Chapter 3
The Ethics of Lifelong Learning and its Implications for Values Education

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1 Introduction

In this chapter, I am recognising a body of normative scholarship under the label “lifelong learning theory”. Scholarship so labelled I consider to be either that which argues *for* lifelong learning or that which provides a *critique* of lifelong learning as a concept of worth. Included are such works addressing the notion of “lifelong education”, rather than that of “lifelong learning”, and also those that are recognised in the scholarly literature of lifelong learning theory as being works importantly foundational to the theory but which are less explicitly working under the label of lifelong learning or lifelong education – such as the Club of Rome report (Botkin et al. 1979) and the UNESCO report *Learning to Be* (Fauré et al. 1972). That body of theory I see as presupposing and implying a particular ethic, which I have characterised elsewhere (Bagnall 2004) as an aretaic ethic with a teleology of optimising universal human flourishing through learning. It is an ethic that suffuses the character of social entities or individuals who practice lifelong learning – at least to the extent that they are true to the theory in that practice. It does not, in other words, lend itself to being compartmentalised into those aspects of individual or social action that in some sense pertain particularly or majorly to lifelong learning activities and those aspects that do not – if such were possible.

In presupposing and implying a particular ethic, lifelong learning theory entails the imperative that individuals, social entities and policies embracing or espousing lifelong learning are true to the ethic. The ethical or moral values constituting the ethic may thus be seen as a normatively irremediable part of any program or policy of values education that seeks to work within a lifelong learning value framework.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to examine that ethic and to tease out its implications for values education. This is done, first, by examining the ethical values presupposed by lifelong learning theory – grounding them in the literature of that theory – before sketching the form of the ethic in which those values are located. The ethic is then located in the context of values and values education, before the implications of the ethic for ethical learning and values education are drawn out. Finally, some concluding comments and discursive observations are drawn out from the analysis. The analysis here draws particularly on work in Bagnall (2004/2005).

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2 Ethical Values in Lifelong Learning

The ethical values of the aretaic ethic that I argue as being presupposed and implied by lifelong learning theory may be understood as being captured in what I have termed "informed commitments". These are commitments to acting in particular sorts of ways. They 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 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.

The 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 may be seen, in that sense, as individual, community, organisational or societal *virtues*. Lifelong learning theory may thus be understood as presupposing in this extended sense an ethic of virtue – an aretaic ethic. The object of the informed commitments is the human condition. They characterise action and motivation to act that is seen as optimising universal human flourishing through learning. As such, they may be understood as *humane* commitments.

In constraining human action and defining human character, the commitments should be understood holistically. As such, they may be constructed as a set in different ways. The set of commitments recognised here is thus to an important degree arbitrary in the way the individual values are recognised and separated out. The individual commitments are, though, grounded in contemporarily emergent value emphases and, to that extent, they are non-arbitrary. Nevertheless, they should be recognised as an integrated set. The informed commitments that are recognised here, then, are the following: 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; to individual and collective autonomy; to social justice; to the non-violent resolution of conflict; and to democratic governance. These may be understood as follows, using here just an illustrative selection of lifelong learning theory literature to ground each commitment.

2.1 Commitment to Constructive Engagement in Learning

A commitment to constructive engagement or participation in learning 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. It involves one, then, in seeing each of life's events as having educational potential (in an outcome sense), which may be enhanced or directed through educational intervention (in a process sense). It involves also the recognition of one's own continuing capacity to learn from life's engagements. It thus avoids the difficulty of claiming that all events are equally educational, although it may involve a claim that all events have a similar *potential* to be educational. 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 reflexively constrained by the humane commitments here noted. It embraces, though, a wide church. A commitment to engagement in learning implies also a focus on the individual *as* a learner.

Thus, Fauré et al. (1972, p. 181) argue that "every individual must be in a position to keep learning throughout his life. The idea of lifelong education is the keystone of the learning society". They observe that "probably for the first time in the history of humanity, development of education on a worldwide scale is tending to precede economic development" (Fauré et al. 1972, p. 12). For Gelpi (1985, p. 15) "[L]ifelong education means making full use of a society's human resources." That requires, for Lengrand (1975, pp. 124–132), the integration of education with other life engagements and interests. For Delors (1996, p. 85), "[E]ach individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden her or his knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to adapt to a changing, complex and interdependent world." Wain (1987, p. 176) recognises that "all learning that influences growth in positive ways is educationally relevant, whether it is intentional (formal or non-formal), or non-intentional (non-formal or informal)". For Longworth and Davies (1996, p. 21), "[L]ifelong learning recognizes that each individual has a learning potential and accepts few limitations on that potential". That "means doing things in a different way, creating an out-and-out focus on the needs and demands of the learner" (Longworth 2003, p. 12). For the OECD (1996, p. 27), "[T]he key idea underpinning lifelong learning for all is that while everyone is able to learn, all must become motivated to learn . . . throughout life." This commitment is captured also in Senge's notion of "personal mastery" as one of his five new "component technologies" of "innovative learning organisations". For individuals, personal mastery is achieved through their "becoming committed to their own lifelong learning" (Senge 1990, p. 7).

2.2 Commitment to Oneself and One's Cultural Inheritance

A commitment to oneself and one's cultural inheritance 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. Presupposed here is the centrality of learning in the formation of individual and collective identity. This commitment calls for the

acceptance of responsibility for one's own development, through learning in a manner and direction that respects and builds upon one's current lifeworld. It includes also the development of learning-to-learn capabilities and commitment in exercising that responsibility.

Botkin et al. (1979, p. 15) argue that "*Human dignity* is at the heart of demands for participation" – which dignity includes "self-respect". Wain (1987, pp. 177–179) argues that lifelong learning theory is strongly humanistic; and Gelpi (1985, p. 83) that "Cultural activity, directed to the development of a sense of self, is one aspect of cultural action which requires greater consideration." For Lengrand (1975, p. 75), "[T]he aim of education is to cater for every aspect and dimension of the individual as a physical, intellectual, emotional, sexual, social and spiritual being." The individual thus "becomes more and more, the subject of his own education" (Lengrand 1975, p. 97). For Longworth (2003, p. 21), "[A] learning organization creates opportunities for, and encourages, all its people in all its functions to fulfil their human potential", "preparing people to meet the future by developing life skills and attributes at all stages and by encouraging self-esteem and self-worth in everyone" (Longworth 1999, p. 89). This involves "giving learners the tools and techniques with which they can learn according to their own learning styles and needs" (Longworth 2003, p. 12).

2.3 Commitment to Others and their Cultural Differences

A commitment to others and their cultural differences 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 thus involves one in respecting the differences that other persons and cultures present in comparison with one's own identity and culture.

The notion of human dignity advanced by Botkin et al. (1979, p. 15) includes for them "the respect accorded to humanity as a whole, the mutual respect for individuals in diverse societies". For Delors (1996, p. 93), the task of education is to develop persons who "will genuinely be able to put themselves in other people's shoes and understand their realities". Longworth (2003, p. 6) notes "[T]he need for the further development of educational structures based on understanding, tolerance and contribution to community." And the OECD (1996, p. 102) calls for "respect for diversity". Gelpi (1985, p. 77) sees also that "the recognition of popular cultures is a necessary condition for popular participation".

2.4 Commitment to the Human Condition and its Potential for Progress

A commitment to the human condition and its potential for progress involves one in seeing humanity, its nature, culture, context, limitations and possibilities as worthwhile and worth advancing and enhancing and as able to be so. The

flourishing of humanity and the progress of the human condition are thus accepted as intrinsically valuable – as being good in themselves – and, of course, as being achievable through human learning. This commitment enjoins one to work to further the human condition. It presents a secular view of humanity as grounded in the material world.

"Learning to live", one of the "four pillars of education" articulated in the Delors (1996) report, presupposes a strong commitment to the human condition and its potential for progress. For Fauré et al. (1972, p. 156), "[T]he physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education." For Gelpi (1985), lifelong education is constructed essentially as a means to human liberation. For Lengrand (1975, p. 95), "[T]he true subject of education is man in all his aspects, in the diversity of his situations and in the breadth of his responsibilities." In Senge's (1990) work, the commitment to progress by and through the (learning) organisation may be seen as presupposing what I have articulated as a commitment to the human condition and its potential for progress. Similarly, the speed-of-cultural-change argument advanced by the OECD (1996) presupposes this commitment. Likewise, in arguing for lifelong learning as necessary to humanise scientific and technological developments, Longworth (2003, p. 5) is presupposing this commitment.

2.5 Commitment to Practical Reason and its Contribution to Bettering the Human Condition

A commitment to practical reason and its contribution to bettering the human condition involves one in seeing instrumental thinking, based on empirical evidence and experience, as valuable in the project of human betterment. Included in the notion of instrumental thinking is empirical science in its various manifestations, but also informed and evidence-based policy and action much more broadly. Entailed is a commitment to open, evidence-based inquiry in education as in other aspects of life.

This commitment is captured in the concept of "innovative learning" advanced by Botkin et al. (1979) as being central to lifelong education. Delors (1996, p. 91) argues for "a scientific culture which will give … access to modern technology as a way to the future". Fauré et al. (1972, pp. 146–147) argue that the "new educational order" should be based on "scientific humanism", since "command of scientific thought and language has become as indispensable … as command of other means of thought and expression". For Gelpi (1985, pp. 15,76), lifelong education "is an education … whose end is action" and where "education for all and education by all imply an educational process in which research, creation, production, teaching and learning are interlinked". For Lengrand (1975, p. 99), lifelong education calls for "the scientific approach which, as we have said, is one of the basic components of modern humanism". For Senge (1990, p. 11), "[S]ystems thinking is the fifth discipline" of his conception of the learning organisation. In his adoption of

John Dewey's pragmatism as the informing philosophy of lifelong education, Wain (1987) acknowledges the strongly scientistic and instrumental nature of both the philosophy and lifelong learning theory.

2.6 Commitment to Individual and Collective Autonomy

A commitment to individual and collective autonomy involves one in social structures that give persons control over their own destinies. Included here is the valuing of 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. Presupposed is the individual freedom to make ethical decisions and to take ethical action – freedom from undue restraint and constraint. Included here is autonomy in learning itself, which implies a commitment to developing the capabilities and commitments in managing one's own learning.

For Delors (1996, p. 101), "[L]earning throughout life is essential for people to retain mastery of their own destinies." And for Fauré et al. (1972, p. 209) "[T]he new educational ethos makes the individual the master and creator of his own cultural progress." "It should be made a principle to centre educational activity on the learner, to allow him greater and greater freedom, as he matures, to decide for himself what he wants to learn, and how and where he wants to learn it and take his training" (Fauré et al. 1972, p. 221). For Gelpi (1985, p. 78), "[P]eople need to master learning processes if they are to play an active part in the daily reality of living." And for Longworth (2003, p. 28), a principle in his "learner's charter" is that "as far as possible, learners should have ownership of, and control over, their own learning". That principle, he argues, implies that "teachers would become 'learning counsellors' " (Longworth 1999, p. 29).

2.7 Commitment to Social Justice

A commitment to social justice 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 appropriate recognition of learning attainments. It therefore entails, from a learning perspective, the *right* to educational opportunities and to the appropriate recognition of learning attainments, commensurate with their just distribution. It correlatively entails the *duty* to recognise, support and defend that right of others. More broadly, it also entails a commitment to sustainable cultural conditions – to living one's life in a manner that minimises undue use of resources and the production of waste. It enjoins one to use, promote and develop

approaches to life tasks that are economic and efficient in a broad sense – taking into account both financial and other impacts – and to engage in learning to that end. It thus enjoins, *inter alia*, a commitment to the proper recognition and accreditation of prior learning.

Delors (1996, p. 102) argues that "equality of opportunity is an essential principle for … learning throughout life". For Fauré et al. (1972, p. 72), equal access to education is a requirement of a just society, but that "equal access *is not* equal opportunity. This must comprise equal chance of success". Longworth (2003, p. 21), as part of his "learner's charter", declares that "all citizens have the right to learn and to develop their own potential throughout life". He argues strongly for the "Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning" (Longworth 1999, p. 51) and for "the idea of a learning birthright" (Longworth & Davies 1996, p. 143). Longworth (2003, p. 5) also argues for sustainable development as a lifelong learning imperative – "in other words, the need for a lifelong learning approach to a lifelong survival issue". The OECD (1996, p. 94) argues for lifelong learning in "building an inclusive learning society" and Wain (1987, p. 190) that lifelong education theory enjoins commitment to "a redistributive conception of justice" and to education as a "right" (Wain 1987, p. 168).

2.8 Commitment to the Non-Violent Resolution of Conflict

A commitment to the non-violent resolution of conflict 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.

Botkin et al. (1979) presuppose the use of non-violent approaches to solving the world's problems – what they label the "*global problematique*" – in their overarching notion of "dignity". Delors (1996, p. 92) sees the need to "avoid conflicts or resolve them peacefully" through, at least, "teaching non-violence in schools". Gelpi (1985, p. 142) argues for a universal commitment to peace, involving "the disciplines that could be considered to be human sciences: sociology, psychology, history, economics, pedagogy, political science – perhaps even poetry". Lengrand (1975, pp. 106–107) argues that "hostility to others, the desire and will to destroy, are closely related to frustration, individual and social failure, resentment and various inferiority complexes" and that "inculcating a spirit of peace in individuals is therefore bound up with all the other ultimate ends of education". For Longworth (2003, p. 46), what he calls "life deep" learning "is essential for international harmony and peace". "'Life deep' learning is a new term to describe the insights and discernments which increase our awareness and understanding of particular issues in the wider world beyond our immediate environment".

2.9 Commitment to Democratic Governance

A commitment to democratic governance involves one in respecting and supporting democratic processes of decision-making in matters of public concern. The form of democratic process – whether representative or participative and of different types – will vary with the cultural context, as will the criteria for inclusion in the democratic public itself. All forms of democratic process, though, involve some sort of distribution of decision-making on matters designated as being of public importance. Included here is a commitment to collaborative and cooperative approaches to action, including notions of "community involvement", "community action" and "popular participation, informed by "active citizenship" and "political literacy".

Fauré et al. (1972, p. 151), for example, argue for education that is committed to "replacing a mechanical, administrative type of authority by a lively, democratic process of decision making" involving "participation of the greatest number exercising the highest responsibilities". Delors (1996, p. 92) calls for contact between different groups of people that "takes place in an egalitarian context". For Gelpi (1985, p. 77), the transformation of traditional education into lifelong education is dependent upon "the depth and quality of popular participation in the running of society". Lengrand (1975, p. 107) argues that developing a universal spirit of peace calls for "the development of a democratic spirit and its international aspects". Longworth (1999, p. 175) suggests that "an individual has a responsibility to contribute to and improve the society in which he or she lives". And, for learning organisations, Senge (1990) argues for non-authoritarian, "flatter" power structures in which there is shared responsibility and decision-making.

3 The Ethics of Lifelong Learning

The foregoing ethical values, presented here as informed commitments, indicate the aretaic nature of the ethic that is presupposed and implied by lifelong learning theory. In such an ethic, the values identify qualities of individual or community character and they serve in that way to constrain human action (Oakley & Cocking 2001).

Lifelong learning theory also clearly recognises the contextualised nature of ethical action. The foregoing informed commitments 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.

Lifelong learning theory also 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 of ethical action or capability to act ethically. In other words, it is subject to refinement and improvement over time through learning. 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 expression of informed, humane commitments. It is a conception of ethics that is grounded in Aristotelian ethics (Bagnall 1998) – a conception of the sort argued by Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) 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. It is the sort of conception of ethics that 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 exercise as a human skill.

This conception of applied ethics takes ethical knowledge to be culturally constructed, rather than its 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 might 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, lack of awareness or intolerable

difference; 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 et al. 1986; Proctor & Dutta 1995). It clearly also, though, depends on descriptive or theoretical knowledge. The most important descriptive and theoretical knowledge informing skilled ethical action is not, however, 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 et al. 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.

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 tend to construct ethical knowledge as: (1) universally applicable within the community of practice for which they are intended (rather than as situationally responsive); (2) absolute and invariable (rather than as a matter of degree); (3) imperative knowledge to be applied in practical contexts (rather than as the situationally skilled application of humane commitments); (4) knowable through study of the code and brought to individual practice (rather than being knowable, developed and learned through guided practice); (5) evidenced in action that is evaluated and justified with respect to the codified precepts (rather than with respect to the good); and (6) encouraging commitment to the code (rather than to a life lived according to the humane

commitments). The various aspects of skilled ethical performance identified here 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 notable 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 presupposed in lifelong learning theory.

Similarly, ethical egoism (Nietzsche 1967) and fundamentalism (Preston 2001) are opposed to this conception of ethical knowledge and action. A singular 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.

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 reasoning plays an important role in ethical action as it is here understood. 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.

4 Lifelong Learning and Values Education

It is argued here that the foregoing conception of ethics is presupposed by lifelong learning theory. The question arises, then, of how that argument relates to the values education focus of this volume. However, before we move to address that question

in the next section, we might think that more might usefully be said about the values and values education contexts of lifelong learning ethics.

Perhaps straightforwardly, ethical values – including those captured in the informed commitments of the lifelong learning ethic – may be seen as a subset of cultural values more broadly. The notion indicated here of ethical values is that of cultural imperatives to act in one way or another for the common good, in the sense that they direct human action to attain states of being that are valued features of cultural reality (Bagnall 2004). Excluded, then, are values that are neutral or negative with respect to the common good, encompassing, possibly, purely aesthetic, prudential or egoistic values, although, as Jarrett (1991) has argued, such values may contribute importantly to the ethical as contributing to the good life and to well-being.

Values education, in its most generic sense, will embrace, then, both ethical and those other, non-ethical, values. This sense is evident, for example, in the definition of values education advanced by Brian Hill, in which the "cognitive aspect" calls for "a representative *knowledge base* concerning the value traditions which have helped to form contemporary culture" (Hill 1991, p. 10). It should be acknowledged, though, that proponents of values education not uncommonly see it as being focused on or restricted to ethical values. Robb (1994, p. 1), for example, notes that a "values education approach" (which he prefers to the term "values education") "is based, fundamentally, on respect and caring for one's fellow human beings", and that "values education is ultimately about persuading people … to act in accordance with fundamental values such as love, honesty and respect for the humanity of others" (Robb 1994, p. 6). In this sense, values education may be understood as moral education, as is done, for example, by Stephenson et al. (1998).

In such conceptions of values education, the lifelong learning ethic here articulated has profound implications for values education to the extent that education is sympathetically responsive to lifelong learning theory. That theory is directed to transforming traditional education systems, policies and practices in important ways. In particular, it is directed to focusing educational attention on: (1) the learning *engagement* (rather than on educational provision); (2) learning *outcomes* (rather than what is taught); (3) learning capabilities for *managing one's own learning* (rather than on the learning of disciplinary content); (4) learning *throughout life* (rather than just in childhood and adolescence); (5) the *facilitation* of learning (rather than the constraining and policing of learning); (6) educational *inclusion and re-engagement* on an *as-needs* basis (in contrast to educational participation to the point at which a student has reached the identified limits of his or her evidenced learning potential); (7) the *separation of learning from its assessment and credentialing* (rather than the tying of learning assessment and credentialing to episodes of teaching); (8) *practical* knowledge and learning (rather than hierarchically-structured disciplinary knowledge in which propositional knowledge is most highly valued); (9) the *embedding* of learning in other life tasks and events (rather than the differentiation of education from other institutions and realities); (10) *individual* (rather than societal) learning needs; (11) the *culturally contextualised learner* (rather than the learner as a member of a developmental category); and (12) *empirical experience*, *practical utility and technique* (rather than tradition,

ideology and policy) in the framing of educational interventions. Without suggesting that the ethic here articulated entails or indicates lifelong learning theory, it is nevertheless the case that the practice of values education is subject to those transformations no less than is any other substantive focus of education.

There is, though, a further and more direct connection between lifelong learning theory and values education. Since lifelong learning theory presupposes the sort of ethical values identified in the preceding sections of this chapter, the learning of *those* values may be seen as an important part of values education curricula – again, at least to the extent that lifelong learning is embraced by them. This connection certainly arises in the notion of values education noted above as focused more on *ethical* values. It is with this connection between lifelong learning theory and values education in mind that the following section has been drawn together.

5 Ethical Learning

In examining the implications for values education of the lifelong learning ethic here articulated, I will focus on the *learning* of the values constituting that ethic. Such a focus is true to lifelong learning theory itself, while also providing a logical link between the ethic and its learning through engagement in values education. That focus is, though, broader than just the *values* (the informed commitments) of the ethic, since it embraces also the learning of ethical *commitment*, in the exercise of which ethical action develops through practice in the manner of a *skill* and one's actions come to be characterised *by* the values of the ethic. Such an encompassing conception of values education is consistent with others, such as that of Hill (1991), who includes aspects of learning necessary for living according to the accepted values. (Although it should be noted in passing that Hill's notion of skill in values education is more limited than that involved here.)

First, 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 offset by its limited flexibility.

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.

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.

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. They may also be valuable in maintaining and strengthening ethical commitment, through either positive or negative instances.

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 those 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.

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. Thus, for example, the progressive erosion of commitment to the public good that is argued to accompany the contemporary privatisation of education (Bauman 1993) is subject to more general acceptance than are cases revealing the effects of strongly egoistic behaviour in organisations, which later have raised strong opposition to that tendency. 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.

Finally here, and on a slightly different tack, the commitment of lifelong learning theory 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.

6 Discussion

Returning, briefly, to the articulated lifelong learning ethic itself, this analysis reveals the limited practical utility of many traditional approaches to applied ethics. Such approaches – including duties-based ethics, utilitarian ethics, ethical egoism, ethical rationalism and an ethic of care – may be seen as variously and variably contributing aspects of applied ethical knowledge to ethics as the skilled and situationally sensitive application of humane commitments or virtues. None of them, though, captures the richness of ethical action as it is here understood. The study of traditional approaches to applied ethics may, nevertheless, contribute importantly to learners' development of conceptual frameworks through which they generate cognitive strategies for managing ethical learning. It may also provide ethical understanding and ethical precepts through which ethical performance may be evaluated and with which deliberative ethical action in the face of radically different ethically challenging situations may be informed.

The analysis reveals also the ethical limitations of codes of conduct. They neither assume nor encourage the sort of learning contexts or engagements that are here indicated. They are invariably prescribed as though the capabilities to apply their dictates were unproblematically pre-existing in all potential users of the codes. They thus are constructed as calling only for a focus on the learning of limited verbal information (the codes), the association of codified statements with situations, and the association of those statements with particular courses of action. They appear to presume and invite learning of the code as a collection of imperative statements or desired states of affairs, using approaches to learning that are conducive to such a task: repeated recitation (internally or outwardly articulated) and recall. And they invite the learning of associations between particular imperatives or states of affairs and the situations where they should be applied, and between imperatives or states of affairs and the indicated courses of action, again using approaches appropriate to the task: the study and recall of associational cues and repeatedly tested practice in correctly identifying associations. In other words, codes of conduct call for the learning of a set of

restraints to existing potentialities for human action. They are not conceptualised or constructed as enriching or extending the possibilities of human action, but of *limiting* them. The learning therein required is that which limits and contains, rather than that which extends human potential.

The learning implications of the lifelong learning ethic articulated here may be seen as normative constraints in the development and conduct of values education programs and curricula that are directed to working within a lifelong learning framework. They point to the irreducible importance of situated learning in the learning of ethical knowledge as it is here articulated. Such learning calls for engaged and interactive learning in contexts where ethical action is valued and is practiced by valued others (for learning ethical commitment) and where ethical action can be observed, copied and practiced and where that practice can be constructively criticised (for learning ethical skill). They point also, though, to important limitations to situated learning in this area. The learning of ethical theory is not evidently best done in a situated fashion. Neither probably is the identification of precepts and maxims for learning through ethically novel situations. The risks involved in the making of ethical errors in situated learning identify another important limitation. The need for situational diversity in broadening ethical skill also reveals a limitation to naturalistic situations which, in the normal course of events, may be expected to incline to the repetition of similar situations. While carefully structured and guided simulations may be used to enhance the quality of situational learning with respect to the learning or precepts, in limiting the risks of errors and in enhancing the ethical diversity of learning situations, the learning of ethical theory would seem to be best undertaken through more formal educational approaches.

What is suggested in broad-brush, then, is that values education within a lifelong learning framework would encompass a complex and multifaceted diversity of learning engagements, centred on those experienced through a continuing and thorough-going immersion in cultural realities informed by the values of the lifelong learning ethic – an immersion that is, nevertheless, self-reflective, self-critical and informed by ethical theory. Comparatively unitary approaches to values education are insufficient, even though each may contribute importantly to ethical learning in a lifelong learning framework. Among such approaches would be, of course, the range of case study, dilemma-based and values-clarification approaches (Raths et al. 1978), including Lipman's (1988) 'Philosophy for Children' approach and its extensions by, for example, Freakley and Burgh (2000).

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