course, these trends could also provide opportunity for a much greater investment, both public and private, in a quest for self-development, which is at the same time a quest for the good society. Indeed, this has been one strand of modern culture, often cited as a reaction to materialistic values and the dominance in everyday life of economic concerns and requirements. Courses have proliferated in the domains of self-awareness, consciousness raising, 'New Age' religion and lifestyle, 'well being' and the overall enhancement of personal lifestyle. For funding purposes, these are generally categorised as private, the responsibility of individuals undertaking them, with private returns but of little significance for social and economic purposes. However, they can be developed into powerful means for community development and renewal with social and economic benefits. Potentially, curricula mapped by the values and standards of personal knowledge and self-realisation have as much relevance in public policy as either of the other two approaches discussed above.

No curriculum mapping exercise of adult, community and further education could proceed far without encountering this wide and highly varied array of 'personal development' activities. The difficulty is to analyse them coherently whilst respecting their distinctive features and styles. Not to make the attempt would be to neglect one of the enduring values and contributions of adult education. It would also represent a diminution of culture and human experience.

For purposes of social harmony and cohesion, peaceable relations, the happiness of individuals and communities, and their continuing emotional, intellectual and cultural vitality, avowedly personal interests and pursuits may be as worthwhile to society and as much in the public interest as more obviously useful and economically productive knowledge and capability. The idea of a

liberal education not bounded by immediate, utilitarian considerations has been a part of the core of adult education throughout its history.

CONCLUSION

The challenge to increase participation in adult education is both individual or personal, and social and communal. Diversity of provision and practice reflect widely differing learning interests and needs of adults. They also demonstrate considerable unevenness, variable opportunities for access and deep uncertainties about the structures and kinds of organisation that might best broaden access and meet current expectations and future needs. Closer attention is needed to the conditions most likely not only to foster, but to sustain, continued, lifelong learning by more people. Similarly, greater effort is needed to analyse, strengthen and further develop curricula and learning resources. As the knowledge revolution extends further into the recesses of social, economic and personal life, new challenges arise for adult education, mapping knowledge and the ways individuals and communities can develop and thrive through systematic, continuing learning.

Knowledge is not the same as information; skills are not the same as understanding. Learning is much more than the transfer of information and the application of skills to known tasks. To foster participation and increase access, more needs to be known about why some adults decide to continue learning, to deepen their understanding and competence whereas others do not. Strategies have to be developed that focus on people's interests and motivations and on the barriers to access, whether personal, economic or social. Increasing the scale and effectiveness of adult learning is not a matter of a few simple nostrums and behavioural observations, but takes us on the one hand into the depths of personality and, on the other, into the basic structures of contemporary social and economic life.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ATTRACTING NEW GROUPS INTO LEARNING:
LESSONS FROM RESEARCH IN ENGLAND

VERONICA MCGIVNEY

In England as in many other western countries, adult participation in organised learning activities is largely determined by who you are (your social class, sex, race and age); the age at which you left school; your level of qualification and your current occupational status. National surveys continue to show that poorer, less qualified and older adults are severely under-represented in most forms of organised post 16 learning opportunities.

In education policy documents, the absence of large segments of the community from post-compulsory learning programmes is viewed as a problem. The groups concerned tend to be judged as having learning deficits, especially poor basic skills, that exclude them from the mainstream of society and lead to undesirable situations such as unemployment, dependency on the state, deprivation and crime. Lack of basic skills and formal qualifications are routinely cited as the major causes of deprivation, but I would suggest that it is the other way round: industrial decline, poverty, deprived and run-down communities— these often lead to, rather than being generated by, poor educational achievement among successive generations.

Nevertheless our policy-makers continue to attribute economic and social problems largely to people's learning deficits, the implication being that if those who do not engage in learning would only modify their behaviour and acquire some qualifications, those problems would in some miraculous way be eliminated. Fuelled by concerns about poor qualification levels and low productivity in comparison to our national competitors, there has been a growing policy thrust to raise achievement levels among those groups of adults who traditionally, and for a complex range of reasons, are under-represented in most forms of organised learning.

The range of well-intentioned national widening participation measures introduced in England in the last 7 or 8 years, include *inter alia*: the establishment of strategic local learning partnerships, increases in funding for adult learning, the introduction of (relatively short-lived) Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) and the introduction of two new funding streams, the Union Learning Fund and the Adult and Community Learning Fund (recently succeeded by the Widening Adult Participation Action Fund).

There has also been considerable investment in organisations and centres offering ICT learning, the introduction of a national lifelong learning helpline (Learndirect), the launch of a national adult literacy and numeracy skills strategy, a range of measures to achieve a wider mix of students in further and higher education and the introduction of educational maintenance allowances to encourage more young people to stay on in education after the official school-leaving age. More recently there has been the announcement of an entitlement to free learning for a Level 2 qualification (the equivalent of five good GCSEs[1]) for people of working age.

Despite the number and range of initiatives, however, participation patterns among adults have not been significantly changed. In fact recent national surveys have actually shown a *drop* in adult participation, especially among those in the lower socio-economic groups. Why is this? One analysis (McGivney, 2001) suggests a number of reasons.

Post-16 education policy continues to be concentrated largely on young people aged 14 to 19. Policies for adult learners are narrowly focused on increasing 'employability' skills; on improving adult literacy and numeracy (which not all non-participants need), and on getting people of working age qualified up to Level 2.

Secondly, there has been a persistent reluctance to take into account the findings of participation research over the last few decades. These have repeatedly identified the factors that deter people from learning and the aspects of recruitment, delivery and support that most assist successful participation. Yet since 1997, a great deal of money has been spent on new research into participation and barriers to learning that has produced exactly the same findings that have been known for decades. The time has come to act on these, rather than continue in an endless circle of rediscovering what is already known.

Thirdly there is little public funding that allows for the essential first-stage development work with new communities. Outreach activity—engaging with people in the community, winning their trust, listening to them and translating

what one hears into constructive learning responses—is one of the most effective ways of reaching people least represented in formal learning (McGivney, 2000). However, as it is staff-intensive and time-consuming it is invariably under-supported and under-resourced.

There are also few funding sources available that are sufficiently flexible to enable providers to experiment with small numbers and new approaches. While the Adult and Community Learning Fund has enabled adult and community learning providers to innovate in catering for new learners, the overall resources involved have been so limited that only a few hundred groups have been able to take advantage of it.

There has also been a reluctance to invest in small voluntary organisations with an established record of contacting and involving new groups in learning. The post-16 delivery system in the UK is still weighted in favour of large institutions and offers comparatively little in the way of smaller-scale and flexible provision of the type most likely to attract new learners. Most widening participation funds go to the larger education institutions, and a large proportion of the resources for learning partnerships have sometimes been absorbed in maintenance of the partnerships rather than being spent on contacting and working with new groups.

Fourthly, there is a naïve faith in the potential of ICT and e-learning to significantly widen participation. Money has been poured into neighbourhood ICT centres although these have not yet been conspicuously successful in making a dent in overall participation patterns. Moreover there has been insufficient attention to learners' group and face-to-face support needs.

Finally there has been little recognition of the extent to which decisions to learn are influenced by other people. In policy documents learning is largely regarded as an individual process dependent on individual motivation and conducted in isolation from the family, social and community contexts in which people lead their lives. Widening participation measures and publicity campaigns are consequently targeted at individuals and appeal to individual self-interest. But most adults are in partnerships and families and belong to social, cultural or co-worker networks, and decisions to learn or not to learn are often made with other people in mind.

Other people play a huge part both in promoting learning and in inhibiting it. If you track individuals' attitudes and behaviour with regard to learning, you will often find that they have been strongly influenced by other family members' encouragement or discouragement, by peer reinforcement or disapproval, or by the help or constraints provided by 'key' individuals in their lives.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN DETERRENTS?

It is well documented that different groups have different experiences and constraints in relation to organised learning. Barriers related to practical issues such as time, location, costs and childcare are the most commonly cited problems, but even if you make learning more accessible and affordable and provide childcare (which are essential elements in any widening participations strategy), only the people for whom these are genuinely the major obstacles will participate. Many of those who cite such obstacles will not. There are other, more deep-seated barriers that are not easy to address.

There are factors that affect one's motivation and readiness to engage in learning (cultural, social and psychological constraints) and factors that inhibit one's ability to participate (physical, practical and structural constraints). The first comes before the second. You have to be motivated and psychologically prepared to engage in intentional learning before you even begin to consider the practical implications such as time and costs. Inevitably, however, these are the barriers to participation that are mentioned and addressed first. The cultural, social and psychological barriers are far harder to acknowledge and deal with as they involve values, attitudes, feelings and assumptions. But unless you confront these, you will be unlikely to attract the groups that are traditionally the most reluctant to engage in education and training.

One of the first obstacles to address is perceptions, as these play a huge part in non-participation. Many people have a resistance to education that was 'structured in' at an early stage by their school experience or family influence. As adults, many continue to conceive of 'learning' as a narrow, formal process that involves a taught course, a subject such as English or History, and some form of assessment. By extension, centres and institutions that deliver learning are perceived to be formal and intimidating like school, and to cater mainly for younger adults or other social and cultural groups.

These perceptions are often bound up with feelings people have about themselves, for example, the belief that one is not 'clever' enough or 'too old' to learn and fears of repeated failure or exposure to ridicule. Many people also feel pressurised to conform to the social and cultural norms of their family, peer group or social networks. To engage voluntarily in organised learning is completely outside some groups' cultural frame of reference, as it is perceived to be part of the lifestyle of other groups and social classes.

This indicates that widening participation among 'unreached' groups is not just a question of making routes into learning easier. It is first and foremost a

question of changing perceptions. This is neither an easy nor a short-term task. It also requires recognition of the risks participation can present for some people—the psychological risks (of possible failure or ridicule); the social risks (of acting contrary to family or cultural norms) and the financial risks (endangering welfare benefits or getting into debt) when there are no guaranteed (employment or fiscal) returns from learning.

Unfortunately, some national widening participation initiatives in England have reinforced rather than removed some of these risks: for example, the stress on adult learning deficits (poor basic skills and lack of qualifications) can deter those who already have a sense of educational failure. The increasing costs of learning, for example in higher education, can also have a deterrent effect. Data for 1998 from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service indicated that the introduction of loans and tuition fees for students had prevented many poorer and mature individuals from applying to universities at the very time when changing the social profile of students had become a key government aim. The current prospect of higher 'top-up' fees may well reinforce the persisting and shameful social class divide in the higher education sector.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ASSIST THE PARTICIPATION OF NEW ADULT LEARNERS?

It is often believed that all a provider needs to do to widen participation is to go out and ask people what they want to learn and then respond with appropriate courses. But if you ask people what they wish to learn, they will automatically try and frame their response within a standard educational paradigm (involving a classroom, a teacher, a structured course or programme based on conventional academic subjects) because they believe this is what learning is all about (McGivney, 2003a). Some may specify subjects that are of no real interest to them in order to give what they believe will be an acceptable response but they will not necessarily participate if a class is subsequently organised; others who are resistant to any form of education or training and do not consider it to be relevant to their lives, will declare a lack of interest in learning anything.

A skilled development or outreach worker will use a different approach and instead of asking people outright what they want to learn, will find out what their immediate priorities, interests and concerns are then work at translating these into relevant learning activity. For example, I have found that the most pressing concerns of many working-class women are worries about health, the local

environment and their children's education and development. These are rarely if ever perceived or expressed as 'learning' needs or interests that might be addressed in a conventional, subject-based course. However, experienced development workers can identify the potential for learning in such concerns and develop learning activities that enable the women to deal with them. This approach can lead to some amazing transformations.

Some years ago I evaluated the impact of a community education project in Northern Ireland targeted at poor, working-class women without qualifications. As a result of an influx of international and charitable funding in the 1980s, community centres with crèches had been established on some of the poorest and bleakest estates in the province. These had enabled mothers, many of them isolated and depressed, to meet together for the first time in a communal space outside their homes, and to share concerns about the inadequacy of local facilities and their frustration at the inaction of local officials, health professionals and politicians.

Proactive community workers in a number of the centres invited a range of outside visitors to talk to the informal women's groups that formed around the creches. One of these was an educational outreach worker from the Women's Education Project, then a tiny, charitable-funded organisation with two and eventually three workers. Informal conversations with the women in the different groups enabled the outreach worker to identify some emerging learning needs. Initially she found that many needed help with health issues and dealing with 'authority' figures such as doctors, and teachers. This implied the need for assertiveness and communication skills. As certain charitable foundations were withdrawing from some of the centres and crèches, some of the groups also needed to acquire the ability to self-organise and fund-raise in order to keep going. This implied the need for another range of skills. In consultation with all the groups concerned, the development worker set up a range of informal and negotiated learning activities, in response to the concerns and issues expressed. Over time the women's confidence grew and they began to request more conventional and accredited courses, some of which could be delivered by formal learning providers. The research found that over the five years that the education project had been operating, hitherto depressed and isolated women had become volunteers and community activists; some groups had conducted and published research on conditions in their estates; some had addressed public meetings and challenged politicians and local officials; some were successfully running their own groups. In every group researched, there were a number of individuals who had gone on to take accredited courses in local colleges, who had gained

qualifications and found jobs. Some had eventually become adult tutors themselves (McGivney, 1992a).

ROUTES INTO LEARNING

This example illustrates that adults' routes back into learning do not necessarily originate with clearly defined learning interests or needs. They are often serendipitous and circuitous rather than direct. In fact, my own research on widening adult participation in learning suggests that many former non-participants initially return to learning for reasons that have very little to do with an interest in a particular subject or the desire to acquire a particular skill. They return to learning:

- Because others in their circle (family, friends, workmates) are doing it;
- Because of a wish to meet other people;
- Because informal opportunities are provided in a familiar place that they already frequent for another purpose (e.g. pre-schools, community centres, church halls);
- Because information and encouragement are provided by someone they know and trust;
- Because they want to help their children learn;
- Because of an involvement in voluntary or community action; and
- Because of the need to deal with an immediate situation or crisis in their life (life transitions, illness, redundancy, bereavement, divorce).

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROVIDERS

Although none of these situations arises out of a specific learning interest related to a specific 'subject', most can (and often do) lead to the acquisition of a taste for learning. It is the first 'hook' that is all-important. According to an outreach worker interviewed in McGivney (1999, p. 91): 'Once you've got them through the door the possibilities are endless. It's the investment in that stage which is the most important.'

Most of the situations listed above imply some specific ways of engaging new people in learning. The first scenario (because other people are learning) indicates that group targeting can be a more effective recruitment strategy than targeting

individuals. People do not in general want to be conspicuously different from others in their circle. There is safety in numbers and it is much easier to embark on something new, especially if it departs from family or social norms, with other people.

The wish to meet other, like-minded people is a commonly cited reason for engaging in learning, especially among women and it is often found that providing informal opportunities for social interaction often leads to participation in learning. Some years ago a community education worker on a deprived estate in Birmingham organised coffee mornings for local mothers, with a crèche, in the local community centre. This allowed local women to get to know each other and to familiarise themselves with the venue. Eventually, some of the regular attenders requested information on child health and development and the worker organised an Open University community course on the subject. This enthused the women who requested other learning activities. After engaging in a number of these, many formerly unqualified individuals embarked on their own personal learning trajectories. These individual learning paths were mapped by the worker (reproduced in McGivney, 1992b).

This example, like the one in Northern Ireland, demonstrated the importance of providing learning opportunities in familiar and non-threatening places already frequented for other purposes (the third scenario listed above). Many individuals—especially those in disadvantaged circumstances—have limited spatial 'comfort zones' and are reluctant to leave familiar local territory. In such cases, the learning opportunities need to be located in places they are already using.

A good example of this was found in a study that investigated how people are drawn into learning via informal routes (McGivney, 1999). Unemployed people visiting a resource centre situated in a Working Men's Club in a depressed former coal-mining region, started informally trying out laptop computers that were strategically located in the same venue. After gaining some informal tuition into using the computers, a number moved into more structured learning activities delivered in the same building. These included courses in subjects such as English, German, maths, first aid and counselling. Two ex miners eventually enrolled in teacher-training courses as a direct result of engaging in the learning opportunities provided in the club. *None* of the unemployed people concerned would have considered enrolling in an education institution. They had originally visited the club for social reasons or for advice on welfare benefits.

Another study found that adults who were using pre-schools for their children and who became actively involved in their management and activities, had

achieved a significant amount of both informal (incidental) learning from their voluntary activities, and formal learning from attending the courses for parents (on child development, health and safety etc.) provided on site. Virtually all of the parents interviewed said they had only participated because these were offered in the same premises as the pre-school. They would not have attended the courses had they been offered elsewhere. Although none had had any prior intention to do so, a striking number of interviewees had subsequently decided to study for qualifications (McGivney, 1998).

In all of the examples cited above, the initial learning activities were informal and unimposed, and provided an easy stepping-stone to more structured learning courses. Without these prior learning experiences in familiar and non-threatening locations, most of the individuals concerned would not have had the motivation or confidence to move into formal learning.

The fourth situation listed earlier (information and encouragement provided by a familiar and trusted person) highlights the need for investment in people who can act as learning brokers or champions. My research over the years has shown repeatedly that trusted 'influential persons' play a significant role in decisions to participate in learning across the range of providing organisations and settings. Learning intermediaries or brokers—people who act as influencers, catalysts or change agents—are hugely important in leading others into learning. These can be professionals (community nurses, pre-school managers, education workers, guidance workers) but they can also be local opinion leaders. Some of the most effective 'recruiting agents' I have come across have been an office cleaner and a voluntary playground supervisor—people who are enthusiastic advocates for learning and who are popular and trusted by the groups they are in contact with (McGivney, 1999, 2000).

Training people who have, themselves, successfully engaged in learning as learning champions, learning ambassadors or mentors has been found to be an extremely effective means of widening participation. If these come from the same social, cultural or working background as a target group, they can act as potent role models. One of the most successful widening participation strategies introduced in England has been the introduction of a Union Learning Fund which has been used to train a large number of workers as learning representatives. Evaluations of the fund have shown that the representatives have been crucial in encouraging a culture of learning in workplaces (Shaw, Armistead, Rodger, & Hopwood, 2002).

The fifth situation is self-explanatory. It has frequently been found that family learning programmes which are embarked upon initially to help one's children

learn very frequently motivate adults to continue learning for their own benefit (McGivney, 1999; 2003b).

Involvement in voluntary, political or community action is another frequent catalyst for learning. Some of the most innovatory examples of adult learning in England have been generated in collective struggles or protests to do with specific political or environmental issues. Concerns about local issues—road safety, transport, housing—or about the environment—can all form the basis of valuable learning activities and often lead to an awareness of the need for particular knowledge and skills (see Foley, 1999).

> In one example I have come across, residents on a large estate on the edge of a city in England were worried about the impact on the locality of a proposed large building development. A group of them approached a community education centre and asked for advice on how to oppose the plan. With the help of a community education worker, they subsequently embarked on a learning process that involved finding out about planning application procedures, how to register opposition, how to communicate with officials and the best way to express their views. During the process, their interests broadened and they started to investigate the history of the estate. This led to the need to develop research skills. In time the group decided to produce a book about the estate, which in turn led to the need for writing and computer skills. This way a whole set of structured learning activities spiralled out of an original and collective concern with a specific local issue *(McGivney, 1999)*.

A significant outcome of this kind of 'organic' learning—learning that arises naturally out of immediate circumstances and needs—is that it frequently leads to more formal, intentional and planned learning. As a result of the learning generated through community activism, people's confidence grows, their interests widen and they often then identify a desire for more information or new skills. Once this transition is made there can be a shift from group or collective learning to individualised and more structured, formal learning. Policy-makers and funders are inevitably more willing to support this kind of learning than the earlier, informal and often collective, learning when the original spark occurs, and this is one of the principal reasons why widening participation remains such an elusive goal.

Personal transitions or crises are another well-established catalyst for learning. Individuals often require help with problems and situations that arise in their lives although, again, they will not always identify this as a learning need. That it *is* a learning need is illustrated by the huge amount of learning, both informal and structured, that goes on in single-issue, self-help and support groups set up to help people cope with situations such as bereavement, redundancy,

retirement, homelessness, specific illnesses or addictions. The learning trajectories of winners of English Adult Learners' Week awards indicate that many of those who require help with life transitions and crises eventually find their way onto a lifelong learning path.

What all of this means is that there *is* a demand for learning among those who engage least in education and training, but it is not usually defined as a demand for learning. Education in the abstract has little pulling power. Adults do not for the most part learn just for the sake of it, but for a specific and immediate purpose relevant to their current situation—to solve a problem, to improve their current circumstances, to find out how to deal with a particular issue, to achieve something specific. Educationists may define these as learning needs, but I have consistently found that many people do not. In fact some will go to considerable lengths to avoid defining the learning they do as 'learning'. This is usually because it is a by-product of another activity or because learning continues to be understood as something that is intimidating, formal and assessed even when experience demonstrates that it can be something substantially different.

SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

Cumulatively the research evidence suggests that strategies for reaching new groups should be based on three essential principles—recognition, respect and relevance.

Educational policies and provision need to recognise adults' diversity. People are not all in the same circumstances nor do they experience the same constraints. Not everyone has the same learning interests and goals, and learning will not lead to the same outcomes for each individual. The belief underlying education policy that if you improve your basic skills and get a qualification you will get a job and therefore a better life is not always an accurate assumption. In some areas there are few jobs and many employers appoint on a basis other than qualifications.

To broaden participation requires that people's different experience, views, choices and preferences are respected. Just because some groups are wary of education because of the difficulties they have experienced in the past or because they are sceptical of its value, it does not mean that they are deficient or inadequate people who need their behaviour modified. It may just mean that what they perceive to be on offer is not practical or relevant to them. There are many people who have been disaffected from the process of education, but who remain

'learners' in the broad sense of the term. Many of those categorised as 'non-participants' are highly skilled even if they do not have a string of formal qualifications. In areas where participation in formal learning is low, many individuals engage in a rich diversity of informal learning activities that are related to their immediate lives and interests. This is by no means a new or original insight and many will be familiar with Alan Tough's writings in which he described formal adult learning as only the tip of a huge submerged iceberg of learning (Tough, 1971). More recently Greany (2004) has observed that people categorised as learning 'rejecters' based on their attitude to (formal) learning often turn out to be involved in a variety of learning activities:

> I often sit in on focus groups with Rejecters (…) and they invariably start the discussion by saying that nothing would interest them in learning, yet by the end of an hour's conversation about how much of our learning is informal and how we learn in different ways, most will be talking animatedly about their hobbies and learning passions from fishing to knitting, from health and fitness to bio-diversity. *(p. 28)*

And finally relevance. To engage new groups in learning, opportunities have to be not only accessible and entail no financial, social or psychological risks; they have to be relevant to their immediate priorities, interests and concerns. The discovery that learning can be relevant is an essential stage in overcoming the negative perceptions listed earlier in this chapter. People are far more likely to engage in learning when they are given the opportunity to decide what is of value to them than when they are offered pre-packaged courses and programmes. Once people see that education can be relevant, they will be willing to participate.

What this means is that you cannot divorce learning from the overall context of people's lives. There therefore needs to be some articulation between initiatives to widen participation and those designed to improve local conditions and combat poverty and exclusion. Educational planning and learning opportunities need to be integrated with policies on employment, welfare, housing, health and other areas of life. These should be linked into a strategic framework rather than operating in isolation from each other as they so frequently do.

A FINAL OBSERVATION

To widen participation in learning we need to recognise just how deep the economic, social and cultural divides in society actually are. Under-representation in organised learning is just one dimension of the multiple and inter-related forms of social exclusion that many people face. To paraphrase a view expressed in one report on lifelong learning (Gorard & Rees, 2002), it is more likely that a more

equal society will lead to wider participation than that wider participation in learning will lead to a more equal society.

NOTES

[1] General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations are usually taken at age 16 across a range of subjects.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TOGETHER FOR A CHANGE: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

DAVID BECK

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Minister for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education, Department for Education and Skills stated in a speech made to the British Council Education and Training Group National Conference 2001:

> There has been a large increase in those involved in Higher Education but many of those participants are from the middle classes. There has been little or no change in the proportion of children from lower income backgrounds participating in Higher Education over the last 10-15 years. We want to break down this class barrier and get more young people from lower income groups into Higher Education, which will be the challenge. *(Hodge, 2001)*

From this and other evidence, it is clear that Universities are still predominately the preserve of white, middle class students (Bourgeois & Frenay, 2001) despite five years of initiatives from New Labour (Davies, 2001). This is the challenge that Govan Community Development Training (CDT) sought to deal with, sited within a predominately working class area and focussing on people who had been unemployed for at least a year and often far longer. They worked with trainees who were first generation University students; most had no formal qualifications at all. Many also had struggled with drug addiction at some point in their lives. In short, they were unreached learners.

This paper explores the particular approach to Lifelong Learning as operated by CDT and its partners. Specifically it proposes that the key features which enabled access to unreached learners and enabling of social inclusion are: partnership working, shared values, an integrated approach and the impact the project had on the community.

THE PROJECT

Govan Community Organisations Council (COC) is an umbrella organisation for voluntary sector organisations, which developed Govan Community Development Training (CDT) in 1996. CDT was a response to the fact that in areas of regeneration, like Govan, many jobs are created, however it is suggested that, although local people do benefit from these jobs, it tends to be the low skilled low paid jobs which they access (Cloonan & Crossan, 2000). This is a particular problem in the case of Community Development jobs since local people often do not have the skills or qualifications to take up these very influential posts. This, in turn, leads to the phenomena of people 'parachuting' into the community and deciding for them how they should be developed. The COC felt that the best way to respond to this unacceptable situation was to develop a project that would enable local people to gain experience of working in community development at the same time as studying for higher education qualifications in Community Development. It will also be argued later that the project also had a beneficial effect on community infrastructure but this was not one of the original reasons for the project's development.

This innovative project was initially funded via The Urban Programme and Glasgow Works. The Urban Programme was a short term funding programme administered by the Scottish Office that supported local regeneration programmes for an initial period of four years. Glasgow Works is an organisation that sets up Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) projects throughout the city. The intention of ILMs is to provide linked employment and training programmes, which enable long term unemployed people to progress into full time permanent employment.

CDT worked with people who had been unemployed for at least a year, providing them with a yearlong linked employment and training programme. During this time the trainees worked in local community organisations for three days per week, attended the University of Glasgow one day per week and pursued personal development activities for the other day. Personal development consisted of group activities like visiting galleries, music events and other cultural experiences and individual pursuits like driving lessons, reflexology courses and hypnotherapy to stop smoking.

SOCIAL POLICY CONTEXT

The project was a product of its time; the three inter-related policy strands of Lifelong Learning, Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship were beginning to

shape much of the welfare provision within Scotland. Consequently, there was a willingness amongst a wide range of organisations to enter into partnership arrangements in order to reach mutual targets set under these policy strands.

Lifelong learning as understood and practiced within the project is not just about the acquisition of employment-related skills over a longer period of time and in a way that meets the needs of a rapidly changing labour market. Rather it is as Jane Thompson (2000) has said, to do with the development of social understanding and critical engagement which leads to people having increased ability to affect their economic, social and physical conditions throughout their lives.

Social exclusion is not simply about having no job, little money and poor housing it also encompasses feelings of being trapped, low self-esteem and self-confidence, and feelings of insecurity, hopelessness and depression (O'Connor & Lewis, 1999). This is why a holistic approach to education, like the one practiced in CDT is essential. Development of new knowledge within the context of new social networks and changed economic status begins to address many of the factors of social exclusion and develops the foundation for sustainable change.

The concept of Active Citizenship is also a contested one but the version adopted by CDT was one of political participation and civic practice more generally attempting to develop trainees to be members of a self-ruling democratic community of free and equal citizens (Fermin, 2000).

PARTNERSHIP

It is recognised that, if participation in Higher Education is to be widened, development of partnership working must be undertaken (HEFC, 2001). CDT represented a partnership between Govan COC, voluntary organisations in Govan, the University of Glasgow and the funders. This partnership provided the essential elements of the programme, all of which were required for it to be successful

COC

The COC was an umbrella organisation for community and voluntary organisations in the greater Govan area. They provided information and development support to local groups as well as directly managing a youth information project, a community law centre and CDT.

In the context of CDT, they provided the administrative hub for the project and made connections with local organisations and individuals. They also

provided a local resource base for the trainees, access to computers and a selection of Community Development texts. Most importantly, the support and supervision of trainees and the additional tutorial support that they provided on the ground enabled people with very poor experience of education and no academic qualifications to be successful in higher education.

UNIVERSITY

University level education was a key element of the programme. The sense of achievement gained by attending the University was only surpassed by the sense of achievement at completing the course and receiving their certificates in the Senate Room of the University! But of course the main point was to provide them with analytical skills and theoretical frameworks which would enable them to make sense of their communities and the impact they could have in processes of development and regeneration.

The Certificate in Community Work was the course that all of the trainees went through. This was particularly appropriate for the following reasons:

- The course was staffed by community development practitioners who were well acquainted with the practicalities of community work as well as being very familiar with the client group from CDT;
- The course adopted a predominantly groupwork methodology which placed high value on the experience of the trainees which made them feel as if they had something to give as well as to receive. This greatly increased their confidence and ability to productively engage in the learning process;
- Both the Certificate and CDT staff's practice were informed by similar values and educational philosophy based upon a Freirean approach to education—explained below; and
- Staff members from the university were involved in the management of CDT and staff members from CDT were involved in the university's marking and quality control systems making for a seamless approach to the trainees.

It might be assumed that assessment would be one of the most off-putting elements of the university experience and yet it was not so. While it is true to say that there was a great deal of apprehension about writing essays, many trainees reported that it was this process which forced them to think deeply about the work

they were involved in and to examine whether or not the theories which they had learned made sense in the real world.

Furthermore, the process of assessment gave them an objective standard, which could stand against all of the previous educational failure from earlier life and prove that they could succeed. This dimension would not have been possible without the University who provided the gravitas and credibility that a voluntary organisation would be unable to provide.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

They provided community work placements for the trainees. The ability to work in real community work situations allowed them to test the theories that they learned at university against practice. It also allowed them to develop basic working practice—good time keeping etc. They were also well placed to identify potential trainees for the project from the clients they worked with.

Placement providers were brought together on a regular basis to share information about their projects, to enlist the support of CDT trainees for their new projects and to evaluate what CDT was doing. One of the consequences of bringing placement providers together on a regular basis was that they were able to share about the projects they were involved with, this promoted co-ordination and collaborative working. This was further enhanced by CDT trainees being placed in organisations across the area who regularly shared information and co-operated with each other.

KEYS TO PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Values Issues

Within CDT it was observed that, in order for partnerships to work, there had to be agreement at the level of values. These values would be broadly in accord with those expressed in the National Occupational Standards in Community Development Work (PAULO, 2003): commitment to social justice, encouragement of self-determination, working and learning together, developing sustainable communities, supporting participation and reflective practice.

This was much more important than strategic frameworks or policy which are often more rhetorical than actual. A commonality of values enabled co-working across a wide range of occupational areas. It also meant that, for example, trainees

could move from CDT into a mental health project, to the university and then to a play organisation and feel that there was a common understanding of what was being aimed for even if organisational culture and practices were very different. These values are discussed in more detail below.

Organisational Issues

Having said that, there are organisational issues that enhance or inhibit partnership working. These are some, suggested by the Standing Conference on Community Development (2001, p. 18):

- Recognise that community development is a long-term process, which requires a long-term commitment.
- Have clear and well-publicised processes that enable stakeholders to provide feedback. This includes processes to monitor progress and to raise and consider any complaints or concerns of stakeholders.
- Dedicate time and resources to evaluation and commit themselves to share experience with others.

The two main mechanisms for achieving the above were the monthly management committee meetings and regular placement provider's events. Through these, the local development Company, the university and local groups, all committed staff time to help manage, develop, and evaluate the project over its four-year lifespan. This long-term commitment developed a joint understanding and ownership of the project and encouraged the effective use of resources through an ongoing dialogue between stakeholders.

Specific to working with the University Of Glasgow, having project staff involved in the exam boards and board of management enabled lessons learned in the community context to shape the development of the Certificate Course. The way selection was dealt with was also a key to a successful partnership with CDT. Firstly, there were no formal educational qualifications required for entry to the course—this dealt with a barrier that would have stopped these trainees attending most undergraduate programmes at the university. Secondly, a system of jointly interviewing trainees meant that aptitudes for work and study could be jointly considered.

COMMON SET OF VALUES

The values of Community Development and Freirean Education underpinned CDT and, either implicitly or explicitly, the organisations with whom they had the most productive partnerships.

Community Development

Community development (SCCD, 2000) is about building active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about changing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Community workers support individuals, groups and organisations in this process based on the following values: Social Justice, Participation, Equality, Learning and Co-operation. There is a commitment within this approach to:

- Challenge discrimination and oppressive practices within organisations, institutions and communities;
- Develop practice and policy that protects the environment;
- Encourage networking and connections between communities and organisations;
- Ensure access and choice for all groups and individuals within society;
- Influence policy and programmes from the perspective of communities;
- Prioritise the issues of concern to people experiencing poverty and social exclusion;
- Promote social change that is long-term and sustainable;
- Reverse inequality and the imbalance of power relationships in society; and
- Support community led collective action.

CDT was attempting to train people as community development workers; it not only taught this approach but also modelled it. Hence, there was an emphasis on a collective approach to learning and other issues. The processes of how things happened were as important as the results. As far as possible, the principles of democracy and participation were applied. Workers were encouraged to come up with their own solutions to problems rather than having solutions imposed. A sense of self-determination was fostered and workers were given the opportunity to take charge of their own learning.

Within the project, principles and values were not only discussed with the trainees but also became the focus for their critical scrutiny. This was particularly the case because of the tension between Community Developments' values and the inevitably hierarchical nature of a publicly funded project.

This clear set of values caused problems for the trainees in situations where they were working with organisations whose values were at odds with theirs. These problems were addressed through individual supervision and also raised as issues for the learning group to consider.

Freirean Education

The work of CDT and the teaching on the Certificate in Community Work were shaped by the thinking of Paulo Freire, who proposed a radical education practice which would effect change not only in people's thinking but also in their social, cultural and material conditions (Freire, 1970). CDT was attempting to develop a group of co-investigators who were exploring the generative theme of community development.

Group sessions would look for issues that were of interest to the trainees and engage in dialogue on those themes. The generative theme would be any idea or issue about which the group had a critical curiosity which led them to understand themselves and their world better. Dialogue in the Freirean sense happens when two or more people are actively involved in investigating the world. It implies a democratising of learning where everyone is prepared to learn. Even those in the role of teacher must be willing to learn because they do not fully know this or any other subject. Similarly those in the role of learner must also be prepared to teach since they have knowledge and insights, which may help someone in the group to understand the issue more deeply.

McLaren and Leonard (1993) outline ten key values that underpin the Freirean approach to education. In order to give a sense of how the project operated let me exemplify two of these values.

Participatory: Trainees are invited to participate in making their education by decoding thematic problems. These could be issues such as poverty, drugs, sectarianism, education, social change and community development.

During group sessions, trainees would present issues from newspapers, things they had seen on TV or real-life issues. The group would then analyse these issues to see why they were happening, what the power dimensions were and how they could effect a change in those circumstances. Often sessions also consider what the impact of those issues on our practice.

Activist: The learning experience is active through problem posing. It also envisages that action should be the product of the educational exchange.

Since the common bond of the group was as Community Development practitioners the activist focus of the learning was a very clear one. Theories and models that were discussed were also implemented and the results could be tracked over time. This, in turn, informed further thinking about the theories and models.

INTEGRATED APPROACH

Working & Learning

Economic issues

Schemes that have been devised by the government to get unemployed people back into the world of work or education have failed for significant numbers of people. For example approximately 50 per cent of young people on Government Support training schemes drop out before completion (Thornhill, 2000). This has led to a great deal of suspicion from local people about the genuineness of these attempts. CDT offered a programme that combined a real job with a reasonable level of pay, the highest quality of education and payment of childcare costs. All of these elements were needed by the trainees in order to successfully engage in the process. Without a wage, they would not be able to afford to take up the opportunity to learn. Without the work element, they would not have the practice on which to reflect in order to make the learning real to them. This is in accord with the findings of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) Report (Thornhill, 2000), which states that the single most important factor influencing early dropout is whether the young person has employed status at the start of training. Additionally the payment of childcare costs opens up the opportunity to, mainly, women who have responsibilities for childcare. This also addresses the concerns raised in the Scottish Executives Interim Report on Lifelong Learning (Neil, 2002), which advocates a change of culture that would address the dislocation between work, education and learning.

Cultural fit

Part of the problem for the CDT trainees was that university level education was not part of their culture; it has been noted that across Scotland around 45 per cent

of 18–21 year olds will participate in some form of Higher Education. For Glasgow as a whole this falls to around 15 per cent and for Govan and other former Priority Treatment Areas, the figure is 5 per cent (Steele, 1999, p. 1; UACE, 1999). This cultural norm was keenly felt within the community and within the trainees. It was much easier for them to say, 'I have a job' than to say, 'I am going to university'. In this way they were able to not stand out from the crowd, particularly at a point in their development where they felt in 'no man's land' drawing away from their known cultural norms and assumptions yet not established within a new cultural landscape.

This community hegemony is a powerful force that must be considered when launching people on programmes of change. To some extent working class communities are held in their social position not by coercion but by their own consent. Sarah Mills (1997) talks of this hegemony in terms of people colluding with their own oppression. In other words they choose to act in ways that are to their own detriment. Therefore, since people's lack of participation is the result of hegemony, action for change must be counter-hegemonic in nature; not relying on individual improvement through acquisition of skills but the development of collaborations of individuals and groups who develop criticality and social action for change.

Theory and Practice

The approach of the Certificate in Community Work course is one that recognises that theory shapes experience and experience shapes theory as a vital element of the project. Without the theoretical input of the project the vast amounts of experience the workers had sometimes made no sense. In one case, I asked a young man to describe an example of discrimination he had experienced in his community and he could not. Given that Govan has high levels of deprivation, is very divided along sectarian and territorial lines and has high levels of crime and drug abuse, it seemed clear to me that he must have experienced discrimination in one form or another. It was only when he had some theory of human rights and the structural nature of poverty that he realised that most of his life he had been dealing with discrimination.

Peer Support

The emphasis on teamwork and team identity was stressed throughout the project. In this way, there was a deliberate integration of the educational and the social.

This led to a strong sense of ownership within the workers. It also led to high levels of peer group support. In terms of learning a group problem solving approach was developed. This enabled the workers to learn from one another. It gave them opportunities for their assumptions to be challenged and therefore for them to develop new ways of thinking. In a more individualised approach the potential for those shifts in thinking are reduced.

High levels of academic and personal support were also an important element of the programme. The time spent in informal or social contact seems to have developed strong working bonds where thinking and practice can be developed. Here also the holistic nature of the programme is seen. It is clear that the effects of a programme like this are not confined to thinking and work. These changes produce a whole range of impacts within families and communities. These can be very positive or very challenging. At times of challenge, the close working relationships between workers and project staff seem to have been the difference between people continuing on the programme or buckling under the pressure.

IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

Learning for Change

Crombie and Harries-Jenkins (1983) analyse Adult Education by considering its impact on social change. There is a continuum which ranges from: programmes which aim to preserve the status quo; programmes which aim for social integration through consensus and cohesion; programmes which seek to contribute to a reform of the social conditions within which they are sited; and finally programmes which aim for social transformation.

In terms of the intention of the project, it aimed to achieve social change and was therefore at the social transformation end of the continuum as discussed above. It is underpinned by an understanding that it is the structures of society themselves which produce inequalities and so it is they that have to change. The result of that analysis was to invite workers to reflect on their experience in the light of wider social forces in order to make sense of them. This was done in the context of collective reflection that highlighted the commonality of experience. This then served as a counterpoint to the ideology of the individual that permeates much of our society and is inherent in the capitalist system (Ireland, 1987).

However in terms of the outcomes of that process it could be argued that it achieved the aims of an integrationist approach. It is true that people who had been socially excluded from the benefits of work and education had been

reintroduced to those benefits through the CDT programme. It is also true that very little on a wider societal level had been changed. And yet I feel that to give people an abbreviated experience of transformed social relationships is the small beginning that is needed, over and over again, if there is to be any real and lasting change within society.

It could also be argued that CDT also had an important contribution to make to community learning and development in the following areas.

Capacity Building

> Capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organisations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner. *(CIDA, 1996, p. 1)*

The development of community infrastructure through the out-placing of trainees in community projects and the joint thinking and working which flowed from that, helped to develop an environment where collaborative responses to community issues was adopted. For example, funding for work to bring young people in danger of being drawn into drug use into education was jointly sought by CDT, a detached street work project, and the local enterprise company. This type of approach not only uses existing resources more efficiently but also draws upon a wider range of expertise thereby coming up with more comprehensive responses to community issues.

Social Capital

> Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society—it is the glue that holds them together. *(World Bank, 1999)*

Robert Putnam (2000) identified two forms of social capital: Bonding and Bridging. Bonding social capital refers to the strong bonds that exist between homogenous groups such as church groups, some ethnic organisations and women's groups. Bridging Social Capital refers to the bonds between dissimilar groups. A community example of this could be community forums that bring together wide varieties of groups and agencies to collectivise community issues. Woolcock (2001) develops the idea of a third form, Linking Social Capital. This

he understands as a vertical form which links different levels of the social world, enabling, for example, marginalised communities with high levels of bonding and bridging social capital to lever in resources from more powerful or affluent sections of society. Development of these three forms of Social Capital can be seen in the work of CDT.

Firstly, Bonding Social Capital was developed within the learning group as new social relationships were developed and with them new ways of understanding their world. A greater degree of trust and mechanisms of reciprocity were also established. This was seen both in terms of how as students, they supported one another to complete assignments and as practitioners, how they put their own time into attending other people's events, helping with street work etc. This was of primary importance; since the educational journey the students were on was in many ways antithetical to the cultural values of their community. The development of a closely bonded social group gave them an alternative to this hostile environment. This sense of solidarity and support gave them the confidence and means to practice within the community in a way that had significant impact.

This impact was seen in the development of Bridging Social Capital. This was particularly significant in the Greater Govan area because it is a community that is divided along sectarian, political and territorial lines. This has often resulted in resources and services either being withheld or becoming inaccessible to certain sections of the community. CDT workers, because they worked in local projects on both sides of these many divides, were able to foster partnership working and sharing of resources across projects. More importantly, they were able to foster dialogue and sharing of perspectives and concerns among people who traditionally did not talk to one another.

An example of Linking Social Capital was the development of the local community radio station. One of the CDT students developed a partnership with a variety of local groups concerned with youth work and community arts. They collectively worked to develop the Radio station and were able to attract broadcasting equipment, training from the local college and the right to broadcast from the government. The station then became a vehicle for the community to develop and celebrate a strong sense of itself. All of this was a product of the bonding of the group of students, leading to bridging across a variety of local projects and workers, leading to exercising influence and securing resources and services for the local community.

Community Learning Plans

Community Learning Plans and the Wider Community planning has been put forward by the government as a way to promote the active involvement of communities in decisions on local services and issues which affect people's lives. For example, health, education, transport, the economy, safety and the environment (SOEID, 1999), should be influenced by local people. This is all very well at the level of theory, however if local people are not equipped to take part in these discussions on an equal basis, in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the issues, the process is doomed to be tokenistic. In this age of consultation, people are fast developing a sophisticated sense of where they are able to make a difference. Strenuous efforts must be made if people are to give their precious time in this way. Clearly this effort is not being universally made, hence the observation of Her Majesty's Inspector of Education:

> Some partnerships had consulted insufficiently with local groups and had made key decisions with little or no community input. In general, the practice of gathering views from the community was much more fully developed than that of involving the community in decision-making. *(HMIE, 2002)*

In its training of community workers from the local community CDT is equipping them with tools of analysis for genuine participation and action within areas of regeneration.

CONCLUSION

In the first three years of the programme more than thirty people, many with no educational qualifications, from an area with very low numbers of people progressing onto Higher Education demonstrated that, with the support of locally based organisations and the input from the University they were able to achieve a completion rate in excess of 70 per cent.

A package that includes education, work, personal development and childcare support is required in order to maximise the impact. Any simplistic response to the issue fails to take account of the hegemonic forces at play and is therefore destined to be only marginally successful in enabling working class communities to access higher education. These forces include: local culture; political and economic

pressures; the family; influences from statutory agencies, e.g. social services, education and health; and the media. All of these become internalised and working class communities tend to feel that education is not for them through the constant reinforcement of all of the above.

Through the work of Govan Community Development Training a more holistic approach to the development of learners has been demonstrated. This approach takes into account the nature of adult learners. Firstly they come to any educational encounter with a wealth of experience and understanding. The problem posing nature of the Freirean approach to learning helps unlock and deepen that understanding. Secondly they have social and emotional needs that the educational process intensifies. The relational nature of the project with its emphasis on tutorial and peer support across all the issues of the workers' lives is vital in recognising and addressing those needs. Thirdly they have financial constraints and other practical issues that act as a barrier to the uptake of Higher Education. The offer of a reasonable wage and childcare means that people, and particularly women, are able in reality to access the opportunity of education. And finally adult learners do not exist in a vacuum; they are part of a culture. The changes wrought by the process of education act as a challenge to that culture. This is a traumatic change. In this process of cultural transformation there are a variety of reactions that tend to oppose the process. These come from all of the hegemonic forces outlined above.

> In the light of this it is important to develop new networks of support, new language and new possibilities. In effect this is the production of a new sub-culture which has learned a new body of behaviours common to a given social society acting rather like a template (i.e. it has predictable form and content), shaping behaviour and consciousness from generation to generation *(Miraglia, 1996, p. 1).*

It may therefore be possible to effect lasting change that has an impact, not only on the individual, but also on communities on an ongoing basis. Clearly this is not a quick fix, but a process that will take generations, determination and the dogged holding on to lofty ideals.

> Education is to be the path to permanent liberation and admits of two stages. The first stage is that by which people become aware (conscientized) of their oppression and through praxis transform that state. The second stage builds upon the first and is a permanent process of liberating cultural action. *(Heaney, 1998)*

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CHAPTER SIX

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL: THE CHALLENGE
TO ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

MALCOLM SKILBECK

BUILDING A MORE COHERENT FRAMEWORK OF POLICY AND
PROVISION FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Research and analytical studies of adult and community education in Australian and many other countries, are yielding a common agenda of concerns and issues, together with increasing knowledge and ways of strengthening and improving provision. It is particularly in the moves being made to develop and implement policies for *lifelong learning for all* that fresh issues and questions arise. As yet, however, efforts on the ground still tend to be piecemeal. Overall coordination of the numerous and varied elements is weak, and there are many gaps to address (see Figure 1)

It is that continuing education for all people over the lifespan is highly desirable or even, necessary. What this means for comprehensive, well co-ordinated policy planning, education and training provision, legislative and regulatory changes, funding and the learning process itself is, however, still largely uncharted territory.

Lifelong learning refers to the whole of life, not only adulthood. This is part of the difficulty—the scope is enormous. While there are many signs of change, declarations and statements of intent exceed firm, clear, inclusive policies and the large-scale action programs that should follow. We still have many building blocks to put in place. The numerous reports and declarations that have been produced within the past decade and more, from varied sources within countries, and by international organisations, are beginning to address need and opportunity in comprehensive, strategic ways. General directions are being set, with numerous common elements (Adult Learning Australia Inc., 2001; Adult Learning Australia Inc., 2002; Australian National Training Authority, 1998; BHERT, 1999; 2001;

Figure 1: Gaps in Adult and Community Education Policy

- For adult, community and further education we do not have the comprehensive legislative and administrative frameworks and resource arrangements that have been put in place, over a long period of time, for primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education.
- Resources fall short of needs; there is a heavy reliance on volunteers and remuneration for professionals is often very modest.
- Data are lacking on performance and outcomes; data covering all forms of adult education, formal and non-formal, are not adequately integrated for purposes of analysis.
- There is a paucity of research and scholarly analysis which only relatively recently in this country has begun to be addressed.
- Key terms, such as 'learning', 'learning communities', 'lifelong', are either not defined or used loosely; responsibility for them is often unclear.
- Policies affecting the education of adults are fragmented and public responsibilities are spread across different ministries, departments and jurisdictions, each with its own authority and frequently in competition with one another for resources and power.
- Links between the informal or non-formal sector and the formal sector are uneven.

Central Council for Education, Japan, 1981; Cochinaux & de Woot, 1995; College Board, 1978; Coffield, F. (Ed.), 1997; Department of Education, Employment and Training Victoria, 2000; Department of Education and Science, Ireland, 2000; European Commission, 1996; Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 1997, 2002; Ministry of Education, Finland, 1997; Ministry of Education Victoria, 1987; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Netherlands, 1998; OECD, 1996a; OECD, 1999a, Education Policy Analysis Chapter 1; Rubenson; 2001; UNESCO, 2000).

The number and scope of the reports and policy initiatives demonstrate rapidly growing interest, also a level of concern. They indicate just how much is to be done. Finding practical ways to translate aspiration into action is, now, the key issue. Part of the problem is the sheer scale and complexity of the task when 'lifelong learning' is linked with 'for all' (OECD, 1996a). Also to take into account is the great diversity of interests to be served and the variety of potential and existing players in the field. One of the targets must be to extend the range of provision; another is to achieve firmer policy coherence, cooperation and a more

cohesive strategic approach, drawing more systematically on all of the resources and facilities for adult and community learning. There is opportunity and need for leadership as well as collaboration and closer integration of the separate parts of the education and training system as a whole.

The challenges implied in the slogan of 'lifelong learning for all' are formidable. But they appear less daunting if, first, we put them into the perspective of what has already been achieved, consider the resources that are being and can be deployed and accept that, historically, we are only in the middle stages of what undoubtedly will be a very long term social transformation.

MILESTONES ON THE WAY

Heroic, extremely valuable efforts have been made over many decades to erect the remarkable edifice that is adult and community education today. This is not the place for a studied review of the historical evolution of adult and community education—a story that has been neglected in the standard general histories of education and still lacks its own scholarly recapitulation. But from the original inspiration and early tendencies there is a residue of ideas and values that continues to inform present thought and practice. It is indeed this residue that underlies much of the dialogue and, at times, tension between the practitioners and advocates of adult education on the one hand, policy makers and system managers on the other.

Leaving to one side the educators of classical Greece, for whom it was the humanisation of 'man' not the distinction between formal and non-formal, adult and youth education that counted (Marrou, 1956, pp. 217-221), it is in eighteenth century Europe that certain fundamental and enduring principles for adult education were laid down. These were built on in the following two centuries, and the movement progressively became global (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Evolving Edifice of Adult Education

- Adult education, like that of children, in its eighteenth and nineteenth century origins, was a result of *voluntary effort and private initiatives*, not government intervention. Its inspiration and purposes were varied, but predominantly religious and humanitarian.

- *The main aims of the early religious efforts* were to enable illiterate adults to read the Bible in the vernacular and to train Sunday school teachers, but also to ameliorate widespread

destitution and poverty. Specific target groups were identified, in industrial cities and rural parishes.

- *Although religious motives were dominant in the origins of adult education and remained a major force well into the twentieth century, other forces were also at work. Enlightenment and post Enlightenment theories about the rights of man (and woman), the development of a civic culture and political emancipation* provided a fresh impetus especially in France and Great Britain. In 1792, Marie Jean Antoine de Condorcet proposed to the Revolutionary Convention universal and equal rights to lifelong education—an ideal that, two centuries later, is now being translated into policy. In 1793 Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Rights of Women* launched the feminist movement. Earlier, in the American Colonies, adult education was under way, for example through Benjamin Franklin's Junto ('a club of mutual improvement') and the establishment of libraries, reading circles, etc.

- *A great variety of sites, settings and institutional arrangements* emerged from the late 18th and throughout the 19th centuries. In Britain and America, by contrast with the folk high schools or people's colleges in Scandinavian countries, there was no standard nomenclature or single distinctive institution. Sunday Schools, Adult Schools, Mechanics' Institutes, Adult Institutes, Working Men's Institutes/ Colleges, Lyceums, Academies, Summer Schools, literary circles, reading circles, settlements, university extension etc all played a part. The diversity of organisations and agencies involved— churches, religious societies, co-operatives, unions, universities, YMCA, YWCA, Young Men's Hebrew Association, extension divisions of agriculture departments, libraries, museums, professional associations and so on—reflected the multiplicity of aims and interests.

- *There were notable leaders, both religious and secular* who taught, wrote, established institutions and led movements, provided and sought finance. But, the great bulk of the work on the ground was performed by innumerable anonymous tutors, teachers, organisers, facilitators and patrons. A roll call of pioneers would be large and varied— they included religious figures, philosophers, scholars, intellectuals, educational

theorists, politicians, unionists, social activists and radicals and institutional leaders and organisers. Some highlights, mainly British, American and West European are indicative. Theologians, bishops and clergymen included John Amos Comenius, St Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Bishop Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Bishop John Heyte Vincent, Professor Frederick Denison Maurice, Canon Barnet, Rev. Thomas Stock, Dr Thomas Pole. There were philosophers, luminaries, intellectual leaders and scholars who provided inspiration, including de Condorcet, La Chalotais, Mary Wollstonecroft, R.H. Tawney, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Sir Richard Livingstone and Edgar Faure. Politicians became active mainly in the twentieth century (and then not many). A notable pioneer was English politician and social reformer John Henry Brougham. Social activists and radicals who have contributed to the adult education movement extend from the English Chartist William Lovell in early Victorian England to the Brazilian Paolo Freire in mid-twentieth century Latin America. Mention should be make here of the revolutionary movements of the Russian and Chinese Communists whose assaults on adult illiteracy from the 1920s onwards were matched by waves of political education especially of rural peasants and industrial workers. A strong feature of these systems has been the education of women.

- Those who in earlier times organised movements and established institutions are a numerous tribe including Samuel Fox, William Singleton, Dr Thomas Pole, William Smith, Dr George Birkbeck, Robert Raiken, Quintin Hogg, Timothy Claxton, Josiah Holbrook, Henry Morris. Influential books and reports paved the way for later reforms.

- *By the end of the twentieth century it could be said that the age of pioneers had passed and that inspirational, charismatic and more routine leadership at the grass roots had been supplemented when not largely replaced by national and international organisations* with their news-sheets, journals, conferences, platforms and programs. Progressively, policy making with increasing roles for governments has become normalised and program provision has become more organised and regularised. Nevertheless, scope still remains for highly individual, creative initiatives outside and beyond the established parameters.

Despite the diversity of interests, the different standpoints and the multitude of agencies, institutions and groups at work over more than two centuries, there are recurring themes and issues:

- Provision has always been unfair and inefficient in that it excludes large numbers of people, children and adults alike;
- That while there is a utilitarian need for instruction—in literacy, numeracy, vocational training—wider needs must be met, for social, civic, cultural development in individuals and communities;
- Stated purposes and values are important in setting directions. Initially religious and moral, over time they have become more secular and political and broadly ethical as education came to be seen as an instrument of social reform, a preparation for collective social action and the enhancement of personal life;
- That while the education of adults—and of children not members of the minority benefiting from extended schooling—should have definite vocational and economic purposes, the liberal, democratic ideals of individual enlightenment and social empowerment should be interwoven with economic improvement;
- That commendable as individual initiative and single ventures are, there is need for collective approaches and for structure, organisation and coherence in provision, content and methods. However, there has always been a concern to maintain local control or responsibility;
- That encouraging to learn requires a mixture of relevant provision of good quality and recognisable incentives or inducements; motives to learn are both intrinsic and extrinsic—psychological, cultural, economic.

Flexibility, responsiveness and addressing deeply felt needs and social justice issues are among the many positive features of the edifice of adult education that has been erected since its eighteenth century origins. Wide scope for individual choice and voluntary action—both powerful drivers—means that personal motivation and commitment have often been high.

Much of the religious and socio-political impetus of the European and American movements found expression in the Australian colonies in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Close parallels have continued to the present day, particularly with adult and community education developments in England and Scotland. However, the platform has become international, and Australia's membership of UNESCO and OECD and institutional and individual

memberships of and affiliations with international professional associations mean that policies and ideas about practice now both reflect and contribute to wider, more global movements and programs.

NEW BUILDING BLOCKS

Whereas in the past adult, community and further education has mainly been available, or been sought, on the basis of demand by individual adults and groups, a fundamental shift in contemporary thinking is signalled by the title of the 1996 OECD publication *Lifelong Education for All*.

- What has been—and still is—a choice made and acted on by a minority of the population is beginning to be replaced by the notion of large-scale participation. This mirrors the historical shift in secondary schooling and, now, formal tertiary education, from highly selective towards mass and universal participation.
- The term 'lifelong' in everyday usage is frequently reduced to a synonym with 'adult'. This is misleading since 'lifelong' means the whole life cycle; lifelong learning signals a continuing, coherent developmental process from infancy into old age, referred to in the striking metaphor of 'the learning chain' (Cochinaux & de Woot, 1995).

This fundamental shift toward a conception of continuing education over the life cycle has yet to be worked through to the point of full-scale action by any country. Many, however, are moving ahead as shown by the succession of reports and studies at national and international level during the past decade. Among the issues being addressed are gaps and discontinuities in provision, ways of monitoring performance and determining outcomes and impact, barriers to participation, cost sharing and incentives. In the process, the field of adult education, long relegated to the margins, is emerging more clearly on the horizons of public policy and funding. It is becoming fertile territory for research and strategic thinking (Golding, Davies, & Volkoff, 2001). Clearly a new framework for educational policy and action is needed. As Green, Wolf and Leney remark in their study of European education and training systems, 'It is no longer appropriate to see education and training as a stage in people's lives, undertaken before they enter the workplace; but rather as something which is a lifetime enterprise.' (Green, Wolf, & Leney, 1999, p. 221)

Among the building blocks for a system of lifelong learning is well-grounded knowledge of what we are already doing. For adult and community education, we have lacked sound data relative to the data systems that have been built for other sectors, especially in the areas of compulsory schooling and higher education. In addition to weaknesses in statistics there has been in the past a limited research base. Considerable progress has been made, however, in the past decade (Golding, Davies, & Volkoff, 2001). Statistical reporting remains, by contrast, inadequate and this is an international problem. The OECD education indicators, for example, provide practically no data on non-formal adult and continuing education in member countries. Amongst other constraints this means we are very poorly placed to make comparisons, quantitative assessments of the value of the service and measure benefits against costs. When systematic and comparative data on participation rates, costs and overall provision are lacking, policy making is severely constrained or has the character of a venture into the unknown. A further problem is that with relatively few exceptions, the analytical, discursive and reflective literature on the education of adults in the non-formal sector has been, until relatively recently, sparse by comparison with that on formal education.

Here we should note that the term 'education' is often misused, as if to mean 'formal schooling'. This tendency can be observed in scholarly literature as well as everyday usage. Thus, a sample of texts widely used in history of education courses for trainee and experienced teachers and other scholarly work shows just how strong is the cast of mind that treats 'education' as formal schooling. A number of standard histories were surveyed for their treatment of adult education. Only Connell and Jarman and perhaps Butts were exceptions to the general tendency either to ignore adult education altogether, or to give it only passing, spasmodic attention (Adamson, 1919; Armytage, 1964; Boyd, 1965; Browning, 1903; Brubacher, 1947; Butts, 1955; Butts & Cremin, 1953; Curtis & Boultwood, 1962; Connell, 1980; Cubberley, 1920; Eby & Arrowood, 1934; Good, 1956; Jarman, 1963; Monroe, 1915; Pollard, 1956; Rusk, 1957; Ulich, 1945).

As a field of inquiry, adult and community education has lacked data comparable to that of schools and tertiary education, and has until recent years attracted relatively few serious scholars. Inevitably, the courageous and committed people who explored ideas, launched projects, sought funds, organised and provided programs and taught at the numerous often poorly resourced sites for learning, formed a culture which was of relatively little interest to—or exercised significant influence in—the mainstream of education development. As Kennedy said in her review of British further education: 'Further education suffers because of prevailing British attitudes. Not only does there remain a very carefully

calibrated hierarchy of worthwhile achievement, which has clearly established routes and which privileges academic success well above any other accomplishment, but there is an appalling ignorance amongst decision-makers and opinion-formers about what goes on in further education. It is so alien to their experience' (Kennedy, 1997, p. 1). If we substitute the terms 'adult and community education' perhaps the same could be said of Australia, at least, until quite recently.

All this is beginning to change. There has been an awakening of interest in the value and necessity of highly educated communities, rural as well as urban, for a mixture of reasons—economic, social justice, civic responsibility and community well-being. Appreciation is growing of just what is at stake for education in the worldwide social, economic, political and cultural transformations now occurring. Technology is one driving force; economic globalisation is another. They are by no means the only considerations. Lacking a highly educated and systematically trained populace, the knowledge society/knowledge economy and a high quality of life for all people are unattainable. It is quite insufficient, and at the same time unacceptable, in a democracy, to suppose that the growth, diffusion and everyday use of systematic and advanced knowledge and skills should be the preserve of the few or that educational foundations laid down in school and initial tertiary studies will suffice over a lifetime. The survival of communities and whole cultures is dependent on intellectual, moral and social qualities of their members, fostered and sustained by continuing education.

Policies, structures and finances for adult, community and further education are in need of revitalisation from both public and private sources, to align a fine tradition of extensive voluntary effort, community service and modest public funding with contemporary needs. Systematic provision of continuous learning for a higher proportion of adults and young school leavers requires more and clearer pathways, better linkages between the non-formal and formal sectors. Individuals, employers and voluntary bodies will need to join in new partnerships with government, including local government, to mobilise the necessary resources. While some solutions will be cost neutral, additional resources should be progressively be brought into play in order to raise participation rates and strengthen quality. Costs are of course an issue but from an investment perspective, they should be assessed against the social, economic and individual benefits that accrue.

The emergence of mass, democratic, knowledge-based societies implies well functioning education systems. Why, though, does this mean extending opportunity and access to ever larger numbers of people, over the lifecycle? What

are the scope and the scale of what is required? We turn now to the more specific arguments for universal, lifelong learning, to the different elements of the rationale.

RATIONALE: WHY WE NEED LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL

The foundations of learning are in the home, family life, neighbourhood and school. We have early childhood education at the pre-school stage, but provision is uneven and costs to parents can be very high. Schooling is universal, but not uniformly sound. It has been the subject of constant review and appraisal, with numerous reform initiatives especially in recent decades (Barber, 1996, 2002; Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). Schooling is universal (but pre-school is not).

As a minimum, successful completion of secondary education to Year 12 or its equivalent is widely accepted as a necessary foundation for either effective entry into the labour market and continued employment, or continuing study through some form of post-secondary or tertiary education. It has been adopted in Australia as a policy objective in all States and Territories, although there is still some prevarication over whether or not full-time employment from age 15 might be an acceptable alternative (Department of Premier and Cabinet, Queensland, 2002; Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1999). Achievement of this goal is, however, still elusive and Year 12 completion rates are modest by international yardsticks. According to OECD figures on the population that has attained upper secondary education, Australia falls below the mean of the thirty countries surveyed, for all age groups (25 to 64). Particularly significant are the low rates for older age groups that would be lower still for those aged 65 and over. Such figures have implications for the scale and quality of a country's human and social capital (OECD, 2001d).

Despite our best endeavours, we may have to accept that even with completion of a full secondary education, average performance standards in the basic subjects of the school curriculum, quality of learning—including learning skills—and attainments in the ethical and moral domains, will all be modest, on average, in universal systems of schooling. Australian school students have performed well on international comparisons of attainment in several subjects (OECD, 2001a). This performance is, however, uneven. Within average scores there are wide internal disparities including regional differences. A high level of basic education attained by all people, is the surest foundation on which to build all forms of continuing education, but it is only a foundation. Of considerable

importance in this regard is the impact on their children of learning achievements and active learning by adults—the creation of a family learning culture.

Whatever may be achieved in school subjects and learning assignments by age sixteen or seventeen, formal education to the end of secondary school cannot be any kind of completion but rather the first stage of a continuing process of individual self-realisation and the development of human potential. Continuing, post-compulsory, post-school, tertiary or adult education within a framework of lifelong learning into old age is therefore quite properly becoming the target as countries grow in understanding of the value of a highly educated populace. A further consideration is the ageing of the population. Combined with earlier retirement, and a great increase in part-time and contract work, this demographic change means that very large numbers of adults will need opportunities to continue developing, growing intellectually, socially and culturally into old age. Understandably, these changes are affecting public policy and creating fresh challenges for the numerous providers and organisations in the fields of tertiary, adult and continuing education (Department of Human Services, Victoria, 2002; OECD, 1998).

While we are still struggling to raise our school participation and completion rates and ensure a high quality of learning for all students of school age, we have to recognise that, now, very large numbers of adults lack formal qualifications at Year 12 or its or equivalent.

Moreover, necessary as is such a foundation, it is still insufficient. Knowledge itself is changing too rapidly, as are requirements in working life and civil society. Flexibility and the continuing upgrading of personal and social competence are basic requirements for effective social and economic participation; they are not optional.

Of particular importance now and for the foreseeable future is raising the overall standard of computer literacy. This has been set as a national goal (in the Commonwealth Action Plan articulating the education and training industry's response to the Government's Strategic Framework for the Information Economy). The plan extends to all parts of the education and training system including adult and continuing education and embraces review, monitoring, standard setting, research as well as direct training. It covers both public roles and responsibilities, and those of the private sector. A key component is that all stakeholders work toward ensuring 'that all citizens possess broad literacy, numeracy and technological literacy skills for life, work and lifelong learning and that there are adequate numbers of people with the specialist skills needed by … industries' (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 2000, p. 7).

Not only is this a demonstration of the role of technology in everyday contemporary life, it also provides a telling illustration of the thesis that learning is to be conceived as both lifelong and for all. Similar requirements are set in the plethora of national and international reports on the impending/actual transformation of learning through information and communication technologies (European Round Table, 1997; Ministry of Education Finland, 1995; National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, 2002; OECD, 1996b, 2001a, 2003b). Whereas for schools, colleges and universities there is a clear line of development visibly leading toward universal basic technological literacy, for adults who have not had these opportunities in the recent past or do not have access now there are clear targets yet to address. There are indeed many programs including well-subsidised short courses for beginning adults (Gooley, 2001; Skilbeck, 2001). E-learning is making rapid strides, notably in tertiary education institutions but, as Trow remarks, it would be a mistake to suppose 'that the new modes of communication will soon be replacing traditional forms of continuing education' (Trow, 1999). Short, introductory courses, now so common, are but the beginning. For example, close attention is required to the professional skills of all teachers and tutors, in the field of adult education, not just a minority of specialists and enthusiasts, if the promise of 'revolution' is to be fulfilled.

FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL: LINKAGES AND PATHWAYS

While we need to continue moving towards inclusive systems and forms of education that are continuous, with smooth transitions from one level or stage to another, there are crucial differences which cannot be overlooked between education in/for the compulsory years and the post compulsory years. For formal education, that is schooling, in childhood and into the adolescent years, Australia, like many other countries in the Western democratic tradition, has a long established, clear, legal base with origins in legislation late in the nineteenth century. This legal framework is grounded in a recognition of considerations that are both utilitarian and moral: preparation for civic responsibilities and economic activity and the need for a caring, nurturing environment for young people. For the post-compulsory years different considerations operate. No general legal requirement is made regarding participation, although there are both moral issues (for example, equality of opportunity) and a variety of demands—for socio-civic education, employment training and retraining, personal fulfilment and so forth - which constitute a culture of provision and persuasion to participate.

A key distinction between school and post-school is freedom of choice. A crucial question arising in the knowledge-based society as it moves toward lifelong learning for all is how far this should be steered by considerations of public policy, through a mixture of moral suasion, public promotion, incentives and formal requirements, to shift the level of participation from the present minority to the majority of adults. Public authorities should be addressing this question with a view to establishing targets both for overall participation and to meet the needs of particular, heavily under-represented categories. Thus far and most recently, the trend has been toward broad goals and aspirational statements and there is a dearth of well researched information on what is happening on the ground. A further question concerns the role of communities in fostering, promoting and encouraging learning, not simply as a matter of individual choice but in the interests of the well-being of all who live and work in the region. 'Community', in this sense, is exemplified by the learning towns and cities movement; but we need analogous organisations at the local level too. It is noteworthy that enhancing freedom of choice and individual liberty for more people was one of the aspirations of the more socially conscious and politically-minded pioneers of adult education. They both encouraged and expected people to choose what would be beneficial to themselves, their families and communities.

Different cultures of access and provision have evolved for the compulsory and post-compulsory education years: the one much more professionalised and structured, and intimately linked with the apparatus of the state, with certification and registration to practice; the other much looser, informal, diverse and independent (Perry & Volkoff, 2001). The usefulness of the distinction in recent years has decreased somewhat, although it continues to leave deep traces in policy and practice. Both the formal sector of institutions and non-formal or informal provision contribute to meeting a growing demand for adult and community education. The extension, extra-mural and adult entry programs of universities have long served as a bridge between the formal and the non-formal sectors.

While it is clear that freedom to choose will—and indeed should—remain a principle there is now a range of compelling desiderata, compulsions and incentives for adults to engage in systematic, continuing learning. They include professional requirements to practice, career advancement, requirements of regulatory frameworks, statutory requirements, prerequisites of entitlements to benefits and other factors in a volatile employment market. The diffusion of communication and information technology means that a majority of households in Australia now has access to the massive information resources of the World Wide Web, an instrument with a vast potential for adult learning yet to be tapped.

The dramatic growth of tertiary education enrolments including a substantial increase in the numbers of mature age students has raised expectations and stimulated interest in families and communities which have had no history of education beyond the bare minimum (OECD, 1996c).

Many of these mature age students would, in past years, have been attending adult evening classes and some indeed have come into universities through this route. A mix of psychological, cultural, social, technological, economic and ethical factors continues to generate new expectations and even imperatives. The non-formal, introductory class is seen, by many, as a first step, not an end point. We are beginning to hear claims not only for universal opportunities for continuing learning but also for universal rights and socio-cultural-economic requirements and obligations.

Freedom of choice by learners and flexibility of provision are greatly valued features of the adult and community education tradition. Together with the principle of voluntary work, they are of enduring value and need to be sustained as social and economic pressures lead to greater engagement with public policy issues. Investment by government including subsidies is not new. The first step was taken long ago when public subsidies and concessions were sought by religious and charitable providers of adult education, and governments took responsibility for programs.

The diversity of pressures, requirements and provision, hence of opportunities to participate in adult, continuing education and training, is unlikely to diminish but can be expected to grow. The public interest dimension will gather further force. More and clearer pathways to facilitate progression will be needed, together with improvements in determining the level and nature of attainments and recognition of diverse forms of learning. For these purposes, qualifications frameworks are valuable, but recognition is also a matter of closer links between the formal and non-formal sectors. As noted above, there is a corresponding need to greatly improve our present data standards, means of reporting and uses of data—especially those pertaining to attainments, outcomes and impact. Ways to meet these deficiencies have been proposed (Borthwick, Knight, Bender, & Loveder, 2001).

From the wide ranging changes in society and conditions of life outlined above and reviewed in great detail in a welter of research studies and policy documents relating to the future development of Australian society we can infer areas of policy action for adult and community education. There is a rising tide of needs to address.

Demographic, economic and social research going beyond head counts is needed to quantify likely demand and to consolidate data on all kinds of provision and participation, both formal and non-formal. The strands of formal-compulsory/informal-voluntary need to be interwoven in the fabric of lifelong learning for all. Policy makers and providers will need to be much more attentive to such matters as: pathways through and from non-formal into formal learning; diverse ways of recognising learning attainments; shared funding and other kinds of partnership and collaboration with the private sector; and the quality and value of what is being taught and learnt at the adult stage. Adults will generally need to be much better informed than at present about both opportunities and requirements, and prepared to take increased responsibility for their own learning, individually and in groups.

IN WHOM AND IN WHAT IS ADULT AND COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION AN INVESTMENT?

In order for the rationale for continuing private and public investment in adult, community and further education to be firmly grounded, the question of investment in what, and by whom, needs attention. Benefits both to individuals and to society accrue from investment in education. Together they justify private and public sharing of costs (Cohn & Addison, 1997; OECD, 2001c). For approximately half a century, following the groundbreaking analyses of Schultz, Becker, Coleman and others, economists and sociologists have developed techniques and measures for assessing the benefits to individuals and to society—economic and social—accruing from investment in education and training—the so-called rates of return (Behrman & Stacey, 1997; Mingat & Tan, 1996). There is a continuing international debate about variable rates of return, specifically economic returns (employment, levels of income, economic growth, etc), according to levels and types of education. While there are disagreements about actual rates of return to particular types and levels of educational attainment, few now dispute that returns substantially exceed costs, even more for individuals than for the community as a whole.

There is, however, a difficulty here for non-formal adult and community education. Rates of return analysis depends on accurate information about levels of formal education completed, entry or re-entry to employment; it also seeks data on lifetime earnings. A key factor is the level or stage of formal education completed, for example a rate is calculated for completion of upper secondary

schooling, and another one for completion of tertiary education (OECD, 2000, p. 297).

As far as it goes, rates of return analysis is useful, despite the disagreements about actual rates and various technical difficulties. However, the analysis does not take us very far for present purposes. The necessary data for a non-formal adult education and training are simply unavailable so at present overall rates cannot be calculated. Despite the limitations of rates of return analysis, it is a widely used procedure that features in debates and decisions about educational investment. For the foreseeable future appraisals of the socio-economic 'value' of adult and community education will necessarily depend on such techniques as sample studies of perceptions of employers, self-appraisal by students, structured reports by tutors and program managers, and field studies of opportunity and uses made of them by adult learners. There is an accumulating body of research evidence on the impact of adult and community education programs (Golding, Davies, & Volkoff, 2001). While further research is needed, there is evidence that investment is resulting in gainful employment, continuing study, community enrichment and personal well-being.

The proportion of costs that should be fairly allocated to different stakeholders, whether government, individuals, communities, employers and other beneficiaries is a contentious issue but some form of sharing is widely seen as the way ahead (OECD, 1999a). Negotiations, with trade-offs, are essential if cost-sharing is to work well. The most efficient ways of organising payment, whether through direct charges, loans, deferred payment etc., are contested, as are the different kinds of support schemes (targeted grants, loans, tax concessions, income support etc). Public attention in Australia has been focused on meeting the costs of tertiary education and the debate over public funding of non-government schools, with consequent policy analysis in depth. For adult and community education, however, there is neither comparable public interest nor, as yet, sophistication of policy analysis.

The major concerns to address are two-fold: ways to parcel out public resources; subsidies to assist individual students facing financial difficulties or to support economic priorities. These are both important but they by no means cover the range of issues that need to be addressed.

The same kinds of analytic processes and the same attention to issues being given to investment and returns and cost issues in formal tertiary education should be applied as far as practicable to non-formal adult and community education. The results would be more transparency, better accountability and, in all probability, a transformation of the present funding regime. As to what is being invested in, the

obvious answer is adult community and further education. Less obvious are outputs and impact for which at present measures are lacking and data inadequate.

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR ALL: DO WE MEAN 'FOR ALL'?

The title of the influential OECD publication *Lifelong Learning for All* stakes out two significant claims. The first, scarcely novel but challenging nevertheless, is that the target is learning, hence learners and not teaching, teachers or providers and formal education institutions (which might have been supposed had the title been *Lifelong Education for All*, such is the impact of formal structures and requirements on our understanding and the uses of language). The claim for learners and learning is in itself a challenge to think creatively about the goals and processes of learning—the conditions that sustain and the barriers that impede. The need for creativity and boldness is all the greater when we turn to the second claim, 'for all'. This indeed is a novel idea and attempts to realise it in practice in any state or nation can be expected to raise extremely difficult not to say controversial issues.

The OECD document, despite the title, reverts to a much more cautious stance in the body of the text—for all who wish or need to benefit from the opportunity. Yet, the flavour of the report is universalist—an expectation that, at some future but not remote time, all adults and not only all children and youth, will be regularly and systematically engaged in learning. In a more recent publication which draws on the findings of a multi-country review, the OECD emphasises strategies that show promise for increasing participation of adult learners, with an emphasis on comprehensive, integrated strategies and for closer attention to learner motives and interests (OECD, 2003a).

In its World Education Report 2000 and in a monitoring report on the global programme *Education for All*, UNESCO draws on the UN tradition of rights—that all people should have a right to education. Originally formulated with basic education and literacy very much to the fore, the 'right' is increasingly viewed through the lens of lifelong learning. This implies, at least, adequate supply or provision of opportunities and the elimination of barriers. In no country in the world can it be said that in practice all people are able to exercise the right to education, lifelong (EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, 2002; Skilbeck, 2000).

Several questions arise which can be tackled by considering the categories of people who are currently not accessing lifelong learning. They are all those who wish or feel a need to be engaged in learning, but for whatever reason are not or

are unable so to be. Or, in a drastic extension, they might be those who, regardless of their present wishes and intentions, need to be drawn in—for whatever reasons there may be.

Putting aside for the moment questions about how systematic, continuing, sequential and rigorous the learning in question might be, for what kinds of reasons can the claim be made that everyone should be actively engaged in learning over the lifespan? We have already seen that in the erection of the apparatus of compulsory schooling there is a long-standing, comprehensive, prescriptive social and legal answer given to this question for children and youth. It should not be forgotten that, in historical terms, compulsory schooling is a 'modern', i.e. Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment, invention—and that libertarian arguments have been advanced against it, for example by Ivan Illich in his radical critique of the formal system of education (Illich, 1971, ch. 8. The Futility of Schooling), or Mark Twain's quip that a man should not allow schooling to stand in the way of his son's education.

For adults, the issue is not and cannot be one of a general stipulation or compulsion. Yet there are now various pressures and incentives, many of them economic in nature, combining to create widening sets of expectations and requirements about learning. As already stated, there is an element for adults of at least quasi-compulsion and sometimes an enforceable requirement related to the performance of various professional, technical and work tasks. All who wish to be licensed vehicle drivers, for example, undertake a process of systematic learning whether through formal instruction or more informally. Many of these licence-to-practice requirements relate to specific vocations or situations and may be episodic rather than continuing. They are conditional, in the form of 'should you wish to drive a car, carry out electrical work, practice the law etc. you must demonstrate competence and satisfy prescribed tests.' Compulsory schooling is of a different order.

For reasons stated above, in discussion of the social and economic strands of the rationale for lifelong learning, we can expect a continuance or extension of requirements and obligations in order to practice in different professions. This will occur through formal rules or a supply side stimulus—for example requirements by governments or the operations of the labour market. Accordingly, systematic learning is already a necessity or formal requirement in many spheres of life. Nevertheless, the range of such expectations, requirements and practices, which have to do with safety, health, the performance of dangerous or complex tasks and so on, would have to be vastly extended before they could be said to constitute a large component of lifelong learning for all.

There are objections to a requirement/enforcement approach that extend beyond these more obvious cases. First, learning forced or required may be ineffectual and unused. Second, in democracies, formal constraints and enforceable requirements should not be extended beyond necessity. Third, the pleasures and fulfilments of learning cannot be readily celebrated and enjoyed when unwelcome compulsion operates. It may be argued that these objections, notwithstanding learning of certain kinds, are necessary-for personal safety and well-being, in the fundamental interests of the social group etc. Is lifelong learning for all a demonstrable necessity for all people, or is it not, rather, a cultural ideal? As an ideal or a desideratum it can of course be vigorously pursued and promulgated as policy.

There are trends and arguments that provide reasons for the emphasis being given to more inclusive approaches to the education of adults. For example, in families, children may be severely disadvantaged unless adult members have knowledge and competence. The smooth functioning of democratic institutions and processes and active citizenship depend on the continuing growth of knowledge and understanding widely dispersed across the whole society. A developing repertoire of competencies in adults requires something more than individual choice—or indifference. This would be an extension of the famous remark by Robert Lowe, about the necessity for elementary education in nineteenth century England: 'we must educate our masters'. The modern democratic counterpart might be 'We must educate ourselves and continue to do so' in order to be capable, active citizens of a knowledge-based, democratic society.

There are other tendencies in this direction. For example, beyond the years of compulsory school attendance there is considerable pressure on individuals in receipt of state aid to continue in learning, or to undertake vocational training for re-entry into the work force. Increasingly, employment specifications require evidence of formal qualifications or expertise gained through systematic study. As already stated, the extension of regulations and professional requirements for periodic updating of knowledge add further weight to the argument that we are becoming a continually schooled society.

To summarise, 'lifelong learning for all', even if accepted as a desideratum, cannot be achieved and should not be sought by means of generally enforced requirements and comprehensive regulatory measures. Alongside the trend towards more formal demands for current, demonstrable competence in the social and economic spheres, we need to use a variety of means to promote learning, arouse interest in continuing learning and foster commitment to it.

A mixture of supply and demand side strategies based on developing and disseminating knowledge, and seeking assent is the way ahead. In short, there are educational ways of achieving the goals. On the supply side, removal of barriers, provision of facilities, programs, equipment and other learning resources, suitable teachers and other personnel, is the first step and it is already widely adopted. Beyond basic provision and facilitation of access, a stronger supply side approach is required to encourage, foster and demonstrate, in different ways, that authority figures and institutions value learning, and they are prepared to reward it.

The arguments for much more intensive support and promotion of lifelong learning are by no means uniformly accepted. Greatly extended adult and community education may come to be accepted. But there are no easy answers to some of the issues—meeting the costs, demonstrating value and extending the remit of public policy. Moreover, there is an issue to address on learning itself. What kinds of processes and structures do we have in mind in invoking the principle of 'lifelong learning for all'? Is there in adult, community and further education anything resembling the systematic, sequential bodies of knowledge, fields of well analysed experience and sets of competencies that we find in the structures and procedures of formal education? Should or could there be?

For schooling, from pre-school to graduate programs, there is a familiar apparatus—of institutional curricula, assessment, accreditation, a professionalised teaching force and so on. Are there, or might there be, analogies in the much more loosely structured and organised domain of adult and continuing education? Do we need them? Some would vigorously repudiate any such approach in the belief that it would undermine the purposes and essential values and practices enshrined in the concept of non-formal or informal learning, which have been instrumental in the worldwide growth of adult education. Valid as such concerns are, they are not a reason for rejecting a more strategic and structured approach in discussing the purpose and nature of future learning.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding a long history, numerous achievements and the recent strengthening of adult, community and further education, there are gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed if we are to achieve the goals of lifelong learning. Participation rates have increased but are too low and skewed. The 'already educated' tend to continue, the 'less educated' tend not to. Our knowledge base for policy is too limited. And so on. Among the changes to be

considered are: broader legislation; additional and new sources of funds; greater policy coherence and co-ordination; strengthening the place of adult continuing and further education within the overall 'chain of learning', formal and non-formal, childhood to old age; procedures for monitoring, evaluation, analysis; research needs.

In developing a coherent, analytic framework for adult, community and further education we start from the legislative base and present operations but need to go much further in the trajectory of lifelong learning for all and in the analysis of what kinds of education are of most worth. The voluntary principle for adults continues but there are expectations and requirements leading toward a society-wide norm of participation in some form of continuing learning. More can be done by public authorities and collective effort in communities to shift the level of participation from a minority to a majority of adults, to do more to define pathways, clear blockages and barriers, identify larger target groups and play a more prominent role in promotion and dissemination of information and ideas.

To do this and for other reasons, a clear articulation, explanation and wide dissemination of the underlying rationale for universal lifelong learning is needed. There are three principal kinds of justification for extending opportunities and for seeking a much wider participation in some kind of continuing education over the lifecycle. All three require public promotion by opinion leaders:

- A cluster embracing the exercise of democratic rights and responsibilities, strengthening social initiatives and social cohesion or capital, achieving a more equitable, fair and just society;
- Strengthening human capital, and improving the economic conditions of life; and
- Enabling people to develop themselves to the full to enjoy the richness of human experience.

The breadth of the rationale is a reminder that narrow specialisation and undue concentration on a limited range of learning 'needs' risks distorting educational goals and values, thereby limiting creativity, innovativeness, diversity and the pool of ideas for future social, economic and personal growth.

From the foregoing outline of trends, achievements and directions one conclusion that stands out is that adult, community and further education is on the cusp of what could be a new wave—the systematic advancement of strategies to take lifelong learning for all nearer to realisation. To take advantage of the opportunity—or to meet the challenge—several changes and developments have

been suggested. These arise from the field itself or rather from reflection on tendencies in the wider environment and their educational implications. To sustain the work and extend it further, a variety of public-private partnerships need to be mobilised. Sharply focused efforts to increase participation and ensure successful learning outcomes could both follow resource flows and themselves encourage further investment from a wide range of stakeholders. More and clearer pathways through the different sectors would be beneficial. Greater use of the qualifications framework and other ways of recognising learning achievement would assist in demonstrating outcomes and impact of learning. Innovations and declared developmental strategies are good ways of improving visibility, gaining further support and drawing in more students. Such developments as these do entail further costs but if the starting point is a strategy to improve revenues, costs will take their place as but one element in a broader strategy of operationalising the goal of lifelong learning for all.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

OLDER LEARNERS AND ENGAGEMENT
WITH THE LABOUR MARKET

TOM KARMEL AND DAVINIA WOODS

INTRODUCTION

The ageing of the Australian population and the implications for the work force have received considerable popular attention in recent time. For example, the headline story for the *Australian Chief Executive* (November, 2003), 'Population ageing: Workforce implications' featured an article by the Prime Minister, Mr Howard, among others:

The answer has to be found in increasing workforce participation rates and the obvious place to start is at the mature end of the workforce (Howard, 2003, p. 6).

Similarly, the Australian Government (2004) in *Australia's Demographic Challenges*, points to the potential effect that the ageing of the population will have on the economy and on living standards and argues that the answer is in labour force participation and productivity (p. 1). There is a wide belief that education and training have a key role to play. Indeed, the first chapter of the report is about improving the capacity for work, arguing that education and skills are the key to ensuring effective participation (p. 3).

Some economists have been inclined to dismiss the concerns with the workforce implications of ageing, pointing to the difficulties that current older workers have if they are displaced from their jobs and arguing that the market will sort it out. Banks' (2004) assessment is that 'many aspects of an ageing Australia will be accommodated automatically by the market' (Banks, 2004, p. 15), but 'the indications are that the demographic transition will have profound effects on our society and economy that will require judicious planning and timely intervention by all levels of government'(p. 29).

Education and training potentially have a role to play in two ways. First, we know that a high level of education tends to launch people on a career that

involves high labour force participation as well as higher wages and lower unemployment rates. So increasing levels of education should in themselves lead to higher participation rates among older persons. The second way is that education and training later in life arguably should improve participation rates among older persons by improving or maintaining productivity or by providing a broader range of employment opportunities. Indeed, the rhetoric of lifelong learning has this very much in mind. The issue for this chapter is the second of these. We are interested empirically in the extent to which education and training later in life leads to high rates of engagement with the labour market.

In the next section, we map out the level of participation in the education and training system by older persons. In the third section, we examine the relationship between timing of education and training, and the extent to which on-going education and training improves employment rates. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.[1]

EDUCATIONAL PARTICIPATION OF OLDER PERSONS

To provide context to the issue of older learners, we present some simple cross tabulations of the participation rates of older persons and younger persons in vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (see Table 1). The rates are presented separately for males and females because of the different labour markets they face.

We see:

- For males, the rate of participation in VET among 15 to 24 year olds is around three times the rate of 40 to 64 year olds. For females aged 15 to 24 years, the rate is over twice the rate of 40 to 64 year olds;
- Similarly, and as expected, the rate of participation in higher education is much higher among 15 to 24 year olds than 40 to 64 year olds;

Table 1: Participation rates[2] by sector by sex and age, 2003

	VET*		Higher education**	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
15-24 years	25.0	20.9	12.9	17.9
25-39 years	12.0	11.2	4.5	5.3
40-64 years	7.1	8.2	1.2	1.7

Notes: * VET statistics cover public VET only.

** Students in higher education refer to domestic students.

Sources: ABS Population by age and sex, Australian, June 2003 – Final, cat no.3201.0; Higher Education Statistics, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2003; NCVER National VET Provider Collection, 2003.

- Overall, older females have slightly higher rates of participation in education and training than older males; and
- Overall, older persons are more likely to participate in VET than higher education.

A comparison of Australian participation rates internationally indicates that Australia has a particularly high level of participation in education among older age groups. Figure 1 indicates that the participation rate among the 40 and over

Figure 1: Enrolment rates by age group, OECD countries, 2001
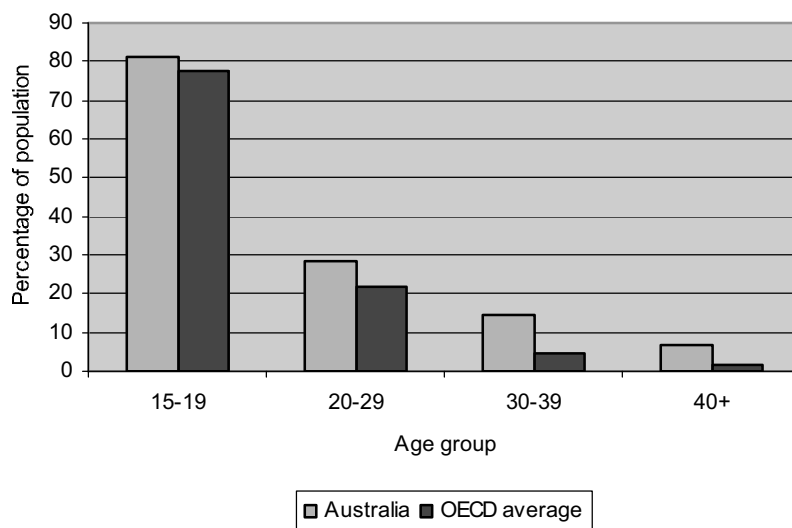
Source: OECD 2003, Education at a glance: OECD Indicators, OECD, Paris

age group is over three times that of the average of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Participation rates are also shown for older learners by level of education to see what qualifications older persons are typically engaging in. To simplify the number of observations, some levels of education are combined. The results are shown in Figure 2 and the main findings are summarised below:

- Overall, as expected, participation in education and training by older persons declines with age;

- For both males and females, participation in VET is greatest in non-Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications. These comprise students enrolled in subjects only (and thus not full courses), non-award courses and other recognised courses[3];

- For males and females enrolled in AQF qualifications in VET, participation is greatest at certificates III and IV and lowest at diplomas and above;

- For the females aged 40 to 50 years in higher education, participation is greatest at Bachelor degrees and below. However, the variation between the educational levels declines as females approach 60 years of age; and

- For males in higher education, there is little variation in the participation rates between the levels of education.

Figure 2: Participation rates of students aged 40-64 years in VET and higher education* by age and educational level, 2003

Males in higher education

Females in higher education
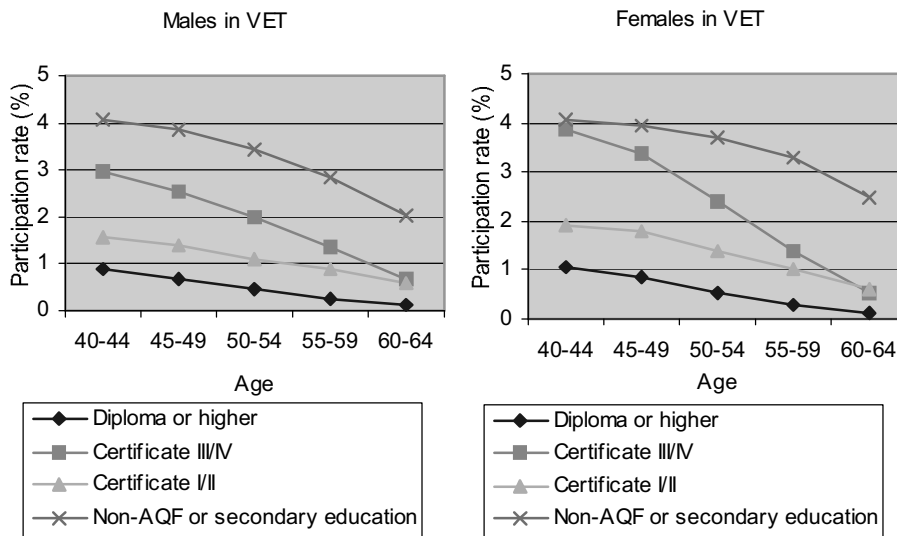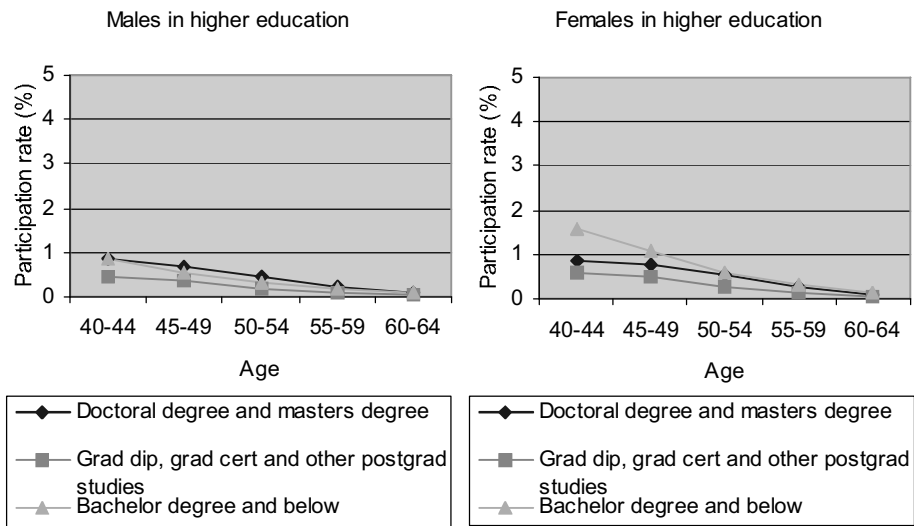
Notes: * Students in higher education refer to domestic students.

Sources: ABS Population by age and sex, Australian, June 2003 – Final, cat no.3201.0; Higher Education Statistics, Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), 2003 and NCVER National VET Provider Collection, 2003.

The overall point is that older persons are studying at a wide range of levels. Some are building on other qualifications, while some are doing quite low level courses. It should also be noted that some have vocational aims in mind while others have a purely educational or self development motivation. Indeed, given the finding that participation in VET by older persons is greatest in non-AQF qualifications, it is likely that a large proportion of older learners will be motivated to study for personal reasons.

The NCVER Student Outcomes Survey allows us to examine the reason for undertaking training at technical and further education institutes (TAFEs)[4]. This survey provides information about training outcomes for students who completed training in the previous year. The results are presented separately for students who received a qualification at the end of their course (graduates) and students who successfully completed part of a course (module completers).

Not surprisingly, personal reasons are more important for older persons (see Figure 3). However, what is striking is that employment related reasons dominate

Figure 3: TAFE graduate and module completer reasons for study by age and sex, persons aged 40-64, 2004
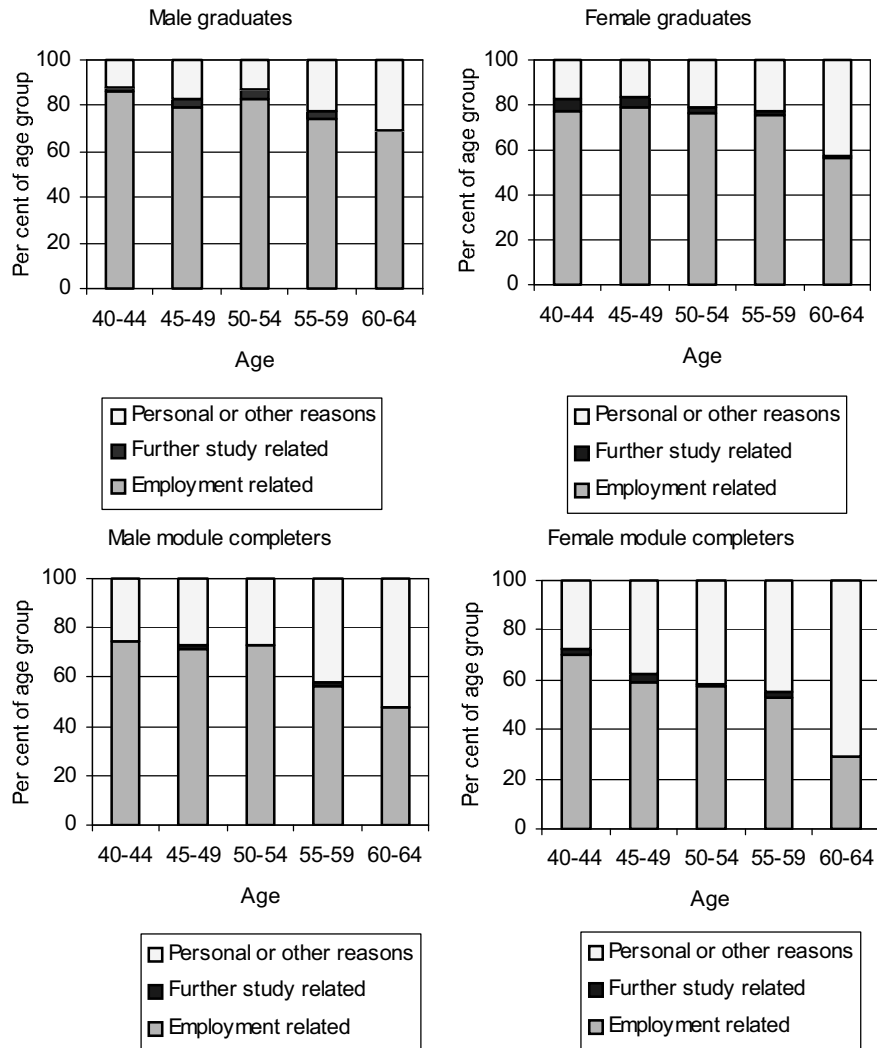
Source: NCVER Student Outcomes Survey, 2004.

for all age groups for those who completed a full qualification. In fact, personal reasons only dominate for women over the age of 60 who do not complete a qualification.

DOES RECENT STUDY HELP OLDER PERSONS IN THE LABOUR MARKET?

Section Two illustrated that the current participation rate of older persons in education and training is substantial, although lower than that of younger persons. Furthermore, the section suggested that older learners in VET on the whole are motivated by employment related reasons, although closer to retirement age there is an increase in motivation to study for personal reasons.

Within this section we explore whether 'lifelong learning' itself promotes engagement with the labour market. It could be the case, for example, that it is entry level training that sets an individual on a certain course in the labour market and that education and training later in life has no additional impact. Alternatively, education and training later in life might assist those with a poorer hold on the labour market or provide scope for a second career (or third career) that will enable or motivate a person to remain longer in the labour market than otherwise would have been the case.

In this context, we consider how the timing of study affects labour market engagement within each level of education, making use of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Education and Training Experience, 2001. This survey provides details on current study and the three highest qualifications attained. In respect of the latter, the survey asked the date of completion of qualifications.

One way of approaching the problem would be to allow the impact of timing of qualifications to vary with age and educational category (as well as sex). This, however, would generate a large number of models and stretches the sample. The more parsimonious approach we adopt is to fit models within each educational category. That is, whether or not an individual is employed is modelled as a function of age and age (squared) interacted with educational category and time since completion of the educational category, again interacted with educational category. Interactions between age and time since completion are also included to

allow for the likelihood that obtaining a degree at age 40 is a very different situation from obtaining one at age 60. We also restrict the observations to persons over the age of 40, since we are interested primarily in what assists older persons in maintaining engagement with the labour market[5].

Even with a survey as large as the Survey of Education and Training Experience, the number of observations limits the analysis. In order to get sufficient observations we collapse the educational categories into high (post-graduate degree, advanced postgraduate degree, graduate diploma and certificate, bachelor degree, advanced diploma and diploma). The results are quite interesting and provide solid support for the view that educational qualifications gained later in life are indeed helpful in maintaining engagement with the labour market (see Figure 4). This finding is consistent with UK research: Jenkins, Vignoles, Wolf, and Galindo-Rueda (2002) found using longitudinal data that those who were out of the labour market in 1991 were more likely to be in the labour market in 2000 if they had participated in lifelong learning (defined as learning between the ages of 33 and 42 that results in qualification).

For males, a high level qualification attained as a person approaches 60 appears to promote continued employment. Acquisition of low level qualifications is also helpful, but over a broader age range. By contrast, timing of middle level qualifications does not seem to have much impact on employment rates. For women, the results are stronger. A consistent result is obtained for each qualification level: those who have more recently acquired a qualification have much higher employment rates. It would seem that a qualification is an effective strategy for obtaining or keeping employment. While the survey does not provide us with an explanation for this finding it would seem that women whose engagement with the labour market is low during the years of family formation find that obtaining and educational qualification is an effective way of getting back in the labour market. For men it is more about a strategy for maintaining engagement with the labour market. Of course, what we do not know is whether this would have been an effective strategy for those who have not chosen to upgrade their qualifications.

Figure 4: Impact of timing of qualifications on employment rates of older workers

Males: Post-grad, grad dip/cert,
degree, adv dip

Females: Postgrad, grad dip/cert,
degree, adv dip

Males: Cert III or IV

Females: Cert III or IV

Males: Cert I or II

Females: Cert I or II
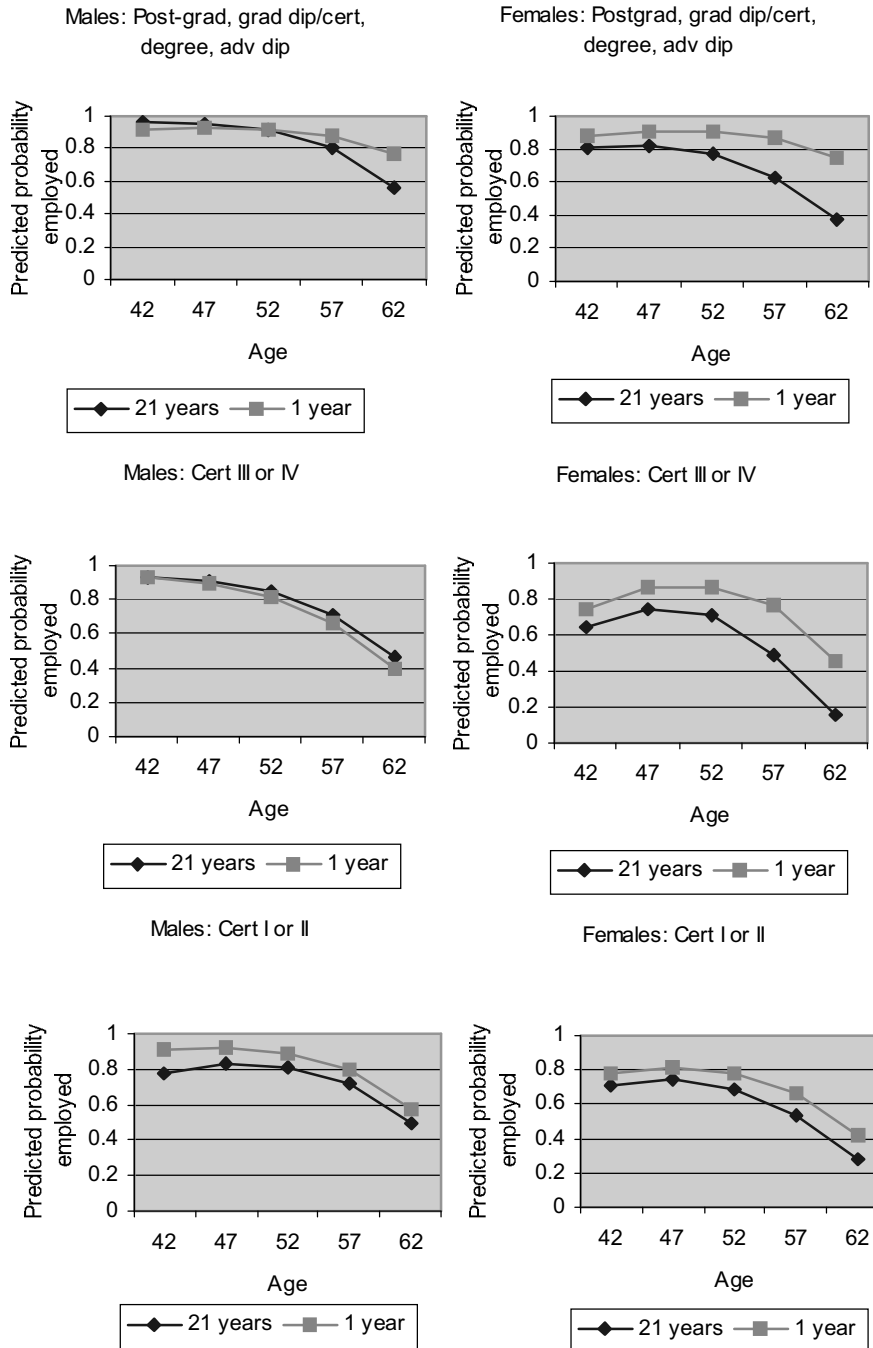
Source: Derived from the ABS Survey of Education and Training Experience, 2001

As well as looking at the timing of qualifications, the Survey of Education and Training Experience provides a series of variables on an individual's engagement with education and training. These variables include:

- Whether an individual has acquired a qualification subsequent to the acquisition of their highest qualification;
- The number of non-school qualifications;
- Whether the person was currently enrolled in a course;
- Whether the person intends to enrol in the future; and
- Time spent on incomplete educational awards over the previous five years.

The hypothesis that is consistent with the lifelong learning policy push is that these variables will be positively associated with engagement with the labour market. We test this hypothesis by adding these variables to the models developed above. The results are presented schematically below. A positive indicates that the sign is positive (as we would expect according to our hypothesis) at the 50 per cent significance level. A negative indicates that the sign is negative at the same significance level. The remaining estimates are not significantly different from zero (at the 50 per cent significance level). We choose this rather extravagant significance level to see if some pattern emerges over the eight groups.

This exercise provides some support to the idea that the more qualifications the better. The signs on the additional qualification variables are all positive (and a couple of them are significant at the 5 per cent level). However, the other variables are a mixed bag. Being currently enrolled or intending to enrol, if anything, is associated with a lower employment rate – perhaps for these people education is an alternative to employment. Having a more recent qualification different from the highest tends to suggest that, everything else being equal, obtaining a lower level qualification later in life does not do a whole lot for employment. So while the more qualifications the merrier it would seem that engagement with the labour market is associated with obtaining higher level qualifications rather than lower level qualifications. Having incomplete qualifications is not associated with employment rates in any systematic way.

Table 3. Impact of various education variables on employment rates

	Males				Females			
	Post-grad	degree or adv dip	Cert III or IV	Cert I or II	Post-grad	degree or adv dip	Cert III or IV	Cert I or II
One additional qual	+	+	..	+	+	+	+	..
Two + additional quals	Na	+	..	-	na	+	..	+
Latest qual not highest	-	-	..	..	..	+	..	-
Intend to enrol in future	..	..	-	..	..	..	..	-
Currently enrolled	-	-	-	-	..	-	+	-
Incomplete award (1-5 years study)	..	..	-	..	..	+	-	-
Incomplete award (< I year study)	..	..	..	..	..	-	..	+

Source: Derived from the ABS Survey of Education and Training Experience, 2001

CONCLUSION

Educational participation in Australia is relatively high among older persons although, as would be expected, it declines with age. The motivation for studying, at least in the vocational education and training sector, for which we have data, is predominately for employment related reasons. Our analysis suggests that study later in life, at least for those who completed a qualification, education does pay off in terms of labour market engagement; those with a recent qualification tend to have higher employment rates than those whose qualifications were attained when they were younger. This suggests that study later in life has been a successful strategy for those wishing to find or maintain employment. This provides support for the idea of lifelong learning to maintain engagement with the labour market, although it cannot be included that it will benefit all.

NOTES

[1] For further information on the analyses presented within this chapter please refer to Karmel and Woods (2004).

[2] Survey derived rates give lower participation rates (suggesting individuals do not always view the sectors in the same way as the system does)

[3] For this analysis, a small number of students enrolled in secondary education is also added to this educational category.

[4] Unfortunately we do not have corresponding data for higher education. The analogous survey – The Graduate Destination Survey – does not have 'a reason for study' question.

[5] The survey provides time bands for when qualifications are obtained, with the earliest one being prior to 1980. The variable representing years since qualification was coded to 21 for persons reporting that their highest qualification was obtained within that band.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

OVERCOMING BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE PARTICIPATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING

JUDITH CHAPMAN, JACQUELINE MCGILP,
PATRICIA CARTWRIGHT, MARIAN DE SOUZA
AND RON TOOMEY

LIFELONG LEARNING: A MULTIFACETED CONCEPT

One approach to conceptualising lifelong learning suggests that lifelong learning is primarily concerned with the promotion of skills and competencies necessary for the development of general capabilities and specific performance on given tasks. Skills and competencies developed through programs of lifelong learning will, on this approach, have a bearing on questions of how workers perform in their tackling of specific job responsibilities and tasks and how well they can adapt their general and specific knowledge and competencies to new tasks (OECD, 1994). This approach presents us with a relatively narrow and limited understanding of the nature, aims and purpose of lifelong education. Nevertheless, this instrumental view tended to dominate earlier approaches to lifelong learning, especially in the Australian policy arena.

It is evident from the work of OECD, UNESCO, the European Parliament and The Nordic Council of Ministers, however, that there are much broader and more multi-faceted ways of approaching the conceptualisation of lifelong learning. Instead of seeing education as instrumental to the achievement of an extrinsic goal, such as the acquisition of job skills, education may also be perceived as an intrinsically valuable activity, something that is good in and of itself. On this view, lifelong learning offers the opportunity for people to bring their knowledge up to date. It enables them to enjoy activities which they may have either long since laid aside or always wanted to do but were previously unable to. It allows them to try their hands at activities and pursuits that they had previously imagined were

outside their available time or competence. It enables them to work consciously at extending their intellectual, vocational and personal horizons by seeking to understand and grasp some of the more significant advances of recent times, which have done so much to affect and transform their worlds. From this viewpoint, the expansion of cognitive repertoire and increasing one's skills and competencies is an undertaking that can—and indeed, must—continue throughout life, as a necessary part of growth and development as a human being, as a citizen in a participative democracy, and as a productive agent in a process of economic change and advance (Chapman & Aspin, 1997).

None of these aims of lifelong learning can really be separated from the other: all three elements interact and cross-fertilise each other. According to this view there is a complex inter-play between all three:

- Learning for a more highly skilled work force;
- Learning for a better democracy and an inclusive society; and
- Learning for a more personally rewarding life.

For this reason, OECD Ministers argued that the whole notion and value of 'lifelong learning for all' has to be seen as a complex and multi-faceted process, that begins in pre-school times, is carried on through basic, compulsory and post-compulsory periods of formal education and training, and is then continued throughout life, through such learning experiences, activities and enjoyment in the workplace, in universities and colleges, and in other educational, social and cultural agencies and institutions—of both a formal and informal kind—within the community (OECD, 1996).

Figure 1. Lifelong Learning – the Concept

Aims of Lifelong Learning

Actualised Through Learning experiences Across the Lifespan

A knowledgeable and more highly skilled workforce leading to economic advance

Personal development, autonomy and choice

Stronger democracy and more inclusive society

Pre-school

Compulsory Schooling

Post-compulsory education

Adult, Community and Further Education

The workplace

Universities

RESEARCH BARRIERS TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Informed by this conceptualization of lifelong learning, a research project, *Lifelong Learning, Adult and Community Education in Rural Victoria* was undertaken in 2002 by the Centre for Lifelong Learning, ACU National, under the auspices of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) of Victoria, Australia. The research was designed to address:

- The ways in which adult and community education provision in rural communities is making a difference, to whom and how;
- The identification of barriers that impede access to lifelong learning; and
- The identification of existing effective practices and practical, cost effective ways of providing opportunities to remove the barriers for lifelong learners.

The research project adopted a number of methods to achieve its goals:

1. *Regional Case Studies*: Three regions were selected for intensive analysis. The regional studies focussed on barriers to participation in, and pathways into and through, adult, community and further education. Data were collected from tape- recorded interviews with regional directors and focus group discussions with separate groups of providers, participants and community leaders within each of the three regions.

2. *Good Practice Exemplars*: The process of identifying the good practice exemplars was commenced by our contacting the regional directors and personnel within the three regional offices to gain their opinions of a range of centres in the region that offered programs recognised for good practice. Consideration was also given to the programs that had received recognition by award in 2001 at the local, regional or state levels. Initial contact with regional personnel from each nominated centre was made to gauge their responses to being classified as offering 'good practice'. This was followed by a phone survey of a random selection of providers and service across the regions. Further contact was made with some members of local councils, as well as local business and service clubs, to gain their views of examples of good practice. In some instances this contact was by means of their membership on regional boards. In the final selection of 'good practice exemplars' attention was given to the geographic spread, ensuring that there was representation from the three

regions; also to representation of large providers and small providers offering programs for youth, the unemployed, the disadvantaged, Aboriginal people, business, leisure, health and the mature aged. Of importance was the issue of showing the diversity of the 'good practice'. Phone contact was made with the nominated centres to gain their permission to be part of the research project. Meetings were then arranged with coordinators, trainers and participants where possible. Visits were made to centres over a two-month period.

3. *Consultation meetings on an 'Issues, Questions and Options' paper*: On completion of the conceptual work, the regional case studies and the identification of good practice exemplars an 'Issues, Questions and Options' paper was prepared for consultation with senior personnel and members of the community associated with adult and community education in rural Victoria. These meetings provided the opportunity for the researchers to test tentative conclusions and recommendations with members of the community.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE PARTICIPATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING

The research revealed that are many indications of ways in which adult and community education is able to make a difference in people's lives. In regard to overcoming personal and societal barriers, for example, there are programs that are enabling young persons to grow in self-esteem and confidence and to gain skills for living and for potential entry to the workforce. There are also programs where training for employment is available. There are examples of engagement in relevant programs by members of rural communities, for example, single parents, men, women, ethnic groups, aborigines and mature aged persons. In some instances, there is sharing of expertise by newcomers to the community, as well as long-term residents, to bring about community cohesion and advance regional development. However, despite these achievements the investigation revealed that the overwhelming majority of the 15+ age group in rural Victoria was not reached by provision in the adult and community education sector. In short, adult and community education could reach many more people.

In order to expand participation and access, a number of barriers that impede access to lifelong learning and participation need to be overcome. Such barriers could be categorized as: personal and societal; barriers confronted by providing agencies; and barriers confronted by the sector as a whole. These barriers,

however, are not one- dimensional. Barriers confronted by participants or potential participants do not exist in isolation. They often interact with one another to create complexly interlocked patterns. Rural isolation, for instance, cannot simply be reduced by providing better transport facilities. Redressing the situation may require changing people's attitudes towards themselves and their fellow citizens and structuring opportunities for them to work together on matters of both community and rural significance. Specifically, the barriers included:

Personal and Societal Barriers: It must be acknowledged at the outset that non-participation in adult and community education need not always be regarded as a problem. Many people lead full and satisfying lives without feeling the need to join in formally organised adult and community activities, and as adults it is entirely appropriate for them to make that decision. However non-participation is often due to other factors, including lack of information, lack of confidence or lack or resources, or some other impediment, and in such circumstances, it may be appropriate to take steps to mitigate those inhibiting factors. Many rural people have great difficulty returning to study, either formal or informal for a variety of personal and social reasons. Their personal histories often cause them to be cautious about institutionalised forms of education. Their own immediate family members or their friendship groups sometimes reinforce their reserve. This is especially the case for those in greatest need within the rural setting such as people with limited literacy, youth, certain ethnic groups, Indigenous Australians and men.

Financial Barriers: An analysis of the pattern of participation in adult and community education for rural people shows that the capacity of many people to fund ongoing education is limited. The population has limited disposable income. With the ageing of the regional population the likelihood of people being able to afford greater participation in courses is diminished. The employment status of people also contributes to their capacity to pay for courses.

Geographic Barriers: The geography of each region involved in this study is such that access to courses is often impeded by the distance people have to travel, or by the geographic barriers that exist between prospective participants and providers. This circumstance produces a range of problems for providers attempting to address some issues of access over difficult or remote terrain.

Management Barriers: Planning, accountability, staffing, clerical and compliance issues were among the many management issues that emerged in the regional case studies as presenting management problems for provision. The work pressure on coordinators, especially in the small operations in rural communities, was found to be a particular problem. The coordinator is often a part time worker, sometimes new to the system, who is attempting to master, on the job, a range of new skills including marketing, record keeping, fundraising, counselling and staff recruitment. The management demands sometimes make the expansion and diversification of educational programs difficult. Moreover, providers are frequently constantly engaging a wide range of separate governmental and other agencies for support, finance and other matters, thereby adding to the complexities of management.

Vision, Mission and Identity Barriers: The research highlighted the need for clearly articulated vision and mission for lifelong learning. There is a strong perception among people in rural settings that adult and community education makes an important contribution especially to giving people a second start on learning; that it helps people make the transition from economic, educational, social or personal disadvantage to a strong sense of personal, social and economic empowerment. But lifelong learning provision has the capacity to be more than this. It is important to more clearly articulate, measure and report the wide range of economic, educational, social and personal impacts and outcomes of lifelong learning in the interests of making the image and contribution of education clearer.

It needs to be pointed out that what is a barrier/obstacle to some people is not to others. Barriers/obstacles affect different individuals and communities in different ways. A mix of policies and well attested practical approaches is required: reducing or eliminating barriers/obstacles assisting, enabling, encouraging people to overcome them; highlighting incentives, ensuring their availability and studying take-up and impact. In addition to government and employers, there are roles for communities to engage in collective action to lower barriers and raise awareness of incentives.

IMPROVING PROVISION BY SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

There were certain overarching elements highlighted in this study that were inherent in the good practice exemplars.

Commitment to Values

One element that was central to the success of the programs was the values of individual worth, social connectedness and human agency. This was evident in the altruism and strong sense of social justice, qualities that permeated the ethos of providers and tutors involved in the programs, and was demonstrated in the relationships, the mentoring process and the acknowledgement of each person's success in learning.

The Wangaratta Centre for Continuing Education Inc: The Centre) for example, has a youth-specific CGEA (Certificate in General Education for Adults) program called YARHOO – Youth at Risk Have Other Options, which aims to assist young people who are experiencing marginalization. The lack of available and inexpensive transport can be a barrier to program participants since they are under eighteen and therefore dependent on parents, carers and/or friends to ensure their attendance. Other barriers are personal in that there may be little support from their families or other networks, or there may be problematic relationships that appear to be almost insurmountable. Additionally, the past experiences that many of these young people have had of formal schooling have left them with little motivation to attend or participate in further learning programs. The program makes a particular effort to help these young people feel a sense of belonging by engaging them in projects at The Centre. For instance, students have been encouraged to plan for and participate in the creation of an outdoor learning/study area. This process has allowed them a certain level of ownership, thereby motivating them to become involved in the activities. Learning is made more relevant by utilising newspaper articles and current affairs in the literacy program. In addition, the dedication of the teachers and the care they extend to participants are clearly observable through the relationship they have established. In order to promote a more positive learning environment at The Centre, all participants are: treated with respect and given a voice, which increases their sense of belonging and being a valued member of the group; taught in small groups that encourage positive relationships and a partnership between tutors and learners; and provided with opportunities to develop their personal and social skills which enable them to make a worthwhile contribution to the community. On completing the courses, some young people have gone on to further studies, either at school or at The Centre. Some have undertaken a variety of studies at TAFE (Technical and Further Education) institutions, sometimes part-time. A few have obtained apprenticeships. While the level of youth unemployment in rural communities is high, some have obtained employment, though this has usually been part-time,

some have continued to search for work, and a few have been involved in voluntary work.

The Youth-at-Risk Program offered by the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) at Albury–Wodonga is an example of a program that emphasises the development of self-worth in adolescent males and females. They offer a broad range of programs, with the CGEA (Certificate of General Education for Adults) particularly focussing on offering learning opportunities to young people whose previous experiences of learning have not always been positive. Approximately 500 young people have participated in the courses offered at the YWCA, but not all have completed the programs. In an effort to address this, particular attention has been given to the length of the courses, since many of the young people have difficulty making long-term commitments. As a result, courses are divided into ten-week units of work. Further, the courses are made more accessible by having flexible entry points for participants. Of the young people who enrol in the courses, some are homeless or at risk of homelessness, others have serious health issues including drug-related problems, and there are also some young Indigenous Australians who are re-establishing connections with their culture that can sometimes lead to concerns about their identity. Additionally, many of the young people have personal problems and/or may have engaged in anti-social behaviour, and most have had negative experiences of their primary and secondary schooling. Generally speaking, poor attendance rates at school for many have contributed to low levels of literacy. In order to engage young people in their learning, activities are relevant, manageable and fun. In offering an alternative educational program where life skills are important, the young people learn daily living skills—those of meal preparation, budgeting, caring and socialisation, for example, eating together on a regular basis which eventually leads to skills such as eating in public and behaving appropriately. Further opportunities are provided whereby each young person can establish a relationship with an adult, that is, a mentoring process has been established. Finally, the value of involving the participants' families in discussion and decision-making is recognised. Of the young people who have completed the CGEA, some have gone on to TAFE (Technical and Further Education) institutions, or the workplace, and some have returned to the Centre. The following features have contributed to the development of a sense of self-worth amongst the participants of the program at the YWCA: young people are treated with respect, generosity and trust so they feel a sense of belonging and responsibility to the organisation; they are provided with positive and effective role models who help them learn about their own learning, and who value and affirm them in their achievements; and their families are included in the pastoral

care and decision-making processes. Ultimately, it is the team approach at YWCA Albury–Wodonga that underlies the strengthening bond of the program. The Coordinator of the YWCA at Albury–Wodonga has commented: 'Many of our young people grow in confidence, learn to take on responsibilities and to develop an improved sense of self-worth as they recognise that they can be learners'.

Relevant Programs

A second vital element of 'good practice' related to the relevant, responsive and useful nature of the learning program. This was apparent in the willingness to innovate in regard to learning provision, the flexibility of courses in content and delivery, accreditation of courses, a sense of ownership and responsibility by participants for their own learning, and for the learning in the community.

The King Valley Learning Exchange programs, for example, emphasise building community cohesion. This promotes shared knowledge and strategic advancement to overcome the lack of social cohesion in the valley. In this region, people travel basically only to the next village. Of significance is the public knowledge and recognition that the 47 groups in the valley need to work cooperatively. The King Valley Learning Programs are a means to strengthen communication and work within and between the different groups operating from the centres across the valley. The Learning Exchange Programs are developing because of the initiative of enthusiastic volunteers and a strong management team. Before this had occurred, the viability of offering learning opportunities in the valley had become questionable. While the valley is an outreach of the Wangaratta rural region, provision of the types of programs had been restricted and the availability of 'specific homes' from which to operate had been a major concern. Through the initiative of different local groups, a purchase resulted in the establishment of the Moyhu Drop-In Centre, which is offering courses relevant to the needs of the community, and is contributing to community cohesion. The building of community cohesion is also a result of learning provision by an open learning approach, a style that tailors learning to individuals. Their learning occurs within personalised program, self-study groups and short courses, which cover personal and family development and general wellbeing, as well as the acquisition of necessary skills in certified programs. Courses are offered to advance farm safety, output yield and administration in the valley, for example, first aid courses, skills in grape-grafting and those pertaining to certification for the handling of chemicals. The programs and resulting interaction are a means to keep the villages alive. The residents of King Valley have met the challenge of building

connectedness across the valley. They have addressed this by providing process-oriented education and lifelong learning initiatives, and by encouraging responsibility and co-operative ownership for the future of the valley.

The Maryborough Learning Centre has had particular success with the online Heritage Tourism course. Participants come from a range of areas—Bendigo, Kerang, and from Castlemaine—thus enabling the sharing of ideas across the region. The course has only a small number of participants in each of the areas mentioned, so much use has been made of the chat-room, and bulletin board facilities, as well as emails. These facilities have helped ensure that the participants were attached to a learning centre of some kind, and were thus able to support each other in their learning. A strength of the Heritage Tourism course is that, while it began as a face-to-face course for local people in Castlemaine, Bendigo and Rushworth, it was seen to be such a worthwhile course that it became accredited, with a further development of an online version that enables the course to be extended to broader geographical areas. Thus, the course caters for people who cannot always come to the Centre for study purposes. Additionally, the range of people from different areas has enabled a rich exchange of ideas and information about the historical elements of a particular area. The course also enables people to trust in the development of heritage tourism in their area, leading them to consider issues of legislation, funding, development and marketing. A particularly significant aspect of the course is the identification of Indigenous sites and concerns in each area. The few Indigenous participants have been invaluable in this regard, and much effort is being made by the Centre to increase their participation.

Learning

A third important element in good practice concerned the *cognitive, social and cultural space within which the learning took place*. To begin with, attention was given to the accessibility of venues through their location in the heart of the community, and the provision of welcoming, friendly and safe environments. In addition, utilising tutors from within the community, whenever possible, was seen as a valuable and relevant factor in encouraging and promoting learning.

Gateway, The Business, Employment, Education and Training (BEET) organisation, is a lead agent in a cluster group for the region of Hopetoun. It offers programs that attempt to overcome the various problems that have beset small and large communities experiencing a social and economic downturn. Gateway BEET draws on the concept of collaboration which recognises that a multi-agency

approach can widen participation in their programs and this, in turn, has given rise to the cluster group whose mission is to devise means whereby they can maintain and put services back into their towns. Gateway has three foci: provision of local government services; provision of services relating to education and health organisations; and focus on commercial and economic development. Combining multiple agencies under the one umbrella promotes cohesiveness in the community, as clients come to the Centre to use one of the services, and invariably hear of a learning program being offered. At an administrative level, care has been taken to maximise the opportunities for enrolment provided by this aspect, thus overcoming the problem of insufficient numbers to run courses. Specific strategies have been implemented to promote and enhance learning, and to encourage participation of community members in the programs and facilities offered at Gateway. Cost effective access to Internet services has proved a valuable resource in the community, with the added dimension of younger members acting as tutors to older members of the community. Learning is offered in a social environment, which aims at integrating newcomers into the community, as well as encouraging members of the community who may be reluctant to participate in courses they perceive as irrelevant to their concerns. Indeed, using innovative, non-traditional, but relevant approaches to literacy and technology has been identified as a real strength in the learning process. Some of the programs which include the above strategies are: Carer's Program and first aid courses which meet the needs of both an ageing and a farming community; Working Dog Training days and Sheet Metal Sculpture which encourage access to learning for male clients; and Wine-Tasting Tours which advance a socially integrated community and a strong economy. A client who is retired and has completed a basic computer course goes to the Centre every day in order to access the Internet commented:

> My experience with computers started from my wife being overseas, visiting our two boys. It was costing me a heap of money by staying in touch over the phone. I have a computer at home, but it is not linked to the Internet. I came up to Gateway, and this young man was very helpful and in about 20 minutes I could surf all over the Internet. The other thing I like about it is not only do I keep in touch with the family via e-mail, but it also gives me access to the overseas newspapers. This learning has been a real boost for me.

Gateway BEET represents different regional bodies, so small rural communities are given a voice in bigger arenas. This has strengthened links within

the communities, and has promoted improved economic opportunities in the region. Course offerings are flexible and more viable for small communities.

Horsham Community House concentrates on the provision of leisure activities within a venue that is accessible to the participants. The Leisure Programs, particularly the cooking program, are a means by which participants access learning covering many elements of living, for example, skills acquisition, socialising and community participation. The programs are planned to overcome fear of failure in learning that is experienced by many of the participants. A glimpse into the Horsham Community House on any given day shows people playing cards, cooking, working on the computers and socialising, therefore contributing to the social cohesion of the community. One success story for the Horsham Community House has been the development of cooking classes— 'aimed at creating simple, economical and tasty meals for the whole family'. The suggestion of offering these cooking classes in the vicinity came from the local community for they saw it as a means to help low-income families. Associated with the cooking activities are other learning experiences including budgeting, recipe building, sharing of cooking skills, and the acquisition of computing skills. Computers are used for recording expenditure, designing recipes, for planning menus and for extending literacy skills. This also means learning to use certain computer programs, which helps individuals to overcome their fear that often results from tackling a hurdle 'alone'. Of significance is the fact that participants in the cooking classes are able to extend skills and share knowledge by the project approach. Participants work in teams, sharing and advancing their knowledge and skills of cooking. Through this team approach, participants at the Centre offer community lunches on a weekly basis for a wider community. The luncheon occasions have become social events for both men and women.

An analysis of the numerous 'Good Practice' exemplars identified in this study demonstrates the ways in which, ultimately, the recognition of and response to the needs of individuals and communities assists in promoting deeper levels of personal wellbeing, social connectedness and economic resilience. This was achieved in the following ways:

Features of successful practice: for PERSONAL FULFILMENT
- Stress on values—trust, respect and cooperation, having 'a voice' and development of a sense of belonging;
- Key persons' commitment, enthusiasm and belief in the rightness of their engagement with the programs;

- Recognition of a range of backgrounds and abilities within groups and the development of individualised programs;
- Provision of a sheltered, protected environment in an accessible position;
- Engagement of young people by making the learning relevant, manageable and fun; leading to desirable kinds of change for the learner;
- Provision of mentors and role models who engage in positive relationships with learners;
- Experience of alternative educational programs which include survival skills;
- Promotion of 'ownership' of learning for building of self fulfilment;
- The offering of programs in flexible mode;
- Attention given to interdisciplinary nature of the activities;
- Extension of computer literacy and online activities;
- Opportunities to learn through a shared project approach, and to progress to other courses;
- Advancing learning through daily journalling exercises;
- Connections with other community organisations; and
- Development of skills throughout life.

Features of successful practice: for SOCIAL COHESION

- Representation of many groups on committees;
- Training of individuals to contribute to new projects in the community;
- Providing support for participants to complete learning activities in their own communities;
- Working with people in their own region;
- Utilising the skills of the region;
- Providing necessary services for a region;
- Using tutors who are familiar with the region where courses are provided;
- Ensuring connectivity with other providers;
- Sharing learning by visiting other centres; and
- Being sensitive to the working lives of the participants.

Features of successful practice: for ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

- Learning assists people to seek alternative employment opportunities;
- There is awareness of local needs;

- Cooperation between local groups and organisations to address needs occurs;
- Programs are offered in flexible modes to advance the skills of more people;
- There is availability of short and intensive courses, with emphasis on the gaining of relevant information rather than on qualifications alone;
- There is acceptance of change in regard to the type of learning provision needed for employment;
- There is willingness to innovate;
- Organisations cooperate for the provision of a variety of programs and accredited courses;
- Mentoring is a means of support for gaining further skills; and
- There is employment of trainers with past and present experience in industry.

PROMOTING CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ADULTS PARTICIPATE AND LEARN

From the evidence of this project, many adult, community and further education providers are successfully integrating rich strands of learning theory into their everyday practice, and developing reflective, critical strategies that enable adult learners to deepen and enrich their own learning. But it is a concern among providers that bureaucratic procedures of reporting on programs of adult and continuing education do not pay adequate attention to qualitative matters, or to the conditions needed to sustain and strengthen them. Fiscal responsibility and administrative accountability are necessary, and there is an unavoidable, increasing demand for compliance and effective risk management procedures. But there is need, equally, to focus on the quality and value of learning as on the teaching practices most likely to foster and support learning. A system of reporting is needed, focused on the quality of teaching and learning and the learning environment—conditioning factors, processes and outcomes.

For robust policies and action programs for lifelong learning we believe there is a need to be more systematic in gathering and analysing evidence about learning achievements. But, we also need to be clearer about the application of common principles and sets of conditions to different kinds of learning and different bodies of subject matter. The value of the lessons from 'Good Practice' set forth above is to serve as guidelines about which judgements have to be made according to

circumstances. They are not conclusive or prescriptive, but suggestive and advisory, beacons to what the field itself defines as 'good practice'.

Further progress in developing and implementing strategies of lifelong learning will depend on our ability to establish a stronger research and analytic culture than exists at present. We need to know more about how and why adults learn and we need more systematic bodies of research-based knowledge to underpin practice. On this basis, we can work towards a greater professionalisation in the provision of lifelong learning, including the continuing professional development of teachers, tutors, course organisers and evaluators.

The same kinds of analytic processes and the same attention to issues being given to investment and returns and cost issues in formal tertiary education, we believe, should be applied as far as practicable to adult and community education. The results would be more transparency, better accountability and, in all probability, a transformation of the present funding regime. As part of our project we have begun to identify a range of impacts and outcomes which may go some way to developing alternative models for measuring the impacts and outcomes of adult and community education and which may be considered as bases upon which alternative funding and reporting arrangements can be developed.

Such indicators might include:

i)   The extent of local community building as a measure of social capital;
ii)   Number of people going into employment on completion of courses;
iii) Number of people going on to further learning on completion of courses;
iv)   Number of people assuming new responsibilities in their community, on completion of courses including volunteers;
v)   Numbers of learners using adult and community education and completing courses;
vi)   Improvements in self-concept, self-esteem, self-respect among participants and graduates;
vii) Improvements in sense of belonging, affiliation, community, 'place' among participants and graduates;
viii) Satisfaction with courses among participants;
ix)   Diversity of offerings among providers;
x)   Capacity of providers to generate revenue from a range of sources; and
xi)   Capacity of providers to identify and develop facilities for community use.

THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED 'WHOLE' COMMUNITY APPROACH TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Arising from this study we emphasise the importance of an integrated, whole community approach to lifelong learning, in the broader context of state policy on regional development and education. Informed by government priorities and concerns in regional development (Edwards, 2002), we recommend adoption of:

- An integrated, whole government, whole community approach;
- Connecting people and connecting strategies in education and regional/rural development;
- Delivering the message of the importance of linking lifelong learning and regional development in new, clear and creative ways;
- Highlighting the relevance of what is being done successfully, what can be done within existing resources, and what should be done in linking learning and regional development;
- Focussing the allocation of public and private resources on to shared priorities; and
- Building on successful strategies in regional development, innovations and learning.

The State of Victoria, Australia is an economy and society in transition, moving towards a knowledge intensive, highly globally integrated economy and society. The Government is seeking to develop the attributes of regional economies (including skills formation, knowledge creation and innovation, business formation and growth, business infrastructure and an international focus), as well as building on the strategic capabilities of the economy (especially in information and communication technology [ICT], biotechnology, design, new manufacturing technologies and environmental technologies).

Whilst some communities, especially some small rural communities, are having difficulty in meeting these challenges and in being connected at either micro- or macro-level, there is already evidence of the success of a more integrated, 'connected' approach to regional development. As an example, changes in agriculture (including new crops, greater complexity, increasing scales of operation and the need to spend more effectively on more expensive equipment) have combined with new technologies and scientific developments in biotechnology to drive innovation in rural economies. Synergies emerging from the growth of cooperative research centres, incorporating co-investment of universities, state government and private enterprise are resulting in highly

sophisticated research knowledge and technology being available to farmers. New technologies in plant and animal breeding offer new capabilities (e.g. shorter breeding cycles) and add value and sustainability to production (Pittock, 2002).

The question for those concerned with the linkage between regional development and adult and community learning is this: How can this knowledge and these new understandings and approaches be better disseminated? How, for example, do farmers acquire this knowledge and develop the requisite skills in application for better farm management and more sustainable economic and social development?

The critical point arising from the 'Good Practice' examples identified in this research is that lifelong learning initiatives are occurring in rural Victoria in a range of ways. It is our view that critical to the success of government policies in education, community building and regional development is an approach that integrates and connects a range of government departments, community agencies of all kinds, and a whole array of formal and informal learning providers. Our study has revealed that the adult and community education sector, when it is functioning well, has the potential to provide an integrating framework for such linkages. Many providers are working with multiple agencies, private and public funding sources and individuals to meet the needs of rural people. We believe that the adoption of such an integrating whole-community role could build upon the many examples of good practice identified in this study. We believe that the adult and community education sector is ideally placed to further the government agenda in regional development and lifelong learning. It can develop and deliver educational programs in areas such as community building, conducting meetings and so train people in other community agencies, who in turn can move forward in the implementation of government priorities in regional development. It can develop educational programs to assist regional people to make better business decisions, to disseminate the latest information in farming and business, to promote skills in areas such as the exporting and marketing of regional products. To move forward there is a need for re-imaging, and for the adoption of a more collaborative approach to reform including a renewed emphasis on clusters and networks.

NETWORKS AS A REFORM STRATEGY IN THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Arising from this research we believe that serious consideration be given to the extension of current cluster and network arrangements in the provision of lifelong

learning and adult and community education. Existing structures and relationships in adult and community education enable it not only to be a provider but a broker of lifelong learning opportunities, embracing other networks in the community such as: the Farmers Federation; Land Care Groups; Garden Clubs; Rotary and other service clubs; and Country Women's Association Branches.

Chapman and Aspin (2002) have argued that the important point to make about the concept of 'network' is that it differs in character from other terms that have historically been used in association with educational institutions and with the organisational arrangements with which they are managed and through which innovation and change have typically been brought about. The idea of networks is distinct from traditional forms of grouping of educational organisations and systems, in which hierarchical structures and organisational approaches were most often adopted, and from the more recent emphasis upon restructuring in some countries in which the market philosophy prevailed.

In contrast to such approaches, the notion of 'network' stresses the idea of 'community' as the common element and principle of connection between institutions, organisations, agencies and people. In this approach, learning providers are not talked of simply as 'clusters', which connotes geographical proximity, nor 'groups'. Rather they are seen as being overtly associated with each other in forms of inter-connection and relationship that are deliberately established and worked upon in the pursuit of a community of interests, concerns and goals (Chapman & Aspin, 2003).

New lines of social, political and administrative thought have functioned to provide an increasingly powerful basis for the envisioning of learning organisations and systems as 'communities' and their conceptualisation as important nodes in the evolution and establishment of learning networks. In recent years notions of the community, as articulated and developed by such writers as MacIntyre (1980), Etzioni (1996) and Gray (1997), have been enormously influential in revitalising and re-directing social and political thinking. Notions of community have laid the basis for the establishment and elaboration of new ways of thinking about political morality, public policy, and administrative relations, and the creation of new social forms, structures and interactions, which have wide-ranging implications for education and its institutions. The notion of 'networks' is an inherent part of these considerations.

Economic factors have also highlighted the need for educating flexible, networked workers for transformed workplaces. The OECD *Study on Sustainable Flexibility* (OECD, 1997) argues that, in the new information- and knowledge-based economy of the twenty-first century, with rapidly changing technologies

and markets for products, the nature of work will be transformed. This in turn will alter expectations regarding the kind of worker required. This transformation will be characterised by flexibility and networking, in which there will be a complex interplay between more highly educated workers prepared to learn more quickly to take on new tasks and to move from one job to another, and best-practice firms promoting increased flexibility through general training, multiple-task jobs, and employee decision-making (OECD, 1997, p. 34).

Florida (1995), in an examination of environments and infrastructures that will facilitate the flow of knowledge and ideas in the knowledge-based economies and societies of the twenty-first century, concludes (1995, p. 535):

> The industrial and innovation systems of the 21st Century will be remarkably different from those that have operated for most of the 20th Century. Knowledge and human intelligence will replace physical labour as the main source of value. Technological change will accelerate at a pace heretofore unknown: innovation will be perpetual and continuous. Knowledge-intensive organisations based on networks and teams will replace vertical bureaucracy, the corner stone of the 20th century.

The concept of 'networks' provides one approach to navigating our way through issues associated with the operationalization of lifelong learning. Chapman and Aspin (2003) have identified the following benefits associated with networks:

- Networks offer a means of assisting in the policy implementation process especially in a time of changed centralisation/decentralisation arrangements. Networks provide a new construct for conceiving of educational provision and a new vehicle for achieving change;
- If we are going to raise standards in education there is a need to link policy both horizontally and vertically. Networks are one way of achieving this linkage;
- Networks also provide a process for cultural and attitudinal change, embedding reform in the interactions, actions and behaviour of a range of different stakeholders in education and the community;
- Networks provide a multi-agency vehicle for reform which has the potential to be more supportive, cooperative, less costly and less disruptive than much of the structural change of the past;
- Networks provide for an opportunity for shared and dispersed leadership and responsibility, drawing on resources in the community beyond

members of the education profession. In so doing they can provide a more cost effective, community-based reform strategy;

- Networks can be capacity building, in so far as they are able to produce new knowledge and mutual learnings which can then feed back and inform public policy;

- A concern for networks moves attention away from recent preoccupations with micro-level change at the individual site; networks are able to function at the meso-level to strengthen interconnections and spread innovation across all levels—the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. Through the dissemination of network knowledge both policy development and practice may be enhanced in important areas of national concern; and

- Networks have the potential to bring together the policy, resource and practice dimension of educational reform together. If networks are successful they hold the possibility of changing the environment in which policy makers operate. They provide the opportunity for the environment and the system to become 'recultured' in ways that are more cooperative, interconnected, and multi-agency. They have a capacity for evolutionary transformation and renewal in changing aspirations, ways of working together, and providing learning opportunities. The commitment to working together that underpins networks incorporates the notion of working together at all levels, including government. In this way networks provide an opportunity for more effective policy development and implementation at all levels through a wide array of agencies in the community.

THE ARTICULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VISION, MISSION AND IDENTITY

As we face the challenges of the twenty-first century, in a context of:

- changing economic, social, technological and political conditions;
- changing approaches to learning and understanding knowledge;
- renewed emphasis on the importance of community; and
- a growing policy emphasis on lifelong learning and its linkage to regional development,

we believe that there now needs to develop an impetus for innovative and creative solutions to the problems of providing lifelong learning, adult and community education, particularly for regional and rural people.

We maintain that there needs to be a reframing and re-vitalisation of the nature, role and purposes of lifelong learning, adult and community education in the development of public policy for education and learning in Victoria. In the same way as in 1872 the 'Free, compulsory and secular' Education Acts laid the basis for the policy, administrative, financial and organisational frameworks for the introduction of schooling for all in the nineteenth century, so too in the twenty-first century, strategic thinking for educational policy and action in the area of lifelong learning, adult and community education is required.

The revitalisation of lifelong learning, adult and community education will, however, offer challenges of a different kind from those facing the development of educational policies in the areas of compulsory schooling. For example:

- Lifelong learning, adult and community education, by its very nature, must be embedded in the life of the community. Whereas in compulsory schooling, adults have assumed responsibility for offering solutions to issues associated with the needs of young learners, in the policy-making and planning process of adult education there needs to be an emphasis on dialogue between equals, each of whom has their own part to play and their own contributions to offer in articulating lines and directions of possible development. Policy-making in adult education must be a dialogic process built into the social and institutional structures and processes in and by means of which adult education is conducted. Policy-making and action in adult education is a joint venture among equal partners.

- In compulsory schooling, curriculum has been the subject of intensive theoretical and research enquiry. Such enquiries have informed decision-making and policy with respect to the selection and mandating of curriculum schemes, content and aims in institutions of compulsory schooling. In adult education the selection of curriculum content and pathways of advance has tended to be less structured and more personal. Decisions pertaining to adult and community learning provision have come to be determined by administrative and financial calculations based on student contact hours. There is now a need to move beyond this approach, to one involving more strategic planning, reinforcing more recent moves towards re-framing and re-mapping of adult and

community curriculum and learning. This study confirms the importance of lifelong learning, adult and community education clearly articulating what it values, who it serves, what it is to concentrate upon in the provision and promotion of learning, how it is to achieve this, and why.

In the past compulsory schooling was seen as a first step in a hierarchical model of educational provision. In contrast, adult and community education 'flows in the spaces left by other learning providers'. As Ann Jarvis from Kergunyah, Victoria, remarked in the course of our study, in rural communities, adult education centres constitute a twenty-first century version of the 'village pump': they spread their irrigating and life-renewing effects through the fields of learning needs, interests and potentials of the community. People gravitate to an adult education centre, such as a Neighbourhood House, because they are the embodiment of community and the centre of re-invigoration and renewal lies in their midst. At a time when regional communities have lost their primary schools and their banks, and when Shires have been amalgamated, adult and community education providers enable opportunities for communication, belonging, identity and support and a central point and focus for endeavour in overcoming the dangers of moves towards a potentially fragmented community. The need to learn from the exemplars of good practice in lifelong learning, adult and community education has never been more important than it is now in rural communities.

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CHAPTER NINE

MEN'S LEARNING IN SMALL AND REMOTE TOWNS IN AUSTRALIA

BARRY GOLDING

INTRODUCTION

A series of research projects conducted by the author in Australia in 2002–4 has thrown new light on the ways in which men in small rural towns do (or don't) return to learn. This chapter summarises the evidence from some of these studies and places them in the context of a small but emerging literature on the distinctive and arguably different nature of men's learning and their learning preferences. The research is timely in the light of concerns, both real and imagined, about men's (McGivney, 1999a) and boys' (Slade, 2002, House of Representatives 2002) differential rates of participation and attainment as compared with women and girls and changing discourses of gender and education (Lingard & Douglas, 1999). While there has been widespread historic gender segmentation of adult learning by field of study in most education sectors, segmentation involving men has not received sufficient or critical recent inquiry.

This research focuses particularly on the learning experiences of rural men with limited choices for learning locally through structured providers or programs. People in most small rural towns in Australia with a population of less than approximately 3,000 people have relatively limited local learning options: certainly no on-campus university access, and rarely access to technical and further education (TAFE). Depending on the State or Territory and the size of the rural town, the only local public access to learning for adults is likely to be some form of Adult and Community Education (ACE), at best offering short vocational and interest programs with public internet access, typically oriented to the particular needs and interests of women that make up at least three quarters of users. While some larger towns may also have private providers, as town population size decreases, the likelihood of even a local ACE provider diminishes.

As this chapter will show, the fact that men tend not to use ACE—even where it exists in rural Australia—does not mean that men are not learning. As remoteness from services increases and town population size decreases, the role of formal learning organisations becomes less important, and a small number of 'surrogate' local organisations—often with secondary learning functions, becomes critical for rural adults of all ages. Even in the smallest communities in Australia there is usually a primary school and invariably a fire or emergency services organisation. The learning that adults experience—simply by being responsibly involved in running a local primary school or a fire brigade along with sporting clubs and farmer-based organisations—becomes particularly critical. As the penalties for *not* learning have increased, particularly with the introduction of new information and communications technology (ICT) to all facets of work, leisure, family and community life, adults of all ages who are *not* learning through their connections as volunteers or participants within such organisations are at particular risk of being left behind in the rapidly changing world—particularly the world of work.

As the research will show, the key negative issue identified in this chapter is that it is men who have had least positive formal learning experiences—particularly at school—who are most at risk and are less likely to come to ACE or embrace any form of institutional, adult and community or formal learning. On the positive side, the opportunities and potential of learning informally over a lifetime through active participation and reciprocation within community-based voluntary organisations is huge.

No attempt is made to make a hard and fast distinction between formal and informal learning. As McGivney (1999b, p. 1) notes, it is difficult to make such a clear distinction 'as there is often some crossover between the two. The setting itself is not necessarily the defining element …'. The author concurs with McGivney's judgement (p. 1) that it is fallacious also 'to make a simple distinction between accredited programs which are considered to be formal and non-accredited programmes which are generally classified as informal', on the grounds that there is a diversity of content, teaching and learning styles in both. Though governments in Australia tend only to fund formally accredited vocational or university programs, the learning that actually occurs through universities, TAFE and ACE, is not the same as what is contained in the formally embedded curriculum or units of competency. For the purposes of consistency, the author has adopted McGivney's (1999b, pp. 1–2) definition of informal learning as 'Learning that takes place outside of a dedicated learning environment, which arises from the activities and interests of individuals or groups but which may not be recognised

as learning', as well as 'Non-course based but intentional learning activities … provided or facilitated in response to expressed interests and needs from a range of sectors and organisations'.

While the term ACE is used in this chapter to describe adult and community education, it is important to note that there is no national Australian ACE system and that the acronym ACE is neither widely understood nor recognised in Australia. Further, several States and Territories in Australia have no ACE sector, policy or funding (Golding, Davies, & Volkoff, 2001). Though many Australian rural towns have the equivalent of an 'ACE provider', the actual name of organisations rarely includes ACE and typically varies to include combinations of the terms learning, education, community, house, neighbourhood or centre. In some towns neighbourhood houses run alongside or instead of ACE providers and tend to cater more for the needs and interests of women. In reality, most rural ACE providers survive by providing resources and programs from a range of mainly government agencies and are therefore effectively (though often precariously) funded from a range of sources.

The increasing emphasis in my research and in this chapter is therefore on less structured learning that takes place after the completion of compulsory schooling. However it becomes evident from the research, as Schuller (2004, p. 9) notes in his study of the benefits of learning that 'schooling is a major influence on both subsequent learning', and the effects of initial schooling on people's motivation for learning can be long lasting. There is an argument coming out of the current research as the need for creating lifelong learners increases, that researchers in education might usefully spend less effort on analysing why a minority of people positively 'succeed' at school—and more effort looking at the long-term, debilitating impact of negative school experiences—for what appears from the emerging evidence, to be a majority of rural men.

Men had been identified, along with people living in rural areas as being under-represented adult learners (the Leigh Report, 1997, pp.154–6, cited in Beckett & Helme, 2000, pp. 16–17). Several reasons were cited for this: unlike women, men have gained fulfilment from work and now want to rest; men prefer outdoor activities; women are better at joining groups and networking; men are afraid to appear weak by not knowing things; adult learning centres are perceived as women's domains; and men don't respond to a structured learning environment.

From the outset it is important to acknowledge that the analysis of any group of adult learners, including men, who comprise 50 per cent of the adult population, cannot assume homogeneity. As Merrill and Alheit (2004, p. 154) note in their study of adult returners to learning, adult students are not a homogenous group 'as

they differ also by age, gender, class, ethnicity and mode of study'. It is also important to note that their chapter focuses deliberately on the learning undertaken by men in small rural towns in familiar local environment. In doing so, the analysis goes well beyond the idea of men formally learning as adult 'students', 'enrolled' in education 'providers'. It draws in part on insights from important and extensive recent research into informal learning (McGivney, 1999b) and into men who are, arguably, 'missing' from education and training (McGivney, 1999a), particularly in the United Kingdom.

It is important also to note the role gender segmentation already plays in the economic and vocational life of small rural communities in Australia—a factor that flows though the research findings as they relate to adult learning. While farm work has tended to be dominated by men there has been a tendency for the labour tasks to be divided, such that men have tended to do the work beyond the farm yard and women have traditionally done the books. With the advent of computers and the Internet, women have tended to 'go on line' first. They have also been more likely to reinvent themselves—sometimes through education and training, which includes ACE—to engage in paid vocational roles off-farm more so than have men. As in many families, women generally have tended to take more of an active interest in the learning undertaken by children and grandchildren than have men. Further, a surprisingly high proportion of the professional workforce (and also the 'learning leaders') in small rural towns have been women—in teaching, health, nursing and welfare professions in particular. The net result is that learning in its many forms has tended to become dominated by women: as workers, teachers, mothers and learners.

From the perspective of a child growing up in a country town, most of the teachers, learning mentors and role models are women. As in many developed, modern agricultural economies, for at least 30 years there have been limited options in small towns for professional employment of young people post-school. As a consequence, most young people who complete school move to education, training and employment in larger cities. There is a relatively lower number of 15 to 24 year olds in rural and remote Australia (Kilpatrick, Williamson, & Thrush, 1997). Of the ten regional study locations of Kilpatrick's (2000) national study of learning through VET, seven rural areas experienced inter-censal declines in youth population (1986–1998) of between 8 and 36 per cent combined with even greater increases in all but one region in the 65+ population between 15 and 54 per cent (Appendix 6, p. 13). Given this general and widespread general aging of rural populations and often static or declining rural town populations, 'there will need to be an emphasis on skill upgrading and updating, and retraining for the existing

workforce, as the economy restructures to meet the challenges of the 21st century' (Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 7).

Those men that remain in small towns tend to have farms or businesses to 'come back to', and in general have more limited levels of formal school or post school education than men and women who leave—or people, including professionals, para-professionals and tradespeople—who come from elsewhere to take up local jobs in town. In effect, men who stay in town and who do not undertake formal vocational upskilling tend not to be competitive in the new, and increasingly feminised world of work—particularly if they lack the now essential ICT skills.

Two research reports from the UK by McGivney (1999a, 1999b), about *Informal learning in the community* and *Men who are missing from education training* have been particularly seminal and useful in informing, guiding and validating the design and intent of the author's recent research into learning in and beyond ACE, and logically into men's learning. McGivney's (1999b) key findings in her research report on informal learning have been used as part of the design template for some of the author's recent research that is inclusive of informal learning. McGivney (pp. iv–v) identified that while informal learning is difficult to pin down conceptually, it 'plays a critical role in widening participation among people who are educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged'. Her research confirmed that informal learning 'can result in important benefits not only for the individual but for the family and for the community or society as a whole'. While it 'takes place in a huge variety of settings', McGivney (p. 20) identified the siting of learning in a familiar local environment' as 'extremely important, often more so than its actual focus' (p. v). Her research (p. 47) also noted that 'People often choose familiar, non-threatening or stereotypical learning activities' as a safe starting point that 'gives them the confidence to progress to something quite different'.

McGivney's (1999a) report on men excluded from education and training has been similarly useful and inspirational for a range of reasons quite apart from its academic rigour and clear evidence and findings. When questions of possible gender bias towards women in some adult learning contexts were originally raised in ACE and VET research contexts in Australia, the author was quietly but firmly advised to 'back off'. Much of the research in ACE has a strong feminist flavour, and the idea of a male publicly raising questions about gender equity for men were initially difficult. While the situation has changed somewhat with the two commissioned reports on VET and ACE now published, it is important to note that the Australian House of Representatives (2002) report into the education of boys

also experienced difficulties getting information and cooperation from a number of education stakeholders including researchers. What McGivney's (1999a) report did was clearly flag that what was showing up in research in Australia as a tendency for men not to 'come forward' to embrace new initiatives in adult and continuing learning was not isolated to Australia and could be the focus of serious academic inquiry.

McGivney (1999a), like the author, is at pains from the outset to stress the importance of creating and retaining educational pathways for women and recognising the disadvantages still endured by many women in education and work. As McGivney (1999a, pp. 1–2) notes in her Introduction, consistent with the McGivney (1999b) report, 'because adults may be missing from formal education does not imply that men (or women) who do not participate in formal, organised programs are not learners in the broad sense of the term. … Nor to imply that people who do not engage in organised learning programmes are any less talented, enterprising or resourceful than those who do. … It is, however a question of equity. If we have education and training programmes and institutions which are ostensibly open to all but which attract only certain segments of the population, that 'openness' is itself open to question. … [I]f we aspire to be a learning society with a culture of lifelong learning, the problem of unequal access to education and training opportunities needs to be addressed'.

McGivney's (1999a) research in the UK turned up a number of trends, some, but not all, have since been confirmed in Australian research. As in Australia, 'community-based adult education courses … continue to be dominated by women' (p.5), 'In higher education, the number of women students has also increased significantly' (p.6), 'There are clear differences between the sexes in their choice of subjects' (p.7). Unlike women, 'who tend more than men to engage in learning activities which are connected with self-development and which expand their interests and activities and lead to educational progression. Men appear to be more single-minded, focussed and practical in their motivation to learn, seeking to further specific goals and particular interests' (pp. 7–8). As is the tendency in Australia, McGivney (1999a, p. 8) also noted 'the greater tendency for men to be learning for reasons connected to employment', and the tendency for men to use VET and university as their main educational pathways to career and academic status, while women follow a wider range of learning routes to achieve greater societal and economic participation. They are more likely than men to be involved in non-vocational learning and far more likely than men to continue learning after age 40.

Of particular relevance to the most recent research in Australia (Golding, Harvey & Echter, 2004), Elsdon (1995), also in a UK context, identified a higher rate of women's involvement in generalist voluntary organisations. However, adults, particularly men with minimum school experience, were much more likely to be found in specialist organisations. Men's interests were found by Elsdon (1995, p. 44) to be 'more linear and focused, especially on practical activities'. Many men, particularly 'the long-term unemployed, manual workers, men with poor literacy and no or few qualifications' were found to be amongst those significantly under-represented in many forms of educational provision.

McGivney (1999a) also identified African and Caribbean men in the UK amongst the significantly under-represented. This chapter does not attempt to cover the similar, well known and significant disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in mainstream education systems. While this includes Aboriginal men in education and training, VET tends to be the Indigenous sector of choice. Research by the author shows that with some local exceptions, Aboriginal Australians generally make little use of ACE in Australia as it is currently configured, though the need for appropriate adult and lifelong education provision remains huge. The author has elsewhere in his research (Golding & Pattison, 2004, pp. 113–115) flagged the need to separately consider and address the striking relationship between increasing Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage and decreasing accessibility to services/increasing remoteness. It is important to note that Indigenous Australians in Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia in particular are concentrated close to remote towns and homelands and have objectively and significantly less access to TAFE (Golding & Pattison 2004, pp. 115–117). In these locations they arguably also have the greatest need for appropriate community-based adult education but have the least well developed ACE sector, providers, policies or funding. In many of the sites in which rural (as distinct from remote) research has been conducted in south-eastern Australia, Aboriginal Australians make up a very small proportion of the adult population and rarely access ACE.

The research on men learning in small towns draws heavily and deliberately on analyses of learning that move away from the traditional focus of attention '… on the mind of the individual learner and his/her accumulation of the valued information and abilities transmitted by a teaching adult' (Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004, p. 9), towards sociocultural approaches '… that shift and broaden that focus to the learner's active appropriation of valued cultural practices and knowledge with a social context'. Theoretical approaches that consider fire service volunteers and football club members as learning in context through *communities of practice*

are more accommodating of learner experiences than approaches that regard adults and what they learn as an individual endeavour as students interact with content.

The field of research that probes literacy, particularly adult literacy from a sociocultural perspective, also provides important insights into what men are learning and why. There are tantalising insights from research into what Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992, p. 133) call *funds of knowledge*: the 'historically accumulated and culturally developed of bodies of knowledge and skill essential for household and individual functioning and well-being' that help explain intergenerational accumulation and transmission of knowledge and skills through community organisations. This research also helps explain why educational achievement at school is so closely related to the educational achievement of the parent, and as Gregory, Long and Volk (2004, p. 22) point out, points to the importance of 'knowledge and skills transmission within a social matrix, a community of social networks based on reciprocity and *confianza* or mutual trust'.

Research in small towns that establishes the importance and value of learning in context, through organisational and family networks, links also to more recent literature on the relationship between learning, well-being and social capital (Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brassett-Grundy, & Bynner, 2004). Schuller, Hammond and Preston's (2004, p. 192) three concluding points are particularly salient in the context of the current research: that (1) 'Learning has value at every age'; (2) 'Learning outcomes should be assessed within a framework which goes far beyond the acquisition of qualifications, and includes the learners' capacity to sustain and develop themselves and their communities across a range of domains. It follows that learning opportunities should be broad and diverse in content, mode and pedagogy, and driven by personal need and motivation more than top-down specification'; and importantly, (3) 'Huge costs are incurred when learning is absent'.

Other literature that informs the research comes, sometimes obliquely and at other times from the gaps in the literature on gender in education, couched largely in feminist discourse, and which typically presupposes combinations of universal female disadvantage and male hegemony in educational participation and outcomes. Some feminist analyses of educational theory, while acknowledging men's general privilege in terms of access and control to high status knowledge, educational routes, institutions and employment (Weiner, Arnot, & David, 1997), recognise that effects of current and future social change will be different for men and women in different positions in the social hierarchy and within different nation states.

Arnot (2002, p. 260) notes that 'previous transitions from school to work which were taken-for-granted aspects of the transfer from boyhood to manhood have been disrupted and young men are forced to contemplate an accelerating "diploma disease"'. Arnot predicts that media discourses of schools of the future that construct the 'future as female' will lead, in advanced economies, for a need to address a 'crisis in masculinity'. Arnot also notes (pp. 260–261) that other theorists predict, 'In an alienating social and economic climate, and indeed in a shifting gender climate, boys may celebrate hyper-masculine identities' as they '… cling on to traditional male roles, traditional family structures and local (territorial and community) identities'.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH FOR EDUCATION POLICY

The research introduced in chronological order below provides a snapshot of evidence and key findings that emerged primarily through the author's research, sometimes with others, over the decade from 1996. The emerging research helps to build up a pattern of research endeavour that increasingly and deliberately changes foci, methodologies and findings. The early research presupposes initial learning by young students enrolled in their first post-compulsory courses in formal and institutional settings without consideration of location or context. Later research looks at lifelong learning by older adults, particularly men, in and through ACE and informal community settings in particular rural locations. In its totality, the research is illustrative of the cumulative and derivative nature of research. It shows that insights and findings from one piece of research are all the more powerful when supported by an emerging body of related data, policies and discourses from elsewhere. It also illustrates how research can amplify, explore and sometimes negate prevailing education policies.

Evidence that important aspects of learning derive from contexts other than formal education, as summarised above (Schuller, Hammond, & Preston's 2004, p. 192 second point) have accumulated in a range of research projects over the past ten years. They were first apparent in a national study of generic skills in the context of credit transfer and the recognition of prior learning (Golding, Marginson, & Pascoe, 1996). In that research adult students were surveyed with experience of both university and vocational education and training (TAFE). They were asked in which sector or context (school, TAFE, higher education, work, home) they had experienced a major contribution to work-related skill development for twelve different generic skills including the eight Mayer key competencies. Overall, for this sample of adults with considerable, multi-sectoral

tertiary experience, informal workplace and home settings were perceived by respondents as making the major contribution to their key competencies (Golding, Marginson, & Pascoe, 1996, Tables 6 and 7, pp. 23–24). What was also striking, as an important aside, is the mismatch between where university and TAFE staff *perceived* that skill formation would generally take place and the contexts *attributed* to the learning of those skills. In effect, experienced tertiary educators surveyed greatly over-emphasised the role adult learners ascribed to skill formation through formal education, as compared to informal learning at work and at home.

To the mid-1990s TAFE specifically and VET generally were the largely neglected poor cousins of 'higher' education. ACE, as now, remained largely beyond the education policy radar as the 'Cinderella' sector. A national qualifications framework regarded university-based learning as 'higher' education. A separate qualifications stream was created for accredited, competency-based vocational training and training (VET). Only formal learning in school, university and VET programs (with what were presumed to be vocational intent and vocational outcomes) was supported by both national government policy and funding. The prevailing paradigm was that young people got their skills for a career of work by 'front-loading', that school students would gravitate universally upwards as suggested by the qualifications and sectoral hierarchy from school and then to VET or university and work.

A major study of two-way movement between university and TAFE (Golding, 1999) identified shortcomings in models of movement in education that had assumed a linear progression of adult learners from a lower to a higher post-compulsory sector. The study was the first to identify significantly stronger movement from university to the VET (TAFE) sector rather than had previously been assumed—from VET to university. It concluded that intersectoral movement is a complex, two-way phenomenon indicative of the need for extensive learning. It clearly demonstrated that learning, particularly post-initial learning post-school, is largely contingent on circumstance and context and indicative of considerable change in vocational and personal circumstances of individuals over a lifetime. The research was conducted in the wake of the 1991 economic recession and the considerable restructuring of school, VET, higher education and work that flowed from it during the decade that followed. It illustrated the high level of 'to and fro' between work, formal tertiary courses and sectors. It also established 'a conceptual framework for characterising and modelling post-secondary movement and recognition, in the context of changing recurrent education and training needs of people in and out of work' (Golding, 1999, p. ii).

To the mid-1990s national education policies had generally assumed that students would have one intention and one outcome that matched either an academic or vocational outcome. It further anticipated that the match between intentions and outcomes for individuals would be relatively congruent. Extensive longitudinal research into outcomes from vocational education and training (Golding & Volkoff, 1999) for a range of equity target groups revealed the very diverse intentions and outcomes of adult learners in VET—and the frequent lack of congruence between intentions and outcomes over the course of their training. It also illustrated the importance of learning for reasons other than for paid employment: for interest, to help children, to become engaged with the community, to change life direction.

Through interview it was possible in the research to identify a set of learner intentions and outcomes at different times over the course of the training. By interviewing students over several years, it was possible to identify a set of pathway types that included congruence or lack of congruence between intentions and outcomes. While the research revealed congruence between intention and outcomes for around half of learners surveyed, it identified less congruence for people categorised as having low skills. Of considerable relevance to the later research conducted in ACE contexts, the pathways travelled by ACE learners undertaking literacy and numeracy programs more frequently led to minimal outcomes.

The mid-1990 equity 'target groups' identified as under-represented in education (such as Indigenous Australians, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, with limited formal literacies or living in rural and remote areas) were taken to be relatively discrete and homogeneous. Disadvantage, however, was found from the research to act within and across groups of adult learners and across learning contexts (Golding & Volkoff, 1999) as well as to overlap and reinforce in particularly insidious ways for particular groups of adult learners. Disadvantage was shown as acting differentially by group—and cumulatively there is overlap as a consequence of multiple membership. In particular, most Indigenous Australians and adults with a disability were shown to experience particular relative disadvantage in terms of access to and outcomes from learning. Adults with low skills and/or who had experienced long periods of unemployment were also less likely to gain positive outcomes. While people in rural and remote areas as a whole were not seen as disadvantaged in terms of participation and outcomes from VET, particular subgroups such as Indigenous Australians in such areas were more affected by remoteness and lack of services than others.

The findings in the research that some women experience disadvantage at all phases in VET (access, participation, and outcomes) are important to acknowledge, in the context of arguments later in the chapter, about some men's disadvantage in ACE. Golding and Volkoff concluded (Volume 2, p. 229) that a lack of paid work is often a barrier to women's participation in VET, since it impacts on self-confidence, on direct and indirect financial cost of learning as well as on income foregone during VET participation. Further, women experience disadvantage at all phases in VET and are adversely affected by roles associated with parenting and childcare. Their disadvantage was found to be exacerbated by the gendered division of labour and gender segmentation in particular fields of study and professions as well as by susceptibility to low-paid, casual, part-time and insecure work in professions dominated by women.

Golding and Volkoff's (1999) study looked also at rural and isolated people in VET and found that while access to programs is typically more limited in such settings, the positive interactions experienced while learning provide a critical social and community function for adults in rural and remote communities. Frustrated by their inability to discriminate between regional, rural and remote locations in their study using an objective rural or remoteness typology they (p.253) recommended the development of standard national definitions of 'what is meant by urban, rural, regional, remote or isolated, based on nationally recognised criteria'. The Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) introduced nationally during 1999 (ARIA, 2001) effectively provided the typology required and has been used in most subsequent research.

Despite these definitional problems, Golding and Volkoff (1999) identified more problems for learners in smaller, isolated localities, particularly where 'thin markets' in education limited program choice. It identified the cost of travel as well as distance, particularly for younger learners, as a major barrier to participation. Consistent with later research findings, it also concluded (Volume 2, p. 250) that 'Rural and isolated learners, particularly Indigenous people, were susceptible to early withdrawal from school programs and subsequent early commencement in VET programs'. In terms of gender, it concluded that 'The opportunities of secure, well paid work for rural and isolated women after VET were generally more limited than for men in a smaller number of male dominated industry areas. Those learners who were older, male and less educated were less likely to achieve job-related outcomes'. The research, as a precursor to the work that would follow, also concluded that:

> … voluntary community involvement after VET was an important outlet for many rural people, parallel to or in place of, paid work. It was also a significant and

> valuable activity which helped sustain social and community capital. VET programs have a criticalsocial and community function in rural and remote communities. *(Golding & Volkoff, 1999, p. 250)*

Research was pointing to a disjuncture between adult and vocational learning as conceived in national VET frameworks and how it actually occurs in regional Australia. This disjuncture became the focus for a major study of VET in ten diverse areas across regional Australia that the author contributed to (CRLRA, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2000). The study showed, amongst its diverse findings, that 'Learning is highly valued, training and education are not' (CRLRA, 2000, p. 119). It provided evidence that while work is assumed by national VET authorities 'to be available, single-industry oriented, full time and permanent. This is not the case in regional Australia' (CRLRA, 2000, p. 118). This finding had important implications for a national 'one size fits all' training system based on universal national vocational competencies. While VET had been conceived as having immediate single use in particular industries, the CRLRA research showed that VET has multiple uses spread over time, that include social and community as well as economic purposes. It identified the multiple outcomes of VET learning other than employment, including 'health, intergenerational activity, community and public service' (p. 118).

By 2000 some winds of change were blowing through the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), the national body responsible for VET until its demise in 2005. As Dreise and Golding (1999, p. 9) noted from an Indigenous VET policy perspective, lifelong learning and social capital were:

> … formally acknowledged as desirable by ANTA. Moira Scollay, CEO of ANTA noted in a keynote speech to TAFE Directors that (March 1999) ANTA was in an ideal position to provide a dynamic and vibrant approach to lifelong learning and skill acquisition. Scollay cited the UNESCO Delors Report [Delors 1996], which recognised that education is at the heart of both personal and community development. The Delors report, like ATSIPTAC, is concerned about a broad concept of education that is pursued throughout life, and which is flexible, diverse, and available at different times and places.

By 2000 research into social capital was beginning to inform studies of education. Falk, Golding and Balatti's (2000) study of social capital in ACE provided new evidence of the critical importance of providing opportunities for adults to learn through networks and to build social capital in communities. It identified the important web of relationships between adult learners, ACE

providers and the communities in which they are embedded. Based in Victoria and on an analysis of narratives collected in ten diverse ACE sites, the study set out to examine ACE learning through a social capital 'lens'. In effect, it looked for evidence of social capital—networks, trust and reciprocity—in the process of learner transformation. One of its key findings was that 'building social capital is not an incidental by-product of the way ACE providers operate. Building social capital is the modus operandi of the sector' (p. v). Falk, Golding and Balatti observed that while learning in many forms—lifelong, transformational, skills-based, informal, self-directed, workplace, community—typically takes place in ACE, 'learning' is not often used to name what has happened' (p. xii). As McGivney (1999b, p. vii) had identified, '"onward and upward" progression to structured formal learning was [mostly] unplanned and unanticipated'. As Falk, Balatti and Golding (2000, p. xii) concluded, adult and community learning does not always come from enrolment in a 'course' but 'from exposure to a multitude of experiences and points of view, and the making of new connections between them'.

Having grazed fortuitously into ACE, it became obvious that it was very much a women's paddock. As Golding, Davies and Volkoff (2001) remarked in their consolidation of Australian ACE research in the decade to 2000, ACE, where it exists in Australia, is profoundly oriented to the educational needs of women. One of the foci in their analysis of the research literature was user-groups in ACE. They concluded, on the basis of consistent data showing at most a ratio of one male to every three females in ACE, 'Most national and State ACE research confirms that women clearly outnumber men as learners and workers in ACE. This phenomenon is historic and ongoing' (p. 68), and further, that 'ACE is profoundly oriented to the educational needs of women' (p. 69). Most of the research literature on gender in ACE was found to be underpinned and informed by women's and feminist perspectives and learning pedagogies. There was no evidence of research into men.

On the basis of evidence in a subsequent major study of 20 small and relatively remote towns in Victoria with and without ACE provision, Golding and Rogers (2001) found that women dominate adult and community learning in small rural and remote towns. They identified ample scope for existing ACE providers in small and remote towns to meet the different needs of men as well as to develop better networks with organisations that attract and target male learners. These findings were amplified in detail in Golding and Rogers (2001, pp. 19–20) as below:

- The attitudes and skills necessary for this 'new world' of work, enterprise and community have tended to fall increasingly to women: as learning leaders, networkers and learners. Women have been better placed through adult education networks to embrace widespread proliferation of computers in workplaces, and more recently the Internet.

- Most [Adult, Community and Further Education] providers in small towns are run, staffed and networked primarily by women. Most have a rich history of women's involvement through patronage, management and volunteerism. The program profiles are typically oriented to women's needs. The learning environments are typically shaped in ways which are overtly inclusive of women and which promote connection to community through learning.

- However, there is evidence from this research that as a consequence, men in small and remote towns are much less likely to become involved in ACFEB-funded adult learning. The Statewide ACE participation data show women outnumber men in all ACFE regions by a factor of between two and four[1]. It can be argued that men tend, in effect, to be excluded from ACE and learning networks in ways not dissimilar to the ways in which TAFE has typically tended to cater for men and exclude women.

- The implications of female domination of ACE go beyond the likely gender-based exclusion from opportunities for local lifelong learning in small and remote communities. The question needs to be asked as to what role models and messages mainly female adult learning environments provide to local young people through parents and adults, particularly in the relative absence of other adult learning organisations overtly inclusive of males. It is important to note that most organisations in small towns which incorporate and embrace adult male learning are those devoted to sport and emergency services such as [State Emergency Services] and [Country Fire Authority] and further, that these organisations are typically very poorly networked to existing learning organisations.

- There are exceptions. Situations where men are more directly or collaboratively involved in learning organisations as managers, teachers or as committee members, male involvement in, and attitudes to, learning are qualitatively different. In some recently created learning organisations, such as those structured around computer-based networking initiatives funded by State and Federal governments gender exclusion appears to be less of an issue.

The report concluded that:

> New incentives are necessary to increase the skills, diversity and capacity of learning organisation committees, to actively encourage male involvement in ACE at all levels and to improve the skill and employment base of remote ACE staff and providers, particularly through professional development offered locally and cross sectorally *(p. 6)*.

Having clearly identified the bias towards women as learners and workers in ACE as well as ACE research to 2002, the author sought to undertake research that would look closely *not* at why men were not in learning in ACE but in a site where men actually *were* learning. Hayes, Golding and Harvey's (2004) major Australian study of learning though rural and remote fire and emergency services organisations showed that they are important community locations for adult learning, particularly for men. The research was based in 20 small and objectively remote towns, selected by ARIA in five southern Australian States. It involved a survey and extensive interviews in both Fire/SES as well as conventional ACE-type organisations. It was underpinned in part by government perceptions of 'literacy problems' amongst public safety volunteers who were being increasingly required, by changing formalisation and national accreditation of training, to engage in more formal training and assessment. At the time of the study in 2003 there were around 400,000 volunteers, mostly men, in fire and emergency services in Australia.

Hayes, Golding and Harvey's (2004) research identified that 85 per cent of volunteers in these small and remote towns were men. It also confirmed that there were as many fire organisations as primary schools extending to the remotest parts of Australia in which adults were regularly meeting, practicing and receiving increasingly accredited training. Despite being widespread and having a long culture of training and a high training frequency, few people consciously regarded these public safety organisations as adult learning organisations. Their research confirmed a broader interest in learning amongst fire and emergency service volunteers that goes beyond industry competencies, and that: This interest remains relatively untapped for a group of learners that is not otherwise measured in conventional adult learning data and are often (wrongly) regarded as unreachable through existing adult education organisations. While in some small towns fire and emergency service organisations are the only or most important site for accredited training, they are not currently regarded by most local people, including their members, as learning organisations. (p. 36)

As had been anticipated, volunteers in these organisations were also:

> … unlikely to be otherwise involved in formal or non-formal learning, though many
> learn informally. In general, their knowledge of existing adult learning organisations
> is very limited, even where they exist locally. *(p. 36)*

From a literacy perspective, the research confirmed the findings of Bull and Anstey (1995, p. 9) that in many rural communities literacy, as it is traditionally defined, was seen more as women's work. 'Conversely, men generally saw literacy in more functional terms in order to complete tasks or augment work.'

As in the CRLRA (2000) and Golding and Rogers (2001) research, network diagrams were used as part of the research to identify the inter-relationships between learning organisations. These networks indicated the very poor linkages and mutual recognition of learning between service-oriented, community-based 'surrogate' learning organisations such as fire and emergency services on one hand, and ACE providers with 'learning' in their mission (and often their organisational title) on the other.

What this research highlighted was that hundreds of thousands of Australian people in rural and remote towns, mainly men, were engaged in intensive and extensive local training and practice for community benefit that was not generally recognised as learning. While many of the specialist emergency skills they were acquiring would rarely (if ever) be employed, the direct and indirect benefits of the learning experiences were shown from the research to be extensive—in employment, business, family, personal, and community life. In particular, volunteers who meet and train regularly for a common purpose:

> …develop high levels of bonding social capital—trust, reciprocity, networks within
> their organisational structure. These are essential in providing a quick and coherent
> response to local community emergencies and, when required, to distant major
> emergencies. *(p. 37)*

One important finding was that fire and emergency service volunteers have a clear preference for training (learning) that is practical and hands-on, particularly for older men with lower levels of formal schooling and limited post-school qualifications. As McGivney's (1999b) research predicted, *where* the training takes place is also critical. 'Very few volunteers would feel comfortable training in a conventional formal classroom setting, particularly in a setting beyond their own organisation, even if it is close and accessible' (Hayes, Golding & Harvey, 2004, p. 36).

A particular value of the survey used as part of this research was that it provided a mechanism for objectively separating out gender and also age as a

significant[2] variable for this large national sample of volunteers from small and remote towns. Men were found to be significantly less likely than women to have an ability to use computers to find information (but with significantly better map skills), and significantly more likely to have been in the organisation for many years and also hold leadership positions. Older volunteers were found to be significantly less likely to have stayed on at school or to be confident ICT users, and in more remote localities had significantly less opportunities for learning in their own communities.

Though inequitable access to adult and vocational learning for adults in rural and objectively remote areas of Australia as a consequence of remoteness to services and facilities was perhaps self-evident, it had not been researched in ways that objectified accessibility to services and remoteness. Many researchers—and even national governments—had wrongly assumed that all locations beyond capital cities could be classified as rural and that inclusion of regional cities in research samples would give a sufficient window into issues of rural accessibility to learning.

Golding and Pattison (2004) undertook a national desk study, in part using the relatively new Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA), 2001 VET data and 2000 Indigenous disadvantage data to contribute to a book on research readings on equity in VET in Australia. They argued a case for factoring in location based on accessibility to services as part of VET policy and provision and also accounting for known socio-economic disadvantage by location. Previous national data on regional differences had been based on metrocentric assumptions and categorisations that regarded most areas beyond capital cities as rural and which regarded all 'remote' locations as equally remote. They argued a case for using measures such as ARIA to address known inaccessibility to publicly-funded adult and vocational learning (including TAFE) in rural and remote locations, particularly remote Indigenous communities known to be objectively very remote and highly disadvantaged.

MOST RECENT RESEARCH INTO MEN'S LEARNING

Golding's most recent research has further explored evidence of gender segmentation of adult learning in small and objectively remote Australian communities. It provided new evidence that males in many small and remote communities are in need of learning spaces that meet their particular and different needs. It argued that while the ACE participation and research data indicated men's relative absence from ACE:

> … men are nonetheless learning on the farm and in businesses, they are
> particularly learning 'by doing'. However, the learning men do tends to be less long-
> term, strategic or discretionary. Typically men learn what *has* to be learned just in
> time for a particular practical purpose. … In essence, while men's participation in
> VET in quantitative terms is not radically different from that of women's, men's
> learning in VET tends to 'lack the *quality of engagement* (or perhaps immersion) in
> the community' (see Beckett & Helme, 2001, p. 13, their emphasis). *(Golding, 2004,
> p. 230)*

Questions posed about gender segmentation and its effects on adult learning
(Golding, 2004, pp. 236–237) became the foundation of subsequent research by
Golding, Harvey and Echter (2004). It confirmed that men experience important
and valued learning through their experience as volunteers and participants in
community organisations more so than as 'students' in ACE. Their research was
framed in the wake of the House of Representatives (2002, p. 62) report into the
education of boys that included the note[3] that:

> A number of assumptions developed during two decades of activity in girls'
> education have been uncritically carried forward into the renamed gender
> strategies. While it may not be fashionable to argue male disadvantage, it is
> important to recognise the extent to which boys and men in small and remote
> towns are particularly disengaged from learning and therefore disengaged.

A citation from Baker (1996, p. 32), based on UK research, provided part of
the expanding rationale for this subsequent study focusing only on men.

> While it is easy to applaud the demise of male domination in the workplace—
> an outcome certainly overdue—it is nevertheless still crucial to acknowledge the
> profound effect such a change has on men's sense of themselves. It cannot be right
> that so many men are left feeling confused, angry; dispossessed and powerless
> without that experience being publicly acknowledged and discussed.

The research, a ten-town, survey-based study of learning by adult males in
small rural Victorian towns (Golding, Harvey, & Echter, 2004), explored the
observed under-representation of rural men (ARIA 1.7 to 3.7) in adult and
community education as broadly defined. It was therefore deliberately inclusive of
men's learning both in *and beyond* narrowly defined ACE 'providers' funded by
governments. The survey was specifically directed to men (not at school) who had
accessed local ACE programs or services in the previous twelve months or who
were involved as participants and volunteers in four other community-based
organisations.

These included four other surrogate learning organisation 'types': the local
football club, landcare organisation, senior citizens club and the fire brigade. The

intention of surveying men beyond ACE was to find out what learning men were currently doing or would do; what their learning preferences, attitudes and experiences were, and how learning in ACE might be configured to better meet men's particular learning interests and preferences. In their exploration of significant differences between sub-groups of men, Golding, Harvey and Echter (2004) revealed that previous formal education experiences, at and post-school, were relatively limited for most rural men.

Golding, Harvey and Echter (2004) provided strong and disturbing new evidence of the ongoing and debilitating effects of negative experiences at school on involvement in lifelong learning and community activity for men of all ages. Being an active part of a community organisation was shown to play a key role in men's current learning and provide critical opportunities for further and lifelong learning in ways that ACE apparently struggles to provide. Though relatively few men 'really enjoyed' learning at school and one in five were limited in their ability to engage in learning by their limited literacy skills, most men shared a clear desire to learn for a wide range of purposes in less formal, practical, group settings.

Consistent with the conclusions in McGivney's (1999a) study, most men wanted any extra learning delivered locally—preferably through their own organisations and generally not through ACE. Overall, most men expressed a keen desire to learn by being actively *involved in an activity* rather than passively learning 'about' something. Golding, Harvey and Echter's research threw new light on the critical and positive role played by active and frequent involvement in volunteer community activity through service and leisure organisations in small rural towns. It highlighted the current problems ACE has attracting men as learners—despite the value they clearly placed on learning—and the expressed needs of men of all ages to keep learning. Four out of ten men did not know enough about the local ACE provider to use it, and one in five did not feel comfortable going there.

The cross-organisational survey design allowed, for the first time, exploration, and comparison of a number of significant differences of learning-related variables by type of organisation in which men were participants. Men surveyed in the five organisation types learnt in significantly differently ways. In general, learning as a consequence of participation within and through non-ACE service and leisure organisations was more effective for men than learning through adult and community education (ACE).

On most learning-related criteria, fire, football and senior citizens organisations in particular fulfilled a number of critical, learning-related roles for

men who were actively involved in those organisations. Learning through regular and active community participation is more effective and more closely matched to men's learning preferences than learning through a local ACE provider—even for men who are already users of ACE.

Fire and senior citizens organisations provided men with significantly more opportunities than the local ACE provider for learning in modes preferred by men: through regular practice, by taking on responsibility through the organisation and for one-on-one learning. As Hayes, Golding and Harvey (2004) had anticipated, fire organisations also provided significantly more opportunities for accredited learning through the organisation than ACE provides for men to learn through special interest courses.

Nevertheless local ACE providers facilitated significantly more opportunities to learn through the Internet than did the other organisations. For many men who needed Internet skills, particularly those involved in senior citizens and landcare organisations, there remained large gaps between the importance of Internet skills and self rating of those skills, that ACE does not currently meet. Of the organisations surveyed, ACE users were significantly more likely to agree that the small size of the organisation made their learning easier, but were significantly more likely to regard ACE as a mainly 'women's organisation'.

Men involved in organisations other than ACE were significantly more involved as participants and also in leadership roles in those organisations than men who participated in ACE. They were also more satisfied that their level of skill allowed them to take an active part in their organisation and significantly less likely than ACE users to regard opportunities to learn elsewhere in their communities as limited. Non-ACE organisation participants were significantly more likely than ACE participants were to value the importance of skills to take responsible positions in community organisations. Most men who did not use the local ACE provider nevertheless regarded it as a valuable resource and around nine out of ten would use it any time if they really needed it.

A number of factors affected men's attitudes to and participation in learning. Men in *smaller* rural towns were significantly more active participants in their organisation's activities than in larger towns. They were also more likely to regard opportunities to learn elsewhere in the community as limited, and more likely to regard the local ACE provider as a useful place to do a course. Men in *remoter* towns showed somewhat similar trends to those in smaller towns, but importantly, were around one half as likely to agree (only 16 per cent in remoter towns agreed) that they 'really enjoyed learning at school' than men in the less remote towns.

There is evidence of a clear link between knowledge about learning and community involvement. Men who had been involved in organisations for more than ten years were significantly more active and interested learners on a whole range of adult learning criteria, but being older, had more limited computer and internet skills and held relatively negative attitudes towards the local ACE provider.

Men who knew enough about the local ACE provider to use it were significantly more involved in their own organisation's activities and more aware of the opportunities to learn through those organisations. Men who *don't* know enough about the local ACE provider to use it were significantly more satisfied with their current skill levels and less likely to take part in learning—even through their own organisation. Men with a limited knowledge of the local ACE provider were much more likely to feel uncomfortable using the local ACE provider. They were also around twice as likely to be older, not know other people using the provider and regard it as a women's space—than men with a good working knowledge of ACE.

For the small number of towns surveyed, the position of the ACE provider in town appeared to affect men's attitudes to the provider. Around twice as many men in towns where the provider was shopfront did not feel comfortable going there as men where the ACE provider was not shopfront.

Age was a significant intervening variable in terms of men's attitudes to and involvement in learning generally, and to ACE in particular. Younger men had significantly higher Internet and computer skills, were much less comfortable about going to the local ACE provider and were more likely to regard it as a 'women's space'. Around six out of ten men of age 24 years or younger did know enough about the local ACE provider to use it and over one half considered it did not currently offer anything they needed to learn. At the other extreme, men over 55 years had more negative and limited experiences of formal learning and ICT and were also unlikely to access ACE.

The survey provided strong and disturbing evidence of the ongoing and debilitating effects of negative experiences at school on involvement in lifelong learning and community activity for men of all ages. On a large number of criteria, men who did not 'really enjoy learning at school' not only had significantly less positive attitudes to adult learning, they were also much less actively involved in community organisations. They participated significantly less frequently, were less interested in more learning, regarded public speaking skills less highly and rated their computer skills lower. Men who did not enjoy school learning were significantly less likely to be active or hold leadership roles in organisations or to

have recently been involved in formal learning programs. In order for them to participate in ACE, courses would need to be shorter and their general attitude that they are 'too old' as adults to be involved in learning would also need to be addressed.

Attitudes toward school—and many other learning-related criteria—were found to be significantly related to completion of higher year levels at school. Men who left school earlier (particularly older men) had significantly lower Internet skills. These differences flowed through into significant differences in men's post-school education. Men with any form of education or training completed post-school had significantly more opportunities for learning through their community involvement than men with no formal post-school experience. Men with limited post-school education completions also had significantly lower internet skills, were more likely to regard their age as a barrier to learning and to be attracted by learning opportunities in smaller organisations.

MESSAGES FOR ADULT LEARNING POLICY AND PRACTICE

All five organisations surveyed in Golding, Harvey and Echter's (2004) research played critical roles as learning organisations for men in small rural towns. For the men surveyed, adult and community education's (ACE's) importance as a learning organisation was different from but significantly less valuable than for the four other community organisations surveyed.

The research confirms the critical and positive role played by active and frequent involvement in volunteer community activity through service and leisure organisations. It highlights the current problems ACE has attracting men as learners—despite the value they clearly place on learning and the expressed needs of men of all ages to keep learning. While around 90 per cent of men value learning in some form, ACE falls well short of providing opportunities to meet the expressed learning needs of the majority of rural men in small rural towns.

Overall, most men express a keen desire to learn by being actively involved in an activity rather than passively learning 'about' something. Men particularly value learning that allows them to stay fit, healthy and safe, but also to take on responsible positions in community organisations including speaking skills and interpersonal communication. Men's preferences are for learning through practical, hands-on experiences, by doing, and wherever possible, in outdoor settings. A minority of rural men prefer to learn in a classroom setting and for four out of ten men, learning from books, via the computer or the Internet are also inappropriate.

Two-thirds of men who are interested in more learning want the learning facilitated in a local situation where the organisation that they are already part of normally meets. Given that a significant minority of men express an aversion to the local ACE provider as a place essentially for women, the provision of a choice for men to learn in contexts and settings than in an ACE provider or classroom—as it is currently typically configured—would appear to be more appropriate.

Men generally, and particularly younger men, have a limited knowledge of the local ACE provider. Around one in four men don't know enough about the local ACE provider to use it, and those who do use it appear only marginally attached to the organisation. In order to better meet the needs of men, there is an expressed request, from around three-quarters of men, for ACE to provide more practical, hands-on learning and more programs specifically for them. Around six out of ten men requested more flexible opening hours and for more males to be involved as ACE teachers or on the ACE committee.

The most negative attitudes towards adult learning, including towards ACE, come from men whose previous experiences of school or formal learning are limited or negative. While younger men have a significantly better grasp of ICT skills, they have fewer opportunities to learn through leadership roles in organisations and more negative perceptions of ACE.

If local rural ACE providers are to more effectively meet rural men's learning needs as expressed through the most recent research, they may need to create more learning situations in which men are already 'at home'—in fire or emergency service organisations, in sporting clubs or via practical, hands-on activity. The different strands of research over the decade confirm the need for ACE providers in these settings to recognise and break down the perceived and persistent barriers that a lack of enjoyment and limited early experiences of learning at (and also beyond) school can and do create for many men over a lifetime.

Another strong theme in the research is that changes in ICT pose new and bigger barriers particularly for older men who have limited access to new technologies through work or through community involvement as volunteers. Men of all ages, particularly younger rural men with higher levels of ICT skills, tend to have more dismissive, uninformed or negative attitudes towards ACE. Though ACE is recognised an important potential resource by most men, four out of ten men don't know enough about the local ACE provider to use it, and one in five men don't feel comfortable going there.

In summary, being an active member of a community organisation plays a key role in men's learning and provides critical opportunities for further learning. Though relatively few men 'really enjoyed' learning at school and around one in

five men are limited in their ability to engage in learning by their limited literacy skills, most claim and share a desire to learn. However most men express a clear preference for learning in less formal, practical, group settings. Most men favour learning delivered locally—preferably through their own organisation, and generally not through the local ACE providers in rural towns—as they are currently configured.

In conclusion, a 'crisis' arguably experienced by men learning in small rural towns is not only experienced by men and is not the end of the problem or the story. The research and its investigations of gender segmentation in adult learning in small town settings have important potential implications for adult and vocational education learning practice in rural communities generally, particularly for men's learning through ACE and through active community involvement. Further research is necessary to more clearly identify the relationship between adult male attitudes to learning and preferences as well as the attitudes towards learning of the next generation of boys. It will be important to establish whether the findings clearly demonstrated for rural men in small Australian towns do (or do not) transfer to other locations and other organisations. It would also be useful to know how learning through involvement by female volunteers compares or contrasts with men's involvement.

A range of grass-roots initiatives, typically called 'men's sheds', are currently working ahead of national research and policy and creating alternative spaces specifically for men to interact, support each other in crisis and also to learn. Some of the momentum for creating such sites comes not from a community education but from the men's movement and from family and community service perspectives—particularly from men experiencing family law disputes. As for some women, some men who perceive inequitable treatment as parents or who feel damaged after failed relationships need sites and services away from home supported and surrounded by other men where they can feel valued, recover and relearn.

A Commonwealth Department of Family Services report (2002) found a high level of un-met demand for services targeted specifically for men, noting that men are open to skills development and relationship support, provided that the approach is male-friendly and non-judgemental. A service that is not identified as being specifically for men is unlikely to attract a large number of men.

Research from Human Services (Murray, 2004) suggests that if men have access to male staff, perceive a service to have an honest and supportive attitude, not be portrayed using a deficit model as 'the problem' and not have services delivered in a physical environment primarily for the use of women and children,

they are more likely to attend. Such research might be particularly pertinent in some adult education providers on each of these grounds if they are to cater better for the learning needs and the wider need for well being of a wider range of men.

NOTES

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[1] 1998 data: see ACFE 1999.

[2] All significances reported in this and other research are based on a Chi square test of independence where $p<0.05$ is taken to be significant.

[3] R. Fletcher, Submission no.166, p.4, cited on p.62.

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CHAPTER TEN

THE GENERATION IN-BETWEEN:
THE PARTICIPATION OF GENERATION X IN LIFELONG LEARNING

RICHARD RYMARZ

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GENERATION X

> Generation X is also more sharply polarized than the immediately preceding
> generation, and the dividing line has moved up the social hierarchy. It is true that the
> perplexing volatility of social placements, the dimness of prospects, the living from
> hand to mouth with no reliable chance of a durable, or at least longer term settlement,
> the vagueness of the rules that need to be learned and mastered to get by—these
> haunt them all without discrimination, breeding anxiety in everyone, stripping all or
> almost all members of their self-assurance and self-esteem. *(Bauman, 2004, p. 14)*

Bauman, in the quote above, provides a number of strong images, such as the
harshness of living from hand to mouth and the pain of being stripped of self-
assurance and self-esteem, to describe the situation of Generation X. Under this
rubric being a member of Generation X brings with it a number of significant and
daunting challenges, not the least of which is to be heard in the public square. As
Generation X is a chronological cohort they have, nonetheless, demography on
their side. The perspective of Generation X cannot be ignored as they assume
more prominent positions in society. In the coming years their experiences will
become pivotal in shaping public policy in a number of areas. The characteristics
of Generation X are the subject of a sizeable literature and what is intended here is
not a thorough review but rather the raising of a number of pertinent issues. The
parameters of the definition of Generation X are usually related to those born
between 1960 and 1975, although these boundaries are somewhat elastic
especially at the upper end. Coupland (1991), one of the first writers to use the
term Generation X, or Gen X, chose it as for him it describes well a group with no
name or identity. The term is often used as a term of anger and alienation to

describe those who considered that they had no identity and little voice (Dunn, 1993). The feeling of alienation of Gen X can be explained, in part, by the relationship between Gen X and those who preceded them—the Baby Boomers (Lipsky & Abrams, 1994).

The Boomers, those born between 1945 and 1960, were the children of post war prosperity and a certain cultural confidence that this generated. Boomers were often involved in a deliberate rebellion against societal and parental norms (Roof, 1993). To take one example, the years of the 1960s and 1970s, when Boomers were coming of age, were marked by stark changes in what previously had been seen as conventional sexual morality (Cohen, 1993). For Gen X, living in a time of relative social introspection, these and other historically divisive issues, and the decisions they entail, have been replaced by a range of uncontested options or choices (Mahedy & Bernardi, 1994).

Another aspect of the alienation of Gen X is that younger generations are now competing with them for a place in the public square. Members of Generation X born in 1960 are now well into their forties and cannot be described as young in any meaningful sense of the word. In societies where youth is esteemed, those who no longer fit the description can easily not be heard in discourses about the future. A small example of this is the amount of research money that is assigned by funding bodies into investigation of youth spirituality and the like compared with similar studies dedicated to those in their thirties and forties.

Mackay (1997) has described Gen X as the options generation and members of it as having the characteristic of being moral boundary riders. Having options brings with it freedom from commitment and little interest in ideology (Barna, 1994; Mackay, 1998). Generation X, it is argued, places far more emphasis than previous generations on the importance of human experience and is generally suspicious of institutional authority (Beaudoin, 1998). Generation X is also typified by a relative uncertainty about the future conditioned by a perception that the seemingly endless prosperity of the post war years has ended (Howe & Strauss, 1993). Other uncertainties also mark the adult world of Gen X. Bauman (1992) has described the postmodern landscape as one which is typified by a loss of belief in the grand narrative or story, and in which individuals need to rely much more on their own resources to create meaning, and these may change many times to suit particular circumstances. Usher (2001) goes further, describing one of the predominant modes of the postmodern as the inability to believe, as evidenced by incredulity at accepting any grand narrative. To live without a guidebook, to use Bauman's terminology, is not, however, easy and also undermines social cohesion (Bauman, 1993). To try and do so places great

emphasis on the individual and private sphere of life and on personal reflection especially as it relates to adapting to ever changing social and political contexts. For Bauman a suitable word to describe many contemporary adults is *strangers*, for whom bonds with others, and also with culturally held norms, are transitory and tenuous (Bauman, 2000). It is a world where optimism has been replaced with more cautious emotions, or to use another expression, postmodernity is a place we go *to hide from our fears*—fears here referring to the apprehension that comes from living in a world where old certainties have been removed (Bauman, 1992).

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING OF GENERATION X: A GENERATION OF LIFELONG LEARNERS?

There is one sense in which Gen X can be seen as lifelong learners par excellence. Bagnall (2001) points out that one dimension of educational discourse can be characterised by describing lifelong learning as a commitment to learning skills that are vocationally relevant. If lifelong learning is seen as a type of ongoing training, equipping the individual to meet the demands of ever-changing work and community circumstances, then members of Gen X, more than previous generations, are well accustomed to this type of activity. Their experience of various forms of vocational training is high and their participation in them reflects the experience and awareness of a population that expects to undergo this type of activity as part of a continuous process of upskilling. A number of factors related to changing conceptions of work and education militate against the participation of Gen X in those variants of lifelong learning that are not directed towards an immediate vocational or training purpose.

Members of Gen X experience of vocational training is one consequence of the worldwide implementation of rationalist economic paradigms, which first emerged in the later 1970s but which came to the fore in the following decades, a time when members of Gen X were first entering the adult job market or tertiary education in large numbers. A major change in the relationship between work, study and the individual is relevant here. The post-Fordist approach of contractual and transitory employment has changed the perception of work amongst Gen X. Whereas Boomers often experienced significant periods of stable employment, Gen X often move from different types of employment and much of this is part-time, casual or sessional. As a consequence of changed work patterns and relations individuals may have to retrain or acquire new skills on a regular basis. Despite this retraining and concentration on vocational education many members of

Generation X do not appear to be enjoying the economic fruits of a market-driven economy. One of the characteristic features of the postmodern economy is the disparity in the ability of social groups to accumulate capital. Typically this disparity is described as relating to different socioeconomic groups but is also a powerful descriptor of differences between chronological cohorts. Older generations, exemplified by Boomers, have benefited from the economic polices of governments across the Western world, which have favoured those with existing assets. Those without capital find it difficult to achieve financial security and are well described by the phrase widely used in Australia as the aspirational class, that is, those who see the achievement of a higher standard of living as their most important political aspiration.   Adding to the financial burdens of Gen X are the rising costs of providing for an ageing population and the retraction of many state-sponsored welfare programs aimed at achieving social equity. All these factors tend to make Gen X poorer than their elders and the lack of financial security is a critical factor to understanding the participation of Gen X in lifelong learning. What is attractive for many people who are struggling to meet financial obligations are pathways that seem to lead to greater job and financial security, even if these goals do not materialise.

The educational experience of Gen X tends to reflect a more atomised and individual perspective, with emphasis on short work-related courses as opposed to liberal or generalised degrees. This trend is exacerbated by the high fees that now accompany tertiary education in most Western countries, and Australia is no exception to this. The commodification of education is one important way of understanding how participation in lifelong learning is interpreted by Gen X. Education is a commodity, the possession of which is seen as a means of assisting the worker to be seen as a more valuable agent in the workforce marketplace. As with all commodities education has to be capable of being measured against some agreed standard and the merits of one individual ranked against another. In practice this type of evaluation favours an education in skills and competencies that are reflective of a very market-driven understanding of education. In terms of teaching and learning what is valued is how well the program being offered, and by implication the student (or more properly termed, the consumer), achieves the agreed outcomes. This focus on the immediate and the achievable runs counter to many of the goals of lifelong learning which is oriented to the future and which changes to suit the individual needs of the learner. Implicit here is the notion that the learner will grow and mature and that their educational needs cannot be adequately covered by discrete outcomes.

The commodification of learning is however much more problematic, some would say impossible, if it is concerned with measuring genuine understanding and the development of the ability to critically reflect and assess the claims of a number of belief systems. This type of learning, however, is not the experience that most members of Gen X have of education certainly in the tertiary post-compulsory sector. The pressure to undertake courses that are regarded as giving *value for money*, which can be concluded quickly and are tied to current workplace expectations, militates against anyone engaging in more reflective and participatory approaches to education. One indication of the impact of these institutional educational changes is the decline in the number, character and values of those university faculties dedicated to liberal or non-vocational disciplines across the Western world, a trend that is likely to continue at a greater pace, with more small highly specialised institutions offering tailor-made courses that train students for specific employment roles. This will occur more frequently, as against interest in the courses offered by more traditional universities and tertiary institutions.

In a deeper sense lifelong learning is understood by some as the ongoing development of a critical reflective self, incorporating a satisfying and life-sustaining ethic that transcends the material satisfaction of the senses. Snook (2001) describes the goal of lifelong learning as directed towards developing the autonomy of individuals and their ability to be involved in critical thinking and liberating action. In these senses of the term the participation of Gen X in lifelong learning is far more problematic. If the goal of lifelong learning is to stimulate an open and critical engagement in society by the individual, a number of factors appear to work against the participation of Gen X in this endeavour. Firstly, one of the characteristic features of members of Generation X is that they lack trust in grand metanarratives, understood here in the sense of complex webs of meaning which provide individuals with a worldview that helps sustain them and gives their lives direction and meaning. The later half of the twentieth century was famous for the phenomenology of metanarratives allegedly coming adrift. For example, belief in the postulates of modernity, that society was developing progressively, positively and continually along agreed lines and that rational thought would increasingly lead to a more open and enlightened society, was severely tested by the calamitous wars of the twentieth century with their successive and subsequent atrocities. Also the challenge to empiricist assumptions in philosophy and social science rendered the tenure of scientific and simple notions of human progress unsustainable.

A more spectacular decline was the collapse of communist regimes all over the world. A less well-described demise was that of the metanarratives offered by mainline religious groups. The worldview of a coherent and self-contained belief system, intertwining metaphysics with Aristotelian ethics, that was an important part of, say, the Catholic identity for centuries came increasingly into question in the post-Vatican II era, the time after 1965 (Stacpoole, 1986). The correlative notions of exclusivity and absolute truth claims can lead to distinctive patterns of enculturation and socialisation but these were not available to members of Gen X who grew up within the Catholic tradition. This pattern was played out for members of other mainline traditions, notably Protestant ones which experienced a radical reassessment of what it meant to be Christian, far earlier than that experienced by Catholics (Kelley, 1972). Nonetheless, the parameters of the dilemma are the same. What had been an intact worldview that allowed for individuals to move into adulthood sustained and supported by a wider group sustained by common belief and practice was largely held in the suspense of disbelief, was evanescent, or had all but disappeared by the time that members of Gen X were making the transition into adulthood.

The examples above illustrate one of the most significance difficulties facing Gen X as lifelong learners. What do they bring to the task of creating for themselves a critical and reflective stance to any chance they have of contributing to society? The lack of attachment to a metanarrative is perhaps better described in their cases as a lack of substantial and initial engagement with a grand theory of the world and the place of the individual in it. Much of the writing around lifelong learning has centred on a discussion that contrasts previously held and relatively straightforward uncontested views with developing ones that are more sophisticated and tenuous. This is a classic example, however, of what has been described as a *Boomer dialogue*, that is, a conversation that is replete with meaning for an older age group but one with which Generation X has trouble engaging (Rymarz, 1999). Lifelong learning in the so-called Third Age well describes this process where individuals develop and refine their position becoming more critical and participatory. An important feature of this process is that it proceeds from an existing belief system and significant life experience. This can be characterized by the phrase, '*I once believed and did this but now I have changed my position to this*'. If we accept, and I believe we should, the definition of Generation X as those who have not engaged with any metanarrative then how can we describe their developing worldview? What is it developing from? What is it developing to?

In order to participate critically in lifelong learning members of Generation X are often engaged in a search for meaning. 'Meaning' has a number of senses in modern philosophical discourse. Popper (1972) based his discussion of meaning on the principle of falsifiability. This provides a mechanism for distinguishing between the disciplines such as the sciences, which generate theories that can be disproved, and other disciplines such as theology, which are usually based on irrefutable claims. Another way of discussing meaning is to link it with the idea of verification. The verification principle, simply put, claims that for statements to have meaning they must be able to be verified by observation (Ayer, 1946). Both these approaches describe restricted understandings of how the term meaning can be used. As Parkinson (1976) points out they have applicability in some instances but cannot be applied in all circumstances, especially to concepts that lack an empirical base.

Another perspective, which will be followed here, sees meaning as being heavily connected to the context in which the term is used (Grant, 1956). Moral philosophers, for example, will use and develop a technical language, and meaning will be understood in a particular way by those in this discipline. This approach can be contrasted with other perspectives such as linguistics or logic, which have a far different understanding of what meaning is and how discussions around the concept should be shaped. The search for meaning is also a good example of a concept that will be understood differently and is dependent on how it is being used. In this chapter, the search for meaning will be used in an existential sense, that is, how it affects individuals and how they live their lives.

Meaning here is understood as a three-fold phenomenon, following the discussion provided by Brennan (2001). On the one hand the search for meaning can be understood as seeking the experience of being a part of an intimate and compassionate community, where the contribution of the individual is valued and perhaps most importantly, where the individual is recognised and not seen as part of an undifferentiated mass. This dimension of the search for meaning can be seen as an antidote for the social isolation of Generation X, an attempt to overcome the pervasive feeling of being strangers. Another aspect of the search for meaning is an experience of the transcendent or a belief system that moves beyond the individual and the satisfaction of his or her immediate needs. This aspect of the search for meaning can also be described as seeking to find a suitable metanarrative with which the individual can identify. The final dimension of the search for meaning is the sense that Generation X is seeking a sense of purpose. This can be expressed in the desire to see themselves as part of a wider mission,

that is, associating with others who share similar goals, ideas and aspirations and who are not brought together simply on the basis of common fears or concerns.

The search for meaning is not a unique experience within the Western tradition. Writers from Augustine to Spinoza and beyond have wrestled with questions of belief and identity. The ability to grasp the need to construct meaning is a concept that is central to many areas of philosophical, psychological and educational enquiry. It has a philosophical dimension that is developed in the writings of a number of modern philosophers such as Quine, Popper or Habermas. Quine, for example, sees knowledge, among other things, as building up a complex web of inter-related ideas (Quine, 1974; Quine & Ulman, 1970). This process begins with rudimentary concepts well understood and well integrated. To Habermas, gaining knowledge is seen as a movement through three different sequential levels or stages of cognition, beginning with technical competence (Habermas, 1987). It is not being suggested that there is agreement between these approaches, but that they illustrate the need to develop, from a philosophical perspective, a belief system from core or primary ideas. The need to develop a coherent worldview is also a theme in much contemporary psychological discourse. The writings of Viktor Frankl, for example, are premised on the need for people to find and cultivate meaning in their lives (Frankl, 1967). Gaining such a meaning is described as a necessity and a key indicator of mental health. Frankl was the originator of *logotherapy*. The judgments and actions of this school of psychotherapy are rooted in the belief that ultimately humans are meaning-oriented creatures. From this perspective the search for meaning is far more important than the desire to find physical pleasure and comfort. Finally the process of meaning construction is a crucial aspect of contemporary approaches to quality learning and teaching. These approaches stress the need for conceptual learning to be seen as a sophisticated system of inter-related knowledge (White & Gunstone, 1992). The key is to make links between existing beliefs and knowledge. Without a core of fundamental or primary building blocks, however, deep understanding can never develop (Stodolsky, 1988). These core or primary concepts are then elaborated and connected with other knowledge and beliefs to develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the world. This type of thinking is often used to describe understanding in disciplines such as science and mathematics. It also has relevance for the evolving critical consciousness. The process being described here is very much a process of meaning construction and this makes it pertinent to any discussion of the search for meaning in the case of Generation X. Interestingly the process of deconstruction also has a parallel in contemporary approaches to learning. This occurs when a faulty or imperfect

understanding has become ingrained. Before any real learning can take place these imperfect understandings need to be exposed, identified and corrected or discarded.

ASSISTING THE GEN X LIFELONG LEARNER

Generation X's search for meaning appears not to have originated from strong formative experiences, powerful memories or conceptually challenging educational programs. Indeed what characterised this period was the saturation of competing belief systems presented vicariously but without any authentication of a particular one. One of the characteristics of the postmodern is a multitude of choices, but without the authority, be it internal or external, to critically evaluate differing perspectives. Encountering a welter of competing theories can be disempowering.

The process of constructing a cogent and sustaining belief system can, however, be one of discovery for many members of Gen X and is well described as lifelong learning. This can bring with it a freshness and originality that is open to looking anew at ideas that have the potential to develop into sustaining webs of meaning. At the very least what is required if Generation X is to participate in an emancipatory lifelong learning is a familiarity with the language and symbols of Western culture. If a group does not share a common language or languages then this can cause divisiveness and alienation because some members of a community have no way of understanding the collective history and culture. This is not simplistic nostalgia, a longing for something to cling to in a confusing and complex world. Nor is it a view that sees the immediate past as a mythical golden era. The sense of valuing the past has a much more contemporary tone: it is about owning a heritage and feeling comfortable in it. It is about being discerning and having the confidence and skill to use great themes and concepts to develop a contemporary and relevant way of becoming critical and reflective members of society, whose contribution to and participation in it is welcomed, required and valued.

There are many ways to proceed here but two suggestions about assisting the lifelong learning of members of Gen X will be offered here. Firstly, they often display a lack of connectedness or involvement with support networks. A critical aspect of the search for meaning is the need to feel valued as a part of a human community. Genuine lifelong learning is also greatly facilitated by the integration of the individual into supportive learning communities. To help establish these

communities when social factors encourage privatisation of learning and the isolation of individuals is a significant challenge. The counter-cultural nature of this endeavor may, however, provide some hope as individuals who are interested in this type of discourse could be empowered by the fact that they are going against contemporary practice and seeking rewards that are not easily operationalised. The participation of Generation X in lifelong learning may be a reflection of their search for a vision of life and culture that is presented as positive, welcoming and is lived out in a concrete way. This search, however, may be highly personal, as it reflects choices that set them apart from what have become conventional ways of learning.

The second point is to be clearer about the distinctive features of what being a critical and reflective member of society means. It should be possible to mark out a large area of common interests that enable members of Gen X to presume and speak to a common heritage and understanding. If this demand were better and more forcefully articulated, the search for identity amongst Gen X could be more clearly directed, especially if we consider the base that many are starting from. This type of learning could become, amongst other things, an ongoing self-generating program as more and more links are established between existing concepts and new understandings with elaborate webs of meaning established. Once this type of cognitive infrastructure starts to develop then it is possible to speak of a sense of purpose, which is such an important aspect of the search for meaning, beginning to take shape.

The era which marked the adolescence and young adulthood of those born in the years of the 1960s and 1970s was a time still very much influenced by the unresolved debates and in some ways overwhelming pluralism that developed in Western society in the latter half of the twentieth century. The advantage of working with people who are not, in a sense, doing their learning by reacting to prior knowledge or experience is a considerable one. The first members of Generation X are now over 40 years of age. The views of this group will become more prominent and in due course their dialogue will inevitably replace those of older people. This dialogue will be much more about who we want to be, rather than who we were and are no longer.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO WORK AND FURTHER EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

JOHANNA WYN

INTRODUCTION

The framework of 'lifelong learning for all' has been widely articulated within Australian educational policy. A recent expression of this is the report *Lifelong Learning in Australia* (Watson, 2003) in which the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) embraces the OECD paradigm of a 'knowledge-based economy' and the UNESCO position that individuals who are not lifelong learners will suffer economic and social exclusion, as will nations that are not primarily learning societies. The policy rationale for lifelong learning links the growth of knowledge-based industries with an increased requirement for educated workers who can engage in re-skilling throughout their working lives (OECD, 1996). A central assumption is that economic growth in a knowledge-based economy would be promoted by workers with particular skills. Lifelong learning is also seen as necessary in order to promote social cohesion in a society that will continue to experience rapid social and economic change.

Internationally, commentators have identified an emerging gulf between those who can navigate their way successfully through the new economy and those who are at its mercy as a 'major danger' of new economies (Delors, 1996). This gap has been identified across many countries (OECD, 2001). Summarising recent OECD thematic reviews on lifelong learning, Levin (2004) concludes that inequalities in education have become worse rather than better in the last 20 years.

> Most of the dynamics in the education system and in the labour market tend to favour those who are already successful. The education system while nominally committed to success for all, actually embodies many features that work against such success and changing these will be very difficult. *(Levin, 2004, p. 41)*

While the actual patterns of transition and engagement in lifelong learning for individual countries differ, there are broad similarities that may contribute to a

policy agenda for the future. Firstly, unequal outcomes based on gender, socio-economic status, geographic location, and cultural minority group status will continue to be a problem because equity measures are almost always 'on the margins of existing practice' (Levin, 2004, p. 41). Funding for larger scale transformation of formal learning is not widely available and the effects of large-scale initiatives (such as national qualification systems in the UK and the USA) have yet to be researched systematically.

Secondly, understanding of the relationship of formal learning to transition processes is undergoing change. It is now recognized that focusing narrowly on preparation for specific jobs does fit well with the requirement for flexible, multi-skilled workers who can negotiate their way through new economies. The life-long benefits of tertiary learning, in conjunction with adult learning partnerships between individuals and employers, are beginning to be recognized. The problem is that the longer-term view of education (or lifelong learning) is not well represented in the education policies of most governments. The adult learning sector, which has been expanding under the influence of the idea of lifelong learning, is diverse and amorphous, leading to inadequate provision (Levin, 2004, p. 33).

This broader context sets the framework within which Australian educational reform is being shaped. The dual goals of educational reform in Australia are to increase rates of participation in education and to ensure that educational programs support the global competitiveness of the Australian economy (Ryan & Watson, 2003). In practice, this means improving young people's completion rate in secondary education, increasing ongoing participation in further and higher education and at the same time identifying the skills that the economy requires in the present and in the future. The change agenda is focused on the production of workers with the particular dispositions and knowledges that will serve the Australian economy and ensure its international competitiveness. Little attention has been paid to the nature of educational reforms that would promote social cohesion and even less has been paid to the dispositions, subjectivities and attitudes that are associated with the capacity to be good navigators through new economies.

Despite the government's policy goals of increasing school completion rates across all states and territories, not all groups of young people have responded wholeheartedly to education. Rates of school completion are uneven. Across Australia in 2001 just under a third (31 per cent) of 15 to 19 year olds were not in full-time education and 15.1 per cent of 15 to 19 year olds were not in school or in part-time work, unemployed or not actively looking for work (Curtain, 2001). The

sizeable group of young people who do not engage with or even attend school are relatively visible; there are many government programs devoted to school retention and there are a number of innovative programs which are attempting to address the needs of these young people. For example, the Victorian Government has a number of 'school retention' programs in place, involving collaboration between secondary schools, the community sector and Adult and Community Education providers in order to provide pathways back into education for out-of-school youth.

Concerns have emerged about the extent of 'fit' between secondary education and employment. It is evident that not all young people who complete their secondary education gain the economic benefits that the education system is intended to bestow (Teese, 2000). Disparities in achievement and educational outcomes are seen as one of the elements indicating that 'the state of post-compulsory education and training is problematic' (Teese, 2000, p. 55). In addition, access to higher education is far from equitable. In 1990 a government report found that there were a number of population groups that were under-represented in higher education (DEET, 1990). Despite some progress, Australians from lower socio-economic backgrounds are still half as likely to participate in higher education as those from medium and high socio-economic backgrounds (James, 2002). A study of young people's higher education choices found that on a per capita basis, for every ten people from urban locations who go to university, only six people from rural or isolated Australia do so (James, Wyn, Baldwin, Hepworth, McInnis, & Stephanou, 1999).

Against the backdrop of policy documents that identify concerns about the implications of entrenched patterns of educational inequality for both individuals and societies, this paper reports on the experiences of a cohort of young people during their transition from secondary school through higher education and into work (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). The Life-Patterns study provides support for the view that individuals need to have the capacity to navigate their way through uncertain times. The findings highlight the impact that the post-1970 generation in Australia has had on shaping new approaches to work and learning. This point is important for educational policy, because it suggests that social, subjective and attitudinal factors as well as economic forces need to be taken into account in educational reform. The relatively underdeveloped notion of social capital and of 'attitudinal and motivational' factors that has informed policy development situates young people's changing approaches to education and work within a narrow, instrumental and economistic approach to education and lifelong learning

that may be more in tune with the industrial economy of a previous era than with the 'knowledge economy' of the present and future.

In the following sections, the paper describes current patterns of youth transitions through further education and employment and summarises the policy context for postcompulsory and lifelong learning in Australia. Next, the paper presents findings from the Australian Youth Research Centre's Life-Patterns study on young people's experiences of transition into further education and beyond and their changing approaches to education and work. Finally, the implications of these findings for Australian policy development in post-compulsory education and lifelong learning are discussed.

YOUTH TRANSITION PATTERNS

Changes to the economy and shifts in the labour market over the last two decades have created a new demand for higher education and lifelong learning. As Australia has shifted towards a post-industrial economy higher education has become the new mass education sector and post-compulsory education has become the norm for Australian youth. Between 1951 and 2001, the number of higher education students increased from 31,700 to 614,100 (ABS, 2002). Over the period 1991–2000 there has been a 30 per cent increase in the total number of higher education students (only 19 per cent of which is constituted by domestic students) (DEST, 2002, p. 57).

During the same period, the part-time and casual share of employment among young people has increased dramatically (Wooden & VandenHeuvel, 1999). Part-time jobs are overwhelmingly taken by full-time students (Wooden, 1998). For the quarter of Australian school age youth who are not in education, however, casualisation of the youth labour market is a long-term problem. The part-time and casual workforce is characterised by high levels of job insecurity, a lack of union representation and a lack of access to training and promotion opportunities (Sweet, 1995; Wooden, 1998).

Consideration of those who are unemployed or not in the labour force raises further concerns about the precarious labour market situation of many young people. In May 2003, 12 per cent of teenagers (age 15–19) and of young adults (age 20–24) were neither in full time education nor in the labour market (ABS, 2003). In May 2003, 16 per cent of teenagers and 10 per cent of young adults not attending full time education were unemployed (ABS, 2003). The loss of full-time jobs, and an increase in part-time and casual work has made it increasingly

difficult for early leavers to find permanent, full-time work—and even part-time work given the competition from full-time students (Irving, Maunders & Sherrington, 1995; Wooden, 1998). Analyses of this group often conclude that all young people in this situation are disadvantaged in the labour market (McClelland, Macdonald & MacDonald, 1998).

There is however emerging evidence that even for this group of young people there are diverse outcomes. McMillan and Marks found that non-school completers are 'more likely to be in full-time employment, receive higher hourly earnings, display greater job stability, and report being in the job they would like as a career' than school completers who do not enter higher education (2003, p. xiv).

Many studies report that, measured against other criteria, school non-completers were in the group most likely to be unemployed and female non-completers were more likely to be not in the labour force (Lamb, Dwyer & Wyn, 2000; Teese, 2000). However, over time these patterns are less clear. Marks and McMillan have found that despite the link between school non-completion and higher unemployment rates in the early post-school years, in the later years the picture becomes less clear. After controlling for a range of social background and educational factors, 'the odds of completers being unemployed were not significantly different from those of early school leavers, other things being equal' (McMillan & Marks, 2003, p. xii).

While completion of senior secondary education continues to reduce the risk of unemployment, it is not sufficient for economic security. Around half of those school completers who do not apply for entry to tertiary education are in 'an economically precarious situation' nine to ten months after completing mainstream Year 12. Based on his research on educational outcomes for Victorian youth, Teese concludes:

> The link between the senior certificate and employment is often weak. Credentials inflation is eroding employment opportunities and imposing on young people not only school completion, but post-school education and training as well. This trend has major equity implications. For it places increased pressure on young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to raise their levels of achievement to secure entry to tertiary education. During the 1980s and 1990s the pressure was to finish school to get jobs. Now this is not good enough. *(2000, p. 53)*

Further pressure on young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds is mounting through new arrangements to allow universities more freedom in charging fees to students, adding further financial barriers to participation in tertiary education. The proportion of tuition costs paid by students rose when a fee

system (the Higher Education Contribution Scheme) for university students was introduced.

However, there is evidence that the longstanding gap between those who participate in education and training and those who do not is widening. Participants in higher education and lifelong learning tend to be underrepresented in the lower socio-economic groups. James reports that Australians from lower socio-economic backgrounds have roughly half the likelihood of participating in higher education than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds (James, 2002, p. ix). An analysis of lifelong learning in Australia shows that 'Australia's capacity to achieve higher levels of educational participation may be undermined by a widening socio-economic gap between individuals who participate in education and training and those who do not' (Watson, 2003, p. 38).

Recent research on Australian's participation in education and training reveals that overall levels are high. Participation in education and training involves 72.4 per cent of the Australian population aged between 15 and 64 years and 80 per cent of wage and salary earners are engaged in both formal and informal learning (Watson, 2003, p. 26).

However, the labour market has experienced growth in both high skill jobs that require high educational levels and ongoing educational improvement and in low skill jobs. There appears to be evidence for a 'disappearing middle' in the skill composition of the Australia workforce (Watson, 2003, p. 18). The widening socio-economic gap has been identified as one of the most significant elements constraining Australia's capacity to achieve higher levels of educational participation (Watson, 2003, p. ix).

In conclusion, there are two factors that are affecting young people's transitions from secondary school: young people's educational outcomes are directly related to socio-economic status and the widening gap between low-skill and high-skill jobs. Young people from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to undertake higher and further education than their peers from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In the short term this does not mean that young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are necessarily more likely to be unemployed. But in the longer term, the effect of the 'disappearing middle' range jobs and the widening gap between low-skill and high-skill jobs and the positive link between higher skilled jobs and lifelong learning means that new inequalities are emerging.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY CONTEXT

The pressure on young people to complete senior secondary education and even higher education, as outlined above, has gone hand in hand with an increased emphasis on individual investment in education. As Australia is perceived to be moving towards a knowledge economy, there has been an increased emphasis on investment in human capital. While this involves investment by government and private industry, increasingly individuals are expected to invest more in 'knowledge', mainly through gaining more and higher educational qualifications (Taylor & Henry, 2000). Research shows that young people seem to have adopted this belief in individual responsibility (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). An Australian study of Year 9 and 10 students found they rated individual attributes and abilities for success in schools and in working life (such as hard work, positive attitude and abilities/talents) much more highly than factors outside their own control (such as parents who are rich or highly educated, incompetent politicians or global economic changes) (Cooper, 2000).

Educational policies in Australia have embraced the apparent link between high levels of education and training and economic growth. In January 2001 the Government launched a $2.9 billion innovation statement, *Backing Australia's Ability* (DEST, 2001). The underlying rationale for this initiative was that innovation—developing skills, generating new ideas through research, and turning them into commercial success—is the key to Australia's further prosperity (DEST, 2001).

The most recent Government review of higher education, *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, (DEST, 2002) has resulted in a very broad framework for the provision of higher and further education in Australia. The purposes of higher education are primarily seen to be for the benefit of individuals 'to develop their capabilities to the highest potential', and to 'enable individuals to learn throughout their life' (DEST, 2002, p. 1). The benefits of individual learning for the economy are acknowledged, particularly with respect to the goal of enabling 'individuals to adapt and learn, consistent with the needs of an adaptable knowledge-based economy' (DEST, 2002, p. 2). Lastly, mention is made of the contribution that higher education and lifelong learning might make to promoting 'a democratic, civilized society' and 'tolerance' (DEST, 2002, p. 2). The most significant outcome of this review has been the adoption of a funding framework that continues to shift the costs of education from the Government onto individual students and their families. The increases in educational costs that are borne through mass participation in higher and further education have effectively been

passed onto individuals through the capacity of Australian Universities to increase their fees on Government subsidized courses. Universities are also increasingly generating revenue through full-fee paying courses and through research, commercialization and product development. In summary, the characteristics of the lifelong learning agenda are that it is both formal and informal, self-motivated learning, self-funded and universal.

Despite the reliance on education for economic growth, Australia lags behind other OECD countries in terms of national spending on education as a proportion of GDP. Australia also has relatively low rates of secondary school completion and participation in higher education (Watson, 2003, p. 17). Watson argues that the stated emphasis on the role of individuals in co-financing their own learning 'appears to contradict its stress on lifelong learning as a remedy for social exclusion. Given the many factors inhibiting participation in education and training for less-skilled individuals in low-wage jobs, governments should play a greater role than generally acknowledged in the literature in breaking the nexus between low skills and non-participation' (2003, p. 38).

At a wider level, policy analysts point out the complex political discourses within which these claims for educational reform are made. Dominant neo-liberal discourses frame educational policy (including Third Way politics) with an assumption of the antipathies between state and market (Taylor & Henry, 2000). In seeking to find a new way to conceptualise the relationship between the individual and the community, systemic social relationships, such as poverty and disadvantage are obscured, to be replaced by the language of 'choice' and 'individual characteristics' (e.g. employability). Policy issues such as educational outcomes can, from a neo-liberal approach, ignore the deep-seated structural inequalities of late capitalism, to focus instead on social exclusion and individual employability.

The difficult task of linking an understanding of structural and systemic inequalities with the individualism inherent in the policy frameworks of neo-liberalism, has generated interest in concepts such as 'social capital' as a new focus for the development of educational, social and welfare policy. Thomson (1999) has pointed out that this concept is attractive, because it relates to the educational goal of developing human capital for purposes of national competitiveness. She points out that this concept also recognises the need for a certain level of 'social cohesion, stability and trust' for economic success. But perhaps most importantly, she notes that 'many people are de-coupling economic success from a sense of well-being' (1999, p. 2). This last meaning of the concept of social capital recognises an emerging trend amongst young people

towards the creation of 'balance' in life and a shifting emphasis towards valuing education for personal and social development as well as contributing to economic security.

The multiple meanings that Thomson identifies within current uses of the term social capital highlight an emerging contradiction for educational policy. The framing of educational policy in terms of the contribution that education makes to international economic competitiveness places education within a narrow, instrumental framework of education for work. The 'de-coupling' of economic success from a sense of well-being by individuals creates new challenges to educational policy to broaden the frame of educational goals.

Government reports identify 'attitudinal factors' as one of the two most significant areas affecting Australian higher education and lifelong learning participation rates. (The other most significant area is the nature of educational funding.) When asked to identify the most positive features of learning, individuals across very different segments of the market cited personal benefits (such as a sense of achievement, personal growth, the pleasure of learning and interaction with students) more often than reasons related to the acquisition of skills (ANTA, 2000). These 'attitudinal and motivational factors' represent more than just an approach to study. There is emerging evidence from the Life-Patterns study that they also represent a shift in approaches to career and work. For this reason, more needs to be known about the perspectives of young people on education, career and work.

In the following section, I argue that research on young people's transitions through higher education is important for the generation of new policy frameworks that have a closer fit with the reality of young people's lives in post-industrial economies. The increasing significance of attitudinal factors in young people's participation in higher education means that it is crucial that their perspectives and experiences are taken seriously. Their subjective understandings and experiences provide an important insight into how some groups do successfully 'navigate their way through the new economy' rather than being left at its mercy.

LIFE-PATTERNS STUDY

The Life-Patterns project is a longitudinal, panel study of young Australians from the State of Victoria who left secondary school in 1991. In that year, 29,000 young people left school. They were surveyed in 1992 to follow up their progress after leaving school and a representative sample of 11,000 young people was

constructed. In 1996 the Youth Research Centre surveyed a smaller, representative sample of this data set of 2,000, maintaining consistency within the sample of gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity and geographic location. This sample has formed the basis of our Life-Patterns study, which has followed the progress of this group of young people until the present (Dwyer, Smith, Tyler, & Wyn, 2003).

The young people in the Life-Patterns project were in their last year of secondary school when the project began in 1991. They are now more than ten years out of school. Their experiences and the ways in which they tell their stories provide a useful insight into a generation that faced very different circumstances from their parents. The study provides an insight into the specific experiences of the post-1970 generation. Young people born in the early 1970s came to the end of their compulsory years of schooling in the mid 1980s. This group represented the first generation of Australians in which the majority completed secondary schooling. Significantly, this new 'educated' generation was also confronted with a new phase in educational policy and public attitudes to education and work. By this time the youth labour market had collapsed and there was an emerging expectation of increased participation in further education and training to escape unemployment. Even though university graduates would be experiencing employment uncertainty, the post-1970 generation began to face the prospect of paying increasing university fees (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001, p. 77).

The Life-Patterns project has recorded the ways in which these young people have responded to their changing world. Of necessity they are actively and positively developing their own responses to these circumstances. The use of a participatory methodology has meant that the researchers have been challenged to re-think our assumptions about transitions from youth to adulthood, the role that education plays in gaining employment and the meanings that both education and work have in their lives. Through the use of questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews, the project has been able to link broad patterns across the cohort with in-depth studies of individual trajectories. In the following section I draw on the interviews to introduce the two individual stories of Nat and Frank[1], before describing the broader patterns. The study reinforces the significance of 'attitudinal and motivational' dimensions to young people's outcomes (Watson, 2003). The dispositions and subjectivities that shape their approaches are a key element in the extent to which they plan and navigate pathways through education and employment. The subjective dimension is also evident in the extent to which a central component involves the expression of new approaches to both education and work and the crucial implications of learner identities.

Two Young People
Nat

In 2003, Nat was twenty-nine years old, and was employed by a large advertising company as the Manager of Trade and Marketing for Australia and New Zealand. This is not where she expected to be at this age. In fact sales and marketing were the areas she thought herself to be least interested in. Her story begins at the end of Year 12 when she missed out on her first preference for university (medicine). With her score she would have been successful the previous year, but the Tertiary Entrance Result (TER) scores had increased across the board for university entrance in 1992 and she did not qualify for entrance to her chosen course.

Nat's next plan was to get into a science course at the university and then to transfer to medicine at the end of her first year. However she 'lost focus' at university and did not get the results to transfer. She admitted that she wasn't too devastated, as she was still unsure if it was medicine that she really wanted to do. In her third year she did a triple major: cell biology, botany and anatomy. She particularly chose anatomy to help her work out if this direction was right for her. She concluded that anatomy was really about having a good memory and not about learning good people skills. The realisation that there was a disjunction between her goals and her present course of study led her to take on extra subjects to help her work out what direction to take, including accounting and philosophy of science. However, on completing these subjects, she still did not feel she could make a decision.

What made the difference was her work over the summer. Nat had worked for many of the years that she was a student as an occupational health officer for a petrol company in a regional city in Victoria and for a petrochemical company in Tasmania. She also had a spell working as an accounts file clerk and in customer service with a bank. It was this last job that revealed to Nat that she enjoyed working with people, not science!

When she graduated, Nat started looking for work in the 'people' arena and took a job with a large advertising company that offered her the kind of scope she wanted. She said that the company appeared 'broad-minded' and that they regarded her science background as an asset. She started in the sales area, on the understanding that the company 'would teach her the rest.' Over the next five years, she has moved up the ranks in the company and in 2002 was in charge of 60 million dollars worth of business export interests. She says 'I like it, you get to influence things, you work out how things come together and you can influence the direction of the company.'

Today Nat defines her career as not a job but 'a *mindset* of what I do every day, it's about what I learn, the journey I am on, the big chunks of learning and the relationships I develop'. She does not describe her job as permanent because she realises that the company could be the subject of a take-over bid 'tomorrow.' Although she has worked there for the last five years, she was only planning to stay for two years in the first instance, because 'any less wouldn't look good on the resumé', but the company has kept her interested. She feels she has *chosen* to stay where she is.

Nat fiercely defends her life beyond work and has consciously decided to pursue her own interests and goals as an individual. She has put a lot of effort into designing and supervising the building of her own home. While she feels there has been pressure on her to find a partner and marry (before building her own home) she believes that her own personal development has been more important than waiting for someone to shape her life for her. 'I'm going to be in life—not wait for it to happen! In my 20s I was searching but now I know myself much better. I am much more confident'.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Frank

Frank has never seen further education as a priority: 'I enjoy writing reports but I have never been much of an academic, I don't seem to retain things very well.' Frank has pursued work rather than study after leaving school. At first he began working at Pizza Hut as a driver doing deliveries, but 'the cost of the fuel meant it just wasn't worth it', so he quit. From here he helped out a friend of a friend who was building a factory. He stayed in this job for 11 months, mainly employed as a light factory hand with a bit of engineering 'thrown in.' He enjoyed the work but was frustrated by what he saw as poor management and a lack of clear roles of responsibility. However he did not have to put up with this situation for long. He said:

For a time there was not much work coming in and we were told we could be laid off, when they ran out of money it was a big relief as it was freezing in winter and sweltering in summer, in other words not a comfortable place to work.

After a period of unemployment Frank came across a bus driving job which he still has. He thinks it is more difficult to work out what it is to be an adult today than it was in his parent's day. Both of his parents were 21 when they married, and they worked on a farm.

Life wasn't so much of a rush then, admittedly you would have your busy times when the crops came in but then there would be a lull and there was real time to spend with your family and friends.

He believes it is 'harder now' as there aren't the opportunities there were back then.

I feel I am always on the run, 2 or 3 different jobs a day, I don't like it, it takes away from your life and the time you have to think about what you want to do.

Frank describes himself as 'a follower, grabbing the tail rather than the horns', which means that he is 'not as forceful or as ambitious as I'd like to be.' Frank loves his bus-driving job; he says he loves 'the practical jobs which benefit people'. He wants to direct more of his energies into truck driving, but admits he only wants to do it for a few more years. There is some impetus he says for him to earn a better income, as he has been living with his brother and his brother's girlfriend has just moved in and 'you know the story, three's a crowd, so I need to get out and find my own home'.

He would like to have more time to spend with his family although he admits that he does enjoy learning from his numerous work places. 'Each job offers

something different, and I like becoming more versatile, it helps to also stretch you
so you can find your own limits. It's just difficult getting the balance right!'

* * *

While the outcomes for these young people are different, their stories have in common a recognition of the challenge that choice and decision-making plays in their lives. They are reflective about their past decisions and both are concerned to 'get the balance right', focusing on their own personal development, finding their own limits, extending their capacities and making the most of their lives. They are both aware of the need to 'navigate' their own course. One approach to understanding the differences in their biographies is to explore what their narratives reveal about their 'learner identities' (Rees, Fever, Furlong, & Gorard, 1997).

Nat and Frank both express the desire to continue learning as a key element in their lives and especially in their employment situations and both are reflective about the conditions under which they and their generation are attempting to make a life. At the outset Frank explains that he has felt marginalised from formal learning and he does not see formal education as a way of improving his life situation, despite the fact that 'stretching his limits' is important to him. Nat's experience of formal education is not entirely straightforward either. She has taken a number of different educational pathways in order to find the area of study that suited her. Despite these complexities, her narrative reveals a determination to use formal education to her advantage and she sees education as a means to support her quest for employment that will allow her to develop personally. Frank appears to be trapped in a cycle of precarious employment and unemployment but remains hopeful that he will be able to improve his situation.

Contrasts between the situations and learner identities of young people have also been noted by other youth researchers (Ball, Maguire, & Macrae, 2000; Evans, 2002). These researchers argue that contemporary social and economic circumstances have created the need for a shift in focus in education, towards facilitating young people to shape their own lives—and developing pedagogies that make a better fit between young people's identities and curriculum. The disruption of traditional education and employment pathways has created new social and economic 'landscapes' in which young people are active agents. Evans points out that 'where they go depends on how they perceive the horizon' (2002, p. 265), creating a need to shift education from focusing on the attainment of sets of knowledge and skills towards a recognition of the role of learner identities.

These approaches confirm earlier work by Wexler on the relationship between education, inequality and young people. He also found that 'educators…have concentrated on cognitive skills, curriculum or knowledge, to the neglect of identity' (1992, p. 156). Ball, Maguire and Macrae (2000) also comment on the role that formal education plays in creating 'damaged' learner identities that ultimately restrict young people's capacities to gain the qualifications that would assist them to reach their goals.

THE POST-1970 GENERATION

In 2004 the Life-Patterns participants are aged 28–29 and the majority has established themselves in their adult lives. Despite the diverse makeup of the participants, we found common themes emerging in their attitudes to education and work and their idea of self. These themes are summarised in the following way:

- striving for balance in life
- new meanings of 'career' (valuing flexibility and mobility)
- personal autonomy
- reflexivity

At the outset, the subset of the participants who went through an education track after leaving secondary school displayed a trend towards non-linear pathways. Just over half the cohort experienced some sort of change to their study arrangements. A quarter changed courses, a further 20 per cent changed institutions and more than a quarter either had an interruption to their study or discontinued. As illustrated through Nat's experience, many found that the course of study they entered was not suitable, and others found that other aspects of life took on a higher priority or influenced their decisions.

This non-linearity is reinforced by the tendency to combine study and work. Over 30 per cent of young people in both rural and urban settings combined both study and work all the time and a further 25 per cent were studying and working most of the time. We found that this reflected a preference for a mix of study and work, partly because of financial necessity and partly because it enabled young people to keep their options open. We note that this pattern is established in secondary school, with well over half of 17 year olds having held a paid job at some time. It has become normative for students in Australian secondary schools to combine study and work. In this way, these young people are learning to

manage conflicting responsibilities and taking the opportunity to learn in non-school settings.

By 1999 at the age of 24, 38 per cent of the participants said that they were in a 'career' job and a further 32 per cent were in a job that they felt had prospects for a career. As the first generation of Australians to achieve relatively high rates of school completion and participation in further education, these young people had initially held high hopes. In 1996, 81 per cent believed that there was a 'strong' link between further study and better jobs. In accordance with policy assumptions about the likelihood of young people moving through a coherent set of educational experiences leading to a desired employment destination, 72 per cent thought that they would benefit by undertaking further study by achieving highly skilled or professional careers (AEC, 1991). At that time, 66 per cent indicated an ambition for professional or management careers and 61 per cent fully expected to achieve this.

The first phase of the Life-Patterns study, which concluded in 2000, found that young people were forced to reassess their assumptions about the links between education and employment because they did not achieve the kinds of jobs that they had expected. This finding is consistent with broader trends for graduates to find that their qualifications and skills are not utilized in the jobs they get (Ainley, 1998). Two related trends became apparent: the rethinking of careers and the adoption of 'mixed patterns' of life priorities (Dwyer, Harwood, & Tyler, 2003, p. 10). Depending on their situation, young people in different locations were making 'their own assessments of how best to respond to a discernable mismatch between educational levels and job-market realities' (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001, p. 121).

By 2002, 75 per cent were in a full-time job, which is consistent with the national figures. They have experienced a lot of uncertainty and change, with 82 per cent having changed jobs since 1996 and nearly a quarter have held five or more jobs since 1996. At the same time, we have seen the emergence of some distinctive attitudes towards the idea of career. The traditional idea that career equates with full-time employment in one occupation, involving upward mobility over time, is not confirmed by their views. Instead, as illustrated by Nat (above), these young people have a subjective assessment of career as a 'state of mind' rather than an objective and visible trajectory within one occupation. Over 80 per cent of the participants stated that a career was a job that offers scope for *advancement*, offers opportunities for *commitment* and an ongoing role that offers *fulfillment*. They stated that a career is not a permanent full-time job; it is not necessarily your current job and does not have to be connected to your source of

income. While Frank did not talk about his work goals in terms of a 'career', his priority on getting involved in work that would enable him to keep learning, become versatile and stretch his limits also reflects an unfulfilled desire to link employment with personal development and advancement.

These approaches reflect a common view amongst the participants that the goal of attaining security in uncertain times can only be reached by maximising the capacity to be mobile and responsive to new market demands. Security is more likely to be attained through the capacity to be flexible and multi-skilled than through making a strong investment in one occupational area. Faced with employment insecurity, these young people believe that they will have greater security of employment if they can manage 'horizontal mobility', developing the capacity to move from one job to another, depending on their needs and interests. This skill is valued over the older emphasis on vertical mobility within one occupation.

It is important to note this shift in approach. They foreshadow a trend towards 'flexible careers' that are shaped by individuals who are prepared to invest in ongoing study to gain new skills and knowledge in response to their own assessments of their opportunities in the labour market. Their decisions are also influenced by the goal of holding work and employment in balance with other priorities in their lives. The worth of their educational investments is also assessed in terms of their well-being and the quality of their personal relationships. Their insistence on balance in their lives has, at times, been difficult for their parents to accept because, despite the educational investment in them, they have made decisions that are not necessarily been to their best material advantage in their parents' eyes (Dwyer et al., 2001).

In our 2000 survey, many of them make a clear distinction between having a secure job (92%) and one of 'high status' (34 per cent). Whether this is something unique to our sample—although there is some support in other research in America (Willis, 1998) and Europe (Du Bois Reymond, 1998), or a temporary outcome of career uncertainties at present, is difficult to say. They are obviously serious about finding ongoing careers for themselves, so if they are in fact reassessing the balance between personal fulfilment and material reward this might at first sight appear to represent a dramatic break with the past. (Dwyer et al., 2003, p. 26).

These findings lead to consideration of the extent to which there has been a dramatic shift in patterns of living and earning. The evidence of the Life-Patterns study supports a moderate position. It reveals that young people are developing new priorities that they are weighing up alongside those of the previous generation. The priorities of the post-1970 generation can be summarized as involving flexibility and the capacity to be reflexive; valuing ongoing career choice and personal autonomy and on balance between life commitments. These priorities can be placed alongside the patterns for the post-World War II generation, involving: traditional family roles, predictable career paths, collective identity and upward mobility (Dwyer et al., 2003, p. 26).

In the absence of reliable, established pathways through education and into employment, and faced with precarious employment, these young people have learned that their own personal development, adaptability and capacity to make the 'right choices' are most important 'resources' for building their lives. The pressure on individuals to shape their own pathways favors identities that are based around their own capacities and personal autonomy. In 2000, the participants were asked what had been the major factors shaping their lives. Overwhelmingly, participants relegated structural factors, such as socio-economic status or gender to an insignificant status, and reported that their own decisions (97 per cent), their studies and their personal relationships were the most significant influences. Parental influence (80 per cent) was rated as more significant than peer influence (47 per cent).

Employment, for many, provides opportunities to extend their learning and to find out what they are good at. As one participant expresses this, 'a career is like a journey. It's the chance to sort out what it is that makes me happy. In general, the dollars are not the driving force'. Work is evaluated in terms of the contribution that it can make to their personal life. At the same time, the participants have demonstrated a complex understanding of the demands that are part of adult life and in making their choices, they take a range of non-career choices into account. Table 1 reveals that a majority of males and females who are in career jobs place a high priority on achieving a balance of commitments and a focus on the broader context of their lives.

Table 1: Post-1996 Priorities (%)

Priority for young people in careers	females	males	Total
The important thing is to pursue a career in my area of interest / expertise	18	25	20
Holding an ongoing job that provides economic security is the big thing	11	11	11
The broad context (e.g. family, lifestyle, 'field of work') is the deciding factor	27	20	24
The important thing is to rethink priorities and make new choices	5	7	5
The important thing is to keep a balance of commitments rather than just concentrate on one aspect of life	39	37	39

This approach is confirmed by their approaches to staying in the job. In response to the question 'how long do you intend to stay in your present job?' 16.5 per cent of the participants expect to move within one year and 28.3 per cent intend to move within three years. The anticipated moves are not associated with the tenure of their positions. Of the permanent job-holders, 42 per cent were intending to change their jobs within less than two years. Of contract job-holders, 48 per cent were intending to move within two years. In 2002, 82 per cent of the participants had changed jobs within the previous five years, and 55 per cent had changed jobs because of better opportunities.

The broad life patterns of our participants have provided a powerful illustration of the emergence of new subjectivities and approaches to life, as this generation has negotiated Australia's changing social and economic environment of the 1990s and 2000s. The study is one of the few insights into Australian youth in transition that does not focus exclusively on problems and failed transitions. The analysis tends to focus instead on the ways in which young people have made successful transitions and to analyse the diversity that exists within the 'mainstream' of Australian youth (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001). Nonetheless, the

processes of inequality, marginalisation and social exclusion have affected the lives of participants as well. In the following section, I highlight some of these processes.

INEQUALITY AND MARGINALISATION

Despite the apparent success of many of the participants in managing 'flexibility' and uncertainty in their employment situations, they have not been as successful in maintaining the balance in their lives. When asked about disparities between the way they spend their time and how they would prefer to spend their time, 63.5 per cent admitted to having great difficulty in balancing their commitments and 58 per cent said that 'work pressures' caused the imbalance. While the participants continued to express a positive outlook and satisfaction with life (an overwhelming 98 per cent said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their level of personal development), they did have concerns about their physical and mental health.

Just over half of the participants were prepared to say that they were physically healthy (55 per cent) and mentally healthy (58 per cent). For 16 per cent, their mental health was of concern. These figures are consistent with objective assessments of the physical and mental health of young Australians. In particular, the health statistics are showing increasing rates of mental illness amongst young people, including depression and anxiety disorders (Donald, Dower, Lucke, & Raphael, 2000).

While the young people in the Life-Patterns study have remained optimistic, positive and proactive overall, it is apparent that this is often an effort, and requires particular skills, dispositions and a degree of social support. In 2002, the 'most positive' influences on their lives were family support (49.5 per cent); self discovery (38.7 per cent), travel (25 per cent) and friends' support (23.6 per cent). For those who have the capacity to be reflexive—to make the right judgments and respond rapidly, who have the support of friends and family and the resources to 'take time out' for reflection and renewal—life can be good, if stressful at times. But for those who do not have these capacities or resources, the demands made of them appear overwhelming and, like Frank, rather than being able to make the most of their lives, they can feel trapped.

Given the significance of autonomy and reflexivity to their transition processes, we decided to explore the relationship between socio-economic background and autonomy (Dwyer et al., 2003). We found a clear correlation

between socio-economic background and autonomy: 55 per cent of young people in the high socio-economic group were high on autonomy, compared with 34 per cent of young people in the low socio-economic group. High autonomy was also correlated with type of qualification. Autonomy rates increased consistently with the status of initial qualification from 19 per cent for apprenticeship trainees, 28 per cent for TAFE qualified and 49 per cent for university qualified. The disposition towards autonomy is also associated with sector of employment. Those in higher status jobs were more likely to rate highly on autonomy than those in lower status jobs. The link between socio-economic status and autonomy was largely related to gender. Among university qualified young women, 66.7 per cent were high on autonomy, compared with 38.2 per cent amongst other groups of females. By contrast, there was no difference between high and low socio-economic background university qualified males.

This means that, in constructing new approaches to work and life, this generation is nonetheless re-creating older patterns of inequality, based on class and gender. The effect of this process is that young women from higher socio-economic backgrounds are the most likely to possess the subjectivities that enable them to benefit from the opportunities that the flexible, changing and uncertain high-skill labour market requires. These young women have both the dispositions and resources that enable them to benefit in the current environment. As Harris comments, these young women are:

> … a unique category of girls who are self-assured, living lives lightly inflected but by no means driven by feminism, influenced by the philosophy of DIY, and assuming they can have (or at least buy) it all *(2004, p. 17).*

We can see this approach reflected in the narrative provided by Nat (above). By contrast, Frank's story illustrates the situation of many of the young people employed in the low-skill labour market. Life is stressful because employment is precarious.

Of necessity, this generation is forging new patterns of life, in response to their circumstances. They are developing patterns that will endure into their 30s and possibly beyond, as they are required to continue to juggle work, lifelong learning and to try to maintain a balance between these in which leisure, relationships and personal development also have their place. The patterns of mobility that are evident for workers in the high-skill and low-skill labour markets alike may mask the extent of inequalities—in the options that are available and in the personal capacity to take up options—that are being shaped for this new generation.

CONCLUSION: EDUCATION FOR A POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

The findings of the Life-Patterns project extend a double challenge to educational policy makers and practitioners. It reveals a) shifts in 'mainstream' thinking and approaches and b) new inequalities. This means that, as Levin has suggested, it will no longer be sufficient to tinker around the edges of current educational provision. More fundamental transformations of education are required to meet the needs of both young people and new economies.

It is common to acknowledge social change within recent educational policies. Yet there has been little recognition of the effects of these changes on young people's identities and subjectivities. Because their life patterns have not conformed to the patterns of the previous generation, new terms have been coined to describe this generation, all of which imply that they have failed or been slow to become fully 'adult' according to the expectations of the previous generation. Terms such as 'post-adolescence', 'over-aged young adults', 'generation on hold' and 'extended transitions' are used in Western countries to imply that young people's transitions are faulty (Dwyer & Wyn, 2001).

Rather than failing to make a transition to adult life, the evidence is that young people are engaging with adult responsibilities and experiences incrementally, early in their lives. Instead of entering the adulthood experienced by their parents, the post-1970 generation is more likely to be entering a 'new adulthood' earlier. The trend towards part-time employment at the same time as being a school student is one element in this. But other elements include earlier engagement with sexuality, responsibility for younger siblings or parents who are not well, and familiarity with new information technologies that deliver unprecedented information and knowledge to their computer screens.

From an early age, school children are encouraged to present a portfolio of their skills and capacities, and to draw on a wide variety of experiences and learning settings to portray themselves. They have engaged very effectively with the 'project of the self', displaying a capacity to be reflective about their own lives. This is a necessary skill, because they are required to make active choices about their lives at almost every point. As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) have pointed out, in order to survive circumstances that change almost daily, individuals have had to become 'stage managers of their own biographies'.

Now more than ever, education is of critical importance in equipping young people to make something of their life and to 'become somebody'. The older imperative that framed education in terms of its contribution to the production of sets of skills and knowledges that would serve economic interests still exists.

Alongside this approach, new priorities are emerging. As the pace of social change makes the relationship between education and the economy much more diffuse, the industrial model of preparing young people for predictable jobs and occupations is increasingly outmoded.

The views and experiences of the young people in the Life-Patterns study support a new focus on the relationship between formal education and identity formation—in particular, learner identities. This new emphasis is one that enables young people to cope with social change, to thrive in a precarious employment environment, to be actively engaged citizens and lifelong learners. Yet, the new mass education sector, post-compulsory education, has been grafted onto the mass education system that was designed to meet the needs of an industrial society. The contrast between some key educational approaches for industrial and post-industrial society is described in Figure 1 and, in the following sections, these features of a 'post-industrial' approach are discussed.

Figure 1: Educational approaches for industrial and post-industrial societies

Industrial	**Post-industrial**
Mainstream and at risk	Diversity
Seamless pathways from school to work	Multiple commitments and mobility
Future citizens	Youth participation
Economic outcomes focus	Focus on 'uses' of education

These differences in orientation represent a significant shift in order for education to meet the needs of young people to navigate their own way through complex new economies. Older patterns of socio-economic inequality are in danger of being reinforced by new workforce divisions. The significance of subjectivities, learner identities and motivations tends to privilege young people from higher socio-economic backgrounds, but the pattern is not clear-cut. Engagement with work is occurring within a context of lifelong learning, personal development, flexibility and mobility. As Levin comments, 'strengthening transitions to work is in some ways the most difficult of the lifelong learning

policy challenges because it involves so many different sectors. At this point, awareness of the nature and extent of the problems is not matched by answers as to how to resolve them' (2004, p. 26).

In conclusion, the two key factors that contribute to entrenched and widening educational and employment inequalities amongst young people are educational costs and learner identities. The latter factor is almost inevitably relegated to a footnote on motivation and attitude in policy documents. It is time to give greater consideration to the significance of learner identities and the role that new pedagogies in education can play in supporting young people's transitions, as lifelong learners in post-industrial economies.

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NOTES

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CHAPTER TWELVE

SCHOOLS AND LIFELONG LEARNERS

JENNIFER BRYCE

For the past ten years, educators have been using the term 'Lifelong Learning' to mean engagement in learning throughout life rather than adult education or second chance education. This more recent interpretation embraces the notion that we keep learning from the cradle to the grave (European Commission, 1995). In this interpretation, school years are a part of a journey that continues throughout life. They are, however, a very significant step in the journey, being a time when foundations for future learning are laid.

For schools, the term 'Lifelong Learning' represents an immense change in orientation. This change may be as momentous as that of the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth century (McKenzie, 2000) from where the idea of compulsory education for all emerged. Although notions of equity and 'equality of opportunity' (Karmel, 1981) have been a part of the compulsory education rhetoric, education offered in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries was underpinned by beliefs that 'academic' was superior to 'non academic' and 'professional' was superior to 'trade'. In school education children were ranked, classified and labelled as successes or failures, as 'clever' or 'good with their hands', which meant 'not clever'.

Need for an orientation to lifelong learning arises from the present information age, where knowledge changes so rapidly that technical knowledge learnt one year may be obsolete the next, where, arguably, it is more important to possess the ability and resource skills to learn rather than to possess specific technical knowledge at any given point in time. Some of the most significant implications for education are that facts, which were once the basis of a school curriculum, are now regarded as transient. We cannot be certain that knowledge is truth (Aspin, 1997). The workplace no longer values the precision, regularity and predictability of the past. More important than possession of facts and ability to follow set patterns, is to know how to learn, and to have characteristics such as curiosity, self-confidence and ability to make links from one area to another.

There is now a considerable literature that outlines the elements of lifelong learning for schools (for example: Bryce & Withers, 2003; Chapman, Toomey, Gaff, McGilp, Warren, & Williams, 2003; Enterprise & Career Education Foundation, 2002; Hargreaves, 2004; Longworth, 2003; OECD, 2004a & b). This chapter will review characteristics of school pedagogy that are oriented to lifelong learning. It will draw heavily on the outcomes of a project undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) that investigated ways of improving the foundations for lifelong learning in secondary schools (Bryce, Frigo, McKenzie, & Withers, 2000; Bryce & Withers, 2003). The chapter will then conclude with a discussion of some challenges that schools embarking on a lifelong learning journey are likely to encounter.

A LIFELONG LEARNING PEDAGOGY

The ACER project started with an exploration of the theoretical basis for lifelong learning in a secondary school context. An extensive literature review was undertaken and key educational concepts that are thought to provide the foundations for lifelong learning were identified (Bryce et al. 2000). Through case study work the research investigated ways to operationalise these concepts by exploring curriculum structures and teaching and learning strategies observed in secondary schools of various kinds which followed approaches to lifelong learning suitable to the particular school culture. Seven schools were visited. They were not necessarily 'light-house' schools – exemplars of practice. But all had some interest in orienting towards a 'lifelong learning' approach. The schools were government and non-government, located in South Australia and Victoria (Bryce & Withers, 2003).

Major elements that emerged from this study suggested that schools with an orientation to lifelong learning:

- focus on information literacy;
- stress certain values, dispositions and attitudes;
- stress certain skill sets beyond the 'basic';
- acknowledge the significance of self concept and self regulation in learning how to learn; and
- acknowledge the importance of teachers as facilitators and role models of lifelong learning.

Information Literacy

A part of learning how to learn and becoming an independent learner involves learning how to handle information, and learning how one best handles this in terms of one's own strengths and weaknesses. It is essential to have some information literacy in order to become a lifelong learner. At upper primary and secondary school students can explore information independently with guidance from teachers. These students are aware of multiple sources of information – for example, deriving information from telephone conversations and interviews as well as printed and electronic material. Students were fluent users of the Internet in many schools in the ACER study. But the term 'information literacy' encapsulates a great deal more than information technology. It involves knowing how to retrieve information from various sources and recognition of the need for information. It involves collecting, analysing and organising information from multiple sources and the ability to pose appropriate questions and integrate the information. Most importantly, students who are information literate are able to evaluate and offer critiques of the information they gather, sort, and classify. As one teacher explained:

> It's not just a matter of finding out some information and that's it. We actually sit down and plan what they are going to learn, their skills, their knowledge, their experience.

The library is often the hub of learning in those schools that have a focus on information literacy. There are practices where it is acceptable for students to come and go freely from this centre during class time. In other schools there may be a 'learning centre' that serves a similar purpose. This focus also assumes that there will be staff in the library or learning centre who can help students to plan and evaluate information as well as to retrieve information.

Values, Dispositions and Attitudes

Young people need to be able to make connections between different fields of knowledge – to have what Candy, Crebert and O'Leary have described as 'helicopter vision' (Candy, Crebert, & O'Leary, 1994). Lifelong learners need to be willing to adapt and be prepared to be flexible. Curiosity is an important attribute for the lifelong learner – a disposition where one uses initiative to explore avenues regardless of traditional subject boundaries. There is a close link here

with information literacy, where a person uses initiative to explore various sources in pursuit of knowledge. In a school that values lifelong learning, one sees young people working in groups in all kinds of places, not necessarily in the classroom or the resource centre. There is often animated discussion.

Differences and change are celebrated. The importance of such values and dispositions is now recognised at a policy level where lists of work-related or 'employability' skills include working in teams, adaptability and flexibility, curiosity and, indeed, 'lifelong learning' (for example, ACCI, 2002; OECD, 2001).

Traditionally, 'intelligence' has been viewed as logico deductive reasoning, particularly in mathematics. Knowledge has been conveyed by reading. In the past, if a student had difficulty reading, he or she was pretty much doomed to be regarded as 'unintelligent'. The idea of multiple intelligences was popularised in the 1980s by Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1993, 1993b). Other writers (such as Goleman, 1996; and Sternberg, 1985, 1996) acknowledged that intelligence is not necessarily logico deductive reasoning – people may be intelligent in many ways, including emotionally, practically, creatively, kinaesthetically. In keeping with these views, teachers now recognise that students who have difficulty learning by listening or reading, may be very good at learning and expressing themselves in other ways all of which are valid.

Reading and numeracy continue to be essential abilities for the learner. The point to make here is that where there is a lifelong learning approach, different kinds of intelligence are acknowledged and valued, whereas in the past the range of abilities considered to be 'intelligence' was more limited.

One teacher in the ACER study referred to different kinds of intelligence as different strength groups:

> We encourage the students to develop strength groups and when they are working on
> a project to incorporate within their strength group someone who is not strong in that
> area so that that person can have a different input into their project.

This was a case of both acknowledging and celebrating different kinds of intelligence: acknowledging that people may tackle problems in different ways and from different perspectives and celebrating the richness that a diversity of approaches may bring to a task.

Whereas for some time lip service has been paid to individual differences, teachers are now encouraged to teach group work explicitly and to use strategies that 'support different ways of thinking and learning' (SofWeb, 2005).   For

example, in Australia, the Victorian Government Department of Education states that teachers are to help students 'to understand their own specific learning needs' and to set 'a variety of types of tasks during each unit and [use] a range of resources eg. print, visual, aural, experiential' (SofWeb, 2005, p. 7).

Thus the main values, dispositions and attitudes that are evident in schools with a 'lifelong learning' approach are:

- encouragement to develop 'helicopter vision';
- encouragement to develop curiosity;
- encouragement to be flexible and adaptable;
- the welcoming and celebration of change;
- recognition of different kinds of intelligence; and
- recognition of different ways of learning.

Skill Sets Beyond the 'Basic'

Over the past decade there has been a focus on the importance of encouraging students to develop certain generic skills. Some of this interest has been driven by economic factors; in particular high rates of unemployment or casual rather than career focused work for young people (Mayer, 1992). But, in addition to this, generic or cross-curricular skills have also been considered important in light of the 'information age' mentioned above. Because knowledge is readily accessible and changing rapidly, it is considered important for young people to learn how to access, evaluate and use this knowledge. These skills are context independent – not tied to any particular domain of knowledge. Whilst being cross-curricular and context independent, it is the case that these generic skills are learned and practised within particular contexts and it is assumed that the skills, having been learned in one context, can be transferred to another.

Generic skills similar to those developed in Australia (Mayer, 1992) emerged at about the same time in various Western nations (for example Department for Education and Skills: Key Skills in the UK; Ministry of Education: The New Zealand Curriculum Framework of Essential Skills; United States Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills). Generic skills that were considered important in all of these countries included Communication, Working with Others, Planning and Organising and Problem Solving.

In schools oriented to lifelong learning, generic skills are seen as helping students to think independently and reflect on their learning. For example, problem solving is not necessarily a convergent exercise of trying to find the

correct answer; divergence and creativity are encouraged, and the problems themselves may be conceived by the students.

Communication skills are highly valued, where students work collaboratively and express themselves clearly in both formal and informal situations listening to others and making appropriate contributions. Through interpersonal interactions students acquire 'reflective independence' (Nixon, Martin, McKeown, & Ranson, 1996) whereby they build for themselves a richer and broader community that assists the development of their sensitivity and judgement. Interaction with both peers and adults helps to develop such independence, especially when the interactions are common and valued by all parties. These skills are enhanced when the classroom becomes a 'community of enquiry' (Splitter & Sharp, 1995), a place where it is safe to take risks and students feel comfortable asserting their own opinions or challenging those of other students or teachers. It is also important to have time to work alone and reflect – to monitor one's learning needs and set personal goals that will take learning further.

One way of encouraging students to reflect on their learning is to have them keep reflective journals. It is, however, essential that the teacher allows some time with each student to discuss the journal entries. Even very young students can reflect on their learning. The writer observed a double class (approximately 50 students) of six year-olds reflect on their learning when she was evaluating an arts program at a school involved in the South Australian Learning to Learn program (Department of Education and Children's Services). Each student spent about five minutes thinking about what he or she needed to do next to progress learning.

Significance of Self Concept and Self Regulation in Learning How to Learn

If young people are to become lifelong learners, they need to know how they learn and to be self-regulated learners. According to Zimmerman (2002, pp. 65-69), a self-regulated approach to learning involves three phases:

1. The *Forethought* phase, which includes task analysis, goal setting and planning, and self-motivation;
2. The *Performance* phase, which involves self-control, deployment of the strategies planned in the forethought phase, and self-monitoring, and;
3. The *Self-reflection* phase, which includes self-evaluation, including causal attribution to errors or successes.

Zimmerman (2002) maintains that the skills required to implement each of these phases can be learned. The extent to which a student can be a self-regulated learner is related to his or her confidence and sense of agency as a learner (Bryce & Withers, 2003; Candy et al., 1994). This confidence and sense of agency depends to a significant extent on an individual's view of the nature of ability (Pomerantz & Saxon, 2001). If a student views ability as 'fixed', and if that student views him or herself as 'a failure', this failure will be accepted passively as being outside the student's control. (Pomerantz & Saxon, 2001, p. 154).

The cultivation in all students of positive self-concepts as learners is probably the most important way that a school can shape young people to be lifelong learners. A Year 10 student interviewed in the ACER study had been 'dead set' on leaving school as soon as possible, he then moved to the particular case study school and changed his mind because:

> The teachers want to help you and they really show a keen interest. [They] help you set your own goals. I know if I didn't come here, I wouldn't be doing much. I'd probably be sitting at home doing nothing.

Another way of encouraging a positive identity as a learner is when teachers help students to recognise how much they know. The following is from a conversation with a teacher at the same case study school referred to above:

> They have got lots of skills, but they don't know how to audit the skills that they have achieved. . . . So I try and break down their tasks that they've done into smaller parcels and then push it in front of them and say, you just did that – do you realise you did all those steps? Like a kid said to me the other day, I took a cutting deck off a [*brand name*] rider mower, that's all he wrote. I said, how do you do that? . . . And he said, you do this, you take these bolts – and I said, what bolts, tell me exactly what you've got to do, so that if I was going to do it . . .and we wrote down 19 steps.

The Importance of Teachers as Facilitators and Role Models

For many teachers, the change from a traditional role of imparting knowledge to facilitating lifelong learning poses a significant challenge. This will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter. In order to help students to set their own goals and evaluate their progress towards them, teachers need to be mentors and facilitators rather than dispensers of knowledge. They also need to be role models of lifelong learners – showing that they are continuing to learn, acknowledging that there is a lot that they do not know.

With a lifelong learning approach all students are valued as learners – not just those who show academic potential. Teachers need to have high expectations of all students. This means taking an interest in each student as an individual and also taking an interest in *how* each student is learning rather than only evaluating the end products. If teachers are to be models of lifelong learners they need to feel comfortable about taking risks. This is a part of being open about their own lack of knowledge in certain areas. It is helpful to work collaboratively not only with teaching colleagues but with specialists such as librarians, and members of the local community.

To sum up, what are the main elements of a lifelong learning pedagogy?

Learning how to find, analyse and interrogate information is considered as important as the content of the information. It is helpful to be able to take a 'helicopter vision' (Candy et al., 1994) of a field of knowledge – to be able to make links from one field to another without being confined by traditional subject boundaries. It is important to recognise and value different ways of learning and different kinds of intelligence. Generic or cross-curricular skills are valued, including working with others and independent reflection. Students are encouraged to know how they learn and to become self-regulated learners (Zimmerman, 2002) with a strong sense of agency as a learner and a positive self concept. Students usually learn best in a 'warm' environment where the classroom is a community of enquiry (Splitter & Sharp, 1995) and teachers are facilitators more than imparters of knowledge.

WAYS THAT SCHOOLS CAN BE ORIENTED TO LIFELONG LEARNING

There is no recipe for becoming a lifelong learning school. The ACER study (Bryce & Withers, 2003) observed many different approaches that were in keeping with schools' particular philosophies and cultures. One school with a strong Christian ethos viewed lifelong learning as underpinning that school's philosophy of mercy. Another school with a strong focus on preparation for work saw lifelong learning as opening the school and developing it as an integral part of the local community and another described itself as 'a safe house for learning how to learn' (Bryce & Withers, 2003, p. 41). Some significant indicators of lifelong learning that emerged from the study were that:

- ownership of the need to learn rests with students, who are helped to set and evaluate their own learning goals;
- there is a central hub of learning in the school (such as a learning centre or library) rather than a rigid vertical structure;

- there is provision of time and encouragement for students to think and reflect and this is supported by someone with the role of a mentor;
- teachers themselves are model lifelong learners;
- there is an emphasis on formative rather than competitive assessment; and
- there is an environment where learning is fun.

Before discussing each of these indicators in turn, it is important to emphasise that a school's orientation to lifelong learning is a journey (Longworth, 1999) that cannot be accomplished quickly. A principal at what was described as a 'very traditional' high school at the very beginning of the lifelong learning journey said:

> If I'm passionate . . . and I come in and say, right – we'll have 100 minute lessons, we'll have work placements – I may have the authority to do that, but I don't think it would be sustained. After a little while, the arms would be folded and we'd see all the problems it would have caused because it had come too soon. So – I think it's stealth. My approach here has been to keep that stuff on the boil, to ask those challenging questions, to cause a little bit of discomfort.

All schools are already learning communities and to some extent they will already have strengths in some of the indicators mentioned above. Once significant members of a school community have become interested in the idea of becoming a lifelong learning school, they can start to consider the extent to which that journey has already started, by asking questions such as:

- Do students at our school set their own learning goals?
- Is there fluidity between year levels?
- Is there a learning centre that is the hub of learning in the school?
- Are students given time for reflection, and is there opportunity for them to share their ideas with a mentor?
- Do we value and support our teachers?
- To what extent are our classrooms communities of enquiry?
- What are the strengths in this school that we should build on?

In the 'very traditional' high school mentioned above, there was already a learning centre, but it had been used for special education and the Learning Assistance Program. This was an excellent strength to build on because the program represented many elements integral to lifelong learning. In particular, each student in the program had a mentor, a volunteer from other students,

parents, or members of the local community. The school counsellor described the motivation of some of these volunteers:

> A lot of them had trouble themselves in their early years at school and they want to help somebody. A lot of them need a boost in their own self-esteem and they become the guru rather than being at the other end.

One significant step was to open the centre to all students, not just those who had been classified as 'special ed'. Gradually the stigma of 'having to go to special ed.' could be removed and the role of the centre could be seen as a place where any student could go to talk to a mentor about his or her learning.

A Year 12 student in the school indicated how this transition was progressing:

> It is good, because it's not a specific – right, we're going to teach you how to read. They [groups of students] just have sessions and they do – maybe work they have to do for a subject or learn how to use a program on a computer. Most importantly it gives them confidence. I think it would be good if we could have heaps more volunteers so that everyone could use it – not everyone – but a lot more people who didn't think that they needed assistance.

There is also a strong pastoral program in the school based on 'home groups'. Home group teachers are encouraged to get to know their group well and they teach the group as often as possible in a secondary school. The group is encouraged to evaluate how they are working as a group. The school can build on this a practice that encourages students to reflect on their learning.

The discussion now turns to examples of ways that schools have started to address the indicators of lifelong learning.

Ownership of the Need to Learn Rests with Students

Traditionally, ownership of the need to learn has rested with the teacher. If students in a class are not learning, the fault has been seen as that of the teacher, whose responsibility it is to motivate them. Programs exist that can help schools to orient to an approach where responsibility for learning rests with the student. For example, one of the case study schools (Bryce & Withers, 2003) used the Australian Quality Council quality learning program: Plan, Do, Study, Act (Business Excellence, 2002). As the school principal pointed out, traditionally, most emphasis for the student has been on the 'Do'. But at this school, students were actively involved in all four phases. For example, at this school the Languages Other than English (LOTE) teacher gave her students the prescribed

set of curriculum outcomes and asked the students to rewrite them in a way that was meaningful to them. She pointed out many benefits of doing this. It gives students a clear purpose – they know where they are heading. Some comments from students in other classes at this school indicated the effects of the Plan Do Study Act approach, for example, a Year 10 student in an Industry and Enterprise class said:

> In this class you get to make your own decisions. You get to think for yourself and not have the other teachers think for you. That's what I like about it.

And some Year 12 students said:

> In English they've changed the course around, so, instead of the teacher teaching you, you're learning for yourself. So they're pushing you more to do the stuff yourself, even to correcting your own work as a group.

At another school, for the first assignment in Year 10, students had to analyse their learning styles. They could then reflect and build on this information as they planned their learning for the year.

There is a Central Hub of Learning in the School

The most appropriate focus for learning in a school will, most likely, depend upon that school's culture. A case where one school developed a 'hub' from what had been a centre for special education has been mentioned above. It must be stressed that this 'hub' is available to everyone, not just the people needing 'special' help, or privileged students who behave well. When this researcher visited the case study schools (Bryce & Withers, 2003) it became evident that if students are given the opportunity to learn at their own pace, in their own way, something that they want to learn, they will do it readily. There seems to be no need to worry about students abusing opportunities for independent learning when these things are in place. But these things will fall into place gradually.

Within a hub of learning, year levels and age levels mix. There are many instances of older students helping younger ones. In senior colleges in the ACER study there was a considerable range of ages, which seemed to be beneficial to students' learning. For example, speaking of the school's learning centre, one group of students said:

K: There's not like the dud group, or whatever.
W: You're all here together; you all want to learn.
K: You could have someone who's 26 and someone who's 18 on the same table chatting.

What's it like working with older people?
K: It's interesting – you hear their views. A lot of them say they like hearing our views.

There are staffing implications for a centre of learning. It will not have the desired influence if students who go there are frustrated because there is no one who can guide them. It is important that there will always be a teacher or a person in a position to offer assistance. To some extent, such assistance can be managed by forward planning. One of the case study schools had developed a lot of 'how to' pamphlets for the learning centre that helped students access information, write reports and use particular kinds of texts. This is helpful, but insufficient. In libraries, teacher librarians can fulfil the role of guiding students, but in a large school, more staff may be needed. As mentioned above, one school used volunteers from the local community. Students who come to a centre of learning mainly need a mentor; someone with whom they can talk through their ideas and strategies. A 'volunteer' or older student can, in many cases, fulfil this role very well.

There is Encouragement for Students to Think and Reflect

One way of encouraging students to reflect about their learning is to suggest that they keep diaries or reflective journals. It is important to support this practice by setting aside time to talk to students about their journal entries and to make use of the journals. Again, it is a role of mentoring. For example, at one case study school there was a Year 10 Industry and Enterprise class. These were students who, in a traditional school, might have been labelled 'reluctant learners'. They were not keen on writing and found it difficult to articulate their ideas in discussions. On Thursdays each student had a work placement. On Fridays they had an Industry and Enterprise class. The one hour class was spent reflecting on their previous day's work: what did you do? What did you learn? What did you do well? – the teacher helped them to structure their thinking. If they wished they could use photographs and sketches in their journals. In that one hour class, the teacher managed to talk to each of the students on a one-to-one basis.

Another way of encouraging students' thinking is to challenge their views and encourage them to challenge the views of the teacher – rather than taking a stand that the teacher is always right. This practice can help students to sharpen their

thinking and to make sure that they have strong grounds for their assertions. Students at one of the case study schools said:

> Boy: Sometimes teachers ask you to challenge them.
> Girl: You have to think about it first before you make a point, you have to make sure it's valid enough so they don't come up with a stronger point that challenges you straight away.

Teachers Themselves are Models of Lifelong Learners

In a school oriented to lifelong learning, ideally teachers make transparent their own learning journeys. They can learn from students (these days this happens particularly with information technology). It is quite acceptable for a teacher to not know something, because rather than being a repository of knowledge, a teacher is a model, a mentor and facilitator. One teacher in the ACER study said:

> I don't think I'll ever stop learning. . . . At the moment I feel more like learning through my teaching, that's certainly going to be a big focus for me for the next few years. I'd like to learn to teach better. When I was at university there was a huge gap between the lecturer and the students. You couldn't ask questions. It wasn't a two-way process. Although I passed, I didn't feel I learned a lot that way. I really feel today that I could learn better, having taught Maths.

At another school, a teacher said:

> One thing that really stuck out here as far as I am concerned is that the staff aren't frightened to let the kids know that they are learning new things too and to set an example regarding how ever long you have been doing something you are still always going to be learning something and you have always got to be willing to tackle new things.

It is important for teachers to realise that it is acceptable to make mistakes – to admit that they are learning. One principal referred to this as a 'no blame mentality':

> We worked very strongly on a no blame mentality about things. And the staff then gained some confidence. They tried things because they knew if it was a disaster they wouldn't be crucified because of it.

As model learners, teachers are valued. One case study school in particular was notable in valuing its teachers. In addition to the usual staff work room, there

was a lounge area with comfortable arm chairs, a pleasant outlook to a courtyard, coffee making facilities and various newspapers and magazines. It was an area that encouraged reflection. At this school, the principal was very aware that each teacher had a learning path. She had a systematic way of encouraging every teacher in the school to develop that path:

> What happens in August is that I see every member of the teaching staff for half an hour. It takes me a couple of weeks but I get to see everybody and those who are on leave come back and have an interview. We have a sheet that they fill out …it's a check list that says, 'what have been the good things about this year, what have been the frustrations, what was your teaching load like, what sort of professional development have you done in school time and in your own time, what sort of study.' They write responses to that and bring it to the discussion, with a copy for me and we use that . . . There is an expectation. If there is a blank in the study part, I'll say 'we'll talk about future career paths and where they might be headed…maybe a leadership course might be appropriate'…

> Another bit is, 'what would provide a challenge for you?' Some might say 'I'd really like a leadership position and I'd be interested in a couple of areas.' Those who have been in positions of responsibility have another sheet that they fill out that talks about their achievements for the year and whether they achieved their goals and where they might have left room for improvement and whether they are interested in a position for the following year and what their vision will be, where they might take the faculty. So that's just an automatic thing that happens every August.

This principal was herself modelling lifelong learning. She respected and valued every teacher. She made time to speak to each one. She encouraged each teacher to reflect on his or her learning.

In another school teachers' learning was celebrated through twilight seminars where teachers 'show cased' their innovative work. Teachers in this school were happy to stay back and give presentations outside school hours when they felt that their ideas and work were being valued. Much of this work was innovative and collaborative, so teachers were being encouraged to use each other as resources and change was celebrated. The principal described one of these seminars:

> They were little pockets of best practice that other people sat and looked at. We look to others outside, but we're not always looking for the big expert to come and tell us what to do, we're actually sharing amongst ourselves and building up that level of confidence as a community here.

At one case study school there was a 'buddy' system for new staff members that encouraged collaboration. The assistant principal of this school commented:

> If you are looking to engage students in their learning you really need to engage staff
> in their work and their own learning and develop or enhance the motivation for the
> work they do.

There is an Emphasis on Formative Rather Than Competitive Assessment

Given the impact that 'failure' can have on a student's self concept as a learner, there are important implications for how teachers introduce and handle assessment. On the whole, a formative rather than a competitive approach will provide students with opportunities to be 'self-regulated' – in other words, they can set realistic goals, in consultation with the teacher and then endeavour to achieve them. But there are times when students should not be shielded from competition that is inevitably a part of life. If a student believes that he or she has control over ability (as discussed above), the results of competitive assessment are more likely to be viewed as a part of learning rather than a 'sentence', a labelling or a barrier.

In most schools, students face a high stakes competitive examination at the end of their schooling. If students view ability as 'fixed', competitive assessment results will have a positive impact only on those few students who obtain high results and there will be a significant blow to the self-esteem of low achieving students.

By definition, formative assessment is a part of learning, it provides information about what a student can do and will help in the planning of what to learn next. In a school with a lifelong learning approach, competitive examinations are viewed as a part of the learning journey. This approach is favoured rather than one where the grade is the main goal. If the grade is the main goal, students focus on surface rather than deep learning (Biggs, 1987), they ask: how much do I need to know? Rather than: what do I need to know? Teachers in the case study schools (Bryce & Withers, 2003) suggested that students who are lifelong learners tend to do well in competitive exams because they have learned how to set goals and plan their learning. Although not yet proven, it could be argued that confidence as learners and good learning skills will equip students better for tertiary studies than surface learning imparted for a particular exam.

There are many formative assessment strategies. In particular, folios of work and approaches that encourage self-evaluation and reflection: where did I go

wrong? What do I need to improve? What did I do well? (Masters & Forster, 1996; OECD, 2005).

There is an Environment Where Learning is Fun

Students are more likely to have a positive outlook to learning if it takes place in an environment that is 'fun'. In place of the traditional Nineteenth Century classroom of compliance and punishment, silence and rote learning, today we value learning that is shared, enjoyable, open-ended and ongoing.

The ACER study (Bryce & Withers, 2003) endorsed the idea that students will learn well if the classroom environment is a 'warm' one, a community of enquiry (as suggested above), where students can feel comfortable about taking risks. Learning is essentially active, and thus students will learn well if they have opportunities to construct their own knowledge and set their own learning goals. Students will do this more readily if they can see a purpose to their learning. There needs to be time to reflect – to ask 'Am I going in the right direction?' Students can be helped to develop self-organisation skills so that when they have set their goals they can plan how to achieve them in a realistic way.

The context for learning is significant. Some students feel uncomfortable in an atmosphere that is dominated by seriousness and a lack of openness. For some students learning becomes more relevant if it has a practical, work-related orientation – such as that provided by Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses. Opportunities to combine school and work are often helpful to students in senior years. They can then relate their learning to the work place and to life outside school.

The recently published Victorian Principles of Learning and Teaching recommend a learning environment that 'promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation' (SofWeb, 2005, p. 4). Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and teachers are encouraged to establish what students know already and then to provide opportunities for students to build on their prior knowledge in manageable steps. It is suggested that students could design their own assessment tasks. One way of building on students' prior knowledge in a maths lesson is suggested:

> A lesson on triangles begins with an exploration of what students understand to be a 'triangle', including physical objects of a variety of types, The discussion is guided towards a class consensus on the essential characteristics of a triangle as an abstraction from the concrete examples, with the teacher monitoring the variety of student views as the discussion progresses *(SofWeb, 2005, p. 8).*

These approaches that aim to enhance students' self confidence and their sense of agency as a learner are in no way seen as 'dumming down' or restricting the curriculum to what is popular with young people. Indeed it is intended that students will become engaged with learning to an extent where they enjoy being challenged to develop deep levels of thinking and application.

Continuing the Journey

At the beginning of this section it was suggested that all schools have started the journey of orienting to lifelong learning, but they will start the journey at different points, depending on the culture and history of the school. It is important to have a framework for evaluating how the journey is going, to ask what has gone well? What has been a challenge? Why? What are the next steps? As a part of the ACER study, some tools based on Longworth's work were developed (Bryce & Withers 2003, pp. 91-95; Longworth, 1999). These are checklists and questionnaires that could be modified by schools and used on a regular basis at staff meetings or professional development sessions. The most important activity is to set goals that will build on a school's strengths at particular points in time. This needs to happen at regular intervals so that momentum does not wane.

CHALLENGES TO LIFELONG LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

The main challenges to lifelong learning in schools stem from the fact that change of this magnitude cannot occur quickly. The key players: students, parents and teachers will take time to evaluate the worth of this new approach that challenges their traditional views of schooling. Students pick up the views of their parents, so although many relish the opportunities to set their own learning goals and to discover the exhilaration of learning, others expect teachers to be figures of authority, providers of knowledge and they find it difficult to respect someone who admits to not knowing all aspects of a particular specialist field of knowledge.

Parents expect their children to receive grades at school. They may consider that the school is 'slack' if children are not graded. They like to be able to compare the progress of their child with his or her peers rather than to be told whether or not he or she has achieved particular learning goals. This attitude is passed onto students, who expect to be graded. As the principal of one school in the process of orienting to more goal focused, formative assessment rather than grades commented:

> The kids aren't taking much notice of the comments we're putting at the side of the essay, they're just interested in: what was the result? . . . Now this means that we have to change the paradigm of what kids have learned [*about assessment*]. That is a difficult task. A lot of students, of course, don't like this because it involves a lot more work.

Many teachers were trained to believe that good teaching involves 'putting on a performance' and transmitting knowledge whilst standing 'in control' at the front of a classroom. Secondary school teachers are used to being regarded as authorities in their fields of specialisation, thus it is very difficult to step down from being an authority figure. Indeed some teachers will find it impossible.

Most teachers come from 'academic' backgrounds and a mindset where academic achievement is valued more than achievement in other areas. Some teachers will find it difficult to change this mindset; to take up a stance where different kinds of intelligence and different approaches to learning are seen as worthwhile: where a child who cannot articulate his ideas well in writing but can take good photographs is seen as just as good a student as one who writes well.

For those teachers who can change, implementing lifelong learning practices, although rewarding, is a lot of work that some teachers find very difficult to handle and suffer 'burn out'. A report from one of the case study schools observed:

> Many teachers seemed to be living their work every minute of the day, and at week ends. The results of this, on the one hand, are invaluable. Students frequently said that the best thing about the school is that they feel they belong and that people care about them. Inevitably this takes its toll on teachers. The only obvious solution is more money so that there can be more teachers to take on these roles.

One of the most satisfying aspects of taking on a lifelong learning approach to pedagogy is that schools can build on their existing strengths and they can choose to undertake the journey at a comfortable pace. Although, overall, it is an immense change, it is likely that every school already embraces some elements of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning itself celebrates change and celebrates difference, thus, however long it takes, the journey promises to be very satisfying and rewarding.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

LIFELONG LEARNING: HELPING ADDRESS DISADVANTAGE THROUGH COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING PROJECTS

CAROLYN BROADBENT, JILL BURGESS AND MAUREEN BOYLE

INTRODUCTION

Glover and Patton (2004) stress the importance of education in promoting the life chances of young people, arguing that 'employment, health and wellbeing, and civic engagement are a few of life's outcomes that educational outcomes predict' (p. 20). Further, in an increasingly complex world, young people are challenged by the need to build a repertoire of skills that will assist them to'access and navigate options' (Glover & Patton, 2004) across their lifespan. This has impacted on the role of schools to ensure they provide relevant experiences and opportunities that prepare these young people for dynamic learning environments within a globalised world.

Implementation of such policies provides real challenges and ongoing concerns. The high level of disengagement from schooling by students, particularly during the middle years, remains at the forefront of educational debates and provides the stimulus for curriculum change. There are, of course, numerous reasons why students disengage from the school classroom. Of importance is the recognition of the difficulties faced by those children who live in families experiencing poverty, violence, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, psychological illness and social isolation. These difficulties alone provide sufficient argument for approaches that build community and strengthen the sense of connectedness between students, schools, families, and other educational institutions within the wider community as a means to improve students' achievement outcomes, levels of engagement, and sense of self-efficacy. This is especially important given the growing propensity towards behavioural and

emotional problems in young people. The prediction of Glover and Patton (2004) that 'between ten and twenty per cent of young people will experience serious problem behaviours between twelve and eighteen years of age, and as many as one in five young people report difficulties with mental health, such as anxiety disorders and depression' (p. 20) creates a rather bleak prognosis. Young people facing any of the difficulties identified below remain at a considerable disadvantage.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DISADVANTAGE

Poverty and Disadvantage

The term 'absolute poverty' is used internationally to describe those people who lack food and shelter for minimal needs, whereas such people living in Australia are generally described as living in 'relative poverty' (Healey, 2002, p. 1). People are considered to be poor when their living conditions fall below a community standard and they are unable to fully participate in the ordinary activities of society as a result of this poverty (Healey, 2002). In Australia, wealth is distributed very unevenly with the top 10 per cent of wealth holders owning 45 per cent of household wealth and the bottom 50 per cent owning only 7 per cent (Kelly, 2001). As McClelland (2000) highlights, around one in eight children lives in poverty in Australia, which is relatively high compared with other industrialised countries. The highest rates of poverty in Australia can be seen among sole parent families, indigenous Australians, people with disabilities, unemployed people and some groups of refugees and immigrants (Healey, 2002).

A survey conducted by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Poverty Task Group, shows clearly that poverty is a significant issue (90 per cent of 200 respondents) with identified causes including: 'educational attainment, unemployment and social circumstances' (ACT Poverty Task Group, 2000) with major identified impacts on health, housing and the inability to afford very basic items. Further, poverty was found to lead to considerable stress, a lowered sense of wellbeing and an increased risk of self-destructive behaviours. As the report highlights, poverty can lead to desperate measures such as associated crime and thereby impact on other individuals within the family, and the community more broadly (p. 8). Of note were the significant difficulties imposed by poverty on individuals, thereby disempowering them to fully participate in their community; for example, lack of a 'work community' as a result of unemployment, reduced educational opportunities and increased general social isolation. For some

children, poverty leads to such consequences as being 'labelled, excluded and picked on' (p. 8).

Participants of the ACT Poverty Task Group survey suggested a number of strategies to help address poverty including: education and information, provision of universal services and direct services, such as resources, support and skill development, to people 'at risk', and acknowledgment and further identification of the issues. As highlighted in the report:

> 'poverty is about trying to be a super-parent to make up for the lack of material things … poverty wears you down and can make you sicker than you already are, both physically and mentally, it's about stress, isolation, fear and constant struggle … POVERTY equals PAIN' *(p. 3).*

Peel (2003) warns that describing disadvantage is a '"dangerous game", where people's stories, tragic, despairing, heroic or humorous, may come to be all that is known about their places and all that is true about their lives' (p. 32). Peel argues that people are far more than the labels given them in some quarters and that sharing their stories can sometimes fuel the community's cyclic feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. It is essential, he believes, that we listen to these people so that we can learn from them about the injustices of poverty and its possible remedies (p. 32).

Particularly stressful for people in poverty is contemplation of the future of their children, especially the boys. As Peel (2003) highlights, these people are able to cope with almost anything if it means their children will have a better life; as and when that conviction fades, hope becomes fear (p. 132). Peel describes a form of *collective depression,* a general feeling of helplessness and hopelessness of teenagers and young adults who see themselves as isolated from the community with no prospects for future employment, family or housing. Many young people in Peel's study came from families of two and three generations of unemployment. Such loss of identity and future prospects has been highlighted in other studies (Glover, Burns, Butler, & Patton, 1998; Larson, 2002; McDonald, 1995).

Bullying and Violence in Adolescent and Youth Culture

The far-reaching effects of bullying, teasing, harassment and violence in schools and youth culture have and continue to be well documented in the literature (Macoby & Jacklin, 1980; Olweus, 1978; Rigby, 1996; Rogers, 2003; Sanders & Phye, 2004). Healey (2001) argues that as many as 20 per cent of students in Australian schools have at one or more times been subjected to harassment and

bullying leading to lowered self-esteem, personality changes, health problems, including significant depression and in some cases, possible suicide, isolation from the peer group, absenteeism from school and difficulties with school work (Rigby, 1996). Healey's investigations identified numerous forms of bullying, including verbal abuse (put-downs, name calling, threats), physical abuse (kicking, hitting/punching, tripping, spitting, scratching) social abuse (exclusion, ignoring, ostracising or alienating) and psychological abuse (gossiping and spreading rumours, 'dirty looks', stalking, damaging and hiding possessions). Of concern also are the long-term effects on the person who perpetuates the bullying, given that the resolution of conflict through bullying and 'power-over' approaches to peer interaction tends to continue well beyond the school and into working life (McCarthy, Rylance, Bennett, & Zimmerman, 2001).

Numerous reasons are provided as to why individuals adopt bullying behaviour, including: fear of being bullied themselves, peer pressure, feeling as though they do not 'fit-in', being upset or angry, seeking attention or showing-off, and holding a dislike of themselves. Low self-esteem and insecurity are not regarded as major factors; in fact the opposite may often be the case. One significant factor that does emerge from the study of bullying behaviour is the lack of empathy or consideration by the bully of the effects of the behaviour on the victim.

Rogers (2003) argues that boys are often socialised to think, believe and act aggressively, learning at an early age that this behaviour is acceptable and that conflict can be solved in an aggressive manner. The damaging attitudes and responses to bullying, including; 'boys will be boys', 'it's character building', 'it's just a normal part of growing-up and will always be here' and 'turning a blind eye', continue to perpetuate, tolerate and even condone violence in schools and communities (Rogers, 1985). Research has also found that children will often model bullying and other aggressive behaviours when living in family situations where violent expressions of anger are considered legitimate ways to resolve conflict and frustration (Sanders & Phye, 2004; Smith & Thompson, 1991).

The need for explicit and unambiguous consequences for bullying and teasing behaviours supported by overt protection, particularly for the victims of bullying, through whole school and community policies and programs, is essential (Sanders and Phye, 2004). Programs that focus on the development of empathy skills are crucial to the reduction of bullying, aggression and violent behaviours and for the enhancement of pro-social skills in all students (Borba, 2001; Gibb, 2002; Goleman, 1995; Scotellaro, 1998) argues that empathy is the foundation stone of moral intelligence, sensitising children to different viewpoints and raising the

understanding and awareness of others' opinions and ideas and their ability to deal with and have resilience to the anger in themselves and others.

> Empathy is what enhances humanness, civility, and morality. Empathy is the emotion that alerts a child to another person's plight and stirs his (her) conscience. It is what moves children to be tolerant and compassionate, to understand other people's needs, to care enough to help those who are hurt or troubled. *(Borba, 2001, p. 19)*

Research has shown that teaching empathic skills significantly increases the empathic behaviour that individuals display towards others (Davis & Franzoi, 1991; Hatcher, Nadeau, Walsh, Reynolds, Galea, & Marz, 1994; Scotellaro, 1998). Recognition of the positive impact that empathy training (Cotton, 2001), both in short-term and long-term programs, has on children and adults has resulted in the development of a variety of local and international programs for schools and communities (Gibb, 2002).

Depression

The problem and extent of depression in childhood and young adults remains a significant issue in communities across the western world (Patton, Coffey, Postgerino, Carlin, & Bowes, 2003). While very little difference is noted between males and females in primary and early secondary school age, more depressive symptoms are evident in adolescent females. In Australia, evidence suggests 24 per cent of teenagers will suffer a major depressive illness at some time during their adolescence, and one in five people will experience depression at some stage in their lives; one in four females and one in six males (Beyond Blue, The National Depressive Initiative, 2004).

Many depressed youths have a history of anxiety related disorders, very low self-esteem, behaviour problems, substance related disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, eating disorders, significant social withdrawal and isolation, hypersensitivity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and borderline personality disorder (Kendall & Chu, 2000; Lane, Gresham, & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). Kaslow and Rehm (1998) describe the various age-related symptoms of depression in younger, preschool children as often displaying anger, somatic complaints, sad facial expressions, irritability, lethargy, sleep and feeding problems, decreased socialisation, separation anxiety, excessive crying, hyper and hypoactivity, labile mood and anhedonia. Children 6–8 years of age can display many of the earlier systems and also poor school performance, accident-proneness, phobias and attention-seeking behaviours. Children from 9–12 years

can also display depressed moods, aggression, verbalised feelings of helplessness and low self-esteem, guilt, self-destructive behaviour, hallucinations and suicidal ideation; these latter behaviours becoming more evident into adolescence. Particular problems arise when children perceive themselves as having low self-efficacy and/or as being disadvantaged in their school or home lives. As Banadura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli and Caprara (1999) state, 'perceived social and academic inefficacy contribute to concurrent and subsequent depression both directly and through their impact on academic achievement, prosocialness and problem behaviours' (p. 258).

Literacy and Numeracy Issues

Luke (2001) argues that one of the most significant factors to impact upon the success or failure of students to acquire literacy skills is poverty and, as highlighted in the Queensland Department of Education's *Literate Futures* (2000, p. 8) report, 'poverty, socio-economic exclusion and cultural marginality remain powerful forces in the shaping of who gets which kinds of literacy, and to what end these can be used'. Such concerns are pivotal to discussions regarding students' level of engagement, or disengagement, during the middle years of schooling. As the findings of the National Literacy Survey (Masters & Forster, 1997) highlight, a third of primary school children are unable to read or write at an adequate standard and the problem becomes exacerbated as students progress through years 3 to 5. The longitudinal surveys of the Australian Youth Program (Kemp, 1996) provide similar information regarding high school students.

The gravity of this situation has resulted in the development of numerous reports and policy initiatives such as the 10th Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), which endorsed new National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century, commonly referred to as the Adelaide Declaration. Agreed English literacy and numeracy goals identified at that time state that every student should be numerate and able to read, write, spell and communicate at an appropriate level (MCEETYA, 1999).

Family Support for Schoolwork

For a number of reasons, many parents feel very poorly equipped to assist their children with their schoolwork. These reasons include: cultural barriers (e.g., English as a second language), physical and mental health related problems,

environmental factors (e.g., poverty, homelessness), or their own educational limitations. Regardless of these factors, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that parents of school-aged children want to assist their children, especially with their homework (Forster, 2000). Kalantzis, Gurney and Cope (1991) also report that both low income parents and non-English speaking parents are equally as inclined to look for homework for their children as higher income and English speaking parents. In a study undertaken by Forster (1999, cited in Forster 2000), disadvantaged mothers believed their children should get homework, even when homework caused considerable family problems. Summarised research data by Cooper, Lindsay, Nye, and Greathouse (1998) indicate that classes of average high school students who completed homework outperformed 75 per cent of students in classes that did not complete homework. Access to computers for homework purposes needs to be a consideration in the selection of venues for homework groups. One US researcher found that only 22 per cent of children of low-income families have access to a home computer, compared with 91 per cent of middle to higher income families. Even where there was access to a computer, those in lower income families reported lower usage (Becker, 2000).

HOME-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A significant factor in the development and sustainability of positive educational outcomes for students who might otherwise be disadvantaged is the establishment of strong home-school-community partnerships (Lueder, 2000). The level of connectedness of young people to school and family has also proved valuable as a protective factor against substance abuse, violence, emotional distress, and risky sexual behaviour, while relating positively towards improved education outcomes (Resnick et al., 1997). Groundwater-Smith, Brennan, McFadden and Mitchell (1998) highlight the advantages of group learning situations, while the importance of strong home-school partnerships, in developing and sustaining positive, educational outcomes for all students, has been noted by Shopen and Liddicoat (1998). Additional benefits from these relationships include deeper levels of engagement and a stronger sense of self-efficacy in young people. Although the benefits are obvious, encouraging parents to become more involved in their children's education is rather more problematic. As Rutherford (1995) highlights:

> Although many educators and schools and some school systems have developed programs and practices to strengthen parent involvement in education, not all programs have succeeded in involving low incomes, racial and ethnic minority and limited-English proficient parents. Many such programs come and go *(p. vi).*

The following describes two community-based programs that aim to assist in addressing the issues identified earlier in this chapter.

PROGRAM 1: BARNARDOS AUSTRALIA HOMEWORK GROUPS PROJECT

As noted by Forster (2000, p. 21), many students cross the divide between home and school every day but, for some, the divide is much greater than for others. The Barnardos Australia Homework Groups Project (Broadbent, Boyle & Burgess, 2002) is a community-based program that aims to address some of the many issues raised in this chapter, in a constructive and educationally sound way. The program comprises community volunteers who work as tutors to support students and their families. The context within which the Barnardos Australia Homework Groups Project operates provides an ideal opportunity to link current research with supportive practice. The evidence provided in this chapter affirms the value of this program and outlines the outcomes achieved to date.

Context

Barnardos Australia is a non-government child welfare agency that has operated a range of family support and alternative care programs in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) since 1963. The Barnardos Homework Groups Project was established in 2001 to meet the identified literacy and numeracy needs of groups of students in the ACT and nearby New South Wales. As a result of its ongoing work, Barnardos Australia had become increasingly aware that many of the children and adolescents in their programs experienced major educational deficits and problems including:

- disrupted learning due to movement through different schools;
- poor school attendance;
- lack of encouragement and support for learning in the home environment;
- regular suspension from school due to disruptive behaviour;
- undiagnosed learning disabilities;
- lack of concentration at school due to other distracting life problems; and
- poor self-esteem and social skills (Shopen & Liddicoat, 2000, p. 10).

It was also realised, during the development of the Program, that many of the children referred to Barnardos Australia lived in the same geographical area.

Bringing together groups of 4–6 students with 2–3 tutors created a different emphasis and provided some advantages including:

- more children were supported in the program at any one time;
- local community resources and services could be accessed by each group of children (e.g. public libraries);
- tutors were able to share their skills across the group of children;
- children were able to work in small groups with others of varying ages, in a peer tutoring supportive atmosphere;
- close monitoring of students' achievement;
- tutors could provide collegial support to each other, and
- Barnardos Australia could target the most disadvantaged areas where after-school educational assistance was not available.

Students' Perspectives

Evidence from research conducted by Pierce (1999, p. 2004) showed that students gained great satisfaction with the Homework Groups Program. Of particular value were the relationships and friendships the students had developed with their tutors. The use of public libraries, fortunately located close to the students' homes, proved beneficial to the participants as venues for study. Most students perceived they had improved in spelling, tables, mathematics, reading, and information gathering had become less difficult. Students valued the opportunity to use computers while in the library, especially to complete schoolwork and access information online. Although some students did not quantify the way in which the program had helped them, they did state they liked coming and 'everything about it'.

In some situations the social interaction within the homework groups drew mixed ages together. In one location students stated that while no close friendships with other students had developed as a result of the Homework Groups Program, they did consider all students to be friendly and polite to one another. This was in stark contrast, some commented, to their school experiences where lowered self-esteem and isolation were reported.

Tutors' Perspectives

The tutors reacted positively to the use of public libraries for students' tuition, as they believed this had increased the students' confidence and independence in

learning. Library staff also had been very supportive in arranging specific locations for the tutoring to occur. Tutors valued the easy access to the computer area, Internet, and audio headphones where these were provided, and the fact that students were able to utilise resources not normally found in their homes or at other community centres. The easy access to reference books, CD-Roms, and other resources for teaching was regarded as beneficial by tutors, especially in cases where the school had not set specific homework. Utilisation of the library as a learning environment was also believed to have encouraged more cooperative and positive study behaviours. The only disadvantage noted was that, at one location, there had been a need to balance students' working noise with that of expectations by the general public for a quiet atmosphere in the library.

Teaching and Learning Approach

The tutors expressed a strong preference for one-to-one and small group tutoring sessions. Some tutors believed there had been dramatic changes in the self-esteem and confidence of students during the short time (maximum of 8-10 sessions) they had worked with them. Two of the tutors had spoken to the teachers of referred students and had found this helpful, while other tutors planned to create this link in the future. One tutor experienced some difficulty in establishing her 'bona fides' at the school when attempting to speak to a teacher about a particular student's needs and progress.

Monitoring of students' progress varied across locations. For some tutors the process appeared very informal and anecdotal, while others set more formal tasks that were systematically completed and assessed. In cases where the school had set homework for the students to complete, the tutors focused on the completion of these tasks during the tutoring session. Where no formal work had been set, the tutoring session focused on work that resulted from an informal discussion between the student/s and tutor. In some instances, a school had specifically designed homework for a particular student and that then formed the basis for the tuition. The tutors believed this approach to be of special value as it assisted the student to make gains in their regular school environment.

General Observations

It was clear from the observations made and the comments provided by the tutors and students that a high level of satisfaction existed across locations where group tuition was offered as part of the Barnardos Australia Homework Groups Project.

The special friendships that had formed as a result of the program worked effectively to provide extra support for both tutors and students. Of particular interest was the expressed appreciation of students for the special friendships they had formed with their tutors and the way in which the tutors had assisted them in their learning. It was also evident from the tutors' comments that many had found participation in the program, and the interaction with the students, intrinsically satisfying. For one tutor it proved to be the 'highlight of my week', and a welcome break from being 'at home with a young baby most of the time'.

Clearly there is still work to be done in building community and facilitating improved cooperation and dialogue between the program tutors and teachers in schools. It might be expected that increased opportunities for discussion and interaction should lead to more productive outcomes for both teachers and students alike.

The partnerships formed between a local university, community volunteers, and Barnardos Australia have worked effectively to develop a program that supports the learning and improvement of the educational attainment of students who were experiencing considerable difficulty at school. The community-based Homework Groups Project has attempted to address a number of the underlying issues affecting educational performance. Evidence gained from an evaluation of the program shows an increase in students' confidence and self-esteem, and that the students could be maintained in their current school without being suspended.

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS FAMILIES TO LEARN TOGETHER

For many years, concerns have been expressed regarding the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, who feature as one of the most disadvantaged groups with unemployment at 17.6 per cent (compared with 7.3 per cent national average in February 2000, ABS estimates), life expectancy at 18 years below other Australians (AIHW, 2000) and infant death rates three times higher in 1998–2000 (Al-Yaman, Bryant, & Sargeant, 2002). Retention rates and low levels of achievement of Indigenous children in Australian schools provide little comfort either. Yet Indigenous Australians are forthright in their expectations, as shown in the Supporting Statement to the Commonwealth Government's National Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (DETYA, 2000, p. 1):

> Our people have the right to a good education. Our children need the skills, experiences and qualifications to be able to choose their futures. Our communities need young people coming through with the education and confidence to be effective

leaders. We need young people who can be advocates for our people, able to take
their place in Australian society and business and still keep their culture strong.

Although public perceptions may differ, there has been significant progress in
recent years in improving the education levels of Indigenous Australians; for
example:

- participation in early childhood and primary schooling has improved
  dramatically;
- Year 12 retention rates have shifted from single digits to about 32 per
  cent in 1998;
- the involvement of Indigenous parents and communities in education has
  increased, with over 3,800 parent communities in 1998 (run through the
  Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness program), covering
  about 105,000 Indigenous school and preschool students;
- Indigenous participation in university courses has increased from under
  100 people 30 years ago to some 7,800 in 1998; and
- the participation rates of Indigenous 15 to 24 year-olds in vocational
  education and training have actually reached levels that are about the
  same as for other Australians (DETYA, 2000, p. 1).

Yet while these figures are heartening, much still needs to be done to soften
the barriers that militate against members of the Australian Indigenous community
achieving more equitable outcomes. As the Supporting Statement highlights,
Indigenous Australians:

- are less likely to get a preschool education;
- are well behind in literacy and numeracy skills development before they
  leave primary school;
- have less access to secondary school in the communities in which they
  live;
- are absent from school two or three times more often than other students;
- leave school much younger;
- are less than half as likely to go through to Year 12;
- are far more likely to be undertaking bridging and basic entry
  programmes in universities and vocational education and training
  institutions;
- obtain fewer and lower-level education and qualifications;

- are far less likely to obtain a job, even when they have the same qualifications as others;
- earn less income;
- have poorer housing;
- experience more and graver health problems, and
- have higher mortality rates than other Australians.

Groome and Edwardson found Indigenous Australian students expressed a strong need for the school 'to explicitly recognise their Aboriginality and to provide them with resources for personal and cultural identity development' (cited in Price, 2001, p. 299). Craven (1999) confirms this need and expresses the notion that Indigenous students are more comfortable in the classroom situation and achieve improved outcomes when the familiar concepts of their cultural background are acknowledged and valued.

In a recent Australian Council for Educational Research longitudinal study, Frigo, Corrigan, Adams, Hughes, Stevens, and Woods, (2003) monitored the growth in English literacy and numeracy achievement of a group of Indigenous Australian students in their first years of primary school. The report highlights the importance of 'attendance, attentiveness in class, language background, region and school as factors influencing achievement' (p. 11). Schools that were deemed to be most effective in Indigenous achievement levels were those that had good teaching, high attendance rates and had 'formed strong links with the Indigenous community' (p. 11).

According to Anstey and Bull (1999), it is important to identify family literacy practices and to incorporate these into the schools' programs. From a social justice perspective home experiences are then given the same prominence as school experiences and as a result the school is seen to be more responsive to the needs of the community. Programs that acknowledge Indigenous students' history and culture are important for all Australians and, in the case of Indigenous students, the potential benefits of using cultural and community resources to link learning to the home are considerable (Price, 2001).

The following discussion in this chapter outlines an out-of-school program that draws on the specific expertise of members of the Indigenous community, and creates links between schools, parents, and students. The structure and success of the program has implications for the wider educational community.

PROGRAM 2: FAMILIES LEARNING TOGETHER PROJECT

Context

In 2003, the ARTS Factory at Australian Catholic University received funding through the Adult and Community Education (ACE) sector to run a program focused on families learning together. The program, affectionately named 'What's Up?' aimed to support Indigenous families to assist their children's learning through a community-based literacy and numeracy program. This section describes how the increased support networks and links between staff in Government and Catholic schools, the parents of Indigenous students, the Indigenous students themselves and a local university worked effectively to build confidence and self-esteem while also creating the beginnings of a dynamic learning community.

Each week the program was presented at the local Youth Centre in Narrabundah, ACT. A variety of stimulating learning experiences was offered to students aimed at strengthening cultural awareness while also improving literacy and numeracy skills. The program drew on the support and expertise of local artists, businesses, teachers and members of the general community, including adults and children. Course presenters comprised university lecturers, members of various other professions, and the Wiradjuri artists, respected members of the Indigenous community.

Identifying Community Need

To commence the developmental process, members of the planning team held information-sharing discussions with the Gugan Gulwan Indigenous community group located in Tuggeranong, ACT. Contact was then made with both Government and Catholic primary schools in the suburb of Narrabundah ACT, to facilitate the establishment of connections within the wider Indigenous community. The School Parents' Association, parents of Indigenous students, Wiradjuri performing artists, the Indigenous Education Officer, and school principals and staff provided advice on the development of the program. This proved invaluable in ensuring details of the proposed program reached the target group during the planning stage, and that the aims and focus of the program reflected the needs of the community.

Initially, the program coordinators found there was only limited knowledge of other outside-school programs operating in the suburb; however, as these groups

became known useful liaison and networking occurred. After commencement of the 'What's Up?' Program, staff and coordinators from the other groups were invited to participate in the weekly sessions to observe the program in progress and collaborate on ways to strengthen links within the Indigenous community. The program was advertised through school newsletters and individual invitations were sent to the Indigenous families enrolled in the participating schools, notifying them of the program content and times of attendance.

Program Development

The program aimed to:

- support the learning needs of Indigenous families, both parents and children, through facilitating improved literacy and numeracy skills;
- contextualise learning through the use of appropriate community and curriculum resources, such as the local schools, youth centre, and library, to strengthen the concept of a community of learners;
- stimulate and strengthen interest in the learning process through the provision of appropriate resources that increase relevancy and create a positive learning environment; and
- construct learning experiences that build confidence and assist in the achievement of productive learning outcomes.

To ensure relevancy of the program the weekly learning sessions were developed around familiar themes; for example: family, work, tradition, recreation and community. The workshop activities were designed to foster active participation by students and adults, with an emphasis on confidence building and group cohesiveness. In addition to tasks that involved literacy and numeracy learning, specific workshop activities centred on developing Indigenous arts and cultural awareness through mural painting, jewellery making, music and dancing. A record of the participants' learning was maintained through journal and portfolio entries, and completed artefacts were taken home for family use. By structuring the program around rich tasks focused on deepening cultural awareness, while also strengthening literacy and numeracy skills, the authenticity of the program within the Indigenous community was greatly enhanced. Attendance at the twelve-week after-school-hours program was regular and students showed their enthusiasm for the program by participating eagerly in all

the activities. Parental involvement allowed students to display their learning at the Narrabundah Youth Centre on a regular basis.

Following liaison with Southside Community Services, which operates in the area, two half-day workshop discussion groups were presented for parents of primary school children and those with children enrolling in 2004. Staff from the local university facilitated the learning process. Childcare was provided to assist parents in attending the workshop.

Another feature of the program was the provision of opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe community learning in practice and thereby broaden their professional learning. Further support was provided by a number of high school students who attended the program on a regular basis as part of their contribution to community work experience.

To conclude the 2003 'What's Up?' Program, all parents and the wider community were invited to attend a whole-school assembly to celebrate the participants' achievements. At the assembly the students displayed the artwork they had created during the program, performed energetic dances with the Wiradjuri artists, and presented an extensive and colourful powerpoint presentation of photos, writing and music that documented the learning achievements of the participants.

Evaluation of the Program

To ensure the maintenance of quality and responsiveness of the 'What's Up?' Program to the needs of the Indigenous community, evaluative data were collected from the following:

- observation records of the participants' achievements as documented in personal learning journals and portfolios;
- the participants' level of interest and enthusiasm to participate in the workshop activities;
- the level of achievement in relation to the learning outcomes for the workshop activities;
- the quality of the learning outcomes for the program overall; and
- the contributions offered by members of the Indigenous community and their acceptance of the value of the program in supporting the specific learning needs of families and the wider community.

Community Response to the Program

Comments from parents, students, teachers, other education staff and members of the Indigenous community reflect the success of the 'What's Up?' Program. The Wiradjuri artists, who coordinated the presentation of the cultural elements of the program, believed the program to be unique in that it provided students and families with valuable ongoing support towards academic achievement while learning together about their Indigenous culture.

The students and their parents were strongly supportive of the aims of the program and valued the various learning experiences presented during the workshops, especially those emphasising development of cultural awareness while also strengthening literacy and numeracy skills. Parents commented on the relevancy of the weekly sessions and the increased positive attitudes towards learning that they had observed in their children. Teachers in the school, parents of the students and the students themselves said that the learning experiences built their confidence and self-esteem. Students also developed more positive attitudes to learning and increased their skills in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

At the conclusion of the program, and during a celebratory afternoon tea, students were presented with Certificates of Achievement in recognition of their outstanding participation. These were added to the students' portfolios of work completed during the program. Students voted the program a great success and hoped that it might continue in coming years. The following reflection from the portfolio of one student attests to the enthusiasm generated by the program: 'On Friday [at the assembly] I was so proud of myself representing my culture. We were excellent and it went very fast and very well. The best time ever!' Parental involvement throughout the program allowed the students to share their learning on a weekly basis and the resultant interaction between all participating members formed the beginnings of a dynamic learning community.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From the results of these programs, there is evidence to suggest that closer connectedness between educational institutions, students, and the wider community can assist in overcoming barriers to successful learning, especially within the Indigenous community. The opportunity for a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to become more closely involved in the educative process should be encouraged given the potential of close collaboration to revitalise the learning process, and contribute to ensuring more equitable outcomes for all members of the community.

These community-based programs continue to meet the learning needs of the participants through utilisation of a number of teaching and learning modes, such as small group cooperative learning groups, direct instructional methods and where appropriate, use of the information and communication technologies to enhance learning. Involvement in community-based learning experiences in local educational centres or institutions, such as libraries, has also extended the range of options for learning. Through a process of investigation and reflection on learning, the various teaching and learning models utilised in these programs continue to encourage the integration of local knowledge with personal knowledge.

Members of the Indigenous community have clearly affirmed the value of the 'What's Up?' Program and this has created avenues for the development of new project initiatives, resulting in the successful application for funding to extend the program throughout 2004. Development of the new program will once again involve collaboration with respected members of the Indigenous community to support and authenticate the learning process. Continuation of the 'What's Up?' Program responds to a strong need within the Indigenous community to be more closely involved in an innovative program that acknowledges and respects the integrity and traditions of Indigenous people while at the same time supporting their children's education in an urban setting.

This program reflects a growing emphasis on the need for families to learn together if real change in educational attainment within the Indigenous community is to be realised. The increased support networks between staff in Government and Catholic schools, the parents of Indigenous students, and the Indigenous students themselves in cooperation with other education institutions has worked effectively to build confidence and self-esteem in the participants. This provides a small step towards ensuring that Indigenous Australian families enjoy greater success, especially for their children, in their efforts to achieve 'a more secure economic, social and cultural future' (DETYA, 2000) thereby improving their overall health and well-being.

It is apparent from this brief discussion that the Homework Groups Project also filled a strong need within the educational community and provided an important service to a particular group of students who might otherwise be greatly disadvantaged during their formative school years. It is suggested that there is a strong need for Government bodies and others to demonstrate ongoing commitment to community support for such programs. Given the propensity for disaffected students to seek satisfaction from less socially acceptable forms of behaviour, thereby decreasing 'their chances of developing and sustaining satisfying, fulfilling and responsible lives' (Withers & Russell, 2001),

strengthening programs such as the Homework Groups Program and replicating this form of community-based learning project should work towards overcoming disadvantage and more equitable outcomes for students throughout life.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

LIFELONG LEARNING AND THE ARTS: "THE ARTS ARE NOT THE FLOWERS, BUT THE ROOTS OF EDUCATION"

SUSAN CROWE

In many of today's schools, the Arts are held to be very low in priority, as teachers do not fully understand how and why they should be implemented. This is possibly why many teachers do not devote much of their teaching time to the Arts—and in particular, the Performing Arts. For this chapter I will define the Arts as creative works and the actual process of producing that work, as well as the body of work in the art forms that make up our intellectual and cultural heritage. These Art forms that I refer to are Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Art—recognising that within each form there are a variety of sub-disciplines. The Arts should assume a particular significance as learning can be done in and through the Arts. In 1959 in England the Crowther Report declared:

> 'The Arts are not the flowers, but the roots of education'
> (cited in *Dance Education and Training in Britain*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,
> 1980, p. 3).

The Arts can reach students in ways that we cannot reach them in the areas of English, Mathematics or Science. If we do not give students the opportunity to encounter the cognitive, physical, social and emotional experiences offered in the Arts, many of them will become the 'unreached learner'. 'Through engagement with the arts, young people can better begin lifelong journeys of developing their capabilities and contributing to the world around them. The arts teach young people how to learn by giving them the first step: the desire to learn', according to the Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, in his statement in *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (2000, p. vi). In Australia, the Committee for National Education and the Arts Strategy (2004) states 'The Arts provide rich opportunities for students to develop the kinds of skills and capacities

needed to build a viable and environmentally responsible economy and society for Australia in the 21ˢᵗ century' (p.5).

Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) recognized that 'Learning is most often defined in the literature, as a relatively permanent change in behaviours as the result of experience' (p. 5). Gardner (1993) maintains that 'not all people have the same interests and abilities; not all of us learn in the same way' (p. 10). Just as research shows us that there is no 'one way to learn', there is no 'one way to teach' and the debate continues as the social context of each new generation changes. What we do know, is that for students to be successful learners they need a supportive environment, which allows them the freedom to play, to explore, to experiment, to practise and above all to think. Such an environment helps build a healthy self-concept in the students, which enables them to grow in terms of their spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, emotional and aesthetic needs. Over the years the environments in which we live and work will change, and our children will need an adaptive learning style to help them cope with these changes. When we as teachers, observe our students learning in the classroom, we note that they learn through their senses. While they may use all senses as they learn, they tend to 'learn best' through a particular sense. *Auditory learners* prefer to listen and talk about a situation. *Visual learners* prefer to see a situation, and write down what they see to help their learning. *Tactile or kinesthetic learners* need to be directly involved in their learning. For successful learning to occur, students need to be given the opportunity to experience activities that are relevant and purposeful to them. They should benefit from an education that has coherence, relevance and continuity. Students must be fully nurtured, affirmed and enabled by the educational opportunities we provide. Jeanneret (2004) asserts that providing children with unique and multiple ways of forming, exploring, communicating, and understanding their own and other's feelings and ideas is a key learning area of the Arts.

Remembering the different learning styles, we need to carefully think how to impart the skills and knowledge students will need to express themselves, their values, and their feelings. The teacher today has to play multiple roles. No longer is s/he 'the instructor, organizing and supervising students'. Teachers need to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the students they teach. The teacher must motivate students and initiate activities that will encourage and enable students to learn. Teachers ought to model valuable learning strategies, and it is a unique opportunity in the Arts for teachers to do this. They themselves must be lifelong learners as they continue to explore the Arts medium in which they work and teach. A teacher needs to establish a learning environment that is supportive to the

students in the class. Students need to be encouraged to 'have a go' at learning and not be afraid to make mistakes. It is through these mistakes that they can learn—especially so in an Arts situation. Risk taking is part of living as an adult and if students have learned to take informed risks in their learning, then they will continue to do so in their lives outside education. Students ought to be presented with activities that will allow them to succeed, when this occurs they will be motivated to continue with their learning. Students need to be challenged. In the area of the Arts, they can be given many problems to solve in a creative, enjoyable and thought provoking manner. This invites learning, especially when they are actively engaged in finding a solution. 'When you make art you not only produce interesting images and objects you also develop your thinking and reasoning skills and your ability to think creatively when confronted by a problem or challenge' (Aland & Darby, 1998, p. 1). What better foundation for lifelong learning in adults.

Gardner (1985) believes that 'From the very first, an individual's existence as a human being affects the way that others will treat him and very soon the individual comes to think of his own body as special' (p. 235). As teachers we must give students a variety of ways of using their body to create special Arts works thus achieving this goal of developing self-worth. We must offer our students different Arts forms including Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance. Education using Multiple Intelligences is concerned with the development of understanding rather than the mastery of a defined body of facts. A curriculum, which is balanced and broadly based, promotes the whole development of students, the school and society, and prepares these students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. 'In the Arts, students learn ways of experiencing, developing, representing and understanding ideas, emotions, values and cultural beliefs. They learn to take risks, be imaginative, question prevailing values, explore alternative solutions' (Board of Studies, 1995, p. 9). Arts education is the process of teaching and learning how to create and produce visual and performing Arts and how to understand and evaluate art forms created by others. Without the Arts students may not realize their full potential. Therefore, teacher education and training in the Arts, for both new and experienced teachers, is critical to the achievement of a major change in understanding of the importance of the Arts and in the implementation of teaching strategies and learning styles. 'To ensure quality Arts teaching in our schools, teachers need to feel confident to teach the Arts' (Bott, 2004, p. 7).

The Performing Arts, (Music, Dance, Drama) and the Visual Arts could be considered universal languages through which we can express our common goals

and beliefs. They are some of the most common forms of communication and understanding between peoples of different cultures. The Arts are a source of human insight and understanding about the world and those who live in it. They connect us to the past and help us imagine new possibilities for the future. The Arts are experienced through the direct use of the senses and engage both feelings and the intellect. The Arts bring humanity, compassion, understanding and harmony to the world in which we live. Aland and Darby (1997) suggest 'Art works can tell us a great deal about how people live, work, play, relax and enjoy themselves, as well as what they imagine and speculate and fantasize and dream about' (p. 13). They share a special capability of penetrating to the very core of human existence, having the potential to deal with every aspect of life, from the most light-hearted and humorous to the most disturbing and profound. The Arts have the capacity to convey ideas and feelings and to represent experience. Pascoe (1998a) says that they 'reveal symbols, forge connections and help prepare students for life' (p. 15). Preparation for life is a continuing process as we are always preparing for new aspects and challenges in our lives. He also asserts that the Arts 'enable us to better understand the complexity of human behaviour and imagination as well as rehearse and explore ways of living in an increasingly changing technological society' (1998b, p. 53).

Art has to do with the awakening of interest, with curiosity and discovery. An artist is one who perceives the world in ways that many of us are not accustomed to sensing it. The Arts stimulate the human spirit. They can help us reflect upon our sense of belonging to something precious and worthy of protection. If we, as teachers can make the beauty and grandeur of the world more observable to others, and if they, as students can recognise how wonderful and worthwhile the world is, then all can learn to feel responsible for it. When we encourage children to use the Arts as a means of expressing their views of and understanding about the environment and the world generally, then they will also develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for the Earth. Fowler (1994) claims 'Instead of telling them what to think, the Arts engage the minds of students to sort out their own reactions and articulate them through the medium at hand' (p. 4).

In the Arts, students experience much as they are active and involved. They have a sense of accomplishment and exhilaration. They work with purpose and energy. They are absorbed in exploring, discovering, creating and learning. These art forms encourage our students to dream, to create, to have beliefs, to have a sense of identity. When we deprive our students of the opportunity to use these gifts in their everyday lives, we can be encouraging mediocrity in the expressing of their inner selves. In most cultures the Arts provide important ways of

expressing and representing ideas, emotions, values and spiritual beliefs and as such are grouped as a key area of learning and human activity. 'The Arts invite students to be active participants in their world rather then mere observers of it' (Fowler, 1994, p. 4). Underlining this thought is that creation is a continuous process—as we create something new we are learning something new. Learning is part of the creating process.

Dance is expressive human movement, which has a variety of forms and purposes ranging from social activities to theatrical and religious rites. According to Snell (1982), 'Dance more than any other form provides opportunity for the whole body to be used as a means of giving ourselves. In dance we use the mind, the will, our emotions, strength and energy' (p. 2). Children love to dance—from earliest childhood they sway to music and express their joy through spinning, jumping, rolling, running and much more. It is therefore only natural that they should express their love of life through dance and movement. We can encourage them to use this expression of life in their school activities. For centuries people have realized that some things can only be expressed through gesture or motion, thus the world's rich tradition of dance and drama in religious celebrations. These are usually formal processions, prescribed gestures used in specific rites and in many religions, ceremonial dance. However, for our students who are still learning to express their feelings in a variety of ways, creative movement is a good place to begin. Bretherton (1995) suggests that 'Creative movement allows children to express praise, love, joy, thanks, sorrow, faith and petition through movement and dance … [It] helps the children to understand that they can communicate in many different ways involving all aspects of their person' (p. 41).

We must be careful not to 'scare' people off when we talk about dance. Many children and adults will be concerned that they cannot dance. We have to instill in them the idea, says Gribben (1982), that 'Dance must be seen in the broadest point of view, so that it includes posture, gesture, procession and involves music' (p. 6). Most of us can participate in a procession, change our position from standing to kneeling, or use simple gestures; therefore we can 'dance'. Sometimes the gestures we make with our bodies can be words 'in motion'. For example waving a hand to say 'goodbye', shaking our head to say 'no', wagging our finger to remonstrate with a child. Lazear (1991) maintains 'The child is more in touch with his body—his movements, his sensations, his needs and his desires. He moves and expresses his thoughts and his feelings more freely' (p. 81). Knowing all of this, we must allow our students to use these abilities, these gifts in their schoolwork.

Burton (1991) believes that Drama is a way of exploring and understanding the world around us. It aids in the development of essential human abilities of

identification. It is a natural extension of how children learn from the time they are born—through mimicking and playing. He suggests, 'Children are able to imagine environments, experiences and people they have never encountered and behave as though they exist' (p. 1). O'Toole and Dunn (2002) reiterate this belief: 'We can turn the classroom into almost anywhere we choose, and become almost anyone in any human situation real or imaginable, simply by agreeing to pretend' (p. 3). We should, therefore, encourage our students to use their imagination—to pretend when in the Performing Arts classroom.

When using an Integrated Curriculum approach in our education, we are able to implement and use Performing Arts strategies and tools to assist students' learning. Through the use of *role-play* students can take on the role of various people, playing out a specific situation or event. Using *improvisation* (acting out a situation spontaneously) students are able to join in the story as a character without having to learn dialogue or know the story by heart. They can be part of the story as they listen to the story being read or told. Students can explore 'freeze frames' to make living pictures or sculptures of events in their life, or to retell well-known stories. Using their *imagination* students may be able to go on imaginary journeys and meet characters in role. They should be able to feel the heat of the day, the wetness of the water as they paddle at the edge of the beach in *Samantha Seagull's Sandals* (Winch, 1985), the smell of cooking as Mum bakes the cookies in *The Doorbell Rang* (Hutchins, 1989). They need to hear the crowds shouting in *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Daly, 1993). Using the skills of *mime* (acting out stories without words) they (the students) can retell the story by Aesop of *The Wind and the Sun* (Watts, 1992). Teachers can use *puppetry* to assist in the retelling of any range of stories including fairy tales or nursery rhymes. This of course will take time in Integrated Curriculum, but as the students will also be learning these techniques in their Performing Arts classes, then we, as teachers, should be allowing them to use their knowledge across the curriculum, as they work in the classroom.

As Literacy and Literature are of such importance to Primary school students, these Drama activities are all strategies that can be used to encourage children to read. Drama allows students to understand what they are reading/hearing through active engagement. When using mime with students, it is important to keep words and actions or gestures short and simple. Actions can be repeated often—especially with younger students, as they enjoy the security of knowing what they are doing. They are confident when they are familiar with their actions or mimes. The use of *echo-drama* with lower and middle level students may assist in introducing them to this form of learning. The teacher reads part of the story, or

poem, and students 'echo' the reading through movement, mime or gesture. It is important that the teacher stresses the words of the action, as this is where the focus should be. Remembering that students learn best when they are active participants in their learning, teachers can feel quite confident in repeating favourite action songs, mimes or movement sequences.

Moynahan (1984a) has alleged, 'Mime can create the imaginative space wherein the presence of many different relationships can be felt' (p. 88). Actions in mime must be clear, brief and evocative as the mimic is communicating physically with the audience. The mimic should always take the simplest path. Actions must be easily understood. Moynahan (1984b) later suggests, 'the body language of mime restores an important dimension to the total experience' (p. 90). Shape can be not only literal, but also emotive—that is, children can take on a 'squashed shape' or body position that highlights how the character they are portraying feels. As Ashton (1998) maintains 'Size is also an important aspect of shape and form as is the view … front on or profile' (p. 13). In dramatic presentations students need to be encouraged to use this strategy, as they endeavour to make their bodies large for a strong person, or small for a weaker person.

Music has been a documented part of education since the time of ancient Greece. Plato believed that musical understanding was an essential element of thinking and consequently recommended that children be taught music before any other subjects and if music can develop these thinking skills, so too can the other areas of the Arts. Through to the nineteenth century, music was valued for religious, social and moral reasons and became part of the school curriculum. Music is an expressive art form using the medium of sound. It includes the use of instruments and voice. Music was introduced into Australian schools in the form of singing in the early 1850s (Stevens, 1978, cited in Stevens, 2002) as a school subject, despite the fact that most schoolteachers were unskilled in the area of music.

> Inspector Austin Turner despaired of the Catholic Schools in the Ballarat district. Of St Alipius he wrote: 'The natural deficiencies of these children are astonishing. There is not one-third of the whole school that can distinguish one sound from another' and at Buninyong 'So lamentable are the natural deficiencies of these children in music that all my endeavours to teach them the most simple tune from notes or by imitation have utterly failed'. *(Blee, 2004, p. 35)*

However, for over one hundred and fifty years, music has been an important part of Australian schools' curriculum. According to Geoghhegan (1995) 'Music

is considered to be a powerful means for developing the young child's cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth.' (p. 4). Whitehead (1999) in her Report *Advancing Music Education in Australia* states 'Music education should be a lifelong process and should embrace all age groups' (p. 6). Stefanakus (1999) believes that 'Music contributes to students' sense of self, and community and helps shape and contribute to cultural identity' (p. 56).

Current brain research tells us that music can charge and energise the brain, specially selected music has been found to have a powerful energising influence. Jensen (1997) believes that 'when music runs counter to our own natural frequency rhythm, we can feel irritated and stressed' (p. 20). Likewise the use of quiet reflective music can give the students a few minutes to close their eyes, to feel the wonder of life and love, and to whisper a feeling of wonder and awe at all that is around them.

Visual Art is often created to interpret and respond to life experiences in visible form. From the earliest times, humans have made marks and shaped objects. Using any material at hand, useful and decorative objects have been fashioned, and images made to represent incidents and happenings in history. Works of Visual Art provide enrichment and enjoyment through the interpretation of their meanings and an appreciation of their forms. The study of the Visual Arts enables students to understand and enjoy the images and forms they and others make. Through practical experiences, students acquire an understanding of a diverse range of two and three-dimensional media. Students learn to communicate through the images and forms they make, and to develop a sense of pride at producing visible statements of their thoughts and feelings.

Art has many sub-disciplines, ranging from drawing and painting, sculpture and construction to photography and film-making. A variety of media and tools should be available to children to create Art works in the visual form. They can use clay, textiles, paper, metal, or any material they can find, to create a work of art. Mahlmann (1994) suggests that 'Children demonstrate fine motor control … reaching and grasping … tearing and cutting' (p. 31) when they explore and create a Visual Art work. Students will exhibit a sense of joy and excitement as they make and share their artwork with their classmates and others. Their Visual Art works reflect their feelings, just as the works they create in Dance, Drama and Music mirror their emotions. According to Emery and Flood (1998) 'Visual Arts are often the mirror of society, they can reflect truth, distort truth' (p. 15). Through exploring and creating Visual Art, students develop an understanding of the meaning and importance of the visual world in which they live. The Arts are providing our students with a much-needed outlet for creativity and self-

expression, as Emery and Flood (1998) claim, 'The maker connects ideas to make meaning and records their response to personal experiences in visual imagery' (p. 14).

As all that we say about school and learning can also be applied to life learning, it is important that the students in our schools are given the opportunity to encounter the many cognitive, physical, social and emotional experiences offered in the area of the Arts. If schools focus only on Linguistic or Mathematical skills, many students are being 'short changed', as they are not being encouraged to develop the many other skills and intelligences that each of us possess. The Arts provide an opportunity for success for many students who have difficulty with the purely academic subjects offered in our schools. Gardner (1993) is convinced that all eight 'of the intelligences have equal claim to priority. In our society however, we have put linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, figuratively speaking, on a pedestal' (p. 8). 'Do we want flowering plants, or are we content with spindly branches? If we truly believe that our young plants can burst forth in flower, then we need to pay attention to the ingredients we are using to mulch the soil' (Geoghegan, 1994, p. 456).

Gardner also maintains that human efforts draw on an array of human talents or abilities, talents that do not always fall within the bounds of the normal classroom practice. Yet these abilities exist, and individuals who possess them continue to improve our lives with the products of their gifts. This opinion explains the wide range of performances that are valued throughout the world. It appears that the linguistic and mathematical intelligences are systematically nurtured in our schools, however, the others, which are also career and life intelligences, are simulated only in passing, if at all. This notion must be changed if each student is to realise his or her own potential. According to Gardner (1993) the intelligences exist in order to make sense of certain types of information. He defines intelligence as "the ability to solve problems, or to fashion products that are valued within one or more cultural or community settings" (p. 7). The Arts represent multiple forms of intelligence and multiple ways of knowing the world. They are the language of a whole range of human experience; to neglect them is to neglect ourselves, and to deny children the full development that education should provide. Gardner (1993) states, 'The Intelligences work together to solve problems' (p. 9). Real world activities inevitably involve a blend of the intelligences and the process of using these intelligences that we instil in children does not cease with childhood, but will continue throughout their lives.

Mahlmann (1994) asserts, 'Arts education benefits the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination

and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication' (p. 34). This too is a continuing process. It is through the Arts that students will be able to discover and rediscover a sense of their own identity and that of the community in which they live. Students' lack of Arts education can inhibit their ability to communicate ideas spontaneously and lessen their response to new ideas expressing feelings or emotions as they do so. Through the Arts, students learn to respect the different ways others have of thinking, working and expressing themselves. Students will be able to access many of the diverse cultures in the community and that of the wider Australian and international scenes. The Arts promote a better general quality of life. The Arts fulfil many roles in our lives and while some art works have a specific function or purpose, others are created simply for their aesthetic qualities. Students need to know how to recognise the aesthetic qualities in works of Art, nature and material environments. They need to be aware that Art has many layers of meaning. Critics use richly expressive language to help analyse, interpret and respond to Art (or the Arts). Aland and Darby (1998) state that 'Using *TALK* to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings about Art works allows you to respond immediately. *WRITING* allows you to take time and plan your response to art work' (p. 93).

The Arts can assume a particular significance from the beginning of a child's school life and throughout their adult life, as learning can be both *in* and *through* the Arts. When well implemented, they can be enjoyed in their own right and for their own sake, and can also permeate other areas of learning with greater relevance and meaning. The Arts can make the most effective contribution to the personal and social education and development of the student, and have an unusual potential to improve the whole school environment. A curriculum that is balanced and broadly based promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of students in school and society, and prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (1999) claim, 'The Arts are neither ancillary nor core, but rather they are participants in the development of critical ways of thinking and learning' (p. 44).

Some teachers give undue weight to the core or basic subjects. Many believe that the Arts have no significant place in an education system concerned primarily with the concept of knowledge as the 'written word' and the 'academic'. The sheer number of programs of study and achievement targets associated with the core subjects, being the main means whereby schools are to be made accountable is causing distortion of the primary curriculum. Is it surprising therefore, poses Pateman (1991) that some already overburdened teachers, insecure in the Arts due

to inadequate initial training, are inevitably choosing to treat the Arts as peripheral subjects. Unfortunately, current signs show that restrictions are being placed on the Arts due to lack of funding, time, resources, teacher training and interest by academic and education hierarchy.

Current research has highlighted the importance of the Arts in education, yet numerous teachers are still seeing the Arts as an educational frill that is the first to be left out of the timetable when things become too busy. Many of our schools insist that English and Mathematics are to be implemented for up to three hours of a five hour school day and are effectively shutting out students who may excel in the area of the Arts. This is why school can be so difficult for some students. Gardner (1993) tells us that 'the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences' (p. 9). Therefore teachers need to be aware that the Arts curriculum can offer many approaches in other subject areas, in particular experiential activities. These 'hands on' tasks can provide different and sometimes better learning opportunities for low achieving and 'problem' students. Activities and success in the Arts can assist students in finding satisfaction in school. These are two of the essential elements for a successful learning process. Newitt (2000a) in his report on the 'Champions of Change' project states 'Learning in and through the Arts can help less advantaged students to achieve academically in formal schooling' (p. 1). He also states that 'When the Arts become central to the learning environment, a school's culture is changed and conditions for learning are improved' (p. 1). In a further article, Newitt states that it is through implementing an Arts program that we are able to assist 'the development of positive relationships between students through co-operative work, we can promote ethical practices, encourage alternative ways of working and divergent thinking and acknowledge various ways of knowing (intelligences), including tacit knowledge' (2000b, p. 1). They are able to demonstrate student success in many areas of specific knowledge and skills and in a breadth of abilities relevant to a broad range of learning.

Teachers, even experienced ones, are finding that it can be difficult to meet the needs of each student in a class. At all times they must remember that the individual student has been given unique talents, gifts, abilities—whatever we like to call them—and therefore "shines" in his or her own way. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the teacher to help them 'shine' often and more brightly. To do this, a teacher needs to know how students learn and therefore, how they will use their gifts. There are many advantages given to students who are provided with opportunities to study the Arts in any form, while attending school. Students are encouraged to see artistic experience as a means of finding personal, cultural or

spiritual meaning and therefore self-worth. The Arts make statements that are reflecting values, feelings and ideas, which can be defined and mirror the identity of the artist, be it Visual Art, Music, Dance or Drama. 'It is the artist who taps into the consciousness of the community, who makes the connections and brings to the fore the viewer's own prejudices' (Emery & Flood, 1998, p. 15).

An Arts education should 'encompass some discussion and analysis of Art works themselves and some appreciation of the cultural contexts in which artworks are fashioned' according to Gardner (1993, p. 141). Art fulfils many roles in our lives and while some Art works have a specific function or purpose, others are created simply for their aesthetic qualities. The *Curriculum and Standards Framework: The Arts* (Board of Studies, 1995, p. 9) recommends that an Arts program in the school should aim to:

- develop the intellectual and expressive potential of students;
- equip students to use and understand the Arts forms as symbolic language or communication;
- develop skills in Arts criticism and aesthetics; and
- develop students' understanding that the Arts evolve within particular social and cultural contexts.

In all Arts strands, students explore techniques and processes specific to the particular Art form. They are encouraged to present and reflect upon their own work and those of others, discussing, analysing, interpreting and evaluating the different art forms from past and present contexts. According to Wright (1994) an education in Performing Arts requires students to think, not just memorise. The Arts encourage students to celebrate the differences between themselves and others, as they learn understanding, tolerance, respect, self-discipline, self worth, perseverance and co-operation. School Arts programs should highlight the important contribution of the Arts to our leisure time and to the economy through employment. The Arts have a role in various industries, particularly Media Arts where they are often used to advertise products and activities. Large numbers of people visit our galleries, attend performances and use the many aspects of Media and Graphic Communication, which also add to the economy of our country.

When students participate in the Arts as makers, presenters, critics and theorists, they learn to deal with their perceptions through conceptualising ideas and feelings. They also learn to work within a particular medium to transform their ideas into artistic form. Through participation in the Arts, students learn to enjoy, value, discriminate, evaluate, challenge, feel, and respond to artistic

experiences. Thinking skills such as perception, creativity, logical-thinking, metaphoric-thinking, question-formation, decision-making, critical-thinking, concept-formation and memory are all developed through participation in Arts experiences. Arts experiences are active. Students perform actions that need concentration and quite often require practice. Students develop their own physical skills. They learn processes and techniques and come to understand the limitations and potential of the different media they will use in their creations. Participation in the Arts requires students to focus on the use of their senses. They develop their capacities of expression and imagination and learn to give form to sensation. Through the Arts, students develop aesthetic and cultural sensitivities and sharpened perceptions. They learn about themselves and their interaction with others. Students learn to work in groups, to co-operate with others, to express ideas and communicate through the Arts. They begin to examine the role of the Arts in different social and cultural contexts and gain a sense of self through developing personal artistic visions. Through artistic experience they find a sense of style. Students are learning and developing skills and values that they will utilise throughout their lives as learners and as participants in a world they should be making equitable.

All students should benefit from an Arts education that has coherence, relevance and continuity. Students must be fully nurtured, affirmed and enabled by the educational opportunities we provide. Some teachers do not have an understanding of the Arts and all they entail. They do not associate the Arts with 'thinking', not realising that as Cooper-Solomon (1995) claims 'The Arts are not so much a result of inspiration and innate talent as they are a person's capacities for creative thinking and imagining, problem solving, creative judgment and a host of other mental processes. The Arts represent forms of cognition every bit as potent as the verbal and logical/mathematical forms of cognition that have been the traditional focus of public education' (p. 29). Therefore, teacher education and training in the Arts, for both new and experienced teachers, are critical to the achievement of a major change in understanding the importance of the Arts, and in teaching strategies and learning styles. When we balance the Arts with our other key areas of learning it has been demonstrated that students gain academically higher results, demonstrating an apparent relationship between learning in the Arts and other areas, according to Perrin (1994, p. 452). All that has been stated about the Arts and learning in the classroom continues throughout life. We do not want a single flowering of the plant—but multiple and continued flowering, therefore we must continue to water and nurture healthy plants through caring for the roots— the Arts.

When looking to the future, our students will need to be adaptable. The Arts, with their uncommon potential for supporting thoughts with feelings and pursuing individual concepts to their conclusion, are essential to the development and progress of the types of diverse thought and action which will prepare children to function satisfactorily in this changing world. Therefore it is vital that students in our schools are given many and varied opportunities to experience the Arts—Visual and Performing. We need to encourage our students to view the world through Art. If we can reach students and their style of learning through the implementation of Arts programs in our schools, then we can prevent them from becoming the 'unreached learner' and ensure they become promoters of lifelong learning, participation and equity.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

LIFELONG LEARNING, FAMILY LEARNING AND EQUITY

MAL LEICESTER

INTRODUCTION: SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL BEING AND 'WIDENING PARTICIPATION'

It has long been known that a person's educational attainments tend to correlate with their socio-economic status and even with their life expectancy. Similarly, the level of education in the general population tends to correlate with a society's levels of wealth and health. It therefore makes sense for local and national governments to support and encourage the current movement to lifelong learning; that is, to promote worthwhile learning opportunities beyond school. Lifelong learning can make an effective contribution to social well being, not only helping to ensure a skilled workforce but also to securing those wider benefits of learning, reflected in a healthy and responsible population.

Unfortunately, at the present time, at the beginning of the new millennium, not all social groups gain equal benefit from educational provision. Again and again research has highlighted the educational 'catch 22' that materially disadvantaged social groups tend to have received less benefit from schooling and, unsurprisingly therefore, have participated less in post-school provision, particularly in higher education. Thus, less well qualified in formal terms, members of such groups tend to have less good employment opportunities, and, therefore, less financial resources.

The current movement to lifelong learning then, has an ethical as well as an economic basis. It aims to widen participation in education across the lifespan because educational exclusion is both *unfair* and uneconomic. In this ethical context, to 'widen' cannot just mean to '*increase*' the numbers of people who participate. It must also mean to '*broaden*' the social groups who are included. Lifelong learning, therefore, ought to promote the educational inclusion of groups currently underrepresented as mature students in various forms of post-school

learning opportunity. Such groups include some ethnic minorities, disabled students, senior citizens, the unemployed and, in some fields, women. In so far as this aim of widening participation is successful, the social benefits to *all* groups (and thus to society in general) will increase.

THE CONCEPTS OF 'LIFELONG LEARNING' AND 'FAMILY LEARNING'

Educational discourse and policy making is dominated by the extraordinary contemporary emphasis on lifelong learning. Societies everywhere are concerned to develop a literate, skilled and flexible workforce and to widen participation in education at all levels and for people of all ages in every social group.

> 'Lifelong learning', then, is certainly a widely used if somewhat slippery term. Klaus Kunzel, investigating lifelong learning across Europe, suggests that the term lends itself to multiple versions in purpose and basic conception—its international usage relying on its remarkable potential to mean different things to different people. *(Kunzel, 2000)*

This context dependent, *chameleon* quality of the concept suggests that 'lifelong learning' is a 'family-resemblance' concept.

Consider, for example, the proceedings that we call 'games'. I mean board games, card games, ball games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don't say 'There must be something common, or they would not be called games'—but look and see whether there is anything common to all—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities; sometimes similarities of detail.

> I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than 'family resemblances', for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc, etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way—And I shall say 'games' form a family. *(Wittgenstein, 1953, sec. 66–67)*

Wittgenstein's insight that (some) words do not label common features or essences is an illuminating one. The diagram (1) below, illustrates how a variety of common (frequent) characteristics of games may, indeed, produce no 'common' (shared) characteristics.

Diagram 1

Some Similarities Between Games	
A	Rule Following
B	Recreational
C	Skilful
D	Competitive
E	Physical Exercise
F	Etc.

Professional Football   -   A * C D E

Chess   -   A B C D *

Patience (cards)   -   A B * * *

Child's make-believe game -   * B * * E

It is interesting to raise the question of whether this applies to all words (including, for example, 'chair') or only some, and in this case, which. Applied to all words, the notion of 'family resemblances' would suggest a relativistic account of our conceptualisation of the world, an anti-foundationalism (Harre & Krausz, 1996) in tune with a post-modernist epistemology (Leicester, 2000). Be that as it may, however, as a way of our exploring complex abstract, social concepts it can be helpful.

Incidentally, though it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully explore the implications of this conception of concepts, it surely has implications for the philosophical tool of 'conceptual analysis'. Such philosophical analysis of complex terms carried empirical demands to 'look and see'. This introduces a practical/pragmatic note and an emphasis on looking for the cultural/social differences/similarities in usage of such terms. Morwenna Griffiths, for example, recognising this, has incorporated such a plurality of voices/stories in her exploration of 'justice' and developed the notion of practical philosophy (Griffiths, 2003).

If we 'look and see' how the concept of 'lifelong learning' is used (what some of the key conceptual characteristics actually are) we see that it is used as both a normative and as a triadic term. It is a normative concept in that 'lifelong learning' is used interchangeably with 'lifelong education'. It is taken to mean 'educative learning'—taking on the normative assumptions built into 'education' (Peters, 1966). It is a triadic concept in that the term is used to embrace and interrelate vocational training, personal development and citizenship education (Aspin & Chapman, 2000). A typical example of this 'triadic approach' can be found in the UK Government's Green Paper, which stresses the connections between economic prosperity, personal development and social responsibility.

> As well as securing our economic future, learning has a wider contribution. It helps make ours a civilised society, develops the spiritual side of our lives and promotes active citizenship. *(DfEE, 1998, p. 10)*
>
> Lifelong learning is also part of a Government strategy to widen participation in post-school learning. This seems to be one of the motivating aspects of the movement where 'widening participation' seems to mean not just to *increase* the numbers of people who participate, but also to *broaden* the social groups who are included. Lifelong learning, therefore, seeks to promote the educational inclusion of groups currently under-represented as mature students in various forms of post-school learning. Such groups include some ethnic minorities, disabled students, senior citizens, the unemployed and, in some fields, women and, increasingly in other fields, working class men. In so far as this aim of widening participation is successful, the social benefits to *all* groups (and thus to society in general) will increase. Aspin and Chapman have described the triadic nature of lifelong learning as a *pragmatic* concept based on our desire to solve the problems faced by governments across the world—the need to increase their society's 'economic potential, to make their political arrangements more equitable and inclusive, and to offer a greater range for self-improvement and personal development to all their citizens' (Aspin & Chapman, 2000, p. 16).
>
> They suggest, as I have, that 'these elements interact and cross-fertilise each other. There is a complex interplay between all three that makes education for a more highly-skilled workforce at the same time an education for better democracy and a more rewarding life' (p. 16).

It is as part of this movement to lifelong learning, that the British Government has funded some 150 'family-learning' projects in deprived areas of the UK.[1] These UK funded family-learning projects aim to thus widen participation in education, using the potential learning power of the family. This 'educative' learning is intended to benefit individual learners, families qua families and deprived communities. Some other countries are also developing such cross-generational learning initiatives—aiming to 'reach' as yet 'unreached' learners.

Both 'lifelong learning' and 'family learning' are complex social concepts. They are abstract, culturally variable conceptual chameleons. Understood as family-resemblance concepts we can make sense of the complicated, criss-crossing uses of these words.

For, as with 'lifelong learning', if we 'look and see' how the concept of 'family learning' is used, again we see structures with criss-crossing similarities and differences. We could, perhaps, identify some broad similarities between uses of the term (general characteristics that tend to be found) but not produce a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for such uses.

In the UK 'family' is often used to refer to the 'nuclear' family of a father and mother and their biological children. There are also parents with adopted or fostered children who count as 'families'. There are also same-sex two parent families. There are single parent families. (Both mother and father single-parent families.) There are families with a step-parent and step-brothers and sisters. There are extended families of a whole variety of kinds. We can see, already, that biological kinship does not link all family members. Nor is two opposite-sex parents a necessary feature. Could caring for young children be a common feature? (Is this the 'essence' of the 'family'? Does this provide a necessary or sufficient condition?) Surely, child-care institutions do not count as what we mean by 'family'. And what are we to say to my friend who, with no living parents, siblings or partner counts her dog as family. This much loved and loving dog, which is her closest companion, is certainly dependent and cared for in their common household. Consider, too, the huge variety of extended families, and families where the care is also, or even only, of elderly family members.

ADULT EDUCATION: A RECONCEPTUALISATION

Adult Education has traditionally been understood as liberal education offered to adults (the education of adults) or, in a more radical perspective as a species of political education. (e.g. the awareness raising of the women's movement or of the WEA). Additionally, adult education professionals have promoted the idea of an approach to educating which takes account of the nature of adulthood (e.g. Androgogy versus Pedagogy; self-directed learning etc.). Thus adult education becomes a distinct form of education. The movement to lifelong learning has influenced these conceptions of adult education. Though 'lifelong learning' carries a 'cradle-to-grave' connotation, in practice it is often used in connection with post-school learning. This conception of post-school (adult) learning is more

vocationalised than in the previous liberal/radical conceptions, though, as before, it embraces formal, non-formal and informal education.

In order to balance this greater emphasis on vocational education, as mentioned above, the triadic, pragmatic response has been to emphasise liberal and political elements too. The new conception interrelates the vocational, the liberal and the political. The key question, of course, is whether such a triadic conception is coherent.

I suggest that each of these three aspects of education is important and interrelatable, without incoherence, in principle, though in practice, as Jane Thompson suggests, there may be an illusion of consensus about lifelong learning, masking considerable possible and actual ideological and practical disagreements about the meanings and values underpinning the movement (Thompson, 2000).

In principle, however, can we not envisage provision that not only values all three forms of education, liberal and political as well as vocational, but also which encourages their interrelation? The personal can be political, personal development should include vocationally relevant skills and vocational education can also foster personal development.

As was previously indicated, Aspin and Chapman have described the triadic nature of lifelong learning as a *pragmatic* concept based on our desire to solve the problems faced by governments across the world (2000).

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND THE NEW POST-SCHOOL AGENDA

To recap, we have seen that 'widening participation' to post-school education requires reaching a broader range of social groups—groups disproportionately excluded hitherto—and reaching such groups with these interrelated vocational/liberal/political learning opportunities.

However, there are causes for concern about how well we are reaching underrepresented groups. McIlroy, for example, in speaking of the role of the Trade Unions in lifelong learning points out that despite the much-vaunted increased role of the unions in training they lack the power, in general, to enforce training on reluctant, recalcitrant employers so that their ability to do so in specific, favourable circumstances is likely to entrench the training divide between different groups of workers (McIlroy, 2000).

Similarly, Withnall argues that the tendency to concentrate on employment related education and training will exclude post-employment, older learners (Withnall, 2000). Stuart is concerned that the emphasis on narrow forms of

assessment might penalise the disabled (Stuart, 2000). Elsdon questions that sufficient is in train to include and benefit learning in the voluntary sector (Elsdon, 2000), and Malach doubts that the information flow about new opportunities will reach into the ethnic minority communities (Malach, 2000). Hannah highlights the ways in which refugees are excluded from educational opportunities (Hannah, 2000).

In international perspective, Morgan describes China's attempts to become a learning society as having both the potential for greater democracy combined with aggravated inequalities (Morgan, 2000) and Pendlebury and Enslin (2000), while recognising the neat fit between the triadic conception of lifelong learning and post-apartheid South Africa's educational needs, given the substantial proportion of the population which remains excluded, describe it as 'cruelly utopian'.

Perhaps the more recent introduction of family learning initiatives (though small-scale) is more promising. This 'educative' learning is intended to benefit individual learners, families and deprived communities. The idea is to find ways of educating the different generations of family members together. One such initiative is the Share Project, which is provided by the CEDC (the Community Development Centre in Coventry). CEDC is an independent charitable trust and is a national centre for community based learning. Its income is generated from grants, fees and sales of publications—including grants from the European Union and central and local government. It was established in 1980 and aims to engage in learning those who have previously benefited least from education. It has a well-deserved reputation for innovative good practice. It works in partnership with other organisations, including schools.

SHARE is an extensive program of activities supported by excellent learning materials, which aim to engage parents with their child's education and in so doing provides learning opportunities to the parents too, recognising them as adult learners. In CEDC's own words:

> SHARE is an innovative family learning project which is being offered to infant/primary schools in your local education authority and in other areas throughout the country. Building on the experiences of many schools and on previous project work with parents, it seeks to make an important contribution to the quality of parents' involvement in their children's learning as one of the most positive and worthwhile influences on improving children's educational attainments. *(Capper, 1998, p. 2)*

Thus the *SHARE Parent and School Initiative* aims to encourage and engage parents (or any approved carers e.g. childminders, nannies or grandparents) of children to take an active interest in their child's education. It will equip parents

with an understanding of how their child learns, about aspects of the National Curriculum and the Literacy and Numeracy frameworks and about life in their child's school. It will enable parents to learn how to work creatively with their child in the environment of the home and the local community.

The activities in the Sharebooks are designed to be fun and are structured around national frameworks for literacy and numeracy. Parents, when they join the Share group, are given a pack, which includes: Sharebag, pen, memopad, badge and Sharebooks.

Schools provide support for family learning through informal and structured group sessions and individual support for parents. SHARE is designed to be part of the everyday life of the school and does not rely on expensive resources or extra members of staff.

The SHARE accreditation program is a main feature of this project and provides parents with certificates from the Open College Network for the learning that takes place as they work with their children and provides an opportunity for parents to discover their own abilities, their potential for and pleasure in learning.

FAMILY LEARNING AND THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

There are epistemological implications of the shift from a discourse of 'adult education' to a discourse of 'lifelong learning', and though it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore these implications in detail, it is important, I think, to recognise that they exist. Indeed the blurring of boundaries (e.g. between schooling and adult education, between education and learning, between formal and informal education etc.) is indicative of that loosening of epistemological 'absolutes' characteristic of postmodernist modes of thought.

In moving towards a normative and triadic concept of lifelong learning we implicitly recognise that knowledge is partly socially constructed. Knowledge is not, as it were, an absolute, unchanging, ahistorical given. It follows that we can, therefore, at least in principle, construct a curriculum that interrelates vocational, liberal and political 'worthwhile' learning.

However, that knowledge is partly socially constructed does not mean just any claim can count as valid. The pragmatism that is inherent in 'lifelong learning' saves us from the incoherence of the full-blooded relativism inherent in much 'postmodernist' thought. To count as knowledge, that which is constructed/claimed must be tested against our collective experience (albeit an

inclusive range of experience). 'Knowledge' must match our social reality, however complex, shifting and variable that reality has been found to be!

WIDENING PARTICIPATION: PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Before we consider principles post-school, we should, perhaps, pause briefly to consider schooling—which is, after all, the compulsory part of learning across the lifespan. I will make just three key points. Firstly, if *lifelong* learning is to be a reality, children need to develop a love of learning and to learn how to learn. Secondly, more equal opportunities in school organisation and resources, together with a pluralist, multicultural curriculum would help to motivate a wider range of children. Thirdly, more priority must be given to greater inclusion for disabled children, in mainstream provision.

However, turning, at last, to principles for widening participation in post-school, non-compulsory education I would highlight the following:

- The need for *liaison* with currently excluded groups, in order to develop trust and to discover what learning would be of use and interest and when and where and how it should be provided.
- It is also crucial to consider how such learning can be funded for groups too poor to pay fees.
- Moreover, to reach such groups, ways of working using minority networks must be found and partnerships with minority organisations and interest groups must be forged.
- The curriculum and pedagogy subsequently developed must, of course, be appropriate for adult learners.

Thus four key inclusion strategies are: greater liaison and consultation; more funding and subsidy; greater use of community networks including more partnerships with voluntary and minority organisations and attention to principles of adult education.

Moreover, we need to address the specific concerns previously mentioned in connection with government initiatives. Firstly, workplace-learning opportunities must reach workers of all kinds. Ways must be found to enable workers with smaller or recalcitrant employers to be given time for learning. Free courses of genuine interest to the unemployed must be increased, without coercion. Course of interest to older, retired people should also be increased. Given the link between ill health and age, health-related courses will certainly be of interest to senior

citizens and more could be provided in partnership with relevant voluntary/self help organisations as well as with the statutory health sector. The voluntary sector has always been a source of ongoing learning and should be valued by the statutory educational providers.

Community based learning should be expanded in order to reach minority ethnic groups and the non-participating white working class, including the long-term unemployed. Such work is time-consuming and expensive, and has usually been under-funded through short-term projects. A real commitment to 'education, education, education', will not come cheap.

However, at least in relation to economic competitiveness and efficiency and also to health, the benefits of learning are readily seen to include economic gains which can more than offset the cost of provision. (Large-scale reduction of such conditions as diabetes, through greater understanding and awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, would bring massive reductions in the national health bill.) Again the emphasis must be on partnerships between educational providers and both voluntary organisations and the (statutory) health sector.

I have also suggested that family learning can make a significant contribution to greater educational inclusion. For example, when a family member has a particular condition, such as diabetes or lung cancer or heart disease, their loved ones have an interest too. Thus this interest could be used to generate family understanding of some key principles for health promotion, and of choices that help to prevent health problems. Having a family resonance, such understanding becomes much more widespread. Similarly, when children start to learn to read at school, their illiterate parents have a motivation towards basic education that could be used to attract families to family learning in literacy and numeracy projects. Older children, beginning to think of the world of work beyond school could be a trigger for family learning, involving unemployed parents in vocationally oriented family learning programs—including skill development in the new technologies. And so on.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude with a summary of this multi-stranded chapter. First we interpreted 'lifelong learning' as a normative, triadic concept and endorsed the importance of lifelong learning and of widening participation in education post-school. Educative lifelong learning includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, and is very much on the political agenda. In the UK a variety of policy statements have been accompanied by a variety of new initiatives—though we

have seen some concern that the rhetoric of widening participation has not been entirely matched, in reality. Recently, and for the next few years, the UK Government is funding family learning projects, aiming to improve education and participation in it by using the potential learning power of the family. 'Family learning' (like the 'lifelong learning' of which it is a part) is a chameleon concept, not least because 'family' is a culture/context dependent term. I have argued that both 'lifelong learning' and 'family learning' are usefully understood as what Wittgenstein called 'family resemblance' concepts.

Second, drawing on the various criticisms of Government Policy and also on lessons from my own experience, including that of the SHARE initiative, I identify (or, re-identify since these are not new) four principles for widening participation in lifelong learning.

- The need for consultation and liaison with communities about their learning needs and interests.
- Attention to how programs for poorer students and communities are to be funded.
- The use of community and voluntary networks and partnerships in the development and delivery of such programs.
- The development of appropriate adult-centred curricular and pedagogy.

I would add that the implementation of such strategies should be informed by Equal Opportunity principles and good practice—from cultural pluralism in the curriculum to physical access for the disabled and child care provision and so on.

Drawing on the initial exploration of the paper's key concepts, I suggest that these principles for reaching learners of all kinds—where this is understood as drawing from the full range of social, cultural and ethnic groups—are more likely to be successful if all those involved (policy makers, LEA education providers, community adult educators etc.) recognise the normative and triadic requirements of 'lifelong learning' and work with a broad conception of 'family'. They need to recognise the complex variety of families in our society.

Finally, to come full circle and end where we began—I reiterate—widening participation to lifelong learning, broadly conceived, is crucial for social well being. For poor education, poverty and ill health are siblings—a family trio in need of supportive and interrelated change.

NOTES

[1] NIACE (National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education) has produced a guide to family learning (Haggart, 2000) and a toolkit for practitioners (Haggart, 2001). This provides an indication of the kinds of projects that have already been initiated and some principles for providers – particularly the need to develop programs in partnership with families and family organisations.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS, ISSUES AND
TRENDS IN THE PROVISION OF LIFELONG
LEARNING: LESSONS LEARNED

JUDITH D. CHAPMAN

In this book we set out to examine a major problem in educational provision. We were concerned that schools, universities and other traditional learning providers were not meeting the educational needs of all members of the community. In many communities, particularly in economically and socially disadvantaged and rural areas, only limited options exist for people to undertake learning. Limited participation in learning has the danger of reinforcing people's alienation from mainstream education and from participation in social institutions and economic and community life more generally. In the various chapters presented in this book this problem has been addressed. Through a range of conceptual, analytical and empirical studies it was our aim:

- To clarify conceptual, policy and practical issues relevant to lifelong learning, participation and equity;
- To examine the role of government authorities, learning providers and agencies in the community in developing policy to enhance lifelong learning and to foster participation and equity;
- To examine "good practice" and identify the most effective ways in which learning opportunities can be provided for all people across the lifespan, particularly for those people in regional, rural or disadvantaged communities and those who have not experienced success in mainstream education;
- To investigate new directions in lifelong learning provision; and
- To identify implications for further conceptual, analytic and empirical work relevant to research, policy, and practice in lifelong learning.

In this concluding chapter, through an analysis of the various conceptual, analytic and empirical studies presented in this book, a number of the major lessons learned are highlighted. This is by no means an exhaustive list of the lessons that can be extracted from our analyses but it presents, in a concise manner, some of the key issues that policy-makers, educational administrators, educators, researchers, and members of the wider community may feel should be dealt with when they are attempting the task of developing integrated and coherent policies and programs to achieve the goals of lifelong learning for all.

LESSON ONE: THE NEED FOR WELL ARTICULATED, INCLUSIVE AND VALUE-BASED POLICIES OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Among and between the authors contributing to this book there has been wide acceptance of the idea that lifelong learning can be conceptualized as having three over-arching purposes, all of which interact and cross fertilize each other:

- Learning for a more highly skilled work force and strong economy;
- Learning for a better democracy and an inclusive society; and
- Learning for a more personally rewarding life.

The first purpose highlights the connection between lifelong learning and the promotion of skills and competencies necessary for the development of general capabilities and specific performance on given tasks. Skills and competencies developed through programs of lifelong learning will, on this approach, have a bearing on questions of how workers perform in their tackling of specific job responsibilities and tasks and how well they can adapt their general and specific knowledge and competencies to new tasks.

This approach presents us with a relatively narrow and limited understanding of the nature, aims and purpose of lifelong education. Nevertheless, this instrumental view tended to dominate earlier approaches to lifelong learning. As a result of the work of OECD, UNESCO, the European Parliament and The Nordic Council of Ministers in the latter part of the 1990's, however, much broader and more multi-faceted ways of approaching the conceptualisation of lifelong learning emerged and have now gained widespread acceptance. Instead of people seeing lifelong learning as instrumental to the achievement of extrinsic goals, such as the acquisition of job skills and the promotion of economic success, lifelong learning has now come to be perceived as an intrinsically valuable activity, something that is good in and of itself. Seen from this viewpoint, the expansion of one's cognitive repertoire and the increasing of one's competencies is an undertaking

that can – and indeed, must – continue throughout life, as a necessary part of one's growth and development as a human being and as a citizen in a participative democracy, as well as a productive agent in a process of economic change and advance.

For this reason, the notion and value of 'lifelong learning for all' has come to be seen as a complex and multi-faceted process. It begins in pre-school times, is carried on through basic, compulsory and post-compulsory periods of formal education and training, and is then continued throughout life. It is forwarded and promoted through the learning experiences, activities and enjoyment available in and/or provided by the workplace, in universities and colleges, and in other educational, social and cultural agencies and institutions – of both a formal and informal kind – within the community. This conceptualisation of the purposes of lifelong learning can be found in Figure 1 in the chapter of Chapman and her colleagues in this book.

Figure 1.   Lifelong Learning – the Concept
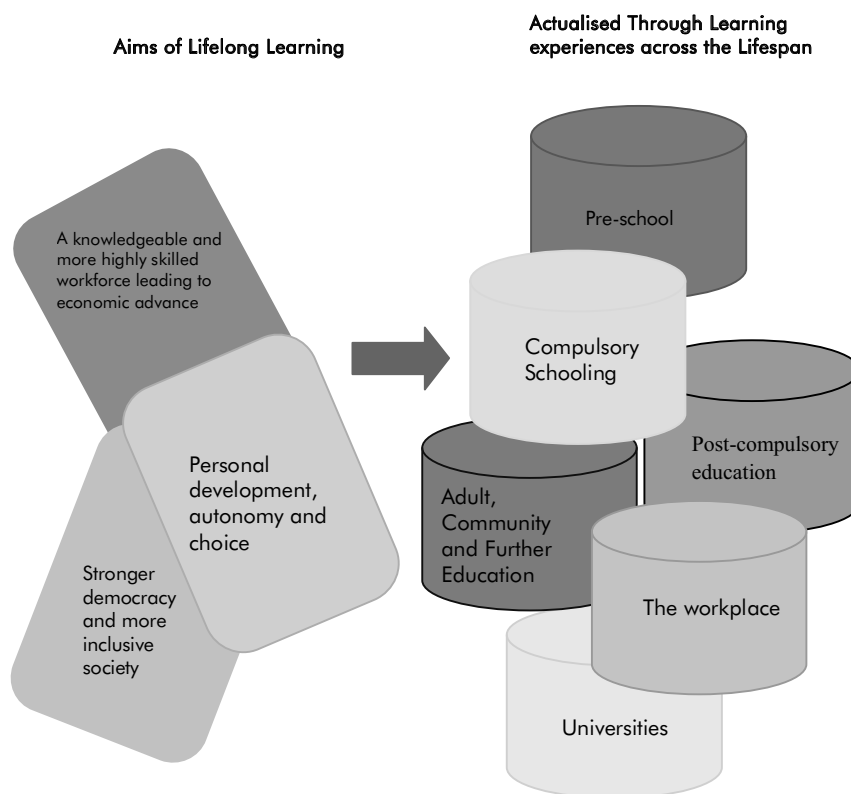
Any analysis of the multi-faceted and integrated concept of lifelong learning, especially as articulated and developed in the major policy documents of international organizations such as the OECD (See Schuller), leads one to conclude that plans and policies for the realisation of the aims of lifelong learning rest upon certain major preconceptions and ideals. For the purposes of this work the key and critical presuppositions are the implicit requirements that (a) all citizens affected by such policies should have equal access to programmes and activities of lifelong learning; and (b) all people should be able to participate fully and meaningfully in such programmes and activities.

Bagnall explores a number of ethical and value dimensions associated with the concept of lifelong learning which, it is hoped, will assist the reader to develop a better and more informed understanding of the link between lifelong learning, participation and equity, the central concerns of this book. Among these notions are the views that:

- Lifelong learning seeks liberation from deprivation, poverty and dependence;
- Learning is democratic in nature and it seeks through lifelong learning, liberation from inherited authority of all forms … from oppression, servitude and poverty, in the creation of a truly civil society through participative democratic involvement; and
- An important principle is that educational access should be equitable.

Leicester takes up the notion of the normative character of the concept of lifelong learning. She argues that lifelong learning 'aims to widen participation in education across the lifespan because educational exclusion is both *unfair* and uneconomic. In this ethical context, to 'widen' cannot just mean to *'increase'* the numbers of people who participate. It must also mean to 'broaden' the social groups who are included. … In so far as this aim of widening participation is successful, the social benefits to *all* groups (and thus to society in general) will increase'. Leicester concludes that 'widening participation to lifelong learning, broadly conceived, is crucial for social well being. For poor education, poverty and ill health are siblings – a family trio in need of supportive and interrelated change'.

In this respect it is important to keep in mind McGivney's observation that it is necessary to recognise how deep the economic, social and cultural divisions in society actually are: '…it is more likely that a more equal society will lead to wider participation than that wider participation in learning will lead to a more

equal society'. McGivney observes that policy makers 'attribute economic and social problems largely to people's learning deficits … Fuelled by concerns about poor qualifications levels and low productivity in comparison to our national competitors, there has been a growing policy thrust to raise achievement levels among those… under-represented in most forms of organised learning.' McGivney makes the important point that not everyone has the same learning interests and goals, and that learning is not going to lead to the same outcomes for each individual. Educational policies and provision need to recognise diversity. Peoples are not all in the same circumstances nor do they experience the same constraints: 'The belief underlying education policy that if you improve your basic skills and get a qualification you will get a job and therefore a better life is not always an accurate assumption…There needs to be some articulation between initiatives to widen participation and those designed to improve local conditions and combat poverty and exclusion'.

Skilbeck has articulated some of the ways in which these concepts, values and purposes might set the directions for policies and programs of lifelong learning:
Social/ civic order: equity, fairness, social justice, social cohesion, inclusiveness; building social capital.

a) A set of broad, analytical and socially sensitive agenda is needed, Skilbeck argues, with attention to the values and expectations of the multiple actors and the diverse communities and to the forces that are transforming social, cultural, civic and personal life. For these purposes, well-focused situational and cultural analysis is required to bring lifelong learning into the mainstream of contemporary life.

b) Economic utility: training and further developing economic actors; strengthening human capital; community as well as individual perspectives

c) Programs, courses and learning activities that are grounded in analysis of change processes, in a sound grasp of current and forward-looking thinking about the conditions of economic growth and the future of jobs and the job market and longer-term variable patterns and self-employment will become more relevant to more people as the globalising of markets and economic reconstruction continue. While the emphasis on job training and retraining must continue, there is a need to connect a broad economic rationale with social, cultural and personal considerations and with acknowledgement that a primary purpose in learning is the development of critical intelligence and not merely

adaptation to the status quo, economic or other (see also Beck who argues: "Lifelong learning is 'to do with the development of social understanding and critical engagement which leads to people having increased ability to affect their economic, social and physical conditions throughout their lives').

d) The idea (and ideal) of human development: personal fulfilment; self-actualisation; spiritual, moral, cultural development of individuals and communities.

Current preoccupations with social and economic change and with job-related skills, useful knowledge and practical applications need to be balanced with a greater emphasis upon more humanistic, social and cultural interests and concerns, by means of and through a deeper appreciation of fundamental personal and communal values and aspirations. The actual conditions that impede the growth of persons and communities must be a matter of great disquiet. The overall rationale for lifelong learning for all must be integrated into policies that give equal consideration and weight to the social, the economic, the personal and the communal. (See also Beck; Golding; Broadbent, Burgess & Boyle; Crowe; and Leicester)

LESSON TWO: THE NEED FOR A WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH

If communities are to be inclusive and democratic, then knowledge, skill, creativity and other important qualities for enhancing and expanding positive community life must be widely shared. The educational challenge is serious and demanding but there are communities that show how it can be addressed. The critical point arising from many good practice exemplars reported in this book is that many effective learning initiatives that address disadvantage in communities are occurring in a range of ways, not all of which are integrated into the current government policy and provision of lifelong learning. It would appear that, critical to the success of achieving lifelong learning, participation and equity, is an approach that integrates and inter-connects a range of government departments, community agencies of all kinds, and an array of formal and informal learning providers in a 'whole community' approach to lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning conceived of in this way can furnish the model that enables legislators and policy-makers to provide a policy framework to develop and deliver educational programs in areas such as community building and provide training opportunities for people in community agencies. Such actors can then in

turn move forward in the implementation of government priorities in community development. Educational programs can be developed to assist people in communities to make better decisions related to their personal, economic and social wellbeing; to disseminate the latest information in areas impacting on health or work opportunities; and to promote skills in areas associated with local development. To enable such people to move forward there is a need for there to be a re-vitalization and re-imaging in policies and programmes, for more consultation across government, community agencies and learning providers of all kinds, and for the adoption of a more collaborative approach to reform, including a renewed emphasis on multi-agency change and the use of community clusters and networks.

In the United Kingdom there have been moves to promote the active involvement of communities in the forming and framing of decisions on local services such as health, education, transport, the economy, safety and the environment. Beck makes the point, however, that 'this is all very well at the level of theory, however if local people are not equipped to take part in these discussions on an equal basis, in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the issues, the process is doomed to be tokenistic.' Beck describes the 'Govan Community Development Training Project', situated in a predominately working class area of Glasgow and focusing on people who number among the long-term unemployed. That project aimed at achieving social change. It was 'underpinned by an understanding that it is the structures of society themselves which produce inequalities and so it is they that have to change'. The aim of the project was to enable local people to gain experience of working in community development at the same time as studying for higher education qualifications in Community Development. An additional outcome of this project, though unintended, has been a beneficial effect on community infrastructure.

The project provided trainees with a yearlong linked employment and training programme, during which they worked in the local community three days per week, and attended the university one day per week. Personal development activities were pursued for one day per week. Beck observes that the results obtained seem to show that a package that includes education, work, personal development and childcare support is required in order to maximise the impact of any such project. Any simplistic response to the issue of providing learning opportunities for the long-term unemployed that fails to take account of the cultural and economic forces at play is destined to be only marginally successful in enabling working class communities to secure access to higher education. Beck concludes that an holistic approach to education is necessary to address the

problem of social exclusion. For this, he observes, 'is not simply about having no job, little money and poor housing. It also encompasses feelings of being trapped, low self-esteem and self-confidence, and feelings of insecurity, hopelessness and depression. … Development of new knowledge within the context of new social networks and changed economic status begins to address many of the factors of social exclusion and develops the foundation for sustainable change'.

In Australia, there are also major policy initiatives being developed and active steps being taken to sustain and strengthen disadvantaged communities, to encourage more people to live and live well and to ensure adequate provision of a wide range of services. A number of authors in this book have claimed that lifelong learning provision can play a significant part in developing the overall economic and social sustainability of communities. What is at issue is not whether there is an educational role for lifelong learning in strengthening communities but how it might be most effectively conceived, structured, resourced and implemented. Community development requires strong central government support and sound judgment on the suitability, appropriateness and adequacy of implementation efforts and endeavours on the ground at local level.

Broadbent and her colleagues describe two successful community-based learning projects in Australia. The first project is the 'Barnardo's Australian Groups Project' where community volunteers work as tutors to support students and their families. Partnerships formed between a local university, community volunteers and Barnardo's Australia have worked effectively to develop a program that supports the learning and improvement of the educational attainment of students who were experiencing considerable difficulty at school. The second is the 'Families Learning Together Project'.   This program aims to support indigenous families to assist their learning through a community-based literacy and numeracy program. Networks between staff in Government and Catholic schools, the parents of indigenous students, the indigenous students themselves and a local university have worked effectively to build confidence and self-esteem while also creating the beginnings of a dynamic learning community.

Broadbent and colleagues note the importance of education in promoting the life chances of young people, and observe that this has had the positive effect of increasing the importance of the work of schools in ensuring they provide relevant experiences and opportunities that prepare these young people for dynamic learning environments within a globalised world. To implement appropriate policies will provide real challenges and ongoing concerns. It is important, however, that approaches that build community and strengthen the sense of connectedness between students, schools, families and other educational

institutions within the wider community be established. Otherwise, students, already facing serious problems, will remain at a considerable disadvantage. The authors recommend that 'there is a strong need for Government bodies and others to demonstrate ongoing commitment to community support for successful community-based programs. Strengthening these programs … and replicating this form of community-based learning project should work towards overcoming disadvantage and more equitable outcomes for students throughout life.'

In addressing the needs of rural and remote communities in Australia, Golding advocates *communities of practice* as being critical for learning. Examples of these communities are found in sporting clubs, such as the local football club, land care organizations, senior citizens clubs, and the local volunteer fire service. Being an active part of a community organization was shown by Golding to play a key part in men's current learning and to provide critical opportunities for further and lifelong learning in rural Australian communities.

Rymarz presents an interesting portrayal of the lifelong learning needs of members of what is often described as 'Gen X', with respect to learning and their place in the community. He argues that members of Gen X lack a substantial engagement with 'a grand theory of the world, and the place of the individual in it'. He describes them as 'strangers, for whom bonds with others and also with culturally held norms, are transitory and tenuous'. Gen Xers 'often display a lack of connectedness or involvement with support networks. Genuine lifelong learning is … greatly facilitated by the integration of the individual into supportive learning communities'. The participation of Generation X members in lifelong learning may be a reflection of their search for a vision of life and culture that is presented as positive, welcoming and is lived out in a concrete way. Rymarz makes the point that, in order to encourage members of GenX to participate in lifelong learning, it is necessary to be clearer about the distinctive features of what being a critical and reflective member of society means.

The point of referring to such examples drawn from a range of different national settings is to show the various ways in which a whole-community approach to lifelong learning can be planned and acted upon to achieve the diverse and multi-faceted aims of the undertaking. Lifelong learning can only achieve wider participation and equity when the commitments of the whole community are invested in it.

LESSON THREE: THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND PROMOTE
CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH PEOPLE PARTICIPATE
AND LEARN

For developing more effective policies and practices to engage a wider set of
constituencies in lifelong learning, we need to be clearer about the whys, ways and
means in which different people learn. Skilbeck has highlighted that:

- People differ widely in their interests, motivation, needs, ways of
  learning; there is no single way to lifelong learning;
- Learning is a defining, fundamental condition of human growth and
  development, not an optional or incidental function of life;
- There are qualitative differences in forms and types of learning, calling
  for different kinds of judgements about conditioning factors,
  effectiveness, value, significance and so forth; and
- Learning is affected by a variety of physical and social factors and
  policies (resourcing, facilities etc) but, equally or even more, by the
  immediate 'lifeworld' or environment, its stimuli, 'feel', 'tone',
  feedback, challenges and rewards.

Many education providers are successfully integrating rich and varied strands
of learning theory into their everyday practice, and developing reflective, critical
strategies that enable people to deepen and enrich their own learning. But there is
a concern that the provision of quality conditions under which people participate
and learn are not spread evenly both throughout the whole community and also
across the lifespan; and that organizational arrangements, funding and procedures
of reporting and assessing, particularly in adult and continuing education, do not
pay adequate attention to qualitative matters or to the conditions needed to sustain
and strengthen them.

Certain overarching elements have been highlighted in this work in reports of
studies designed to identify 'good practice' in lifelong learning provision. In the
compulsory years of schooling, for example, Bryce found that schools with an
orientation to lifelong learning were characterised by:

- Ownership of 'the need to learn' resting with students who are helped to
  set and evaluate their own learning goals;
- Existence of a central hub of learning in the school, such as a learning
  centre or library, rather than a rigid vertical structure;

- Stress on certain values, dispositions and attitudes, including: encouragement to develop a 'helicopter vision'; curiosity; flexibility and adaptability; and recognition of different kinds of intelligence and ways of learning;
- Emphasis on formative rather than competitive assessment;
- Acknowledgement of the significance of self concept and self regulation on learning how to learn; and
- Acknowledgement of the importance of teachers as role models of lifelong learning

McGivney points to good practice in a project in Northern Ireland targeted at poor, working-class women without qualifications, where identification by outreach workers of these women's needs for help with health issues and with dealing with 'authority' figures led to a range of informal and negotiated learning activities. Over five years, many of these women became active members of the community, with a number taking accredited courses in local colleges, gaining qualifications, and finding jobs.

Leicester points to the 'Share Project', a family learning project recently introduced in England which aims to engage parents [or any approved carers] with their child's education and in so doing provides learning opportunities for the parents too, recognising them as adult learners. The SHARE accreditation program provides parents with certificates from the Open College Network for the learning that takes place as they work with their children and provides an opportunity for parents to discover their own abilities, their potential for and pleasure in learning.

Chapman and her colleagues have identified elements that are central to the success of lifelong learning programs in adult, community and continuing education, as follows:

Features of Successful Practice: for PERSONAL FULFILMENT

- Stress on values – trust, respect and cooperation, 'having a voice' and development of a sense of belonging;
- Key persons' commitment to, enthusiasm for, and belief in the rightness of their engagement with the programs;
- Recognition of a range of backgrounds and abilities within groups and the development of individualised programs;
- Provision of a sheltered, protected environment in an accessible position;

- Engagement of young people by making the learning relevant, manageable and fun; leading to desirable kinds of change for the learners;
- Provision of mentors and role models who engage in positive relationships with learners;
- Promotion of 'ownership' of learning for building of self fulfillment; and
- The offering of programs in flexible mode.

Features of Successful Practice: for SOCIAL COHESION

- Representation of many groups on course development and planning committees;
- Training of individuals to contribute to new projects in the community;
- Providing support for participants to complete learning activities in their own communities;
- Working with people in their own region;
- Utilising the skills of the region;
- Providing necessary services for a region;
- Using tutors who are familiar with the region where courses are provided; and
- Ensuring connectivity with other providers.

Features of Successful Practice: for ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT

- Providing learning opportunities that assist people to seek alternative employment opportunities;
- Offering programs in flexible modes to advance the skills of more people;
- Availability of short and intensive courses, with emphasis on the gaining of relevant information rather than on qualifications alone;
- Organisations cooperate for the provision of a variety of programs and accredited courses; and
- Utilization of trainers with past and present experience in industry.

All these programs and activities have the potential of demonstrating to policy-makers, administrators and educators that it is possible to delineate, from an examination of good practice exemplars, the characteristics of lifelong learning programs that can subsequently be put in place to enhance learning and widen

participation across previously excluded groups of learners. Understanding the different and diverse needs of learners at different stages, places and times in their lives, and promoting the conditions and providing the resources that will enhance learning opportunities for all turns out to be a critical pre-requisite and agendum for lifelong learning policy-makers, planners and providers.

LESSON FOUR: THE NEED TO OVERCOME BARRIERS AND DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR PARTICIPATION BY PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT ACCESSING LIFELONG LEARNING

There are many indications of ways in which lifelong learning provision can make a difference to peoples' lives. In regard to overcoming personal and social barriers there are programs that enable young persons to grow in self-esteem and confidence and to gain skills for living and for potential entry to the workforce. There are examples of engagement in learning programs by single parents, rural men, indigenous people and mature aged persons who in the past might not have enjoyed access to or participated in education. Despite these obvious gains lifelong learning provision could reach many more people. In order to expand participation, a number of barriers that impede access to lifelong learning need to be overcome. Such barriers, however, are not found in separation nor are they of a one-dimensional kind. Participants or potential participants – who encounter or confront such barriers – often, find that the barriers do not exist in isolation. They often interact with one another to create complex interlocked patterns.

McGivney makes the point that, even if the most commonly cited barriers to lifelong learning, such as time, location, costs and childcare, are overcome, there are other, more deep-seated barriers that are not easily addressed. Negative factors include those barriers affecting, hindering or limiting motivation and readiness to engage in learning that are cultural, social and psychological in nature. Other inhibitory factors include those that hinder people's ability to participate, that are physical, practical and structural in nature. Negative perceptions also have an important effect on non-participation. School experiences or family influences may lead to perceptions that any centres that deliver learning are formal and intimidating and cater mainly for younger people or other social or cultural groups which may result in their being unwelcoming learning environments.

Beck found, for example, that forces that deter working class people in Glasgow from participating in lifelong learning activities are both cultural and economic. They include: pressures emanating from norms ands conventions of the local culture; political and economic pressures; the family; influences from

statutory agencies, such as the social services, education and health; and the media.

It must be acknowledged, however, that tendencies toward non-participation in learning across the lifespan need not always be regarded as problematic. Many people, beyond the compulsory years of schooling, lead full and satisfying lives without feeling the need to join in formal learning activities; as adults, it is entirely appropriate for them to make that decision. However non-participation is often caused by other factors, including lack of information, lack of confidence or lack or resources, or some other impediment and, in such circumstances, it may be appropriate to take steps to endeavour to mitigate such inhibiting factors. A mix of policies and practical approaches is required to address provision of, access to and participation in lifelong learning activities: reducing or eliminating barriers/obstacles; assisting, enabling, encouraging people to overcome them; and highlighting incentives, ensuring their availability and studying take-up and impact.

Leicester identifies, as one of a number of effective strategies for increasing the opportunities to reach currently excluded groups among minority communities, the following imperatives: 'ways of working using minority networks must be found and partnerships with minority organizations and interest groups must be forged'. Other needs and strategies are summarised as 'greater liaison and consultation; more funding and subsidy; attention to principles of adult education; workplace learning opportunities to reach workers of all kinds; free courses of genuine interest to the unemployed; an increase in courses of interest to older, retired people [eg health related courses]'.

Golding's research provides evidence that men in rural and remote areas want learning delivered locally, and preferably through their own organizations; they prefer to learn through 'being actively involved in an activity rather than passively learning 'about' something'. Golding found that 'The key negative issue … is that it is men who have had least positive formal learning experiences – particularly at school – who are most at risk and are less likely to come to embrace any form of institutional adult and community or formal learning'. He cites research which suggests that, if men perceive that a service is found to have an honest and supportive attitude, in which the men are not being portrayed, using a deficit model, as 'the problem' and does not offer services delivered in a physical environment that they see as being primarily for the use of women and children, they are more likely to participate in learning.

McGivney highlights and proposes three necessary principles that should underlie strategies for reaching new groups of people: recognition of diversity;

respect for people's different experience, views, choices and preferences; relevance to people's immediate priorities, interests and concerns. She notes however that, notwithstanding the large number and range of policies and initiatives introduced in the United Kingdom, participation has not been significantly improved. Among the causes of this phenomenon she suggests the following as significant:

- There has been a persistent reluctance to respond to research that has identified the factors deterring people from participating in learning;
- There is little public funding for outreach activities, that are staff-intensive and time-consuming and is invariably under-resourced and under-supported;
- It had been expected that ICT and e-learning would significantly widen participation, and it did this in some cases. However, insufficient attention has been paid to group and face-to-face support; and
- There has been little recognition of the extent to which decisions to learn are influenced by other people: … 'learning is largely regarded as an individual process dependent on individual motivation and conducted in isolation from the family, social and community contexts in which people lead their lives … Most adults are in partnerships and families and belong to social, cultural or co-worker networks, and decisions to learn or not to learn are often made with other people in mind'.

McGivney concludes: 'Widening participation is first and foremost a question of changing perceptions. … [This] requires recognition of the risks participation can present for some people – the psychological risks (of possible failure or ridicule); the social risks (of acting contrary to family or cultural norms); and the financial risks (endangering welfare benefits or getting into debt) when there are no guaranteed (employment or fiscal) returns from learning'.

Clearly to reach those people who are not accessing education, lifelong learning needs to be clearly and firmly profiled and 'talked up'. However, as Skilbeck argues, an approach through promotion and encouragement is not enough. It is necessary to continue strengthening strategic procedures – planning for longer term provision and funding support, the institution of legislation and regulatory frameworks, the articulation of monitoring frameworks and evaluating outcomes in such a way as to demonstrate their social value. A fuller articulation of goals, purposes and strategies is required. Active public-private partnerships, cost-sharing schemes and agreements among the parties to extend supply by

overcoming identified resistance and other barriers, are among further strategic measures needing to be put in place to establish the acceptability in the community of the idea, value and practices of lifelong learning for all. A mixture of supply and demand-side strategies, based on developing and disseminating knowledge and seeking assent, is required.

LESSON FIVE: THE NEED TO RECONCEPTUALIZE PROVISION THROUGH MULTI-AGENCY NETWORKS AND ARTICULATED PATHWAYS

Lifelong learning emerges in this volume as a concept of co-investment and joint engagement between partners engaging a range of institutions and agencies, and following a multiplicity of pathways, some traditional, some innovatory, some formal, some informal. There is a need for clearly defined and flexibly articulated pathways of interaction, connection and co-operation among and between the wide ranges of providers in a network of educational provision. There needs to be established and developed a complex and sophisticated set of arrangements offering: cross sector linkages; easy credit transfer; recognition of qualifications across sectors and geographical locations and boundaries.

The concept of 'network' is critical in this reconceptualization of educational provision (see Chapman, McGilp, Cartwright, de Souza & Toomey). The important point to make about the concept of 'network' is that it differs in character from other terms that have historically been used in association with education and with the organisational arrangements with which education has been managed and through which innovation and change have been brought about.

The idea of networks is distinct from traditional forms of grouping of educational organisations and systems, in which hierarchical structures and organisational approaches were most often adopted, and from the more recent emphasis upon restructuring in some countries, in which the market philosophy prevailed. In contrast with such approaches, the notion of 'network' stresses the idea of 'community' as the common element and principle of connection between institutions, organisations, agencies and people. Networks provide a process for cultural and attitudinal change, embedding reform in the interactions, actions and behaviour of a range of different stakeholders in education and the community.

Networks provide a multi-agency vehicle for reform which has the potential to be more supportive, co-operative, and less costly than much of the structural change of the past. They provide an opportunity for shared and dispersed leadership and responsibility, drawing on resources in the community beyond that

solely provided by members of the education profession. In making such opportunities possible networks can provide settings for the institution of more cost effective, community-based reform strategies. The relevance of 'networks' as a construct and strategy for educational reform in the operationalization of lifelong learning is evident in the wide range of good practice exemplars presented in this book.

The importance and need for learners to exploit a wide range of learning methods and styles, to follow a range of different trajectories and tracks and to move through various forms of education and learning opportunities in a network of educational provision across the lifespan has been highlighted in this volume by Wyn. She refers to the emerging gulf between those who can navigate their way successfully through the new knowledge economy and in so doing secure access to a range of lifelong learning opportunities, and those who are at its mercy. She shows that while the actual patterns of transition and engagement in lifelong learning for individual countries differ, there are broad similarities that may contribute to the formation of policy agenda for the future. Essential for this new policy agenda is an understanding of the relationship of formal learning to transition processes and recognition that focusing narrowly on preparation for specific jobs does not fit well with the requirement for flexible, multi-skilled workers who can negotiate their way through new economies. She points to concerns about the extent of 'fit' between secondary education and employment; the inequities regarding access to higher education; differences in participation between people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and rural backgrounds, who are much less likely to participate in higher education than those from medium and high socio-economic backgrounds and urban locations.

Against the background of entrenched patterns of educational inequality for both individuals and societies, Wynn reports on experiences of a cohort of young people during their transition from secondary school through higher education and into work. The Life-Patterns study, to which she refers, provides support for the view that individuals need to have the capacity to navigate their way through uncertain times and an increasingly changing future, through multi-age networks and articulated pathways.

Wyn's research has shown the importance of the provision of alternative pathways and agencies, as a significant number of young people shows a trend towards non-linear pathways. Many people change between institutions; they interrupt their studies, as and when necessary; or even discontinue at certain points. This phenomenon, Wyn argues, is important for educational policy, because it suggests that social, subjective and attitudinal factors as well as

economic forces need to be taken into account in educational reform to address issues of participation and equity.

LESSON SIX: THE NEED FOR FURTHER CONCEPTUAL, ANALYTIC AND EMPIRICAL WORK

There is broad agreement among the authors in this volume that further progress in developing and implementing strategies of lifelong learning will depend on our ability to establish a stronger, more extended and sophisticated research and analytic culture than exists at present. In the interest of developing a strong, robust and progressive program, the following suggestions are among those put forward in this book as areas for future conceptual, analytical and empirical enquiry:

- Consideration of whether current Education Acts and organisational, administrative and financial arrangements proceeding from such Acts remain adequate as means of extending and developing the ideal of lifelong learning for all;
- Mapping of existing pathways that facilitate lifelong learning, examining whether they foster or inhibit effective linkages, promote or hinder efficiencies and facilitate participation and equity across the lifespan;
- Undertaking projects of systematic curriculum analysis and evaluation to map and orient existing learning provision as a basis for future planning and resource allocation for learning for all people across the lifespan;
- Undertaking projects to consider the benefits of a more coherent and structured approach to lifelong learning provision, linked to considerations of quality, standards and expected learning outcomes;
- Investigating the ways in which lifelong learning can sustain and help develop deprived communities, targeting community development as a goal and mobilising public /private, state/national/local resources to support communities in need, and having the potential to address major social, cultural and economic difficulties;
- Investigating the ways in which multi-mode educational delivery strategies can be used as means of overcoming isolation and inadequate service delivery, particularly for the most remote, isolated and poorest communities;
- Addressing barriers to learning and giving attention to incentives to enhance greater understanding in the community of the investment-return (personal- social – economic) approach; and

- Studying learning practices, processes and pathways, drawing on present good practices that have a potential for providing practical advice to teachers, facilitators and learners in the field.

Schuller discusses in some detail the types of evidence in relation to lifelong learning and equity that the OECD and the EU gather and that might be appropriate for researching such problems, issues and trends. He discusses the issue of what is, and what is not, evidence, citing the 'political drive to base educational policy more on systematic evidence'. His key concluding argument is that we need a range of research approaches to cater for the multi-dimensional nature of lifelong learning and equity considerations.

This implies some hard choices about what may be appropriate for any given task as a research or analytic tool. Schuller argues that there is no doubting the prevalence of highly inequitable patterns of participation and equity, in respect of access to education; practice within education; and the distribution of costs and benefits. He maintains, however, that we need to look for different and complementary kinds of evidence in order to get a proper purchase on the issue. In this regard he sets out a set of possible criteria for assessing the rigour and relevance of evidence-based policy research methods that could be applied to an analysis of lifelong learning, participation and equity:

- Causality: to what extent does the research method provide valid estimates of the causal effect of an intervention?
- Explanation: to what extent does the research method explain how or why the causal effect is happening?
- Transportability: how far is the evidence such that the results can be applied to most or all the relevant field in different settings of time and space?
- Stability: will the evidence be reasonably stable over time in its application?
- Validity: does the research use instruments that measure what it is intended to measure?
- Variability: to what extent does the research method involve or permit variation in the type of intervention?

The use and validation of evidence, Schuller argues, will depend to a large extent on the complexion of policy-making: how 'policy' itself is conceived of within the relevant community (national, international or more local); and who are

understood to be the essential stakeholders. This, Schuller concludes, will vary significantly according to the different political traditions involved.

CONCLUSION

The various accounts of lifelong learning that have been presented in this book have been employed to show that the purposes and values of lifelong learning need to be clarified in the context of widespread social, economic, cultural and educational change and to be used as a basis for the development of clear, well articulated and inclusive policies. It has been shown that responsibilities for learning that are often fragmented and spread across different ministries, departments, jurisdictions and agencies need to be reconsidered with the goal of achieving stronger coherence and integration between them. Resources that currently fall short of learners' needs (particularly in critical areas of need such as economically disadvantaged communities and remote rural areas) need to be reassessed. Data that are lacking in details on performance and outcomes of learning, and data covering all forms of lifelong learning, formal and non-formal, need to be reviewed and adequately integrated for purposes of analysis. In areas such as adult, community and further/continuing education, there is a need to establish the comprehensive legislative, administrative and curriculum frameworks and resource arrangements that have been in place, over a long period of time, for primary, secondary and tertiary or higher education. Provision of learning across the lifespan that excludes large numbers of people from learning opportunities needs to become more equitable. There is a growing need for more integrated, networked approaches to promote efficient and effective structure, organisation and coherence in provision, content and methods of learning.

The achievement of lifelong learning, participation and equity remains a major policy goal in countries around the world. In this volume an attempt has been made to develop and put forward a set of agenda that will provide the basis and ground upon which those countries, agencies and individuals committed to enhancing and extending equity and participation for all people may elaborate their thinking, develop the frameworks, build the structures and set in motion the initiatives and actions that will go far towards achieving the imperative of making possible real access to lifelong learning for all.

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Lifelong Learning Book Series