

CHAPTER THREE

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

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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

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

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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). |
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(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 impulsion. 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 bitterness 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 hypostatized 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

<p>Personal competences are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Social Competencies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to co-operate; • Ability to communicate; • Ability to grasp overlapping personal and professional connections; • Responsibility (in relation to work, environment, health, etc.). <p>(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.)</p>
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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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