

Springer International Handbooks of Education

David N. Aspin  
Judith Chapman  
Karen Evans  
Richard Bagnall *Editors*

# Second International Handbook of Lifelong Learning

Part 1

 Springer

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Springer International Handbooks of Education

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Karen Evans • Richard Bagnall  
Editors

# Second International Handbook of Lifelong Learning

Part One

 Springer

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*VADE MECUM*

γηράσκω δ' αἰεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος  
*I am growing old but still learning many  
things*

*(Solon c630–c555 BC)*



*To all those  
Of every age, every country, and every creed  
Committed to  
Making Lifelong Learning  
A  
Reality for All  
In the confidence that  
'this world one day will be  
the type of world we all deserve'*

Nelson Mandela





# Foreword

## International Handbook of Lifelong Learning

The past 10 years have witnessed lifelong learning entering a phase of unforeseen strength, but also of weakness. The discussions in the 1990s about the defining issues of lifelong learning were built mainly on positions adopted, from the 1960s and onwards, in international organisations like UNESCO and OECD. UNESCO was the protagonist of a humanitarian and utopian concept of lifelong learning, whereas the OECD forged an economic view with regard to competitiveness and economic growth. In the 1990s however, the EU-Commission joined with a stand on social cohesion and employability, and all three organisations increasingly approached almost consensus on lifelong learning incorporating employability, social cohesion, personal fulfilment and social inclusion.

Within the EU lifelong learning soon became the overarching concept for the national employment plans. So where lifelong learning in the beginning rather was a philosophy, based on visions on learning leading to happiness and personal fulfilment, it soon entered political rhetoric, and from there moved into the area of policies and strategies. Many adult education NGOs increased their influence in European policy shaping. From then on the concept has been discussed as encompassing all learning from cradle to grave, including formal, nonformal and informal learning. In consequence of this, the EU in 2007 collected all education and training programmes under the overarching title of lifelong learning. The use of improved statistical tools however has made visible some uncomfortable realities. The development of learning outcomes and participation in lifelong learning has not uniquely been a success. Much policy has been developed, but less implemented.

There is a complex relationship between improving the evidence base for policy development through knowledge production, and the impact on social and pedagogical practices. However, there is at the world level too little research and research-based knowledge about adult education and learning, the importance of the conditions of adult learning and lifelong learning and about learning theories and workplace learning. How can knowledge exchange be enhanced globally?

The Asia-Europe Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning offers an example of ways in which knowledge exchange can be promoted, providing a platform for dialogue between research and policy, between Asia and Europe and, since 2010, Australia, New Zealand and Russia. Interregional cooperations such as those between African Union and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) identify education and the fostering of human talent as integral to the entire life course as well as to social transformation. These and other interregional cooperations are making their distinctive contributions to bridging both research areas and continents, but there is a much bigger need to join forces globally in comparative research, making its results visible worldwide.

Today higher education is opening up for adult returners and access is widening, but there is still too little research and too few studies on the social return on investments in adult learning and the wider benefits of lifelong learning. Countries around the world acknowledge that lifelong learning has a major role to play in addressing economic and social challenges. They make national strategies for lifelong learning and regions come together to create new resource-bases, like the new regional Seameo Centre for Lifelong Learning in Vietnam. New research will be needed to contribute to the knowledge and evidence base for policy development, about learning cities, libraries and museums, and with offering critical perspectives as part of the policy framework.

The present handbook offers excellent examples and reviews of such up-to-date research, as an inspiration and foundation for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners alike.

I commend this publication to audiences around the world.

Arne Carlsen  
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ASEM Education and Research Hub for Lifelong Learning  
Director of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning from 2011

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To each of the above we are deeply grateful.



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## Foreword

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He is Honorary Doctor (philosophy of education) from Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences, Honorary Doctor (lifelong learning) from University of Latvia and Honorary Professor (Lifelong Learning) at Leningrad State University n.a. Alexander Pushkin.

He has been visiting professor at Kaunas University, University of Western Timisoara, German Institute of Adult Education, National University of Malaysia and Peking University.

As an international expert in lifelong learning he has been consultant to OECD and UNESCO, and member of various editorial boards and international think-tanks on lifelong learning. As vice-rector of education (2001–2006) at the Danish University of Education, he has acquired vast professional experience in educational policy development and implementation. He is currently executive director of the International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes (IALEI) and chair of the steering committee of the Erasmus Mundus Joint European Masters Programme in Lifelong Learning: Policy and Management and has recently been appointed director of UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning from 2011.

## Part I

**David Aspin** is emeritus professor of education, School of Graduate Studies, and formerly dean of the faculty of education, Monash University, Australia. Prior to this he was professor of philosophy of education at King's College London and adjunct

professor in the Department of Philosophy of Education in the Institute of Education, both in the University of London. With Judith Chapman he is co-author of the publication *The School, the Community and Lifelong Learning* (London: Cassell 1997) and, with Judith Chapman, Michael Hatton and Yukiko Sawano, co-editor of the *International Handbook on Lifelong Learning* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 2001). In 1999 he was awarded a visiting fellowship at the International Studies Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Como, Italy; in 2004 he was appointed a visiting professor at Nottingham University. In 2007 he was elected a visiting fellow at St. Edmund's College Cambridge. In 2006 he was editor of two volumes in the Springer Press 'Lifelong Learning' series – *Philosophical Perspectives on Lifelong Learning*, and (with Judith Chapman) *Values Education and Lifelong Learning*. His current research centres on lifelong learning, principally its epistemological, mental and methodological aspects and on values and values education, principally their normative conclusions and meta-ethical aspects.

**Robin Barrow** is professor of philosophy of education at Simon Fraser University. He was until recently dean of education there, and prior to that was reader in philosophy of education at the University of Leicester (UK). Professor Barrow is the author of 25 books and over 100 articles in the philosophy of education, philosophy and ancient history, including '*The Philosophy of Schooling*', '*Giving Teaching Back to Teachers*', '*An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*' and most recently, '*Plato*' (Continuum 2007). In 1996 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

**David Beckett** teaches and researches adult education as professional practice, especially for those in institutional settings, such as managers, trainers, HRD Staff, nurses, teachers and also in community-based and consultancy-based work. His chief work as a research supervisor engages him in the areas of human resource development, workplace learning, professional development and in education philosophy and policy. By the end of 2008, he had published about 270 items, mainly of two kinds: non-refereed education policy contributions to 'Directions in Education'; and referred journal articles, chapters, conference papers and a book *Life, Work and Learning* (2002: London: Routledge). David is a fellow of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia and of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders. His next book *Starting Educational Research: Creative Thinking and Doing*, written with John O'Toole, is currently in the Press of Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

**Judith Chapman** is currently professor of education and until July 2009 was director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Australian Catholic University, where she was dean of the Faculty of Education from 1998 to 2003. Before that she was professor of education at the University of Western Australia from 1992 to 1998 where she was also associate dean for teaching and learning of the combined faculties of economics, commerce, education and law; prior to that she had been director of the School Decision – Making and Management Centre in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. In 1999 she was awarded an Order of Australia for services to

tertiary education as a teacher and researcher. In 1999 she was also awarded a visiting fellowship at the International Studies Center of the Rockefeller Foundation in Bellagio, Como, Italy; in 2004 she was appointed a visiting professor at Nottingham University and during 2007–2011 she has been elected a visiting fellow at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge.

**Richard Edwards** is professor of education and head of The Stirling Institute of Education. He has researched and written extensively on many aspects of lifelong learning. His most recent books include, with Robin Usher, *Lifelong Learning – Sign, Discourses, Practices* (2007, Dordrecht: Springer), and *Globalisation and Pedagogy* (2008, London: Routledge, 2nd edition), edited with Gert Biesta and Mary Thorpe, *Rethinking the Contexts of Learning and Teaching* (2009, London: Routledge), with Roz Ivanic et al., *Improving Learning in College: Rethinking Literacies Across the Curriculum*, (2009, London: Routledge), and, with Tara Fenwick, *Actor-Network Theory in Education* (2010, London: Routledge).

**Penny Enslin** is professor of education at the University of Glasgow, where she is director of the Ed.D. programme. Her research and teaching interests lie in the area of political theory and education, with particular interests in democracy and citizenship education. She has published internationally on deliberative democracy and education, liberalism, gender and feminist theory, nation building, African philosophy of education and higher education.

**Colin W. Evers** is a professor in the School of Education in the Faculty of Arts at The University of New South Wales. His research interests are in educational administration, philosophy of education and research methodology. He has written many papers and is an author and editor of seven books including *Knowing Educational Administration* (Pergamon, 1991), *Exploring Educational Administration* (Pergamon, 1996) and *Doing Educational Administration* (Pergamon, 2000), all co-authored with Gabriele Lakomski, and *Leadership for Quality Schooling* (Routledge/Falmer, 2001), co-edited with K.C. Wong. He is currently co-editor of the journal *International Studies in Educational Administration*.

**Peter Gilroy** was formerly Manchester Metropolitan University's Director of Research Development. He has published widely in the area of professional development and has additional research interests in the general areas of cultural change, philosophy, education and curriculum justification. His recent publications represent a series of linked critiques and reviews of policy developments in the field of continued professional development. He has served as the sole editor of the international *Journal of Education for Teaching*, a member of the board of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, co-opted member of the executive of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (having previously been the elected chair of UCET) and one of two UK representatives on the Japan/UK Education Forum. He is currently professor emeritus at Manchester Metropolitan University and holds a visiting chair at Roehampton University whilst acting as a consultant for a number of other UK and overseas universities as they develop their research profile.

**Terry Hyland** qualified as a teacher in 1971 and after completing B.Ed, MA and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Lancaster, taught successively in schools, further, adult and higher education. After a 2-year secondment at the University of Sokoto, Nigeria, he worked in teacher education at the University of the West of England, before moving to the University of Warwick. Dr. Hyland was professor of post-compulsory education and training at the University of Bolton from September 2000 until his retirement, but continues to teach there as a consultant; he was appointed honorary visiting professor at the University of Huddersfield in 2006. Dr. Hyland's main research interests are in vocational education and training, professional development, values education and post-school policy studies. His books are *The Changing Face of Further Education* (RoutledgeFalmer, 2003, with Barbara Merrill) and *A Guide to Vocational Education & Training* (London: Continuum, 2007, with Chris Winch).

**Peter Jarvis** is a former head of department of educational studies at the University of Surrey. He is the founding editor of *The International Journal of Lifelong Education* and serves on a number of other editorial boards in Europe, Asia and the United States. He has written and edited over 40 books and 200 chapters and articles in books and journals, a number of which have been translated into many languages. He holds and has held a number of visiting professorships in universities throughout the world and has received many awards for his work, including a number of honorary doctorates.

**Patrick Keeney** is adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University, having previously taught at Okanagan University College (British Columbia), Canada. His academic interests are mainly in the areas of the history of education, philosophy of education and educational law, in particular the effects of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on educational governance. He is a regular contributor to the *National Post*. He is currently deputy editor of *Prospero: A Journal of New Thinking in Philosophy in Education*.

**Mal Leicester** has had a career in education which has encompassed teaching in schools, teacher education, community education in inner city Birmingham, being adviser for multicultural education for the Avon Education Authority and most recently professor of adult learning and teaching at Nottingham University. She is a long-serving member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Moral Education*. Her research interests include moral education, values in education, lifelong learning, family learning and social justice in education. She has published widely in education journals, undertaken considerable editorial work and authored books on both ethnicity and disability in education. Most recently (with Routledge and Jessica Kingsley) she has written collections of original, themed stories with associated educational activities for the foundation level and at key stages one and two. She is emeritus professor at Nottingham University and visiting professor at the Universities of Derby and Nottingham Trent.

**Ivan Snook** trained as a primary teacher at Christchurch Teachers' College and taught in secondary schools from 1961 to 1965. He took his BA and MA (First Class

Honours) at the University of Canterbury and gained his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois where he specialised in philosophy of education under Dr. Harry S. Broudy. He was head of the department of education at Massey University 1985–1990 and dean of the faculty from 1989 until his retirement at the end of 1993. He is now emeritus professor of education. He has authored, edited or co-authored several books: *Philosophy of Education: An Organization of Topics and Selected Sources*; *Indoctrination and Education*; *Concepts of Indoctrination*; *Education and Rights*; *More than Talk: Moral Education in New Zealand*; *Church, State and New Zealand Education*; *The Ethical Teacher*. In 1993 he was elected an honorary fellow of the New Zealand Educational Institute. In 1994 he received the McKenzie Award of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education. In 1995 he was elected as one of the first three fellows of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia.

**Mary Tjiattas** is an honorary research assistant in the Department of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. She is also a part-time faculty member at North Carolina State University. Her current academic interests are in moral psychology, and social and political philosophy.

**Jan Visser** is president and senior researcher at the Learning Development Institute (LDI), with prime responsibility for the focus areas of the Meaning of Learning (MOL); The Scientific Mind (TSM); and Learning for Sustainable Futures (LfSF). He is also a professor extraordinary at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, and a lifetime fellow of the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction, which he served as one of its directors for 6 years. Prior to establishing LDI, Jan was UNESCO's director for Learning Without Frontiers (LWF), a global trans-sectoral programme of which he was the principal architect. A theoretical physicist by original vocation and training, who graduated from the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, he engaged into many other areas, including film-making and instructional design. In the latter area, he obtained his degrees from Florida State University. Whilst broadening his interests and activities beyond the study of nature, his original passion, he developed a career that has lasted more than four decades in international development, working around the globe to improve the conditions for human learning. Dr. Visser is also a musician (who built some of his own instruments), an avid walker and, naturally, a lifelong learner.

**Yusef Waghid** is professor of philosophy of education, Chair of the Department of Educational Policy Studies and dean of the faculty of education at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. His research focuses on democratic citizenship education and is captured in his research book (2010) *Revisiting Democratic Citizenship Education: Pedagogical Framings* (African Sun Media Press). He is the author of *Community and Democracy in South Africa: Liberal Versus Communitarian Perspectives* (Peter Lang Publishers). He is an elected member of the Academy of Science in South Africa and editor-in-chief of the *South African Journal of Higher Education*.

**Kenneth Wain** is emeritus professor of education at the University of Malta where he has served as head of the Department of Foundations in Education and as dean



of the Faculty of Education, where he still does some teaching and supervision in philosophy of education. Before taking up his first appointment at the university as lecturer he taught in state primary and secondary schools for several years. He received his Ph.D. from the University of London. Over the years he has published numerous articles in academic journals as well as chapters in books. He has also authored the following books: *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* (1987), *The Maltese National Curriculum: A Critical Evaluation* (1991), *Theories of Teaching* (1992), *The Value Crisis: An Introduction to Ethics* (1995) and *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* (2004). He has recently finished a book on Rousseau's work on politics and education, which is due to be published shortly by Sense Publishers.

**Melanie Walker** is professor of higher education at the University of Nottingham, where she is director of the doctorate course in higher education and lifelong learning; she is also an extraordinary professor in the faculty of education at University of the Western Cape. Her research interests focus on higher education, in particular, theories and practices of equality and social justice, identity formation and learning, agency and gender equity and capability pedagogies.

**Shirley Walters** is professor of adult and continuing education at the University of Western Cape, South Africa. She is the founding director of the Division for Lifelong Learning, which is concerned with helping the university realise its lifelong learning mission. She is presently chair of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and has recently received an appointment as honorary professor at the Free State University, Bloemfontein, South Africa.

## Part II

**Amy Bohren** is a research assistant and doctoral student in the faculty of education, Monash University, where she is writing her dissertation on the employability of liberal arts graduates. She is currently involved in the ARC Project entitled 'The Teaching Occupation in Learning Societies'. Amy is a registered professional career practitioner and was formerly the postgraduate careers and employment consultant at Monash University. Prior to this, she worked as a research fellow in the faculty of arts at Monash University where she coordinated the Graduate Pathways Project.

**Catherine Casey** is professor of organisation and society at the University of Leicester, UK. She was formerly at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and prior to that she researched and taught at the University of Rochester, New York. Her principal research interests are in areas of economic sociology and in education. Catherine Casey has held visiting fellowships in a number of European institutes and she has served as expert scientist for the European Union Commission Directorate-General Research, and Directorate-General Education and Culture. She is a senior editor of *Organization Studies* (Sage). She has published numerous articles in international journals and books, and is author of *Work, Self and Society:*

*After Industrialism* (Routledge 1995) and *Critical Analysis of Organizations: Theory, Practice, Revitalization* (Sage 2002).

**Lynne Chisholm** holds the chair for education and generation at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, where she coordinates the university's Research Centre on Education, Generation and Life-course; she also holds visiting professorships at the University of Oslo (education and citizenship) and the Danish School of Education/University of Aarhus (adult learning/continuing education), and is a member of the Austrian Council of Universities of Applied Sciences. She is an international specialist in education, training and youth research in comparative and intercultural context. She is regularly involved in undertaking European and international studies and reports in these fields and was co-editor for UNESCO's first global report on adult learning and education. She also coordinates the Asia-Europe Lifelong Learning Hub research network on workplace learning.

**Karen Evans** is professor of education (lifelong learning) at the Institute of Education, University of London, where she was formerly head of the School of Lifelong Education and International Development. Her main research interests are learning in life and work transitions, and learning in and through the workplace. Books include *Improving Literacy at Work* (2011); *Learning, Work and Social Responsibility* (2009); *Improving Workplace Learning* (2006); *Reconnection: Countering Social Exclusion Through Situated Learning* (2004); *Working to Learn* (2002); *Learning and Work in the Risk Society* (2000). She was editor of *COMPARE*, the journal of comparative and international education, between 2004 and 2009 and is currently a leading researcher in the Economic and Social Research Council's Research Centre (LLAKES) on Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies. She is an academician of the UK Academy of Social Sciences.

**Josephine Fleming** works in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney. She is currently a researcher on two large joint university projects: one is a collaboration between Sydney, Melbourne and Griffith Universities funded by the Australian Research Council (*TheatreSpace*) and the other is led by the University of Technology Sydney and funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Josephine is also completing her Ph.D. research, a three-country comparative study on lifelong learning. She was previously communications manager at the University of Sydney's Centre for Continuing Education.

**Kaori Kitagawa** is research officer in the faculty of policy and society of the Institute of Education, University of London, where she completed her Ph.D. in 2004 with a thesis on lifelong learning in England and Japan. Her research interests include lifelong learning, professional development, vocational education and training and youth transition. She is currently working in various research projects including the Changing Youth Labour Markets and School to Work Transitions in Modern Britain project funded by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. She also has teaching responsibility in the IOE's Doctor in Education Programmes, in Master of Arts (MA) programmes including the MA Lifelong Learning

(Singapore), the MA in Comparative Education and in the Foundation Degree in Professional Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

**Wing On Lee** is dean of education research at the National Institute of Education, Singapore, and president of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies. He was previously vice-president (academic) and deputy to the president, chair professor of comparative education, dean of Foundations in Education, head of the Departments of Educational Policy and Administration and Social Sciences and co-director of the Centre for Citizenship Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. He has also served as director (international) in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney, Australia, where he was professor of education. His public service in Hong Kong included membership of the Central Policy Unit, Education Commission and Curriculum Development Council. He received the Medal of Honour awarded by the Hong Kong Government in 2003 and HKSGI Award from the Hong Kong Soka Gakkai International Association in 2010.

**David Livingstone** is Canada Research Chair in Lifelong Learning and Work at the University of Toronto and professor emeritus in sociology and equity studies at OISE/UT. His books include *The Education-Jobs Gap: Underemployment or Economic Democracy* (Garamond Press, 2004, 2nd edition); *Hidden Knowledge: Organized Labour in the Information Age* (with Peter Sawchuk, Garamond Press and Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); *Education and Jobs: Exploring the Gaps* (University of Toronto Press, 2009); *Lifelong Learning in Paid and Unpaid Work* (Routledge, 2010); and *Manufacturing Meltdown: Recasting Steelworkers' Labour and Learning'* (with Dorothy E. Smith and Warren Smith, Fernwood Publishing, 2011).

**Atsushi Makino** is professor in the Graduate School of Education, University of Tokyo. Following graduation from Graduate School of Education, Nagoya University, he worked as researcher in the National Institute of Educational Research in China between 1992 and 2006. He was professor in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University, from 2006 before joining the University of Tokyo as professor in 2008. His research topics include lifelong learning, educational thought in modern China, educational reform in contemporary China, community education in Mainland China and Taiwan, education in ageing and birthrate-declining society in East Asian Region and so on.

**Greg William Misiaszek** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California (UCLA) Graduate School of Education (advisor Carlos Alberto Torres, Ph.D.) in comparative and international education. His dissertation is on adult, non/informal progressive environmental education programmes Argentina, Brazil and Appalachia, United States. He has presented internationally and/or published on ecopedagogy, Freirean pedagogy, globalisation, adult education, higher education, in/nonformal education, Latin American education and educational technologies. He is an honorary founder and principal advisor to the director of the Paulo Freire Institute, UCLA. He has worked at the University of Southern California's (USC) Davis School of Gerontology for over 15 years as an educational expert and programme manager.

**Moses Otieno Oketch** was educated at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, before he proceeded to the United States where he obtained his master's and Ph.D. in economics of education and education policy at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He has written over 50 articles, reports, working papers, book chapters and books on matters of education policies in Africa, and participated in over 45 conferences and workshops across the world. He previously worked as academic member of staff at Vanderbilt University, USA. He is presently a senior lecturer in educational planning and international development at the Institute of Education, University of London.

**Ingrid Schoon** is professor of human development and social policy at the Institute of Education, University of London. She is also director of PATHWAYS, a fellowship programme funded by the Jacobs Foundation, and research director of the Centre for the Analysis of Youth Transitions (CAYT). She is a member of the ESRC Centre for the Study of Learning and Life Chances in the Knowledge Economies (LLAKES). Her research interests are focused on human development across the life course: transitions to adulthood, risk and resilience, the realisation of individual potential in a changing socio-historical context and the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage. Her publications include over 100 scholarly articles, book chapters and reports.

**Terri Seddon** is professor of education at Monash University. Her research focuses on transformations in learning and educational work in Australia and globally. She has documented the restructuring of Australian education and training since the 1990s and the way these changes have increased global interconnectedness and mobility, dispersed learning spaces and reconfigured the identities and practices of educational workers and workforces. Terri's current research is examining 'the teaching occupation in learning societies: a global ethnography of occupational boundary work', which builds on her recent book, *Learning and Work and the Politics of Working Life: Global Transformations and Collective Identities in Teaching, Nursing and Social Work* (with Lea Henriksson and Beatrix Niemeyer).

**Martin Weale** is an economist, currently visiting professor at the Institute of Education, University of London, and a leading researcher in the ESRC Research Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies (LLAKES). He was director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in the UK, until 2010, when he joined the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee. At NIESR, he has published widely in academic journals and written numerous studies and reports for a wide range of national and international bodies.

**Joseph Zajda** is associate professor in the faculty of education at the Australian Catholic University, where he specialises in globalisation and comparative and international education. He has written and edited 22 books and over 100 book chapters and articles, including his two *International Handbooks of Globalisation and Education Policy Research* and the 12-volume book series *Globalisation and Comparative Education and Policy Research*, all published by Springer. He has founded four international journals in education: *New Education* in 1978

(*Educational Practice & Theory* from 1995), *Education and Society* (1982), *Curriculum and Teaching* (1984) and *World Studies in Education* (2000). He is joint recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant for research into ‘Globalising studies of the politics of history education: a comparative analysis of history national curriculum implementation in Russia and Australia’, 2011–2013.

**Miriam Zukas** is currently professor of adult education and executive dean of the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy at Birkbeck, University of London. She was previously the director of the Institute for Lifelong Learning at the University of Leeds. Her background as an adult educator has entailed an engagement with many different professionals including healthcare workers (doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and so on), educators (in further, community and higher education) and those working in the private sector (solicitors, accountants etc.). Her research currently focuses on the transition of professionals from one level of responsibility to another, particularly in relation to doctors. She is co-editor of *Beyond Reflective Practice: New Approaches to Professional Lifelong Learning* (Routledge, 2009).

### Part III

**Michael T. Buchanan** is senior lecturer and a member of the national school of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. He has held positions of leadership responsibility in Catholic schools and in tertiary education.

**Judith D. Chapman AM** is professor of education and formerly dean of the faculty of education at Australian Catholic University. Judith was formerly professor of education associate dean (teaching and learning) of the combined faculties of economics, commerce, education and law at the University of Western Australia and director of the School Decision-Making and Management Centre at Monash University in Australia.

**Sandra Ratcliff Daffron** is associate professor of adult education at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA, and has an extensive background in adult education and continuing professional education with an Ed.D. from Northern Illinois University. Daffron has 27 years of experience as a professor, programme planner and professional executive in the fields of law, improvement of justice, adult basic education, prisoner education, military training and physician training. Daffron has served 2 years as chief of party for a Rule of Law project for USAID in the Middle East (West Bank and Gaza). Daffron and Mary North are authors of the forthcoming book, *Successful Transfer of Learning*, by Krieger Publishing.

**Ruth Dunkin** has over 30 years experience in public policy development and implementation, with a particular focus on education, health reform and labour market change, gained in senior executive roles in the public, not-for-profit and private

sectors, including as deputy vice-chancellor and vice chancellor of RMIT in Melbourne, Australia. Her academic interests have been in strategy, management and organisational change, teaching and learning and economic reform.

**Nic Gara** is a former college director of the Higher Colleges of Technology in the UAE. He has held a similar position in Kuwait and prior to this he was the managing director of the Midland College of TAFE in Western Australia. Previous director-level positions within TAFE (WA) have led to membership of national and state level curriculum committees, national ACE taskforce involvement and system coordination responsibilities. Originally qualifying in engineering, he later trained as a mathematics teacher and did further studies in chemical engineering, before completing graduate qualifications in education, administration and a master's in business. This led to a doctor of education, which was completed at UWA where he is still involved in teacher education on a sessional basis.

**Abrar Hasan**, retired head of Education Policy Division, OECD, is a policy advisor in the fields of education, labour markets, technology and economic development. His latest publication is 'Development Paradigms and Education Policy', in the *Journal for Educational Change* (2010), and his current work centres on capacity development in education for UNESCO. He is currently engaged in authoring a book on *International Trends in Education Policy and Practice* for Springer (Netherlands). Over the last couple of years, Dr. Hasan has served as advisor to ministries of higher education in Portugal and Denmark and for CONFITEA VI (UIL): Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (Lead Co-editor, 2009), Danish University Evaluation: Panel Report (December 2009, Panel Member), Reforming Arts and Culture Higher Education in Portugal (Chair, International Panel, September 2009), Reforming Distance Learning Higher Education in Portugal (Chair, International Panel, July 2009). Recent OECD publications conducted under his direction include: *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers* (2005); *Promoting Adult Learning* (2006), *Starting Strong II: Early Childhood and Education Care* (2006), *Review of Higher Education Policy: Denmark* (2005), *Review of Basic Education Policy in Turkey* (2007), *Review of Higher Education Policy of Portugal* (2008) and *Review of Tertiary Education Policies* (including China and Croatia) (2008).

**Norman Longworth** is now in his tenth career as an author, private consultant and project manager, having worked as head of department in schools and universities, as marketer, researcher and education developer in industry, and as leader of European and global professional associations. During the past 40 years, he has been holder of the IBM/UNESCO Chair of Information Technology and Education, author of five influential books and many learning materials on lifelong learning and learning regions, author of the European Commission's policy document for the local and regional dimension of lifelong learning, President of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative and vice-president of the World Initiative on Lifelong Learning, consultant to the European Commission, UNESCO and OECD, visiting professor at five European universities. His main activity and expertise is now in the domain of

lifelong learning cities, towns and regions in which he has managed and advised many European Commission projects, and created learning materials.

**Phillip McKenzie** is research Director of the *Transitions and Policy Analysis* programme area at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and a former director of the Monash University-ACER *Centre for the Economics of Education and Training* (CEET). At ACER and CEET he has worked on a wide variety of commissioned research projects on the costs, financing and labour market outcomes of education and training and education policy issues. From 1996 to 1998, and from 2002 to 2004, he worked at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on school-to-work transition and teacher policy issues.

**Tatum McPherson-Crowie** is the liaison librarian to the three schools of education, educational leadership and religious education at the St. Patrick's Campus of the Australian Catholic University, Victoria.

**Iris Metzgen-Ohlswager** is a recent graduate of the Continuing and College Education Master's programme at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA. She has a background as a high school teacher, teacher trainer, community prevention educator, media literacy specialist, programme planner and curriculum developer. Each of her professions has forced her to consider the importance of transfer of learning and recognise the need for research and dialogue on the subject.

**Loretta Saarinen** is a graduate of the Adult Education Master's programme at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA, USA. Saarinen's adult education experiences include community educator, curriculum developer, programme planner, researcher, trainer and conference speaker. She has taught at community colleges, universities, with incarcerated populations, refugees, social agencies and for work training. Transfer of learning is a major focus for the varied adult audiences.

**Yukiko Sawano** is currently a professor of comparative education and lifelong learning at University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo. From 1988 till 2005, she had been working at the Education Ministry of Japan and at the National Institute for Educational Policy Research of Japan (NIER) as a Senior Researcher. Her recent works include *Mapping the Dynamic Trends of Academic Achievement of Students Across the World* (2009, co-editor and author, in Japanese) and *New Society Models for a New Millennium – The Learning Society in Europe and Beyond* (Peter Lang, 2007, co-author). She is also socially contributing as a board member of the Japan Association of Lifelong Education, editor of the Japan Comparative Education Society, vice chair of the Council of Lifelong Learning of Kanagawa Prefecture, a member of Council of Youth in Toshima District, Tokyo.

**Malcolm Skilbeck** is an independent researcher, consultant and writer. His appointments have included director of the Education Centre and professor of education in the University of Ulster, director of the Australian Curriculum Development Centre, professor of curriculum studies at the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations for England and Wales, vice chancellor of Deakin University in

Australia and deputy director for education at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris.

**Shari Skinner** is a recent graduate of the Continuing and College Education Master's programme at Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. Skinner has over 12 years' experience in community college administration, in addition to experience in small business management, counselling and training. She currently provides technology training and supports online courses through the Office of eLearning at Whatcom Community College, Bellingham, WA. She is particularly interested in the transfer of learning in the online environment.

**Veronica Volkoff** is a senior research fellow in education policy and leadership at the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Her extensive research work over the last 15 years has focused mainly on equity in education across sectors and comparative studies. She recently completed an evaluation of the impact of provider inclusiveness strategies on participation levels in vocational education and training across all Australian states and territories and longitudinal research of study participation and outcomes for people in Adult Community Education providers in Victoria. In addition, she has led the design, development and implementation of an academic programme providing a new pathway into teaching, as part of a national initiative.

**Alexandra Withnall** recently retired from the post of associate professor in lifelong learning and health at Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick, UK. She now holds honorary posts in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at Warwick and the Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Leicester. She previously worked at the Universities of Lancaster and Keele and spent a decade as a researcher at the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education where she first developed an interest in older learners. A former chair of the Association for Education and Ageing, she has published extensively in the field and has contributed papers to a range of international conferences concerned with both gerontology and lifelong learning. Her most recent book is *Improving Learning in Later Life* based on research funded through a national research programme on teaching and learning issues.

## Part IV

**Richard G. Bagnall** is a professor in adult and vocational education and dean (research) for the Arts, Education and Law Academic Group at Griffith University, Australia. His scholarly work is in the social philosophy of adult and lifelong education, with particular emphasis on the ethics of educational theory, advocacy and policy. He has published over 100 books and papers in that field, including *Cautionary Tales in the Ethics of Lifelong Learning Policy and Management: A Book of Fables* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2004), and *Discovering Radical Contingency: Building a Postmodern Agenda in Adult Education* (New York: Peter



Lang, 1999). His teaching is centred on the philosophy of adult and lifelong learning. He has supervised to graduation the doctoral studies of over 25 doctoral and 30 research masters and honours degree candidates.

**Robin Barrow** is professor of philosophy of education at Simon Fraser University. He was until recently dean of education there, and prior to that was reader in philosophy of education at the University of Leicester (UK). Professor Barrow is the author of 25 books and over a 100 articles in the philosophy of education, philosophy and ancient history, including *The Philosophy of Schooling*, *Giving Teaching Back to Teachers*, *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*, and most recently, *Plato* (Continuum 2007). In 1996 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

**Roger Boshier** is professor of adult education at the University of British Columbia and former director of UBC programmes in Hong Kong and Singapore. He is actively involved in attempts to build a learning society in China, has participated in UNESCO-inspired activities designed to expedite this process, produced biographies of elderly cadres and studied Chinese learning villages, districts and mountains. He has also studied 'farm-gate' (self-educated) learners in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with a particular focus on America's Cup sailors, and analysed learning in the context of New Zealand heritage conservation. He maintains a longstanding interest in marine safety, search and rescue and coast guard politics in Canada.

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# Introduction and Overview

David Aspin, Karen Evans, Judith Chapman, and Richard Bagnall

## Introduction

'Lifelong learning' is a concept that has featured increasingly widely in educational policies and institutions, practices and programmes for nearly 50 years now, and whose place, power and presence has been marked especially since the mid 1990s in the attention given to it by a wide range of national and international agencies, organisations and departments. The notion that education and learning are activities and processes that do not begin and end with the commencement and closure of people's attendance at formal institutions of schooling goes back in western philosophy, at least as far as Plato, and was given repeated expression in the writings of his successors – Augustine, Quintilian, Aquinas, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and so on – finding its strongest emphasis in the twentieth-century work of philosopher and educator John Dewey.

Different cultures have their own discourses on learning throughout the life-course, informed by their own thinkers and traditions. For example, in Eastern philosophy, the concepts of lifelong learning are held to date from the ideas of Confucius of 2,500 years ago, with Confucian traditions shared by many East Asian societies and developed in different ways by Confucianist representatives such as Mengzi and Xunzi as well as Dong Zhongshu, who introduced Taosist philosophy into Confucianism in the Han Dynasty (Zhang 2008). The Confucian tradition emphasises education for all and has expression in commitments to educational equity and lifelong learning (Zhang 2008), with an emphasis on integration and harmony (Feng 1952).

Western thinkers and writers have argued that one of the chief characteristics by which human beings may be distinguished from other forms of organic entity and sentient creatures is their endless curiosity, their various forms of communication with each other about the puzzles, problems and predicaments they encounter, their desire to have their questions answered, their awareness of the need to cope with and master change and their propensity always to seek improvement in their situation. Human beings are endowed with these tendencies from the time of their birth and

exercise them throughout their lives. For human beings, living and learning are virtually synonymous – a view also central to writing and thinking within the Confucian tradition, the main distinction between Western and Eastern thought lying in the significance afforded to cooperative and collective values in learning and human development.

Of course there are times when learning seems to be particularly rapid and pressing: the first 5 years of life are the times when the greatest cognitive gains are made, that equip individuals with the competencies, capacities and qualities that enable them to face and begin to master the enormous amounts of information and the complex kinds of skill that their living will necessitate. Since the earliest times societies have determined this process should be carried out, at least initially, and during these years of accelerating development in childhood, adolescence and youth, in the surroundings of the family and the community, and then later, most often, in institutions devoted to the purpose and under the direction and guidance of specially qualified and committed people serving the community's interest in developing the learning of its coming generation.

### *The Institutional and Romantic Views of Learning*

It seems to have been and still is widely accepted that attendance at institutions of learning should be compulsory until the time when a society's young people may be deemed to have gained adequate information, mastered enough skills and developed into a state of sufficient maturity to be able to go on 'under their own steam', so to speak, and to make decisions as to their own continuing patterns and pathways of development. At that point – when individuals may be regarded as having attained a degree of autonomy – comes the end of most of the compulsory forms, institutions and patterns of learning. Learning after that becomes a matter of self-selection, with varying degrees of external prescription. Both require individuals to be aware of facts and possibilities about their situation in the world, to weigh the necessities or desirability of further learning and to have the informed judgement and the settled disposition to make choices for themselves. All these capacities will come about as a result of further learning.

There never was a time when this was not true and it is to their credit that educational thinkers and writers such as those named understood and appreciated this from the first. There were some, of course, who confused 'learning' with mere 'maturation' and 'education' with schooling. The 'New Romantics', as they were called by David Hargreaves (Hargreaves 1972; Hargreaves et al. 1975), claimed that 'the first impulses of Nature are always right' and believed that individuals, if left to themselves and without the officious interference of others, would tend to grow and learn 'naturally' all those things that their existence required: learning would come about simply as an accretion of growth. Others – those 'free thinkers' who believed in the kind of education that befitted the free person, the free mind and the free spirit – held that there was a paradox inherent in a situation in which individuals

were required to attend ‘teaching and learning’ institutions on a compulsory basis. In this constraint, some held, individuals were being subjected to the contradiction of being ‘forced to be free’; for them, schools were inimical to the real enterprise of ‘education’ and were analogous to ‘prison houses’ whose shades, descending upon growing young people, would actually produce the contrary of the outcomes at which societies aimed in setting them up in the first place.

The only similarity between such groups was often to be found in the view that there came a time when such processes could be regarded as complete: when people’s natures had come to full fruition, when the liberal education of people’s minds and spirits had brought them to full and final maturity. For such thinkers, any formal attempt at schooling after such a ‘terminus ad quem’ had been reached was redundant and otiose: people had reached a point when all further educational work was unnecessary, superfluous and fruitless. There might, of course, be some occasional need for supplementary training in the acquisition of further skills or additional instruction in the knowledge required for application in the workplace. But these needs were very much ‘ad hoc’ and could readily be provided and acquired on a piecemeal ‘need to know’ basis.

### *The ‘Fauré’ Report*

A harbinger of the rapid changes to which such thinking needed to be subjected was the emphasis placed in 1972 on the idea of ‘lifelong education’. This notion was articulated and developed in the Report to UNESCO of the Committee chaired by M. Edgar Fauré entitled ‘Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow’. The main point of this initiative was, in the words of Kenneth Wain’s summary of it (Wain 1993), as follows:

‘Lifelong education’ stands for a program to reconceptualise education totally according to the principle that education is a lifelong process. ... for a complete overhaul of our way of thinking about education, for a new philosophy of education and ... for a program of action... as the ‘master concept’ for all educational planning, policy-making, and practice ... The ambition was that the word education would eventually become synonymous with lifelong education in people’s minds ... (today’s) world ... requires a lifelong education which is a ‘constant reorganising or reconstructing of experience’.

The Fauré Report was instrumental in creating a climate that was consonant with the times. Education and learning were becoming increasingly important throughout the lifespan as people were facing the increasing plethora and range of changes bearing in upon them as the twentieth century unfolded (and now increasingly so in the twenty-first century). Such changes were being introduced and experienced in the world of industry and commerce; the increasingly global patterns of economic development; the almost exponential increase in the growth and extension of knowledge; the revolutionary transformations of communication and interaction brought about by the revolution of information technology; the needs of indigenous peoples and many in developing countries to undertake culturally relevant lifelong learning,



contrasted with the demands and requirements of western-oriented education. The Fauré Report provided the site for a passionate argument that the only way that people could hope to face and deal with such changes was in forms of life in which they would be constantly involved in the activities of an ‘education permanente’.

These arguments began to be expressed with all the greater emphasis, as those changes and developments being imposed on and required of people and nations by the onset and motive power of the forces of globalisation and the multiple flows and exchanges of policies, production and the needs of trade and community infrastructure, began to exert such weight and influence on countries and communities across the international arena, whose peoples have been subjected to and experienced a kind of all encompassing transformation – in economy, in culture and in identity. It is not too much to say that the changes in the world effected by these transformations over the last 30 years have been no less radical and fundamental as the changes that came about as the result of the invention of the wheel and of the printing press. In 1996 the OECD addressed these changes, in its Ministerial ‘Making Lifelong Learning a Reality for All’ (OECD 1996). Underpinning the OECD Report was the acceptance that we are now living in a new age in which the demands are so complex, so multifarious and so rapidly changing that the only way in which we shall be able to survive them is by committing to a process of individual, communal and global learning throughout the lifespan of all of us.

### *An Inclusive Approach to Lifelong Learning for All*

In this symposium we intend to take an all-inclusive approach to the need for and demands of lifelong learning. Our values should be clear: we believe that there is overall and everywhere a need for all people to assume that they too have equal rights to and opportunities of participation and equity in the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning. Here we want to emphasise the obligation incumbent on policy-makers and institutions of all kinds to be responsive to, provide for and nourish the needs of hitherto unreached learners – those in work and the unemployed; women, older citizens, indigenous and First Nation peoples, immigrants and refugees; people of means and those without adequate resources of finance or support; the sick, the ill and the dispossessed; people from all groups and strata of society and perhaps especially those regarded as being in an ‘underclass’ of access to reasonable entitlements.

Care must also be taken to reach out to and provide for the learning requirements of people who live at a distance from places where their needs may be addressed – not only in cities and towns but also in rural and deserted environments. And there is a powerful motivation to ensure that individuals in our communities are not disbarred from access to a range of available sites, ways and means of advancing their own learning, by reason of their ethnicity, gender, age, background or class. The provision of lifelong learning pathways and avenues of advancement cannot be restricted to those who happen to have the means of securing entry to it. To allow

for such a possibility would send a strong message to members of our community not so advantaged: that lifelong learning underlines the injustice of offering it only to those best positioned to afford it (see Chapman et al. 2006).

A number of international bodies and agencies have taken equal cognisance of these obligations for transformation and the demands they impose upon societies and communities of the twenty-first century and have developed and articulated policies that will bid fair to enable citizens of the world in the twenty-first century to face these challenges. It is now a declared policy of international bodies, such as OECD, UNESCO and APEC, international agencies such as the European Union, and national governments as diverse as Australia, Japan, Norway, The Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam and the UK, that education for all their citizens has to be a lifelong undertaking and an investment in the future that is not restricted merely to the domain of economic advancement. It must also seek to develop and encourage social and political emancipation and democratic participation and enlarge and expand the values that all people place on personal independence and on the various ways and means of increasing their autonomy.

### ***The Need for Autonomy in Facing Recent Challenges***

After the first decade of the twenty-first century and the great convulsions that have attended on the global financial crisis (GFC), policy-makers across the international arena are grappling all the more with the need to equip their populations with the knowledge and skills with which they can face the challenges, effects and consequences of such large-scale problems, and their attendant risks, as global poverty and economic breakdown and climate change, and endeavour to identify, develop and plan alternative and self-saving courses of response and action (see Popper 1989). Framing and developing such responses will require the advances in knowledge, understanding, imagination and creative thinking, together with augmented self-knowledge and confidence, that can only come from increased engagement in activities that embody and confer the benefits of lifelong learning approaches. This means that our educators and policy-makers will have to move from systems that emphasise education and training in formal institutions and settings to those of a more informal and alternative kind and to the more radical construct of accepting and undertaking the need for engagement and involvement in learning of all kinds throughout the lifespan. It is this realisation that has formed and framed the context and approach adopted in this second and substantially new edition of the International Handbook of Lifelong Learning.

### ***Some Versions and Conceptions of Lifelong Learning***

We have thought it useful in this symposium to examine, from the discourse already available, some examples of the different forms, focuses and nexuses of thinking on this topic that have emerged since the first edition of the International

Handbook was published (see Aspin et al. 2001) and that are now 10 years beyond that initial portrayal of lifelong learning in our hypothesis of its triadic character. For example, one of the most widely adopted approaches to conceptualising lifelong learning articulated at that time held that it is concerned primarily with the promotion of skills and competences necessary for the development of general capabilities and specific performance in roles, activities and tasks that relate primarily, or in some cases entirely, to economic development and performance. Skills and competencies developed through programmes of lifelong learning, using this approach, will have a bearing on questions of how workers perform their job responsibilities, as well as how they can adapt general and particular knowledge and competences to new functions. Taking this view, a more highly educated and skilled workforce will contribute to a more self-sufficient, advanced and competitive economy.

This economic justification for lifelong learning was highly dependent upon two prior assumptions: one, that 'lifelong education' is instrumental for and anterior to some more ultimate goal, and second, that the purpose of lifelong learning is highly job-related and economic-policy-dependent. This approach, that we saw in discussions on 'lifelong learning' at the 1990s forums of the OECD (1996), UNESCO (1996) and the European Parliament (1995), is still occupying the minds and mentalities of many in positions of political power and the utilities of public agencies and institutions concerned with what they see as the 'realities' of economic management and administration and the need for national self-reliance and international economic competitiveness to be the key feature of our public and private systems and institutions of learning. Recent Reports on Higher Education – the 'Browne' Report in the UK and the 'Bradley' Report in Australia – show how endemic and, in its consequences, far-reaching this approach to higher education (HEIs) is still at work (see Head 2011). It is to the credit of a number of key personnel in some international bodies – the OECD and UNESCO in particular – that that line of argument, even in the 1990s, was played down as presenting too narrow and limited an understanding of the nature, aims and purpose of 'lifelong education'.

A second perspective rested upon different assumptions. Instead of 'lifelong learning' being seen as instrumental to the achievement of an extrinsic goal, 'education' is seen equally as an intrinsically valuable activity, something that is good in and for itself. Incorporated in this perspective was the belief that those engaging in lifelong education do so, not so much to arrive at a new place, but 'to travel with a different view' (Peters 1965) and in that way to be able to travel with a qualitatively better, richer and more elevated perspective from which to view the world. There is still wide acceptance of the view that people engaging in educational activities generally are enriched by having their view of the world and their capacity for rational choice continually expanded and transformed by having access to the increased ranges and varieties of experiences and cognitive achievements that the lifelong learning experience offers. Importantly, the benefits accrue at the individual and societal levels. The scope of such a transformative function of education was recently re-stated and articulated by Ross Gittins in an article exploring the ramifications of the newly elected Australian Prime Minister's declaration of her commitment to the

‘transformative power of education’ (Gittins 2010). Gittins averred that ‘education should be seen not just as a means but also as an end in itself’. He elaborated this term – ‘our belief in knowledge for its own sake’ – as follows:

One of the great characteristics of the human animal is its insatiable curiosity. Just as George Mallory’s best explanation of why he wanted to climb Everest was ‘because it’s there’, we need no better justification for the pursuit of education and knowledge than that we just want to know. Education increases life satisfaction. It opens our minds to the wonders of science and the glories of history and culture. We learn about ourselves and about others, which makes us more tolerant of people different to us (including asylum seekers).

This view was adopted by a variety of community groups and is still widely held, notwithstanding the economic perspectives, dictates and goals of many in politics and business. Emerging from this view, in addition to opportunities for lifelong learning through traditional institutions and agencies, there has been a growing trend for lifelong learning activities to be offered by and through a host of non-traditional community initiatives. For indigenous peoples and many members of developing economies, these non-traditional community initiatives may in fact represent a return to tradition, rather than the creation of a new paradigm. But in all such cases, the transformation involved and the values therein embodied may reflect and promote a return to lifelong learning. Such values clearly should be on offer and available to all people, wherever located, at whatever stage of learning need, and by suitably appropriate forms of access and engagement.

Lifelong learning conceived of and offered through all such channels, new or traditional, often offers people the opportunity to bring up to date their knowledge and enjoyment of activities which they had either long since laid aside or always wanted to do but were previously unable to pursue; to try their hands at activities and pursuits that they had previously imagined were outside their available time or competence; or extend their intellectual horizons by seeking to understand and engage with some of the more significant cognitive advances of recent times.

### ***‘Lifelong Learning’ as a Public Good***

This is not to suggest that lifelong learning is an activity restricted or even primarily directed towards those who have passed the age when education in formal or institutional settings may be largely complete. In fact cognitive and skill development begins early and can continue throughout one’s life. This is an indispensable part of one’s growth and development as a human being, as well as a foundation for social and economic participation more broadly in society. Individual and community welfare is protected and promoted when communities arrange for lifelong learning to be available to the widest range of constituencies, through as many channels as possible and in as many forms as are viable. Smethurst (1995) put this well:

Is education a public or a private good? The answer is, neither: it is both. There is some education which is overwhelmingly a public good in that its benefits accrue very widely, to society at large as well as to the individual. Equally there is some education which, whilst benefiting society, confers overwhelming benefits on the individual learner. But much

of education sits annoyingly between these two extremes, leading us, correctly, to want to influence the amount and type of it supplied and demanded, because society has an interest in the outcome, but also to note that it confers benefits on the individual above those societal benefits.

The argument that education is a public good supports the third version of lifelong learning, a notion held these days by an increasing number of institutions and organisations. It is widely agreed that the availability of educational opportunities over the whole of people's lifespan is a prerequisite for informed and effective participation in society by all citizens (see Grace 1994; McLaughlin 1994; Smethurst 1995). Similarly, such services as health, housing, welfare and the legal system, along with education, constitute the infrastructure which people need in order to construct and realise a satisfying and fulfilling life in a society that is mutually supportive, inclusive and just.

### *A 'Triadic' Conception of Lifelong Learning*

For our part, in conceptualising this symposium, we have operated from the belief, articulated and developed in the first edition, that there is a complex relationship between at least three major elements or outcomes of lifelong learning: education for a more highly skilled workforce; personal development leading to a more rewarding life; and the creation of a stronger and more inclusive society. It is the interleaving and interplay between these elements that differentiates and animates lifelong learning and this is why lifelong learning is a complex and multifaceted process. The process itself begins in pre-school, continues through compulsory and post-compulsory periods of formal education and training, and is then carried on through the rest of the lifespan. It is actualised through provision of learning experiences and activities in the home, the workplace, in universities and colleges and in other educational, social and cultural agencies, institutions and settings – both formal and informal – within the community. This is the perspective that informs this publication.

The central elements in the triadic nature of lifelong learning, we believe, are interrelated and are fundamental prerequisites for a wide range of benefits that governments and peoples widely across the international arena regard as important goals related to economic, personal and social policies. The adoption of policies for lifelong learning, we hope to show in this volume, will help achieve a variety of policy goals that include building a strong, adaptable and competitive economy, providing a fertile range of opportunities for personal growth and development, and developing a richer social fabric where principles and ideals of social inclusiveness, justice and equity are upheld, encouraged and practised.

We need to point out, however, that, for the effective development of educational policies and lifelong learning practices widely across, in and through national and international settings, agencies, institutions and milieux, the triadic emphasis on the idea of lifelong learning has required a coherent, consistent, coordinated and integrated, more multifaceted approach to learning. Realising a lifelong learning

approach for economic progress and development, for personal development and fulfilment and for social inclusiveness and democratic understanding and activity has not been easily achieved. To achieve these goals required a substantial reappraisal of the provision, resourcing and goals of education and training, and most importantly a major reorientation towards the concept and value of the idea of ‘the learning society’. This has constituted a major challenge for governments, policy-makers and educators in countries around the world as they have grappled with ways of conceptualising lifelong learning and realising the aim of ‘lifelong learning for all’. Furthermore, the notions that this learning should be ‘lifewide’ – recognising the interplay of informal, non-formal and formal learning in different life domains – and ‘life deep’ – incorporating the religious, moral, ethical and social dimensions that shape human expression – have led to richer and more pluralistic interpretations of the scope and possibilities of learning throughout the lifecourse.

In this second edition of the *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, we have attempted to identify, review and evaluate the progress that has been made in meeting these challenges over the last 10 years since the first *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning* was published in 2001.

## **An Overview of Some of the Answers Suggested in This Work**

We hope that we have addressed some, though certainly not all of these problems, topics and issues in the various chapters constituting this publication on lifelong learning. In the writing and thinking that we have assembled in these volumes, we have attempted to draw upon the widest range of ability, insight and experience in putting the various elements in it together. The publication is divided into four parts.

### ***Part I: History, Theory, Philosophy***

Part I is edited by David Aspin, and is devoted variously to historical, philosophical, theoretical and values issues. In this part mention is briefly made of the antecedents of the present interest in lifelong learning policies. Movements in that direction are to be found as early as the dictum of Solon in the sixth century BCE – *γηράσκω δ’αίει πολλά διδασκόμενος* – and were given much more extended treatment in the dialogues of Plato (especially *Republic* and *Laws*) and Aristotle’s *Politics*. An approach to learning, knowledge and understanding was implicit in the works of medieval and Enlightenment philosophers and became explicit in the work of more modern philosophers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where, again, something of that concern may be presupposed. Again, it should be acknowledged here that different cultures have distinctive discourses about lifelong learning in ways that are traceable to their own thinkers. These discourses overlap and diverge in significant ways.

Modern theorising of the concern for lifelong learning began to be more strictly applied in investigations of the bases of the endeavours of Adult and Continuing Education, articulated especially in English in the writings of RWJ Patterson and K Lawson. The modern interest in lifelong education and, later, lifelong learning, may be said to have commenced in the 1970s with the UNESCO report of the Fauré Committee and the long list of publications taking their inspiration from it. This interest quickened in the 1990s, with the realisation that the need for learning to extend throughout the lifespan was given expression in the work and publications of several international agencies, such as the OECD, The Nordic Council of Ministers and UNESCO (especially the Delors Report of the latter in 1996) and was taken up formally as one of their principal education policies by a wide range of governments across the world. It can be said that this movement has now reached the point where it can be confidently assumed to be a major part of the policies of governments and educators in all countries and systems.

In Part I mention is made of the history of recent advances and changes in policies for lifelong learning adopted and implemented by various government departments and agencies. From the work of colleagues below the reader will be able to develop a reasonably well-informed conspectus of the way those developments have come about. They will also derive insights into the different and individual ways in which people engaged in lifelong learning activities go about and achieve their learnings, in and through the various styles, methods and approaches they adopt. The chapters written by Jan Visser, Peter Jarvis and Terry Hyland will be especially helpful here. They will learn much about the importance of the settings and milieux – social and political – in which individuals and institutions propose and make available to their fellow citizens their offerings of access to and participation in lifelong learning courses and activities, for the purposes such learners need. Here the work of our South African colleagues – Penny Enslin and Mary Tjiattas, Yusef Waghid and Shirley Walters – will be helpful and noteworthy. Other colleagues have shown how lifelong learning approaches are brought into play and can have an influence on and draw beneficial effects from the institutional circumstances in which they are deployed. The contributions of Robin Barrow and Patrick Keeney, David Beckett, Mal Leicester and Melanie Walker are particularly important in showing up the tensions and constraints which lifelong learning approaches and policies have to encounter in the institutions in which they are applied. Of course, as Peter Winch remarked long ago, in philosophical matters the central questions remain those of ontology and epistemology: ‘what is the meaning of ...?’ and ‘how do you know?’ Judith Chapman and David Aspin try to tackle some of the complex questions of the meta-theoretical bases, meaning, epistemology and values of lifelong learning ideas and approaches, and in this endeavour they are followed by a range of contributors – Peter Gilroy, Colin Evers, Richard Edwards, Ivan Snook and Terry Hyland. The Part ends with the reflections of Kenneth Wain on one of the newer and increasingly widespread reconceptions and evaluations of the place and role that lifelong learning can play in the working out of the idea of ‘the learning society’. All the above contributions may be seen as thoughtful and thought-provoking contributions to what is still a vitally important debate.

In the opening chapter ‘Towards a Philosophy of Lifelong Learning’, David Aspin and Judith Chapman seek to show that attention to the philosophical questions about lifelong learning is an indispensable element of theories of lifelong learning programmes. Conclusions reached via philosophical enquiries have practical implications for developing programmes, curricula and activities of lifelong learning. Productive work in the philosophy of lifelong learning depends upon the nature of the problems being looked into, the intellectual histories and interests of those tackling them, the outcomes at which they aim, the considerations that make their selection of particular categories, concepts and criteria significant and the reflections that make certain moves in their arguments and theorising decisive. Such analysis is also important in the attempt to provide a second element in this study, which addresses the need to develop a theory or set of theories and to construct a theoretical framework against which programmes and activities of lifelong learning might be tested to see whether the practice matches the principles.

The purpose of this kind of investigation is to consider the theories with which people active in the field are working and to engage in the task of theory examination, theory comparison, and theory criticism, correction or even replacement. Philosophy viewed in this way, the authors argue, is not merely an exercise of analysis for the purposes of clarification but an undertaking of theory criticism and construction to ensure that lifelong learning undertakings are based upon sound principles, such as those of economy, simplicity, coherence, consistency, fecundity and capacity for successful prediction. The chapter reviews a number of versions of lifelong learning and criticises most such definitions for their underlying essentialism and empiricism, proposing a more acceptable alternative. This consists in the application of a post-empiricist, pragmatic and problem-solving approach. And this points in turn to the triadic nature of lifelong learning endeavours – for economic growth and advancement, for social inclusion and democratic empowerment and for personal growth and the increase of autonomy. It is suggested that these aims must be addressed by making learning across the lifespan available for all people.

In Chap. 2, Robin Barrow and Patrick Keeney argue that lifelong learning should be interpreted in such a way as to imply self-fulfilment through education. Education is thus taken to be an intellectual and character-forming business rather than a mere acquisition of skills or mastery of trades (and, as such, has a long and venerable history dating at least from the time of Plato). The ideal length or scope of lifelong learning is not to be estimated by reference to any amount of information or even continued search for it but by the need to ascend to ever higher and more abstract bodies of understanding. The authors then distinguish between a skills-based approach and an approach based on the idea of self-fulfilment. They argue, in conclusion, that new technologies, which might in principle be assets in the search for lifelong learning, may in practice be detrimental, whilst various recent changes in the nature of the university seem to challenge the ideal of lifelong learning as personal fulfilment.

In Chap. 3, Peter Gilroy takes an epistemological line of concern in addressing two aspects of the concept of lifelong learning: its meaning and its relationship to various epistemological theories. Lifelong learning appears to be inherently ambiguous, and as that ambiguity is inevitably the source of much confusion, the chapter



opens with a review of the many ways in which the term ‘lifelong learning’ is used. Resisting the temptation to declare it meaningless, the author then argues that an holistic epistemology provides an approach that can both explicate certain difficulties with the term and also suggest ways in which lifelong learning can better be understood as a technical term in search of a definition.

In Chap. 4, Colin Evers remarks that, most of the time, individuals learn in organisational contexts: schools, universities, workplaces, clubs and societies, in professional and social groups and amongst friends and family. The aim of this chapter is to explore, in a general way, those organisational configurations that promote organisational learning, and how learning occurs for individuals within these configurations. Two issues are examined in particular detail. The first concerns the units of epistemic agency: Is organisational learning something that can exist over and above learning by individuals within an organisation? The author argues that it can, and that the most important consideration in favour of such separate collective epistemic agency is the way knowledge is dynamically connected in organisations. The second issue concerns the characterisation of organisational connectivity. An obvious template for connectivity in many workplaces is the organisational chart. However, this ignores much learning that takes place via informal networks of individuals. To capture this, Evers examines learning in ‘small world’ networks of the Watts-Strogatz type. If you imagine individuals as nodes in a graph, and the communication lines connecting them as paths, then a small world network is characterised by two features: (1) a short average path length and (2) a high level of clustering of nodes. These networks are interesting because they offer a more realistic account of how individuals are linked in patterns of communication and, therefore, suggest a more fruitful characterisation of individual and collective contexts of lifelong learning.

In Chap. 5, Penny Enslin and Mary Tjiattas examine the role of lifelong learning in developing the capacities and conditions for democratic participation in a globalising world. Taking Judith Chapman’s idea of lifelong learning as including ‘a concern with achieving and sustaining a democratic polity and institutions that promote and practice equity, justice, and social inclusiveness’, the authors extend the idea of the learning society as one that assumes a move of a sovereign Westphalian state to a global public sphere and its accompanying institutions. A starting point for their argument is Nancy Fraser’s theory of justice in her *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World* (Polity 2008). Central issues include: the meaning of democratic citizenship in a global public sphere, the question of who is responsible for providing the enabling conditions that would allow world citizens to participate in democratic processes (the creation and sustaining of new democratic institutions and spaces for deliberation and fostering capacities of democratic decision-making that promote inclusion and empowerment). One of their main challenges is to provide a normative conception of democratic citizenship that does not, as traditional political theory and philosophy has done, presuppose the Westphalian national state. In Fraser’s terms, what grounds the legitimacy of public deliberation if one can no longer invoke the nation state as the dominant governance structure (and the attendant notions of shared citizenship in a bounded community, the basic structure of society etc.) in public justification?

In Chap. 6, Yusef Waghid argues for a conception of learning to be connected to the achievement of cosmopolitan virtues. His contention is that learning in universities on the African continent can more appropriately respond to some of the societal and political challenges Africa faces if it were to be connected to the appropriation of virtues such as democratic iterations, hospitality and assuming responsibility for the Other. His analysis is directed on to other postsecondary institutions and pathways in the lifelong learning domain to see how such initiatives are found and being explored in the modern South African educational situation.

In Chap. 7, Peter Jarvis contends that learning has so frequently been regarded as a cognitive phenomenon that it needs to be expanded to argue that: it is not only the mind that learns but the whole person, a concept that itself needs discussion. Thereafter, he maintains, we need to define learning in terms of personhood. However, once we do this our conception has wider implications for our study of human learning, including examining the possibilities. In this chapter Jarvis argues that learning is an ontological phenomenon and examines the implications of this and suggests some future developments in learning research and theory by relating this discussion to aspects of the mind/body debate.

In Chap. 8, David Beckett notes that when adults immerse themselves in their workplaces, they engage essential aspects of lifelong learning. They shape themselves and others, and ‘working’ itself, by what is done, hoped for and undergone, as manifest in practices, capacities, competences and skills and judgements about all these. This chapter moves beyond an individualistic account of the agency these characteristics require, taking instead a sociocultural, or relational, analysis into current interest in expertise and learning practices. The ‘projective’ dimension of time is central to such an account of expertise and practices.

In Chap. 9, Mal Leicester claims that the current policy emphasis on lifelong learning is influencing conceptions of adult education. In this chapter the contemporary policy context in the UK is explored, covering influential government reports on developing the post-school education sector and the arrangements for assurance about teaching quality through the establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Within this context ‘lifelong learning’ is shown to be a slippery concept – sometimes equivalent to ‘adult education’ and sometimes to ‘education across the lifespan’. There is also an interrelation of vocational, liberal and social education. The author explores the normative dimension of ‘lifelong learning’ (arguing that there is a blurring here of the concepts of ‘learning’ and of ‘education’) and ends with the question of how far government policies on lifelong learning will generate fruitful changes, such as wider education participation across the lifespan by currently excluded social groups.

In Chap. 10, Ivan Snook explores four major themes, each implicit in Dewey’s philosophy of education, and their implications for lifelong learning. He argues that the centrality of ‘education’, as distinct (but not separate) from ‘training’, suggests that we need to turn away from current preoccupations with skills and competencies in a strictly vocationally oriented form of job training. Education needs to be restructured towards providing basic understandings required to continue learning throughout life and the motivation to go on learning; encouraging an educational approach where knowledge is coherently integrated into the life of the learner; and ensuring that the

computer is seen as a tool for the promotion of certain ends in education. The dichotomy between liberal and vocational education is to be rejected in the move to help a person's direction of their life activities; this renders them significant to that person because of the consequences they accomplish. Good vocational studies are liberal in the sense that they free people from blind conformity and rigid habits and release people to be agents of their own lives. The importance of the changing social situation means that education takes place in a wider social setting. Education should be viewed as a means of transformation: its aims and its related activities must be flexible and tentative: aims must liberate activities. Education must involve the continual reconstruction of experience – a lifelong process. Central in education is critical thinking: the major aim of lifelong education is to promote the autonomy of the individual and their readiness at all times to be involved in critical thinking and liberating action. This is not a skill but an attitude of mind: a disposition not to take statements for granted, not to accept dogmatic beliefs, not to go along with the dominant majority. It is this attitude that should be encouraged in lifelong learning. The most successful form of such an education is that which involves praxis.

In Chap. 11, Richard Edwards discusses lifelong learning in relation to the postmodern condition. The contemporary role of education is examined within the context of globalisation, risk, uncertainty, reflexivity and the foregrounding of diversity and difference that characterises that condition. Postmodernity, Edwards argues, has, on the one hand, contributed to erosion of the 'liberal' curriculum and an emphasis on performativity, on learning opportunities that optimise the efficiency of the economic and social condition. On the other hand, the postmodernist decentering of knowledge has resulted in a valuing of different sources and forms of knowledge (including knowledge that would not have traditionally been considered worthwhile) and a corresponding devaluing of specialist discipline-based knowledge. The author argues that changing conceptions of knowledge and the need to understand knowledge in terms of its performative and signifying location in different social practices of the contemporary implies that the meaning and significance of 'lifelong learning' cannot be fully subsumed in current educational economic and political discourses.

In Chap. 12, Jan Visser argues that mainstream conceptions and definitions of learning generally fit the requirements and expectations inherent in the design of formal (deliberate) learning processes. Formal learning is only a relatively minor – though not unimportant – part of most people's learning life. This chapter explores the learning landscape in an integral fashion, considering that it is comprehensive, integral and comprised of learning in the formal, non-formal and informal domains. The boundaries separating these domains are often vague and usually irrelevant from the learner's perspective. Learners and communities of learning navigate through the landscape, take temporary residence in it or lead a nomadic learning life, depending on their needs, desires and idiosyncrasies. Whilst doing so, they explore and use the resources offered to or acquired by them. During their learning life, they leave behind what results from their learning experience for the benefit of others whose learning life they share or who will come after them. In the context of his explorations, the author revisits an alternative definition of learning earlier proposed in the first edition of the *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*.

In Chap. 13, Melanie Walker considers two models of lifelong learning as seen in their effects for the agency and well-being of young people in Europe. Her chapter sketches the context of inequalities in Europe and then discusses and contrasts human capital, and human capabilities, arguing that only a human capabilities model offers rich and expansive lifelong education for agency and well-being. The assumption here is that lifelong learning is a contested concept and that not all versions enhance agency and good lives and that the version which most concerns government policy-makers in Europe is one lacking a critical social vision, constructing lifelong learning and education as a matter for individual interests and their employability skills development for service to the local, national and global economy. Thus, the chapter expands on ideas for capability-based education drawing on the work of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum and sketching broad capability dimensions for an egalitarian approach to lifelong education and learning. The chapter also relates the models to policy directions and proposes principles for lifelong learning policy.

In Chap. 14, Shirley Walters maintains that the HIV/AIDS pandemic highlights some of the most difficult social, economic, cultural and personal issues that any educators have to confront. Discussions on pedagogies amongst people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS therefore can help to sharpen and clarify ways of thinking about lifelong learning, particularly in and for the majority world, in ways which little else can. It is for this reason that this chapter utilises our experiences over the last 10 years in developing innovative approaches to feminist popular education in the time of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, to draw out insights for theorising lifelong learning more widely.

In Chap. 15, Terry Hyland remarks that, although it has been given qualified approval by a number of philosophers of education, the so-called ‘therapeutic turn’ in education has been the subject of criticism by several commentators on post-compulsory and adult learning over the last few years. A key feature of this alleged development in recent educational policy is said to be the replacement of the traditional goals of knowledge and understanding with personal and social objectives concerned with enhancing and developing confidence and self-esteem in learners. After offering some critical observations on these developments, Hyland suggests that there are some educationally justifiable goals underpinning what has been described as a therapeutic turn. Whilst accepting that ‘self-esteem’ and cognate concepts cannot provide a general end or universal aim of education, the therapeutic function – the affective domain of learning – is more valuable and significant than is generally acknowledged. This claim is justified by an examination of the concept of ‘mindfulness’ which, it is argued, can be an immensely powerful and valuable notion that is integrally connected with the centrally transformative and developmental nature of learning and educational activity at all levels. The incorporation of mindfulness strategies within adult learning programmes may go some way towards re-connecting the cognitive and affective dimensions of education.

In Chap. 16, Kenneth Wain contends that the notion of the learning society was an essential element in the vocabulary of the lifelong education literature that flourished in the 1970s and early 1980s following the publication of the Fauré Report (1972).

The Learning Society in a Postmodern World (2004) which Wain began to write in the late 1990s was an attempt, more than a decade after his earlier book *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* (1987) where he devoted its last chapter to taking stock of the significance of that idea now, at a time when the world had changed dramatically (to the extent of justifying the appellation ‘postmodern’), to show that a new language of lifelong learning, with a different agenda arising from the lifelong education literature, had come into dominance in Europe and elsewhere. The notion of the ‘learning society’ was part of that language at first but fell into disuse later and the expression ‘knowledge society’ came into prominence instead. A combination of factors outlined in this present chapter (written to follow up on a symposium on the book which was published in the journal *Educational Philosophy and Theory* in 2008), led to the writing of a very different book from what was originally intended. Amongst these factors, besides developments in the politics of lifelong learning, were changes to the author’s own thinking brought about by intellectual engagement with ‘postmodern’ thinkers, Richard Rorty and Michel Foucault in particular, who each influenced it in different ways. Wain’s chapter is an attempt to think out these influences for himself as much as for the reader interested in his work systematically, and to move on from there to the question which he wants this exercise to help him address – whether and, if so, how, the notion of the learning society is still useful, given the current state of the lifelong learning discourse, and in our own thinking on this matter.

This question and its implications is one that could occupy the thinking of all of us, as we reach the end of this Part on the History, Theory and Philosophy of the idea of Lifelong Learning.

## ***Part II: Policy Challenges in Lifelong Learning***

The Second part of the International Handbook is edited by Karen Evans. This part focuses on Policy Challenges in Lifelong Learning. It considers dimensions of lifelong learning policies in different parts of the world. Lifelong learning policies introduced across the globe could be classified into four types according to their stated aims: (1) a compensatory education model, whose aim is to improve basic literacy and vocational skills in an attempt to compensate for inequalities in initial schooling; (2) a continuing professional and vocational education model of workforce development, which aims to respond to and also anticipate changes in work organisation as well as ameliorating unemployment; (3) a social innovation, or civil society model, which aims at overcoming social estrangement and exclusion, as well as supporting aspects of socioeconomic transition and democratisation; (4) a personal development or ‘leisure-oriented’ model which aims to enrich the personal lives of individuals and thereby health, well-being and personal fulfilment. A more critical perspective, looking behind stated aims, might identify, from the same configuration of policies, therapeutic (state as benefactor), recruitment (incorporation of the disadvantaged in the dominant political model) and modernisation

(integration into the world market economy) models at work (Torres 2009). A range of policies and discourses on lifelong learning coexist at national as well as international level. Dominant policy discourses generated at international level are adapted to the shape of the social landscapes into which they are introduced, reflecting their underlying structural features, cultures and histories. Whether they work or not depends crucially on what people make of them (see Evans 2009). The fact that one 'official' discourse may be dominant at any one time does not mean that other ways of thinking about lifelong learning have disappeared. They are alive and well in a range of critical traditions and perspectives that retain their power to engage and persuade. In this part, contributors analyse issues in lifelong learning that have important implications for policy in different parts of the world. Evidence, ideas and perspectives are drawn from a range of countries in the continents of Africa, Europe, North and South America and the Asia-Pacific region. Some of the analyses focus regionally; for example, Oketch reviews challenges of embedding lifelong learning in policies in African countries whilst Casey and Chisholm focus in their chapters on aspects of the European Union policy discourse and on higher education in Europe, respectively. Other contributions analyse particular measures or policy priorities of current significance; for example, Lee and Fleming evaluate the replacement of university 'extra-mural' departments with continuing professional education units, in Australia, Hong Kong and the United States; Zajda considers the new role of adult education centres in the Russian Federation whilst Kitagawa compares translations of lifelong learning in England, Japan and Singapore. Thematic chapters that challenge conventional thinking and perhaps prefigure directions for the future include, for example, Livingstone on 'reversing policy-making optics'; Misiaszek on critical environmental education – adult eco-pedagogy – and Zukas on 'regulating the professionals'. Taken together, the set of contributions is intended to stimulate debate about policy futures as well as offering insights into policies in action in the present moment in contrasting societies and social contexts.

In Chap. 17, Karen Evans, Ingrid Schoon and Martin Weale review and discuss available evidence of the ways in which social, economic and cultural factors influence and impede individuals' attempts to control their lives, their ability to respond to opportunities and to manage the consequences of their choices. How do individuals react to degrees of risk and how far are differences in socioeconomic outcomes influenced by factors such as parental background, educational attainments and participation in education and training after entering the workforce? This overview draws on the authors' own research in the UK as well as wider international research to discuss 'risk' and the dynamics of learning throughout the life course: changing constellations of risk and opportunity in early childhood; the transitions from secondary, further and higher education into employment; the opportunities for different groups of adult workers to engage in lifelong learning; and the changing fortunes of older persons. The evidence points to the need to consider heterogeneity in life and work experiences, the need for more flexible and diversified life course models and the need for broader views of what constitutes 'successful' transitions and outcomes, taking into account variation in resources amongst different subgroups of the population. The chapter concludes by bringing together what 'riskiness' in the life course

actually means from different perspectives. It elaborates significant questions about riskiness and learning through the life course and argues for a movement from narrow versions of rational choice to biographical negotiation as a dominant life course model for effective policy-making.

In Chap. 18, David Livingstone encourages greater attention to the economic and ecological problems that lie behind the global crises of the twenty-first century. Adult learning, he argues, should be more fully understood as intimately related to our unpaid as well as paid activities, but also inherently limited in its capacity to solve economic and ecological problems. Formal and further education should offer opportunities for all people to achieve their educational potential. But a wider and deeper appreciation by policy makers and the general public of the rich and extensive formal and informal knowledge already achieved, as well as the extent of the waste of this talent in jobs beneath the capacities of the available labour force, should also encourage greater attention and initiatives to address directly the economic and ecological problems that are at root of the crisis of global sustainability. Greater public investment in formal education and financial bailouts of economic organisations as currently structured will not resolve this crisis. This chapter makes a case for much greater policy and programme priority to economic and ecological change and much less attention to appeals for still greater formal educational efforts by already highly educated labour forces.

In Chap. 19, Atsushi Makino focuses on the changing labour market in China. Along with the recent rapid economic development, the labour market in China has become increasingly fluid, and job changes or turnovers are becoming normal. There has been a growing pressure to advance to higher education. The scale of higher education has expanded rapidly especially since the end of the 1990s. On the other hand, as basic public education thoroughly pervaded in the inland area and then secondary education centred on vocational education began to be popular there, a large volume of young labourers from the poorer regions has been pushed to urban areas as an industrial labour force. In the wake of such a phenomenal social change, a community-based education guarantee system has been rapidly spread and developed, particularly in the metropolitan area, as a safety net for labour turnover and social integration. It can be said that Chinese society, especially the urban area, has stepped into an era wherein its fundamental educational system itself is to be quickly reorganised, particularly for the adult educational domain. This encompasses the liberal arts education provided in the local community as well as vocational technical education offered by higher educational institutions, against the common background of growing social liquidity. It will be necessary to observe in what ways and by what means the above transition realises both improvement and stability of people's life in the future.

In Chap. 20, Kaori Kitagawa widens our perspectives on lifelong learning development in contrasting societies in 'Three Translations Revisited: Lifelong Learning in Singapore'. This chapter provides an analysis of the development of lifelong learning in Singapore, applying the framework of three translations developed previously (Kitagawa 2008, 2010). This argues that 'lifelong learning' is a concept which has unusual adaptability and legitimacy. It has been subject to multiple

translations over the years, identified: (a) through discourse, (b) in the development of policy and (c) as the shift in the political ideology. Drawing on these three strands, the chapter demonstrates that lifelong learning has been translated to accommodate various agendas and has been adapted in specific contexts in Singapore. The translation framework highlights the multidimensional nature of 'lifelong learning'. Furthermore, major counterpoints to the case of Singapore can be identified from the cases of England and Japan.

Chapter 21 shifts our attention to Europe and the pervasive influences of European Union policy discourse. In this chapter, Catherine Casey focuses our attention on how the promotion of innovations and particular policy models at European level can influence lifelong learning practice. The European Union has most prominently articulated its aspiration towards achieving competitive knowledge-based economic advantage in the global economy. Debates on the expansion of a liberalised knowledge-based economy and the learning society conceived as its corollary continue to raise critical questions. Education policies at national and supranational levels promote lifelong learning as a vital route to aligning the learning society with the knowledge economy. Critics argue that the conceptualisation of the 'learning society' and of lifelong learning promoted in policy models leaves very much to be desired. More recently, social policy interest has turned to a new promotion of citizenship in the hope of regenerating social cohesion and diminishing social exclusion. The role of education and lifelong learning in citizenship formation now attracts much attention. These developments pose challenges and opportunities for lifelong learning policy and practice. This chapter offers a critical social analysis of challenges and prospects facing lifelong learning policies and practices in the European Union in regard to economic learning agendas and citizenship aspirations, showing how particular innovations and institutional factors can advance and hinder lifelong learning practice.

Lynne Chisholm widens the European analysis to focus on European universities in Chap 22. By definition, universities cater to adult learners, but universities do not see themselves in the first instance as institutions of adult learning. In theory, access to higher education is open to all; in practice, European universities still disproportionately serve young adults with favourable social capital. Opening up to a genuinely lifelong learning culture accessible to all therefore demands significant structural and cultural change in higher education; this encounters resistance in academic communities and organisations whose sense of identity and purpose are constructed within first modernity modalities of knowledge production, transmission, exchange and distribution. Reshaping higher education for second modernity equally includes a switch of perspective that places learners' needs and demands at the starting point, which means taking learning lives and learning identities into greater account for designing provision and practice in higher education. In this respect, recent studies, including comparative surveys, offer useful evidence on adults' experiences and perspectives on learning and how their participation in and satisfaction with university continuing education can be better met.

In Chap. 23, Wing-On Lee and Josephine Fleming examine the changing roles of universities as providers of lifelong learning, with reference to examples from Australia, Hong Kong and the United States. The concept of lifelong learning has



emerged in this century as a major policy strand of higher education institutions and governments worldwide. With the establishment of extramural education, universities have offered lifelong education in a nonformal mode since the late 1800s. However, in the last three decades, continuing and professional education units began to replace former extension units with the directive to become self-financed and even profit centres. As their popularity increased, these lifelong learning units provided an alternative learning pathway which became increasingly institutionalised, and in some cases their students outnumbered those enrolled in the University's core academic programmes. Their growing presence within universities today gradually challenges the definition of what constitutes legitimate knowledge within the context of higher education, as once these units become institutionalised they have a formal claim towards knowledge building. Through a study of the growth of lifelong learning units in Australia, Hong Kong and the United States, the chapter analyses their increased claim to knowledge production. The authors illustrate the role of these units in bridging community needs and academic traditions, and question whether this trend will gradually blur the boundary between the University's traditional academic core and its periphery.

Chapter 24 expands the geographical and cultural scope of the part. In this chapter, Moses Otieno Oketch argues that most African countries have no clear policies on lifelong learning and yet they acknowledge that their citizenry need to be able to develop skills that would permit the creation and participation in knowledge economy. The predominant preoccupation is realisation of universal access to primary education and rapid transition to secondary level. But whilst these are important foundation stages and are what can be regarded as the basics, creating a learning culture that does not only focus on access will require policies that encourage lifelong learning. In this chapter, the author argues that Africa's education policies must embrace the idea of lifelong learning and develop mechanisms to operationalise it. This will encourage a workforce that is both trainable and one that places value on learning within and beyond the formal schooling years. If Africa wants to move from survival stage to developmental stage and eventually innovation, then embedding lifelong learning early on amongst both young and mature populations needs to be part and parcel and a priority of their education policies.

In the final four chapters of this part, the focus shifts to lifelong learning practices and what these mean for teachers in a range of policy contexts. Starting with teachers in lifelong learning and representations of a 'lifelong learning teaching occupation', Chap. 25 by Terri Seddon and Amy Bohren considers 'Lifelong Learning and the Teaching Occupation, Tracking Policy Effects of Governing Ideas on Occupational (Re)Ordering'. Lifelong learning is a policy theme that has highlighted the importance of learning throughout life. Prioritising 'learning' immediately problematises the work of teaching and teachers, but the way policy affects the teaching occupation has received limited attention. This chapter approaches lifelong learning policy as a governing idea that travels through globally networked localities as a way of understanding policy effects on the teaching occupation. The authors report on research that tracks the construction of lifelong learning as a governing idea generated within transnational policy networks and its translation into nationally endorsed

policy instruments. Focusing particularly on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, the authors indicate the kind of teaching occupation that is encouraged by policy instruments premised on lifelong learning and the way these instruments suggest a vision of the 'lifelong learning teaching occupation'. This representation challenges the established organisation, ordering and agency of the established 'modernist teaching occupation'. Showing how this shift in the order of discourse disturbs the teaching occupation and its occupational boundaries in complex and contradictory ways, it is argued that occupational boundary work is critical in navigating the discursive effects of lifelong learning policies. Understanding the way lifelong learning policy effects are mediated through knowledge practices suggests ways for the teaching occupation to engage in occupational boundary work that contests the processes of occupational (re)ordering.

In Chap. 26, 'Transformative Environmental Education Within Social Justice Models: Lessons from Comparing Adult Ecopedagogy within North and South America', Greg Misiaszek focuses our attention on adult education in social and environmental movements. He argues, in this context, that the politics behind environmentally devastating actions must be understood for effective solutions to be found that can counter social and environmental injustices. Ecopedagogy is critical and dialectic environmental education that focuses on learning the connections between environmental devastation and social conflict. In addition, ecopedagogy stresses the need for transforming oppressive social systems rather than merely working within them. Comparative education approaches allow for effective ecopedagogy practices and research that are multidisciplinary and multiperspective, developing dialectically from the local and the global. The chapter discusses results of qualitative research based on 35 interviews with informal and nonformal adult ecopedagogues in regions of Argentina, Brazil and the United States to define what is effective ecopedagogy. Results highlight the need for comparative education approaches and democratic education practices involving research through horizontal discussions (reinventing Freirean Pedagogy) for effective ecopedagogies to emerge.

In Chap. 27, current trends in lifelong learning in the Russian Federation are examined. Joseph Zajda discusses various social and economic dimensions impacting on education and society, especially on the lifelong learning sector. The chapter focuses on adult education centres and their pedagogy of social and educational rehabilitation and vocational training. The new emerging role of adult education centres is one of offering an opportunity for completion of secondary education and vocational training for individuals with incomplete secondary education, including students at risk, and educationally and socially disadvantaged adolescents and young adults. The centres are designed to promote social justice by means of compensatory education and social rehabilitation for individuals dislocated by economic restructuring. The chapter evaluates their overall role in helping to develop young adults' popular consciousness of democratic rights and active citizenship in a participatory and pluralistic democracy.

In Chap. 28, Miriam Zukas offers critical perspectives on professional learning and education policies. Whilst professional bodies recognise that learning is ongoing and needs to be sustained throughout professional careers, approaches to and policies

for the regulation of professional education are suffused with assumptions about learning. For example, some organisations assume that learning takes place in education and training outside the workplace. However, such approaches often fail to take account of professionals' learning in practice, and to recognise that educational activities do not necessarily change practice. Other professional bodies require individuals to write reflective accounts from time to time; these might be assessed by other professionals, or 'measured' in some way to ensure that members are engaged in appropriate learning on the job. Whilst recognising the significance of learning in practice, these reflective approaches focus on the individual's internal thought processes and responsibility for their actions. There may be little recognition of context, power dynamics or ideological challenges as an integral part of professional learning. This chapter explores and critiques the theoretical assumptions underlying the most common forms of professional requirements for lifelong learning. It suggests that contemporary theories of learning offer alternative perspectives on professional learning and development; it also suggests quite different implications for the regulation of those professionals.

This closing contribution of the Part II reminds us that critical insights into the policy challenges that pervade lifelong learning require us not only to keep in view the realities of the contexts, environments and social landscapes of those who learn, but also the implications of new knowledge about how they learn.

### ***Part III: Programmes and Practices***

The third part of the Handbook, 'Lifelong Learning Programs and Practices', is edited by Judith Chapman. In the previous two parts of the Handbook, authors have shown the extent to which international agencies and national governments have accepted and promoted the importance of lifelong learning. The concept of lifelong learning has been explored and various policies have been reviewed and evaluated. In this part of the Handbook, the focus is on the ways in which the goals and policies of lifelong learning might be realised in programmes and practices that will be effective, sustainable and adaptable in the ever-changing educational, social, economic and cultural context. Policy makers, scholars and researchers and leaders in educational systems and institutions explore the ways in which knowledge, values and commitments regarding lifelong learning can be translated into programmes and practices that can make lifelong learning a reality for all. Hasan sets the framework for this analysis by pointing to two major shifts in the orientation of educational policies in recent years and their implications for the provision of lifelong learning. The first is the shift to a system or sector-wide approach comprising 'lifelong learning', from cradle to grave, and 'lifewide learning' covering learning in all settings, including learning in institutional settings of primary and secondary schools and tertiary education; professional learning in the workplace; and informal and formal learning of an individual and communal kind for people of all ages in the community. In this Part, various authors address concerns relevant to the provision

of lifelong learning in each of these settings. Programmes and practices of lifelong learning in schools are considered by Chapman and Aspin, Mc Kenzie and Chapman and Buchanan. The provision of lifelong learning in the tertiary sector of technical and further education and universities is addressed by Gara, McPerson-Crowie and Dunkin; learning in the workplace by Daffron, Metzgen-Ohlswager, Skinner and Saarinen; and in adult and community education by Volkoff and Withnall and Sawano . The integration of learning provision in each of these settings into learning cities and regions is addressed by Longworth. The second shift that Hasan points to is the shift in the guiding principle underpinning educational provision from an emphasis on ‘supply’, to a greater recognition of the importance of ‘demand’, giving greater recognition to the interests and needs of the learner, and calling for the progressive democratisation of the learning process. The implications of this shift for the mapping of a lifelong learning curriculum are addressed by Malcolm Skilbeck. Skilbeck argues that lifelong learning requires a broader understanding of curriculum, not focused only on provision in primary, secondary or tertiary settings, on the workplace or community settings but conceived of as purposive and structured process whereby ‘individuals creatively and critically engage with subject matter and situations in a continuous lifelong journey’. From this perspective curriculum mapping is reconceptualised as both a prospectus for and an account of educationally rich personal and social living. Skilbeck provides a wider understanding of worthwhile learning, emerging from a consideration of lifelong learning, which is expressed as ‘a normative way of life informed by and expressive of cherished values...as people seek happiness and wellbeing in a meaningful and fulfilled life, both personal and communal’. The vision offered by Skilbeck provides a guide all those who face the many challenges, identified by the authors of this part, of making lifelong learning a reality of all. Such challenges include ensuring that educational equity is treated not only as a matter of equitable access but requiring deeper considerations of the underlying causes behind poor performance, another challenge lies in ensuring quality in educational provision at the same time as responding to greater diversity in the needs of learners in a context of more widely available secondary education and the increasing ‘massification’ of higher education.

In Chap. 29, Abrar Hasan restates the lifelong learning (LLL) framework and examines its driving forces through a demand-supply optic. He interprets the LLL approach as a strengthening of the influence of the demand side factors in shaping education policy. The chapter attempts to demonstrate that the lifelong learning concept has distinctive policy content, contrary to what is sometimes alleged, which offers advantages over other alternative approaches. Its advantage in handling system-wide education policy issues is unmatched. At a subsector level, the chapter develops the implications of the LLL framework for six areas of education policy typically of interest to a country: strategic directions, governance and policy coherence; types and quality of provision; access and equity; teaching and learning processes; investment levels; and sharing of education costs. These six areas are used to assess the influence of the LLL framework on education policy experience of the OECD and the developing countries over the recent years. For the former, despite official endorsements of the lifelong learning approach, the policy imprint is patchy and

limited in scope, although in the general spirit of the approach. The chapter makes a case that the lifelong framework is even more relevant for the developing than it is for the high-income countries. The policy orientations that this implies are illustrated by examples from the six policy areas.

In Chap. 30, Malcolm Skilbeck argues that there is relatively little direct discussion of curriculum issues in the policy-focused and analytical literature of lifelong learning. Yet there are questions of a more general nature for policy-makers, providers, communities and individuals about the content, structure and organisation of learning that go beyond provision of specific programmes and courses. The foundations of lifelong learning in childhood and adolescence are seen to be provided through universal schooling. Beyond schooling and over the life cycle, there is no common institutional experience with an attendant curriculum framework, yet there is widespread agreement that in adulthood learning provision and opportunities should become increasingly universal, a mixture of formal and informal, voluntary yet directed by a diverse range of ‘imperatives’ such as generic skills, competencies, active democratic citizenship, money (risk) management, healthy living and so on. This chapter frames these imperatives and related views about provision of and opportunities for lifelong learning according to theories which, developed in the context of universal schooling, can be shown to have relevance to the more diverse conditions of continuing, lifelong learning. A key concept is curriculum mapping – in the form of both provision of and enhancing access to learning opportunities by public agencies, employers etc. and through group and individual action. Of particular interest is part played by individual choices in the quest for the good life.

In Chap. 31, Judith Chapman and David Aspin propose an agenda for schools and school leaders, based on the notion of lifelong learning and stressing the function of schools as core centres for learning in the community. They argue that to realise the goal of providing a foundation and continuing basis for learning throughout people’s lives, school curricula and pedagogies have to be re-assessed in response to challenges posed by economic and social changes and trends within countries and internationally. There is a need for flexible learning environments catering for a range of learners and addressing the constraints of standardised curricula, age- and subject-divisions, time-tables and didactic approaches to pedagogy. They argue that increasingly schools are important in the socialisation of young people, their acceptance of civic responsibility and the need for community involvement and service. The growth of interconnected learning pathways amongst learning institutions, employers and other education providers impacts on relationships between schools and their constituencies in the community. Schools are now becoming core centres of lifelong learning catering for the needs and interests of members of the community. Chapman and Aspin argue that schools committed to lifelong learning need to direct their missions with leaders for learning operating with a clear strategy for change; a re-conceptualisation of the place and function of schools in the community; a preparedness to re-culture the school; a readiness to invest in people; an expansion of the outreach of the school; a commitment to maintaining the momentum of change, sharing good practice with other learners and institutions and celebrating their commitment to the idea of leading for learning in schools functioning as core foundations and centres for learning in the community.

The importance of schools in the provision of lifelong learning is addressed again in Chap. 32 by Phillip McKenzie. He argues that economic and social changes have made a solid educational foundation more important than ever before. Young people with low levels of literacy and numeracy or who do not complete school or a vocational equivalent are more likely to experience multiple periods of time outside the workforce and are less likely to engage in further education or training after leaving school. The lack of engagement in further learning increases the ongoing risks of not being employed and social marginalisation. This chapter uses findings from a substantial programme of research on young Australians' school-to-work transition to argue that experiences at school play a vital role in providing the foundation for lifelong learning. Students who are engaged and have positive attitudes are more likely to complete secondary school over and above the effects of their achievement in literacy and numeracy. This implies that policies to strengthen lifelong learning need to focus on what happens early in school.

In Chap. 33, Judith Chapman and Michael Buchanan look at the issue of lifelong professional learning for school leaders, particularly in faith-based schools. They argue that recent reforms in schooling have added to the complexity of school leadership and have demanded that leaders need new kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Changing expectations of the leader and reformulated visions of educational leadership in the context of lifelong learning have emphasised the need for leaders to develop a deeper understanding of a range of areas pertaining to the exercise of leadership in schools, particularly in regard to learning, not only of student and staff learning but also to school leader's own learning. Research and policy-oriented work of international and intergovernmental bodies has highlighted the need to review the ways in which the conceptualisation of leadership roles and the allocation of responsibilities and tasks meet the needs of the school and the quality of learning provision for students but also meet the various personal and professional stages of educators' careers, lives and professional lifelong learning needs. It has become clear that in all school settings, there is a need to develop, support, renew and revitalise leadership exercised at all levels of every school and across all stages of an individual's lifelong learning journey. In regard to leadership in faith-based schools, it is argued in this chapter that contributions derived from much of the international body of research and policy-oriented work on lifelong professional learning and leadership, though relevant and vital to the needs of all leaders in all types of schools, is necessary but not sufficient for the development and application of lifelong learning policies, programmes and practices promoting effective leadership in faith-based school. Whilst the concepts and categories emerging from such work provide major insights and understandings relevant to the lifelong professional learning of school leaders in all types of settings, there needs to be other considerations brought into play to deepen and enrich the formation of effective leadership in faith-based schools.

Moving beyond the school in Chap. 34, Nic Gara argues that concurrent with the effects of globalisation, economic restructuring and the subsequent realignment of industry has been the integration of new technologies, with labour market and skill structures being altered, entire workforces being displaced, workforce profiles being changed, with shorter job cycles and increasing casualisation. The recent concern

for the future of the individual and society in an environment of increasing economic, industrial and social change has led to an ongoing reevaluation of traditional educational policies and processes. A lifelong approach to education is now considered essential for survival in this rapidly changing environment. The challenge now is on how to achieve the desired economic objectives, whilst still safeguarding social cohesiveness, democratic principles and the opportunity for individuals to achieve their full potential. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) has traditionally had a key role in providing work skills, the opportunity for self-improvement, re-entry and recurrent education. Accordingly, this chapter examines how the lifelong learning concept could underpin an organising framework for TAFE provision within the context of the existing systems, roles and service functions, as well as the various political and economic overlays impacting across the sector. The work examines the drivers for change and this leads to the curriculum, teaching and learning, literacy and transition issues, which are inherent in a lifelong learning strategy. The current institutional approach to learning is then considered and progress against earlier proposals on lifelong learning is examined. Implementation issues, in particular, the essential funding mechanisms necessary to support a viable lifelong opportunity are considered, and these then lead to a series of policy proposals considered essential to implement a coherent and ongoing learning framework. A series of themes emerge, which relate to an effective supporting and curriculum framework, the need to produce empowered independent learners, the necessary funding framework and, finally, the positive role that technical and further education can play in the mosaic of educational providers.

In Chap. 35, Tatum McPherson – Crowie argues that individuals working in academic institutions are now required to engage in increasingly complex learning processes and interact with a vast array of information and range of literacies to complete their academic and professional tasks. In order for academics to maintain participation within this evolving context, it has become essential for them to embrace an evolving concept of knowledge, a breadth of learning and an array of learning strategies and learning technologies. Libraries are purposeful in their role as giving the impetus and offering their resources to act as an individual's companion for the development of knowledge, understanding and a range of literacies to the ongoing benefits of an academic's lifelong learning. This chapter outlines key characteristics of the relationship between academic staff, libraries, literacies and lifelong learning within the new environment of higher education.

Also addressing the theme of lifelong learning provision in institutions of higher education, Ruth Dunkin, in Chap. 36, points out that lifelong learning has been a long-held ideal and expectation of tertiary education. Its development over the past 20 years has been fitful, highly dependent on a combination of personal need and formal compulsion and strongly linked to vocational need. This chapter reviews the explosion of knowledge and technological advances in the past 10 years, together with the near-universal requirements for professional development as part of licensing and indemnity arrangements and shows that career-long education is more prevalent than it was. However, the competing priorities for learners' time mean that complying with these requirements may still mean that such activity results in surface learning unless the

learner seeks continuous development as a competent and reflective practitioner. To the extent that they do, their involvement in what appears to be ‘vocationally relevant education’ may indeed be close to the traditional ideal of lifelong learning.

In Chap. 37, Sandra Daffron, Iris Metzgen-Ohlswager, Shari Skinner and Loretta Saarinen contend that successful lifelong learning is measured by successful transfer of learning. Transfer of learning to one’s practice does not occur automatically and if research is to be believed, learners only acquire about 10% of the information they are given. Through case studies that include 498 respondents, it has been determined that, though nothing can absolutely assure that learning transfer will transpire, there are many strategies that can be employed that will enhance the chances for transfer to occur. The case studies show the effort to help the learner transfer to practice comes from a team effort and not just by the programme designer. A model for successful transfer of learning emerges and includes variables detailing learner characteristics and motivation, design and delivery of programmes, the learning context, immediate application of new learning, actions in the workplace environment and eliminating barriers to learning transfer. The term ‘transfer of learning’ is used throughout this chapter, though it could be interchanged with transfer of training since training sessions were included in this research. The discussion of the model also addresses the context of variables before, during and after a course. The model additionally includes four key players who form the learning team: the programme planner/designer, the instructor, the learner and management/the organisation. When each player engages in active roles during the phases prior to, during and after training occurs, and the transfer variables are addressed, the chances for the learning to be retained is greatly enhanced. This chapter concludes with proven strategies that assure knowledge, skills and abilities presented by a team effort can transfer to practice throughout a lifetime of learning.

The broader context of lifelong learning in adult and community education is considered in Chap. 38, ‘The Contribution of the Adult Community Education Sector in Australia to Lifelong Learning’ by Veronica Volkoff. She shows that during the last two decades, completion of a high school certificate and post-school qualifications has become increasingly important for individuals wishing to maintain sustainable employment. Low level and inadequate education and training impact adversely, not only on an individual’s labour force status and their social participation, but more broadly on a nation’s economy and its communities. The relationship between adult education and the community has been widely discussed across the twentieth century and more recently, the capacity of community-based delivery to address the learning needs of disadvantaged, nonparticipant groups has been harnessed by governments to help redress skills shortages and strengthen community cohesion. This chapter draws on data from a longitudinal study of participation in Adult Community Education (ACE) in the state of Victoria, Australia and state-wide student participation data to explore the contribution made by the ACE sector to lifelong learning within an Australian context. In particular, it analyses the effectiveness of the role played by ACE in providing second chance opportunities for both young and mature aged people to reconnect with learning and gain skills, qualifications, employment and social benefits.



In Chap. 39, Alexandra Withnall argues that as life expectancy increases, there is growing emphasis, especially in developed countries, on the importance of offering older people opportunities to continue learning, often as part of a broader strategy that encourages them to remain healthy and independent for as long as possible. Accordingly, a whole range of different programmes aimed at people over their fifties have emerged in different countries across the world. It is shown that many of these had their origins in different frameworks for understanding and exploring aspects of ageing and the life course; however, in recent times, later life learning is more likely to be considered as an integral part of lifelong learning. Yet older people are not a homogeneous group. It is argued that we now need to think in terms of ‘longlife learning’ – a more broadly based conceptual framework that acknowledges the importance of demographic trends and recognises all older people and the range of influences on them at any one time. This new approach would allow for explorations of the meaning of learning in respect of physically and mentally frail older people and those with low levels of literacy who are currently excluded from debate.

The experiences of lifelong learning strategies for people in their latter years is explored again in Chap. 40. In this chapter Yukiko Sawano sheds light on lifelong learning practice in Japan that may help revitalise local communities facing the consequences of a rapidly ageing population. It reviews the development of lifelong learning policy in Japan since the end of the 1980s and describes the recent trend of promoting a lifelong learning designed to nurture a ‘New Public’ of active citizens. Second, it describes a brief historical outline of ‘citizens’ universities’ established by local communities and then examines three case studies from Shizuoka, Kanagawa and Tokyo involving citizens who are teaching, learning and disseminating their knowledge on their own initiative.

In Chap. 41, Norman Longworth extends his contribution to the first International Handbook which focused on the growth of learning communities, cities and regions as locations for propagating and embedding lifelong learning concepts. This chapter in the Second International Handbook outlines some of the projects, reports and initiatives that have expanded knowledge of learning regions since the first Handbook’s publication. It concentrates particularly on international cooperation as a means of widening horizons, fostering joint learning and creating new knowledge, tools and materials. This includes reference to: (a) the TELS (Towards a European Learning Society) project and its influence on the European Commission’s Policy Paper on the Local and Regional Dimension of Lifelong Learning ; (b) the PALLACE project – linking stakeholders in seven learning regions in four continents (Longworth and Allwinkle 2005); (c) the INDICATORS Project – developing stakeholder audits for universities, local authorities, adult education colleges, SMEs and schools in a learning city ; (d) LILARA (Learning in Local and Regional Authorities) – a collaboration between six European partners to develop Learning Needs Audits for Local Authority staff in 12 areas of lifelong learning city/region knowledge; (e) PENR3L (PASCAL European Network of Lifelong Learning Regions) – a network of experts in 26 European countries with the mission to expand knowledge and practice of learning regions throughout Europe; and (f) EUROlocal – an ongoing joint European project to gather all knowledge, tools, materials, charters, recommendations,

projects etc. in the field of learning regions. The author has been involved in all of these either as project manager or advisor and tries to bring out their essential elements as generators of innovative thinking in a learning society. The chapter also makes reference to other projects and initiatives which, although not formally linked to learning city/region development, nevertheless contributes to international learning.

### ***Part IV: A Critical Stocktaking***

This final part of the Handbook edited by Richard Bagnall was conceptualised as a selection of chapters providing an overall assessment of the place, impact and influence of lifelong learning. Contributors were encouraged to provide not only summative critique of the state of play of lifelong learning in policy and practice, but also constructive and original visions of what might be done in the future to address the failings and limitations of policy and practice to date. Some of the chapters were selected from the first edition as fitting for that purpose, with appropriate updating and re-focusing. Others were commissioned for the purpose. The part deals with lifelong learning theory in policy and practice across different formal and nonformal sectors, picking up a number of alternative and other initiatives in learning across the lifespan, assessing the place, impact and influence of lifelong learning theory: critically, constructively and with originality. The form and focus of the argument in each chapter were left largely to the individual authors. The patterns of commonalities and differences that have emerged across the chapters are thus an interesting expression of the preoccupations of at least the scholars who were invited to contribute. In that regard, a number of important thematic threads are evident across the chapters in this part.

First, and historically the primary, thread is the strong sense of social democratic utopianism in the theorisation of lifelong education and to a significant extent also of the continuing theorisation of lifelong learning. The substantive focus here is, significantly, on the theory and the advocacy of lifelong education and, to a lesser extent, on that of lifelong learning, rather than their expression in either policy or practice. Whilst this aspect of lifelong learning is a thread that is raised directly in many of the chapters, those in which it is particularly addressed are the chapters by Jim Crowther and Roger Boshier.

Second, and drawing a contrast with the social democratic utopianism of lifelong learning theory, is the strongly instrumental and economic vocationalism of lifelong learning policy and practice. This thread is raised in most of the chapters in this part, but is articulated particularly in the chapters by John Halliday, John McIntyre, Jim Crowther and Roger Boshier. It is generally presented by these and other scholars as a distortion of the utopianism of lifelong education theory, although in the chapter by Richard Bagnall, it is argued to be an inevitable consequence of the conceptual simplification of that theory.

Third, and in spite of the educational limitations of the highly instrumental and economically vocational nature of lifelong learning policy and practice, that policy and practice may be seen as having contributed to a number of significant

educational achievements. The breadth and extent of those achievements are examined particularly in the chapters by John Field and Richard Bagnall, but particular achievements are also the focus of most of the other chapters as follows:

- The heightened recognition and understanding of the contribution of workplace learning and other forms of situated learning to educational development, which is addressed particularly in the chapters by Paul Hager and Lorna Unwin, and that by Karen Watkins, Victoria Marsick and Young Saing Kim.
- The heightened recognition and understanding of the educationally liberalising aspects of vocational learning itself – a point that is strongly argued in the chapter by Gavin Moodie and which, in itself, renders of educational significance the flourishing of much instrumental learning developed under the banner of lifelong learning.
- The heightened recognition of the importance and nature of nonformal learning in educational development – a point that is the focus of the argument in the chapter by Paul Hager.
- The heightened recognition of the importance and nature of learning communities, networks and partnerships in educational achievement. Different aspects of this thread have been picked up in the chapters by Lorna Unwin, Chris Duke and Stephen Brookfield, Karen Watkins and that by Victoria Marsick and Young Saing Kim.
- The recognition of the educational value of the resulting complexity, diversity and inherently contradictory nature of lifelong learning in policy and practice – a point made most strongly in the chapter by Robin Usher, but also in the chapters by Paul Hager and John Field.
- The heightened recognition of the educational importance of informed critical reflection on, and formal study of, our lived experience, including vicarious experience through art and literature. This thread is developed here most strongly in the chapter by John Halliday and that by Patrick Keeney and Robin Barrow.

In each of these ways at least, the authors in this part have argued and evidenced significant educational contributions from lifelong learning policy and practice in recent decades.

Looking now in a little more detail at the arguments of each of the chapters in this final part of the Handbook, we note first that, in Chap. 42, Roger Boshier traces and critically evaluates the development and growth of lifelong education and its transmutation into lifelong learning. He argues that the UNESCO's articulation and advocacy of lifelong education as the master concept for educational reform had, at its centre, the need to foster learning from cradle to grave (the lifelong dimension of a learning society) across a broad array of settings (the lifewide dimension of a learning society). UNESCO's conceptualisation was built on social democratic conceptions of society, the need for vibrant civil societies, a commitment to equity and the notion that education was too important to be monopolised by educators. Developments along these lines were stalled, though, in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher came to power and neoliberalism became a worldwide preoccupation. In the 1980s, lifelong education was hijacked and repackaged by OECD and

intergovernmental organisations more interested in money than civil society. Today, state needs and market imperatives exert a strong influence on lifelong education theory and practice. The civil society elements in lifelong education have now been overwhelmed by state and market preoccupations. The utopian and social-democratic emphasis of older versions of lifelong education has been replaced by individualistic and mean-spirited renderings of lifelong learning. Today, lifelong learning is a tattered flag of convenience concealing more than it illuminates. In this chapter, the author shows how the vertical (the lifelong) and horizontal (the lifewide) dimensions of lifelong education are today invoked to justify dodgy deals and questionable behaviour. Too many exponents of lifelong education use words like ‘visions’, ‘best practices’ and ‘benchmarks’. These words disguise feeble, dangerous and often pathetic attempts to educate people at all stages of their life and in a broad array of settings, and are far from the utopian ideals nested in earlier notions of lifelong education.

In Chap. 43, Robin Usher puts lifelong learning as discursive policy and practice under a postmodern lens, highlighting some common themes impacting on its development. Two philosophers, Baudrillard and Deleuze, who perhaps more than any others exemplify the postmodern turn in scholarly discourses, are drawn upon in that venture. Baudrillard’s notions of simulation and hyper-reality are used to interpret lifelong learning in the context of a society of signs, where lifelong learning is located in lifestyle practices based on the consumption of signs. Deleuze’s notions of strata and rhizomes are also deployed to interpret lifelong learning, not only as being trapped in the repressive and homogenising strata of contemporary capitalism, but also as being a rhizomatic practice that is lifewide as well as lifelong, surfacing in a variety of spaces and entwined in other practices. With each of Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari, there is an aversion to the universal, a position where a loss of finalities is not necessarily something to be mourned. There is a tolerance of the apparently contradictory and paradoxical. For Baudrillard, the hyper-real is simulation, but it is also more real than the real. An individualistic consumer culture can live with lifelong learning as a social activity. For Deleuze and Guattari, lifelong learning can be located in strata and still take off on lines of flight. The chapter concludes that lifelong learning should not be universalised or ascribed a single definitive meaning. Let us resist the temptation to think and act in that way. Lifelong learning has many significations, a number of which are contradictory, but all of which are mappable.

In Chap. 44, John Halliday updates his chapter from the first edition. Through a review of some recent policy developments, he attempts to mount a stronger argument against a dominant instrumentalism within lifelong learning. Such instrumentalism suggests that people become more economically productive through prescribed courses of formal learning at school and elsewhere. Formal learning is perceived commonly, both as a response to the perception of rapid changes in the nature of work and as an instrument to bring about greater social justice. Halliday argues that this perception is misguided and that, despite the undoubted changes brought about by information and communications technologies, much remains relatively stable. He also argues that it is a mistake for governments to place too

much faith in the policy idea that investment in formal learning is bound to lead to increased economic productivity and social justice. Rather, he argues that such investment is itself part of an economic and social problem. In the final part, he argues that the benefits of formal learning in terms of labour market access are becoming less equal and that fresh thinking about instrumentalism in lifelong learning policy is required.

In Chap. 45, John McIntyre explores the development of lifelong learning policy as an evolutionary process. In doing so, he seeks to develop a perspective of policy realism contrasting to that often to be found amongst advocates of lifelong learning, with its correlative tendency for that advocacy to assume the character of an educational movement. He argues that it is something of a paradox that few nations have implemented a lifelong learning policy framework in the comprehensive form expressed by the OECD in 1996, although governments have pursued a raft of policy reforms in education and training over that time. 'Education reform' is ubiquitous in OECD member nations, yet it is driven by policy agendas at odds with the policy ethic of lifelong learning. There is a case, then, for examining how the lifelong learning ideal fares when it is subject to the policy realities played out in contemporary education and training developments. One vantage point for such a study is a critical policy sociology that gives due regard to policy process in its complexity, including the contest of ideas and values and the interplay of political, institutional and professional interests. The aim of such work is to identify those 'turns' or moments in public policy where lifelong learning ideas are either resisted or accommodated. This approach analyses how particular policy agendas discursively construct the meanings of reform and govern the direction of educational change.

The chapter takes technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Australia as a case for analysis, since it has been the subject of the continuous policy intervention from the 1980s. McIntyre argues that the policy developments of Australia's 'national training reform' have resisted the lifelong learning concept and have accorded an ambiguous status to 'adult learning' as a consequence. Yet, as the limitations of a narrow instrumentalism in institutional training have become evident, there has been a turn to more holistic or ecological concepts of skills formation. The imperatives of the 'participation and productivity agenda' have seen 'workforce development' adopted as a leading policy discourse and have favoured the emergence of 'adult learning' as a discursive resource in contemporary policy. This shift has been reflected in the adoption of OECD categories of adult learning in national data collection, which have enabled a richer analysis of adult learning beyond formal settings and their boundaries to embrace workplaces and communities. So in this sense, the revaluation of 'adult learning' can be seen as an accommodation to the comprehensive policy ethic of lifelong learning. McIntyre then carries the analysis further, in examining how policy has positioned adult and community education at the margins of the national training reform project. He argues that community education has played an important symbolic role in carrying the lifelong learning policy agenda through its valorisation of nonformal learning, although many community providers have been pressed by funding constraints into working in the training system. It can be shown, he argues, that the sector has provided a

discursive space, which has amplified communitarian discourses of social capital and fostered developments such as ‘learning communities’. In doing so, it has helped to amplify the possibility of a more ‘ecological’ paradigm of skills formation, whilst creating ideological vehicles for the advocacy of lifelong learning in education and training generally.

In Chap. 46, Paul Hager shifts the focus more firmly from training to learning. He notes that lifelong learning is an inclusive concept that encompasses learning in all types of settings: settings that range from formal educational systems of all kinds, through diverse sorts of nonformal educational provision, to the limitless situations and contexts in which informal learning can occur. From that premise, he argues that a major obstacle to the valuation of learning in all types of settings comes from the hegemony exerted by the formal education system in deciding what learning is to be valued and how it is to be assessed and accredited. This hegemony is illustrated by the way the nonformal educational sector is defined by what it is perceived to lack in relation to the formal sector: formal assessment of learning and/or the awarding of formal credentials. Even more so, informal learning of most kinds lacks the kinds of characteristics that are valued in the formal education system. One reaction to this situation would be to use those characteristics of learning that are valued in formal education to upgrade informal learning, so that the best of it can at least be encouraged and even recognised. However, Hager rejects this approach, arguing that a closer examination of informal learning has the potential to enrich our understanding of learning in all settings. He argues that there has been significant conceptual development and research investigation around the topic of informal learning over the last decade. In this chapter, he provides a critical overview of that research and argues that it provides new insights about the nature of learning. These insights point to a concept of lifelong learning that incorporates a richer notion of learning than the one that has hitherto dominated educational thought.

In Chap. 47, Lorna Unwin argues that, as work and learning are inseparable, work-based learning can be said to contribute to lifelong learning. She suggests, however, that it is important to be cautious in our approach, as we identify, describe and conceptualise that contribution and that there is a need, not only to be clearer about what we mean by the work/learning relationship, but also to embrace a critical, as well as fluid and expansive understanding of learning in the context of contemporary forms of work. In this chapter, Unwin discusses the different ways in which work-based learning might be interpreted, including learning for the subversion of the work process. She argues that the work/learning relationship could and should be enhanced for the benefit of individuals, organisations, the work process and society more generally.

In Chap. 48, Jim Crowther focuses attention on the concept of ‘really useful knowledge’, which, in the radical tradition of social purpose education, signals the importance of questioning whose knowledge counts and, often more importantly, whose does not. Really useful knowledge involves critical knowledges that could help exploited and oppressed groups explore and articulate their own problems, providing, where necessary, a guide for social action. This way of thinking about learning and life implies a potentially rich form of adult learning embedded in the

experiences and social interests of distinctive groups. Adult educators with a social purpose commitment have a key role to play in allying learning and action by making themselves a resource for different communities of endurance and struggle. ‘Merely useful’ lifelong learning, on the other hand, reflects the growth and dominance of a narrow, instrumental and individualist perspective on adult learning that is preoccupied with vocational and economic imperatives. The dominance in policy of this perspective on lifelong learning is changing the way we think about learning, whom it serves and the type of life and society that it promotes. All this has significant implications for the educator’s role. If adult learning is to be really useful, in the current context, then educators need to reassert their social purpose and reclaim their vocational impulse in terms of principled political and ethical commitments. In this chapter, Crowther locates and analyses these issues in the UK context, inviting readers to compare this analysis with trends and developments in other contexts.

In Chap. 49, Gavin Moodie begins by challenging us with the observation that not all the changes to vocational education and training over the last decade have been driven by general educational principles, such as those of lifelong learning. He cites Grubb’s ideal, that he calls the ‘education gospel’ in the United States and many other countries as positing that education is the solution to many individual and community problems, such as access to rewarding employment, equity, transition to the knowledge economy and competitiveness in a globalised world. Hyland’s observation of the ‘vocationalisation’ of all education from school to university in the UK has resonances in many other countries. In contrast, the European Union, engaged in vocational education almost from its foundation, has integrated its various educational and training activities under the lifelong learning programme, which seeks to enhance students’ and workers’ mobility by developing common European frameworks and tools to enhance the transparency, recognition and quality of competences and qualifications. Yet even in the apparently more instrumental and materialist Anglo countries, vocational education has implemented some lifelong learning principles, increasing its flexibility in places and modes of delivery, broadening its demographic reach and developing stronger and more sophisticated interactions with school and higher education. And not far behind the European Union’s broad principles of lifelong learning are pragmatic economic and social concerns, exemplified by its Lisbon strategy ‘to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’. This suggests that, over the last decade, lifelong learning has been more than just statements of principle – lifelong learning practices have been incorporated even within policies developed to serve instrumental goals. On the other hand, countries find that even the strongest and most comprehensive commitment to lifelong principles in vocational education must also support and be supported by pragmatic interests. In both approaches, vocational education is a mixture of principle and pragmatism, perhaps more so than other sectors of education. And in both approaches, educational principles have been influenced strongly by lifelong learning.

In Chap. 50, Chris Duke argues that central to the philosophy of lifelong learning is the capacity and opportunity of individuals to learn throughout the life course.

He notes that much of the discourse of lifelong learning is located within and about the education system, especially its adult education, nonformal and informal peripheries, yet the discourse is confused by a modern tendency to speak of learning whilst looking at education. An alternative understanding is located ‘out beyond’ – informal learning – indirect, about creating and nurturing an environment that enables learning to take place through and throughout society. This shifts attention to all the places and circumstances in which individuals live, work, express and develop themselves, and hence the language of learning ‘communities’, ‘cities’, ‘regions’, ‘societies’ and suchlike. The context is all kinds of social organisation and institutions, across all sectors of society and all departments of state. This challenges and is complicated by conventional management. Networking and partnerships respond to a need to work across disciplinary and administrative boundaries. There are cultural difficulties for both sides in such partnerships. Taking the UK as a particular example and comparing it with other countries and systems, Duke considers the setting of attempts to connect universities and their local regions. The conclusion is that cultural dissonance, as much as more obvious barriers such as scarcity of time and money, makes this slow and difficult. Nonetheless, it appears unavoidable if lifelong learning is to grow in the necessary enabling environment.

In Chap. 51, Patrick Keeney and Robin Barrow argue that, whilst universities have traditionally been the site of a liberal education, the digital revolution has challenged the university’s monopoly on higher learning, as well as many of its pedagogical assumptions. In addition, recent disquieting trends in the contemporary university suggest that it is rapidly abandoning liberal learning as the heart of its educative mission. In particular, the authors identify a drift towards vocational training and credentialing, a trend that underscores what various commentators are calling the ‘end of education’ in the academy. Despite the parlous state of universities, the new technologies hold great promise for filling the educational void, and for delivering to students the promise of a liberal education and its concomitant, lifelong learning. In light of these new technologies and their potentials, Keeney and Barrow conclude that either the university must recommit itself to liberal learning, or university educators must begin looking to alternative models and modes of pedagogy.

In Chap. 52, Karen Watkins, Victoria Marsick and Young Saing Kim suggest that, historically, lifelong learning in the workplace has been predominantly employee-centric, with broad, whole-organisation initiatives often focused on fads. They note the extent to which organisations are being called on to develop core competencies that enable adaptive learning cultures to support the continuous learning of an often virtual, globally dispersed, migrating workforce. This focus on learning, they argue, puts more responsibility on learners to seek continuous learning, and on leaders and organisations to create the infrastructure to support that learning. Leadership development remains a strong focus of lifelong learning in organisations. Increasingly, that development is much more organic and holistic. New evaluation models that capture salient outcomes and the impact of these more open-ended programmes on the organisation’s business are needed. They argue that many of the strategies being used for lifelong learning in organisations are less expensive because they are not instructor-led. This means that employees themselves, their



peers or their managers are picking up more of the burden of designing learning. This decentralisation of responsibility for learning will not be effective, though, if learning departments are not strategic in providing appropriate tools, clear directions and training for managers in their new roles as facilitators of learning. Lifelong learning is thus a major sector of the economy, being pivotal to an organisation's success, and hence is becoming more closely aligned and integrated with business strategies.

In Chap. 53, Stephen Brookfield returns to the idea of communities. He argues that, in a fractured and increasingly diverse world, the notion of what constitutes community has moved far beyond the 'community-as-neighbourhood' notion prominent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today we have virtual communities, communities of practice, communities of interest and communities of function. Brookfield here outlines a critical perspective on community development and considers the role of lifelong learning implied in a radical approach to developing different kinds of communities. He explores two kinds of learning in some depth: first, the learning that community leaders engage in as they seek to develop collective leadership models within their communities and, second, how one particular community leader – Cesar Chavez, founder of the National Farm Workers Union in the United States – sought to encourage the learning and development of those he worked with. He argues for the need to encourage different kinds of political learning if communities of the dispossessed and marginalised are to play a full role in the body politic.

In Chap. 54, John Field examines the evidence for claims that lifelong learning has a measurable impact on people's lives. He considers this evidence in three main areas: the economic impact, the impact on individual well-being and the impact on the wider community. He focuses, in particular, on recent studies that explore longitudinal data, following people's behaviour over time. He tries to identify where those benefits flow, not least because it might seem reasonable to suppose that those who benefit might decide to share in meeting the costs. He identifies a number of interesting findings, suggesting that this is a fertile area for investigation and argues that, although the findings need to be interpreted with caution, their significance for policy and practice is considerable.

In Chap. 55, Richard G. Bagnall seeks to draw together key threads in the other chapters through an argument that sees lifelong education and learning theory as being grounded in a process of denying the moral legitimacy of conceptual distinctions. In consequence, whilst the theorisation of lifelong education and learning has focused strongly on its transformative dimensions, lifelong learning policy and practice has focused strongly on accommodating individuals to the demands of cultural contingencies. It is also evident, though, that the promulgation of lifelong education and learning has contributed to significant contemporary changes in the educational landscape, especially those of enhanced educational inclusiveness and participation, expanded curricula, the pervasion of economic and developmental discourse with lifelong learning theory and the recasting of individual and social identity as identities of lifelong learning. These changes may be seen as creating the opportunity for an educational renaissance of transformative learning. For that renaissance to occur may require, though, the rebuilding of lifelong learning theory

in such a way that it embraces important conceptual distinctions that facilitate transformative learning, but which it currently denies.

## Afterword

We hope that in assembling the various parts and chapters reviewed in the foregoing, we have shown that lifelong learning means what it says. Our emphasis is on the learning that takes place in human beings over their whole lifespan.

We hope that in this second International Handbook of Lifelong Learning, we have helped our readers to carry forward some of the thinking necessary for facing this challenge. In this work we have tried to set out some of the main ideas of leading thinkers in the conceptualisation of lifelong learning over recent years and since our first edition. We have detailed some of the policies articulated and implemented by governments, agencies and instrumentalities of all kinds, widely across the international arena; we have pointed to examples of activities and experiences that have been planned, developed and put into place in a range of institutions and environments, where leading policy makers have demonstrated concern for creating learning opportunities across the lifespan; and we have delineated some of the research projects that have both preceded and arisen from the many current lifelong learning initiatives, endeavours and enterprises. A conspectus of these matters presented in the chapters above may suggest and illustrate some of the ways in which people may respond to the challenges of change posed by the new demands of the knowledge economy and the learning society of the twenty-first century.

Above all, we have, throughout the work, concentrated on showing how different theories, accounts and versions of lifelong learning may be related to successful practice. We believe that concerned readers will find plenty of both in this symposium but we have been especially concerned to show that the theories adumbrated in it are not mere flights of fancy, of intellectual *jeux d'esprit* exploring the realms of possibility. Throughout we have been determined to point to successful examples of lifelong learning in practical implementation and we have been concerned also to underline specific suggestions for policy and action that can be put into place as a result of reading about what other people have been doing.

It will be reasonably clear that the conception that has been animating much of the work in this volume might be thought to resemble what some have described as 'maximalist' – the transformation of existing models and practice of education and training deriving from twentieth and even nineteenth century antecedents, into a new agenda and set of approaches that will enable people to define, structure and realise their need for learning throughout the lifespan. As one of our authors has pointed out, this conception has enormous implications – for the administrators, professionals, public servants and teachers who will have to implement lifelong learning strategies, structures and ideas, and for the citizens themselves. In this undertaking, a 'climbing frame' of learning institutions and their diverse and varied pathways – universities and other tertiary learning institutions, schools, com-

panies, professional associations, special interest groups and, above all, individual citizens – will all assume new roles and responsibilities.

There will be those who will be dismayed by this realisation and who will consider such matters as the evident lack of resources available for the introduction of new patterns and models of learning in many countries across the world, and the well-known inertia of existing institutions and structures, as constituting factors that will constrain or militate against the introduction of the new policies of and approaches towards learning across the lifespan called for by the changes to be faced in the twenty-first century. Such people may simply throw their hands in the air and, however reluctantly, give up in the attempt. Others will see the challenges of these changes as presenting an exciting opportunity for initiating and instituting a set of radical changes in our approaches towards education and training and teaching and learning. Infused with a sense of the excitement that the maximalist conception will give them, they will demand a major paradigm shift in our conception of learning and teaching that will amount to nothing less than an educational and social revolution. The sad fact is, however, that forcing changes in such a radical manner may end up by doing more harm than good.

For us the better wisdom is to accept and follow the evolutionary rather than the revolutionary path. Starting from the maxim that in our thinking and policy-making we should 'Do No Harm', we suggest that the best way to initiate the changes required to bring about the kinds of transformation that have been hoped for and envisaged is better achieved by taking a gradualist approach. People need to start from where they are, with the tentative hypothesis, testing and adoption of a solution to a problem that they feel they can manage and that lies within their resources. In this way, by tackling in sequence one issue at a time, policy makers, educators and practitioners will, with the benefit of hindsight, come to see how much change they have actually achieved. Like Major in Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, by dealing with one issue after another and in a piecemeal 'one step at a time' fashion, we shall be able to look back 'at the end of all our striving' and see how such an approach can turn out to have transformed the whole educational domain. Adopting the principle of 'Sufficient unto the day is the problem thereof' we can attempt, slowly but surely and step by step, to introduce the changes necessary for bringing about a positive mindset towards the adoption of lifelong learning policies and practices, as, when and where they are needed.

Two principles in this Popperian methodology (Popper 1989) stand out. The first is the democratic one: in proffering solutions to immediately pressing problems, we need to expose them to the widest possible range of attempts at critical review and refutation. This highlights the need for the process to be all-inclusive, for in the critical enterprise no one is immune from scrutiny and no one is exempt from the responsibility of seeking to contribute to the critical enterprise of proffering and testing solutions to problems affecting us. In an open society, there is no class distinction; everyone has a part to play in social construction and reconstruction, from the richest, oldest and most powerful, to the poorest, youngest and most vulnerable. This clearly has implications for the aims that we should set for ourselves in proposing, discussing, developing and implementing lifelong learning schemes.

The second principle arising from the adoption of this perspective is that all can and indeed must be called up to participate cooperatively in the process of reconstruction. No one is exempt from that responsibility; all must be included within it. This refers to communities of all kinds and at all levels – the local, the national and the international. The corollary of this is that people must be helped to accept that responsibility: just as we give help to those people who, in educating institutions of all kinds, are not, for various reasons, starting so far on as the rest of us or making progress quite so quickly, so at the national and international levels are we under the epistemic and ethical obligation to ensure that all people have the resources, means, access and right to participate in the process as all the rest of us. This entails that the advantaged amongst us should offer support and lend a helping hand to those who need it. We cannot plan for facing the challenge of change in the twenty-first century with only ‘half our future’.

In advocating the adoption and application of such an evolutionary approach, we can – looking back over the last 10 years – see that, in a number of areas and by adopting a range of gradualist approaches to problem-solving, considerable progress has been made in making lifelong learning a reality for all. At the same time, lifelong learning advocates are increasingly adopting a philosophical world view that emphasises human connectedness (see Preece 2009). A dialogic approach which values different forms of cultural knowledge and traditions also requires open minds and willingness to question taken-for-granted precepts and ‘truths’ in all cultures. This represents a long-term future challenge for us all.

Of course, there is still much that needs to be done, but in facing future challenges, we hope that the various contributions to this International Handbook have helped set forth a realistic agenda upon which governments, departments, policy-makers, educational institutions of all kinds, agencies, organisations, associations of both a formal and informal kind, communities, groups and individuals can work to frame policies, practices and research that will be meet to assist them in their endeavours to identify, face up to and take on the questions, problems and predicaments that will arise and constantly confront them in the future. To that debate may this International Handbook serve as a contribution to the learning of all.

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**Part I**  
**History, Theory, and Philosophy**

# Chapter 1

## Towards a Philosophy of Lifelong Learning

David N. Aspin and Judith D. Chapman

### Introduction

In the thinking and activities of those working in educating institutions these days, there is always so much to do connected with the realities of the financing, staffing, delivering and evaluating educational programmes that there seems little time to concentrate on anything else. It is not surprising therefore to find that questions of a more profound kind are generally put to one side, either to await those rare opportunities when there will be an opportunity for more serious reflection or to consign such matters to the advice of ‘experts’ or ‘theorists’ whose time can be given over to such matters, separate and aside from the ‘real’ problems. This is particularly so with philosophical questions. In this chapter, we hope to show that attention to the philosophical questions that are part and parcel of thinking about lifelong learning is not only a crucial and indispensable element of the framework within which lifelong learning programmes and activities are conceived and articulated, but also that the conclusions that are reached as a result of philosophical enquiries have *practical* implications for developing programmes, curricula and activities of a lifelong learning character.

Philosophy is often thought of as ‘urbane and cultivated sermonising’ (O’Connor 1963) about the nature of reality and the place of human beings in it, much in the sense that people speak of their ‘philosophy of life’. This implies a set of beliefs, values and attitudes to what are seen as the weighty questions of life and death and/or the principles to be followed in our relations with other people. A similar sense

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of 'philosophy' is found in use where people talk of ideologies such as Marxism or economic rationalism, codes for living such as Bushido or religious systems such as those of Islam, Judaism or Christianity. Such approaches to philosophy are widely known and much practised, but we think they have little to offer us here. However, neither do we feel that we ought to fly to the other extreme and apotheosise the model of philosophy associated with exponents of it such as Ayer (1936) and Austin (1962), involving a highly technical and rigorous exercise in the analysis and clarification of the meanings of words.

As we see it, the adoption of an appropriate philosophical approach to enquiries about lifelong learning will depend, as much as anything else, upon the nature of the problems being looked into; the intellectual histories and interests of those tackling it; the outcomes at which they are aiming; the considerations that make their selection of particular categories, concepts, criteria and procedures significant or determinative in the framing of questions, the conduct of enquiries and the judgment of what shall count as valid answers or good theories; and the reflections that make certain moves in their arguments and theorising decisive.

Thus, in attempting to put into play our own version of philosophy, we need to be clear about the questions that we believe will loom large in our consideration of lifelong learning and the things that we hope will emerge from philosophical enquiries into it. Our work in this area leads us to think that there is a number of topics, issues and problems that ought to be looked into and that these are concerned, amongst other things, with the planning, provision and assessment of activities in educating institutions of all kinds, both formal and post-formal, concerned to promote and expand opportunities for learning experiences and activities for all across and through the whole of their lifespan.

The first of these questions concerns the ways in which lifelong learning might be defined, characterised and understood; the second concerns how lifelong learning might be brought about; the third concerns the kinds of knowledge, understanding and skill that people might want or need to acquire and what the status of their claims to have acquired such knowledge might amount to; the fourth draws attention to the ways in which people will be able to learn, understand and make progress in their lifelong learning endeavours; and the fifth concerns the grounds on which lifelong learning programmes can be justified and adopted. Any or all of these will also therefore probably make some demands on a wider framework of philosophical, methodological, epistemological, pedagogical and ethical concerns within which lifelong learning undertakings are more generally to be understood and the ways in which substantive theories about them may be appraised, compared, criticised and, if necessary, improved.

In attempting to show how one might go about framing answers to such questions, we shall need to draw upon the insights offered by a range of philosophical approaches. For example, the deeply held beliefs, values and attitudes, to which everyone is committed, are often hidden and only become explicit or 'public' through the expression of our preferences, ambitions, political, economic or moral decisions, and through our observable involvement in a particular pattern or certain 'form of life'. It is, however, those hidden, underlying assumptions and preconceptions that are crucial in determining the influence of our theories not only upon our



undertakings in promoting lifelong learning but also upon the aims and content of the kinds of programmes and activities we believe should be offered under the heading, in the name and for the purpose of preparing, promoting and providing opportunities for learning across the lifespan.

One element in our approach, therefore, will be some attempt to identify and throw light on some of the presuppositions that underpin and serve to define the ‘form of life’ within which we believe that lifelong learning enterprises are most appropriately located and take place. Such analysis is not undertaken simply for its own sake, however, but for particular reasons. It is undertaken, for one thing, in an attempt to promote clarity and soundness in our theoretical understanding. This is a task that we regard as being of vital importance: one cannot promote clarity of thought, soundness of argument and rational decision-making in policies of and amongst participants in lifelong learning programmes if, as policy-makers and educators, we ourselves are unaware of or unclear about those elements, principles and criteria that lay the basis for decision-making about our own work, especially when these may not be self-evident but require public expression and justification.

Such analysis is also undertaken in the attempt to provide us with the second element in this study, which is devoted to the endeavour of developing a theory or set of theories and constructing a theoretical framework against which present day programmes and activities of lifelong learning could be tested to see whether the practice matches the principles. In this way, we should be able to discover where there are weaknesses, deficiencies, omissions or errors and thus be able to determine what amendments, refinements or even wholesale restructuring might be needed in order to bring about a close ‘fit’. The purpose of this kind of investigation, then, is to consider the theories with which we or other people active in the field are working and to engage in the crucial task of theory examination, theory comparison and theory criticism, correction or even replacement. Philosophy viewed in this way becomes not merely an exercise of analysis for the purposes of clarification, but an undertaking of theory criticism and construction in order that the undertakings themselves shall be based upon sound principles, such as those of economy, simplicity, coherence, consistency, fecundity and capacity for successful prediction (see Lycan 1988).

We see, then, two main characteristics in the version of philosophy with which we shall be working in this chapter. First, we see a need for a rigorous analysis and elucidation of those concepts, criteria and categories that are embedded and embodied in any lifelong learning undertaking, together with an examination of the presuppositions underlying them [the kind of activity described by Strawson (1959) as ‘descriptive metaphysics’; see also Trigg (1973)]. Second, however, we are inclined to believe that there is a practical ‘pay-off’ or creative element, which is concerned to point to the implications of such analysis – to settle what ought logically to follow from it with respect to putting on programmes of lifelong learning. And this will mean ensuring that the theory/ies embodied in those programmes will be the temporary best theory that fits the phenomena and helps us to answer the problems at the time when we look at them. In this respect, our approach has much in common with the notion of philosophy as a process of tackling and attempting to solve problems (Popper 1972).

## A Note of Caution

It is important to be clear about the nature and purposes of such a philosophical examination and indeed of the various approaches to these questions that follow. None of them purports to provide *the* answer to any of the questions raised therein; indeed, this would not be a philosophical enterprise if that were to be the outcome aimed at. The analyses we engage in and offer, the elucidations of presuppositions, the comparison and criticism of competing theories presuppose canons of intelligibility and corrigibility that are not themselves immune from further criticism. Our willingness to put up hypotheses and conjectures that criticise or claim to refute the views of others is based upon the expectation that these will themselves be subjected in turn to rational criticism put forward by others. Any conclusions that we draw can only stand until such time as they in turn are subjected to and refined or refuted by further rational and relevant argument. Such is the nature of this kind of activity.

However, just because such an activity is regarded therefore as only provisional in nature will not mean that it is pointless or unimportant. Any policy, undertaking or enterprise that attempts to influence the lives of other people for the better count, potentially at any rate, as an intrusion into and an interference with these lives. As such, it needs to be justified publicly if it is to be accorded any weight or acceptance, whilst the presuppositions on which such a policy is based ought also to be laid bare and rendered subject to scrutiny, rather than left hidden or unexamined. It is this public examination of such policies and the rigorous scrutiny of their implicit principles or explicit recommendations for action that we see as the prime responsibility of the philosopher.

In the language we have been employing, therefore, the questions about lifelong learning that we believe need to be tackled and, it is to be hoped, answered (even if only provisionally), may be categorised, at least initially, into the following:

- Questions of meaning and definition
- Questions of methodology
- Questions of epistemology
- Questions of the philosophical psychology of pedagogy/learning
- Questions of ethics

In the rest of this chapter, we shall try to deal with the various issues arising in these areas of enquiry and to come to some tentative conclusions that might form a useful basis for theories of lifelong learning.

## The Problem of Meaning and Definition

It is with the question of meaning that the problems of developing a philosophy of lifelong learning begin, for if we cannot easily understand or agree upon the terms being employed in our discourse in and about the topic, then we cannot proceed

further to an examination of the validity of arguments employing or theories embodying them. Thus, the analysis and clarification of terms become a prior stage in the conceptualisation of lifelong learning matters, for it is upon them that all else that follows will depend.

Gelpi, one of the early writers on the topic of lifelong education (Gelpi 1984), argued that there was a need for a clear definition of the term 'lifelong education'. The problem, he maintained, was that, whilst one could be reasonably clear about the meaning and applicability of such terms as 'vocational education', 'technical education' and 'nurse education', no such clarity could be found in the case of terms with much less specific points of application, such as 'lifelong education', particularly when a range of other apparently similar terms – *education permanente*, 'further education', 'continuing education' and so on – were often used interchangeably with it and with each other.

Other writers on the topic have maintained that there is no point in trying to apply the term 'lifelong education'. They claim that such a term seeks to generalise the reference of the notion of 'education' to such a wide set of parameters as virtually to empty it of all meaning. Still others have acted as though the term 'lifelong education' were simply another way of alluding to those educational endeavours and opportunities that were offered after the end of formal schooling and thus was interchangeable and synonymous with terms that had wider currency, such as 'adult education', 'careers education' or 'recurrent education' (Stock 1979). Yet another group have commented that, whilst there may have been enough examples around in the history of educational philosophy of such key ideas as 'liberal education' or 'moral education' to offer discussants a reasonably firm point of purchase, there is so little said about 'lifelong education' that there is almost nothing on which we can get a grip in our attempts to give a clear account of those elements that we may discern as being cardinal to or indicative of its meaning and application.

There is an important point to be made when one is considering the positions that have been taken in the past in respect to the concept of lifelong education and the arguments that have been put forward by various proponents of these positions. For it seems to us that differences in and between various versions of 'lifelong education' are functions, not only of particular educational, moral or political commitments, but also of particular meta-theories at work in the philosophy of lifelong education/learning.

In some versions of the term, and in various attempts to produce a clear account of it, we may discern the presence and operation of a particular preconception. In many writers' work on lifelong education, for example, there is an implicit acceptance of the idea that (a) it is possible to arrive at some uniform descriptive account of the term 'lifelong education', which all could then accept and take as a kind of *primum datum*, and that (b) if there were not such a definition already available, then there ought to be. The common postulate shared by many writers – particularly the earlier ones – seems to be that unambiguous agreement on the meaning and applicability of the term 'lifelong education' or 'lifelong learning' is conceivable, possible and attainable. In our reading of the various books, chapters and papers on this topic, we find plenty of evidence that many writers seem to share this assumption

and operate according to the logic and dictates of an empiricist approach to concepts and meaning (see Dave 1975; Cropley 1979; Gelpi 1985; Lengrand 1975, 1979; and Richmond 1979 and Stock 1979).

The main feature observable in the work of such writers is their holding of preconceptions about definition that may be described as ‘essentialist’. This is the notion that it is possible, and indeed philosophically proper, for participants in discussion about any term in educational discourse to employ the methods of etymological derivation, dictionary definition or the sharp-cutting tools of conceptual analysis (looking for those cases that all can agree to be ‘central’ or ‘peripheral’ to allowable utterance employing the terms in question), in the endeavour to arrive at some kind of agreement about the separately ‘necessary’ and conjointly ‘sufficient’ conditions that will underpin and define the direction of discourse employing this term.

The notion that the quest for ‘essential’ definitions was legitimate was held in an earlier era where students of education accepted the academic tenability and conformed to the dictates of the empiricist paradigm, tending only to engage in activities of conceptual analysis, pursuing philosophical enquiries and developing and applying research designs and instruments exclusively based upon it. This view – also known as ‘positivism’ – is still to be found at work in many departments and faculties of social sciences and education in many parts of the world. However, it has been subjected to the formidable *elenchus* of the criticisms advanced against it by such antilocutors as Popper (1943, 1949, 1960 and 1972), Wittgenstein (1953), Lakatos (1976, 1978) and Quine (1951, 1953, 1974, etc.) to say nothing of more modern writers such as Rorty (1979) or Bernstein (1983). That this presumption and *modus operandi* may be taken to encapsulate a mistaken view of meaning and intelligibility has been common coinage for some time now (see references in Aspin 1996a, b).

As a result of this *critique*, we may now accept that the older positivist/empiricist approach of seeking to achieve clarity about or understanding of the ‘essential’, ‘basic’ or ‘central’ meaning of such terms as ‘lifelong education’ and ‘lifelong learning’ rested upon and embodied a fallacy. This was the fallacy described by Quine (1951) as resting on two dogmas of empiricism. These dogmas amounted to the prescription of the uncontested acceptance of the following claims: that (a) distinctions may be found and coercively employed between domains that were *sui generis* disciplinarily different (such as fact and value, science and religion, and so on) and that (b) in all modes of intellectual enquiry, there are some absolute foundations of belief, fact, concept or category beyond, which it was impossible to go and from which all further enquiry in that field must proceed (for the origin of this view, see Plato *Phaedo* 101 D 5 ff. and *Republic* 510 D and 511 B ff).

For Quine, Popper and many others, by contrast, all language and all enquiries are inescapably and *ab initio* theory-laden, far from value-free, and a mixture of elements, such as description and evaluation, fact and theory, that had been previously regarded by empiricist thinkers as absolutely distinct. Such arguments were used powerfully by such post-empiricist thinkers in education as Evers and Lakomski (1991) to develop a new approach to the elucidation of problems in educational discourse and policy. On this view, our talk on these matters does not consist of an analysis of discourse and terms into separate categories of facts and values, meaning

and meaninglessness, subjective and objective and the like. Rather, it has to be conceived of as being in itself a ‘theory’ or set of theories. This, our overall ‘theory of the world’, embodies a complex ‘web of belief’ (see Quine and Ullian 1970), shot through differentially with descriptive and evaluative elements, according to the contexts and purposes of which our theories and discourses are brought to bear and applied in our world. This is what happens when we apply our thinking to the world of education, policy and administration, teaching and learning.

For such reasons, it is now widely believed that there is a need, in philosophical activities devoted to a thorough-going and intellectually responsible enquiry into such matters as lifelong learning, to fuse description-evaluation, fact-value and quantitative-qualitative methods in new forms of enquiry, that are valuable both for the researcher and the policy-maker in educational matters. Such an approach would involve both groups in a common enterprise – what Lakatos (1976, 1978) might have called a ‘progressive research programme’ – of seeking to gain understanding and promote policy generation about lifelong learning. On this account, future work in the philosophy of education would be well advised to consider the adoption of approaches of this kind (see, e.g., Wain 1985a).

In this enterprise, we do not attempt to reduce everything to some absolute foundations of ‘fact’ and ‘value’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, or ‘policy’ and ‘implementation’, in the (vain) attempt to reduce some ‘analyses’ of concepts and theories that can be completely ‘correct’ or ‘true’; or to produce some fundamental matters of indisputable research ‘findings’ about the objectivity and existence of which there can be no dispute. Against this notion, we tentatively contend that a different approach is to be preferred. What is important, when we endeavour to identify the nature, aims and purposes of all kinds of educating institutions, activities and processes – formal and informal, fixed-term and lifelong – and to promote excellence, effectiveness and quality in them, particularly when we wish to get clear about the contribution of such activities to programmes of lifelong learning, is, we believe, to adopt some such pragmatic method as the following:

- To seek to understand the questions, the problems, the categories and criteria with which researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of lifelong learning are currently concerned and are working
- To identify the theories with which researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field are operating
- To seek to understand the causes of success or failure in the conception and application of such theories, policies and practices, as a necessary prelude to attenuating or eliminating dysfunctions and establishing or ameliorating structures and procedures that would conduce towards improvement

It is by examining various attempts that have been made to give form, content and direction to the idea of ‘lifelong learning’ that we may begin to develop and articulate a theory that will bear application to the problems that those who have been placing so strong an emphasis upon this idea are seeking to address and to solve. Of course, we cannot assume that all these problems are the same or even similar: different countries, different educational systems and different agencies of

learning will be pre-occupied with some similar but many different concerns. Such differences will not only be those of degree of complexity or difficulty; the problems they address will also be different in kind. This is something of which anyone attempting to give some account of 'lifelong learning' will rapidly become uncomfortably aware.

The reason for this is not far to seek. Like 'Art', 'Religion' and 'Democracy', 'Education' (and *a fortiori* 'lifelong education' and 'lifelong learning') is an example of what Gallie (1956, 1964) called an 'essentially contested concept' (see Hartnett and Naish 1976). To think that one can find an 'essential', 'basic' or uncontested definition of 'lifelong education' is to embark upon a search for a chimaera. Thus, rather than engaging in a futile search for the real meaning or an uncontested definition of lifelong education and lifelong learning, we would suggest that the best one can do is to follow Wittgenstein's advice (Wittgenstein 1953, 1958) and 'look at the use' of these terms in the discourse of those who employ it and the purposes for which they employ them.

In the current educational climate, this will make it impossible for us to avoid noting the increasing frequency and growing importance with which idea of 'lifelong learning' has, over recent years, been appearing in international discussions, proposals and schemes of educational policy, planning and administration, as did 'lifelong education' in a slightly earlier age. This movement for the adoption and institution of the idea of 'lifelong learning' is still being proposed as a major and necessary element in the educational policies and plans of countries widely across the international arena – even though what such countries might mean or intend by it is far from being widely agreed. But of its importance, there is still little doubt.

### ***A Note on the Use of the Terms 'Lifelong Education' and 'Lifelong Learning'***

In order to avoid confusion, it may be worthwhile to try to chart some of the causes of and explanations that might be advanced to account for the gradual replacement of the former concept 'lifelong education' by the latter 'lifelong learning' in public discourse in this whole area. For it may be that from this change some confusion may have arisen.

There is some history to be commented upon here. By a number of authors and in the discussions of several international bodies concerned with these matters, it began to be noted that the emphasis on the idea of 'lifelong education' placed great weight – perhaps too great – on teaching and learning transactions within the norms, conventions and boundaries of an institutional environment and within education seen in institutional terms. It was realised and argued that people interested in learning could and should be able to make cognitive progress in a number of environments, not all of which were institutional, and not all of which exemplified a didactic model and a 'transmission' approach towards a student's acquisition of knowledge and understanding typically found in institutional education settings. Educational

institutions, it was pointed out, were only one source amongst an array of milieux, sites and locations to which people seeking growth and advancement in their own knowledge, understanding and skills could turn. Increasingly, individual people wanting further training or personal development could plan and make learning gains in areas of their own interests with a much greater degree of access, freedom and flexibility if they were to tailor their own learning needs to the resources offered by teaching and learning programmes of all kinds and found in all kinds of places – traditional and novel, formal and informal, conventional and alternative.

Not least of such sources providing impetus towards personal learning in the recent years has been the almost exponential growth of opportunities for individualised learning afforded by developments in the world of information technology and communication. The IT revolution offered individual learners almost unlimited untold potential for the acquisition of new information, knowledge and insights by novel means, the running of thought experiments, the framing of hypotheses, the exploration of a myriad possibilities and the probing of connections and alternative pathways, many of which were not available in more traditional conceptions of the ‘appropriate’ environment for learning. Nowadays, learning through multi-media technology is not like that found in the more traditional school setting: in these days, learning, acquiring knowledge and probing understanding through this technology can be regarded as play. No wonder that a growing number of students of all ages prefer to go about their learning with the aid of such assistance as is made accessible to them by PCs rather than having to be subjected to the constraints of the typical environment of many educational institutions and the stress they very often lay upon particular styles, modes and patterns of student learning and pupil progress. Learning with these new instruments of multi-media technology enables students to work and achieve positive learning gains according to their own pace and preferred styles for learning.

Concentrating on individual learning styles and targets of interest in this way also laid to one side many of the problems associated with the idea of acquiring learning in educating institutions. Either the term ‘education’ used there was vacuous – so wide that it could cover any kind of use involving the notions of upbringing, training or change – or it was heavily loaded with a particular kind of curriculum and content value. ‘Science, mathematics, history, art, cooking and carpentry, feature on the curriculum [sc. of educating institutions], not bingo, bridge and billiards’ was the view of Richard Peters (1966: 144), one of the world’s leaders in the philosophy of education at the time and that was a view widely shared amongst those planning, funding and putting on the programmes of educating institutions in those days. Although there is much to be said for acquiring knowledge and skill in such subjects, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that people might also want to learn how to be better at activities and to know more about subjects that would be rather more similar to the latter class of activities than the former. ‘Learning’ how to be good at bridge, for example, could be a *desideratum* for many older people freed from the tyranny of the workplace, whilst billiards, snooker or even darts could be a source of many good things for young and older people. In that respect, the concept of ‘learning’ is to be preferred over that of ‘education’: it is not only neutral with respect to questions of value but also in the matter of the construction of a programme of preferred activities it has

much to commend it for individuals. It also emphasises processes – the ongoing nature of the activities – rather than products; learning is what Ryle called a ‘task’ rather than an ‘achievement’ word (Ryle 1949).

It is for these kinds of reasons that the term ‘lifelong learning’ has now come into much greater prominence and use than ‘lifelong education’, which has been increasingly laid aside. In what follows, therefore, except where sense and intelligibility requires the use of both or one or the other, we shall also adopt this approach. For it is now becoming increasingly clear that policy-makers in countries, agencies and institutions widely throughout the developed and developing worlds are devoting increasing attention to the notion that ‘lifelong learning’ is a central idea to be promoted in education policies for the future. It is regarded as offering a necessary and a strong foundation to underpin education and training provision, for ends that have to do with matters of an economic, social and individual kind, upon which countries, systems and individuals wish to lay ethical importance and to base their education and training policies for the future.

## Questions of Methodology

### *A ‘Maximalist’ Approach*

The post-empiricist approach to attempting to understand and elucidate the various types and shades of meaning given to ‘lifelong education and ‘lifelong learning’ in educationalists’ talk appears to sit well, on the surface at least, with the view taken of lifelong education by Kenneth Wain, one of the most prolific writers on the philosophy of lifelong education in recent times (see Wain 1984, 1985a, b, 1987, 1993a, b, and 2004). Wain’s preferred ‘progressive research programme’ of lifelong education is the ‘maximalist notion’ incorporated in the UNESCO ‘Programme’, as various proponents of this idea (see Dave, Cropley, Gelpi, Lengrand and Suchodolski) have delivered it. As Wain (1987) comments:

‘lifelong education’ stands for a program to reconceptualise education totally according to the principle that education is a lifelong process... for a complete overhaul of our way of thinking about learning, for a new philosophy of education and... for a *program of action* (Fauré et al. 1972; Lengrand 1975; Dave 1975; Cropley 1979)... as the “master concept” for all educational planning, policy-making, and practice... Their ambition was that the word education would eventually become synonymous with lifelong education in people’s minds... (today’s) world... requires a lifelong education which is a “constant reorganizing or reconstructing of experience”... (Dewey 1966: 76)

The emphasis of Dewey upon education as ‘a continuous process of ‘reorganisation and readjustment’ of experience and the pragmatic concerns of lifelong education’ may be claimed as the principal intellectual forebear of the maximalist position. The notions of *deliberate direction* and *conscious ordering* are crucial in the conception of education as consisting in working on the reconstruction and



re-organisation of experience. These are manifestations of a concern on the part of proponents of the maximalist position to show that educators are leaders of the 'learning society'. The proponents of the maximalists' position argue that lifelong education '... should be institutionalised in a "learning society"; this clearly shows that... it wants to make education more central to society, not deprive people of the right to it'. (Wain 1993b: 67). This gives us a Deweyan reason and support for encouraging the development of lifelong learning approaches, as one of the necessary features of a democratic society (see also Hickman 2008).

A 'maximalist' conception of this (Deweyan) version of a 'learning society' might thus be stated as Wain sets it out, both below and, though with some reservations, in his recent 2004 publication on *The Learning Society*:

There is no 'model' learning society, there are different forms a learning society could take, just as there are different forms the lifelong education program could take. What distinguishes one learning society from the other is precisely the kind of program it institutionalizes within its particular socio-cultural and political context. The political characteristics of the movement's 'learning society' are... democratic... a shared, pluralistic and participatory 'form of life' in Dewey's sense...

This means reassessing the role of the school and of childhood education... and prioritizing adult education on the same level. A fundamental strategy with regard to the latter is to sensitize social institutions, the family, the church, political party, trade union, place of employment, etc., to their educational potential... with respect to their members. To encourage these institutions to regard themselves as potential educative agencies for their members and for the wider society (Wain 1993a: 68)

[T]he learning society is one that is exceedingly self-conscious about education in its total sense; that is conscious of the educational relevance and potential of its own institutions and of the general social environment that is its way of life, and is determined to maximize its resources in these respects, to the maximum' (Wain 1987: 202–3)

## A Different View

Richard Bagnall (1990) attacks this version of 'lifelong education' as 'regressive' and 'illiberal'. He restates the four semantic interpretations of 'lifelong education'. The first – 'education as a preparation *for* the rest of a person's life' – he says

may be identified with the traditional view of schooling... as comprising... an educational foundation for adult life (e.g., Peters 1966; White 1982: 132)... such a view of education is inadequate for adult participation in modern, technologically sophisticated, liberal democratic societies... (see Evans 1985; Long 1983; Wedermeyer 1981)...

The second – 'lifelong education as education to be distributed *throughout* the whole of the lifespan' – remarks Bagnall,

accords... with the... conception of lifelong education as 'recurrent education' (Davis et al. 1986; Kallen 1979) and with the principles of 'continuing education' (Titmus 1989 and Za'rour 1984)... While further development of educational systems along the lines of 'recurrent' education would clearly entail major changes in educational provision and participation, these changes at least would appear to be a constructive development of present educational provision and understanding

The third – ‘lifelong education as education *from* the whole of life’s experiences’ – reduces, in Bagnall’s view, to the fourth version of ‘lifelong education’ – that

All events in which one is consciously involved throughout one’s lifespan constitute education (as process) and contribute to and are part of one’s education (as outcome). Education is the process and the on-going education product of living.

This view Bagnall rejects as failing to accord any intelligibility to the notion of formal and active engagement in educating activities as opposed to informal and unintentional education. For him *education proper* consists in making distinctions between knowledge and ideology, between educative learning and the simple accumulation of experience, between offering a contingent plurality of programmes and simply following one undifferentiated path of cognitive growth, between activities that conduce to worthwhile ends and experiences that are just simply ‘had’, between ends that may be cognitively difficult and challenging, but are morally defensible, laudable, and commendatory for all people, and outcomes which just simply come about after undifferentiated and unselected experiences and not as a result of informed and clearly differentiated choices of various kinds. Bagnall argues that: ‘There is a desperate need for concrete educational expression to be given to many of the liberal and humanitarian ideals of lifelong education theorists such as Gelpi (Ireland 1978)’.

Charles Bailey would be in strong sympathy with such an approach. He stresses the importance of developing, maintaining and applying the powers of rational autonomy throughout the whole of people’s lives (Bailey 1988), citing the work of Kant (1964), Hirst (1965) and Peters (1966) in support:

If... Hirst claims that a genuinely liberal education must involve the development of rational mind... then it is difficult to see why this should be a process that terminates at 16 or 18... Hirst’s well-known transcendental justificatory argument... does bear on individuals asking questions like: How should I live? How ought I to develop myself? Persons asking these kinds of questions would clearly be adults rather than children...

Similarly... Peters’... conception of education as involving worthwhile developments in knowledge and understanding is clearly not something that is in any essential way limited to schooling... there is the clear implication that the rational person will have a duty, or at least might reasonably want, to continue their liberal education throughout life...

Education should be seen on this account as a series of deliberate undertakings to introduce students to some activities rather than others and to make them available as programmes in educational settings. These undertakings will introduce students to a range of activities and experiences that will enable them to make informed judgments and judicious choices about the options open to them, to choose rationally between them and consciously to accept the consequences and obligations that may arise from them. It is not the case that the undifferentiated flow of life itself will guide us to make such judgments and choices; the presuppositions of human autonomy and community render it a matter of necessity for the enterprise of education to be a conscious, deliberate and discriminating series of distinctions, values and decisions.

These considerations require that any form of *education proper* must be based on some more deliberate, objective and inter-personal ground than those accretions of

experience that come about as mere increments of growth. That ground is provided, on these arguments, by the presupposition of individual autonomy and the moral obligations towards other autonomous agents constituting the human community and their welfare and progress that arise from and in it (see Smith 1997).

### *Some Criticisms: The Need for a 'Third Way'*

The consequences of adopting such arguments of Wain or Bagnall and Bailey bear substantially on the approaches and strategies employed to bring about lifelong education/learning and of the role of educators as leaders of a learning community. The implicative conclusions of those arguments require educators to commit themselves to the correlative educational imperative of planning and seeking educational opportunities, activities and experiences and making them available to ourselves and others throughout our lives. It would be a pity if we were distracted from taking the moral implications of such arguments for our educative endeavours (see Daveney 1973), by attaching excessive importance to such differences between protagonists of lifelong education. There are faults and virtues on both sides.

There is much that is noteworthy and commendable in the maximalist position. Wain's proposal for making 'lifelong education' a 'progressive research programme', as Lakatos conceived it, is worthy of serious consideration. The centrality in this notion of the principle of inclusion and removal of barriers to participation in educational provision gives point and direction to the idea of a 'learning society' (see Ransom 1994 and Wain 2004). The view that lifelong learning subsumes both formal and informal models of learning and places the main burden of the control and direction of learning on the learners themselves accords well with recent developments and advances in both pedagogy and 'andragogy' arising from research into meta-cognition and student-centred learning (Knowles et al. 1984 and see below).

There are some problems with this position, of course: the notion of internal coherence as the sole criterion of progressiveness in a research programme is open to all the criticisms, which anti-relativists have deployed against it, whilst at the same time the appeal to 'touchstone' as enabling inter-paradigm comparisons to be made suggests that such an account of theory competition presupposes the applicability of extra- or supra-paradigm criteria of intelligibility and corrigibility. One cannot have it both ways. Finally, one might have some reservations about the almost totalitarian character of the position envisaged by advocates of the maximalist programme. Not only might some criticism be raised concerning the unitary character and personification of 'society' found in the summary above – how can a learning society be 'conscious of' and sensitive to the educational potential of all its institutions and individuals? – but one might also be justified in sensing in the views of the proponents of that idea a vision and a sense of mission that detractors might describe as utopian and Popperian critics might characterise as millenarian. These considerations should caution us against a too ready acceptance of maximalist rubrics for the idea of lifelong learning.

On the other side, it is right to note that education, however we conceive it, is not something to which artificial barriers can be drawn and that, properly conceived, it is an enterprise that lasts over the whole of a lifetime. Of course, such a view gives undue prominence to place of active discrimination in a formal institutional sense and too little to the idea and functioning of informal education. It tends to stress unduly a particular conception of liberal education in debates about the meaning and content of lifelong learning programmes. A great deal of criticism of that view and its justification has already been written (see Young 1971; Langford 1973; Harris 1979, and Evers and Walker 1983). The possibility of such criticisms being deployed against a similar view of the concept of lifelong learning should perhaps caution us against too ready an acceptance of the rejection of arguments based on 'relevance' and 'coherence' and of any plea for lifelong learning to be seen as a species of liberal education generally. There is much more to it than that.

### **An Alternative Approach: The Focus on Problems**

For these reasons, we think that there is much to be said for trying a different expedient. There is, we believe, little point in attempting to achieve some resolution between the different accounts of the term, especially when there can be as many different conceptions of the concept of lifelong learning as there are philosophers to put them forward and communities willing to put their own versions of lifelong learning programmes into effect. It might, in our view, be better to look, not so much at the various interpretations and accounts of lifelong learning, but rather more at the circumstances in which various theories and policies of lifelong learning have been articulated, developed and applied.

In other words, we are suggesting an objective referent that may be found in the *problems* to the settlement of which lifelong learning programmes are addressed. There is, we believe, more to be gained by looking at the difficulties, issues and predicaments, the attempted solution of which different policies of lifelong learning have been conceived to tackle. In that way, we might attempt to see how, why and in response to what pressures and quandaries the various versions or theories of lifelong learning have been developed or are in play and can be seen to be at work in the attention education policy-makers devote to them, before attempting to assess how far those policies and practices have succeeded in finding answers for the problems that policy-makers are attempting to tackle.

One resolution that might be suggested, then, is to take a pragmatic look at the problems that policy-makers are addressing when urging that learning be lifelong and open to and engaged in by all people. This will help us accept that, just as there is a myriad of such problems, some of them unique to particular countries, education systems or institutions, some much more general and widespread, and so there will be a large difference, not only in kind but also in degree of complexity and sophistication, in the type and scale of the solutions proffered to them. There will be

small- and large-scale differences too in the particular terms of significance in those solutions, the tests for efficacy, the standards of success and the criteria and arguments that make certain approaches more fruitful than others, for the particular times and circumstances in which they are brought to bear and applied.

Examples of such problems may be readily found, though our examination of them is likely to start closer to home than further away. Perhaps, we may begin to make ground by examining some of the accounts of the needs of different people, different communities or different countries for undertaking education and learning across the lifespan, currently under consideration by governments and policy-makers around the world. These days the different versions of lifelong learning occurring widely across the international arena are associated with attempts to respond by educational means to problems of a very large scale and widespread international prominence. The recent policies of such international agencies as UNESCO, OECD, the European Union and APEC as well the policy developments taking place in many national government departments and ministries of education [see here the work of Beycioglu and Konan (2008), and Tuschling and Christoph (2006)] relate to the following concerns, amongst others:

- The need for countries to have an economy sufficiently flexible, adaptable and forward-looking to enable it to feed its citizens and give them a reasonable quality of life
- The need for people to be made aware of the rights and duties open to them in the most widely preferred modern form of government – that of participative democracy, to be shown how to act in accordance with those rights and duties and to become committed to the preservation and promotion of that particular form of political arrangement and its constitutive or associated set of political, social and community institutions
- The desirability of individuals having an informed awareness of a range of options of activities and choices from which they can construct and continually re-construct satisfying and personally uplifting patterns of life for themselves.

If we examine this list of needs, we shall find no shortage of problems, issues and questions, which particular countries, systems, communities, institutions and individuals are currently addressing. Their concern in such undertakings involves the attempt to work out what will best conduce to the individual, communal and national welfare of their people. This entails getting people in turn to take on some study for themselves. People need to look into such matters as how they should act towards themselves and their fellows; what choices they need to make in order to enjoy a satisfying and enriching life; in what directions they may try to shape their futures; for what roles and responsibilities as members of their various communities and the national polity should they prepare themselves. For all citizens in the modern democratic state, these will be matters calling upon continuing educational endeavour and self-conscious, self-directed and deliberate concern. The need for them to face the kinds of problems instanced earlier will require them consciously and purposefully to undertake and engage in a set of learning activities, acquiring the knowledge and skills that will enable them to work out ways in which they may bring about an

improvement in their own lives and that of all members of their community and hand it on to their successors in coming generations. And that, in the eyes of Mary Warnock (1979), is the end of all education.

## **Epistemological Concerns: Knowledge for Lifelong Learning**

Here, we wish to raise two questions. The first concerns those things that people will need to know and to learn, in order to live out their lives as well-functioning and productive individuals in present and future economic conditions; to understand, grasp and seek to expand the opportunities offered them by the right of participating in the political institutions of the modern democratic state; and to judge intelligently and make well-informed choices from amongst a range of activities that will increase their independence, confirm their autonomy and extend their cultural horizons. This is the question of substance.

The second is perhaps philosophically more important: it concerns the nature and status of the knowledge that people will acquire in lifelong learning undertakings. In answering this question, we are helped by recent work on the concept of knowledge and on theories about the ways in which people learn.

More modern conceptions and accounts of the nature of knowledge require us to move away from ideas that were once held regarding the nature of knowledge, and the truth and objectivity of the knowledge claims that one could make. Previously knowledge was held to be certain or at least highly probable, truths were absolute and data were based on facts that were regarded as 'hard' and objective. The sense perceptions, from which allowable knowledge claims were held to spring and were warranted, were uncontentious, theory- and value-free. Instead of this position, there is now widespread acceptance of the view that, insofar as it is possible to speak of knowledge and truth at all, it is something that is highly provisional, constantly changing and problematic (see Rorty 1979).

Thus, thinking that we are acquiring new knowledge or making a claim to have knowledge or understanding rests these days on no secure foundations. Rather, when we lay claim to or talk now about knowledge, truth and belief, we are aware that what we say is perennially open to challenge and critical review. The knowledge claims that we make are corrigible and open to criticism. These days to claim to know or understand something is much less like standing on the building blocks of solid granite provided for us by teachers who were the authorities on it and is much more like the experience of having to learn ourselves to get used to riding on wet slippery logs. The notion of secure foundations and unshakeable building blocks for knowledge has gone.

Further, we have to cope now with the additional realisation that knowledge, instead of being regarded as strictly divided into disciplines constituting the world of knowledge, and partitioned for curriculum purposes into diverse subjects or areas such as English and Mathematics and History and Geography and Science, is to be seen from a more integrative perspective. Our world of apprehension, cognition and

comprehension is much more like a shifting set of webs of discourse that embody the declensions, alterations, and expansions in the theories with which we try to make sense of the reality we share and make it amenable to our understand and control. For this reason, knowledge has now become much more problem orientated. We address our cognitive efforts onto the study and tentative solution of the problems that beset us.

All this has immediate concerns for those educators concerned with leading the learning community and helping its members get started on learning throughout life. These are amongst the key questions that we are called to face: what counts as knowledge and how may knowledge be secured, transmitted and developed in a society where knowledge is constantly changing throughout people's lives? If we are to have new conceptions of knowledge in our society, what kind of policies and programmes shall we provide both inside our society's educating institutions and in more informal environments outside and beyond their walls? Most importantly, what implications do new conceptions of knowledge hold for the education of lifelong learners and the programmes of activities and experiences they may choose or be required to undergo? (We may find the work of MFD Young in his well-known discourse in the 'new' sociology of education *Knowledge and Control* especially useful and thought-provoking in helping us tackle such questions as these).

On the accounts with which our teachers and learners will be operating today, the knowledge they work at imparting or acquiring may not have the status of certainty or even a high degree of probability. It must, however, be public, objective and testable. What matters now is much less the authority to be given to anyone's claim to knowledge but much more the kinds of evidence and of theoretic perspective and interests we have, in which we are willing to research, frame and plan our future thinking and acting. It is our inter-subjective agreements as to what shall count as evidence and the way in which it may be rendered objective that give us a warrant for the public acceptability of our claims to knowledge. Just as we are entitled to take it amiss if some-one promises but subsequently fails to fulfil that promise, so we are entitled to be deeply disappointed, even disillusioned, if some-one confers a right to know upon us, on grounds that we find subsequently to have been at worst mistaken, at best uncertain, shifting or illusory. For letting some one down in that way is actually to upset the whole set of presuppositions and legitimate expectations of which our inter-personal world of cognition and shared understanding is constituted. Just as, when some-one tells a lie, the whole structure of linguistic interchange is called into question; so, when some-one turns out to have been less than secure in his/her claim to know something, our confidence in our own perception of reality is shaken.

So strong is the presupposition in favour of our acceptance of our own and other people's shared experience in matters of claims upon a common framework of veridical perception, cognition and understanding, that it is generally only in the presence of the possibility of uncertainty, misunderstanding or mistake that we strongly assert our claim to know something – as Wittgenstein (1953) pointed out. We know we have to objectify our knowledge claims: public communication and

the claims of intelligibility require it. But we also have to make it clear that our claims are liable to error, contestation or correction, and that is why, paradoxically, when we claim 'to know' something, we are also thereby tacitly inviting our interlocutors to share *but yet to critically scrutinise and check what we say for possible error*. Knowledge is therefore public, yet also automatically open to checking, criticism and possible falsification. A claim to knowledge on our part necessarily involves rendering ourselves subject to challenge, to being candidates for examination, possibly even targets of contestation or conflict.

The claims we make to having acquired rational beliefs, knowledge or understanding, therefore, are, whilst acceptable as objective because of their intersubjectivity, highly uncertain, highly unstable and liable to refutation. Any learning gain that we make, any knowledge claim we advance, however tentatively, wherever we came by it, in howsoever formal or informal the learning environment, has to be seen from a particular perspective. This refers *not* to facts, mathematical certainties and empirical verifiabilities; rather, it issues from, exposes and indeed draws attention to the theoretical frameworks within which our learning gains and knowledge-claims are framed and articulated. The climate in which our cognitive community operates subjects them to critical scrutiny, error elimination and every possible attempt at disconfirmation (see Popper 1949, 1972). It is only when such claims have successfully resisted all attempts at overthrow that they may be *provisionally* accepted for the time being as having 'warranted assertability' (Dewey 1966: 162), and the theories within which they figure and from which they operate as being, *pro tempore*, the 'best' theories for application to theoretical or practical problems that we face and the knowledge and skills we need to acquire and put into play in our attempts to solve them (see also Hickman 2008).

Given the changing conditions of that cognitive world, the notion of knowledge being put forward here is one that is particularly suited to the character and activities of lifelong learning. The nature of lifelong learning, as we shall contend below, is that people approach and undertake the mastery of new knowledge, skills, very much on an individual 'need or wish to know' basis. Indeed, this enables us to signal our awareness of the distinction between Popper's view of the permanent corrigibility of the world (which seems to imply a realist epistemology, in that it presumes the existence of some sort of reality out there, to which our theories make successive problem-solving approaches) and more radical rejections (such as that of Rorty 1979) of the notions of external reality or any sort of objective truth (and therefore any notion of comparability) altogether. It seems important that we note the force of the critique of Rorty and others as offering an alternative view of the vast 'moorland' of possibilities for lifelong learners to explore their own needs and possible avenues of personal advancement, though we believe that the way in which this thesis is sometimes presented seems to leave the individual learner, at any level of education, adrift without an anchor in a sea of conflicting ideologies. For us, the metaphor proposed by Quine following Neurath offers a more plausible account of the ways in which individuals, travelling amongst a loose flotilla of fellow-learners, can choose to chart the ways that will best advance their vessels of theory construction, expansion and correction.



In our view, lifelong learners acquire their beliefs, knowledge and understanding that they need, beyond the ones they already have, in all the highways and byways of the cognitive world. Just as claiming knowledge, on Popper's view, involves subjecting one's tentative solutions to problems to the test of criticism from wherever it may come, so learners gather together the resources they need in the attempt to put together those hypotheses and frame tentative solutions *from whatever quarter they can find them*, whether this should be from traditional or non-traditional, from authoritative or iconoclastic sources. For all of these, both within and well outside of conventional educating institutions constitute Popper's 'Third World' of knowledge.

The 'Third World' of objective knowledge is not only stored in libraries and presided over by those regarded as 'authorities' in formal institutional surroundings such as schools, colleges and universities. It is also to be found in all those places and on all those public occasions where people are thinking creatively and developing imaginative answers to questions and solutions to problems that will then be proposed as hypotheses ready to be submitted to falsification in public discourse. This is not the world of institutional confines to learning but the world that offers opportunities for learning and tentatively putting up hypotheses, from a 1,000 different sources, in a 1,000 different places and a myriad different ways. That is, the character of knowledge as we now regard it and it is one that is remarkably congruent with the cognitive operation that is lifelong learning.

## **The Philosophical Psychology of Pedagogy/Learning**

New conceptions of knowledge are of major importance in setting the scene for advances in the philosophical psychology of pedagogy and 'andragogy'. New approaches to the concept of learning will inevitably play an important part in assisting educational policy-makers and planners to develop and articulate policies and programmes of activities and experiences appropriate to each of the phases and the various different goals of lifelong learning. Equally important in such planning, however, will be reference to new modes and styles of learning, that have been developed as a result of work in learning theory, cognitive development theory and meta-cognition that has been making ground and advancing in recent years.

The former adherence to a uniform mode of knowledge transmission, in which a 'generic' student was simply viewed as a receptacle, somewhat like a jug, into which teachers didactically poured knowledge, contents and facts until the jug's allocated portion was filled [a similar idea may also be found in Freire's account (2006) of what he described as the 'Banking' view of education], has now been long rendered inoperable by recent advances in cognitive psychology and meta-cognition in more up-to-date thinking about learning (cf. Smith 1983, 1990). Now it is widely accepted that, in order for learning to be effectively secured and integrated into the pattern of the understandings that we already have, learning must be self-directed, self-internalised and self monitored. Instead of more traditional conceptions of

teaching–learning, in which learning progress was largely teacher-centred, instructive in mode, linear in progression and didactic in character, there is now a realisation that the progress of learning is *not roughly the same* for all learners in a particular age group and certainly not for learners in different age groups; nor does learning necessarily proceed in a linear fashion.

It is now coming to be widely accepted that the best and the most secure learning occurs when students are centrally involved in controlling, directing and monitoring their own learning progress, in ways and according to particular modes of proceeding that they have worked out and can select for themselves, in accordance with their own characteristic mode of cognitive operation and their awareness of how best they can proceed in mastering now concepts, information and skills. On this hypothesis, learning is not teacher-given but student-centred; and to promote effective student learning now, teachers need to be aware, not merely of the different stages of cognitive development of which Piaget told us, but also of the existence of many different forms of intelligence identified by cognitive psychology (see Gardner 1985), and the very many different styles of cognitive operation with which people of all ages and at different stages operate when they have some new concept, piece of information or skill to master.

This means, for the individual, that learning has much less to do with the mere acquisition of bodies of content for replication later, and much more to do with their becoming active in acquiring and then operating the skilled techniques, rules and procedures by means of which knowledge can be acquired and one's own circle of understanding expanded. From this, it follows that amongst the prime prerequisites in any approach to learning for individual students will be the skills of research, enquiry, and self-starting curiosity that are constantly in play and seeking answers to questions posed to them by others or by their own situations in life, their problems and predicaments. These skills will enable students to expand the concepts and categories they already have, linking them together, so that they become *meaningful* (i.e., that they make sense for the individual *from the inside*) and then exercising, applying, monitoring, checking, correcting and extending them further, in the actual situations in which the various skills and learnings are called for. The motto we may most appropriately employ for this endeavour is that of 'learning to learn'. Here, the work and thinking of Smith (1983, 1990) is central to this idea and helpful in developing it.

Now, therefore, instead of being a passive recipient of recipe knowledge, the student stands at the centre of the learning situation. Whenever and wherever they are engaged, learners are their own best initiators, arrangers and guarantors of the successful integration of new knowledge and understandings into their existing structures and patterns of understandings. Learners now look for personal relevance and applicability in what they are required to assimilate or in what they realise they lack. They tackle the tasks of the acquisition and mastery of new material or skills in ways that give each of them the greatest sense of fit with the contexts in which they will want, need or be required to deploy and apply it. Students now know they learn best when they monitor their own learning progress and learning gains, constantly checking and evaluating, criticising, correcting and

extending as they go along. They can put things to one side for a while and come back later; they can go over the same point again and again; they can try to make progress by a different route, with different instruments, in different surroundings – even if these be in the workplace, the home, the club, the church or the community centre in the evenings. The work of learning can be activated and engaged in at any time, on this thesis – the thesis that underpins the whole notion of lifelong learning. On this model the learnings and understandings that we newly acquire are hooked onto our existing pattern of understandings and built into extended networks of concepts and categories and criteria that we already possess for their intelligibility, utility and significance to us and to those with whom we have to communicate about it.

We may but very often we do not do this on our own. For, on this account, coming to know things is a social activity and common growth process. It is people's intersubjective agreements that constitute the tenability, reality and objectivity of the knowledge claims that we advance. We expand and extend our knowledge and understanding of the world on a collaborative basis. It is now coming to be widely appreciated that a co-operative, rather than a competitive approach to learning is of immense help to groups of students in facilitating rapid gains in the acquisition of their learning and mastering difficult, complex and heterogeneous forms of knowledge and skill (OECD 1991).

Thus, our learning is social and collaborative: as learners we work best in teams, not fighting to work against each other but the more easily acquiring our learning, because we do it best in the company of our peers, cooperating with each other in a collaboration that is positive, supportive and in an environment where the principal motive for progress is *not* that of the threat of 'defeat' or the thrill of 'victory' in some kind of 'competition' for ascendancy over other learners, but that of mutual benefit.

Indeed, we have now begun to appreciate that the competitive approach to knowledge is not merely educationally and ethically dubious: it is also psychologically grossly inefficient and can be socially gravely disharmonious and even disruptive. It is also, for good Popperian reasons, epistemically misconceived: we can make best learning gains and cognitive progress with our problem-solving when we do it in the company and with the assistance of all those who can join in a common enterprise of theory construction, criticism and correction. Research now tells us that the best way of doing this is in company with other people of like minds, at about similar kinds of cognitive development and capable of similar rates of progress – but not necessarily of similar chronological ages – forming a self-conscious critical mass of a group involved in problem-solving work in a research enterprise in which there are no subordinates or super-ordinates and to which all can make equally critical or creative contributions.

There is the final point that this kind of learning is best and most effective if it is addresses problems that are relevant to the students themselves, whenever and wherever they encounter them during their lives and in the pursuit of their own interests and all their main concerns, whether as private individuals or members of the community.

## New Technologies of Learning

The possibilities of this kind of learning are enhanced by the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the storing, retrieval and communication of information. As a result of the globalisation of information and knowledge advance brought about by the information technology revolution, the concept of learning and a learning institution has been transformed. Educationally speaking, we now inhabit a public realm constituted by all the libraries, archives, data banks, information stores and records, to which, with the appropriate technical devices, many learners may now have access any time they need to from anywhere they want. But, we must also be painfully aware that, in making our policies and establishing our avenues of access and communication, we shall need to do everything we can to 'reach the unreached learner' and endeavour to ensure that they too can enjoy similar access. One example may be found in the domain of adult education, where the whole range and pattern of social inequalities in enjoying access to resources and information across the planet indicate that there are many people without such access – and who need to be reached and provided for – if lifelong learning is indeed to become a reality for all. An extended and critical discussion of this topic can be found in Chapman et al. (2006).

For all those having such access, the world of learning, via IT or any other means is not now open only for a few hours each day in term time: In the new kinds of provision, learning by means of the sophisticated modern learning technologies is always available – 24 h a day, all days of the year. The instruments of modern learning technologies are unfailingly patient and never get tired, emotional or angry with learners. They are infinitely hardworking and long-suffering and almost infinitely resourceful: they never run out of steam. They will repeat instruction, checking and corrections; they enable us to make repeated attempts at success as often as we wish and can replicate hypotheses and thought-experiments as many times as we like. They encourage great stress on accuracy and precision in a completely non-threatening way. They can deliver their resources of information, knowledge and understanding to the workplace, the home, the youth club, the crèche, the community centre or the Cyber-Café – indeed, to any place that might be convenient to our purposes and not within the artificial constraints of a place up until now specifically set aside and specially programmed and staffed for learning.

The Information Technology revolution and the powers made available by interactive multimedia have had an enormous impact on the ways in which schools and educational institutions of all kinds work. Similarly, various forms of interactive communication have made enormous differences to the world of work and will clearly go on influencing the ways in which work is organised in a very large part of industry, business and commerce in the future. Education programming is central to this type of activity. Technology will enable the development of communities of interest, interactivity and mutual benefit.

This means that learning institutions of all kinds have to re-appraise and re-organise the ways in which worthwhile knowledge is conceived and presented, how curricula are categorised and delivered and how learning is arranged and promoted.

Schools have to find ways in which they can help people – already reached or not yet reached but needing and deserving to secure connection to this range of new opportunities – develop the now vital skills of *learning how to learn*. Once they enjoy access to a rich range of resources, students can work at pushing their cognitive progress forward themselves, directing and controlling their own intellectual growth, learning how to be curious and how to do research, being imaginative and creative, self-monitoring, self-critical, self-correcting and pacing their own learning, as well as ways to provide multiple pathways and openings for people in which they can work at their own pace. Information technology can help them to build, extend and support all such learning opportunities.

The vision of a networked society with equal access to knowledge and information, made up of communities and individuals, themselves in charge of their own learning environments, and governments, educators and the private sector working in partnership, is fundamental to the evolution and achievement of the goal of a democratic, free, economically stable and socially just society in the twenty-first century. But, realisation of this vision will require a close examination of the content, style, structure and organisation of modern methods and technologies of learning, particularly in respect of the new possibilities offered by the emphasis upon student-centred and self-directed modes of progression, together with an examination of the purpose and function of educational institutions and their use and adaptation of electronic technologies to meet new educational needs. In setting the agenda for education in the twenty-first century, policy-makers and educators will clearly need to direct their attention to an exploration of the ways in which the availability of modern information technology devices and new modes of student progress will make possible, effect and shape frameworks for curriculum content and styles of assessment in learning institutions and environments of all kinds, in ways that will both transform learning institutions and environments generally and contribute to the realisation of broader social goals.

At the present time, unfortunately, many schools and centres of learning are either not teaching all members of the community how to live with and exploit the opportunities offered by information technology or are inhibited by constraints of various kinds from doing so as thoroughly and as extensively as they might wish. Clearly, this should change: there is now so much information available and means of handling it that the hardware, software and the other resources need to be made widely available across all social sectors, and the skills involved need to be taught – on a lifelong basis. Schools and other education institutions have an important role in this and a vital part to play in helping people to manage information and to prepare themselves for the immense opportunities it offers, in increasing vocational preparedness, personal growth, social inclusion and democratic participation.

Before showing members of the community how to use modern technologies of learning, therefore, teachers in schools and other learning centres and educators, generally, need themselves to be shown the many advantages offered by them. They need to help students be clear about the purpose and benefits offered by this form of communication. One of the main advantages of modern information technology is that students will be much more empowered to select and travel along learning

pathways that they can construct for themselves and use for their own personal growth. These are amongst the many reasons why in the future students will be logging into learning centres around the world from their schools, their homes, their workplaces and other potential learning venues. The range of information channels and learning pathways available will be immeasurably enhanced. In the future, modern information technology, including audio-visual channels, will facilitate communication between communities of interest.

For this reason, educators will need to re-examine their reliance on linear models of cognitive growth and communication, since one of the essential components of the new technologies is that random access is possible, that navigation through different informational elements is almost boundless and that the linear structures and approaches that some institutions are still applying to their current course and programme design are not necessarily the appropriate ones for learning. Video on demand, for example, allows students to feed their own non-formal, non-traditional and non-linear requests for information and other questions into the system and get responses that suit them. This means that education audiences are no longer passive; this, in turn, raises substantial questions for those providing access to education services through modern technology media. Programme designers in schools and other educating institutions will have to establish how they develop programmes and design messages that cater for the needs of the active individual learner. The challenge for educators and service providers is to design an educational product and process that makes this possible.

## Questions of Ethics: The Demand for Justification

The OECD *Jobs Study* (OECD 1994a) highlighted the need for a lifelong learning approach on the following grounds:

- The relationship between skills, competences and aggregate economic performance
- Educational attainment and the labour market performance of individuals:
  - Low earnings for the least qualified
  - High risk of unemployment for the least qualified
  - Growing disadvantage for the less educated
  - The widening of the skills gap: opportunities for overcoming low educational attainment
- Education, skills and competences and their relationship to enterprise performance and improved productivity
- The relationship between national, individual and enterprise performance

As is clear from the above, major analyses of the recent and current climate of change in economic and social matters have provided a powerful rationale and justification for the realisation of the idea of lifelong learning for all. Perhaps, the most powerful of these analyses, the OECD *Jobs Study* concentrates heavily on the link

between the economic policies and performances of countries and the concomitant need for the continuing availability of a high quality, skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This point and the emphasis on such relationships have become even clearer and more pressing in the time of the recent global financial crisis, which has affected so many countries so adversely.

This is, however, only one of the goals of many countries' education policies. The others – democratic engagement and personal fulfilment – are now being seen and coming to be regarded as quite as important as economic goals, if the aims of stability, social inclusiveness and personal development are to be achieved. Although, in 1994, the OECD *Jobs Study* made reference to the importance of these other goals for countries' education policies, they were given nothing like the attention that economic factors and arguments receive. And it must be noted that, for many countries' educational systems and policies, the economic emphases are still seen as the leading educational determinative criteria.

Nevertheless, many governments continue to have concerns for a multi-faceted character to be incorporated into their thinking and policies for lifelong learning and its positive relationship to a broader and more diverse set of goals than are merely consolidated under economist rubrics. We may reasonably suppose that, in the work and thinking of countries setting the agenda for education for the rest of this century, a more comprehensive analysis of all the various dimensions and features of the nature, aims and purposes of policies for 'realising lifelong learning for all' will have to be tackled, and a more wide-ranging set of justifications addressing the differences in those aims and purposes more clearly articulated and provided. In this way, policies pertaining to lifelong learning endeavours are more likely to be developed and articulated, not merely with respect to providing arguments to vindicate a country's concern for its economic self-sufficiency, but also to reinforce its appreciation of the need for a multiplicity of initiatives that will conduce to the other and wider goals of lifelong learning. These may be seen, *inter alia*, as increasing the emancipation of, access to, participation in and benefit or success experienced by all citizens in various political, social and cultural institutions and opening further avenues of personal growth and advancement to them.

We are aware, of course, that such goals are open to criticism from many quarters. Not all will necessarily agree that the ends aimed at by lifelong learning policies are so wide-ranging. It is here where questions of values come in.

One of the most compelling problems in the field of lifelong learning activities and their provision is that of the choice between deliberate intervention or simple *laissez-faire*. And this kind of deliberation raises problems of normative ethics on two levels – the general and the particular.

In the first case, this involves asking whether, as a matter of policy, we ought to attempt to influence or alter people's behaviour and attitudes towards learning beyond the school *at all*, rather than allowing people to make their own choices and cope with the outcomes in their own way. It might be claimed, for instance, that any sort of intrusion into other people's lives and all their main concerns, any set of prescriptions or even an overt encouragement to engage in certain sorts of activities takes away people's autonomy and influences them to follow heteronomously

prescribed choices rather than their own. For to decide to try to get people deliberately engaged in lifelong learning activities presupposes that we think they ought to and that entails being prepared to justify the intervention implicit in such prescriptions or public policies.

Having once decided that, however, we arrive at the second level of problem in the normative realm: what particular policies or strategies of prescription or commendation ought we adopt and adhere to, not only in general but in particular cases too? Is it sufficient, for example, simply to provide the access, the resources, the information and the opportunities and then leave people to make up their own minds and/or work out and press forward things for themselves? Is it justifiable deliberately to try to influence attitudes and behaviour, so that people will start taking up the opportunities and engaging in further learning activities and generally come to act in accordance with what we believe to be 'good' or 'in their interests' on the basis of arguments which *we* accept? And what if the outcome of people's engaging in such activities is different from what we expected or hoped for? In such cases, are our policies or prescriptions to be judged on the basis of the legislators', policy-makers' and providers' good intentions, or on the actual outcomes of those policies? And in the case of the latter, what will count as a success: is it the 'nearly 100% success' that will count or the 'nearly 1% failure' that will give us cause for concern?

Our awareness of what we are about when we pose such questions of justification clearly rests upon and presupposes a complex network of preconceptions, theories and value judgments about what it is to be a human being, what it is to look forward to and prepare for a full life in which choices are maximised, what it is to live as a member of the community. To draw out what might be the major elements in such theories and judgments is not easy, for they are often unstated or unexamined. Further, to conclude that people's values should be added to, expanded or even altered is a notion that is likely to meet with some resistance, particularly in cases where such refinement, expansion or alteration may be likely to affect a person's whole outlook on their work, their leisure time and even their domestic circumstances. Much of such resistance could be justified on moral grounds.

For some people, to be exposed to the kinds of requirements or recommendations that some employers, educators in institutions or politicians might urge with respect to the importance of people's taking up learning beyond formal settings would be unacceptable. They might see it as being subjected to forms of control, intrusion or even persuasion that they would find going beyond such groups' authority or abhorrent on other grounds. Such differences of opinion issue not only from such people's beliefs about what constitutes a morally acceptable basis for relationships between employers, other institutions or the state, but also, in turn, from the metaphysical basis of such beliefs about the nature of human beings and of the principles obtaining in relations between them.

For example, if, say, some people take the view that human beings only differ from animals in degree of sophistication and that their patterns of behaviour or the products of their work may be exploited or simply seen as commodities in the market place and that talk of freedom, independence and human dignity merely refers



to another form of commodity, then the kind of recipes they put forward for the need to learn throughout people's lives will probably be different from those policies and prescriptions for action that would follow from subscribing to the Kantian principle of not treating persons as means to ends of any kind, whether economic, social or political, but always only as ends in themselves. In the latter view, individual people are seen as autonomous agents, with complete freedom of judgment and choice in working out what they believe they ought to do in making decisions as to how to face the problems they encounter throughout their lives and how best to spend their time and resources in them.

In this way, it seems to us that approaches to the question of putting forward policies and programmes of lifelong learning exemplify the philosophical problems of human nature *and* moral values. For there will be considerable differences between the kinds of programmes and range of activities devised in the attempt to make possible and encourage the development and expansion of the limits of people's autonomy and those in which it is thought to be a matter of simply inculcating the right attitudes in people or of getting people to respond to the right stimuli. There will be considerable difference between the evaluation of those lifelong learning programmes and activities proffered by those who believe absolutely in the right of individuals to make choices (on an informed basis) for themselves and those put forward by such groups which see people simply as economic functionaries, agents of production, customers or consumers, whose needs can be shaped and whose final choices can be predicted, and amongst whom some 'casualties', 'failures' or 'recalcitrants' will merely be regarded as temporary distractions or nuisances to be put up with in pursuit of the greater economic or social interest.

In practice, does this mean that any policy or programme of lifelong learning proposed by or arising from the interests of such different groups can be accepted? For some philosophers, such fundamental disagreements in matters of moral standpoint are to be taken as a matter of course. One described the logic of moral judgments in this way: 'Take any position and its opposite can be maintained without logical error or factual mistake' (Atkinson 1965). Certainly, some would contend (see Hare 1952) that it would be perfectly possible for two different sides in any moral controversy to follow the 'rules' of moral deliberation (say prescriptivity and universalisability) *and* both be right in their judgments, even though they came to mutually contradictory conclusions. Others would quickly reject such a notion:

How 'X is good' can be a well-founded moral judgment when 'X is bad' can be equally well-founded it is not easy to see... How can questions such as 'What does it matter?' 'What harm does it do?' ... and 'Why is it important?' be set aside here? (Foot 1958)

On such a view, it is simply not the case that in moral matters, anything goes. In the human situation, we have to accept that there are some incontrovertible 'facts of life' that have to be taken account of in discussions about moral matters (see also Geoffrey Warnock 1967). For example, no one would disagree that to lose a limb would be a horror to be avoided if at all possible; or that we ought to do everything we can to maximise people's welfare and minimise the possibilities of their falling into harm; or that a life of quality, in which human beings could be seen to be

‘flourishing’ and not suffering, is an end to be desired, promoted and worked for by people individually and collectively over the course of their lives.

It is this last position that underpins the selection of values we set out above as justifying programmes of lifelong learning. It seems to us that human beings’ functional efficiency and personal benefit will be promoted by their continually acquiring the resources they need to tackle the problems they face, whether these consist in adopting a regimen of behaviours that will enable them to protract their existence until normal term or working out for themselves a pattern of activities and choosing a range of options that, on reflection, they believe will improve the quality of their lives. This means the need to continue to learn until the ends of their lives. For there will always be circumstances, challenges and changes in those lives that will require a changed attitude, an altered set of beliefs, a different kind of value. Examples of cases which call for such changes are too numerous to mention, though all are important, such as, for example, the movement amongst many Australians for altered constitutional arrangements, or the wish amongst many South Africans for genuine reconciliation in the reconstruction of their society. In such cases, the need for new learning is paramount.

It is for these reasons that we suggest that the pragmatic, problem-based approach will be most suitable to the conception, articulation and elaboration of theories, tentative hypotheses and trial solutions suitable and appropriate to tackle the questions with which national governments, national and international agencies, communities and groups of people are currently pre-occupied and to increase their effectiveness and functional utility. This is our answer to the demand for the justification of lifelong learning.

## Conclusion

We believe one may go on from here and identify the problems, topics and issues to which proposals for lifelong learning may be deemed to provide tentative solutions. It is clear that both international education agencies and governments in many countries are concerned to increase their economic growth, to make their political arrangements more equitable, just and inclusive, and to offer a greater range of avenues for self-improvement and personal development to all their citizens. Faced with such needs, aims and endeavours, they see that answers to all these questions may be found in the promotion of lifelong learning as an approach that will further their commitment to the advancement of economic, social and educational ideals. This will animate and direct their policies for emphasising the development, provision and encouragement of lifelong learning programmes and policies as means to their achievement.

We realise, of course, that none of these aims and undertakings for lifelong learning can really be separated from the other: all three elements interact and cross-fertilise each other. A more competent and highly skilled agent in the work-force has more of an interest in and responsibility for contributing to the improvement of

institutions and their point in a set of democratic political arrangements; both are in turn enhanced by the affective satisfaction experienced and achieved by those who have expanded their life-horizons in cognitive content and skills in complex forms of intellectual operation or cultural activity in which, upon reflection, they now prefer to spend their time.

There is a complex inter-play between all three that makes education for a more highly skilled work-force *at the same time* an education for better democracy *and* a more rewarding life. That is why the whole notion and value of ‘lifelong learning for all’ might be usefully seen as a complex, and multi-faceted process, that begins in pre-school, is carried on through compulsory and post-compulsory periods of formal education and training and is then continued throughout life, through provision of such learning experiences, activities and enjoyment in the home, in the work-place, in universities and colleges, and in other educational, social and cultural agencies, institutions and settings – both formal and informal – within the community.

The central elements in what we have described as the ‘triadic’ nature of lifelong learning may be restated as follows (see Chapman and Aspin 1997). They are engaged in:

- For economic progress and development
- For personal development and fulfilment
- For social inclusiveness and democratic understanding and activity

These learning interests and requirements are now seen as fundamental to bringing about a more democratic polity and set of social institutions, in which the principles and ideals of social inclusiveness, justice and equity are present, practised and promoted; an economy which is strong, adaptable and competitive; and a richer range of provision of those activities on which individual members of society are able to choose to spend their time and energy, for the personal rewards and satisfactions that they confer.

This approach, however, requires a far greater, more coherent and consistent, better co-ordinated and integrated, more multi-faceted approach to education and to realising a ‘lifelong learning’ approach *for all* than has hitherto been the case. To bring this about – to move towards the achievement of a ‘learning society’ (cf. Wain 2004 and Ranson 1994) – will require nothing less than a substantial re-appraisal of the provision, resourcing and goals of education and training, and a major re-orientation of its direction and planning towards the securing and increasing the availability and the value of opportunities and choices for all, to secure access to ‘learning throughout life’.

Therein lies the major challenge for governments, policy-makers and educators as they grapple with ways of conceptualising lifelong learning and realising the aim of ‘lifelong learning for all’.

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## Chapter 2

# The Changing University, Lifelong Learning, and Personal Fulfilment

Robin St. C. Barrow and Patrick Keeney

### Introduction

When the original version of this paper was published in 2001, we argued that the concept of lifelong learning (as distinct from the rather ill-favoured phrase itself) has a long and honourable history and should be actively promoted. However, this is on the important assumption that the concept is interpreted in such a way as to imply self-fulfilment through education, rather than in a narrowly utilitarian way that looks through an economic lens and sees no further than skills and training.

Certainly, the idea of lifelong learning must have seemed a given to Plato, and the suggestion that it is intrinsically tied up with personal fulfilment would surely also have occurred to him. In the most literal sense, the education advocated for the Guardians in the *Republic* is a lifelong process, with explicit reference being made to the (adult) ages appropriate for various studies. Indeed, Plato states unequivocally that ‘education... commences in the first years of childhood and lasts to the very end of life’ (*Protagoras*, 325). It is also clear that, whilst recognising, even emphasising, the social utility of well-educated persons, as we shall do below (for the careful attention to the upbringing and education appropriate to all citizens in the *Republic* is intended to contribute to the harmony and happiness of the whole), for Plato, a crucial part of the point of all this education is to realise or fulfil the individual to the utmost (Barrow 1975, 2007). What particularly characterises and distinguishes Plato’s view, especially judged in the context of his times, is his argument that education is an intellectual and character-forming business, rather than a mere acquisition of skills or mastery of a trade, and that its ideal length or scope is not to be estimated by reference to any amount of information to be ingested, but to the need to ascend to ever higher and more abstract levels of understanding. It is true

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that Plato's epistemology inclines towards the idea that ultimately the world and all things in it can be known and hence that, in principle, there might be a finite limit to the time it takes to become educated. But the fact remains that, in practice, Plato saw the business of education as a thing of wonder and of the first importance, and something that would never actually be complete in this life.

The idea, then, of lifelong learning is nothing new.

In preparing this revised version of the paper, we see no reason to change our view as expressed above. However, we believe that a major difference between the situation 10 years ago and the situation today, and a source of major concern, is the rapidly changing nature of communications. Two things in particular seem apparent: first, the resources, particularly technological resources, that were to be relied upon to facilitate lifelong learning and which were perceptibly emphasised as long ago as the late 1960s by a number of educators as capable of changing the nature of schooling (e.g. Illich 1971; Goodman 1971; Reimer 1971; Postman and Weingartner 1971), are now with us, but have proved a very mixed blessing. Knowledge is at students' fingertips, but their ability to make use of it is considerably less so. The result is a great deal of misinformation, misconception and misunderstanding, which, it can be argued, is more worrying than simple ignorance or lack of knowledge. Second, it is surely undeniable that, at the same time, as the information explosion and the technological changes that have led to it have occurred, the nature of the University has changed, as a plethora of books suggest, many arguing that it is a change for the worse, especially in respect of education as we conceptualise it here (e.g. Graham 2002; Kronman 2007; Woodhouse 2009; Kolody 1992; Proctor 1998; Smith 1990). Amongst the many problems that have been identified, we may note in particular the following trends: the rhetoric surrounding globalisation lends itself to an emphasis on skills and training rather than education, whilst at the same time placing emphasis on various social, economic and political objectives rather than academic ones; there is a widespread tendency for governments to re-label a variety of post-secondary institutions 'universities' without regard to distinctions of purpose or practice; the increase in the number of professional, technical and applied schools indicates a further weakening of commitment to education for its own sake; there has been an obvious increase in the energy and financial support devoted to public-relations, fund-raising and bureaucracy generally, at the expense of the academic mission. These and other contemporary trends have undoubtedly led to an increased student enrollment in universities, but it has come at a huge price: in essence, it has broken down the distinction between education and training and between development of the individual and preparation for the world of work. To advertise your university with the slogan 'Come to university and be a plumber' (as one Canadian university, in fact, does) reminds one of various army recruitment slogans and leads to the question of whether universities can any longer be distinguished from other institutions such as the army. Whether or not it is fair to say that 'more has meant worse' (Amis 1971), expanding student enrollments have unquestionably changed the nature of the university experience for many students, and an increasing number of students have difficulty in communicating ideas and arguments fluently. Arguments have, of course, been advanced in support of the expan-

sion of higher education, notably the claim that it is in the interests of social justice. But whether this is plausible or not, and whether education should be governed by concerns of social justice or not, there is nonetheless considerable evidence of academic ‘dumbing down’ even before the UK Court of Appeal recently upheld the claim that the University of Bournemouth had artificially raised the grades of weak students, without the knowledge, let alone consent, of the experts in the field.

The concept of personal fulfilment appears to have become narrower. It is a further question whether today’s universities merely reflect this phenomenon or contribute to its existence; certainly, the market economy and other social forces also contribute to it. But the fact remains that for all the widespread talk of happiness, citizenship, life and social skills amongst contemporary pundits, schooling in general is now conceived of more in terms of economic utility than anything else. Paradoxically, the university is more open than ever, yet less open than it was in respect of providing a path to education.

Our concern will now be with the role of lifelong learning in a contemporary context.

## **The Economy and the Knowledge Explosion**

The phrase ‘lifelong learning’ is still a part of contemporary educational discourse, and, as an idea, it still plays a significant part in a great deal of planning and practical activity, though less so than was the case 10 years ago. To this extent, at least, our views are closer to Plato’s than to those entertained at many other historical periods and in many other cultures. There seems to be a general sense, if not necessarily a well articulated claim, that, just as Plato thought, we should be doing a great deal more than apprenticing people to a trade, initiating them into a priesthood, conditioning them, indoctrinating them or equipping them with various mechanical skills; we should be nurturing the personhood and cultivating the minds and manners of individuals, and this is not something that can be done by and completed in formal schooling alone. But given the ubiquity of the phrase and the popularity of the idea, it becomes important to examine and argue for a defensible interpretation of the concept. To make sure, in particular, that the general sense referred to becomes a reality when we put lifelong learning into practice, so that what we are subscribing to is truly worthwhile and educational.

Why should there continue to be, at this time, explicit and widespread concern with lifelong learning? In large part, the impetus behind the emphasis on the idea is surely a consequence of various social, in particular economic, arguments. Cynics may no doubt attribute it more to the self-importance of theorists and the self-serving of educationalists. But, whatever the tendency of academics to latch on to some temporarily forgotten idea and run with it until it has turned to cliché, there are some fairly obvious reasons why we should be focusing on lifelong learning: many, perhaps most, individuals today change their job more than once during a lifetime; their circumstances in other respects (personal, social and economic) are equally likely to vary. To put it simply, it is no longer the case (if it ever was) that the body of

understanding acquired by the end of formal schooling can possibly hope to see the individual through life. Paradoxically, lifelong learning becomes more important as a goal, even as the popularity of the idea to some extent lessens.

In addition, the so-called explosion in knowledge, the rapidity with which our understanding in certain fields advances, equally quickly renders yesterday's learning obsolete. Development in scientific knowledge is most commonly cited as the example here, but even archaeologists or historians can be left behind if they fail to come to grips with new modes of collecting, sifting and analysing data.

That having been said, it is, in our view, possible, and in fact quite common, to overplay this particular point. First, it would probably be useful to distinguish between knowledge and information here. There has certainly been an explosion in the amount of information generally available. It is not quite evident that we know massively or even much more than we did 50 years ago. Second, and rather more importantly, there are clear differences between various disciplines or types of inquiry, most notably that between those that are in some way necessarily progressively developmental and those that are not, such that it barely makes sense to talk of an explosion of knowledge, or even (which is very different) a deeper understanding, in respect of some of them. Science, for example, does build upon and advance on its past in a linear way, so that it both makes sense and is true to remark upon our vastly greater scientific understanding as compared with, say, that of the Greeks, and to point out that there is simply a whole lot more (and for many of us probably a whole lot too much) to be known. But mathematics is in a slightly different case: here our understanding is (we believe) refined and improved as we advance from our past; it is, we may say, a greater understanding. It may also be the case that this greater understanding implies in a literal sense something more to handle and that to rise to the heights of mathematical knowledge now takes longer than at any earlier time in our history. It may be the case, but it is not actually obvious that it is, and it does not seem to be logically necessary that it should be. When we turn to a form of inquiry such as philosophy or the performing arts, talk of an explosion of knowledge seems very inappropriate. Of course, in a trivial sense, there is more knowledge: the historians of philosophy, or painting, or practically anything, have more data or material to sift through. But philosophy should not be defined in terms of the books written on the subject, but rather of the ideas that are its subject matter. In this sense, whilst some would say that our philosophical understanding was greater than Plato's, others would not, and, in either case, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that it must have taken A.J. Ayer longer than Plato to master the subject, or that the former's task was somehow more demanding than the latter's. (Both claims might be true, of course, but not for the reason advanced.)

The above digression seems to us worth making in order to deflect a rather too glib and misleading tendency to assume that, such is the state of the 'knowledge industry' today, the sheer amount of what there is to be known is a sufficient reason for investing time and money into lifelong learning. The claim is generally vastly exaggerated and, in any case, pushes us down a dangerous path on which we identify education with acquiring knowledge in the sense simply of acquiring information. This conflation of education with information is a major problem in contemporary society and is the source of much misguided policy and practice. It therefore has to

be emphasised that it is understanding rather than knowledge in the sense of information that is our goal in education, and whilst there is in general probably more that is understood today than there was 2,000 years ago, and whilst some subjects at least are considerably more complex and require more subtle understanding than before, it is not at all clear that it makes much sense to claim that the trouble is that it will obviously take a person longer today than 2,000 years ago to educate themselves. To become a poet or a philosopher does not obviously take more time today than it did before. That having been said, and with this corrective in mind, it may of course be acknowledged that, broadly speaking, such facts as the ubiquity of new ideas and information, changing modes of communication, developing understanding and the sheer extent of activity in some intellectual areas may make one in some respects outdated in one's understanding in a conventional sense, if one ceases to advance at the end of formal schooling. Furthermore, it is the case, though it is not clear that it is primarily, if at all, for justifiable epistemological reasons, that the formal curriculum is under constant pressure to include more. In general, increasing demands are made by the various professions as well as by the perceived needs of the wider work place. In particular, there is a distressing tendency towards what can only be called a 'knee-jerk reaction' to various perceived social crises, such that, if, for example, there is an increase in teenage pregnancy, racism, driving accidents, drug taking or knife crimes, the school is expected to lay on 'lessons' to reverse the trend (and, as often as not, the school is also blamed for contributing to the problem in the first place). But, it is far from convincing to argue that responsibility for these and other such social problems can be laid at the door of the school. It is furthermore a very poor line of reasoning that assumes that the way to combat such problems is to devote curriculum time to the explicit study or discussion of them. Individuals who carry knives and use them to threaten others do not normally do so because they have not been taught that knives are dangerous and violent threats are frowned upon.

Be that as it may, the need to develop new understanding, the advances in understanding in some areas, the tendency for new emphases and approaches to be widely disseminated and increasing demands on schooling (both formal and informal) combine to place the individual (where learning ceases with the completion of formal schooling) at an obvious disadvantage.

This is not only fairly uncontentiously the case, but it is, in practice, also probably the main reason for the current emphasis on lifelong learning. Pressure, whether direct or indirect, conscious or otherwise, from industry, business and government has led to the orthodoxy that individuals need to continue to learn, retrain and retool throughout their lives, if they are to serve their purpose as economic units.

## **Skills**

Bearing the argument of the previous section in mind, one can say that during the twentieth century, there was a change of emphasis from the idea of specific training and the development of particular skills, through a belief in so-called generic-skill development, to the current focus on lifelong learning. This amounts to a shift from

the assumption that acquiring a trade (whether manual or intellectual) would suffice for life by way of an assumption that one could learn how to be adaptable to the assumption that one needs to continually learn new trades or re-learn one's trade (at the same time, keeping one's data base up to date).

Thus, at the beginning of the last century, the broad assumption was that one learnt enough to be a bricklayer, an accountant, a priest and a classics Don, and that, combined with learning certain social behaviours, attitudes and so forth appropriate to one's condition in life, would see one through. Little would change sufficient to render one's learning out of date. It is worth noting that adult education, which became a serious matter at the end of the nineteenth century, does not represent any real departure from this generalisation and is therefore not properly to be seen as the precursor of today's interest in lifelong learning. It was essentially no more than the provision of education to adults who had missed it (or part of it) as children, whether it involved instruction in literacy, handicrafts or whatever.

Perhaps the first major step in the twentieth century towards something like a concept of lifelong learning in a broader sense came with the widespread adoption of a belief in the possibility of cultivating generic skills such as that of 'learning how to learn' or critical thinking. American psychologists of education seem to have been subconsciously wedded to the idea of generic skills for the longest of times, but it was in the 1960s that the idea became more or less a part of progressive educational orthodoxy. Part of the thinking that was common at the time is not to be scorned: this was an ardent desire to replace the view that the learner was a passive receptacle into which the teacher placed information, with a view of the learner as an active agent who needed to be helped to process information and understand; a learner who thought critically about the material in question. And the idea that schools should be concerned primarily to cultivate such general abilities as that of being critical, of being caring and of learning how to learn certainly suggests some belief in education as an on-going business; for, presumably, the main purpose of focusing on learning how to learn is so that individuals will be free to go on learning for themselves through life. Indeed, much of the broader rhetoric of child-centred education at the time echoed the view that schooling was but a step on a journey that lasted for life and that the individual was a natural being (rather than a passive receptacle) that could and would continue to grow in a favourable environment such as the educative society it was hoped would be.

This is not the place to go into a detailed critique of a body of thinking that might be crudely summarised as 'right idea, false premise, wrong conclusion'. But the 'false premise' in question is the idea that there is such a thing as a generic skill of learning how to learn (or critical thinking or caring) that can meaningfully be taught to people. Broadly, as has been argued in detail elsewhere (Barrow 1990), there are serious problems in seeing intellectual abilities as skills (at any rate in anything like the same sense as say, discrete and physical skills) and, more importantly, in the idea of them as generic skills. There is also very often a confusion between tendencies or dispositions on the one hand and abilities or skills on the other: part of what it is to be a critical thinker is to have the inclination and tendency to look at things critically. This inclination, this disposition, is certainly neither an ability nor a skill

in any sense, and is, incidentally, quite compatible with being very bad at actually thinking critically (as anyone who has taught undergraduates probably knows).

The argument in essence is as follows: the ability to think critically about, say, art is not some monolithic quality, some single indivisible attribute. The ability consists in various dimensions or facets. Second, some at least of these facets are clearly not skills such that they can be developed, exercised and trained on analogy with a physical skill (or set of skills) such as serving at tennis or riding a bike. For example, as already noted, the tendency, the disposition to think critically about art is clearly not a skill in this sense, but something to be nurtured by some means or other, as distinct from trained. Third, and for our purposes, much more crucially, the ability to think critically about art is one thing, and the ability to think critically without qualifiers is quite another. In fact, the latter is well-nigh incoherent. To think is always to think about something. It simply does not make sense to conceive of someone thinking critically without reference to what they are thinking critically about. But, though that is true, the more important point is that, assuming critical thinking is good critical thinking and involves such things as understanding, being logical, and being clear, and then critical thinking about art will be different in form from critical thinking in, say, science, politics or philosophy. In each case, the thinking needs to be logical, clear and so on, but what constitutes logic, clarity, coherence, etc., the form they take, are determined by the nature of the discipline or type of inquiry in question. In other words, in order to develop someone's capacity to think critically about art or science, it is logically necessary that they exercise their critical disposition whilst studying art or science. The idea of a generic ability such that wherever I go, whatever the subject, even if completely new to me, I can be critical (other than in the different sense of disagreeable or antagonistic) is absurd.

There is still debate revolving round some of these views, but provided that it is understood that we are here only concerned with a partial verdict, we may say that the debate is effectively over. To put the matter in positive terms – the desire to develop individuals, who are both inclined to or have an aptitude for continued learning and critical thinking and are able to continue learning in a critical fashion – will require developing understanding of both generic points of logic and reasoning and also disciplined understanding of various types of inquiry and conceptual frameworks.

Thus, on this account, the 1960s saw a movement towards the goal of a society of learners (particularly when we consider more specifically political educationalists' views such as those of the deschoolers), but it failed to deliver much, largely because the central ideal that there is some specific way(s) to equip the individual to carry on learning is incoherent (and, it may be added, the practical proposals to turn society into an educational environment were naive and unrealistic).

But whilst the view that one can 'learn to learn' may have been in various respects confused and misconceived, and whilst the main impetus towards lifelong learning may be socio-economic, the paradox is that today we have a great opportunity to achieve the aims of those who believed in generic intellectual skills. For it is the idea that a mental quality such as imagination, creativity or critical acumen is a skill akin to a physical skill and can be developed in one context and then deployed in any other that is misconceived, whilst the aim of developing individuals who are

imaginative, creative and critical in relation to important matters is to be wholeheartedly endorsed. Educationalists may now reasonably argue that it is not the direct utility of learning that should be considered, but the intrinsic value of education, its value to the educated person and its indirect utility that matters. (Indirect utility is not the less useful for being indirect: what could be more useful than being able to read and write, though they are only indirectly useful?) The forces that have put an emphasis on lifelong learning have provided us with the opportunity to ensure greater and more prolonged personal fulfilment for the individual.

## Personal Fulfilment

Personal fulfilment is obviously desirable in that, by definition, it increases the sum of individual satisfaction. It is one of those concepts, like happiness or anxiety, which necessarily implies that the individual senses or appreciates the emotion; notwithstanding certain psychiatric views and practices, it makes no sense to insist that someone is anxious when they do not feel or recognise their anxiety. (It may make sense to observe that they exhibit anxiety behaviour; it may even make some kind of sense to refer to a subconscious anxiety, but that cannot be equated with being anxious in the normal, everyday sense.) In the same way, an individual's degree of fulfilment is logically tied up, not with objective criteria of achievement, but with a subjective sense of satisfaction.

Yet, there is a dimension to the idea of personal fulfilment which takes us beyond mere satisfaction. Whilst fulfilment is not to be defined in terms of a set of objective criteria of achievement, it is bound up with the idea of quality. We do not recognise an individual as fulfilled merely on the grounds that their basic lusts were satisfied; more importantly, nor would the individual himself. To be fulfilled means to feel satisfaction in achievement relating to aspects of life that one values. Further, being human, we should expect personal fulfilment to be tied up with peculiarly human achievement.

Thus, there is a strong and straightforward link between education, the development of mind and personal fulfilment. In continuing to educate oneself throughout life, one increases one's understanding. This is not a question of amassing new information nor, necessarily, of exploring new subject matter, so much as of increasing one's grasp of the nature of various distinct types of inquiry. That more sophisticated and deeper understanding in turn allows for a development of appreciation and engagement. And it is in the capacity to understand, appreciate and engage with the world that we most fully realise our human, as opposed to our animal, selves.

That personal fulfilment has intrinsic value we have already seen. It is the flowering of the individual, or the 'telos' as Aristotle would have it. But it also has considerable extrinsic value. A general tendency in life today is to equate extrinsic value with simple and direct utility. Thus, money has extrinsic value, because we can use it to acquire whatever we want. A car has extrinsic value because it is useful to us in an obvious way. But to emphasise direct utility is to ignore the many things in life that

have enormous value as indirect (and perhaps intermittent) means to greatly desired ends. My knowledge of driving has more direct utility than my knowledge of classical Greek, but the latter may nonetheless have greater extrinsic value to me, because I am more interested in the pleasure to be gained from studying Greek than from driving. The extrinsic value of education (as opposed to training) generally and of personal fulfilment in the sense of a developed mind and emotions has been consistently underplayed throughout history. A contrast is again and again drawn between training, which is useful (though to some vulgar), and education, which is for its own sake. The distinction between education and training needs to be drawn, but this aspect of it (the view that education being valuable for its own sake is not useful) has no warrant: in most times and most places, education, meaning a developed understanding, is of greater potential use both to the individual and to society, than training, meaning the development of a particular skill or set of skills, could ever be.

This general point has particular application in a democracy, or any form of society where individual and general good depend to any marked extent on the ability of individuals to share understanding and take responsibility.

It is of course true that there is no necessary relationship between self-fulfilment and lifelong learning. The logical relationship is between self-fulfilment and education, but there is no necessary reason to suppose that those who continue their education through life will be any more personally fulfilled than those who do not advance their education beyond the current end of formal schooling. There is nonetheless a relationship, even if it is not a logical or necessary one.

In the first place, for many, the mere business of continuing to educate oneself, which is to say to continue exercising and developing one's mind, will provide a source of considerable satisfaction. This obvious truth is increasingly underlined by numerous empirical studies of such things as dementia and Alzheimer's, which suggest that the better educated are less prone to debilitating and demoralising diseases. In the second place, it is a contingent and no doubt qualified truth, but, nonetheless, a reasonable generalisation that a society which emphasises and promotes a continuous interest in education through life is likely to increase the general level of education in individuals and society, and to increase the overall recognition of and respect for education.

## **Changing Technology and the Changing Nature of the University**

As we remarked in our introduction, the last 10 years have produced major and rapid changes both in technology and to the nature of the university, and these changes do not bode well for a concern with a lifelong concern for personal fulfilment through education.

As noted above, in the late 1960s, a number of thinkers argued that any system of schooling was in itself damaging. According to the wider thesis (echoing Jean-Jacques Rousseau), institutionalisation was inherently evil. In particular, schools taught servility



and acceptance, blunting the critical edge even when they did not indoctrinate. Schooling served to 'gentle the masses' into acquiescence and destroyed individuality. Overall, the argument was not perhaps convincing, but some of the detailed points were telling. We certainly need to be aware of some of the dangers that such critics were alive to, such as the danger of stifling autonomous thought and of killing off any sense of awe and wonder at the world in students. On the positive side, such thinkers argued that learning could become more widespread and more enthusiastically embraced, if it was freely acquired through various 'open' or freely available resources such as libraries and fellow citizens. In particular, they emphasised the possibilities that technological advances were beginning to open up. But what has technological change actually meant? What are its implications for lifelong learning?

The technological tools that they thought would be the means of our liberation are now with us in spades, as they say, the rate of change and development having been faster even than anticipated. At the time, some sceptics argued that the technology could not deliver as promised and that anyway it could be misused (e.g. Ellul 1964). Today, it is probably fair to say that the technology can and has delivered in the sense that computers and related technological wizardry is capable of even more than was generally anticipated, in purely technical terms. The problem is learning how to make good use of it, and it can reasonably be claimed that it is potentially far more open to abuse and misuse than was ever envisaged, for it is now possible to use technology as a way of avoiding having to think and as a path to dangerous misinformation. It is difficult to avoid caricature on this topic, tempting as it is to depict an ipod-eared individual ploughing a lonely, not to say solipsistic, furrow through life. But the fact remains that there are some very worrying features of our engagement with technology today. Knowledge tends to be presented and taken up in extremely fragmented form, whether this be a matter of interrupting with advertising breaks on television every few minutes, quick-fire diversionary messages on the net, the reduction of complex material to sound-bites or the channelling of sophisticated issues through ten-step programmes and other forms of popular psychology. Not surprisingly, researchers tell us that attention span can now be measured in minutes, but it does not seem to occur to people that this is not because of some innate limit on human capacity so much as because we no longer train our powers of concentration. In addition to the fear that contemporary technology may be encouraging us not to think, there is the fear that the rapidity and widespread nature of modern communication encourages a kind of 'virtual' mob rule.

Though there is no disputing the fact that the possible replacement of books with e-books and the like does not prevent anybody from reading, it is at least arguable that the book as an artefact has advantages that electronic alternatives cannot compensate for. Certainly, there is little evidence yet that reading and learning are likely to improve if conducted through electronic means. A much more obvious and grave concern is the evident fact that, however sophisticated they become, computers remain programmed storage and calculating machines. As such, they obviously give us access to information on a wholly new scale, but they do absolutely nothing to help us engage meaningfully and intelligently with the material. The mere fact that gathering information from the internet is now referred to as 'research' and that

'Cut and Paste', which used to be a jesting term of criticism, is now a key part of composition on a computer should warn us that something is wrong. The medium, intrinsically bound up as it is with personal rather than public communication, with speed rather than depth, and with information storage and retrieval rather than thought processing, in itself does nothing to help us make sense of material, evaluate or critically examine it.

Paradoxically, whilst technology tempts some to focus on alternative modes of teaching (running the risk of mistakenly putting concern for pedagogy before concern for understanding and knowledge), the possible potential for innovative teaching provided by technology is currently unrealised, if we are to judge from the thousands of identical power point presentations to be encountered at most conferences and in many a university class. Of course, some of these concerns could be met by a more judicious use of technology. The fact remains that at the present time, other resources such as public and school libraries, books and media are either facing severe cutbacks or abandoning their educational role, and technological innovation has not to any noteworthy degree provided an alternative. Obviously, technology itself cannot teach us how to use itself wisely, but in practice, we would suggest, we are teaching ourselves 'not to think' by our uncritical use of it.

Universities have done little to combat such trends and dangers in respect of technology; indeed, they could be accused of having wasted large sums of money in over-investment in technological change without having really thought out what they wanted to use it for. But more generally and perhaps more importantly, it seems to many that the university has done a very poor job in upholding its integrity as a place of learning in the face of recent social and economic challenges. On the face of it, this is paradoxical, for one thing that has expanded in the last several years is the provision of distance learning in various forms. (The University of London, e.g., today has some 46,000 students who are not resident in London, 40,000 of them living overseas.) Institutions such as the Open University were founded partly simply to increase the number of university graduates at a relatively low cost, but also partly to facilitate lifelong learning. But whilst it is undoubtedly true that it is now easier than ever to study from home and that means of study that accommodate the needs of the working person are widely available, and that the Open University in particular has contributed much to the education of many, it is far from clear that overall distance learning contributes greatly to educational ends. It is, for example, noteworthy that the courses that are available in distance form tend to be such things as business studies, development economics and health care. Little comfort here for those seeking to provide opportunities for all to engage with the 'best that has been thought and said'. Beyond the surface value of encouraging distance learning, the universities have done a poor job in defending the notion of education, let alone showing a commitment to lifelong personal fulfilment. Whatever the reasons (political, financial, etc.), the fact is that institutions that used to place emphasis on teaching and scholarship – keeping alive our understanding – now place their emphasis on funded research, globalisation, increasing the student numbers and public relations. The link between all such priorities is of course money, and money is indeed needed to run a university. Scientific research is inherently expensive and important. It is far from clear however that the

extension of the scientific model to the social sciences and humanities makes sense. One does not need lavish funding to pursue one's scholarly inquiry into Keats, even though it would be nice to travel to Rome to see his grave; whether most of what passes for scientific research in the social sciences really is scientific or worth engaging in is another important and controversial issue (Shapiro 2005).<sup>1</sup>

Nor is it simply that universities have allowed economic and political forces to overwhelm them. There is also the charge that they have failed to uphold their own academic integrity in the face of 'politically correct' and other forms of ideological thought and what might be termed the narcissism of various fashionable theoretical poses. On this issue, the titles, and sometimes the subtitles, of various books written about the university are revealing; for surely, it is significant that leading academics feel the need to write of such things as 'The Killing of History' (Windschuttle 1997), 'Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus' (D'Souza 1991), 'Fraud: Literary Theory and the End of English' (Washington 1989), 'Education's End: Why our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up On the Meaning of Life' (Kronman 2007) and, bluntly, 'Selling Out' (Woodhouse 2009) (see references).

Indeed, the very commitment to lifelong educational provision that was once quite widespread amongst universities (in some cases, even allowing tuition waivers to senior citizens, e.g.) is now low on the list of priorities. It is readily apparent too that when cuts need to be made, as recently they have needed to be made in most universities, it is programmes such as Liberal Studies and the Humanities that tend to suffer rather than, for example, business, education or social work or the increasing number of work-related courses. Today's university reminds one of Herbert Spencer and his economic utilitarian approach to education, basically providing the knowledge deemed necessary for survival, employment and meeting social obligations. And that is a long way from any aspiration to provide individual fulfilment through lifelong learning. The contemporary concern with 'presentation', 'spin', 'selling oneself' or, generally, Public Relations is of course also counter-productive to the aims of lifelong learning, since, rightly or wrongly, it is believed that such indices as 'completion rates', which are totally at odds with idea of lifelong learning, have significance. Whereas, the two criteria that ought to count in evaluating an educational institution, namely its educational quality and its students' perception of such, are notable for their absence on all such checklists (because, of course, they cannot be 'measured' and hence to today's way of thinking are not 'real'). The concerns that we sketch out here need and deserve much fuller treatment, and we have attempted to provide that in a separate paper in the second volume of this work (Keeney and Barrow 2012). For the present, we simply note that the hopes and

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<sup>1</sup> The cost of running a university is frequently cited as the reason why so many of our universities seem to resemble a veritable United Nations. Foreign students generally pay significantly higher tuition fees and so, it is claimed, offset the real cost of a university education for local students. However, it is far from clear that encouraging extensive foreign contacts and bringing in overseas students really is cost effective when all costs are truly taken into account, and it is questionable whether on balance such policies improve the educational standing of an institution. Furthermore, it is becoming evident that increasing the number of foreign students is often done at the expense of local students.

expectations that we and others held out for lifelong learning in the past have not found much comfort in recent events.

## Conclusion

To emphasise the lifelong aspect of education is, amongst other things, to attest to its value; it is to attest to education being the sort of thing that cannot be quantitatively distributed; it is also to attest that it is not ultimately a private business (although obviously there is such a thing as self-education), but an ongoing interaction between individuals and traditions of thought and inquiry. Whilst practical necessity often dictates an end to formal schooling or study, education by its nature can never be complete nor equated with the end of any formal programme(s). Learning can never be complete, because the nature of reality is always to some extent in transition. What we know changes and develops; what we think we know changes even more; how we perceive and understand is not static. Circumstances change and, partly, as a consequence of that, agents change.

The danger is that 'lifelong learning' may become an excuse for further unwarranted and unnecessary credentialing and skill training, and it is the fear that that may be a very real danger that leads us to emphasise lifelong *education* (rather than simply *learning*) and the importance of self-fulfilment.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the contemporary emphasis on lifelong learning, whilst it may have come about for certain specific, limited reasons and may imply, very often, a rather limited conception of learning as training, is nonetheless to be welcomed and, if possible, taken advantage of. The emphasis on 'lifelong' helps to dissociate education from formal schooling to some extent. But, most of all, provided we seize the moment and emphasise learning as education, rather than as training, the political momentum that already exists can be channelled towards maintaining society's interest in education.

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# Chapter 3

## Lifelong Learning: A Language Game in Search of Its Rules

Peter Gilroy\*

### Introduction

Any novice to the literature of lifelong learning cannot help but discern two threads that weave their way through the material. The first is what appears to be the inherent ambiguity of the term, and the second the focus on learning, however defined. In this chapter, I will address both of these aspects of the concept from an epistemological perspective, though not necessarily resolve them.

### Extreme Definitions of Lifelong Learning

It would be difficult, if not philosophically imprudent, to set out to understand the way in which epistemology might connect to the concept of lifelong learning without first clarifying what one means by lifelong learning. This is no easy task. As Aspin points out, it can mean ‘different things not only in different contexts but also in the same context to different people’ (Aspin 2007, p. 4).

At one extreme, we have the simple assertion that ‘Learning is what we do from before birth’, followed by the conclusion that ‘formal and informal learning will be needed throughout life: hence the term “lifelong learning”’ (Cottrell 2003, p. 5). It is probably best to leave aside for the moment the questions that would certainly be of interest to a Hindu or Buddhist philosopher and that contain echoes of the epistemology of the middle-period Plato, of quite what is learned before birth and how the objects of such learning are to be identified. What Cottrell presents is what

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has been termed the ‘cradle-to-grave’ approach, which Jarvis et al. (2006, p. 545) rightly dismiss as incoherent. If every aspect of life is to be included as the focus of lifelong learning, then the term’s meaning is stretched beyond breaking point to be literally life-long.

Another all-encompassing (and which therefore prohibits any differentiation) approach is that of Longworth (1999, p. 8), who, *qua* President of the European Lifelong Learning Organisation, defines lifelong learning as ‘principally about people and the way in which they can develop their own human potential’. The difficulty with this putative definition is that, as with Cottrell, it covers far too much to be meaningful and, in effect, reduces to the same point that lifelong learning refers to no less and no more than all the experiences that can, or might potentially, define a human being.

At another extreme, others have simply adopted a very narrow definition of the term and assumed that lifelong learning refers to adult or further education. Thus, Lifelong Learning UK (defining itself as an ‘independent employer-led sector skills council’) sees itself as addressing the needs of just one particular sector of the population, namely those working in career guidance, community learning and development, further education, higher education, libraries, archives and information services and work-based learning (LLUK 2008).

This restricted use of the term ties it very much to adult education and, despite its proclaimed independence, inevitably connects the Council to current policy debates regarding formal adult and continuing education programmes in the United Kingdom. Thus, one UK university’s Director of Lifelong Learning bemoans the fact that ‘lifelong learning programmes across the country are closing...we are losing evening courses...which allowed those who could not study in any other mode to gain a qualification’ (Sperlinger 2009, p. 24).

To Sperlinger, and others who accept this definition, lifelong learning is a formal process taking part in an institution, which results in a qualification.

By ‘others’ one would have now to include UNESCO. Initially their understanding of lifelong learning in the 1960s was the ‘cradle-to-grave’ approach, one which was subject to stinging criticism (Bagnall 1990). Subsequently, their Lifelong Education Programme, organised through their Institute for Education, morphed in May 2006 into the ‘Institute for Lifelong Learning’ (UNESCO 2006, p. 56). This institute has recently stated that part of their remit is to ‘promote lifelong learning and adapt the educational system in order to meet changing economic, social and demographic conditions’ (UNESCO 2010, p. 1). To do so, they will support programmes that address the need ‘to maintain economic growth and standard of living’ (ibid.), and they make it clear that these are formal programmes delivered through adult training, basic education, further education and universities of the third age. The only reference to their earlier position is a tangential one, to something rather awkwardly termed ‘the life-course approach’ (ibid., p. 2). It is clear that in the twenty-first century, lifelong learning for UNESCO relates primarily to economic development, with the OECD also making an explicit connection between lifelong learning and the need for society to develop its ‘human capital’ (OECD 2007a, p. 7) through lifelong learning.

In fact, it is interesting to note that the original terminology for this field was not related directly to learning but to education. Thus, Knapper and Cropley (1985) move between the use of lifelong *learning* (which is in fact part of the title of their monograph) and lifelong *education* (an early example would be on p. 15) as if the two were merely synonyms. This allows them to reach a definition that ties the two concepts together, whereby lifelong learning ‘embraces a set of guidelines for developing educational practice...in order to foster learning throughout life’ (ibid., p. 18). It is their acceptance of ‘education’ as a synonym for ‘learning’ that leads them to distinguish the ‘spontaneous, day-to-day learning’ from what they term ‘deliberate learning’ (ibid., p. 38). By doing so, they are led to narrowing the focus of lifelong learning so that it applies to education, which then allows for the next step, whereby lifelong learning is connected to more formal approaches to education. If, however, the point of talking about lifelong learning is to distinguish the activity from formal education, then their elision lends support to what appears to be a category mistake, in that an all-encompassing general term (lifelong learning) is being used as if it can refer to, what is for them, a much more specific formalised process (education).

The obvious difficulty with this approach to defining lifelong learning is that at one level, it is no more than what we currently understand by formal education, but with the age profile of those being educated extending beyond the traditional the first 21 years or so of a person’s life. At another level, it appears to be harking back to a Victorian, conservative, instrumentalist approach to learning, whereby learning throughout life (i.e. ‘lifelong’) is tightly connected to producing a workforce that will support and develop further the economic productivity and well being of society. It could be argued that this is precisely why UK universities, since 2009, are now no longer represented at policy level by a Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, but rather by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Nevertheless, such an approach is, to say the least, at some considerable level, removed from the ‘liberal and humanitarian ideals’ (Bagnall 1990, p. 6) of lifelong learning.

What then to make of lifelong learning? Whatever else can be said of it, the view that ‘Lifelong learning is a beautifully simple idea. It is obvious that people learn throughout their lives’ (Field 2006, p. 1), and seems, given the points made above, somewhat optimistic. Field does continue by accepting that lifelong learning is ‘a loose and all-encompassing term’, which has the danger of being used by policy makers to develop their own ‘narrow agenda...the development of a more productive and efficient workforce’ through post-16 formal provision (ibid., p. 2), which neatly captures the two extremes discussed above. However, whilst accepting that lifelong learning is ‘pervasive’ (ibid., p. 145), his own definition is simply that lifelong learning is ‘the recognition that learning may stretch out across a lifetime – is the new educational reality’ (ibid., p. 9) seems to add only a temporal dimension (and that an obvious one) to our understanding of the term.

The temptation, contra Field and Leicester (2000, p. xvii), would be to accept that the term is so broad as to be a meaningless ‘slogan’ (Elliott 2001, p. 26). Another



is to argue that any attempt to pin down *the* meaning of lifelong learning is inevitably to take part in an essentialist approach to meaning, an approach that has long been discredited in philosophy, in general (see, e.g. Wittgenstein 1953 and Gellner 1959), and philosophy of education, in particular (see, e.g. Gilroy 1982 and Chapman and Aspin 1997).

Succumbing to this temptation would leave those involved with the theory and practice of lifelong learning with the embarrassing problem of appearing to be involved with a subject domain that they cannot meaningfully identify. There are at last two ways of resolving this difficulty. The first is to identify the source of the ambiguity of the concept not with the first term ‘lifelong’ [which seems to be a temporal concept with, as Field (2006, op. cit.) asserts above, an ‘obvious’ meaning], but rather with its second term, ‘learning’. The second is to identify a nonessentialist theory of meaning that provides a cartography that would allow for the meanings of lifelong learning to be mapped. I wish to argue that, as it happens, both resolutions can be connected through an appropriate epistemology.

## Lifelong Learning’s Epistemology: To Infinity and Beyond

Learning, whatever else it might be, is a term in search of qualification. ‘To learn’ is to take part in some sort of activity, physical or mental, deliberate or accidental. However, simply to assert that ‘X is learning’ begs the question, ‘What is it that X is learning?’; hence, there is the need to qualify ‘learning’ in a manner which identifies the focus of that learning. As I will now argue, it is precisely this lack of an acceptable qualification that has left lifelong learning open to a plethora of meanings and the potential for some to re-define the concept to fit their own conservative agenda.

The lifelong learning literature, as we have seen, does attempt to provide some sort of qualification or condition for its use of ‘learning’. In general, this approach can be seen as connecting, though not explicitly, with traditional accounts of epistemology. Briefly, traditional epistemologists shared a common feature, in that they attempted to identify a referent for knowledge, physical, or mental, couched in the technical language of Ideas and sense data (see Hacking 1975). This led them into associating knowledge either with Ideas generated from without (traditional empiricism) or from within the self (traditional rationalism).

Thus, as was noted earlier, Cottrell appears to be accepting, if not middle-period Plato’s epistemology directly, some sort of traditional rationalist epistemology in asserting that learning takes place before birth. However, Plato himself rejected this account of knowledge in both Plato’s *Parmenides* and his *Theaetetus* as incoherent, in that it generates an infinite regress of pre-births (see Gilroy 1996, p. 21), and so it is strange to see it re-surfacing here. If one then turns to the ‘cradle-to-grave’ approach, whereby lifelong learning relates to all of life’s experiences (mental and physical), another aspect of infinity, of experiences, is generated. Leaving aside the mix of both traditional rationalism and empiricism that is

required (where perhaps Kant's synthetic a priori is being hinted at – Kant 1787), the infinity of experiences results in an epistemology with, by definition, no specificity to give it meaning. Here, an epistemological approach to some accounts of lifelong learning can be seen as indicating they are doubly incoherent: first, they produce regresses that, *qua* infinite, cannot be halted and, second, *qua* personal experience they are irreducibly private to the individual. It follows that Jarvis et al.'s (2009, p. 288) recent suggestion that to understand the nature of lifelong learning one should focus on 'the nature of the person' has the potential to recreate the incoherence of the double jeopardy that entrapped traditional empiricists and rationalists. That is, if by 'person' Jarvis is referring to some sort of empiricist approach to clarifying the concept, then the empiricist's meaningless infinite regress of experiences is necessarily invoked; if to some version of rationalism, then the incoherence of private experience is resuscitated.

### **Modern Epistemology: Lifelong Learning in Search of Its Language Game**

It would be philosophically naïve to assert that there is an inevitable connection between learning and knowledge, as this would simply transfer the burden of explanation from 'learning' to 'knowledge'. However, modern epistemologists have made a link between the two concepts, arguing that 'epistemology in its new setting... is contained in natural science, as a chapter of psychology' (Quine 1969, p. 83), where 'psychology' is used to identify relevant learning theories. This is not the place to examine Quine's modern version of empiricist epistemology (see Gilroy 1996, Chap. 4 *passim*). One merely needs to notice that for modern epistemologists, a connection exists, however tenuous, between knowledge and learning (between epistemology and how to acquire/learn what epistemology is of, knowledge).

Two questions remain. What might such a modern epistemology look like and how might it connect to understanding the nature of lifelong learning? One way of understanding modern epistemology is to see it as rejecting the objectivism of the past, where traditional epistemologists, assuming knowledge to be objective, thus attempted to find some secure, objective basis for identifying such knowledge. This essentialist approach to knowledge also underpins an essentialist approach to meaning, referred to above in relation to attempting to identify *the* meaning of lifelong learning.

An alternative, holistic, account of knowledge, which grew as a reaction to the essentialist approach, can be found initially in Frege's work, but was developed much further by Wittgenstein. Frege argued that knowledge relates to 'the entire declarative sentence' (Frege 1892, p. 214), thus moving epistemology away from private individual units of meaning. Wittgenstein, on the other hand, takes this holistic approach much further, eventually arguing that the total social context is what gives words their meaning and knowledge its foundation, where 'the use of a word *in practice* is its meaning' (Wittgenstein 1933–1935, p. 69). The argument is

complex (see Gilroy 1996, pp. 102–134), but two interconnected elements are particularly relevant to the issues under consideration here, namely language game and criteria.

Wittgenstein's conception of the way in which social context relates to meaning and knowing is expressed in terms of his well known analogy of a 'language game', in that the rules of a game provide a means of understanding the actions that are part of the game. Moreover, these rules are part of a background, implicit, agreement about their nature, form and function (Wittgenstein 1949–51, p. 28e, §204). What is perhaps less well known is the connection made between language game and criteria.

The various rules for different language games, and by analogy the different uses of language, are to be found in criteria. However, these criteria exist in different forms. They can be explicit, or implicit, clearly differentiated, or somewhat indeterminate (Wittgenstein 1945–1948, p. 83e, §466), learned by being informed unequivocally what they are or by just being used (*ibid.*, p. 77e, §190).

Here is an epistemology that is based on social understanding and yet, through rules and criteria, is not wildly subjective. It brings with it a contextual approach to understanding meaning, but again avoids meanings being incoherently subjective as they are rule and criteria dependent in subtle and complex ways. Given this approach what sense can be made of 'learning' in the context of 'lifelong learning'?

The material so far examined would suggest that there are a number of ways for identifying the context within which the term is used and that, *ceteris paribus*, there are significantly different meanings to the term. Provided these are internally consistent and rule dependent, then it would seem that one problem with lifelong learning, the attempt to provide a narrow and clear-cut definition, with 'learning' qualified in a once-and-for-all manner, is doomed to fail, as the actual use of the term shows that it has different and not always compatible meanings. Another, related, problem is that the various uses of the term shows clearly that there are no obvious rules for its appropriate use, nor are there criteria provided for those rules' appropriate use. This allows for the concept to drift in meaning from one context to another, with nothing to anchor it epistemologically to any particular context.

Such a situation allows for those with power to enforce, if only by default, their definition of lifelong learning. This is precisely what we have seen where 'lifelong learning's' sense of 'learning' is literally qualified, being tied to institutions that provide the qualifications others perceive as relevant to the activities they believe are appropriate for adults. As such, lifelong learning is likely to be understood, as noted previously, as nothing more than an extension of existing formal educational practice, with the power provided by the bureaucracy of formal educational institutions to legitimate their (limited) understanding of lifelong learning.

What is required to take our understanding of both the policy and practice of lifelong learning beyond what already exists is for the language game of which it is a part to accept that what is urgently required are rules, and the associated criteria for the operation of those rules, which would then act to create an appropriate technical language for the field of study concerned. This might sound as if an epistemological essentialism, with a concomitant essentialist account of meaning, has resurfaced. Far from it.

## Conclusion: A Dumb Technical Discipline

What I wish to argue is that there is an important difference between ordinary language use and technical language use. To revert to Wittgenstein's analogy, there are at least two language games here. The first is that of ordinary, everyday use, and the second the use in a language game we might best term 'the technical'. It is lifelong learning's fate to be used in both contexts and without any clear differentiation between them. In passing, it is worth noting the uncomfortable fact that the subject domain of education in general is deeply compromised by being encumbered with language that is used every day, but which its practitioners often wish to use in a technical sense.

One example, from amongst many, illustrates this point. Teacher educators have been criticised in the past as having failed 'to construct a unified body of knowledge from which educational practice evolves' (Roth 1972, p. 9). One response has been to appropriate Schön's explanation of reflective practice and assume not only that it is meaningful, but that it can be connected to educational practice. Both of these assumptions have been subject to extensive criticism (see Gilroy 1993; Newman 1999), but more than a decade later, they continue to be used as if they were uncontentious. What is worse, the technical sense of the terms 'reflective' and 'practice' is blurred, because they have perfectly common ordinary uses. As a result, a government body in the United Kingdom such as the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted 2008) has been happy to make reference to reflective practice, ignoring the fact that if the term were properly applied, their own existence would sooner or later be the focus of teachers' critical reflection (with all that such criticism might mean to Ofsted's review of those teachers with the courage to publicise their critique of its performance).

If this example is reinterpreted, we can see that it can be argued that those concerned with lifelong learning have, with Roth (op. cit.), failed 'to construct a unified' set of expressions, policies and practices to identify their conception of appropriate lifelong learning. In the absence of defining the technical terminology that make up the language game of lifelong learning, there are no rules and criteria against which to test appropriate use. Thus, Lifelong Learning UK and OECD/UNESCO (as discussed above), paralleling the behaviour of Ofsted, have simply asserted that their use of 'training and testing systems...aimed at ...the development of human capital' to identify lifelong learning is *the* use of the term (OECD 2007b, p. 1).

Education, unlike say other practitioner professions such as nursing, civil engineering and the like, appears to be a discipline without a technical language. In the absence of such a language, it struggles to identify clearly, through a set of explicit stipulative definitions, its unique knowledge base. It is in an important sense dumb: attempting, and often failing, to refer to its technical subject matter with non-technical (and therefore ambiguous) everyday language. As part of the education subject domain, the more open, democratic, value-laden aspect of lifelong learning also finds itself silenced, unable to identify through an unambiguous technical language the knowledge, rules, criteria and practices, which would uniquely identify it.

Accordingly Elliott's plea for 'a social theory of learning that gives due weight to social, economic and cultural influences' (2001, p. 26) can, it has been argued here, be met through an epistemology that is based firmly in social context. What is now required is for the distinct social contexts that make up the Education language game to identify what makes their practice discrete and then to use that identification to stipulate criteria for meaning. Such an approach to epistemology and meaning theory would provide a justification for stipulating meanings in exactly the same way that other technical subjects justify and identify their subject-specific, practice-identifying, terminology. By doing no more (and no less) than creating and abiding by rules of meaning that would establish when a term was being used or misused in that particular practice's context, it would be possible to establish a technical language which would properly and clearly identify the kinds of practices (and thus policy) that the term lifelong learning currently only implies. One trusts that this collection of papers will provide precisely that identification.

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# Chapter 4

## Organisational Contexts for Lifelong Learning: Individual and Collective Learning Configurations

Colin W. Evers

### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore certain features of lifelong learning in organisational contexts. Much effort has been devoted to understanding how individuals learn, this effort often falling into the realm of psychology. There is also a considerable literature on how organisations learn, with many studies focusing on structures and processes. The discussion that follows will examine both of these issues from the perspective of their possible interrelationships, guided in general by the broader framework of social epistemology, where the unit of epistemic agency and its dynamics includes both individuals and organisations. Attention will also be given to the ways in which organisations might scaffold the conditions for individual learning and how this scaffolding is, in turn, shaped by such learning.

### Structure of Argument

The discussion flows from the very general to the rather particular. After a preliminary discussion about terminology, I illustrate some aspects of individual learning within the broad normative context of societies that learn, taking as examples the influential social epistemologies of Dewey and Popper. The main lesson from these examples is that the conditions for social learning do not necessarily require all individuals to learn.

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The focus, while still fairly general, then shifts to examples of mathematical modelling of different social epistemologies that explore, in a more fine-grained way, the structures that promote social learning and the role of individuals in these structures. Here, the emphasis is on different divisions of epistemic labour among individuals within organisations and their effects on how the organisation learns.

One feature that looms large in shaping the relationship between individual learning and organisational learning is the institutional framework in which organisations operate. I use some analyses from institutional theory to specify these matters more closely, drawing on a taxonomy of relations between institutional constraints and organisational options for autonomy. I observe that this relationship operates in both directions. That is, not only do patterns of learning among individuals contribute in various ways to learning in organisations but also organisational structures and processes shape, or scaffold, individual learning.

An analysis of these mechanisms of the institutional scaffolding of organisational cognition and learning and the organisational scaffolding of individual cognition and learning takes us closest to the particular. There are many types of relationship between these factors that can influence lifelong learning in organisational contexts. What remains useful as a general resource, however, is the tools of analysis that are currently under development in a variety of disciplines, the most recent being the link between individual cognition where individuals possess minds extended by both technological and cultural artefacts and by organisational structures and processes.

## Learning and Organisations

Let us begin by drawing a number of distinctions aimed at narrowing or refining the scope of the argument. First, it is useful to distinguish two senses of ‘learning’. The first refers to the acquisition of knowledge that is already known. This is the more familiar sense of the term ‘learning’. It is more a case of knowledge transfer. The second refers to the acquisition of knowledge that was previously unknown. This is a case of knowledge creation. This chapter will be about lifelong learning in this second sense of ‘learning’. Since the application of knowledge to new domains often requires adaptation or reinterpretation, I include these applications as examples of knowledge creation.

A second distinction concerns that sometimes made between organisational learning and the learning organisation. Although usage is not always consistent in the literature – the term ‘organisational learning’ is often used generically for both cases – the former notion is said to refer primarily to individual (or group) learning that takes place within an organisation. It is about the micro features of learning within the organisation. The latter term is said to refer to learning at the macro level, concerning the whole organisation (Dahlgaard 2004). Despite my focus on the learning organisation, I shall blur this distinction somewhat by talking about individual learning within the context of a learning organisation. This is a common



approach having two main foci that match the above distinction. The first prioritises individual learning with the organisation seen primarily as the venue in which it occurs. Schools are the most obvious example. The second prioritises the learning organisation, with individual learning of secondary importance. Argyris and Schon's (1978) pioneering work on single and double-loop learning within organisations is a good example of this focus, including the strategy of explaining failures to learn by freely making use of recourse to individual pathologies.

As a final preliminary point, I want to say a little about how I am construing the epistemological structure of knowledge creation, sometimes referred to as knowledge building or theory building. The most general constraints defining this type of learning are the complexity of the social world, its particularity in relation to situations and our own bounded, or limited, rationality in all its aspects. These constraints place a premium on processes for improving or correcting our existing knowledge, commonly within the dynamic of critical analysis and testing of claims. One consequence of importance is that when it comes to understanding the dynamical aspects of knowledge in organisations, these constraints are self-referential and conspire to render our theories highly fallible, provisional and mostly context specific.

## **Social Epistemology: Dewey**

Broadly speaking, social epistemology is the study of those social arrangements of individuals that engage in the acquisition of knowledge. It examines the conditions under which knowledge is acquired by those arrangements and the various circumstances that make it possible or make it more or less efficient. A more specific account is provided by Philip Kitcher (1993, p. 303):

The general problem of social epistemology, as I conceive it, is to identify the properties of well-designed social systems, that is, to specify the conditions under which a group of individuals, operating according to various rules for modifying their individual practices, succeed, through their interactions, in generating a progressive sequence of consensus practices.

There are many examples of social epistemology. One of the most influential was that proposed by John Dewey, especially as espoused in the context of his work about the nature of education.

Dewey held a praxis view of knowledge, which may best be understood by contrasting it with more traditional empiricist views. For classical empiricists, such as Hume or Locke, learning occurred in individuals through a build-up of sensory impressions concatenated by virtue of the thin resources of logic. One serious limitation of this approach was that there seemed to be no way out of solipsism, the notion that a learner's knowledge was restricted to just their inventory of sensory impressions. Construed as a representational structure, knowledge was thus of the contents of their own sensory experiences, not some world that might have given rise to these sensory impressions. Dewey's theory of knowledge avoided this and other problems of classical empiricism.

For Dewey, epistemology was a method: the experimental method. Construed in terms of individual learners, this method had two dimensions:

On the one hand, it means that we have no right to call anything knowledge except where our activity has actually produced certain physical changes in things, which agree with and confirm the conception entertained..... On the other hand, the experimental method of thinking signifies that thinking is of avail; that it is of avail in just the degree in which the anticipation of future consequences is made on the basis of thorough observation of present conditions. (Dewey 1916, p. 338)

In this method, our knowledge drives expectations of the consequences of actions that in turn validate such knowledge through confirmation by experience. The method of knowing is itself initiated by the perception of problems and the need to reach a solution, or the resolution of the tensions to which they give rise. Hence, for Dewey (1916, p. 344), ‘Knowledge as an act is bringing some of our dispositions to consciousness with a view to straightening out a perplexity...’ Because of this naturalistic formulation, the issue of solipsism cannot arise. It is the natural, external world that is an essential ingredient in shaping the growth of knowledge. In this sense, Dewey is a realist (Godfrey-Smith 2009).

Framed in terms of individual resource development for the solution of problems, this epistemology is quite narrow. However, Dewey addresses the issue by considering the wider social context in which individuals act, particularly in his formulation of a democratic conception of education. Here, human association can function as an epistemic resource in two distinct but complementary ways. Dewey aims to produce an account of an epistemically progressive form of human association that is both realistic in the sense of being grounded in actual practices and normative in the sense that it can embody realisable suggested improvements. The first of the two elements to his social epistemology ‘signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control’ (Dewey 1916, p. 86). This is the ‘within group’ dynamic, without which individuals see fewer ways of strengthening and developing to their own viewpoint as a partially shared enterprise that builds on their interactions with interest-relative peers in that group. The second element concerns how groups in a social formation interact. It ‘means not only freer interaction between social groups (once isolated so far as intention could keep up a separation) but change in social habit – its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse’ (Dewey 1916, pp. 86–87). Herein, lies the principal source of diversity of viewpoint, with the society as a whole benefiting epistemically by this dual structure of within group focus and between group diversity. Dewey regards these two features of human association as constituting a democratic society.

Although an organisation could be construed in this social epistemology as just one group in a larger social formation, it is easy to see how the epistemology could be applied within an organisation by making certain structural adjustments. For example, a research-oriented organisation, specifically in the business of promoting the growth of knowledge, might be partitioned into a number of competing research teams. An individual’s knowledge is extended both through collaboration

within the team and by exchanges of information between teams, and the organisation's knowledge grows when any team is successful in solving the problem. And once the problem is solved, individuals grow in knowledge through the sharing of this success across teams. This broadly Deweyan approach sees individual learning occurring within the context of the whole democratic society advancing its knowledge.

## **Social Epistemology: Kitcher**

Kitcher (1990) imagines a similar example, though with an emphasis on the learning organisation, in a paper that explores possible differences between individual rationality and collective rationality when it comes to specifying the division of cognitive labour within a community of scientists located among different research teams. The difference he explores is the community advantage of having a range of competing research teams working on possible solutions to a problem versus the notion that some individual scientist will be obliged to work in research teams exploring what they believe to be less plausible theories or lines of attack. His key issue is that 'only if we situate the individual in a society of other epistemic agents..... does it begin to appear rational for someone to assign herself to the working out of ideas that she (and her colleagues) view as epistemically inferior' (Kitcher 1990, p. 8). But how, exactly? This is the nub of the problem. How may we reconcile a community optimum (CO) distribution of cognitive labour, requiring a spread of research teams with an individual rationality (IR)-based distribution of cognitive labour where everyone works on the research team that is the most promising? Kitcher considers both altruistic and non-altruistic IR alternatives. The problem is easily resolved in an altruistic model by simply defining an IR agent as one who would prefer to work in a community that maximises CO, where this is assumed to maximise 'the chances of discovering the correct answer' (Kitcher 1990, p. 14). However, Kitcher also shows how a convergence of CO and IR distributions is possible in the case of non-altruistic IR agents, where these are posited to be 'ruthless egotists'. The trick is to set a very high non-epistemic reward for success – say a Nobel prize – divided by the number of researchers in the team. The utility of combining a low probability of success with a high pay-off research programme will be sufficient to attract a modest number of IR ruthless egotists to work on it, as might be expected under a CO distribution of cognitive labour.

The pursuit of lifelong learning under these organisational arrangements is therefore tied to a mixture of both epistemic rewards – getting the right answer – and non-epistemic rewards – a chance of fame and money. (See Kitcher 1990, p. 17. For an alternative analysis, that critically discusses Kitcher's work, see Weisberg and Muldoon 2009.) In Kitcher's model, the extent of individual learning will therefore be stratified, at least initially, being more likely to take place among those individuals working on the research team with the highest probability of success. Members of other teams then will acquire this knowledge through dissemination.

Dewey's theory of knowledge and its growth within individuals led to his view of social epistemology and ultimately to a defence of a conception of democracy as an epistemic ideal. A related line of argument can be found in the work of another influential epistemologist, namely Karl Popper.

## Social Epistemology: Popper

The primary focus of Popper's epistemology was on the nature and growth of scientific knowledge. In contradistinction to many writers on epistemology, Popper's approach was not formulated explicitly within a framework of how individuals come to learn what they know. When George Boole published *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought* (1854/1958), the title may have suggested, mistakenly, a reference to thought as a cognitive process. But no. In dealing with the patterns of inference and logical relations among statements, its subject matter expressed an anti-psychologism that came to completely dominate the field from Frege onwards. Logic gave a normative view of reason, whereas psychology presented a descriptive account. When it came to understanding the nature and growth of scientific knowledge, however, there was a standard bifurcation. The task of justification was a matter of logic of establishing appropriate patterns of inference. Discovery, on the other hand, was thought to involve psychology, exploring the cognitive processes, whereby illumination occurred or where new ideas suddenly materialised. Popper's great work, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959) as its title suggests, challenged this bifurcation. Psychology had no important place in discovery either. In making his case, he begins: 'I must first make clear the distinction between the *psychology of knowledge* which deals with empirical facts, and the *logic of knowledge* which is concerned with logical relations' (Popper 1959, p. 30, italics in original). In Section 2 of this work, entitled *Elimination of Psychologism*, he continues: 'As to the task of the logic of knowledge..... I shall proceed on the assumption that it consists solely in investigating the methods employed in those systematic tests to which every new idea must be subjected if it is to be seriously entertained' (Popper 1959, p. 31). Although the idea of exploring conditions under which knowledge grows, while ignoring the contribution of psychology, may seem strange, remember that we are not working with a transmission view of knowledge growth but with a view of learning things that were previously unknown.

The nature of this testing process and its associated logic is spelt out in great detail in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. And it has been challenged in almost every respect since publication. Nevertheless, the basic ideas, and how they lead to both a social epistemology and a powerful tool for theorising organisational learning and the role of individuals within learning organisations, are easy enough to describe. Roughly speaking, scientific knowledge is said to grow by a process of conjecture and refutation. Problems prompt tentative theories that are hypothesised to provide solutions, and then these theories are rigorously tested in a process that hopefully leads to the elimination of errors. In *Objective Knowledge* (1979, pp. 164–165), Popper gives the following schema for this process:

$$P1 \Rightarrow TT1 \Rightarrow EE1 \Rightarrow P2$$

In this schema, P1 is the original problem, TT1 is the first tentative theory up for testing, EE1 is the corresponding round of testing to eliminate errors, and P2 is any new problem that arises as a result of the process of error elimination. As it is a cyclical process, it is useful to consider each cycle as a Popper Cycle. Knowledge grows when a succession of Popper Cycles is epistemically progressive in the sense that it is deemed to terminate with a solution.

Now, regardless of the schema's status as a logic of knowledge, for it to be applied in real knowledge building situations, it needs to be instantiated in some kind of social configuration. As it turns out, something like this schema is ubiquitous in models of organisational learning, once it is recognised that the process of theory testing amounts to adjudicating the outcome of theory-driven feed-forward expectations against the feedback from experience in testing the theory. Thus, consider the single and double-loop learning models that Argyris and Schon (1978) explored in their work on organisational learning. An organisation develops, or proposes, a set of strategies and assumptions for initiating or maintaining performance at some desired state, or interval, where what is desired reflects a deeper set of organisational values or basic purposes. The performance target can be regarded as the problem, or P1, while the strategies and assumptions are the organisation's tentative theory, or TT1 that leads to particular feed-forward expectations that can then be tested against feedback from the organisations operating experience. In the case of single-loop learning, where there is a mismatch, effort goes into changing this particular narrower, TT1. Since the deeper set of organisational values and basic purposes is not up for consideration, responses to mismatches boil down to reworking implementation processes. In the case of double-loop learning, however, the tentative theory includes, for revision, the background values, basic purposes and even epistemic operating procedures.

In this sort of instantiated Popper Cycle type schema, individuals play their role within these larger epistemic organisational components. The upshot is that individual learning can be quite limited where organisational role does not extend to the full informational picture. Thus, one can be involved in an aspect of implementation that does not include access to knowledge of outcomes. Or one can monitor outcomes without being privy to how the feedback of this information is utilised. The division of epistemic labour in a learning organisation, while efficiently promoting learning at the organisational level, can be antithetical to individual learning. Here, the role of individuals in promoting learning in the organisation is analogous to the role of individuals on an assembly line putting together an automobile. No one has to know more than what their fragment of the whole process requires.

Under what conditions might an efficient social epistemology for organisations be compatible with the enhancement of individual learning? To get some purchase on this issue, we need to take a closer look at the matter of theory testing. The first point that needs to be made is that testing theories is a complex matter, owing to both the complexity of test situations and the complexity of theories. To illustrate this with a relatively simple example, Newtonian gravitational theory implied that

the planet Uranus would have a particular orbit. When careful observational evidence contradicted this predicted orbit, there were at least two broad choices available. First, the theory was falsified by observation. Or second, the mismatch between observation and prediction was the result of the gravitational influence of another, as yet unobserved planet, beyond the orbit of Uranus. When the theory was used to predict the position of this hypothesised planet, Neptune was discovered.

Since, for Popper, the growth of knowledge depends on the possibility of being able to falsify theories, the problem becomes acute when large-scale social theories are up for testing. For there are so many possible causes operating and so many hypotheses within a social theory that are simultaneously being tested that it is difficult to know what claim is being falsified by what condition. Much of *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957) is devoted to working out the implications that social complexity and unpredictability have for the growth of knowledge. In his discussion of piecemeal versus utopian social engineering, Popper argues as follows:

The piecemeal engineer knows, like Socrates, how little he knows. He knows that we can learn only from our mistakes. Accordingly, he will make his way, step by step, carefully comparing the results expected with the results achieved, and always on the look-out for the unavoidable unwanted consequences of any reform; and he will avoid undertaking reforms of a complexity and scope which make it impossible for him to disentangle causes and effects, and to know what he is really doing (Popper 1957, p. 67).

Hence, part of maintaining the social conditions for the growth of knowledge is to engage in incremental reform that which is modest enough for its consequences to be clearly demarcated and for those consequences to be reasonably identified with the theoretically motivated actions which gave rise to them. A further part that Popper adds is to maintain the social conditions for engaging in criticism, notably those practices that permit theories to face the tribunal of evidence, and for the merits of revisions to be explored and tested. And like Dewey, Popper's social epistemology requires a democratic form of human association: 'Ultimately, progress depends very largely on political factors; on political institutions that safeguard the freedom of thought: on democracy' (Popper 1957, p. 155).

Popper's anti-psychologism notwithstanding, it is reasonable to characterise this epistemology in the language of individual and collective learning. For real, social processes requiring individual actors are the means for instantiating its operation. This being so, we can now ask how much of this can be used to underwrite recommendations for organisational structures that make for both organisational and individual learning. In the case of a society, 'the vast majority' of its institutions, rather than being consciously planned, have just grown (Popper 1957, p. 65.) But, when it comes to the design of particular organisations, we have much latitude. One organisational design that assists to reduce both organisational complexity and the problem of theory holism is modularity. Where organisational functioning is highly partitioned by a suitable division of organisational labour, the conditions that make for successful learning from experience may likewise be partitioned. Although he uses decision-making capacity rather than learning as the basic consideration for organisational design, Herbert Simon reaches a similar conclusion, at least in relation to modularity: 'the inherent limits of information-processing systems impose two requirements on

organisational design: that the totality of decision problems be factored in such a way as to minimise the interdependence of the components' (Simon 1976, p. 294). His second requirement goes further – 'that the entire system be so structured as to conserve the scarce resource, attention' (Simon 1976, p. 294) – lending itself to supporting a hierarchy that filters information to the appropriate level of decision. All of this suggests that whenever conditions exist for learning through Popper Cycles, it can occur at all levels, from individuals to large social configurations.

Much traditional work in social epistemology relied on intuitions of social functioning in order to draw conclusions, often under counterfactual circumstances, concerning how particular social relations of learning would actually operate. But in the last 20 years or so, powerful modelling techniques have been developed to simulate these processes on computers. To explore assumptions about relations between individual learners and learning organisations in a more detailed way, it is useful to look at this research on artificial organisations.

## Modelling Learning Organisations

The most general mathematical tool for modelling social learning is graph theory, where a graph is a collection of nodes (or points) connected in various ways by paths (or lines). Hutchins (1995, pp. 243–262) offers an account of learning in a small artificial organisation comprised of four individuals. The individuals, in turn, are represented as containing two sets of nodes representing the hypotheses that are connected by paths in such a way as to define two different theories. These individuals are then connected by paths that link the hypothesis-representing nodes. The paths among the individuals are thus said to represent communication about hypotheses. The whole network also has an input signal signifying evidence. In this model, the issue under investigation was the role of leadership (as represented by strong signals coming from one of the individuals to the others) in shaping the organisation's decision-making capacity and its learning capacity. The key finding was that there was a trade-off between the two. Leadership tended to hasten decision-making, but it also increased confirmation bias with the leader's view possessing a higher chance of prevailing in the face of evidence to the contrary (see also Evers 2007). Conversely, to improve learning in this organisation, less leadership reduced confirmation bias, although it also reduced decision-making capacity.

In a very small artificial network, this result on the propagation of influence may have been an artefact of the network's design. However, more detailed modelling using the resources of social network theory has produced similar results. Hutchins's (1995) network architecture and its dynamics were based on neural network modelling. But, social network models are also graphs, although in that case, the nodes represent people rather than hypotheses. A considerable impetus for the mathematical study of social networks arose out of the discovery by Watts and Strogatz (1998) of 'small worlds', networks that had very interesting properties concerning the propagation and diffusion of information.

Imagine a network consisting of an array of nodes variously connected to each other by paths. This network can be described, in part, with reference to two important properties. The first is distance. This is the number of paths one can travel along to get from one node to another. The average path length expresses this for the whole network. The second is the clustering coefficient. It comes in two varieties. The local clustering coefficient for a node in an undirected network (one where the direction of the path does not matter) is the number of paths that connect it to its nearest neighbours divided by the total number of paths that could exist between these neighbours. The average clustering coefficient for a network is therefore the average of all these local clustering coefficients. A small world network is one that has the properties of a low average distance and a high average clustering coefficient (Lakomski and Evers [in press](#).)

In a network characterised by relations of friendship, it is a small world if ‘on average a person’s friends are more likely to know each other than two people chosen at random’ (Watts 2004, p. 77) – an effect of the large clustering coefficient – and ‘it should be possible to connect two people chosen at random via a chain of only a few intermediaries’ (Watts 2004, p. 77) – an effect of low average distance. So, how does the relationship between leadership and learning play out in various network designs, including small world designs?

In a recent paper, Zollman (2007) has undertaken a variety of computer simulations of network learning for a number of different network architectures. We consider two sets of his findings, the first being for three of these architectures, each containing the same number of individuals. The first network is a cycle, with each node joined by a path to only its two adjoining neighbours. The second is a wheel, which is like a cycle except that there is one node at the centre connected to all other nodes. The third is a complete graph, where every node of a cycle is connected to every other node. In doing the simulations, a trade-off, similar to the one noticed by Hutchins, was observed. The cycle was the most efficient learning configuration, followed by the wheel and then the complete graph, and this held up for networks of many different sizes. However, the speed with which the networks reached their results was the reverse. The complete graph was the fastest, followed by the wheel and then the cycle. In general, ‘the trend seems to be that increased connectivity corresponds to faster but less reliable convergence’ (Zollman 2007, p. 580). In terms of confirmation bias, it looks like the greater the amount of connectivity, the greater is the capacity for a strong leader or, as it is sometimes called, a Royal Family, to exert its influence. This interpretation seems to be borne out by the second set of simulations.

These simulations examined a variety of network architectures that differed primarily on degree of connectivity: five that were minimally connected and five that were strongly connected.

An inspection of the five most reliable and five fastest networks suggests that the features of a network that make it fast and those that make it accurate are very different... Four of the five most reliable graphs are minimally connected – that is, one cannot remove any edge without essentially making two completely separate graphs. Conversely, the five fastest graphs are highly connected.... (Zollman 2007, p. 583).



Again, the basic trade-off was one of accuracy versus speed. The most sparsely connected networks performed most robustly against error or the effects of getting locked into a false view. The comparison with Dewey's social epistemology is useful, as Zollman (2007, p. 586) concludes that where accuracy of learning is important, the sort of architecture that works best is one where there are groups of highly connected individuals, but the groups themselves are relatively sparsely connected. This is exactly the architecture of Watts' and Strogatz's (1998) small worlds (see also Lakomski and Evers [in press](#)).

In these simulations, the distinction between what the individual learns and what the organisation learns is collapsed by virtue of the way organisational learning is defined. For, roughly speaking, an organisation is said to have learned to take some action (or accept some proposition or theory) if every individual meets that condition (Zollman 2007, p. 579). Part of the justification for this is a focus on the problem of confirmation bias, which arises if we posit, as important, the learning of an elite within the organisation. However, the situation is more complex than this focus suggests.

## **Organisational and Institutional Constraints on Learning**

In general, I think that the structures that support a learning organisation will vary according to the nature of the theories under test and the nature of the evidence that figures in these tests. For example, an organisation that is solving highly constrained or very well-structured problems can be very efficient in its learning while being hierarchical with little support for individual learning beyond the top of the hierarchy. This is especially the case where evidence is unambiguous in the sense of being interpretable in the same way by all relevant organisational actors. Single-loop learning can work. The sorts of issues that shaped Dewey's or Popper's social epistemologies will rarely go over into the design of organisations. Deweyan democratic societies have no overarching set of purposes or goals beyond providing the social infrastructure enabling citizens successfully to work out their own life plans in socially compatible ways. Most organisations have quite definite goals and purposes that extend beyond the enabling conditions of their members.

These considerations suggest a broad initial division for classifying relations between individual learning and the learning organisation: namely, those organisations whose purposes and operations are partly constituted by the exercise of judgment requiring high levels of professional autonomy, and those that are not. Consider now, for illustrative purposes, the example of a school as an organisation of the former kind. A central goal, such as providing a good education, can be not only contested by teachers as to what it means but also subject to further debate and difference over how it is achieved, and what should count as evidence for its achievement. Moreover, this kind of debate is highly theoretical, invoking recourse not just to knowledge of techniques of teaching, that is, knowledge relevant only to the classroom, but also to knowledge that expresses an extended view of teacher professionalism, drawing on accounts of the nature of education, good educational

outcomes, worthwhile knowledge, student autonomy, the social relations of learning and a host of other matters. (For an overview of issues and their relevance to conceptions of good education, see Biesta (2010).) Under these conditions of ambiguity and recourse to professional judgment, the most appropriate structure for promoting learning in this school would be more like a ‘small world’ organisation with a good distribution of leadership among teachers, high levels of individual learning and good communication and shared decision-making between the various clusters of teachers in the organisation. (see Silins and Mulford (2002, 2004), for a view of schools as learning organisations.)

However, schools (and other organisations) exist in an institutional framework that has implications for how they operate. One motivation for the development of institutional theory was because organisations did not seem to fit the model of a rational system, that is, one that selected the best means for achieving desired goals. Organisations also seemed to function as natural systems, expressed as behaviours concerned with flourishing in the prevailing wider environment. (For more in institutional theory, see Hanson (2001) and Burch (2007).) A simple example of this conflict can be seen among organisations that manufacture computer keyboards. For historical reasons entirely unconnected to today’s technology, the QWERTY keyboard, which is the least efficient design, dominates English language versions. But to deviate from this design, given prevailing skills and practices would cost market share. The manufacturer would fail to flourish in the wider institutional setting.

Now consider a common institutional framework in which our hypothesised school operates. At system level, we may suppose that there are accountability requirements, perhaps concerning student achievements, and, where schools are hypothesised to operate in an educational market, these accountability measures may be public. In stepping outside the discourse of teachers’ extended professionalism, the major casualties are, first, a nuanced understanding of the learning and teaching environment of the school, and second, a detailed understanding of each student’s achievements that are educationally important as the professionals see matters. One of the tensions that can arise when the work of a small world community of teachers is being evaluated on outcomes that have been formulated to meet institutional requirements where data have been de-professionalised and simplified for the wider market audience is that between relatively flat organisational structures of autonomously operating professionals on the one hand and the more hierarchical structures made possible by the informational currency of disambiguated, a-professional data on the other. In this way, institutional pressures for accountability can, perversely, narrow the scope of individual learning and increase recourse to leadership control into previously autonomous domains of individual judgment.

There has been much analysis of this kind of shifting emphasis in institutional constraints on organisations and its effects on individual organisational actors. Wider analyses, such as critiques of neoliberal reforms of public sector management, clearly apply to more than schools. (For an overview, see Fusarelli and Johnson (2004).) And for analyses that both include and extend beyond the public sector, a four-fold taxonomy based on two organisational and two institutional factors can be employed. This ‘New Institutionalism’ partitions organisational

environments into those that are technically weak and technically strong and institutional environments into those that demand weak or strong conformity (Rowan and Miskel 1999, pp. 364–365.) The matter of degree of conformity is clear enough. Examples of weak institutional conformity would be the many cases of businesses producing commodities, such as supermarket items, or services, such as hairdressing, for a competitive market. Hospitals, on the other hand, operate in a strong conformity institutional environment. When it comes to the matter of technicality, however, the issue is more complex. The idea seems to be that technical strength is a matter of being able to closely specify criteria for efficient (and effective) job performance and, ultimately, organisational performance. Thus, hospitals, and some businesses, are classified as technically strong, whereas schools, because of their ‘uncertain technologies’, are deemed to be technically weak (Rowan and Miskel 1999, pp. 364–365).

Now if we overlay this modestly specified sense of technicality with an epistemic reading, there will be some organisations whose weak technicality is due to the highly context-sensitive nature of what counts as good individual performance, and a heavy reliance on excellence in professional judgment, rather than some useful algorithm, for how to act appropriately in those contexts. With this reading in mind, we can use the four-fold taxonomy of this version of institutional theory to extend our exploration of the various relations between individual learning and the learning organisation and the kind of structures that support the latter. For three of the four possibilities, one can readily construct coherent relations between the individual and the organisation when it comes to the dynamics of learning. The fourth possibility is the example under discussion where institutional strong conformity fails to cohere with the epistemic openness of weak organisational technicality.

## **Organisational Scaffolding of the Mind**

What this possibility raises is the more general question of the role of organisational arrangements in scaffolding the mind. There are many ways that individual minds can be extended, or scaffolded, by artefacts, technological and cultural. An apparatus such as an abacus greatly extends the mind’s capacity for calculation through the ordered manipulation of arrays of beads. Representing numbers in Arabic numerals rather than in Roman numerals greatly extends algorithmic facility for basic arithmetic operations such as multiplication and division, as Arabic number operations can be expressed in compositionally decomposable pattern completion tasks. (See Clark 2001, pp. 140–159, for a useful discussion of cognitive technology.) Social arrangements can also scaffold cognition, including where the unit of analysis is the organisation that learns. For example, the institutional arrangements posited for the original Caldwell and Spinks model of school-based management required schools to (1) develop charters that expressed a modest number of priority school goals to be achieved over the 3 year life of the charter; (2) develop implementation strategies that were to be reviewed annually; (3) use

feedback from reviews to modify these implementation strategies where necessary and (4) review the accomplishment of charter goals in the light of end result feedback (Caldwell and Spinks 1988). Supported by an extended sense of teacher professionalism, this arrangement could produce a coherent combination of individual and organisational learning.

In a Deweyan democracy, with weak institutional conformity mandating merely liberty, freedom from interference and some egalitarian distribution of human development infrastructure, a similar coherence between individual and social learning could result, although this would depend on learning arrangements, arguably weakly technical, within socially distributed clusters of people with common interests. To say something more explicit about the institutional environments that would favour learning organisations that in turn may scaffold (or not) individual learning, we need to move to a more fine-grained analysis than that provided by the categories of current social epistemology and the new institutional theory.

Some preliminary findings on this issue can be found in the work of Andy Clark in his study of the biotechnology industry (Clark 1999). For analysing the epistemic and cognitive dynamics and architectures of this particular industry, a range of new concepts are required, drawn from the theory of complex adaptive systems, to augment more familiar ones. For starters, complex adaptive systems are characterised as self-organising aggregations and are soft-assembled. Self-organisation is a form of aggregation of individuals and their interactions that ‘yield a distinctive collective effect, and in which the relevant interactions are not controlled and orchestrated by any distinct overseeing element’ (Clark 1999, p. 47). Soft assembly is a matter of taking advantage of existing internal and external structures for accomplishing tasks. Relations between the institutional and wider environment on the one hand and the trajectory pursued by the biotechnology organisation on the other means that ‘instead of seeing the environment as simply a source of problems and an arena in which problem-solving processes are played out, it becomes necessary to view aspects of the environment as equal partners in extended, soft-assembled, problem-solving’ (Clark 1999, p. 48). Clark then further specifies the nature of the industry as operating in a high-uncertainty market where its processes are research intensive utilising high-technology.

Given such an institutional and organisational set of constraints, it is possible to argue for certain types of organisational scaffoldings that support both individual and organisational learning. In particular, organisations within this industry typically make use of: (1) ‘minimal hierarchical structures’ both within organisations and between venturing partners; (2) focus on the development of individuals’ specialised skills that lead the organisation to articulate in complementary ways with other relevant organisations; and (3) exploit corporate architectures that enable the organisation to easily extend itself by permitting high levels of interaction with external resources (Clark 1999, p. 52). Despite the possibility of being able to mount quite detailed arguments for these arrangements that link epistemic considerations with the realities of a particular commercial market, the point that needs emphasising is the particularity of the example or, indeed, just about any example.

## Conclusion

The study of lifelong learning in organisational settings is complex. At the most, general level is the study of knowledge building in society-wide social formations of the sort that Dewey's social epistemology dealt with. There are plenty of large issues at this level. One currently being discussed is whether China can sustain internationally competitive growth while maintaining a rigid distinction between economic freedom and political freedom. If economic growth depends on the development of knowledge industries, then as Friedman (2010) argues, 'knowledge industries are all being built on social networks that enable open collaboration, the free sharing of ideas and the formation of productive relationships – both within companies and around the globe'.

Within particular social formations, institutional constraints are defined for various organisations, and these shape in particular ways the nature of both individual learning and the prospects for learning organisations. Although it was possible, using institutional theory to discern a number of conditions at individual and organisational levels that shaped prospects for learning in each and relations among each in their interaction spaces, a more detailed causal story looked like it would require the resources of both a view of individual learning and cognition as occurring in an extended mind, and an account of how organisational structures and processes operate to scaffold that mind. On this matter, I let Andy Clark have the last word.

The study of these interaction spaces is not easy, and depends both on new multidisciplinary alliances and new forms of modelling analysis. The pay-off, however, could be spectacular: nothing less than a new kind of cognitive scientific collaboration involving neuroscience, physiology, and social, cultural, and technological studies in about equal measure (Clark 2001, p. 154).

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## Chapter 5

# Democratic Inclusion and Lifelong Learning in a Globalising World

Penny Enslin and Mary Tjiattas

### Placing Globalisation at the Heart of Understanding Democracy and Lifelong Learning

Democratic deliberation is a form of lifelong learning that develops capacities for genuine inclusion, especially under conditions of diversity, inequality and nascent democratic institutions and procedures. In an earlier exploration of deliberative democracy as enabling democratic inclusion (Enslin et al. 2001), we considered conceptions of deliberation, suggesting a construal of lifelong learning to meet their demands. Although we will briefly revisit this earlier work, in the present chapter our interest in democratic inclusion shifts from an implicitly assumed context of the nation state to probe the implications of globalisation for democratic inclusion and lifelong learning. These are considerable.

Recent reflection on lifelong learning is also alert to the consequences of globalisation for democratic inclusion. Policy and debate on lifelong learning have paid increasing attention to the educational implications of globalisation, recognising it as ‘...a contemporary reality which must be at the heart of our understanding structural lifelong learning and the learning society’ (Jarvis 2007: 40). In its attention to globalisation, inclusion and democracy, the critical literature has seen the idea of lifelong learning as both compelling and deeply problematic. This chapter addresses the problem of understanding the radical implications of globalisation for lifelong

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learning, focusing on the declining importance of the nation state to understanding democracy and lifelong learning – and hence the growing significance of democratic legitimacy for both.

Globalisation's impact on the international economic order brings into question the abiding influence of the very idea of the sovereign nation state as the basis for our understanding of democracy and justice (we discuss cosmopolitan *justice* in Enslin and Tjiattas 2008). Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), 'sovereignty' has underpinned the rights of states to act autonomously within their own boundaries. As modern conceptions of citizenship took hold, such sovereign nation states became the locus for political membership, and their borders tended also to be boundaries for the moral obligations of both the state and its citizens. But growing global association across these boundaries, in the increasingly integrated global economy, with its rapid electronic communications and freer movement of money, goods and people, has prompted reconsideration of the importance of the sovereign nation state. The *de facto* decline of the authority of the state over a clearly defined territorial community (see e.g. Held 2002; Singer 2002) has also prompted reconsideration of duties of justice. So Moellendorf (2002) has argued that duties of justice extend beyond national borders to include others with whom we are in political and economic association. Pogge (1989) argues not only that we have duties to assist those who suffer the consequences of global inequality, but that those who mould the international order have a duty to address its unjust effects; these include the effects of unequal educational opportunities. We argue that more cosmopolitan conceptions of the state and justice must be extended to assumptions about the scope and meaning of democratic inclusion in lifelong learning.

In the context of economic globalisation in the late twentieth century, lifelong learning became prominent in economic, social and educational policy. But at the heart of ongoing scrutiny of the meaning and democratic credentials of lifelong learning has been growing dismay at its appropriation for mainly economic ends (see e.g. Field 2000). Earlier emphases on social justice and individual development were displaced by a preoccupation with development of human capital to enhance the competitiveness of individuals and economies, and by a conception of citizens as members of the workforce who need programmes to develop and certify their vocational skills. So '...policies with a humanistic concern for social justice shifted toward economic rationalism and the idea developed that lifelong learning primarily equips people with the skills needed to compete in a globalised and supposedly ever-changing series of workplaces' (Halliday 2010: 170).

In supporting attempts to reclaim the concept of lifelong learning from such 'neo-liberal' appropriation, writers like Halliday (2010; see also Biesta 2006) turn to Aspin and Chapman's influential normative conception of the 'triadic nature of lifelong learning' (2001, see also Chapman 1996). This normative conception counters the tendency for understandings of lifelong learning to be tied to economic development and progress by emphasising the importance of personal development and fulfilment as well as social inclusiveness, justice and democracy. In changing the emphasis from the narrow, instrumental conception of serving economic interests to achieving and sustaining a democratic polity and institutions that promote and



practise equity, justice and social inclusiveness, their refinements recognise the potential of lifelong learning to promote democratic participatory practice.

Sustaining democratic values requires much more than a minimalist conception of interest-based democracy of the kind presupposed in neo-liberal interpretations of lifelong learning and their underlying individualist assumptions. In earlier work (Enslin et al. 2001), we argued that broadly inclusive public deliberative processes – literally, those in which discussion is central – are essential to the articulation of a general will. We explored the role of lifelong learning in providing the educational prerequisites for genuine inclusion in a democratic polity. We took deliberative democracy to be based, not on the aggregation of individual preferences through voting, but on the ideal of

...a democratic association in which the justification of terms and conditions of association proceeds through public argument and reasoning among equal citizens. Citizens in such an order share a commitment to the resolution of problems of collective choice through public reasoning, and regard their basic institutions as legitimate in so far as they establish the framework for free public deliberation. (Cohen 1997: 72)

We considered three models of public reason to explore the role of lifelong learning in providing the conditions and capacities for genuine inclusion under conditions of diversity and inequality as well as the educational demands of each model. What the models share is the central role of reasoning and justification in establishing political legitimacy. In spite of disagreement on the details, all support the case that the development of practical rationality as a capacity of citizens is a duty that, we argued, can be discharged by lifelong learning. For Rawls, the ideal of democratic politics requires that we be able to justify our actions to others in terms they could reasonably accept. This ideal of democratic politics commits citizens to rational norms of conversation and the duty of civility. Effectively, this means that we have a duty to provide ‘public reasons’ (Rawls 1993: 218) and to submit voluntarily to restrictions in the interests of inclusion, neutrality and tolerance. The Rawlsian conception of the person as citizen is, accordingly, someone who is able to participate in social and political life, exercise its rights and respect its duties. Benhabib (1996) identifies the content of practical rationality as normative presuppositions of deliberative democracy, but does not conceive of this as imposing restrictions on participation in civil and public spaces. Thus, while she shares with Rawls an emphasis on discursive norms and the sharing of reasons, her account of deliberative democracy seems more inclusive and, importantly, allows for participation of people beyond national boundaries, extending the space of participation to all those affected. Young (1996) departs in several notable ways from both Rawls and Benhabib in setting out her notion of ‘communicative democracy’. Deliberation for her is not centred on discursive or rational norms or the promotion of reasonability. Indeed, she takes these aspects of the former theorists’ works to be regrettable to the extent that they lead to a shrinking of democratic interactions. Insisting that difference is a deliberative resource, to be welcomed as providing relevant information, rather than an obstacle to be overcome, she urges openness to having one’s beliefs and preferences transformed in the process of participation. Yet Young (1997) upholds the idea that practical reasoning has a normative and epistemic function,

asserting that deliberation across different perspectives augments available information and transforms partial and parochial interests of each into more reflective and objective judgement.

Notwithstanding their differences, all accounts of deliberative democracy imply that individual participation in civic decision-making requires a broad understanding of economic and political structures and capacities for individual thought. The democratic state is thus duty-bound to provide the conditions for every citizen to meet these requirements, and lifelong learning has enormous potential to help discharge such duties. At the same time, the demands of deliberative democracy are considerable. A deliberative democracy requires much more than an interest-based democracy of the kind favoured by neo-liberal doctrine. In a post-Westphalian world, the demands are even greater. For one thing, the competitive nation state presumed in neo-liberalism's version of lifelong learning must be challenged by more cosmopolitan understandings of the state as both sovereign and as the provider of lifelong learning to its citizens, so that they can compete against those of other states and each other.

The conceptions of public reason we previously considered tended to presuppose the public sphere of the nation state.<sup>1</sup> In addressing the wider implications of globalisation for lifelong learning, we take the view that so far critical attention to the global influence of neo-liberalism has unnecessarily limited the scope of critical defence of lifelong learning, and hence its radical potential for reconsidering the meaning of democratic inclusion on a global scale by retaining traditional assumptions about the state now under critical pressure. It does so even though it rightly acknowledges the revolutionary implications of globalisation for the workings of space and time and firmly dismisses preoccupation with human capital development as inimical to all three elements of the triad. Can we be fully alert to the exclusionary potential of lifelong learning if our frame of reference is restricted too narrowly to an outdated conception of the nation state?

In posing this question, we recognise that discussions of lifelong learning do attend to globalisation in several senses, including internationalisation of the context of policy, and in attention to the place of the nation state both in the changes wrought by globalisation and as the site of lifelong learning. Aspin et al. (2001) correctly observe that lifelong learning policies have been adopted by both national governments such as those of Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom and by international bodies such as the OECD and UNESCO (xix). They see the benefits of lifelong learning as accruing to 'governments and peoples widely across the international arena' (xxi). While acknowledging that policy convergence could still provide opportunities for various different national interpretations, Biesta (2006) too emphasises the agenda setting role of transnational policy instruments such as those of UNESCO, the OECD and the EU as governments and other makers of policy respond to similar challenges, especially pressures to compete in the global economy.

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<sup>1</sup>Rawls, Benhabib and Young subsequently took their work into an international frame, with different results, and we have defended cosmopolitan *justice* in our 2008 and 2009.

Yet Aspin et al. see the benefits of lifelong learning as accruing to members of nation states. They depict a radical re-orientation in our understanding of lifelong learning and its value as ‘the major challenge for governments, policy-makers and educators in countries around the world’ (xxii) and mention the role of ‘lifelong learning’ if nations are to flourish in a globalised economy (xxviii). While we do not disagree *prima facie* with any of these observations, or that the nation state remains both the primary distributor of goods and formulator of policies that frame them, the argument to come will urge a reconsideration of the viability of this view of the nation state in the global order, if it takes the state as the sole locus of democratic legitimacy. In doing so, we do not deny the cogency of Field’s further observation, in describing international convergence on the agenda of lifelong learning, that ‘globalisation too has helped change both the behaviour and the power of the nation state’ (2000: 31). But we submit that further critical perspectives need to supplement his sanguine observation that globalisation has strengthened the nation state because governments have been able to learn from one another as policies are transferred from context to context.

Biesta’s argument for a ‘learning democracy’ notes how the vision of the UNESCO report, *Learning to Be* (Faure et al. 1972), assumed common aspirations and a shared destiny in the international quest for lifelong learning, a ‘fundamental *solidarity* of governments and of people, despite transitory differences and conflicts’ (Faure et al. 1972: v, quoted in Biesta 2006: 171). Biesta comes closer here to following through the significance of globalisation’s far-reaching implications for justice and democracy when he poses the telling question: ‘Could it be the case that economic globalisation is not so much a “fact” as that it is something that is actively being pursued by some so as to serve the interest of particular nations, groups, classes or companies? ... whether it simply reproduces existing economic inequalities, for example, between the so-called developed and the so-called developing nations or between “haves” and “have nots” within societies’ (177). We would answer in the affirmative, and propose to press these questions further, drawing on new developments in democratic theory to extend recognition of the global in lifelong learning.

Taking Chapman’s (1996) idea of lifelong learning as including a concern with achieving social inclusiveness through a democratic polity and institutions that foster and practise equity and justice, we extend the idea of the learning society to a global public sphere and its institutions. In this new examination of the role of lifelong learning, in developing the capacities and conditions for democratic participation in a globalising world, we regard many of the considerations applying to democratic participation in the nation state as equally pertinent to the global context. However, if we place globalisation at the heart of our understanding of lifelong learning, others may require radical modification, new emphases and even novel structures of participation. If democracy is to foster the right kind of inclusion, it must allow for the fullest expression of popular sovereignty, and it must be asked whether current conceptions enable this, especially under globalised conditions.

Our central question is: what form should democratic participation take in a globalised world? In the next section, we discuss how cosmopolitan institutions could accommodate inclusive participation across multiple sites and levels. In the final

section, we then ask ‘what tasks does such democratic participation set for lifelong learning?’ as we try to interpret the very idea of the ‘learning society’ in a transnational sense that frees the concept from a persisting association with the nation state. In posing these questions, we test some of the fundamental concepts and assumptions of lifelong learning which, we submit, remain largely in thrall to the nation state: in a globalised world, what is the ‘learning society’ and where is it? Whose is the ‘learning economy’? Where is ‘the culture of learning’ practised and whose is it? Who is included in ‘learning for all’?

The discussion that follows comprises two further sections. In section ‘[Democracy, Justice and Globalisation: Conceptual and Practical Issues](#)’, we aim to develop a framework for moving towards global democratic structures that could be inclusive in the sense of overcoming the outdated assumptions of the nation state as the context of the learning society as well as the current lack of an extant global governance structure. While we continue to argue for deliberation as a necessary feature of a post-Westphalian international order, it cannot remain at the level of groups pursuing their own interests and powers, for deliberation alone can be loose and unstructured – and it could thus potentially undermine human rights. Deliberation needs structures so that its outcomes are authoritative. Given the limitations of the national as well as concerns about the democratic deficit, how does the literature on democratic theory advance the prospect of realising lifelong learning that could be truly democratic? We will support the emerging idea of democratically deliberative polyarchy as the most hopeful option, because it promises to harness deliberation, so that its outcomes can be authoritative. Section ‘[After the Westphalian Nation State: Lifelong Learning in a Deliberative Democratic Polyarchy](#)’ will examine the implications for lifelong learning of this defence of democratic polyarchy.

## **Democracy, Justice and Globalisation: Conceptual and Practical Issues**

### *Globalisation and the Crisis of Democratic Legitimacy*

The ‘fact’ of globalisation has begun to have a notable impact on philosophical discussions of justice, as reflected in the burgeoning literature on international and cosmopolitan justice. However, the same cannot be said about questions concerning democracy and citizenship. Several theorists (e.g. Kuper, Bohman, Fraser) have drawn attention to the need for both reconstruction of political thought and the transformation of political institutions to supply the resources to cope with fundamental questions of governance in an increasingly enmeshed world.

These authors suggest that a fundamental obstacle to meeting this need is the hold of statism on democratic thought. Yet the imperative to overcome it is being increasingly felt. As nation states increasingly cede authority to extra-national

institutions and corporations, they lose their grip on a monopoly of power and authority, thus precipitating a crisis of democratic legitimacy.

The crisis of legitimacy is thus many-sided: in addition to the de facto weakening of nation states in the face of forces of globalisation, new loci of democratic authority have not as yet been established. Moreover, theoretically adequate accounts of global legitimacy do not yet exist. At the same time, multinational institutions, operating nondemocratically and beyond the control of those they affect, are increasingly usurping democratic prerogatives.

If a commitment to deliberative democracy is to survive these conditions, a plausible normative conception of democratic citizenship that does not presuppose the Westphalian nation state must be constructed. If democracy is intrinsically tied to its justificatory role in making binding collective decisions, we cannot evade Fraser's question: what grounds the legitimacy of public reasoning and deliberation if one can no longer invoke the nation state?

Global legitimacy requires an account of political authority that comports with the nature and scale of the global community and that can be convincingly linked to appropriate institutions. Any proposed account needs to explain how and why democratic participation is a feasible goal, given the vastly expanded reach and heterogeneity of international and cosmopolitan institutions.

### *The Constitution of Global Democracy*

Public sphere theory as developed within critical theory (Habermas, Benhabib) provides a useful starting point in addressing problems of inclusion at the global level. Its theory of legitimacy prescribes that all potentially affected by political arrangements enjoy participatory parity in democratic deliberations (see Fraser 2005; Bohman 2007: 93, 95).

Building on the general idea of the public sphere, recent accounts of cosmopolitan legitimacy invoke emerging global civil society, for example, the European public sphere in Europe, lobbying activities carried out by interest organisations and citizen movements as a source of such legitimacy. Others (see especially Bohman 2007; Kuper 2004; 2007), in describing the constitution of a global public sphere, emphasise instead the crucial role played by international institutions in upholding human rights norms, and hence their centrality to a normatively adequate global governance structure.

Despite these differences in emphasis, the nascent literature on global democracy reflects a convergence on the idea that both a public sphere (informal networks of association) furnishing deliberative decision-making mechanisms that meet conditions of participatory parity on a global scale and global institutions capable of fostering and promoting human rights of all affected by forces of globalisation are indispensable to global governance.

Some version of Cohen and Sabel's 'directly deliberative polyarchy' (Cohen and Sabel 2006) is at the core of a number of independent recent proposals for a

system of global governance. Its attraction lies in its promise to provide expanded opportunities for deliberation and a complex global institutional structure that confers authority on the results of public deliberation and provides the structure and coordination required to sustain complex democratic polities.

Furthermore, it embodies a conception of democratic legitimacy that seems particularly apt for complex societies (according to which democratic legitimacy is distributed among courts, legislatures and executives) rather than arising from a single source. This vertical division of sovereignty has proved effective in federal regimes, resulting in robust democratic institutions, opening the way to the idea of a horizontal dispersal of authority (polyarchy) on the global level where the interaction generated by networks of institutions and organisations issues in a distributed will formation (Cohen and Sabel 2006). The demonstrable ineffectiveness of territorial demarcations of government to deal with such issues as human rights and environmental protection merely bolsters the case for attempting to achieve such an order.

The envisaged federalism is one of problem-solvers discussing both within *and* (crucially) across units of decision-making – sharing experiences and solutions at different sites. Cohen and Sabel thus accommodate the insights of public sphere theory (the centrality of directly deliberative decision-making and its access to relevant local knowledge) while complementing it with the structure and coordination required to sustain complex democratic polities. Problem solving, following the procedures of directly deliberative polyarchy, is enriched by the heterogeneity of participants (so long as they share a view about relevant reasons). Improved reasoning and inclusiveness thus go hand in hand. Directly deliberative polyarchy provides a constitutional structure for a transnational democratic order that is reflexive, deliberative and dispersed (Bohman 2007: 156).

While the desirability of such an order is evident, its feasibility is another matter. In order for the positive benefits of contemporary global politics, for example, interdependence and cooperation, to be fairly distributed, the considerable power imbalances in international politics, especially as they affect participatory parity, need to be addressed. One glaring danger is that global publics will continue to advantage those whose educational opportunities and achievements give them favoured access to global communications and know-how on the use of global structures to their own advantage. Education at all levels, but in particular ongoing education that is responsive to real-time changes, is indispensable to their proper functioning.

### ***Experiment/Case Study: The European Union as a Deliberative Polyarchy***

Cohen and Sabel (2004: 158) describe the EU as a ‘nascent political order’, with the potential to extend the democratic ideal into a setting characterised by a web of problem-solving committees and procedures. Bohman more optimistically still sees it as ‘an ongoing experiment in political integration’ (Bohman 2007: 172) that has already resulted in innovative deliberative practices and an emergent transnational

institutional design with democratic ambitions. Constitutionalism in the EU, he claims, is the best example of a reflexive, democratic, transnational order. The EU is presented as a paradigmatic example of how a polycentric form of publicity might permit different forms of democratic deliberative influence in contrast to the standard model of a national public formed around parliamentary debate (Bohman 2007: 84) and to the nascent transnational order, which is currently made up of disparate, contingently related associations, the members of which enjoy at best delegative powers. The EU is on its way to being a fully-fledged albeit diverse polity with a constitutional framework, displaying transnational structural features (it is an overlapping, differentiated and polyarchical structure) that ensure accountability through open multiperspectival deliberative inquiry. Its explicit recognition and promotion of political rights as human rights invests all affected by authoritative decisions with normative powers and opportunities to exercise voice, including rights of participation.

Thus, the EU provides space for ongoing reflection on agendas and problems and promotes interest in inclusiveness and diversity of perspectives (Bohman 2007: 86). It is committed to the creation of institutional contexts linked to normative powers of deliberation (Bohman 2007: 129). Cohen and Sabel (2004) illustrate this general account, describing the relations between the European Court of Justice and the workings of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), a form of cooperation in which citizens in different parts of the EU deliberate simultaneously on policy objectives. Here, authority is exercised by ‘cascading delegation’ down to actors in civil society, creating practices that originate in informal ways.

Importantly, inclusiveness has not been secured at the expense of human rights. The EU has made headway in realising a jurisprudence of human rights (Cohen and Sabel 2004: 160). Its multiple new institutions, while expanding opportunities for exercising entitlements gained from overlapping memberships (Bohman 2007: 145), also facilitate making human rights claims. EU citizens may make rights claims not only by appealing to basic principles of democracy but also more directly through invoking diverse entitlements associated with multiple *demoi* and the processes and procedures of differentiated political institutions.

Furthermore, Bohman argues, with institutionally reinforced commitments to human rights, a more democratic EU will evolve greater constitutionality-based obligations towards *non-members* (Bohman 2007: 150) and lead it to embrace an increasingly cosmopolitan perspective and to provide a model for transnational democratisation. ‘With the recognition of the full range of human rights of all persons within a complex and differentiated institutional structure, the EU shifts from a regional to a cosmopolitan polity’ (Bohman 2007: 150).

What still needs to be accomplished is the development of more robustly deliberative citizenship (Bohman 2007: 138) that will prepare people for a directly deliberative polyarchy (Cohen and Sabel 2009), allowing for true democratic legitimacy, based on the will of the people rather than the peoples of Europe (Bohman 2007: 138–139). Bohman suggests that to the extent that a democratic deficit exists in the EU, it is due to lack of depth (rather than breadth) in its deliberative processes:

qua argumentative forums its committees need to be structured so that they engage the public more and limit the influence of administrative agencies and private policy experts (Bohman 2007: 149). This, as Bohman points out, may well involve greater institutional differentiation and new normative powers that encourage citizens to deliberate about the very terms of democratic governance (Bohman 2007: 142–143), that is, to engage in the most fundamental kind of democratic will-formation.<sup>2</sup>

## **After the Westphalian Nation State: Lifelong Learning in a Deliberative Democratic Polyarchy**

Given the nascent transnational model of democracy we have considered in section ‘[Democracy, Justice and Globalisation: Conceptual and Practical Issues](#)’, we can now ask, first, what tasks does this set for lifelong learning, that is, what do citizens of a post-Westphalian deliberative polyarchy need to learn? Second, what are the implications for how we might pursue lifelong learning differently from the policy approaches targeted in so many critical analyses of recent trends in lifelong learning policy?

### *What Do Citizens Need to Learn?*

To some extent, the demands of citizenship education for a transnational polyarchy are no different from those already widely agreed on as necessary to sustain democracy. Civic education since Aristotle has aimed at facilitating the public manifestation of moral virtues: the coincidence of virtues of man and citizen (Crittenden 2007: 3). Gutmann’s proposed aim of democratic education is the inclusive commitment of democratic citizens to conscious social reproduction, the self-conscious shaping of the structures of society (Gutmann 1987, cited in Crittenden 2007: 13). Such goals require that we educate all to be capable of participating collectively in shaping their society. The crux of Gutmann’s democratic education is that all should develop capacities for examining and evaluating competing conceptions of the good life and society in ways that avoid inculcation of uncritical attitudes or acceptance of any particular ways of life.

Education for deliberative democracy requires these features – and more. One of the central claims of our earlier chapter was that democratic, deliberative inclusion entails demanding educational requirements. Inculcating a disposition to participate

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<sup>2</sup>See Benhabib’s (2007: esp.21; 31 n.39) account of ‘democratic iterations’ and her suggestion that it be used as a model for the ‘pouvoir consultant’.



is as important as imparting the necessary skills. One point of civic education in a democracy is to raise free and equal citizens who appreciate that they have both rights and responsibilities to fellow citizens. They also need education in judgment, in weighing and considering reasons and evidence. Individual participation in political and civic decision-making requires a broad understanding of economic and political structures and capacities for independent thought. The democratic state thus is duty-bound to provide the conditions for every citizen to meet these stringent requirements. These conditions span opportunities for lifelong learning that develops skills and capacities for genuine participation in deliberative decision making about matters of shared concern to all. Under conditions of diversity that now characterise most nation states the demands increase, and Young's (1996) communicative version of deliberation offers possibilities for transformative augmentation of understanding by gathering information from different perspectives. Global deliberation by all affected is demanding too – but even more so than deliberative public reason in the nation state. Preparing citizens for a directly deliberative polity calls for wide participation and capacities for problem solving that will make global institutions democratically accountable, for 'globalisation from below', that is, transnational agency exercised by citizens through publicly open processes, by contrast with the less transparent global actions of multinational corporations. Global deliberative democracy requires a citizenry that is sufficiently motivated as well as informed to be able to engage with a range of institutions. Citizenship education, in addition to fostering commitments to global objectives, needs to ensure that students receive adequate exposure to issues that clearly depend for their successful treatment or resolution on world-wide cooperation and interaction, for example, human rights, climate change, sustainability and the distribution of economic goods. Critical discussion of the role of trans-national institutions needs to be complemented by serious and thoroughgoing investigations of concrete global issues (Singer 2002; Sachs 2008). Listening to the stories told by others can broaden understanding of their situation and perspectives (Appiah 2006), thus improving our understanding of ourselves and more local issues (Nussbaum 1996). Negative popular attitudes towards international agencies like the UN will need to be addressed. Bodies like the International Court of Justice will need support for their continued existence; global citizens have a duty to support institutions that promote justice on an international scale.

For Crittenden (2007), cosmopolitan education says that good persons need to be aware of the perspectives of others and the effects their decisions have on others. Good citizens will think of themselves as 'global citizens' with obligations that extend beyond national boundaries. Our first obligation is to all persons – to work to make all human beings part of our community of concern – not to compete with them. Yet when Nussbaum argues that civic education should incorporate global awareness and foster a cosmopolitan sensibility (Nussbaum 1996), this does not imply abandoning local and national obligations. The frame of the nation state alone is not up to the task of addressing the moral and political concerns of writers on lifelong learning who lament the trend to neoliberal pursuit of human capital at the expense of democracy, social justice and personal development.

## *Democratic Lifelong Learning*

To ask, as we do now, what structures would better formulate and deliver lifelong learning in a learning democracy cannot be separated from the kinds of questions we have explored about the nature of democracy itself. In Mill's terms (1972, cited in Crittenden 2007) participation in democracy results in complementary benefits in both education and in the quality of political decisions. Imagining the policy and practice of lifelong learning as a transnational project freed from the dead hand of neo-liberal interests so regretted by those who wish to reinstate all the sides of the triad draws us towards radical implications, in which revised notions of citizenship and of learning for all are mutually necessary. We are now ready to follow through the cosmopolitan potential in the very idea of 'lifelong learning for all' in a learning democracy.

The principal objection of critical writers on lifelong learning to the influence of neo-liberal doctrine has been to the way it has driven policy and practice towards the development of skills for a competitive national economy, pitted against other national economies in a struggle for domination of global markets (this, in spite of some policy initiatives that aim at international promotion of lifelong learning). Yet, taking a wider view of neo-liberalism's destructive influence demands recognition too that the nation states that compete most successfully do so at the expense of development in the world's poorer countries, ensuring their continuing subordination to the world's richest states. Under these circumstances, recognition of inequalities in global wealth and hence in resources for lifelong learning demands more than increasing the flow of international aid from rich to poor countries to extend the benefits of lifelong learning to all (Aspin et al. 2001: xxv), which is only part of the remedial action required for more just and democratic distribution of lifelong learning to those in poor countries and in failed states. In such contexts, opportunities for lifelong learning are fewer – not only in the form of access to formal and non-formal educational opportunities for which resources are less – but also and crucially because opportunities for non-formal learning in social movements and institutions of civil society are likely to be fewer, and because participation in conventional national political structures may be prevented by authoritarian government. For all the damage wrought by neo-liberalism on education in wealthy countries, non-formal and social learning by participation in a variety of organisations, a strong thread in various participatory accounts of learning citizenship (e.g. Jarvis 2007: 106) remains more readily accessible there than for citizens of poor nation states. Thus, the democratic deficit of lifelong learning is a crisis of legitimacy that demands reconceptualisation of citizenship in a transnational polity.

This is not to deny the assault on citizenship by neo-liberal policy in wealthy democracies; to depict citizens exclusively as members of a workforce reveals an impoverished notion of citizenship. Hence, Martin's (2003: 2) warning that '...the dominant discourse of lifelong learning ... is in danger, increasingly, of functioning primarily as a political ideology and instrument of social policy'; he argues that the deconstruction of welfare is predicated on the reconstruction of citizenship. For us, such reconstruction must take place at least in part in extra-national contexts.

As neo-liberal policies have forced cut-backs on various kinds of public provision, including for lifelong learning itself and shifted responsibility for learning onto individuals, at the same time, ‘citizenship education has become a major theme in lifelong learning policy’ (Jarvis 2007: 106) – but very much within the nation state.

These aspects of neo-liberal policy and its effects suggest common cause between citizens of wealthy and poor states that in different ways their educational and democratic interests are subjected to those of the market’s definition of social policy. Given the nation state’s subordination to the rationality of the market, possibilities for democratic inclusion, for the citizen agency so yearned for by lifelong learning’s defenders, must lie elsewhere. Hence the importance of lifelong learning in the form of transnational democratic deliberation by an inclusive justificatory community in emergent structures that foster collective efforts across borders and diverse level and institutions – including as sources of policy on lifelong learning itself: its meaning, purpose and provision. If lifelong learning policies are to overcome their own democratic deficit, then participatory parity is central. Lifelong learning must focus on creating informed participants on an equal footing with others, and the learning society is a global one.

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# Chapter 6

## On Learning and Cosmopolitanism in Education

Yusef Waghid

### In Defence of Learning

To begin with, learning has always to do with the myriad ways in which people engage with thoughts, questions of meaning, arguments, propositions and criticisms. Therefore, learning has some inter-connection with the individual and social self. For instance, arguments are always proffered by one and in turn another one makes meaning of these arguments or takes arguments into systematic controversy. What follows from this is that learning happens when one connects with the thoughts of others and in turn offers some of one's own thoughts on an issue to the other. It is such an idea of learning which has been, and continues to be, prevalent in most modern educational institutions. Yet, what seems to be happening on the societal and political fronts in most African communities suggests that something must be wrong about the way people understand learning and with the way that they learn and enact learning. In quite a generalised fashion, one can look at several un-virtuous moments of the kind which seem to be prevalent in some African societies: Congolese women being raped by Hutu militia as well as troops in Guinea; clashes between religious bigots in Nigeria; the Sudanese government's alienation of people in the Darfur region resulting in mass starvation and hunger; political dictatorship which continuously mars Zimbabwean politics; and recent xenophobic attacks against immigrant communities in South Africa – these are just a few examples in such cases. What is at stake here is people's reluctance to engage the other with respect and dignity, a stance which is to my mind fuelled by an erroneous understanding of learning – that is, the notion of learning seems to be distant from what it means for the self to engage respectfully with other selves. And, for the reason

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that practising cosmopolitan virtue depends on the interconnection of other selves, it seems as if such a practice is distinctly cosmopolitan.

I wish to argue that learning devoid of connecting with others in dignified and respectful ways cannot be justifiable, ethical learning, because such learning has, and should constantly have, some morally worthwhile end in mind – an idea made famous in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and which has been extended in the modern era by Seyla Benhabib (particularly her views on democratic iterations and cultivating cosmopolitan hospitality) and Jacques Derrida (particularly his view on connecting with the other in responsible ways). Also, the question can rightfully be asked: How does cosmopolitan hospitality differ from other forms of hospitality? In the main, one can be hospitable towards members of one's own cultural group, yet inhospitable towards people from other cultural groups. However, cosmopolitan hospitality does not restrict hospitality towards any favoured group. Instead, hospitality is specifically extended to others who might not belong to one's cultural group. My contention is that the notions of democratic iterations, cosmopolitan hospitality and responsibility can offer some ways as to how learning ought to be constituted and which in turn offer rich ways as to how un-virtue can be minimised or even eradicated. Learning in African societies, if practised along the lines of democratic iterations, hospitality and responsibility, has the possibility of combating societal and political ills which are becoming more and more prevalent by the day. For example, in South Africa, authoritarian learning (in many instances) has been replaced by democratic learning, and the benefits for society have been fairly visible – 'free and fair' elections, respect for the rule of law and a demand for justice in various forms of life.

## **Democratic Iterations as Learning to Talk Back**

According to the seminal thoughts of Seyla Benhabib (2006), democratic iterations involve something like this: one offers an account of one's reasons, which someone else considers and in turn someone else questions one's reasons to which one can respond. Attending to reasons and critically engaging with reasons often results in the adjustment, modification or even rejection of one's reasons. Others would then be encouraged to agree, disagree or even repudiate one's reasons. This deliberative engagement with reasons is done repetitively; hence, democratic iteration is connected with talking back. Benhabib (2006: 48) refers to democratic iterations as 'those linguistic, legal, cultural, repetitions-in-transformation, invocations that are revocations'. What follows from this is that learning does not simply mean that one listens passively to what has been taught. Rather, one actively and reflexively engages with meanings to the extent that one's own understandings are subjected to critical questioning by others. This dialogical exchange of meaning making, questioning and alteration of thoughts is proposed as learning. Yet, in some communities, learning in this fashion is not encouraged. For instance, in some African communities, talking back is not looked upon very favourably and is often considered

as showing disrespect for the other. In such communities, listening is encouraged without the possibility that one could repetitively disagree and rebut the views of others, especially heads of tribes or sages who are considered as unquestionable authorities. Instead, it seems as if uncritical listening is considered as the norm. In such instances, the dominant figures ought to be encouraged to have the confidence in themselves to persuade others through argumentation and to suppress their concerns that talking back would cause them to surrender some of their authority. In fact, talking back presupposes that one recognises the presence of the other, who at least should be considered as a person worthy of being deliberately engaged with. If not, learning in such a case would either not be possible or at the very least be unjustifiable. This is so because without talking back the possibility of being indoctrinated is highly likely, which in turn would curb mutual engagement and the development of trust to enable one to take risks. Risk taking has some connection with moving towards the improbable, the unimaginable or the lucky find – those outcomes of learning which stand opposed to the mechanical achievement of ready-made answers. I do not imagine pre-prepared answers would necessarily eradicate the violent encounters among some people in African communities, because often the response to violence demands the articulation of a language which is yet to be found, and which can potentially reduce and combat violence. Moreover, risk taking also counteracts the possibility that one can reach a final, completed and blueprint decision. Finality in itself curbs the possibility that there is always something to be learned, discovered or in the making. By implication, finality would mark the end of learning.

What follows from the above discussion is that learning is about connecting with the other, recognising his or her presence and creating opportunities for oneself and others to talk back. If this process of talking back happens routinely, the possibility that learning would be engaging and risky might create opportunities for people to accept one another as friends who are mutually attuned to one another. Only then could disrespect and hostility possibly be thwarted. Specifically, I think here about how people in some African communities are inculcated with a mentality of not questioning the ancestors; yet, the ancestors themselves did not expect later generations to regard their mode of thought and action as immutable and beyond reproach (Gyekye 1997: 247). Unless people are taught to have some public say or debate about the reasons for their actions, to reflect upon and defend their views about, say, the wisdom of the sages – that is, to engage, contest, recursively question and offer possibilities about the wisdom of the ancestry – they would not even begin to learn or to talk back.

## **Cultivating Cosmopolitan Hospitality Through Learning**

In some African communities, there is a very strong tendency among people to settle disputes by recourse to violence and aggression. The most horrifying moment I have experienced recently was when I witnessed hundreds of people in

South Africa running amuck with traditional weapons (knives and sjamboks) intent on harming immigrant communities from neighbouring African countries whom they regard as having invaded their country. Thousands of ‘foreign nationals’ were killed, injured and displaced from their areas of residence: at least 62 people were killed, 670 injured, about 47,000 displaced (28,682 displaced persons in 99 sites across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape) and many returned to their native countries. Areas most affected by the xenophobic attacks were townships of Cape Town (Du Noon, Masiphumelele, Khayelitsa, Lwandle, Macassar, Mitchells Plain, Nyanga, Ocean View and Soetwater) and Johannesburg (Alexandra – where the violence started, Diepsloot, Zandspruit, Primrose, Tembisa, Reiger Park, Tokoza, Hillbrow, Jeppestown, Thokoza, Themisa and Cleveland). An estimated 1,900 people from Malawi have already returned to their home country, and they are being accommodated at an interim shelter, the Kwacha Conference Centre, in Blantyre. Mozambique has received a total of 36,000 returnees, who are currently sheltered at a temporary transit camp at Beluluane centre. Some immigrants are not going back to their home countries; for example, a number of Zimbabweans are going to Zambia. Although the government claims that attempts to curb xenophobia have been successful, there is still a growing concern that immigrants might not be reintegrated into the local communities. Recently, Somalis have been accused of initiating terrorism, which again could possibly spark serious xenophobic encounters. To my mind, people showed profound disrespect towards other persons. If the African term *ubuntu* (literally humanness and solidarity) had any significance, it was definitely not demonstrated through the violent actions of some people towards others. Once again, as alluded to earlier, xenophobia could only arise because people’s learning about the other has not been taken up seriously. For me, the fact that some people have acted so inhumanely towards others is a vindication that their learning seems to be disconnected from notions of respect for the other and the need to treat them hospitably. It is this issue I wish to pursue in relation to Seyla Benhabib’s (2006) idea of cultivating cosmopolitan hospitality.

Cosmopolitanism recognises the rights of others to ‘universal hospitality’. Simply put, others have the right to be treated hospitably. For Benhabib (2006: 22), *hospitality*, in a neo-Kantian sense, ‘is not to be understood as a virtue of sociability, as the kindness and generosity one may show to strangers who come to one’s land or who become dependent on one’s act of kindness through circumstances of nature or history; hospitality is a right that belongs to all human beings as far as we view them as potential participants in a world republic’. Such a right to hospitality imposes an obligation on democratic states and their citizens not to deny refuge and asylum to those whose intentions are peaceful, particularly if refusing them would result in harm coming to them (Benhabib 2006: 25). So, if the intentions of Somali entrepreneurs are peaceful (and there are many of them in South Africa), it would be considered their right to be treated hospitably and all democratic citizens’ obligation to ensure that these immigrants enjoy such a right.

Cultivating cosmopolitan hospitality involves learning to recognise the right of others to be treated hospitably. First, considering that cosmopolitanism involves the right to temporary residence on the part of the ‘stranger who comes to our land’



(Benhabib 2006: 22), it follows that public schools in South Africa cannot deny access to children from immigrant communities. In most cases, they are not refused. However, some children are excluded in subtle ways, considering that the language of instruction, for instance, is not the mother tongue of these immigrant children. In fact, in the black township of Kayamandi (in Stellenbosch, South Africa), African children find it difficult to cope with non-mother tongue instruction in public schools. Three Belgian teachers once requested a mediator to assist them in teaching children in Kayamandi to participate in art and cultural activities. And, taking into account that local school children find it difficult to cope with a different language, it would be extremely challenging for immigrant (say Somali) children to adapt to the public school life in their country of temporary sojourn. What cosmopolitanism thus demands is that immigrant children should be taught initially in their mother tongue before they are assimilated into the broader public school life. Or, alternatively, they should simultaneously learn the language of instruction and be supported in doing so. The point I am making is that one should not take for granted that people with immigrant status would fit naturally into the public structures of their adopted countries or countries of temporary residence. They have to be initiated gradually into social and public life on the basis of a sense of obligation on the part of democratic states. Failing to do so – for example, denying immigrant children gradual access into public schools and thus depriving them of developing and exercising their capacities – would amount to treating others unjustly. The upshot of this view is that if my Malawian student's children, who are attending the local Kayamandi school, are not treated hospitably by, for example, being initiated gradually into public school life by South African teachers and other learners, then the teachers and learners are not abiding by their obligation to treat others humanely – that is to say, justly. This unfavourable attitude towards immigrant others would not only retard interaction and cooperation among different people, but also impede the education for social justice project that the Department of Education in South Africa so dearly wants to implement in public schools. This is because the consequence would be that these immigrant children and their parents will invariably develop a mistrust (as is seemingly the case with my Malawian student and his children) of the public school sector – a situation which in turn increases their suffering (discomfort) and perpetuates what Iris Marion Young (2006: 159) refers to as 'structural social injustice'. With reference to the social justice project of the Department of Education in South Africa, one can have little doubt that cultivating in students the 'values' of democracy, social justice and equity, equality, non-racism and non-sexism, *ubuntu*, openness, accountability, respect and the need for reconciliation and recognition of the rule of law can produce a heightened awareness of what it means to be a responsible citizen. It is difficult to imagine that a learner who has internalised the 'values' of social justice, equality and *ubuntu* could in any way not be considered as having achieved a worthwhile moral outcome, which would invariably position her favourably to deal with issues of democracy, accountability and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. And, bearing in mind that educational transformation aims to engender in learners a deepened awareness of and appreciation for mutual respect, disagreement, justifiable criticism, critical judgement,

rational deliberation and nation building, it follows from this that democratic ‘goods’ as announced in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy can in fact bring about transformation in education. In quite a different way, and of relevance to this essay, failing to inculcate in people an aptitude of hospitality or not treating people hospitably at all would be tantamount to creating conditions where people do not learn. This is so because learning in the first place requires one to recognise that others should be considered as legitimate partners who are capable of contributing to what can be learnt. And a precondition for genuine learning is that the learners experience a sense of belonging – hospitality – that would make them feel comfortable and ready to learn. I cannot imagine Rwandese learners actually learning about reconciliation if the perpetrators of violence against them coerce them into learning.

Of course there might be some plausible arguments against the view that people under coercion cannot actually learn. I agree. In South Africa, during the apartheid days, learning was not denied students who did not attend classes because of police victimisation or political exile; they learned to resist. What I am talking about here is a form of learning free of coercion. Students under apartheid might have learned to resist oppression, but they did not learn freely together with others or their learning did not take place under conditions of hospitality and trust, which would have resulted in engendering an atmosphere of mutual co-existence and deliberation so desperately needed today in Africa. The point I am making is that having learned under protest and conditions of resistance contributed towards their mistrust and hostility, which in any case would take longer to combat if these virtues were to have been acquired under conditions of cosmopolitan hospitality. In fact, cultivating respect for persons as a corollary of learning would stand a better chance of being realised if it were to be achieved under conditions of hospitality rather than hostile aggression.

Second, ‘the right to have rights’ prohibits states from denying individuals citizenship rights and state protection against murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts such as persecution (whether political, cultural or religious) (Benhabib 2006: 25). So, if Somali immigrant children wish to wear their head scarves in South African public schools, following ‘the right to have rights’ notion, these children cannot be discriminated against. Asking these children to remove their scarves, which they might consider as important to their religious and cultural identity, would be a matter of treating them unjustly on the grounds that their right to be different would be undermined. Similarly, for the South African government to have deported a Pakistani national on the grounds of unreasonable suspicion that he might have been a terror suspect caused much humiliation and insult to his family (including his children at school), especially considering that the Department of Foreign Affairs has after more than 6 months not yet produced any evidence on this person’s alleged Al-Qaeda connections. In this case, the political – more specifically, cosmopolitan – rights of a human being have been seriously compromised. To the contrary, this is precisely my concern with practices in some French schools, that is, denying Muslim girls their right to wear scarves. Briefly, the ‘scarf affair’ in France in 1989 originated with the expulsion from their school of

three scarf-wearing Muslim girls. Seven years later, there was a mass exclusion of 23 Muslim girls from their school. Throughout the 1990s and well into the twenty-first century, confrontations between school authorities and young Muslim girls and women continued. Although the intervention of the French authorities to ban the wearing of the veil in the schools at first seemed like an attempt of a progressive state bureaucracy to modernise the backward-looking customs of a group, this intervention cascaded into a series of democratic iterations: the intense debate among the French public about the meaning of wearing the scarf, to the self-defence of the girls involved and the re-articulation of the meaning of their actions, to the encouragement of other immigrant women to wear their headscarves to the workplace. Basically, women have learned to ‘talk back [to the state]’ – a matter of engaging and contesting the meanings of the Islamic practices they want to uphold. To my mind, democratic iteration emerged as a consequence of having denied people their right to exercise their right of wearing scarves.

When one relates ‘the right to have rights’ to learning, one implies that people in the first place cannot be denied learning. People ought to be respected as having the right to learn and, if not, learning can no longer be learning. The right to learn (in this instance, how to engage with one another) is a right which people ought to enjoy. To talk about compulsory learning is in fact an anomaly, because learning in itself is a responsibility. So, cultivating cosmopolitan hospitality is in fact advocating for learning which cannot be denied any individual. This makes sense on the grounds that through learning people get to experience one another, which could potentially root out the possibility of disrespect towards one another, hostility and violence. Experiencing one another creates possibilities of relating to one another in terms of commonalities and differences. Experiencing one another’s differences through a legitimate, rightful learning activity would potentially rule out the possibility that hatred, victimisation and resentment could ensue. Through such a form of learning, the possibility exists that it becomes very unlikely that envy, hatred of the other and other forms of antagonism could become the order of the day. Certainly in South Africa, there are instances of rich and poor, privileged and underprivileged beginning to occupy the same educational spaces. Yet, the levels of intolerance and envy towards the other are subsiding because people are learning to live with one another’s differences and perhaps learning to accept that some are more privileged than others. Learning to live together with others is in fact real learning, because recognising and respecting the differences of others would undermine the possibility that violence can arise. In fact, learning to engender cosmopolitan hospitality would potentially ‘open up’ people to one another and to engage deliberately and iteratively, which Zygmunt Baumann (2001: 142) argues could ‘enhance the humanity of their togetherness’. Opening up to one another would invariably break down the walls and fences which often separate and isolate different people; it means that people would come to recognise others and respect and tolerate diverse peoples. It is this recognition of the other, respect for and tolerance of diversity that can go some way in building mutual trust and deliberative engagement – those qualities necessary to restore security in our ‘polycultural’ (Baumann 2001) environment, particularly on the African continent.

In essence, cosmopolitan hospitality can only manifest itself if African local communities can begin to offer a welcoming hand to the beleaguered immigrants by supporting their integration into our society and by providing them with protection from possible criminal attacks. In many ways, the cosmopolitan hospitality which ought to be afforded other human beings (especially from immigrant communities) complements the duties and responsibilities associated with the activities of democratic citizens. Unless African countries and their peoples recognise the rights of others to be treated with dignity and respect and not suppress their rights, the achievement of justice will remain remote from the minds and hearts of people. People would not have learnt.

## Learning, Responsibility and the Other

Thus far, I have argued that enacting democratic iterations and cultivating cosmopolitan hospitality might offer oneself and others a better opportunity to learn. What democratic iterations and cosmopolitan hospitality have in mind is to create conditions whereby genuine learning can take place – one learns to experience the other and that, in turn, rules out the possibility that violence, aggression and the ridicule of the other can ensue. But then one learns to take responsibility for the other. It is this practice of assuming responsibility for the other through learning which I now wish to pursue in order to find out how one's relationship with the other could potentially be enhanced. For this discussion, I turn to the seminal thoughts of Jacques Derrida.

Derrida (2001) maintains that it is the responsibility of the modern university to be 'unconditional', by which he means that it should have the freedom to assert, question and profess. In other words, for Derrida (2001), the future of the profession of academics is determined by 'the university without conditions'. Put differently, Derrida frames the profession of those academics who work at the university as a responsibility. This responsibility to profess is no longer associated with a profession of faith, a vow or promise, but rather an engagement: 'to profess is to offer a guide in the course of engaging one's responsibility' (Derrida 2001: 35). So, an unconditional university is one that enacts its responsibility of engagement. And if learning is one of the practices associated with that of a university, learning *per se* should also be about enacting a responsibility. Derrida connects the idea of responsibility to the university, but I now specifically want to make an argument for learning along the lines of his conception of responsibility. This is not to say that he does not link responsibility to learning, but rather I want to make the argument for responsibility as a corollary of learning in a more nuanced way than Derrida seemingly does.

From my reading of Derrida's idea of responsibility, I infer three features which are central to what could underscore learning: responsibility means to engage the other freely, openly and critically; to act responsibly is to hold open a space for non-instrumental thinking; and to be responsible is to constantly resist or disrupt practices

which move towards completion (Derrida 2001: 35–36). What are the implications of responsible action for learning (including Africa)? First, a responsible learner (one who has learnt) concerns himself or herself with social problems. Responsible learners endeavour to argue openly, freely and critically with others in an attempt to solve social problems. Such a form of learning provides a sphere in which genuine critical discourse (investigation and debate as against mere text book transmission) takes place, and at the same time is likely to produce activities of ‘value’ in addressing societal problems. In this way, students (as learners) are taught to be critically reflective about society and can simultaneously contribute towards the achievement of, say, improved nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods and security against crime and physical violence. In a way, responsible learners are responsible citizens who are intellectually, culturally and technologically adept and committed to addressing social problems.

Second, for a responsible learner to attend to non-instrumental thinking means that such a learner does not merely perform his or her responsibility for the sake of something else, for instance, physical needs, reputation and gratitude. Such instrumental actions would render responsibility conditional. The responsible learner is concerned with the intrinsic worth of his or her actions (and not with the convenient applications of his or her research) and is engaged in just, autonomous, non-instrumental activities. Such learners’ actions are not rooted in dubious motives and/or interests. Here I agree with Haverhals (2007: 4250), who claims that such learners would enhance ‘the development of personal autonomy, which also has a public significance’. The public role of such a learner and the educative value of his or her activities are affected by a legitimate concern to act responsibly.

Third, a responsible learner constantly disrupts or resists the possibility that knowledge production has moved towards or attained completion. Such irresponsible actions would ignore the contingency and unpredictability of actions themselves. A responsible learner always strives to embark on new narratives in the making, or perhaps moves towards some unimagined possibility. And for this, responsible learners constantly think of themselves as projects in the making – their work cannot attain completion and perfection. There is always something more to learn which, of course, brings me to how one can potentially respond as a responsible learner to the dilemmas which confront African communities. These dilemmas involve the reluctance of many African people to engage one another deliberately and iteratively, the seeming unwillingness to attend to one another in a hospitable way, as is evident from the violent moments which have become endemic to many African communities. Acting as a responsible learner means that one constantly disrupts the practices which one embarks on in pursuit of cultivating non-violence, tolerance and respect for persons.

I shall now illustrate what I mean by constantly disrupting the practices one can embark on in order to combat some of the societal and political ills. For this discussion I have chosen the example of the troops from Guinea who are being accused of raping several thousands of women. The point here is: what can a responsible learner do to challenge such an inhumane atrocity – how can he or she disrupt such

an inhumane practice? In the first place, a responsible learner acts by giving an account of his actions. That is, he or she has to be answerable for his or her actions, in this instance, the act of doing or not doing something about the rape of women in Guinea. (S)he can either vociferously condemn the heinous crimes perpetrated against women or remain silent about the incident. The account of one's silence could be fear of reprisals by some members of the military or ignoring calls by the international community to speak out. Be that as it may, actually doing something such as offering reasons or being silent about the situation involves giving an account of oneself and one's reasons. In my view, a preferred accountable action would be to condemn the crime of rape perpetrated against helpless women. Second, acting as a responsible learner involves amassing the support of others who themselves stand up against crimes which violate human dignity. Third, and most importantly, being a responsible learner actually involves doing something about rectifying the situation – that is, doing something to change the situation – to cause a sudden disruption. This could include a range of actions such as campaigning widely for the war to stop in Guinea or for an international tribunal to put the military junta on trial. Hence, acting as a responsible learner involves identifying a wrong and actually doing something about changing that wrong. The point I am making is that if learning does not lead to actions which can alleviate, quell or even eradicate societal and political injustices, then such learning is not constituted by responsibility. I would like to believe that all forms of learning should be guided by an ethical element – one that involves combating or disrupting various forms of injustice.

Certainly on the African continent, learning has to be connected with the achievement of justice for all. Only then can learning be of value in leading to human flourishing. This makes sense considering that too many injustices are perpetrated by Africans against Africans. And if Africa has any chance of prospering economically, culturally and politically, the emphasis on all educational institutions should be on cultivating a conception of learning that can engender in people a willingness to deliberate in iterative fashion (learning that encourages talking back), an attentiveness to connect hospitably with others and, finally, to act responsibly with the aim to change a bad situation. Connecting learning with such cosmopolitan virtues would go some way towards attending to Africa's moral problems – problems which the world and certainly philosophers of education should not be turning a blind eye to.

Finally, learning through democratic iterations, the exercise of cosmopolitan hospitality and the enactment of one's responsibility towards the other would certainly go some way in the pursuit of lifelong learning. This is so for the reason that 'learning to talk back', performing hospitable actions and enacting one's responsibility towards others are deeply reflexive and inconclusive practices – those qualities reminiscent of lifelong learning through which people are continuously and actively engaged in acts of meaning making.

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# Chapter 7

## It Is the Person Who Learns

Peter Jarvis

### Introduction

In this paper, I want to begin to explore a fundamental problem about human learning – it stems from my recent writing and studies (see, for instance, Jarvis 1992, 2006) and is summed up by the title of the paper itself – *It Is the Person Who Learns* (Jarvis 2009). Over the years, I have tried to understand the learning processes, and, as a result, I (Jarvis 2009, p. 25) have defined learning in the following manner:

the combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, meaning, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person.

However, this definition only relates to human learning and not all animal learning, and there is a fundamental assumption in it – that, in some way, we can distinguish body and mind, and this is what I want to explore in this paper. Nevertheless, in order to explore this relationship, I want to pose three very simple questions, give two examples and ask one question and reach a single tentative conclusion! Initially, then, there appear to be three possible types of relationship between body and mind, and so this paper will have three parts, one dealing with each aspect of the relationship: dualism, monism and non-reductive monism. We will conclude that the learner is a complex person and that learning is a complex set of processes in which body and mind appear both separate and yet united.

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My three questions are:

- When I learn knowledge – what part of me learns?
- When I learn a skill – what part of me learns?
- When I learn an emotion – what part of me learns?

Now we know from neuroscience that when our brain is activated, different experiences/skills, and so on, activate different parts of the brain (Gardner 1983; Blakemore and Frith 2005; OECD 2007 *inter alia*). This led Gardner to postulate different forms of intelligence, since we can locate the brain activity for each experience quite clearly in different parts of the brain – the follow-up question must be – might this mean that we are lots of different minds, as Kant might have suggested, or are we super-complex people? This is the question that I want to explore here.

Now, we move to two personal learning experiences:

*Experience 1: As an international traveller, I am often taken into restaurants which serve the indigenous foods: this is my preference in my travelling. I leave it to my hosts to choose from the menu – and when my food arrives, there is sometimes something on the plate that I do not recognise, and so I ask my hosts what the food is – they tell me. And so, first, I learn its name – a cognitive experience. Then, I taste it and I decide whether I like it or not. Second, then I learn a taste – this is a non-cognitive experience. Third, I learn whether I like it or not – an emotive and cognitive experience. Fourth, then I am left with other questions afterwards – whether I will recognise the taste when I have the food again and will I be able to associate it with the food that I have eaten – I am less than confident that I can – and so I have learned something about my confidence which is emotive and something more, perhaps, about myself.*

This is a common and almost trivial incident about everyday learning, yet we rarely analyse it like this to see the learning processes.

*Experience 2: A number of years ago, I was teaching in Zambia, and at the end of the period I was taken to see Victoria Falls. We arrived there at the end of the day, just as the sun was setting over the Zambezi. The sight was breath-taking – beyond anything that I had anticipated. First, then, I had an emotive experience about what I considered to be beautiful and magnificent. But second, I felt small in the face of the majesty of that experience, and so I learned something about myself. Third, I was forced to ask myself the question – is all of this meaningless? I reached the conclusion that somehow it would be illogical for this and the whole cosmos to be meaningless. In this case, the learning began with an emotive experience and finished with a cognitive question and a belief answer.*

I have deliberately chosen learning experiences from my life that relate to everyday learning, but we often restrict learning to formal learning when we are undertaking analyses of learning, which tend to be depicted as individual cognitive experiences that are distilled from our life-world and then artificialised by their isolation. But in this case it is me who has learned these things, and I am an individual whole person, and so now we need to answer the one question.

The question is – what is the nature of the person who learns?

Underlying this argument is another one that suggests that the validity of any theory of learning depends quite fundamentally on the validity of our understanding of the nature and structure of the person who learns. There are a number of theories about the nature of the person, and this discussion goes back hundreds, even thousands of years when the ancient Greek philosophers and the early Christian theologians explored the nature of the soul and its relation to the body – but this now finds its form in the brain/mind debate. However, we have to recognise that before the concept of mind existed, ancient philosophers used soul to describe it. We cannot explore the whole of this debate in this brief paper, but we do need to recognise it in order to reach an initial answer to this question. These theories can be summed up as dualist, monist and non-reductive monist.

## Part 1 Dualism

This theory claims that the brain (mental substances) and the body (material substances) are entirely separate entities, and in some ways this appears to make a great deal of sense. Indeed, it appears almost obvious to suggest that the identity of the person resides in the mind and that the body is additional to it – a link which may be severed at death. For instance, thought seems immaterial whereas the body is material, and so there appears to be two separate entities in the human being – thought and action – one about the mind and the other about the body. Descartes' meditations on this question have been among the most significant in the history of Western philosophy, although these questions were also discussed in great depth by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and many other thinkers before him. Descartes employed his famous method doubt and questioning to explore this question – even to questioning whether he himself existed. He came to the conclusion that because he could think, he must exist – *Cognito ergo sum*. He went on to argue that he could always be sure of his existence when he was thinking – even if his body changed or even ceased to exist, so that he concluded that he was only a thinking thing when he was thinking! And so he separated the body and the mind although he admitted that there is a two-way interaction between body and brain through the pineal gland. Consequently, it has been easy for early learning theorists, amongst others, to follow this position and make the same separation – we learn cognitions in the mind and skills in the body – and even the learning of a skill, even though it activated the mind, is still a separate phenomenon. Indeed, it was taken for granted that learning was fundamentally cognitive, and tremendous emphasis was placed on the work of Piaget (1929) and cognitive development (see also Kohlberg 1981; Fowler 1981) and that a lower form of learning was that which was related to skills – we also had the well known debate and distinction between education and training (Peters 1972) – these were all assumed by educational theorists until fairly recently and were based on dualistic theories of the person.

At first sight, this distinction may seem obvious and common-sense, but since Ryle's (1949) famous rejection of dualism in *The Concept of Mind*, in recent years

this has been open to question: Ryle talked about ‘the ghost in the machine’ and claimed that an action is one act, not two – encapsulating many of the objections to dualism. Over the years, there have been other criticisms of dualism such as: if all learning goes on in the mind, then the brain seems to have little function, and yet it is one of the largest and most complicated parts of the human body. But also what of the taste I learn in the restaurant – do I only learn taste through the mind or is this learning not also a bodily function? (This problem has given rise to the notion of qualia – private and subjective aspects that relate to what an individual feels).

But, as Kant also asked, how do we know that there is only one soul/mind – if there is one mind separate from the body then there is no reason why there should not be others. Kant also offered other criticisms of this position, and he argued that Descartes separated an

...external world, whose defining characteristic is extension, and an inner and immaterial world – the mind – which is extensionless and whose defining characteristic is thinking. Kant argues that there is just one world, the world we experience, and that we who experience it and think about it are just one of its ingredients – the familiar persons in experience rather than immaterial minds (Politis 1993, p. xxix)

As we noted at the outset, neuroscience has tended to support the position that we are one substance, and we can see that whether our learning is cognitive or active, we activate the brain – albeit different parts. We cannot separate the mind and the body in this manner, since both cognitive and physical activity activate the same brain as electro-magnetic imaging shows. Dualism is not, therefore, a very convincing position, and it can be questioned, so that *cognito ergo sum* appears to be an unproven claim. Consequently, the weakness of separating education from training becomes apparent, and the idea that learning knowledge is different and of a higher status than learning a skill is also seen to be questionable. In contrast, people live in their own life-world, and because we are alive, we think and consequently we can reverse Descartes’ claim and say that ‘I am therefore I think’, or within our present context, ‘I am therefore I learn’, although we do need to recognise that there is a complex process in early childhood between living, consciousness and thinking (see, for example, Tomasello 1999; Gerhardt 2004). But this may mean that the mind is not separate from the brain but a part of it, and this would appear to make sense if we accept the evidence from neuroscience – then we reach the monist position.

## Part 2 Monism

Monism is a theory that claims that there is only one substance, so that mind and body are the same in substance, but, following Maslin (2001), it has taken three major forms in recent years: mind-brain identity, behaviourism and functionalism. It should be pointed out that the social science and philosophical use of the latter two terms differs considerably, and this will become clearer as we examine them.

*Mind-Brain Identity*: This theory basically claims that mental states can be identified as physical states: they are all part of the activities of the brain: mental activity is

brain activity and there is no separate mind. The strengths of this position are that the problems of the dualist mind-body interaction disappear, we can see how changes in the brains due to medical operations, drugs and so on affect mental functioning, and we can see that theory reduction actually enables us to incorporate ideas of short-term memory within terms of brain states (Rose 2006). But there are also problems with this theory as we can see from our two learning examples. First, when I think, it might be possible to locate where in the brain that activity occurs, but it is not possible to specify from a scan whether I like the taste of the food or whether I am in awe at the sight of the sun setting over the Zambezi and Victoria Falls. Second, it is not possible to decide what meaning I might want to give to the experience of awe even though we know the part of the brain where the thought activity is occurring. Neither is it possible to identify from the brain scan whether I can remember the taste of the food, so that I would be able to recognise the taste and relate it to the food on a future occurrence. Indeed, these mental states cannot apparently be identified with or reduced to a physical state – there appears to be no identity between mind and brain, and all the learning that occurs cannot be reduced to recordable data. And we can see that the learning experiences that we have described here cannot be explained by identity theory, and so it is necessary now to examine the behaviourist one.

*Behaviourism:* As a theory, this first came to the fore in the 1920s with the publication of Watson's (1925) book on the subject. In philosophical behaviourism, it is claimed that, 'statements described as mental or psychological states can be translated, without loss of meaning, into statements describing possible or actual behaviour' (Maslin 2001). This is analytical behaviourism, but it also reflects methodological behaviourism which argues that the only way to study what goes on in the brain is through observable behaviour. Underlying this approach is a metaphysical position which maintains that consciousness does not exist but what does exist is living organisms and it is these that we can study. These are reductionist claims, something Bruner (1990) warned against, and we can see immediately that it is difficult to reduce the fact that I liked my food to a behavioural statement neither can the awe I experienced at Victoria Falls be reduced in the same way. If we could reduce these responses to behavioural statements, we would effectively be denying the existence of inner states of mind which is precisely what behaviourism does – but I cannot deny my experiences and neither of the two learning experiences I have described can be translated into behavioural statements. That I might want to give meaning to the Victoria Falls experience is not a behavioural statement but one of intention and the meaning that I give may merely reflect my cultural biography, but it is not a behavioural state.

It is also possible here to turn briefly from the philosophical to psychological behaviourism where learning might be defined as 'any more or less permanent change of behaviour which is the result of experience' (Borger and Seaborne 1966, p. 14). There are many criticisms of the definition (see Jarvis 2006, *inter alia*), but we can see that learning to like the taste of the food and being in awe at Victoria Falls are the learning outcomes of sense experiences, but they do not inevitably result in behavioural change, and they cannot be measured by behavioural change.

Moreover, while behaviourism can test the outcome of some of my mental states by experimentation, such as whether I have learned to relate the taste of the food to the actual food substance, it cannot test the lack of confidence that I have that I could relate the two on a future occasion.

Behaviourism, then, both philosophical and psychological, demands that the existence of inner states of mind is unnecessary, but both of the two learning experiences that we have looked at demand that we acknowledge the existence of mental states that do not demand or imply possible or actual behaviour – they demand some form of recognition that there are both mental and physical states which are a response to experience of the external world. If we accept this argument, learning theories founded upon behaviourist principles are problematic – but this does not mean that behaviouristic practices do not result in learning in many different situations.

*Functionalism:* In precisely the same way as we had to distinguish philosophical behaviourism from psychological behaviourism, we have to distinguish philosophical functionalism from sociological functionalism. Sociological functionalism starts from the ‘wholeness’ of an entity and seeks to examine the part played by individual elements of the identity in maintaining the whole: in other words, the function is the outcome of the existence of the phenomenon as it contributes to the unity of the whole entity. Philosophical functionalism, however, claims that the mind is a function of the brain, that is, that the mind is the outcome of the brain operating (functioning) and that if we can understand all the inputs and outputs to the brain and the state of the operating mechanism, then we can see how the brain operates without a separate mind. The first and most obvious difficulty with this position is that it is seeking to isolate all the inputs and outputs and understand fully how the brain operates – this is almost certainly impossible to achieve and so functionalism starts from a problematic premise. However, it may be seen from this description that the brain is conceptualised as some form of computer, or that it is many computers (or modules) (see Fodor 1983): one of the exponents of this position is Carruthers (2004, p. 302) who argues that

- The mind is computationally realised.
- Modular, or holistic, processes are computationally intractable.
- The mind must consist wholly or largely of modular systems.

Carruthers goes on to demonstrate how he perceives the brain to function and how learning might occur, which demands that we examine what he meant by learning. Indeed, Carruthers (2004, p. 296) had to restrict learning to cognitive systems in order to make this analogy work, rather than regarding learning as the transformation of any experience which can then be incorporated into the biography. But this does not deny that information processing does not work in some instances, and because it overcomes some of the weakness of the previous positions, it has gained considerable credibility. But there are still problems with it as Woodward and Cowie (2004) explain in a number of telling points: amongst their objections is one that reflects the complexity of the learning stories that we have looked at: they make the point that the idea of the complex computer ‘is inconsistent with what is known

about the role of experience-dependent learning and development in shaping the mature mind' (p. 313). Learning experiences, like the ones that I have used in this paper may be simply too complex to be reduced to material items that can be contained in modules in the computerised brain: the way that I learned the emotion of awe or even that I actually learned to like the food maybe too complex for a theory of hard-wired computer-type modules. The impossibility of developing a hard-wired brain capable of coping with the complexity of human experience is also a point made by Donald (2001) when he argued that although a single event could be hard-wired into the brain, but that a continuous sequence of human interaction is impossible to hard-wire since an extended interactive process cannot be programmed. Additionally, Rose (2005, p. 102) makes the point most strongly:

Modules or not, it is not adequate to reduce the mind/brain to nothing more than a cognitive, 'architectural information-processing machine...brains/minds do not just deal with information. They are concerned with living meaning'.

As Maslin (2001, p. 146) says, functionalism is unable to capture the subjectivity and privacy of mental states or the intentionality of propositional attitudes, and we have shown that it cannot capture the complexity of everyday human learning. The analogy of the human being as being like a computer is not attractive and nor is it sustainable, but this does not deny that, in some instances, the computer may reflect some of the ways in which the human brain functions: indeed, the person is more than a computer, and the person learns from the complexity of human experience.

Once we have questioned this approach to learning, then we have to question information processing as a universal theory of learning – it is only useful if we restrict information to the cognitive and omit all other aspects of experience from our understanding of learning.

Neither dualism nor any of the three monist theories that we have looked at can be sustained in the light of the two informal learning processes although they all offer explanations for some types of learning as we have seen and so, finally, it is necessary to examine the non-reductive monist position.

### **Part 3 Non-reductive Monism**

This is a form of monism – there is one substance only, but it claims that mental properties are of a different kind to its physical ones, and so we cannot reduce mental properties to physical ones. This allows us to accept the strengths of the dualist position without having to defend its weaknesses. In a sense, it is similar to Aquinas' idea that the soul was created at the end of the biological process of human creation, and mind is the sum of the mental properties of the brain. Mental properties are supervenient (to be on top of or dependent upon a subvenient base) on physical properties and cannot be reduced to them but can change with them. They are actually dependent on them – so that this position argues that while the brain and the mind are the same physical phenomenon, they differ in their properties. Consequently, this position seeks

the middle way between monism and dualism, but we can see immediately that this type of relationship is very hard to understand and controversial: we are dealing with a form of super-complexity. It still leaves us with massive questions about the nature of mental properties, and we still cannot understand how physical properties give rise to mental ones, and, finally, we have to ask whether the mind is a mere spectator to what goes on in the world and is it the generator of these mental properties as a result of physical experiences? (Maslin 2001, pp. 177–185) Each of these questions is in many ways unanswerable and in trying to answer them we are confronted with even more fundamental ones – for instance, once we begin to ask what mental properties are we are forced to discuss the whole notion of consciousness and we may never be able to solve the question of how consciousness emerges from brain activity (Maslin 2001, p. 180), but this takes us a long way beyond the remit of this paper and so we will not pursue it here. But non-reductive monism seems to be able to account for both of my learning experiences while not opening itself to the criticisms of either dualism or monism. It appears to be the strongest, if not the only position upon which we can base a universal theory of learning. For instance, if we look at my two learning experiences the fact that the non-material elements of my learning – liking a taste, being in awe at the wonderful view and do not need to be reduced to physical ones but can be incorporated into the structure of my mind/brain in precisely the same way as the cognitive and behaviour aspects is a major strength. But the theory cannot be proven although it can account for the complexity of my learning experiences.

While non-reductive monism may explain something about my learning experiences, which is its strength since my mental experiences cannot be reduced to physical ones, the actual relationship between mind and brain remains unresolved and this remains a fundamental weakness. All that we can say is that some form of dualism/monism can be a base upon which we can build a universal theory of learning, but the mind-brain relationship continues to be an unresolved problem.

## Conclusion

Theories of learning have been developed that relate to each of the different theories of body and mind and while we can show the apparent weaknesses of the theories of mind and body and, therefore, the apparent weaknesses of these theories of learning, we cannot prove or disprove the relationship between the brain and the mind incontrovertibly, and so we cannot reach a universal theory of learning. But each theory of learning can only be regarded as acceptable within its specified theory of body/mind and with that limited validity, but we can question those learning theories that are based on what appear to be the weaker theories of the relationship between mind and brain. Despite all its problems, it does appear that non-reductive monism does explain the complexities of my learning, and so it appears to be a most acceptable base upon which theories of learning might be constructed, although it might be dangerous to generalise from the particular without a more sustained argument.

Above all, this theory does recognise that it is the whole person who learns and, to return to my original definition, learning is a life time phenomenon through which the person develops and becomes more experienced.

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# Chapter 8

## Of Maestros and Muscles: Expertise and Practices at Work

David Beckett

### Introduction: Getting Stuck In(to) It

On the penultimate page of his novel, *Maestro*, Peter Goldsworthy's main character reflects on his life as a classical musician:

Now I was faced with myself for the first time: Paul Crabbe, greying, dissatisfied, fast approaching mid-life, my backside stuck fast to a minor chair in a minor music school. Able to dupe my audiences at the odd school concert, and even the critics – no, *especially* the critics – but never for one moment, even at my most unguarded, deluding myself. (1989 p. 148)

Crabbe seems to have failed to work up to what he expected of himself as a pianist, be that artistic expertise, creative accomplishment or professional acclaim. He has not become a *maestro*. His workplace, the concert grand in the music school, just does not afford the high achievement for which he has striven over decades.

Yet, in one crucial respect, Crabbe is a success. He is candidly self-aware – he sees himself, as 'dissatisfied', and also with great moral clarity: he is, now, never deluded.

Musicians, like most creative artists and many sportspeople, often illuminate important aspects of all human experience for us all, because they commit, single-mindedly, to the pursuit of high, but narrowly defined, achievement. The excellence to which they aspire is constructed through robust and sustained agency: 'I can get there' or 'anyone can achieve what they dream' are common mantras in the Western world. Jessica Watson, who, in May 2010, completed a yachting circumnavigation of the globe, alone, at the age of 16 years, stated exactly that when back in Sydney.

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Watson, still a teenager, and Crabbe, crabbed and grey and going in to middle age, are each lifelong learners, by which I mean they are each aware of how their experiences (over time and space, at the workplace of a piano or in a tiny yacht) have made them more aware of their own learning. Moreover, their exertions have been muscular – severe, committed and strenuous. Although Crabbe seems to have failed, he has succeeded in becoming self-aware through his own efforts, that is, agentively. And Watson has succeeded, but in doing so has, naively, located her success within her own agentive capacity, as if her success was entirely due to her efforts.

The construction of our Selves (our identity), at and through our work, is then, traditionally, thought to be up to each individual. We make our Selves through what each of us, more or less strenuously, strives for, in a workplace (but not only in a workplace: families, communities, ethnicities and nations, and so on, are essential too, but outside my scope here). Through single-mindedness, as shown in the more prominent achievements of artists and sportspeople, in their respective workplaces, we too can ‘make something of ourselves’. But such singularity is not sufficient.

This chapter will unpack what this means beyond the ascription of individualistic agency. It takes issue with the simplistic attribution of agency to workers and instead shows how socio-culturally located relations arise in, or emerge from, common work practices, over time. It does this by, first, analysing the temporality of agency in the *present* time (the current interest in Aristotelian practical judgements), then, in the second section, by analysing *future* time (exploring the practical and educative prospects of the *projective*). Humans can indeed ‘work up to something’, and in the third section, I show how workplace *learning* can build expertise through socio-culturally located agency.

Bear in mind however, that although I will de-centre traditional individualistic agency, I do not wish to subsume it in greater or wider phenomena. Of course, we need to acknowledge and preserve singular ways people can make something of themselves, as have Crabbe and Watson, solo performers in the pursuit of excellence. But in this era of lifelong learning, what must be added to the ascription of singular agency to the construction of the self – to identities – is a sophisticated acknowledgement of the ways adults learn at and through workplaces where collective, socio-culturally significant experiences are omnipresent.

## Agency and Time: The Present

In an important and comprehensive overview of the concept of agency, at least as it has been regarded in sociological theory, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) define it as:

...the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit [the past], imagination [the future], and judgment [the present], both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing historical situations. (p. 970)

I have inserted in this quotation the three indicators of this temporality to make it plain how Emirbayer and Mische construct agency: there are actions we recount and justify, in the *past*, and actions we contemplate and foresee, in the *future*, which are held together in the an account of the *present*, in which we weigh up what is to be done in the here and now. Their account of the *present* is broadly Aristotelian, where *phronesis* (practical wisdom or prudence) is widely exercised in human conduct:

In Aristotle's view, practical wisdom can refer variously to means or to ends; it can be either strategic and calculative – in which case, he says we can speak of persons as being clever, crafty, or cunning – or it can be concerned with broader questions of the good life itself... Aristotle sees practical wisdom as intrinsically communicative in nature: that is, it entails a deep involvement and participation in an ongoing community of discourse. Far from being purely individual or monological, it remains open to dialogue and persuasion, and is profoundly implicated in common values, interests and purposes. (p. 995)

In adult, and lifelong, learning scholarship, practical wisdom has become a central interest, largely because, in most workplaces, time has intensified the work itself. We have 'just-in-time' training, 'windows' of time to enact opportunities for change, 'learning trajectories' which imply motion from less to greater states of knowing over time, and 'seizing the moment' which implies that we can atomise time and recalibrate it more productively through chunking work differently. There are many issues and controversies inherent in this analysis (such as the behavioural nature of reductive 'competencies' systems of working and assessing performance see e.g. Beckett 2004), but, in general, closer attention to how humans act in the contingencies of the present, in workplaces, is worthwhile. I turn to this now.

### ***The Present as Making Practical Judgments***

Beckett and Hager (2002) argued for the centrality of practical judgements, as a *relational* way of advancing a new epistemology of practice, one which decentres the traditional Cartesian, and even Platonic, *atomistic* epistemology (where, for example, an 'atom' of learning, that is, a proposition – from a book, or in libraries – is digested and regurgitated in written form to show how the mind, as memory, has been modified). Educators in the Western tradition have assumed that coming to 'know' something is to arrive at a state of the mind as evidenced in accounts of what is cognitively the case – this is about whether the propositions are in place in an individual's memory. Yet, across the human life-span, humans learn best when their experiences are taken seriously. The lowly academic status of the 'tacit', the intuitive, the reflective, the phenomenological, the embodied and the socially efficacious leaves much human experience out of the educational vision, wherever it is, but especially for adults – and especially in the adult workplace.

In this twenty-first century, the greater prominence accruing to lifelong learning comes partly from taking seriously the holistic nature of particular everyday

experiences, such as those of the workplace and the pedagogically diverse classroom (e.g. Hager and Halliday 2006; Beckett 2010). Adult educators, whether they are practitioners (who have real expertise in inclusive learning strategies) or researchers (who have interests in relational practices), can find philosophically rich ways through the messiness of adult learning.

I want to discuss two pieces of empirical research where the relational messiness of work is made epistemologically significant. There are real knowledge claims being made here, and they arise from agency within socio-culturally located, temporally emergent practices. They each explicitly use Aristotle's practical judgments, or wisdom (*phronesis*), as the form of knowing that emerges through such agency.

In the United Kingdom, Alan Bleakley, in a series of empirical studies of the 'micro-politics of practice' in operating theatres, draws on *phronesis* as a virtue ethic which has a 'distributed quality that may be constituted through intentionally collaborative practice, or is an emerging property of a complex, adaptive system' (Bleakley 2006: 305). Simply, where surgeons, nurses and other staff co-operate around an operating table, then

the driver for good communication in the team need not be located in personal agency, but rather in sensitivity to an environmental imperative. Through "education of attention" of team members by the clinical field – the practice context and micropolitical structure – an ethical imperative is addressed. (p. 307)

For Bleakley, the hospital environment is, literally, a 'hospitality' environment. Teamwork in the operating theatre is not just then a useful adult learning skill, but more profoundly a micropolitical practice, tightly contextualised to an ethical perspective that is in fact the imperative of that practice: patient well-being and health, to be blunt. The unit of agentive analysis for Bleakley in such a setting is the socio-cultural, where the collective is not the aggregation of the individualities of those around the operating table. Rather, to be around the table in the first place, individuals have found themselves, albeit willingly, immersed in an 'environmental imperative', in this case, hospitality or caring for the Other.

He goes on to explore the 'consolidation' of this collective practice as an ethic of care. Using Levinas and Aristotle, he argues that, like a home where a guest is welcome (not 'Othered'), '[i]n the household of the operating theatre, ethical practice is characterized by suspension of personal desire for the safety and care of the patient as special Other or Guest – an act of hospitality and a gesture of friendship' (313). Surgery is indeed a form of intensely micropolitical practice, much amenable to an Aristotelian analysis, but so are slightly less intense workplaces, as I now discuss.

In South Africa, Mignon Breier and Alan Ralphs (2009) report fieldwork which shows that

greater understanding of the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom would make an important contribution to the conceptualization and implementation of Recognition (Assessment) of Prior Learning (RPL/APL) in formal education contexts. (p. 479).

The problem they confront is that typically RPL is *given* for achievements in practical workplace settings, where the tacit and the intuitive are essential, but that

the RPL is then *used* for formal education studies where knowledge is often abstract and propositional:

...there is an underlying contradiction inherent in the concept of RPL...RPL was intended to assist those who had missed out on formal education yet it required candidates to compare their learning with formal outcomes...RPL has proved to be most effective when the knowledge to be recognized is of a practical nature and can be demonstrated physically. For example, a cabinet-maker....

However, where the knowledge is less tangible – as in the case of most university courses – ...it is difficult to match the formal learning outcomes.

The form of knowledge that is at stake in the RPL context, then, is primarily that which is associated with formal education. This raises the question: what type of knowledge is the adult without formal education likely to bring to the formal education table? (483)

Breier and Ralphs answer this with *phronesis*: ‘While epistemic [university] knowledge is manifested in propositions and principles, technical [workplace] knowledge in products or artefacts, *phronesis* is manifested in ethically motivated deliberations, judgments, actions’ (485). So, what does this look like when assessing for RPL?

One of the cases, Ms M, is a Xhosa-speaking woman in her 30s. The less-intense but sustained temporality of Ms M’s agency at work was shown in her submitted portfolio of accounts of how her career as a poorly qualified teacher nonetheless enabled her to gain promotions in some of the most difficult schools in the area. On that basis, she was interviewed and related:

...I gained experience of dealing with traumatized children, having to understand where they were coming from, like they were old in age because they were dealing with this, that kind of stuff... You have to understand where they are coming from, and that also, it creates compassion and patience with learners, you have not to rush them with anything...

So it has been a struggle throughout the years. But it gave us strength and experience to continue. (486–7)

The authors claim this suggests a woman who is practically wise:

[O]ne who is able to pursue a goal [over time] that is in both her interest and that of the wider community... [in the] education of pupils in a manner that is both ethical...and also involves a flexible relationship between general rules (her formal knowledge of teaching methods) and particular circumstances (traumatized children, lack of equipment). In the process, she acquires the ‘strength and experience’ that is characteristic of a person with practical wisdom. (487).

Ms M’s career path is marked by her daily immersion in ‘ethically motivated deliberations, judgments, action’, which is *phronesis*. Similarly, Bleakley’s operating theatres are marked out by *phronesis* as an ethic characterised as a ‘distributed quality that may be constituted through intentionally collaborative practice’, during surgery.

Notice that in both contexts, agency emerged through intentional activities – practices – over time, but also ‘in the moment’ and that these practices were ineluctably socio-cultural. The temporal intensity of the theatre condenses the ethical attention to the micropolitical; the temporal extension of Ms M’s work in schools expands the ethical attention to the macropolitical: it is very much her emergent sense of ‘where the children are coming from’ which shapes what ‘gave us strength

and experience to continue'. Despite the urgency and stringencies of such daily challenges in many schools in South Africa, Ms M knows what to look for in children: 'you have not to rush them with anything', which shows she has been (self-) 'educated in attention' (as Bleakley describes the learning of team members in the clinical environment of a hospital and a theatre within it).

In both the UK and the South African examples, we can acknowledge the power of agentic practices, which, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998) put it, following Aristotle, 'sees practical wisdom as intrinsically communicative in nature: that is, it entails a deep involvement and participation in an ongoing community of discourse' (p. 995). There is an immediacy about the 'What to do next?' in most workplaces which both draws upon the past, and also looks ahead. Emirbayer and Mische locate agency in the 'temporal-relational contexts of action', where time, communicability and participation 'interplay'. In developing this, I now turn to the 'projective' – the future – as it contributes to socio-cultural agency in workplaces and therefore as a crucial element in the construction of expertise.

## Agency and Time: The Future

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) build their approach to the future upon the past, as they explain:

[In contrast to Bourdieu and Giddens]...we maintain that human actors do not merely repeat past routines; they are also the inventors of new possibilities for thought and action'. [Actors] 'distance themselves' [from the past, using capacities] 'rang[ing] from the strongly purposive terminology of goals, plans and objectives to the more ephemeral language of dreams, wishes, desires, anxieties, hopes, fears and aspirations...[W]e term it the *projective* dimension of human agency. (p. 984)

Reaching beyond the present is a prominent feature of workplace experiences for most of us today. Neo-liberal management-speak is redolent of the projective, even at its most banal, such as in the mission and vision statements, the strategic planning, the quality assurance cycles and the process re-engineering discourses now organisationally and institutionally ubiquitous. Emirbayer and Mische take a more generous view:

It's potential inventiveness can yield responses as benign and mundane as the projects to grow a garden, to start a business, or to patch up a family relationship, or as sweeping and destructive as the project to establish a 1,000-year Reich. (p. 985)

The projective involves *projects*, and

...the formation of projects is always an interactive, culturally-embedded process by which social actors negotiate their paths toward the future, receiving their driving impetus from the conflicts and challenges of social life. The locus of agency here is the *hypothesization* of experience, as actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations they confront in their lives. Immersed in a temporal flow, they move "beyond themselves" into the future, and construct changing images of where they think they are going, where they want to go, and how they can get

there from where they are at present...Projectivity is located in a critical mediating juncture between the iterational [the past, the habitual], and practical-evaluative [the present, the judgmental] aspects of agency. (p. 984)

How time is understood is thus essential to grasping the potential of the projective. Where it is time to be served, undergone, endured and chunked towards retirement, it passes slowly and as a burden. But work experienced this way probably reveals a workplace where agentive opportunities are minimal or non-existent. Crushed or bored by ennui, inertia or oppression, people deny, or remain oblivious to, their individual and collective agency or at best merely react to the agency of others and other groups.

By contrast, what fires up agency of the more developmental and invigorating kind are the projective possibilities of the work. Where groups can plan, implement and evaluate shared activities, there is a greater sense of commitment and indeed overall workplace engagement.

### *The Future as Working Up to Something*

My claim is that the malleability of time arises from agentive work experiences and that the experiences which best achieve this malleability are *projective*. More technically, citing the quotation immediately above, '[t]he locus of agency here is the *hypothesization* of experience, as actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations they confront in their lives'.

Workplaces generate this hypothesisation of experience when workers grapple with organisational change, or when in the very nature of the work, daily practical judgments require projective activity. Teamwork in professional settings is a prominent example of this latter 'hypothesisation': 'what can we imagine being an effective way forward for this client, or learner, or patient?' is a powerful question, because it assumes an agentive capacity in those who ask it. In working up an answer, there is an assumption of skillfulness, decisionality (or judgment-making) communicability and an 'attention' to the ethical particularity of the 'problematic situation'. Each of these was a characteristic of experience in the operating theatre in the United Kingdom and of Ms M's claim on RPL in South Africa. But now, I need to explore how the projective is apparent in establishing an effective way forward, where workplaces are faced with 'problematic situations'. Here is one such situation, coming from an accountant (fieldwork data: UTS-UM research 2003):

It's a question of experience. You remember that the past figures were very different. So it raises doubts in your mind. I remember once I was working on a project and there was something I didn't know about it – had something funny about it. At 3 o'clock in the morning I woke and said, 'That's what's wrong with it.' I found it at 3 o'clock in the morning in my subconscious. The decision wasn't a conscious decision. It was working in the back of my mind.

Accountancy is a profession traditionally shaped by competence which is readily reckoned: you count, you calculate, you assess and so on. Yet in the little anecdote above, our sleepless accountant is stirred by something else. His technical expertise is not in doubt, but his reliance on hitherto strange psychological experiences is indeed curious. What is he drawing upon to make a professional decision or judgement? Further, notice the experience is both vivid *and* elusive! He awoke and something decisive resulted, yet he was not aware of how this worked for him.

On one level, there is nothing more remarkable going on here than the individualistic account of agency with which this chapter began: a solo sailor (Jessica Watson) or a dispirited middle-aged musician (Paul Crabbe), taking it all upon themselves.

But on another level, in the world of the accountant, if we get past the Cartesian ontology – where the insight emerged from ‘the back of my mind – something more interesting is apparent. Experience is drawn upon, and practical decision-making is the ‘light-bulb’ moment. The accountant’s expertise is manifest in the confidence with which he tells the story. He infers from his past that this insight sets out the way forward. As I have detailed elsewhere (Beckett 2010), this is an instance of ‘inferentialism’: where a practitioner can move from a puzzle, back into the past to help make sense of it and, then, move confidently forward by inferring from the past and present what needs to be done in the future.

The ‘light-bulb’ moment is expressive – as we have just read. It presents a way forward. I rely here on the philosopher Robert Brandom (2000). Brandom’s expressivism sees the mind not as a mirror (which would re-present, in a Cartesian ontology, what is inner and is outer), but, instead, and similar to a lamp,

...making explicit what is implicit. This can be understood in a pragmatist sense of turning something we can initially only do into something we can say: *codifying some sort of knowing how in the form of a knowing that.* (p. 8: emphasis added)

My claim is that these instances of individualistic agency are more often, at least for practitioners, embedded in public codifications of ‘know-how’, which become propositional. That is, they become part of the knowledge base of good, and ultimately expert, practice, such as in accountancy.

Let me unpack that a little. In this case, the accountant needs to give public justification for his practices – as do we all – and when he does this, he is turning what he has *undergone* (in an epiphany) into what he *does* (such as with a client) which may then involve what he *says* (to his colleagues). This is making explicit what is implicit in his practice; it codifies what we *do* by articulating it – it emerges as what we *say* (to our peers, the public, our assessors etc.).

If expertise is shown in what in particular contexts (such as in a profession, amongst one’s peers) by agreed ‘best practices’, then what we know *best* is thus an emergent, publicly justified and therefore accountable achievement. Expertise is a collective achievement, within which an individual’s practices can be calibrated. As other epistemologists, DeVries and Triplett (2000) summarise:

...we know first the public world of physical objects. We can extend that framework to include persons and their language. What we know best, however, are those beliefs that are



the most well-supported pieces of the most coherent, well-substantiated explanatory framework available to us...our best knowledge will be provided to us by the efforts of science. The picture of knowledge created is that of a *communal, self-correcting enterprise* that grows from unsophisticated beginnings toward an increasingly detailed and adequate understanding of ourselves and the world. (p. xlvi) [emphasis added]

This suggests a way forward for the challenge presented in the last few pages of our book (Beckett and Hager 2002) where we claimed:

Instead of asking how the learning (through training for example) is represented to the learner – “Has there been a change in the state of the learner?” – the more profound question is: “What inferences can now be articulated by the learner?” (p. 192)

Expertise is shown in the agentic practices which are subject to the public articulation of inferences as a ‘communal, self-correcting enterprise’ (as DeVries and Triplett stated). We may claim that vocational expertise, in respect of certain generic capacities, such as problem-solving and conflict resolution, for example, *emerges from practices*.

My argument in this section has been that inferentialism – the ‘communal, self-correcting’ justifications given by an individual at and through his or her work of why she or he acted thus-and-so – provides an epistemological basis for the achievement of expertise. But it can be taken further.

## Agency and Workplace Learning

Outside the household, humans’ workplaces are mainly, and often intensely, social. Most of us find our paid employment in organisations and institutions where we are parts of groups. Furthermore, we learn significantly ‘on the job’, that is, through the very doing of the work. And we learn to work *better* this way, too. Expertise in workplace performance is a tricky notion, as Jarvis (2009), who sets out the history and current state of the debates on it, makes clear.

This is not to denigrate the significance of prior or adjacent formal studies or skill-acquisition, but merely to give prominence to the myriad ways in which our daily workplaces are ‘communal, self-correcting’ enterprises. The ‘self-correcting’, however, is, in this analysis, ascribed to the sociality of work – to the group(s) of which we are parts: teams, professions, staffing units and so on. The self-correcting is ‘communal’ in that the relationality of such groups *fuel* that self-correction. For example, as we saw (above), both the UK operating theatre staff, and Ms M, in South Africa, showed how embedded any individualistic agency was in the communal self-correction of, in the first case, surgery, and in the second case, in a school. These respective normative socio-cultural contexts fuelled the relationality from which expertise emerged. It is these practice settings – surely simply another name for daily workplaces – that shape what is taken as expertise when it appears.

I claim, then, that the sociality of workplaces (sites of practices) both generates and identifies expertise. These are not two stages in a linear progression, where first

expertise is generated, and then its emergence is identified after that. Rather, serious and consistent attention to relationality will establish that it is amongst their very practices that workplaces will embody expertise. The ascriptions, indeed, the *inferences* of practices as more or less ‘expert’ arise primarily in the sociality of the workplace. From these communal inferences, expertise may then accrue to the achievements of an individual practitioner within it. But an expert practitioner or especially a ‘mal-practitioner’ is derivative upon communal self-correction which has melded experiences of expert practices with the very identification of it. And this reflexivity between what is communally undergone (around an operating table or in the staffroom or classroom in a school) and what is acknowledged as expert in that undergoing constitutes socio-culturally located expertise. My claim is that *relational practices fuel the emergence of expertise*.

Can we ‘bring on’ these practices? Can we use the conceptual approach I have outlined to bring these practices to greater prominence as, and when, they occur at work?

### ***‘Bringing on’ Projective Learning***

In considering these questions, it is helpful to peruse a list of some adult learning practices, and a list of some assessment practices, in light of the main focus of this chapter, which is how socio-culturally located agency can underpin practices and expertise, in the service of better learning – at least through and for adults’ work.

In Section 2 (above), the case was made for the ‘hypothesisation’ of experiences (cf Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 984), which plays out in the future, as the ‘projective dimension’ of time. I argued that team-based activities lend themselves to projective experiences, because quite often it is, literally, a ‘project’ which is the reason for a team’s existence: there is a problematic future which requires some resolution. What is agentive here is socio-culturally located – within the team, that is to say, relationally. Relational practices of this kind (for example, in the ubiquitous adult workplace) are typically focused on the future. Importantly, these are, I am now claiming, *projective and agentive* practices, and they are constituted and fuelled by socio-cultural experience, not by individualism.

So, the two lists here (from Beckett 2009) deserve careful attention for the prospects on offer in many of these relational adult learning and assessment practices for:

- The socio-culturally located
- The emergent and projective
- And, therefore, the agentive.

At one level, and regarding these practices traditionally, they represent training (in contrast to education). That is, they are redolent of skill-acquisition and susceptible to a behavioural account of learning (see Beckett 2010). But training can be

### Some Adult Learning Practices

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Technical training by repetition (e.g. how to fill out forms)  
 Problem solving/workshopping  
 Learning-to-learn/double-loop questioning  
 Critical thinking/evaluation exercises  
 Negotiation/collaboration/interactivity/interpersonal skill formation via groupwork  
 Formal theory and knowledge inc regulations (e.g. OH&S)  
 Literacy and numeracy through real-life excursions/reporting  
 Case studies/informal presentations  
 Simulations/role playing  
 Reflection/journalling  
 Work placements – real on-the-job learning  
 Expert instruction/guidance ('coaching')

### Some Adult Assessment Practices

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Observations of Performance to Standards  
 Skills Testing to Competencies  
 Projects/Assignments  
 Oral questioning/Written questions/Multiple Choice Testing  
 Evidence from Prior Learning  
 Log Books  
 Records of Achievement/Portfolios  
 Role Play  
 Visual Presentation  
 Third Party Reports  
 Self/Peer Reports

re-cast more holistically to include not merely the bodily activity known as 'behaviour' but richer, more fully human experiences. As Luntley (2008) puts it:

If the activities in question in pointing, using an example, saying things like 'and so on...' are intentional activities, they are activities that exhibit understanding...that are conceptually structured...it is not training that provides the platform of resources to respond to reasons. That platform is supplied by the prior conceptual understanding manifested in the pupil's [or any age learner's] *capacities to undertake a variety of intentional activities*. Training will have an important role to play as we exercise the activities that manifest such understanding. But that is simply to note that when we 'work out' intellectually, the moves we

make need not be restricted to the silent moves made within an inner language of thought; they can include the moves we make in those bodily activities in which we express our intentionality' (702–3; emphasis added)

Pointing and saying 'and so on' are ways of showing the *projective*. So is puzzling about the problem and trying to find a resolution of it. My interest in the various practices on these lists is in the extent to which they *socio-culturally* enable the projective (not *individualistically* enable the projective, which is the traditional view which behavioural training instantiates).

Facilitators of practices such as these frequently start with the dynamics of the group with which they are working and seek to engender a sense of trust, ownership of the common good (including respect of diversity) and agreement on the desired outcomes. Socio-cultural location is the point of entry to the learning, but after that it gets loosened up. Many of these practices are commonly regarded as individualistic, such as keeping a journal, or being tested for a competence, but even in those cases, the criteria which will be brought to bear on the success of the learning will usually be socio-cultural: was the journal reflective on the impact the writer may have had on his colleagues? Does the evidence for the performance of a unitary skill (such as taking a foetal heartbeat) include an awareness of the normative nature of the skill (such as the perception in the ante-natal setting of 'bedside manner' of the nurse)?

As we move into more obviously 'projective' practices, such as role play and simulations, then socio-cultural becomes even more prominent. The emergence of expertise can then be facilitated readily enough by reflexive sensitivity to hypothesisations, or 'what if...?' questions and discussion, on the way through. A successful learning experiences will be partly shown by the extent to which participants did feel they were part of, and had gained from, the common 'wealth' of learning. But success will also be partly shown by the emergence of the creative and the serendipitous. This seems to be a prominent feature of accounts of dynamic, group-based learning. Winch (2010) emphasises the significance of systematic, intentional project-based work in expressing fundamental human capacities such as creativity (Chap. 9 passim and fn. 11, drawing on Marx and Simone Weil). Engestrom (2004) in his 'Thesis Five', calls 'negotiated knotworking' the 'defining characteristic of collaborative and transformative expertise', whereby 'the tying and dissolution of a knot of collaborative work is not reducible to any specific individual or fixed organisational entity as the centre of control' (p. 153).

So the unit of analysis – the work-group – is itself an amorphous and fluid entity. Initiatives, and leadership of them, rise and fall as the problems emerge and are themselves dissolved. In sites like this, projective work is usually, but often latent, important learning. I claim that the potential of many of these learning and assessment practices in and for workplaces can be 'brought out' to prominence in carefully structured settings alongside the workplace, if not already embedded in it (as the UK operating theatre and the South African schools clearly were).

What is essential for the socio-culturally located agency I propound here is that facilitators and course designers 'build in' what is to 'brought out', and this building-in needs to include, first and foremost, opportunities for the participants in the group to grapple with 'what if...' situations through intentionally reflexive processes.

All involved should find that they undergo some contributions to ‘trying out’ or hypothesising what to do next, in the very acts (i.e. agency) of doing it, because that is often what the real world of work is like.

What is reflexive here is the communal engagement with a problem or issue, which provokes skillfulness in resolving the problematic situation, along with the communal identification of the skill or solution as such, on the way through. This sensitivity to the group’s learning process would be manifest in questions like: ‘What are we trying to do here?’, ‘What can we bring to the way forward?’, ‘What should we have done differently just then?’, ‘How do we make sure we will do this better next time?’, and so on.

In this communal engagement, there is to be no divide between attempt (the process) and accomplishment (the outcome). As Thalberg (1972) put it a generation ago, in what he called ‘initiatory trying’:

Here no spatial or temporal crevasse divides attempt from accomplishment, as in causal undertakings. If a hiker succeeds in his attempt to scale a precipice, reaching a summit is a *terminus*, rather than an *effect*, of his climbing’ (90).

Thalberg’s agency is individualistic, but his epistemological stance is relational. Not only space (on the mountain) but also time (spent trekking) is made meaningful if the unit of analysis is maintained at the level of the whole, i.e. non-reductively. The recognition of expertise in scaling a precipice is a recognition of the group’s ownership of both its accomplishment, and its agency is achieving it. These are intertwined. Their intertwining is fuelled by the non-reductive relationality of the group, not by the individuality of the various participants.

## Conclusion

As has been argued above, building upon an Aristotelian analysis of practical judgement, agency itself needs to be re-thought. If adults – and, indeed, all humans – learn not just individually, but powerfully from each other – then agency as expressed as autonomous self-direction needs recasting.

Building a capacity for agentic change, over time, requires less of ‘me’ and more of ‘us’. ‘Working up to something’ is not about one’s personal achievements (in round-the-world youthful yachting) – or the lack of them (as a greying music teacher). Rather, it is about the completion of shared projects – and about the construction of projective capacity to even *undertake* projects, where such a capacity is situated in the socio-cultural relationality of many workplaces.

Revitalising agentic practices means providing (in training rooms and formal education), and acknowledging and rewarding (in workplaces, and often informally), the myriad opportunities for adult learners to make decisions and judgements in particular contexts which meet the particular purposes of those contexts. I have used two lists of relevant practices which show the diversity of ways adult learning can intentionally ‘bring on’ socio-culturally located agency.

Such opportunities for practice-based decisionality (practical judgment at and for work) immerses participants in inter-subjective, or, we may often say, inter-professional, relationships. Moreover, this immersion in the *present* takes skill-acquisition seriously – beyond behaviouristic training – and often melds with broad organisational development initiatives. With the help of Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) account of the temporality of agency, I have linked the present with the *future* – the projective.

The projective aspect of such agentic experiences needs to be given greater prominence in accounts of lifelong learning where these accounts involve workplaces. We work up to something over time and with an eye on where we are heading (this eye is itself a 'way of seeing', or attending to, oneself). My claim is that people learn best at work when they see time as malleable, when they see they are free in groups to make something of their shared problems and challenges and that this requires letting the collective imagination to run free. But the freedom is not anarchic. On the contrary, it is shaped by an ethic which participants can find amongst their shared commitments to the nature of their practice, and this can be drawn to their attention and honed for particular contexts, such as an operating theatre or a school.

In this way, redolent of Aristotelian *phronesis*, workplace participants can 'work up to something' ethical, efficacious and innovative, through agency that has at least these twin aspects: the practically judgemental, and the projective. I have shown how these are best constituted by, and, indeed 'brought on' by the relationality found where pairs, groups, teams and peers are the *first* focus of agency, and not merely as the efflux of the agency attributed only to individuals in all their traditional self-directedness.

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# Chapter 9

## Continuing Professional Development and the Triadic Conception of Lifelong Learning

Mal Leicester

### Introduction

The discourse on lifelong learning has emerged in a wide range of contexts and debates, including interventions around social exclusion, urban and rural policy formations, public health issues, discussions of multiculturalism, concerns about environmental conservation and programmes focused on economic growth as well as in the area of concern in this chapter, namely professional development.

Professional development is increasingly seen as involving lifelong professional learning. Chris Day, for example, explores a lifelong conception of professional development in his influential book – *Developing Teachers: The Challenges of Lifelong Learning* (Day 1999). And in a forthcoming collection of chapters, Lesley Scanlon links ‘the iterative concept of “becoming” to lifelong professional learning’ (Scanlon 2011).

This chapter also explores and links ‘professional development’ and ‘lifelong learning’ and though the link is (as indicated above) far from new, I have found it illuminating to explore the wider conceptions of each in the light of the other. From such explorations, the following four implications have emerged and will be discussed.

- Despite decades without a satisfactory definition of profession (Friedson 1985), the link provides a useful way of identifying professional learning and professionals.
- The link helps us to reconcile non-foundationalist conceptions of knowledge with the worthwhileness of lifelong learning.

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- In a professional, occupational context of continuing professional development, we find a convincing example of a conception of lifelong learning that goes beyond the vocational.
- The link provides a sensible way to organise confusingly disparate aspects of professional development (In particular, the professional development of teachers is considered.)

In what follows I explicate and advocate a (wide) triadic conception of lifelong learning and go on to explore professional development as a species of triadic lifelong learning. I then return to the four implications (or insights) cited above.

## **‘Lifelong’ Learning and the Learning Society**

In the last decade, a discourse of lifelong learning has become increasingly prominent in the education literature and has significantly influenced policy and research. It has particularly dominated discussion of post compulsory education and training across an extraordinary range of organisations and nations. Since the early 1990s, influential international organisations have published reports on the subject. These include reports from the OECD (organisation for economic co-operation and development), European commission, the G8 group of governments (from the eight largest economies) as well as from UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

It is notable that while the idea of lifelong learning has most frequently emerged from discussions about adult education and vocational training (or increasingly for career education in secondary schools) the ‘cradle to grave’ understanding of lifelong learning has also been pervasive, consonant with the political and liberal dimensions of post school education. Many argue that this conception of lifelong learning has re-conceptualised the whole area of adult education to the extent that adult education can no longer be seen as remedial catching up of lost schooling – a second chance. Rather, in presenting education as lifelong, the focus is on the different phases and stages of learning – all of which provide particular learning needs and opportunities and which therefore have their own, albeit interconnecting, distinctiveness. At the school level, the focus has been to teach children how to learn, so that they become lifelong learners. However, we have seen that ‘lifelong learning’ is a slippery term with multiple meanings and conceptions. Indeed, its international usage relies on its remarkable potential to mean different things to different people. It is generally taken to be a good thing, involving worthwhile learning, but there are often quite different perceptions of what the worthwhile content of lifelong learning should be. In this regard, Jane Thompson has, for example, argued that the term lifelong learning masks considerable ideological disagreements in practice (Thompson 2000).

Societies everywhere have been concerned to develop a literate and skilled flexible workforce, as well as to widen participation in education at all levels and for people of all ages in every social group. It is at this societal level that the term is

often applied and in analysing lifelong learning, Aspin and Chapman (2007) looked at the needs of modern democratic societies and noted three main needs:

- For economic progress and development
- For personal development and fulfilment
- For social inclusiveness and democratic understanding and participation

Thus, from the perspective of the pragmatic needs of modern learning societies, a triadic notion of lifelong learning has developed. Lifelong learning thus includes vocational/economic aspects, liberal personal development aspects and political and social democratic inclusiveness aspects. In other words, lifelong learning includes vocational education, liberal education and political education. Importantly, these three elements cannot be separated and interact with and cross fertilise each other.

Perhaps because lifelong learning is often discussed at a societal level, it has been linked with the notion of a learning society. It refers to a society organised in ways that provide maximum learning opportunities for all of its members across their life spans and which values a broad range of learning. It is thus not surprising that a notion that emphasises planned, purposeful, systematic and worthwhile learning across the life span has become so embedded in educational discourse and so strongly connects with the notion of continuous professional development. Chapman and Aspin note that while a learning society will in all probability meet the triadic needs (namely economic, liberal and social), the very notion of lifelong learning requires a mindset where there is no fixed body of knowledge which can be attained or mastered at a particular point (say the end of initial schooling) in one's life.

## **‘Learning’, ‘Professional Development’ and the ‘Professional Development’ of Teachers**

Three of the concepts currently used in discussions about professional development are education, training and learning. Traditionally, ‘education’ is seen as involving a broader and deeper knowledge and understanding than ‘training’. Education, as philosopher RS Peters put it, has a ‘wide cognitive perspective’ (Peters 1966). ‘Training’ on the other hand often suggests mainly vocational or more narrowly focused mechanical skills. In the context of professional development, it refers to the skills associated with professional practice, and such practice includes knowledge and understanding of an educative kind. Thus, when we use the term skill in relation to professional development, we are not referring to the narrow mechanical skills often associated with the term training. The demands of professional development require a wide cognitive perspective.

Similarly, there has traditionally been a distinction between ‘education’ and ‘learning’. Education, but not learning, was said to imply worthwhile knowledge and understanding. Education was therefore described as a normative concept (Peters 1966). Learning by contrast was viewed as value – neutral in the sense that while some learning was worthwhile, some was trivial or even reprehensible

(You could learn to be a pickpocket.) However, in some contexts and certainly in the context of professional development, the term 'learning' like 'education' carries normative value-laden implications. This, as we have noted, is also true of the concept of lifelong learning. Thus, in modern educational discourse, the terms education, training and learning, though they can be distinguished in various ways in different contexts, blur into each other more often than has traditionally been the case. The learning and the training involved in professional development are processes which are seen to be valuable and educative processes and lead to an increase in worthwhile knowledge and understanding.

The concept of professional development itself brings together two concepts, profession and development. The concept of development implies growth towards the fulfilment of potential. In some contexts, this growth to a more advanced state would not require training or learning but only maturations. An example of this would be the development (growth) of a plant. However, in the context of professional development, a more deliberate process of learning is implied. We actively bring about the advance and the fulfilment of potential through successive stages to a higher or more complex level of skill and understanding. Skill and understanding in relation to the professional development of teachers carry normative implications. The competent teacher will have skill and understanding in a range of tasks, roles and jobs that have ethical aspects. Training/learning is needed for such progress to take place. Thus, professional development is ongoing. In practicing his/her skills (practice makes perfect), his/her standards can continuously be improved. Moreover, the notion of practicing a profession recognises that a professional has skills, knowledge and understanding which constitute a shared 'practice'. Members of the professions not only have shared skills, knowledge and understanding, they also share values and standards of conduct.

Not only does the concept of professional development imply this ongoing character at the conceptual level, the real world also provides plenty of reasons for regarding professional development as necessarily continuing. The rapid rate of change in the modern world requires professionals to update their own skills on a regular basis. Thus, the need for learning will never stop. Professionals need to participate in a variety of forms of professional development in order to enhance existing knowledge and keep it up to date, to improve their career prospects and to add to their formal qualifications. The Professional Association of Research Networks (PARN) defines continuing 'professional development' as:

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the means by which members of professional associations maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop professional qualities required in their professional lives. (PARN 2000).

As has been said, this necessarily ongoing nature of professional development is also emphasised by Scanlon, who rejects 'novice to expert' explanations of being professional since 'expert' implies having reached a required end point. He accepts, instead, 'the ongoing-ness of developing a professional self and all that this implies'.

No one can predict all the future developmental needs of newly qualified professionals. Significant personal, political and school-based events bring new

learning needs. Professional development must therefore be career long and involve ongoing reflexive reflections on the professional's own practice in ever changing contexts. In short, just as the notion of lifelong learning requires a mind set where there is no fixed body of knowledge which can be mastered by a particular point in one's life (say by the end of initial schooling), similarly with professional development there is no fixed body of knowledge which can be mastered by a particular point in one's life (say by the end of initial professional development programmes). The idea of lifelong learning overlaps with this conception of continuous professional development.

The National Commission on Education in England (1993) implicitly recognised this overlap between lifelong learning and continuous professional development. Within the goals that they set out goal number four notes that

everyone must be entitled to learn throughout life and be encouraged in practice to do so – learning does not stop at sixteen, eighteen, at twenty one or at any other age. Everyone must have the entitlement to go on learning whether for employment purposes or to fulfil other personal goals. There must be real opportunity to use the entitlement and incentive and encouragement to do so. (NCEE p. 45).

To sum up, I hope that the foregoing conceptual explorations have (albeit succinctly) endorsed a wide conception of lifelong learning and a wide conception of professional development. A wider conception of lifelong learning contrasts with a narrower vocational conception to encompass personal and political learning and contrasts with a front-ended conception of education and learning as contiguous with initial schooling. A wider conception of professional development contrasts with a narrower, skill-based conception and contracts with a front ended concept of professional development as contiguous with professional formal training which is completed on certification. We have seen that the wider conception of lifelong learning and the wider conception of professional development overlap. Professional development involve career long (even lifelong) learning of a broader kind, going beyond vocational skills.

## Four Significant Implications

### *Defining Profession and Professional Learning*

The term profession has been used to mark out a non-manual occupation seen as having social status by virtue of such things as long training, accredited degree and post-degree qualifications, a requisite high standard in relevant complex competencies, the holding of shared values and standards of conduct, a mastery of a relevant worthwhile and esoteric body of knowledge. For a long time, and in an extensive literature, these claims have been debated and contested. There is no agreed definition. Dingwell goes so far to claim that 'a profession is nothing more or less than what some sociologists say it is' (Dingwell 2008). The disputants have ranged

from those who see the professions as those whose members are concerned to serve others, working for unselfish, non-mercenary motives, to ends beneficial both to society and to individuals, to those who see the professions as elitist groupings and their professionals as ultimately self-interested and self-serving.

In modern times, claims to professional status have widened and increased. As Scanlon points out,

google 'professional' and the result is over five hundred million hits and includes a wide variety of organisations representing a range of professionals such as doctors, real estate agents, teachers, and individuals such as wedding planners, fitness experts and flower arrangers.

Any worker whose occupational identity encompasses notions of a particular competency and standards of workmanship may well conceive of him or herself as 'professional'. Perhaps, this enlargement of the scope of 'profession' has arisen, at least in part, from a blurring of the distinction between craftspeople and professionals, and this may have been fuelled by the snobbish and unwarranted social undervaluing of skill. Be that as it may, I want to suggest that we can recapture a meaningful (useful) sense of 'profession' and 'professional' in seeing professional development as necessarily intrinsically lifelong. Those whose occupation requires that they become lifelong learners are members of a profession. They do not have a set of skills which can be mastered at a given point. Rather, they engage with an ongoing dynamic search for understanding and have a commitment to improved reflexive and reflective practice. As has been said of being educated – there is no end point to professional learning.

This notion that professional learning is intrinsically ongoing also connects with epistemological questions to which we now turn.

### ***Lifelong Learning, Professional Development and the Nature of Knowledge***

Modern times have seen a significant epistemological shift. Human knowledge is conceptualised not as the attainment of immutable, absolute truths about a given reality. Rather, it is partly determined (constructed) in line with our human (and dynamic) needs and interests. It is local rather than universal, dynamic rather than fixed and relative to a context. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore these complex epistemological questions at length but some key points must be made.

First, it has been recognised that the form of knowledge that we call science is no exception to this modern conception of the nature of knowledge. Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* has argued, very convincingly, that even scientific 'truth' is relative to a particular scientific 'paradigm' – a particular set of concepts and assumptions etc. Second, this kind of epistemological position need not lead to the incoherence of a full bloodied relativism. As Harré and Krausz (1996) show in their influential work, there are, indeed, varieties of relativism – some of which are not self contradictory. The world exists and therefore places

constraints upon fruitful conceptualisations and truth claims. Pragmatically, we know we have conceptualised and theorised badly if our aeroplanes will not fly, for example, and less badly when they will. Moreover, the inner world of our primitive reactions (Wittgenstein 1963) also imposes limits on our possible conceptual construction and agreements. However, because we construct the conceptual schemes through which we experience and understand the world, there is a degree of flexibility and variability. There may be alternative possible and fruitful schemes and therefore cultural differences and conceptual change. Small wonder, then, that we find both universal concepts, values, truth criteria etc., and some more local ones – local ones which may, in some cases, influence the forms of the universals. We have objectivity – but in terms of possible intersubjective agreements, not by reference to an unmediated world.

Such a postmodernist epistemological position is, I have suggested (Leicester 2000) consonant with the current movement towards lifelong learning, a movement in which we have seen the blurring of boundaries – school/post school, education/work, education/leisure, leisure/work, liberal/vocational and education/learning. The very notion of lifelong learning encourages the idea that there is no fixed body of knowledge which can be attained or mastered by a particular point in one's life. Given that knowledge is dynamic, the quest to achieve it is necessarily ongoing. An intellectual engagement with a quest for knowledge and understanding must be lifelong. Similarly, any occupation that is involved with aspects of such human knowledge and understanding (as distinct from more mechanistic skill acquisition) must, necessarily, involve this kind of worthwhile lifelong learning.

### *The Professional Development of Teachers*

Christopher Day has been researching teachers' professional development for nearly 20 years. He places teachers at the heart of the educational process and explores their continuing professional development in the context of the challenges and constraints which affect their ability to sustain this development. He defines professional development in the following way:

professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and of those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teacher's review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically, the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (Day 1999).

He sees teaching as a vital and moral enterprise because teachers seek to initiate worthwhile learning in their pupils. The professional development of teachers is essential to maintaining quality teachers in quality schools. It is unsurprising that Day's definition of professional development has considerable breadth and depth.

Indeed, according to Day, all learning experiences contribute to educational quality in the classroom and are part of the professional development of teachers. Teachers are agents of change charged with the responsibility of bringing about the moral purposes of teaching. They are critically reflective agents in their own ongoing development throughout their teaching careers.

As RS Peters has convincingly argued, and as most liberal educators in modern democratic societies would agree, education is a normative concept. It is concerned with the development of worthwhile knowledge and understanding. The role of teachers therefore, is indeed to be engaged in a normative enterprise – engaged, that is, in the moral purposes of teaching. Clearly, this wide conception of the role of teachers will require a corresponding breadth in our conception of professional development. The problem is that, although we might endorse the wide conception of professional development suggested by Day and others, to include ‘all natural learning and experiences’ as part of professional development risks rendering the concept vacuous. Richard Bagnall has pointed out this problem in connection with the conception of lifelong education as education from the whole of life’s experiences. This robs lifelong education of any discriminatory power.

When the term professional development or, indeed, the term lifelong learning become so all embracing, not only do they risk loss of meaning, they also invite a plethora of interpretations – a never ending and inconclusive definitional debate. It was partly because of this that Aspin and Chapman (2007) developed their ‘pragmatic approach’.

Rather than participating in an exercise of interpretation, that might in the end prove self defeating or inconclusive, it might, in our view, be better to look, not so much at the various interpretations and accounts of lifelong education, but rather more at the circumstances with which the theories and policies of lifelong education have been articulated, developed and applied.

In other words, we are suggesting an objective referent may be found: it lies in the problems to the settlement of which lifelong education programmes are addressed.

The problems which lifelong learning may be said to address, Chapman and Aspin point out, are threefold: economic, political and personal. This pragmatic approach is thus the basis for their triadic conception of lifelong learning in which these three elements interact and cross fertilise each other.

I suggest that this pragmatism is consonant with the pragmatism at the heart of the constructivist conception of knowledge touched on above. I want to suggest that, just as this triadic notion of lifelong learning rescues wider conceptions from the danger of meaninglessness and provides a useful way forward for policy and programme makers, so, too, with a triadic notion of professional development. A triadic notion of professional development can retain the breadth of conceptions such as Day’s, while avoiding vacuity or the paralysis of overwhelmingly many interpretations and preferences! Policy and programme makers, as well as individual reflective practitioners, can have a concern for all three aspects of their professional development.

- Professional development with regard to the need for individual student and social economic prosperity

- Professional development with regard to teacher and student personal fulfilment
- Professional development for student's social inclusiveness and democratic understandings and future activity

Consider the full range of skills and understandings required by a competent teacher. These include pedagogic skills, knowledge of child development, subject knowledge, interpersonal skills, personal qualities, study skills and understanding of wider social values and issues and of school and government policy. Clearly, there is a need for a way to organise the acquisition of all this. A triadic classification of learning may be a helpful way forward.

### ***Non-vocationalised Professional Development***

The wider triadic conception of lifelong learning encourages a similarly wider perception of professional development. It helps to move us from seeing professional development in terms of initial training which takes us to the point of expertise or full professional competence with any further professional learning seen as short courses to refresh or update the professional. (The knowledge gained in the initial period is able to bring the professional to mastery because it is able to be mastered i.e. it is static, finite, absolute etc.). By seeing lifelong learning as more than the acquisition of vocational skills, we can also see that professional development can involve more than 'once-and-for-all' set of vocational skills. Rather, it can involve ongoing, deepening and widening understandings.

One could say that a triadic conception of professional development, a conception that sees vocational, personal and political aspects of learning as contributing to such development, provides an enriched conception of professional development. In turn, this enriched perception of professional development provides a significant example of the triadic conception of lifelong learning.

### **Conclusion**

Let me sum up the many and inter-related claims about lifelong learning and professional development that have been made in this chapter. First I have endorsed a wider conception of both lifelong learning and professional development, and I have been seeking to show the inadequacy of narrowly vocational and front ended conceptions of either. Second, I have tried to indicate some of the links and overlaps and have argued that continuing professional development is a species of lifelong learning.

I have espoused a constructivist epistemology and suggested that the pragmatism at the heart of such an epistemology is consonant with the pragmatism at the heart of the triadic conception of lifelong learning and, more importantly, that the quest for such knowledge and understanding is, inherently continuous and lifelong.



This inherent quality of learning or acquiring of knowledge and understanding also provides a way of understanding ‘profession’ and ‘professional development’. This claim is made in the context of an extensive literature that has failed to produce an agreed definition.

Finally, I have suggested that the triadic conception of lifelong learning may help us to organise the many demands built in to a wider conception of the professional development of teachers. (It may also, of course, be relevant to other professions). Moreover, triadic conceptions of professional development may, as Aspin and Chapman argued in relation to lifelong learning, provide a pragmatic way forward; through the dangers arising from the sheer breadth and scope of continuing professional development. These dangers are first of conceptual vacuity and continuous and inconclusive definitional debate and second of the paralysis of overwhelming and disparate demands.

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# Chapter 10

## Lifelong Education: Some Deweyan Themes

Ivan A. Snook

### Introduction

John Dewey's *Pedagogic Creed* published in 1897 begins with the stirring words: 'I believe that all education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual's powers, saturating his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together' (Dewey 1971, Vol. 5, p. 84). A little further on he says: 'I believe that education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living' (Ibid. p. 87). This notion of education as a continual process with the potential for growth remained a central part of his philosophy of education. It is interesting, however, that although these words seem a clarion call for what we now call lifelong education, Dewey seemed unable to draw this conclusion from his own philosophy. Thus, for example, the words which immediately follow the creed just quoted are: 'I believe that the school must represent present life – life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighbourhood, or on the playground' (loc. cit.). To my knowledge, Dewey wrote nothing on education beyond the formal school years. Thus, despite the implicit significance of his philosophical position, John Dewey was the major philosopher of schooling rather than of education.

In this chapter, I pursue four major themes, each of which is implicit in Dewey's philosophy of education:

(1) The centrality of 'education' as distinct (but not separate) from 'training'; (2) the rejection of any dichotomy between liberal and vocational education; (3) the importance of the changing social situation; and (4) the centrality of critical thought in education.

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## Education and Training

Dewey argued that ‘The educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity for growth’ (Dewey 1916, p. 54). If the current movement for encouraging lifelong education is really to take root as a genuinely *educational* movement, it is important that the early years of formal schooling (if that organisational form is to be persisted with) need to be revised in the light of this commitment. Currently, educational policy in many countries is committed to the notion of ‘skills’ and ‘preparation for work’. The emphasis on skills ties the student to the concrete and the present: it does not enliven the mind by abstractions; nor does it necessarily relate the ‘skills’ to the interests of the child or to the wider society outside the school. Much of current policy making is dictated by the interests of business and schools are being made increasingly reliant on business sponsorship for resources. At the extreme, children are perceived primarily as consumers and, for the sake of income for the school, are subjected to advertising within the school and within the classroom. They are being taught to ‘think Business, think profit, think short term’ and are prevented from criticising the dominant ideology of the day-consumerism.

The emphasis on the vocational or job-related aspects of schooling further limits the child’s capacity for growth and development along the lines advocated by Dewey. There is an emphasis on the future rather than the present, and this future is seen as limited by the person’s capacity to fill some job or perform some service; the child is to be a functionary of the economic order. This of course has ideological purposes beyond a servile and uncritical workforce; the whole idea of the consumer society is to be accepted uncritically as a natural part of the world. This acceptance of controversial social arrangement as ‘natural’ is the prime purpose of an ideology.

If we are to turn (or return) to a conception of education more apt to meet the current needs of students and yet encourage them to take advantage of appropriate learning later on, formal education needs to be consciously structured towards two main purposes:

- (a) Providing the basic understandings required to continue to learn throughout life and the motivation to go on learning. As Dewey put it, ‘The criterion of the value of school education is the extent to which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective’ (loc. cit., p. 53). Schools should not create the impression that they can provide all that a child will need throughout her life; rather, they should engage her in activities which are both enjoyable in themselves and likely to provide a lifetime of interest. There is, of course, no one way of doing this, but certain school customs and social demands work against it. For example, the constant assessment can destroy the student’s current engagement and her future interest. Similarly, the emphasis on ‘a common curriculum’ which must be ‘covered’ fails to recognise the variant interests of children. If the principal aims are to engage the child’s current interest and to help her preserve that interest for life, it may sometimes

be preferable to allow the student to concentrate her energies on one aspect of the curriculum: from one point of view, it matters little whether this is music, literature, science, mathematics, computer studies or history, provided that it has the potential for 'growth'. Concentration on a limited range of studies can provide the motivation to go on learning and, arguably, the ability to learn in one can readily be transferred to another when that is required.

- (b) There must be a move away from isolated information and studies carried out in isolation from other studies. It is a moot point whether an integrated curriculum is the best means of achieving this, but certainly in some way or another, knowledge has to be integrated in the life of the learner. Although, in the final analysis, the student herself must do this, the teacher should take every opportunity to establish links between bodies of knowledge. After all, the student is a growing person and not a congeries of information and skills.

We are frequently told that this is the computer age, and Information Technology will rule the future in education. To some degree, this seems to be likely. It is important, however, to ensure (from school days onwards) that the computer is seen as a tool of education, and I mean to stress both the words: seen as a *tool* for achieving certain human ends and not a kind of drug which forestalls thought; and seen as a tool for *education*, not for gathering lots and lots of discrete bits of information which do not add up to a process of growth or development of the person. Rob Watts has persuasively argued that in the movement to more use of technology in education, two serious matters are at stake: the first is 'the contest between incommensurate understandings of knowledge and ... 'education'. The second is the danger of losing the 'thick texture' of face to face encounters between human teachers and human learners and replacing it totally by 'thin texture' encounters with virtual reality (1999, p. 3).

Watts argues that there are two basic models of education: an Information Theory (IT) model and an Action-Reflection Theory (ART) model. Following Habermas, he characterises the IT model as 'an instrumental-rational constitutive interest that shapes a distinctive kind of knowledge and praxis' (loc. cit. p. 7). These interests are exemplified in the activities of corporate culture and the military and, hence, constitute a further limitation of the growth of the person. This model can be followed in any classroom (by emphasis on authority, by slavish use of text books, by assessment in terms of memory, by stress on 'right' and 'wrong' answers and by the rejection of criticism). But, the growth of Information Technology brings added dangers of this model dominating. More positively, however, it can provide further opportunity to reflect on the nature of knowledge and of education.

According to Watts, the ART model stresses the importance of interpretation in our daily lives; we impose patterns on our experience and we are shaped by social, economic and political forces of which we are often unaware. In this model, what is stressed are conversation rather than information imparting; the centrality of the learner as a critical, self-conscious being; the recognition of the historical and sociological contexts of all forms of understanding; the importance of the right question rather than the right answer and the awareness of some of the 'canons' of

human thought and action (loc. cit, p. 19). Watts believes that while these can be endangered by Information Technology, awareness of their importance can enrich our use of that technology for teaching.

## Vocational and Liberal Education

I have already drawn attention to the excessive emphasis on ‘vocational education’ on the part of today’s policy makers and the ideological role this plays in social life. It is important, however, to recognise that while ‘liberal’ and ‘vocational’ and ‘skills’ and ‘knowledge’ can be conceptually distinguished, in practice, they converge and overlap; discussions of the curriculum of lifelong learning should not pit one against another. Dewey is again very helpful here. As is typical of his philosophy, he rejects unhelpful ‘dualisms’ or dichotomies. He writes: ‘A vocation means nothing but such a direction of life activities as renders them perceptibly significant to a person, because of the consequences they accomplish’ (1916, p. 307). For Dewey, therefore, a person’s vocation is not limited to her paid or unpaid employment (‘job’) but extends to all those aspects of a person’s life in which she carries out tasks and performs roles. While our vocation will include our job, it will also embrace our roles as parent, spouse, friend, community member, churchgoer, club member, community member, rate payer, citizen and member of the ‘global village’. There is then, no contradiction between vocational studies and liberal studies. Good vocational studies *are* liberal: they free people from blind conformity and rigid habits and release people to be agents of their own lives in all their richness and diversity.

Dewey argues that in the school years, vocational education in the narrow sense will merely predestine some students to a life of drudgery and will in general not promote the ‘freeing of activity’ which education should involve. This point should be well taken by those making policy for schools. It is, however, very likely that in the future, a good deal of post-school education will be centred on a person’s trade or profession. In our society, a person’s job occupies an increasingly large part of her time and energy. There is also much talk of the short-lived nature of skilled knowledge, the need to upgrade credentials and often to re-train for quite different work. That need not be of concern provided that the wider sense of vocation is taken into consideration. In the dominant ideology, the worker’s work IS her life. Those providing in-service training should realise not only that the worker has other central roles in society (which all, including employers, rely on) but also that the full flowering of a person can itself contribute to a better quality employee. Thus, all lifelong education should be ‘liberal’ in the sense in which Dewey meant it; it should provide context and criticism and seek to upgrade not only skills but also background theory and other relevant matters. As an example, it is becoming common to include in MBA programmes for middle management a course or module on business ethics: rightly taught these deal not only with day to day issues such as insider trading, sexual harassment and honesty in advertising but also broader issues of the role of business in developing countries, the morality of multi-national dominance and the

rights of the worker. I suggest that regardless of the trade or profession a broad view can and should be taken on on-going education: the nurse would be exposed to analysis and critiques of health policy; the programmer to the social role of IT; the caterer to the sociology of tourism and the sportsperson to the issues relating to sport as a business.

I would like to illustrate the major points made so far by reference to the education of teachers.

As a result of the current ideology in New Zealand (and, of course, elsewhere), there have been strong moves to de-professionalise teaching and to increase competition in teacher training. As a result, pre-service courses have become shorter, cheaper and (arguably) less demanding. More significantly, the contextual studies needed for a full profession have tended to be reduced. The history, philosophy and sociology of education have been downgraded and often excluded altogether. Thus, teacher education is producing technicians who will be uncritical of their important role in society and subservient to the business interests which are trying to control schools. The 'formal' further education of teachers is generally no better: narrowly technicist, it does not even try to provide senior teachers with an analysis of educational policy or a wide understanding of the tasks confronting teachers in the society.

If Dewey's notions of growth were taken seriously, pre-service education would concentrate less on 'techniques' and narrow methodologies and more on ensuring that students had a sound theoretical grasp of the issues to be faced and the means to solve the problems which will arise. In their formative years, they would become aware of the limitations of their knowledge and hence be motivated to continue with lifelong education and, having been exposed to basic understanding of, for example, social science and ethics, they would have the skills to constantly upgrade their knowledge and skill. *Lifelong education* for teachers would mean just that.

## The Wider Society

Dewey was well aware (it was central to his whole philosophy) that education is always carried out in a particular social setting: we grow up as social beings moulded by the kind of society we are in. But he did not mean that schools should simply prepare young people for the current social system with no regard to its quality. For one thing, as already shown, he was opposed to the notion of education as preparation: education IS life not a preparation for life. But more than that, he refused to allow that education should reproduce the dominant forms of thought and action. Writing in the early part of this century, he recognised that schools could so readily simply conform to the dominant groups. He worried lest education become 'an instrument of perpetuating unchanged the existing industrial order of society, instead of operating as a means of its transformation' (1916, p. 316). In this light, we might have the same deep worry about the role of education in the current environment of trade, enterprise and profit. It is also important that those engaged in lifelong education emulate Dewey in trying to understand the social

order and have a sound analysis of it. They must also learn to work within it without being subservient to it.

One way of trying to envisage world we might well be entering is to follow Gee et al. (1996) in thinking about 'fast capitalism' ('new capitalism' or post-capitalism.) They write that fast capitalism's 'visions and values have deeply informed contemporary calls for reform both in adult education and training and in schools across the developed world' and points out that 'the new-capitalist educators stress education and learning as a lifelong enterprise and thus do not concentrate just on children and schools' (loc. cit. 1998, p. 164). Thus, this analysis seems peculiarly relevant to our theme.

According to these authors, where old capitalism relied on the mass production of relatively uniform goods by large and hierarchically structured organisations, new capitalism involves the design and production of diverse high quality goods for a saturated market. In the former, the worker concentrates on one aspect of the task and does not see the whole. In the latter, the worker has to be a fully active learner. The front-line worker will have to be as knowledgeable as the manager. 'Workers will be transformed into committed "partners" who engage in meaningful work, fully understand and control their jobs, supervise themselves, and actively seek to improve their performance through communicating clearly their knowledge and needs' (loc. cit. p. 29).

These new organisations are characterised by 'flat structures' of management. Every worker is an entrepreneur. To bring this about, either (1) visionary leadership or (2) shared core values and sense of purpose are required. Thus, the world of business is in competition with church and school in creating a vision and a set of values. Dewey is turned on his head: work is no longer a part of a person's life; rather, life is part of a person's work. Business colonises our minds and rules our lives; workers are never really off duty (loc. cit. p. 35).

There are several problems with this account and with the educational significance that might flow from it.

- It is not clear how much this is a well-founded prediction or an attempt to construct our reality for us. As the authors points out, new capitalism deals with the manipulation of symbols and new uses of words. These are devised to present a particular view of reality and to exercise power over people's minds. It is not simply that education will have to deal with a set of phenomena. It will have to 'decode' or 'de-construct' the words used to convey the vision, the values and the ideology. The current talk of 'the Knowledge Society' masks fast capitalism's intent in using this expression: to make all knowledge and all values subservient to the world of work. Unmasking the words used to deceive and to persuade is clearly a task for lifelong education.
- It is far from clear that this is an adequate account of what is likely to happen to the world of work. On the face of it, the modern world seems more to be tending towards a polarised or segmented workforce. Some will have highly paid, secure and pleasant jobs; a huge army of others workers will be poorly paid, insecure (often part time) and they may work in poor conditions. If this is

a likely picture, the education system will be expected to reproduce this structured workforce. It is plausible to argue that ‘choice’ policies in education are aimed at producing just the segmented work force required. Those with cultural capital desert less-favoured schools and go to those attended by other motivated students, leaving the lower classes and the less motivated segregated in schools which, deprived of the social mix, become worse and worse. Some call this ‘social cleansing’. Lifelong education will have an uphill battle to remedy this sort of situation.

- The fast capitalists claim to want ‘knowledgeable’ and even ‘critical’ people, but they cannot allow their employees to criticise the goals and values of the organisation or the system in which it operates. Workers’ ‘growth’ is restricted as anyone’s is when allowed control only over means and not, as Dewey would have, over the ends as well. It is interesting to observe the ways in which teachers have been de-skilled in recent years and are being seen as technicians serving other people’s ends. And if teachers are deskilled, their students are likely to be also. As in teaching, so in other areas of business and professional life: people are encouraged to ‘pull together’ and ‘develop process values’ but are not allowed to criticise the goals or the ideology.

It is very clear that those involved in lifelong education must re-examine their aims in just the way Dewey (1916, pp. 104–105) advised:

- The aim set up must be an ‘outgrowth of existing conditions’. Before we devise high sounding goals, we need to examine carefully what forces are at work and what the contextual situations are. Analysis along the lines of the work on fast capitalism is essential.
- The aims must be flexible and tentative. Aims can never be static because neither the social world nor the growing person is static. Aims must, to a large extent, be derived from the stated concerns of the learners and from the conditions of their lives.
- Aims must ‘liberate activity’. That is to say, each successful achievement must open out to further possible achievement. The solution to a problem is, at once, a further problem. Hence education involves the continual reconstruction of experience. It must be lifelong indeed.

## Critical Reflection

The arguments I have developed so far indicate that the major aim of lifelong education is to promote the autonomy of the individual and her readiness at all times to be involved in critical thinking and liberating action. This was, of course, a major conclusion of Dewey: ‘All which a school can or need do for pupils, as far as their *minds* are concerned...is to develop their ability to think’ (1916, p. 152). For Dewey, this was connected to the respect he had for the methods of science



which he took to be clear and uncontroversial. Of course, good Pragmatist that he was, he did not subscribe to a realist world of 'pure facts' or to the discovery of timeless truths. For him, 'warranted assertability' was all that could be hoped for. It is also true that he did not subscribe to the individualism of the empiricist tradition: all knowledge comes about by joint efforts within a social context. In these, and many other ways, Dewey was ahead of his time. Yet, the methods of science were accepted uncritically; he thought that they needed only to be implemented and imitated.

In these matters, there is a vast gulf between Dewey's intellectual world and ours. The possibility of both autonomy and critical thinking has been under profound attack in recent years under the general heading of 'post-modernism'. Luntley (1998, pp. 15–17) provides a useful summary of the basic epistemological tenets of post-modernism by setting out its four basic theses:

- All experience is based on interpretation.
- There are no secure foundations for knowledge.
- There is no single language suitable for reporting all the things we want to say about the world.
- All languages are local, perspectival human languages.

These seem to cut the very ground from under the feet of any conception of critical thinking. Any thinking which a person does will be limited, personal and 'perspectival'; it cannot discover the truth; my 'critical thinking' will be no better (or worse) than yours. Hence any educational aims which set out to develop critical thinking will be in vain. We can only teach someone to think in a particular way, and this will be, by definition, simply one way among many equally valid ways of thinking. The Deweyan endeavour is particularly compromised by post-modernism's rejection of science as a privileged way of knowing.

Luntley argues that while all the theses of postmodernism are true, they do not eliminate truth, rationality or critical thought. He argues that there are two fundamental questions about knowledge. (1) Can we know which of our beliefs are true? (2) Is there truth at all? To the first question, he answers 'no': there are no criteria by which we can assess knowledge claims. On some interpretations of 'critical thought', this would be disastrous for it seems to be linked with the possibility of an answer being right or wrong. The second question, however, casts a different light on the matter. That we cannot know which of our beliefs are true (and constitute knowledge) does not entail that none of them *are* true (loc. cit, p. 95).

Turning to the second question, Luntley argues that although post-modernists reject the idea of truth, notions of truth remain in their philosophy. Confronting Rorty (1989) head on, he asks what it means to say, as Rorty does, that some of our beliefs are 'better' than others in serving human interests. According to Luntley, they can be better in this way only if they are 'true'. In this 'very humble' sense of truth, apples were falling long before Newton noted the fact. Luntley is at pains to show that while the post-modernists are right to reject any overarching story about truth they are wrong if they carry on to become

irrationalist as well. What has to be retained, he argues, is the notion of 'simple truth'. This underlies all our actions: money in the bank decreases as I cash cheques; seat belts protect us from some serious injuries; dentists can cure our toothache and so on.

It is, of course, a long way from this 'simple truth' and the critical thought which it allows ('am I over-spending?' 'might I be worse off in some accidents if I do wear a seat belt?'; 'can I relieve the pain without the expense of a dentist?') to the criticism of economic and political views with which we are surrounded. This is what critical thinking is normally thought to be about, and it is this that is regarded as crucial to democracy. Nevertheless, there is a link and it is an important one. For one thing, the recognitions that there are 'paradigms' and 'perspectives' none of which can be said to be true in any deep sense should give us confidence in questioning those which are set out as if they are undoubtedly true. At present, New Right economics and the political judgements which follow from it are presented as if they are obviously correct ('there is no other way'). Proponents fail to see (or decline to see) that theirs is one point of view among many; start from one set of assumptions about ownership and private property and you will end up with a particular conclusion; start with a different set and you will end up with a very different conclusion. Post-modernism suggests that neither can claim to be true. Nevertheless, each will contain numerous claims to 'simple truth' (e.g. that the existence of welfare creates dependency), and these can be contested by data. Critical thinking is possible and, to some extent, made possible by the basic claims of the post modernist.

To my mind, critical thinking is not primarily a skill but an attitude of mind: a disposition not to take statements for granted, not to accept dogmatic beliefs no matter how sanctioned and not to go along with the dominant simply because they are a majority. It is this attitude which should be encouraged in lifelong learning. Of course, we now have to acknowledge that our individual selves do not emerge ready made. We are the results of the social world in which we have been brought up and our knowledge, as Dewey saw (though less clearly than is possible in the post-modern age), is inevitably social. We cannot critically examine all our beliefs at once; but we can examine some of them at any time and all of them over a period of time. And even the assumptions on which they rest can, at least to some extent, be challenged by ourselves. This IS critical thinking and it has not been overthrown by post-modernism.

Despite the challenges that have come since Dewey, we can still support his basic idea that the major function of education is to challenge students to critical thinking. This can be done in many ways: by presenting all knowledge historically (the history of science or technology would lead to a more critical approach to those subjects); by examining the philosophy of various human endeavours (the philosophy of art would enliven the study or art) and by presenting alternatives in all areas (the presentation Marxist economics might balance the one sidedness of modern economics teaching; work on creationism might help students to see modern science in perspective.)

## Institutional Support

I have presented a case for lifelong *education* as distinct from training and indoctrination. I am very aware, however, that given my own analysis of the ways in which those with power operate, it is quite unlikely that the institutions and organisations which provide lifelong education are likely to follow the critical path I have mapped out. Dewey reminds us that if an aim is to be more than an idealised and futile hope, it must be ‘an outgrowth of existing conditions’ (1916, p. 104). It is here that most difficulties arise for, as I have indicated, existing conditions are far from ripe for any genuine lifelong education to take place, and if fast capitalism comes to be, the situation for lifelong education will be even bleaker, since the ideology of the entrepreneur will rule in every aspect of life.

It would be naive to hope that business firms will provide re-training courses which allow, much less encourage, criticism of business itself. Perhaps, there are some developments which can be built on: the growth of Business Ethics provides a niche for a more critical study of the role of business in the world.

Very likely, however, lifelong education will have to be found in ‘independent’ situations. Libraries, in planning and displaying their holdings and in providing ways of gaining access to the knowledge, can move beyond the very practical and domesticating. The churches, theoretically committed to a critique of all social situations, might more consciously take up the challenge of providing scriptural and, in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, papal support for in depth study of the economical and political worlds. In New Zealand, for example, the Catholic Bishops’ conference has recently published their many statements over the past 20 years on social, political and ethical issues (Orsman and Zwart 1998). Political parties will have an important part to play; they have normally a strong point of view, and it is in their interests to make it known. Small parties might indeed (since almost by definition they represent a less orthodox view) make education a priority. The popular press has a part to play, though in the recent years, it has by and large abandoned any pretence of impartiality and has enthusiastically supported the dominant ideology.

It goes without saying that universities and other tertiary institutions should be to the fore in promoting a critical view of social life. But, sadly, they too seem to have been ‘bought’ by the powerful. Forced to compete with each other, they tend to adopt the ethos of business and so seek to satisfy rather than to challenge their students. They may yet recover their heart; certainly, there are many within them who hanker for a more critical role for their institutions; they should organise to challenge the status quo.

Without doubt, however, the most successful form of education, particularly for adults, is that which involves praxis, that is to say ‘a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection on action to a new action’ (Freire 1972, p. 31). The activities which in many countries surrounded the opposition to the Vietnam war and the Apartheid regime in South Africa did much to educate people politically, but the memory of these events is fading. What issue would motivate today’s young people? It is difficult to tell. They are ‘children of the

market' and the uncritical support of the status quo is being written into their minds and hearts; even their own burden of debt for their education does not seem to have led to mobilisation for action. The growing popularity of 'Green' parties might suggest that the environment could be a focus for action and reflection.

## Conclusion

Little will be done, it seems to me, unless there is concerted effort by organisations which co-ordinate and fund lifelong learning to develop a careful philosophy of education which transcends mere factual learning, updating professional credentials and providing hobbies and entertainment. As Dewey reminds us again and again, there need be no conflict between these activities and education; they can all be used to educational effect. What is needed is a clear understanding of education in its broadest sense and the will to follow it through. I submit that Dewey has provided us with the understanding; the will must come from ourselves.

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# Chapter 11

## Lifelong Learning: A Post-human Condition?\*

Richard Edwards

### Introduction

The approach I am trying to work for is rigorously committed to testing and attesting. To engage in and understand that this is always an interpretative, engaged, contingent, fallible engagement. It is never a disengaged account (Haraway 2000: 160).

The crucial philosophical question pertaining to reality was; *how can we be sure?* Now, after the turn to practice, we confront another question; *how to live with doubt?* (Mol 2002: 165, emphasis in original).

This chapter is a thing, a gathering around a matter of concern. There is a gathering in the writing of the text, its editing and publication and its reading. It is therefore a gathering across space and time, a thing which changes, translates and betrays (Latour 1996) in the process of its gathering, of thinging.

A strange beginning for a chapter on lifelong learning perhaps... One that may not encourage gathering – you may skip to the next chapter. However, I hope by the end of this experiment that the concerning matter has become a gathering, a thing to be referenced perhaps.

Freud once wrote that education is an impossible profession as it is unable to mandate the future. This inability is now manifested in some of the contemporary discourses of lifelong learning as a constant form of apprenticeship (Edwards 2008). While, for some, lifelong learning is integrally linked to the now seemingly failed project of neo-liberalism, this chapter will explore lifelong learning as possibly a

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post-human condition. It is important that the ‘post-’ is not read as ‘anti-’, but that will depend on what and who are gathered in the writing and reading of this chapter. This then is my matter of concern.

The chapter will suggest that, while Lyotard (1984) argued that the post-modern condition of knowledge was one of incredulity to grand narratives, this could be extended to an ontological condition, the lifelong learning condition. Here, even as they continue to be articulated ever more stridently, there is an incredulity to the notion that there are over-arching justifications for human existence – we need to learn to exist. This arises not least because of the ecological and material uncertainties to which worldly – human and non-human – existence is subject, what Beck (1992) referred to as a risk society. What I want to suggest is that Lyotard’s argument for the post-modern condition of knowledge points to the collapse of representationalism as an a priori worldliness and signifies a post-human condition of existence, wherein lifelong learning could be a conditional set of ontological practices *within* the world, rather than a set of meanings or understandings *about* the world.

Here I am not using post-humanism as simply referring to a gathering after-humanism and the death of the Renaissance subject. Nor am I using it to refer to those who advocate a dys/u-topian future of genetically modified embodied technologies, although both have resonances in what follows. In this chapter, post-humanism refers to an enactment that deconstructs the separation of subjects and objects, the human and the material and with that the focus on the human subject as either a representative of an essentialised human nature or in a state of constant becoming. However, it is also the case that the deconstruction requires a subject and object to deconstruct. As with Lyotard’s (1992) reflections on the ‘post-’ in post-modernism therefore, the ‘post-’ in post-humanism is constantly at play with precisely that which it deconstructs. It is not ‘after’ in terms of going beyond, but in terms of offering a constant experimentation with (Badmington 2003). In one sense then, I am engaging in a form of science fiction that has prefigured much of the contemporary discussion of post-humanism.

This argument follows work derived from and which gathers together aspects of pragmatist philosophy, the work of Heidegger, post-structuralism, actor-network theory and feminism. It is an argument that, in attempting to gather many actants seeks to engender a solidity and stability to the thing to be enacted. Too simply, it is an argument that follows from a focus on ontology – be(com)ing – rather than representation – know(legd)ing. However, the focus on ontology is not human- or subject-centric, but points to lifelong learning as a condition of the entanglement of the human and non-human, as without the non-human, humans would neither exist nor be able to act as part of world existence. People are always already in assemblage within worlds. As Haraway (2003: 54) puts it, ‘humans are already congeries of things that are not us. We are not self-identical’. In our age of ubiquitous digitalisation, this is sometimes referred to as a cyborg condition (Gough 2004), which points to the entanglement of the fleshy and technical – the materiality of things.

I will argue that central to this post-human condition could be entanglements in the world that entail practices of conditionality – what could be rather than should be – fallibility – experimentation and the possibility of failure, i.e. things falling apart – and responsibility – responding in particular ways to others and otherness. It

is these which are the practices that can be developed as a response to the incredulity there can be towards grand narratives of human existence. In gathering this discussion, I shall also make the claim that a post-human condition could point to the end of lifelong learning rather than the latter being a part of that condition. If the practices of learning have been integral to the centring of the human subject (Rose 1998), I shall argue that a post-human condition may not be one of learning as we have tended to understand it.

This chapter then is an experiment, itself fraught with conditionality, fallibility and responsibility. It is an attempt at an intervention and interruption into the practices of lifelong learning, including the practices of representing lifelong learning. It is too simplistic to suggest that it is a shift from epistemology to ontology as each entails the other. What I want to suggest is that the type of debates that have been going on *about* lifelong learning arise from positioning it solely within a representational binary that separates matter and meaning, substance and significance, object and subject, where the latter is grounded in some sense of human nature purified of other matters. I will outline this argument in the next section. I will then go on to suggest that lifelong learning could be re-positioned within a certain performative post-human ethico-epistem-onto-logy (Barad 2007), wherein there is an entanglement of things; ‘things as question, as provocation, incitement, or enigma’ (Grosz 2009: 125). However, insofar as it is entangled, then the practices of learning by subjects are themselves troubled. This entails approaching what we do differently in order to make a difference. It entails more gathering, less objecting – enacting a post-human condition as a thing.

## **Representing and Experimenting: From Objects to Things and Back Again?**

There is often a tendency in the discussion of lifelong learning and education more generally to have to start from the beginning in everything that is written. Of course, origins are myths and any such requirement is itself always already part of the regulatory practices in knowledge production, placing constraints on experimentation on the basis of a rigour that can come close to ‘rigor mortis’ at times. I write this not out of arrogance, but out of frustration that debates in the wider intellectual environment seem mostly to be *purified* from the discussion of lifelong learning or to be marginalised to those with an interest in philosophy or theory. As a result, lifelong learning largely remains an impoverished under-theorised object. Thus, for this section of the chapter, while rehearsing some footings for my overall discussion, I claim little original or seek the origins to what I write. I gather words, discourses and concepts.

There has been sustained critique over decades now of the binaries that shape a crudely Western sensibility. These binaries are held to structure our ways of theorising and intervening, providing the conditions of possibility for how we might act in the world. A critical philosophical binary is that between epistemology and ontology, where the former, of how we can know something, has been the primary focus

of concern. Yet, such binaries already assume what they produce, insofar as the focus on knowing already presumes a relationship between matter and meaning, object and subject, which themselves are positioned as separate; this is to see them as related but in different ways from other theoretical positions from each other rather than related in specific ways.

A number of binaries can be found in the discussions of and research in life-long learning which already assume an epistemological-ontological separation. For instance,

Epistemology	Ontology
Meaning	Matter
Significance	Substance
Ephemerality	Stability
Subject	Object
Theory	Practice
Knowing	Becoming
Apparent	Real
Reflecting	Intervening
Thinking	Doing
Representing	Experimenting

Such binaries establish the terms of debate. Insofar as matter is separated from meaning, then the question arises over how we can represent the former in a meaningful way. Anthropologists explore these issues in their studies of cultural artefacts and their significance (Henare et al. 2007). However, meaningful is not necessarily truthful in the senses we have come to associate with the practices of the sciences – natural and social. Much space has been given to pursuing the ways in which humans can establish the truthfulness of meanings representing matter. This in itself presumes a separation of subject from object with the associated issue of how to fill the gap. The world is full of attempts at such a filling, yet the gap remains. Objects object. They remain the other to the subject, separate.

From a range of positions, the assumption of foundational separations has been subject to sustained critique. This critique entails not simply an attempt to privilege ontology over epistemology, reversing the binary, but to reframe our whole entanglements within the world. Writers associated with these moves include Judith Butler, Donna Harraway, Ian Hacking, Bruno Latour and Karen Barad. Yet, these are unfamiliar names in the writings of lifelong learning. Their works are distinctive if overlapping, and I would suggest contributing to what I am calling a post-human condition insofar as the knowing human subject is decentred by a concern for ways of enacting within the world.

Barad (2007: 137), a quantum physicist turned feminist philosopher, provides a succinct critique of the problem with a representationalist epistemology:

Representationalism takes the notion of separation as foundational. It separates the world into the ontologically disjunct domains of words and things, leaving itself with the dilemma of their linkage such that knowledge is possible... representationalism is a prisoner of the problematic metaphysics it postulates.



She is drawing upon a distinction made by previously made by Hacking (1983) between representing/theorising and intervening/experimenting as orientations in the world, where the former has been separated out and given primacy over the latter. This separation results from and in the dividing of matter from meaning and further divides the material into, for instance, the social, the human, the natural, the technological, the cultural and the economic. These distinctions are then taken to be foundational and a priori rather than themselves being forms of enactment, the manifestation of what Latour (1993) would refer to as *purifying practices*. For Barad (2007: 53), ‘representationalism is a practice of bracketing out the significance of practices, that is, representationalism marks a failure to take account of the practices through which representations are produced’. Representations are taken to be objects that are then black-boxed and taken for granted.

This might look like a social constructivist view, but it is important to distinguish it from such, as realism and social constructivism are held to rely on the same representationalist separation of matter/object and meaning/subject. Meaning may be constructed rather than simply reflect reality in a mirror-like way, but it remains separated out from matter, leaving untroubled the fundamental binaries informing them. It is for this reason that both Hacking (1999) and Latour (1999) are highly critical of the supposed radicalness of social constructivist approaches to research. Both realism and social constructivism remain human/subject-centric, because of an a priori separation of meaning and matter.

By contrast, the writers I am drawing upon formulate performative or enacting framings of worldliness, a world of thinging. Within such framings, meaning is not separate from matter. Indeed, an a priori assumption is that rather than separation as foundational to enacting a purified human condition, entanglement is materially and practically fundamental to a hybridised post-human condition. Objects are not entirely separate entities, but are mixings, gatherings, things, what Latour (1993) refers to as ‘quasi-objects’ in his argument that we have never been modern, i.e. purified. In other words, separations are particular enactments of gathering and mixing. Thus, for instance,

to theorise is not to leave the material world behind and enter the domain of pure ideas where the lofty space of the mind makes objective reflection possible. *Theorising, like experimenting, is a material practice...* both theorists and experimentalists engage in the intertwined practices of theorising and experimenting... *experimenting and theorising are dynamic practices that play a constitutive role in the production of objects and subjects and matter and meaning* (Barad 2007: 55–6, emphasis in original).

Similar positions have also been developed in the discussion of material culture in anthropology. For instance,

discourse can have effects not because it ‘over-determines reality’, but because no ontological distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘reality’ pertains in the first place. In other words, concepts can bring about things because concepts and things are just one and the same. (Henare et al. 2007: 13)

Things as gatherings should not be confused with a concept of separate objects with properties. The latter is seen as very much tied to a representationalist epistemology

within which the world is made up of objects ‘out-there’ that we try to know ‘in-here’ – within the knowing subject. These objects are the ‘matters of fact’ of which Latour (2004, 2005, 2008) is critical as an adequate basis for critical political action. Matters of fact assume and enact a representationalist epistemology of separation untangled from the practices through which they are performed. They are the property of the human subject who knows.

By contrast, for Latour, things are gathered and negotiated as ‘matters of concern’. This argument draws upon and extends earlier work by Heidegger (2009: 118) on the nature and etymology of things and objects: ‘the Old High German word “thing” means a gathering, and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter’. Things are a mixing, an entanglement. They gather the human and non-human in their enactments. They are material and they matter. They cannot simply be represented as there are practices associated with their gathering or enactment, and represented. By contrast, objects are represented as existing separate from one another a priori, and the practices through which they have been gathered are naturalised or lost. ‘Naturalisation means stripping away the contingencies of an object’s creation and its situated nature. A naturalised object has lost its anthropological strangeness’ (Bowker and Star 1999: 299).

It is this view of things that led Heidegger (2009: 122) to argue that there is a need to ‘step back from the thinking that merely represents – that is, explains – to the thinking that responds and recalls’. This notion of responding informs the sense of responsibility that I will argue could be part of a post-human experimental condition.

Where does this leave us? Crudely, we might say that, within a representationalist enactment of the world, practices produce matters of fact through the representation of objects with properties by the knowing subject. This arises from and contributes to a Newtonian notion of matter. By contrast, in a post-human enactment of the world, practices gather different things as matters of concern through their own forms of experimentation. This arises from and contributes to a quantum notion of matter. Of course, matters of fact might be considered a particular form of gathering, a particular mattering (Law 2004), as the practices through which they are gathered and assembled become part of the topography to be explored. Things may be gathered and separated as objects, but, in examining their gathering, objects become things. Thus, I am not using matters of fact and concern as a binary. Matters of fact might be said to be a particular way of enacting concern. Here, as Latour (2004: 232, emphasis in original) argues

Matters of fact are not all that is given in experience. Matters of fact are only very partial and, I would argue, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern and only a subset of what could be called *states of affairs*.

Those matters of fact are based upon drawing distinctions and objectifying the other, while matters of concern might be thought of as entailing entangling with the other through, what Barad refers to (2007) as particular apparatuses.

*Practices of knowing are specific material engagements that participate in (re)configuring the world. Which practices we enact matter – in both senses of the word. Making knowledge is not simply about making facts but about making worlds, or rather it is about making*

specific worldly configurations – not in the sense of making them *ex nihilo*, or out of language, beliefs, or ideas, but in the sense of materially engaging as part of the world in giving it specific material form. (Barad 2007: 91, emphasis in original)

The enactment of lifelong learning as a thing, a gathering, as post-human forms of experimentation and intervention, does not necessarily sit comfortably with the hegemonic discourse we face in much educational and other research where the knowing subject is privileged. It is important therefore, in reconfiguring our entanglements of the world, to consider whether a post-human condition can be one of lifelong learning or whether, in enacting the post-human, we need less learning and more responsible experimenting.

Rather than the subject representing the object through sense data of, for instance, observation, we enter into the spatio-temporal practices of gathering and experimentation. Knowing is not separate from doing but emerges from the very matterings in which we engage. This relies on apparatuses, which *'are not mere observing instruments but boundary-drawing practices – specific material (re)configurings of the world – which come to matter'* (Barad 2007: 140, emphasis in original). To gather is also to draw boundaries, to include and exclude. Here, Barad is drawing upon and attempting to extend the performative epistemology of Judith Butler (1993). It is through the specific forms of boundary-drawing that enactments gather the world as particular things and objects. This form of work is a way of dwelling materially *within* the world and not simply another way of representing views *about* the world. Differences are not simply about matters of opinion and truth, but about ways of experimenting and gathering.

## The End of Lifelong Learning?

The concept of lifelong learning has been much represented, debated, discussed and critiqued over the last 15 years. For some, it has been the ideological weapon of neo-liberalism. For others, it is a sham or an irrelevancy. For yet others, it has provided an opportunity to insert different practices into the framing of education. A lot of the discussion of lifelong learning has focussed on its political and ideological significance. Foucauldians and neo-Marxists have each in their different ways explored the exercises of power within lifelong learning. Philosophers of education have attempted to frame lifelong learning as an aspect of, or integral to, the good or worthwhile life. The terrain of lifelong learning is therefore littered with a huge biodiversity of meanings. But do any of them matter? Or matter that much? Who and what are gathered in the concerns of and for lifelong learning?

From the discussion above, we can experiment with lifelong learning as a post-human condition and the post-human condition as one of lifelong learning, but not as we currently represent it. Post-human lifelong learning can be positioned as an entanglement of the human and non-human. Gathering lifelong learning, enacting the thinginess of lifelong learning, could be a fertile mixing. It could become a matter of concern. While some, such as Gough (2004), have experimented with post-human

experiments in education, in particular, the technological extensions of the human in curriculum and pedagogy, little if any of the thinging of lifelong learning has addressed the issue beyond metaphorical uptakes of the cyborg. In this section of the chapter, I want to gather what could be some of the practices of a post-human lifelong learning. In the process, I will speculate that a post-human condition cannot be one of learning, despite what is said and the extension to education to which humans are being subject. The latter rests upon a continued humanist and representationalist separation of subjects and objects. A post-human condition could be one of experimentation, of gathering humans and non-humans. This is an educational purpose beyond the representationalism that has suffused major educational discourses and practices.

Despite Freud's warning, in education, we are familiar with the desire for predictability and the capacity to master or mandate the future. Audit and accountability are merely contemporary enactments of those desires. At the heart of much educational policy making in Europe and elsewhere in recent years are attempts at mastery of the future, of the knowledge economy and social inclusion, with lifelong learning often positioned as the or one of the means to achieve these. The obligatory passage point for education policy becomes the knowledge economy and education in the form of lifelong learning is duly harnessed and reduced to service its production. It is through the uptake of lifelong learning to support the knowledge economy that seemingly the future can be mastered. Here, lifelong learning is the simple service response to globalised complexity and uncertainty. The more challenges and uncertainty in the world, the more one must learn. Learning here might be seen to reduce unpredictability and that is across the life course by humans. Lifelong learning is represented as a matter of fact for and by humans, a way of representing the objective world to which the separate subject must adapt. The human subject is centred as that which must learn about the world.

However, to learn, humans have to gather and experiment. Learning emerges from the entanglement with the non-human. Thus, while humanism focuses on the mind and learning as a form of reflection, contemplation, abstraction and representation to establish matters of fact, I am suggesting that a post-human condition could position learning as a gathering of the human and non-human in experimentation to establish and engage with matters of concern. However, it could also be that rather than gathering differently, we might want to do away with learning altogether as the role for education. Here, a post-human condition could position experimentation as a gathering of the human and non-human to establish matters of concern – education as practices. This provides an educational purpose different from much of that which is familiar. It is not the human subject who learns through experimenting rather than representing, but a thing that is gathered.

Here I think the works of people like Gert Biesta and Tara Fenwick are useful. Both are concerned with educational purposes and responsibilities. While they would not necessarily position their own work as post-human, the more general 'post-' thing is part of their matters of concern. Biesta draws upon pragmatic and post-structuralist theories in much of his work, and some of his ideas can be gathered to the post-human condition I am positing. For instance, in his critique of critical pedagogy's desire for a language of possibility, Biesta (1998) extends Freud's

idea of the impossibility of mandating the future to all human interactions and suggests, drawing on Derrida and Foucault, that practices need to be developed around an ‘emancipatory ignorance’.

It just is an ignorance that does not claim to know how the future will be or will have to be. It is an ignorance that does not show the way, but only issues an invitation to set out on the journey. It is an ignorance that does not say what to think of it, but only asks, ‘What do you think about it?’ In short it is an ignorance that makes room for the possibility of disclosure. (Biesta 1998: 505)

Biesta’s argument is related specifically to critical pedagogy, but it is relevant to the reformulation of a discourse of education more generally. He and Osberg (Osberg and Biesta 2007) suggest that this calls for a pedagogy of invention. An emancipatory ignorance and a pedagogy of invention (experimentation) sit well within the post-human condition I am attempting to gather.

Similarly, in his critique of the language of learning and argument for a specifically educational discourse, Biesta (2004: 76) has argued for three interlocking principles: ‘trust without ground, transcendental violence and responsibility without knowledge’. With regard to the first, his suggestion is that education involves the unexpected and that this entails trust because there is risk involved. His second principle involves challenging and confronting students with otherness and difference. This entails ‘interrupting’ them, what he refers to as coming into presence, and the possibility of openness to difference. This approach involves transcendental violence as it creates difficult situations, but it is only through these that coming into presence become possible. The third principle, responsibility without knowledge, is based on the notion that educators have unlimited responsibility for the subjectivities of students, but that this is not based on any practice of calculation. In later work with Osberg that draws upon complexity theory (Osberg and Biesta 2007: 47), they suggest that ‘teachers are responsible *both* for the emergence of the world (the future) *and* for the emergence of human subjectivity’.

These ideas signify notions that are a far cry from any certainty about the teleological goals of education and how they are to be achieved, although they remain primarily concerned with the education of the human subject and less with the materiality of education. Nonetheless, the practices identified could be said to be enacted through practices of constant experimentation in response to others rather than aimed at fulfilling ultimate purposes as ends. While Biesta is interested in these notions as educational, it is a reconfigured understanding of education as not restricted to educational institutions. They rely on emancipatory ignorance, invention, risk, otherness, interruption and the joint enacting of worlds and subjectivities. The latter in particular points to the entanglings of the human and non-human through which matters of concern can be gathered.

Formulating lifelong learning in this way may seem absurd. When outcomes, standardisation, audit and outputs are to the fore, what spaces are there for educational discourses around post-human experimentation in matters of concern? It is here that I find the concepts of fallibility and conditionality in addition to impossibility helpful. Fallibility because it points to the notion that, even if we practise upon the basis of the best available evidence we have, we know full well it is not perfect,

that we cannot mandate. This in turn results in and from a position of conditionality, that is, that we *could* do something rather than we *should* do something. Thus, my use of the conditional in relation to lifelong learning being a post-human condition or a post-human condition of after-learning or experimenting, as I am not saying it should be or is. It could be if we respond and experiment responsibly in specific ways. Our practices are only as good as we currently can establish, and they are a process of experimenting in gathering concerns, rather than any simple exercise in mandating and mastery and representing matters of fact. However, we might also consider lifelong learning as too capable of being recouped into a familiar representationalist epistemology, in which case we carry on as before.

From the above, the normative basis for what we do becomes a more modest experimental affair (Haraway 1997) of mixing matters. Fallibility and conditionality provide a basis for invention, for experimentation in practices, based upon how well and widely we enact things. It is in this spirit that I think Biesta's suggestion that we adopt an approach of 'responsibility without knowledge' seems to have resonance. This

requires that we give up, or at least hold back, all the 'tricks of the trade,' all the wisdom of the world, all national curricula and educational strategies, all recipes for 'what works,' in order to be able to approach newcomers without an agenda or pre-conception, but in a way in which we can ask them what they are bringing to the world. It is in this way that educators take a responsibility for something that they cannot know. It is a responsibility without knowledge. (Biesta, quoted in Fenwick 2009)

Biesta is drawing upon Derrida (1992: 41), in particular, his argument that 'the condition of this thing called responsibility is a certain experience and experiment of the possibility of the impossible: the testing of the *aporia* from which one may invent the only possible invention, the impossible invention'. Invention is based in the tension in the impossibility of mandating the future. It is also based upon a decentred human subject, as to engage with the possibility of the impossible is to experiment and a subject experimenting with objects is left with a representational gap, while a post-human gathering provides practices for further experimentation.

Fenwick (2009) provides similar conclusions from her own concerns for educational responsibility. Her work is not explicitly post-human, but has become more focused on the socio-material, drawing upon actor-network theory and complexity theory. She follows the line of gathering that responsibility is about responding to others. The important thing to bear in mind is that others and otherness are not simply human subjects, but can be both human and non-human. For Fenwick (2009), educational responsibility requires that 'educators might think of doing less rather than more: focus on the immediate, open to possibility, leap into uncertainty, care without knowledge'. In other words, to be responsible is to experiment, to risk failure, including that some matters of concern may not become a thing with which to be engaged, and that things can fall apart.

For me, however unsatisfactory, the concept of lifelong learning could symbolise an educational expression of a post-human condition, precisely because it opens up possibilities for humans beyond their subjecthood. It could also gather responsible engagement with the non-human in our thingings. These provide conditions for

modesty in both the claims we might make and how we might proceed. However, in the process, I also think there could be an end to lifelong learning in such a gathering, as experimental practices around matters of concern could take precedence over learning through the representation of matters of fact. The purpose of education would not be lifelong learning but experimentation.

## Experimentation: The Post-human Condition?

Post-human experimentation, fallibility, conditionality and responsibility, these seem to be ways forward from the notion of education as an impossible practice and the limits arising from the separation of subjects from objects. They open up possibilities of course, but not on the notion of mandating the future or any strong normative view about what education can achieve or how it can achieve. They put us all in a position of experimenting, whether we are engaged in policy work, teaching, leading or researching. And perhaps they are necessary if we are to sustain and develop modest democratic practices and the institutions to support them. Perhaps then some worthwhile things would be possible.

So could we then need to drop the notion of learning altogether? Perhaps, rather than a post-human condition of lifelong learning, we could enact a post-human condition of experimentation that embraces risk, responsibility and emancipatory ignorance. To suggest a future for education without learning and the knowing subject may seem strange. However, learning as a concept has evolved from the study of psychology which has at its heart precisely the centring of the human subject. In gathering lifelong learning as a post-human condition then, we could end up sacrificing the notion of lifelong learning itself, as it could be that the post-human cannot be one of learning, lifelong or otherwise. Educational purposes would be around responsible experimental gatherings of things that matter. Would that be such an irresponsible thing?

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# Chapter 12

## Reflections on a Definition: Revisiting the Meaning of Learning

Jan Visser

### Introduction

We learn all the time. Literally. We learn all the time we live. In fact, learning and living are profoundly intertwined. Learning is an integral aspect of what it means to live a fully human life. It starts nine months before we are born and ends when we die. Or does it? Any new human organism emerges in the context of an evolutionary history – genetically as well as culturally – that allows it to take over from and build on what those who went before it left behind. Thus, others will similarly take over from us and build on what, of our own learning, remains relevant and valid for future generations.

Increasingly, such future generations, including those that are growing up right now, will be ‘planetary’ generations. The pervasive opportunities to share information around the world is making us and them more and more aware of what we share, within the limits of a small planet, in terms of opportunities, resources, diversity and, particularly also, challenges and problems. This modern-day context has profound implications for how we should look at learning in a lifelong, life-wide and trans-generational perspective. Inequitable access to increasingly limited resources such as food; injustice in the distribution of wealth and power around the globe; scarcity of water; insufficiencies of the traditional ways of producing energy; degradation of ecosystem services; disintegration of societal coherence; unbridled urbanisation and unchecked pollution as well as dramatic loss of biodiversity are just some of the crucial issues we are facing, which will be increasingly among the concerns of future generations if humanity is to survive at all (e.g. Barnosky et al. 2011). They are all an integral part of a polycrisis the solution of which is a *conditio sine qua non* for sustaining human life on earth (Morin and Kern 1999; Crutzen 2002; Sachs 2007). The challenges the world faces in terms of sustained constructive

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human presence on earth, and the risks involved in not responding adequately and in a timely fashion to such challenges, make serious, profound and continual reflection on how and what we learn and how learning should be conceived, facilitated and nurtured, both urgent and highly relevant. It requires that we start looking at learning differently, that we extend and deepen the meaning of learning.

## Different Visions of Learning

Probably the most common view of learning – the one that comes most immediately to mind in people when they hear the word ‘learning’ – is that of children, adolescents or young adults being taught by someone knowledgeable in a physical space that looks like a classroom with the use of some basic aids to facilitate communication, such as a blackboard or a textbook. Expanding beyond that rudimentary vision, it may be recognised that a physical classroom does not need to have walls. A class can be gathered in the shade of a tree or under a roof without walls, as I have frequently seen while working in African countries; a chalkboard may be an improvised painted scrap of wood, textbooks may be absent because they are out of reach for the poor, and teachers may have deficient content knowledge and lack propitious pedagogical skills, but they will usually be well motivated to give of their best to those being taught. On the other end of the luxury spectrum, one sees classrooms that are opulently equipped with comfortable furniture, effective communication tools, demonstration devices, facilities to allow learners to acquire hands-on experience, with teachers who are among the finest and most knowledgeable known. Besides, whatever the level of luxury or sophistication, classrooms do not have to be physical spaces. They can also be closed or open virtual learning environments in which students interact with each other and the online teachers or facilitators who accompany them in their learning efforts via digital means without being physically, and not necessarily synchronously, present, supporting themselves in their learning efforts by tools and facilities they seek out wherever they can find them in their real-life physical or virtual environment.

Whichever of the above modalities is involved in the learning process, most people will likely think of learning as something that takes place under conditions that have been deliberately planned, having particular learning goals in mind to serve the assumed or expressed needs of learners. Indeed, the schooling metaphor prominently dominates what is subsumed under, if not explicitly articulated in, most commonly accepted definitions of learning. Consequently, lifelong learning is frequently interpreted in terms of lifelong exposure and access to opportunities to become part of such deliberately planned learning experiences as face-to-face courses or training events of some kind, of short or longer duration; varied distance education experiences; and individually or collectively pursued self-taught courses. However, it so happens that such intentional learning – intended by either the learner or someone who sees an opportunity to attend to assumed learning needs – are but a tiny part of our learning life (e.g. Bransford et al. 2008). We learn all the time, even while we

sleep. Agreement with that latter claim obviously depends on how one defines learning. Let us therefore look at the meaning of learning.

## The Meaning of Learning

In an attempt to better understand the meaning of learning, the Learning Development Institute embarked, during the early years of the current millennium, on the Learning Stories Project (Y. L. Visser and J. Visser 2000; J. Visser et al. 2000; Learning Development Institute: Meaning of Learning [MOL] n.d.). Several hundred people around the world were asked the question: ‘What has been the most meaningful learning experience in your life?’ Respondents were young, mature and of advanced age; literate as well as illiterate; from developing nations alongside industrialised ones; and they were usually approached in the context of workshops, meetings, training programmes, everyday work settings or online. They were told to consider learning not only as the outcome of formal events but to look in an equally serious manner at what they had learned outside such formal settings. Most of their answers were given in the form of a one-or-two-page written mini-essay, but some chose to respond by way of a poem, a drawing, a verbally delivered narrative or by acting something out. Respondents were furthermore asked to clarify why they thought these learning experiences deserved to be considered particularly meaningful and what conditions had allowed them to occur. After analysis of the collected narratives, the results revealed a clear trend among those who participated for learners to be seen as inhabitants of not just one, but a wide variety of learning spaces, the large majority of which are not inspired by the above mentioned schooling metaphor (J. Visser et al. 2002; M. Visser and J. Visser 2003b). The most dramatically meaningful learning experiences reported were often associated with emotions, an area the importance of which generally receives little attention in formal education. Meaningful learning experiences almost invariably occurred outside the formal learning context.

It makes sense, therefore, to conceive of a learning landscape that is truly comprehensive, comprising formal, non-formal as well as informal learning, through which learners and communities of learning navigate along and across the lifespan. The three concepts just mentioned, formal, non-formal and informal learning, are commonly listed in that order, referring to decreasing levels of formality in structure, requirements and expectations as well as in order of decreasing assumed relevance and importance. It is a kind of compartmentalisation that may appeal to policy makers and planners of educational infrastructure; however, from the perspective of the learner it does not make sense. The true lifelong learner perceives of his or her learning as an integral experience. Thus, Colley et al. (2002) conclude, on the basis of a wide-ranging study of relevant literature about formal, non-formal and informal learning, that the limits of and associations between these concepts can only be understood with reference to the wider historical, social, political and economic contexts of learning, and to the theoretical view of learning held by those who use these concepts.

Let us look at this in more detail.

## The Elusive Concept

Informal learning is an elusive concept and, properly speaking, a misnomer. It is a misnomer because learning is neither formal nor informal. Learning is just learning. What may be different and distinguishable in terms of the level of formality involved is not learning per se, but rather the prompts that cause us to learn and the circumstances in which we learn. Thus, for the purpose of this chapter, the term ‘informal learning’ should be taken to mean ‘learning in informal settings’. It is a reference to all the learning we engage in outside of contexts that have been deliberately planned and structured to facilitate the attainment of specific learning goals, often with the intent that competence gains, achieved through such learning, be measured and certified.

Learning outside any of the formal contexts referred to above may in fact be more important and more pervasive than what we learn in formal settings. Livingstone (1999) likens informal learning to an iceberg – ‘mostly invisible at the surface and immense in its mostly submerged informal aspects’ (p. 17). According to the survey of informal learning among Canadian adults on which Livingstone’s study is based, over 95% of those surveyed ‘are involved in some form of explicit informal learning activities that they can identify as significant’ (p. 20). They typically dedicate an average of around 15 hours a week to such informal learning.

The above figure does not take into account tacit informal learning. Explicit informal learning is distinct from tacit informal learning in that in the case of the former the learner consciously identifies such learning as significant, both in terms of the knowledge, understanding or skill acquired and the process of acquisition involved (Livingstone 1999, pp. 3–4). The above finding is consistent with earlier studies in both Canada (e.g. Tough 1979) and the USA (particularly studies based on the *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth* 1979). According to Livingstone’s analysis, the trend towards informal learning has increased significantly over the past decades and particularly most recently. Nonetheless, despite its magnitude and common occurrence, the impact of informal learning on human behaviour often fails to become explicitly visible. The reason is a simple one. If no conditions are specifically put in place to make the learning happen, few researchers will go out to measure it. It is simply taken for granted, the same way that the parameters that condition it are taken for granted. Moreover, existing perceptions and definitions of learning are mostly still thoroughly grounded in the idea that learning is the result of some deliberate action on the part of forces outside the learner, be it thoughtfully crafted instruction or exposure to and immersion in a purposefully designed learning environment. In the perspective of such definitions, the learner is the object of an intervention aimed at bringing about change in the learner. Research based on such definitions typically zooms in on learning outcomes and sometimes, which is more interesting, on the processes learners engage in while learning. In the absence of deliberate interventions, it is usually recognised that learning can still take place. However, if it does, it is seen as incidental or accidental and seldom given the importance that is attributed to learning in the formal context.

Yet, informal learning is ubiquitous, frequently appearing in circumstances that we do not normally think of as learning contexts. Besides, it may serve purposes that are not necessarily the same as those that drive most formal learning efforts. More particularly, such purposes are often beyond what is required for ‘enhancing productivity in the economic sphere’ (UNESCO 1999, p. 6). In addition, the population of informal learners may have characteristics that are different from those that characterise the formal learners. One of the interesting, counterintuitive, findings in Livingstone’s (1999) study is that, among those surveyed, ‘the less schooled appear in many instances and significant dimensions of knowledge to be at least as competent as the more highly schooled’ (p. 23). All these deviations from the mainstream perceptions we have about learning make it difficult to pin down what is exactly going on here. This causes informal learning to be treated as something of minor importance that is thought to take place at the margins – or even totally outside – of the realm of ‘real’ learning, and therefore not worthy of our serious attention. We know precious little about informal learning. Or, as Livingstone observes,

The submerged informal part of the iceberg of detectable adult learning does not have the same hierarchical structure as the pyramid of organized education. We are really still at the ‘ether stage’ of understanding the processes and outcomes of informal learning, with little comprehension of their internal dynamics. (pp. 22–23)

The fact that we know so little is a good reason to try and find out more.

## **A Brief Indicative Survey of the Learning Landscape**

The learning landscape is complex, varied and comprehensive. Formal learning is part of it, but so are multiple other modalities of learning. Below we will highlight some areas of interest, other than formal learning, that merit our attention. The overview is far from complete. The purpose of presenting the overview is to make visible the wide-ranging nature of the learning landscape and the diversity of learning modalities comprised in it.

### ***Free-Choice Learning***

Learning results, for instance, from people’s interaction with expressions of culture, the beauty of nature and the products of human ingenuity and achievement via museums, concert halls, theatres, cinemas, archaeological parks and nature reserves. The extent to which people learn in such contexts is usually a matter of their own choice, whence the notion of free-choice learning coined by Falk and Dierking (2002). We note though that many different designations are in use, all of them pointing at different aspects of the same multifaceted phenomenon.

## *Learning in Social Settings*

Next come people's participation in community-based organisations, and, increasingly, their involvement in digital modes of dialogic communication, such as via social networking Internet sites or while playing web-based video games.

## *Learning in the Workplace*

Another area is that of informal learning in the workplace, the pervasiveness and importance of which are being recognised (e.g. Loewenstein and Spletzer 1999) while at the same time it is clear that 'any distinctions there are among formal training, informal training, and learning by doing' still await further analysis (Frazis and Spletzer 2005, p. 57).

## *Distance Education*

Important alternatives to traditional ways of formal learning in the face-to-face mode furthermore exist thanks to a growing endeavour to offer courses and even entire educational programmes via distance education. This mode of educational provision has existed for a long time, using the postal services in addition to radio and TV to allow students and teachers or facilitators to communicate with each other (e.g. Schramm et al. 1967). However, distance education has really taken off grand scale – and in the process become better known as e-learning – more recently with the advent of Internet-based communication and the use of web-based teaching-learning platforms that allow for patterns of interaction to develop among students and teachers that rival those offered by the traditional classroom (Moore and Tait 2002). If properly employed, which unfortunately still rarely happens, the use of these new technologies in education may actually do a better job for those desirous to learn, but lacking the time to fill the seats of conventional classrooms, than the traditional school.

## *Self-Learning*

Most distance education attempts to emulate the characteristics of formal school-based teaching and learning (Simonson 2000). Students who learn in the distance education mode are thus usually motivated by the prospect of receiving diplomas, certificates and degrees from providing institutions to which they pay. However, an additional way of learning – for learning's sake rather than for

diplomas, and costing little or no money – is emerging thanks to the same technologies that drive the expansion of distance education. Increasingly, educational materials are being made available over the Internet either for free (see e.g. OER Foundation [n.d.](#); MIT Open Course Ware [n.d.](#); TV Ontario [n.d.](#); Science Friday [n.d.](#)) or at prices that are a mere minor fraction of what one would pay for attending classes at a traditional institution (e.g. Teaching Company [n.d.](#)).

### *Early Learning*

Interestingly, perhaps the most powerful informal learning we engage in during the lifespan occurs at the start of life, at a time when there is little else to engage in but feeding ourselves and getting to know the world around us in ways that allow us to start manipulating our environment to our advantage (Gopnik et al. 1999). It is a discovery journey in which the infant takes the lead and to which the adult environment responds in a spontaneous and caring fashion, cautiously providing encouragement when possible while carefully avoiding anything that might disrupt or discourage the informal learning process. Facilitating the infant's learning is seen, by those who attempt to nurture it, as a process of interacting with opportunities naturally afforded by the learning child. How different this often becomes when the child goes to school!

Much of early learning is a play of reciprocal action and response between infant and caretakers. Based on Donald's (2001, p. 255) assertion that such early interactions 'interlock the infant's growing mind with those of its caretakers and ultimately the broader society', Egan (2008, p. 46) argues:

The peek-a-boo game, the mutual sticking out of tongues, the hiding and revealing, the weeping and the laughter – will later find their way into language. The rituals of expectation and satisfaction become stories; the pretend games become metaphors; our sense of humor becomes jokes; sequences and patterns become mathematics and rhymes, and so on.

Such learning is all but formal. It is self-organised among those who partake in it as is much of what we learn in later life, sometimes helped in fundamental ways by what we learn in formal settings. However, the rigidity of formal learning can equally well lead, as a number of the learning stories we gathered shows, to blocking or frustrating the way to further development when the child goes to school. Gaining better insight into the workings of informal learning may well be important in the first place for getting a better handle on how informal and formal learning should be conceived—each of them—as part of an integrated learning landscape, ecologically co-existing and interacting with each other, rather than in separation from one another (J. Visser 2008). Besides, important lessons derived from how we effectively learn informally, and how such learning can be facilitated, may well also reveal ways in which formal learning can be improved.

## ***Learning for Transition and Completion***

Learning in old age, often prompted by the experience of painful loss; the need to cope with disease and debilitation; and the coming to terms with one's mortality (this might be named 'learning for completion') constitutes no doubt yet another powerful (and by its very nature final) occasion for the individual to learn – learning in ways that have no longer much to do with how and what one learned in school. Yet, it is learning all the same, and perhaps the most profound learning experience we may engage in during our lifetime. In fact, learning for completion may be seen as a special instance of 'learning for transition', a similar act of learning, often stretched out over several years and having to do with the necessity to redefine one's being-in-the-world. Examples of such transitions may include the passage from a life of school-based learning to one's integration in the world of work; starting to live together with a spouse; creating a family; seeing one's children leave home; and retirement. The transformations we undergo at such – and other less obvious – junctures in life are often profound. The learning processes we go through to make the transitions happen vary greatly across individuals, communities, cultures and circumstances.

## ***Organismic Learning***

Added to all of the above instances of learning at the individual level should be the notion of organismic learning.<sup>1</sup> We function not only at the individual level, but also as integrated elements in social entities, such as families, communities of practice or corporate bodies. Such social entities, just like individuals, learn, transform themselves and grow while they interact with the world around them.

## ***Transgressing Boundaries, ICT and the Learning Ecology***

The realisation that learning spaces do not exist in isolation is important in an age in which technologies make it not only possible, but increasingly likely, and even natural for learners not to feel confined to a particular learning space. Learners will readily transgress boundaries. When such transgression becomes the norm rather than the exception, it is only natural for researchers to become interested in how the different learning spaces are connected among themselves as part of a wider learning

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'organismic learning' is used instead of 'organisational learning' to give the concept a broader meaning that can just as easily be applied to self-organised social units, such as families, as to deliberately organised social entities, such as corporate bodies. Most of the literature on organisational learning refers to the latter.



ecology rather than to focus on what happens within a particular learning space, be it formal or informal. Thus, Sefton-Green (2004) argues, with regard to the role played by information and communication technologies (ICT) in the lives of children, that the recognition that so many children are now ‘immersed in ICT related activities in their homes and with their friends requires us to acknowledge a wider “ecology” of education where schools, homes, playtime, the library and the museum all play their part’ (pp. 5–6). However, it is not just technology that provokes such change. As Brown and Duguid (1996) noted eight years earlier in regard of what drives change in another learning space, the university, ‘It’s probably less helpful... to say simply that the university will change because of changing technologies than to say the emerging computational infrastructure will be crucially important in retooling the already changing university...’ (p. 2). The drivers of change in today’s world are multiple. Technology is but one of them. Thus, speaking three years later at a gathering of the American Association for Higher Education, Brown (1999) furthermore suggested that by taking a fresh look at ‘the notions of learning, working and playing in the digital age and how today’s kids – growing up digital – might actually be quite different from what we might first think’, we may have a chance ‘by stepping back and looking at the forces and trends underlying the digital world,...to create a new kind of learning matrix, one that I will call a learning ecology’ (p. 3). The perspective suggested by Brown shifts the usual focus on ICT as an opportunity for doing more of the same by different means to one that is concerned with changing the very meaning of learning. Coincidentally, the present author arrives at the notion of a learning ecology from a different angle, namely by considering that learning entities at different levels of organisational complexity – ranging from the individual to the social – behave like Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) (J. Visser 1999). He thus argues that it is crucially important to recognise the ecological wholeness of the learning environment. Learning entities (individual/social) at diverse levels of organisational complexity live in that environment. They use its resources and are themselves part of the resources that make up the environment. They are organised and should be allowed to self-(re)organise perpetually, in a complex web of nested frameworks relevant to human learning behaviour as it relates to different timeframes and spatial contexts (pp. 11–12).

A more elaborate argument for the interpretation of the learning ecology in terms of Complex Adaptive Systems, and its implications for how learning should be redefined in such a perspective, appeared in the first edition of this handbook (J. Visser 2001).

### ***Multiplicity of Meanings***

The above explorations, incomplete and condensed as they are, cannot provide but an indicative view of the complexity and richness of what human learning entails. They should have shown, though, that today’s learners find themselves in a learning landscape that is richly multifaceted and constantly and dramatically changing in

terms of the modalities through which people learn; the purposes for which they learn; and the context, including temporal and spatial frames of reference, in which learning acquires its meaning. They should also have made clear that traditional definitions of learning poorly capture such complexity, richness and beauty.

## Reenvisioning Learning

The marginal attention paid to learning beyond what happens in the world of formal education, instruction and training may be linked to the tendency to define learning, implicitly or explicitly, in terms of what happens inside of the purposely established human and material infrastructure created to make formal learning happen, i.e. schools, providing general education at different levels, and training environments, created in response to more narrowly defined human performance improvement needs, often occasioned by opportunities and challenges one meets along the lifespan. The same tendency also leads to wishing to measure what is being achieved, which is necessary for certification of acquired skills. This is no doubt useful and serves recognised societal goals, at least in industrialised societies, but the strong focus – too strong from the vantage point of this author – on formal learning obfuscates a vision of learning that is more integral, complete and comprehensive.

Much of the educational literature assumes that we all share the same (restricted) notion of learning. It thus does not take the trouble to define the concept in depth. In fact, defining learning is far from easy. The difficulty is comparable to the difficulty of trying to define life. It is not too difficult to identify some basic characteristics of things that are alive, such as homeostasis, metabolism and reproduction, and it is not too difficult either to point to some specific things that happen when learning occurs, such as that someone's ability to perform specific tasks changes, but do we really capture the full complexity of what it means to be alive or what it means to be learning when we limit ourselves to merely identifying such basic features?

De Vaney and Butler (1996) assert that past definitions of learning have long remained under the spell of Hilgard's (1948) definition, which states that 'learning is the process by which activity originates or is changed through training procedures...as distinguished from changes by factors not attributable to training' (p. 4). That definition clearly excludes anything that might have resulted from the learner's exposure to a non-instructional or non-training setting. Only relatively recently has the close linkage between instruction and learning started to disappear. Thus, Driscoll (2000) analyses the definitional assumptions shared by current learning theories. She notes that, in order 'to be considered learning, a change in performance or performance potential must come about as a result of the learner's experience and *interaction with the world*' (p. 11; emphasis added). Moreover, Tessmer and Richey (1997), writing from an instructional design perspective, argue for broadening the design concerns to beyond the instructional context as such and to

recognise ‘context’ as an important factor in the design of instruction. These authors thus acknowledge that learning results from more than instruction per se.

Note that in the above definition by Driscoll (2000), which marks an important step forward when compared to prior definitions, the purpose of learning is still seen as ‘a change in performance or performance potential’ (p. 11). The purpose is utilitarian, and the focus is on the outcome rather than the process. However, learners and the learning environment in which learners operate do not exist in isolation from each other. They co-exist and co-evolve in a dialectic fashion. In other words, the question is not what one takes away from the learning environment; what one contributes to it is equally important and perhaps more crucial. Shotter (e.g. 1997) therefore emphasises the dialogic nature of learning, and thus the essential inclusion of other learners (who may be teachers or facilitators), in the learning context. Von Glasersfeld (1984) and Savery and Duffy (1995) do the same with particular reference to constructivist conceptions – radical constructivist conceptions in the case of the former – of the learning environment. John-Steiner (2000) elevates the idea of dialogue to the level of creative collaboration.

Uneasiness about too restraining definitions of learning can also be found in the collection of contributions by multiple authors to the special issue of the *Educational Technology Magazine* on broadening the definition of learning and the implications of doing so for educators and designers of instruction (Y. L. Visser et al. 2002). The same uneasiness was the prompt to two major transdisciplinary debates on the *Book of Problems* at the 2002 and 2003 annual conventions of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) (Learning Development Institute 2004; J. Visser and M. Visser 2003a; J. Visser et al. 2004) and a similar debate on *Learners in a Changing Learning Landscape* at the 2005 AECT convention (J. Visser 2005), which eventually resulted in a collaboratively authored volume on *Learners in a Changing Learning Landscape: Reflections from a Dialogue on New Roles and Expectations* (J. Visser and M. Visser-Valfrey 2008).

## Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations<sup>2</sup>

It is against the backdrop of the inadequacy of existing definitions of learning discussed in the previous section that I proposed in the first edition of this handbook an alternative definition of learning (J. Visser 2001), which I called an ‘undefinition’ because it aimed at removing the boundaries from around the existing, too narrowly conceived definitions of learning. The views of learning based on these too narrowly conceived definitions have long determined educational policies and research agendas that no longer fit the needs and interests of our time.

Following are some reflections *à propos* this undefinition.

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<sup>2</sup>Part of the first segment of this section is adapted from J. Visser (2008).

## *Constructive Interaction with Change*

Human learning is distinct from animal learning and machine learning. Humans operate at a level of consciousness not shared by other organisms in the animal kingdom (Edelman 2004) and most certainly not – some say not yet – by intelligent machines. It allows us to experience joy and sorrow as we transit through life. It is the cause of the eternal amazement with which we stand, generation after generation, in awe of who we are, where we came from, what we are here for and where we are going. It is at the origin of our sense of belonging, of being part of a larger whole, an experience to which we give expression in religious beliefs; mythologies; evolving worldviews based on the methodical and disciplined pursuit of scientific insight; and great works of art. Within the above perspective, being human means having the unique opportunity to participate consciously – for a brief period of time – in the evolution of the universe. During that ephemeral timeframe, we transform the world at the same time as we are transformed by the changing world around us. We do so consciously. Learning is what makes it happen.

Accordingly, human learning must be conceived of in terms of purposeful interaction with a constantly changing environment to which we continually seek to adapt while being ourselves the conscious participants in creating the change. ‘Constructive interaction with change’ thus ought to feature prominently in a definition of human learning, expressing what learning is ultimately all about. The focus, then, is no longer on the product but also, and perhaps more importantly, on the process. Besides, it should be recognised that not only individual human beings partake in such constructive conscious interaction with change. The same behaviour equally applies to social entities at a variety of levels of complex organisation of which humans are part. Learning takes place within, between and among individuals and social entities. The importance of ‘the social’ in this connection is further highlighted by a review study by Meltzoff et al. (2009, p. 288) on the *Foundations for a New Science of Learning*, which concludes that a ‘convergence of discoveries in psychology, neuroscience, and machine learning has resulted in principles of human learning that are leading to changes in educational theory and the design of learning environments’ and that a ‘key component [in this context] is the role of ‘the social’ in learning’.

Moreover, learning as conceived in this perspective is intimately interwoven with life itself. It is therefore not something one engages in merely from time to time, but rather a lifelong disposition, one that is characterised by openness towards dialogue. It is through this dialogue that we continually transform ourselves, each other and our environment. Hence, I define human learning as the ‘disposition of human beings, and of the social entities to which they pertain, to engage in continuous dialogue with the human, social, biological and physical environment, so as to generate intelligent behavior to interact constructively with change’ (J. Visser 2001, p. 453).

### ***From Consumers to Participant-Users of Learning Resources***

The prime initiative for setting up formal learning systems is generally not with the learners. Nations and states set up school systems to cater to society defined learning needs of those born within their bounds. Specific institutions in society, such as corporate and government entities, create training opportunities to meet their demand for specific competencies. Learners use those opportunities because of formal requirements and expectations, particularly those that pertain to their career development. While there is increasingly greater openness towards learner participation in structuring the learning experience and the environment in which it takes place, the learner is basically expected to accept the package for what it is. The learner is the consumer of a readymade or, at best, partly customisable product.

Beyond the formal learning environment, the learner's role is different. Yes, the prompts to learning may occasionally still be associated with the pursuit of formal learning objectives or formal expectations present in, for instance, the work environment of the learner. However, if so, it is the learner who determines how to pursue such goals. Moreover, prompts to learning are often not related to any such formal expectations, as argued earlier in this chapter in the section that surveyed the learning landscape. Individuals may pursue learning for reasons that are entirely detached from their participation in productive life. They select what to learn, identify opportunities to pursue their learning and take control over the ways in which they engage with such opportunities. Because of their informality, these processes are much 'messier' than formal ones. Informal learners swarm, so to say, throughout the learning landscape. Their presence in it is ecological in the sense that their use of its resources – including notably human resources – contributes to, rather than takes away from, the richness of the environment. Instead of simply being consumers, they are participant-users of the resources present in the learning landscape through which they pursue their lifelong journey.

### ***The Unbound Learning Environment***

To learners who conceive of themselves as independent of and not restricted to formal learning opportunities and resources, the learning environment that they see has no bounds. This remains true even if such learners may at times choose to use formal learning opportunities and resources, which they then do on the basis of a conscious and autonomous choice. They are, in the words of Nunan (1996), feral learners. They are not deterred by the absence in their proximate surroundings of readymade solutions for their particular interests and needs. Rather, they go out and negotiate opportunities wherever the environment affords them. They

do not necessarily stay the course of what they initially set out to do but allow themselves to branch off in different directions if this makes more sense to them. Feral learning, according to Hall (2008) is about ‘discovering what might be “out there” rather than reaching pre-defined targets’. She thus suggests that ‘feral learning is by nature student-led, holistic, transparent, respectful, seamless, a-curricular and complex’.

It would be a mistake to assume that one is either a formal or an informal learner. Most people engage in both kinds of learning and develop specific competencies and dispositions for the different settings in which they learn. As mentioned before, we all start out informally, but, in those societies where the school becomes a dominant reality in a child’s life, the perception of what constitutes the learning environment soon becomes narrowed down. Those who drop or walk out, or who are pushed out of the system, may more easily rediscover the full richness of the learning ecology than those who derive their success in life from conforming to the system. This may explain Livingstone’s (1999) earlier cited observation that ‘the less schooled [among the informal learners] appear in many instances and significant dimensions of knowledge to be at least as competent as the more highly schooled’ (p. 23). In view of the inseparability of informal and formal learning, expanding research to beyond the area of formal learning should therefore not try to isolate yet another area but rather seek to broaden the picture. The same applies to the actions of those responsible for setting policies of educational development (or wouldn’t it be better to call this ‘learning development’?).

### *Ecological Frameworks*

Particular attention should then go to exploring the ecological nature of learning. Doing so should bring into perspective that learning relates to adaptive human behaviour beyond the ‘deliberate acquisition of specific skills, knowledge, habits and propensities, motivated by individual choices or societal expectations, usually by exposing oneself to a purposely designed instructional – or self-instructional – process’ (J. Visser 2008). It should also seek to broaden the definition of learning (e.g. J. Visser 2001; Y. L. Visser et al. 2002). Research should thus be informed by theory that facilitates considering the complexity of the learning landscape. Conversely, it should contribute to such theory development. Besides, as Meltzoff et al. (2009, p. 288) conclude, innovative ‘educational practice... [should be] leading to the design of new experimental work’. Technological developments that facilitate self-organised social networking, such as the increasingly ubiquitous use of handheld communication devices (e.g. Scanlon et al. 2005) and the Semantic Web (e.g. Anderson and Whitelock 2004), provide interesting opportunities for making inroads into such research and practice, which, by nature of the reality under scrutiny in this chapter, requires creativity in developing novel methods of inquiry.

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# Chapter 13

## Egalitarian Policy Formulation in Lifelong Learning: Two Models of Lifelong Education and Social Justice for Young People in Europe

Melanie Walker

### Introduction

Education is a crucial element in having a good life – it is valued because of its intrinsic worth in human flourishing and its instrumental value in generating economic opportunities and achieving human rights. Not surprisingly, the right to education is enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Moreover, in advanced modern economies, not having a good education and high level skills reduces one's economic, social and political participation. I am here concerned more specifically with early adulthood, because it can influence lifetime development; choices become cumulative over time and mobility declines with age, so that advantages (or disadvantages) in early adulthood continue to influence lifelong learning capability, throughout life (Yacub 2008). Moreover, research by Iacovou and Aassve (2007) shows that young Europeans in their late teens and early twenties are at a higher risk of poverty than all other groups except for children and older people. It follows that education and training policies and systems need to be transformed to better meet the needs of young people in education, supporting them in making good decisions and choices to make the transition into the labour market (Cedefop 2010), but also to equip them as confident lifelong learners and democratic citizens.

Having said this, the assumption here is nonetheless that lifelong education is contested and that not all versions enhance agency and good lives. The version which most concerns government policy makers in Europe is one lacking a critical social vision, constructing lifelong education as a matter for individualised employability and skills development for service to employers in the local, national and global economy (Field 2000). Whereas early versions of lifelong education

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emphasised both personal development and social service, current concerns are more reductive, concerned with individualised change, economic development and even social control (Coffield 1999). Yet, as Field (2000) emphasises, it is important to retain earlier aspirations, because learning continually throughout life is vital if we are to make informed choices about our lives and the societies in which we live. Of course economic policies and demand-led labour market deficiencies also need attention, so that satisfying economic opportunities are available to complement the supply-side of lifelong education.

This chapter now proceeds from this point to outline the problem of inequalities in Europe with regard to young people's lives. I then sketch two models of education based on human capital and on human capabilities and propose that the richest and most egalitarian is one based on human capabilities, enabling a genuinely lifelong education for full human flourishing. Education – and lifelong education – is inescapably normative; it requires us to consider the worthwhile human qualities we want education to form and the kind of world we hope for through people's contributions to society. Education ought therefore to be an opportunity provider; in short, it matters for lifelong individual chances and fairer societies. I elaborate on Sen and Nussbaum's views on education and conclude with some policy principles for framing this approach to lifelong education.

## What Is the Problem?

Europe's future depends, among other things, on the development of public policies and actions that are conducive to the well-being of its young people and their full participation in education, work and society for both social cohesion and economic growth (World Youth Report 2007). Young people increasingly have to cope with complex situations of precariousness and risk; they also need to function as effective agents in the labour market and as citizens. There are still major opportunity differences for youth in Europe and unequal educational attainments; the poor are more likely to drop-out in the face of difficulties in performance at school (*Ibid*). Yet, fair inclusion in the educational system is ever more vital, since the confidence, resilience, knowledge and navigational skills that can be acquired through education are preconditions for participation in work, life and community domains, all crucial for full human flourishing. All this has been seriously exacerbated by the current global economic crisis and rising youth underemployment, unemployment and weak earning capacity (*Ibid*). To be sure, we live in a world and in a Europe of inequalities both of income and life chances for young people, so that we cannot claim that most European countries are free of social injustices (not everyone has fair access to the goods of society) or that everyone is succeeding in education. Even though some countries are doing better than others on equality metrics, it is still the case that educational inequalities, 'create an uneven playing field in terms of opportunities for youth to make a smooth transition to adulthood' (*Ibid*, p. 225). To take just one recent statistic from the United Kingdom, students from the highest

socio-economic group in the United Kingdom are nearly three times more likely than those from the lowest (manual, unskilled) group to get good grades at age 16 and six times more likely to attend university (Hinsliff 2009). Recent research in the United Kingdom also shows that the school children of graduates thrive – they are seven times more likely to do well at school than the children of parents who left school with no qualifications (Shepherd and Stevens 2010).

Not only do many young people not have access to a good education, the effects of school and college failure can be lifelong on people's identities and sense of hope and possibility. For example, Bourdieu writes that school dropouts and failures 'are obliged to bluff non-stop, for others and for themselves, with a permanently flayed, wounded or mutilated self image' (1999, p. 424). Formal education can diminish dignity and entrench identities which work against the best interests of young people and their futures. For example, Christin (1999, pp. 484–487), drawing from her interview with one teacher, describes an 'ordinary junior high school' for the children of workers on the outskirts of Paris, in which fights and daily violence are everyday events. The school is isolated in the middle of an industrial zone, the stairs and hallway are covered in graffiti and things are always like a 'real pressure cooker', says the teacher. Students come in late and wander in the halls, joining with those 'not in class', because they have been sent to the guidance counselor. Students are expected to line up at the classroom door but, 'even that's impossible... [some] get in line but then one calls to a friend in another class... it's endless insults and verbal abuse. The students are never all there, some come in the morning, some come for the afternoon, some disappear altogether for weeks'. Most of the chairs in the classroom are broken, so that it takes around 20 minutes before the class can even begin but the students are not interested, she says. 'Nothing gets them to participate, neither the appeals of grade, nor the intellectual interest, nor the taste for competition. Their passions are elsewhere' (*Ibid*, p. 486). For these young people, they must lead the life foisted on them by their social position rather than developing the autonomy to choose a life they genuinely value or to construct themselves as lifelong learners. Bourdieu and Champagne (1999) explain that those from culturally disadvantaged families and not wanted by the school system become convinced by this system that they in turn do not want anything to do with school or learning. Thus, one of their informants, Malik explained that, 'at school they don't ask me to get top marks... at school they let us have the choice of making a C, C+, D...so you might as well do as little as possible' (1999, p. 440). Those who feel unsuited to school are then further convinced to adapt their preferences and come to believe that that they are also unsuited for the jobs that a good education opens up (or in Malik's case, closes off).

Added to this, changes in the labour market in developed countries mean that careers and jobs are not for life as they may have been in the past but more insecure; together with the need to update one's skills and knowledge, young people need to be able to make their own opportunities and be flexible if they are to cope or do well in the labour market (White and Wynn 2004). A significant factor is being able to form longer term goals and aspire to an autonomous life; research by Evans (2002) suggests that young people's life chances are closely linked to their ability to be

agent in planning their futures rather than being pushed around by unseen forces. However, some – generally from better-off backgrounds and better schools – are able to marshal their resources to make good lives in contrast to vulnerable young people who are seen to be passive in the face of life and pathologised by the better-off for their lack of determination and drive. If, as Evans suggests this has, ‘structural foundations in social class’ (*Ibid*, p. 259), it is then especially crucial that experiences of education foster goal formation in the absence of other opportunities. The point to be emphasised is that the unevenness of life chances in unequal societies simply cannot be good for individual well-being and healthy societies.

I now sketch two models of education, drawing on but reworking Robeyns’ models of human capital, human rights and human capabilities (2006) to focus on only two models. Each model implies a view on what it means to be human and who counts as having full humanity and dignity. My argument is that only one of these models supports comprehensive and empowering lifelong education.

## Model One: Human Capital

The official European policy problem is one of youth unemployment and low skills development. The policy response to the problem is an emphasis on the economic and instrumental benefits of learning (education for a job). Indeed, human capital – that is education for more national income and education for more economic growth – is the overriding rationale for education policies globally. Human capital theory focuses on each person’s ‘productive ability... measured in terms of goods and services he/she produces’, with consumption the ultimate goal of economic activity (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash 2010, p. 3). The idea is that decontextualised individuals consciously and rationally invest in themselves (for example in more education) to improve their own economic returns through a promotion or better earnings (Keeley 2007). Extra time spent in education is supposed to pay-off in the future in higher earnings, a claim made for investing in a university education. Better-educated countries also tend to be or become wealthier, further reinforcing the economic link between the economy and education (Keeley 2007). Moreover, labour markets are assumed to work rationally and all that counts is the different amounts of human capital individuals bring to the market, so that no account is taken of two people (one male and one female or one a migrant and the other native-born) with an identical amount of human capital but different labour market opportunities (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash 2010). This emphasis on human capital is exemplified in the recent OECD *Education at a Glance Report* (2009) which, while it points out that it is the quality of learning outcomes, not the length of schooling which makes the difference, nonetheless emphasises the link between education and national wealth. Thus, a modest goal of all OECD countries of boosting their average PISA scores in science, reading and mathematics by 25 points over the next 20 years would increase OECD gross domestic product by USD 115 trillion over the lifetime of the generation born in 2010. More ‘aggressive’ goals, the OECD (*Ibid*) suggests, could result in gains in the order of USD 260 trillion.

**Table 13.1** Human capital model and outcomes

On being human	Policy value	Outcomes
Individual economic producer and consumer	Human capital, income and cost efficiency; Economic growth; Training-focused; employability	'Flexible identities'; Adaptability to the market; Transferable skills and generic skills; Social inequalities and exclusion (social, political and economic)

This instrumental approach assumes a human capital model of education and 'employability' as the right way to improve lives and society according to accepted social norms and productivity requirements of the labour market (Bonvin and Galster 2010). People must adapt to the labour market; the policy assumes that individuals are responsible for their own successes and failures, so that in this approach, we end up with the deserving and the undeserving (White and Wynn 2004). The idea is for education to equip the (deserving) youth for the market by producing an entrepreneurial self, active, competitive and flexible (Bonvin and Galster 2010). The undeserving are then socially excluded. Lifelong learning, in these terms, is defined in terms of economic necessity which in turn defines the educational forms perceived as relevant to creating 'skilled' workers'. The recent Leitch Report in the United Kingdom captures this dominant discourse well:

In the 21st century, our natural resources – and their potential is both vast and untapped. Skills will unlock that potential. The prize for our country will be enormous – higher productivity, the creation of wealth and social justice. The alternative? Without increased skills we would condemn ourselves to a lingering decline in competitiveness, diminishing economic growth and a bleaker future for all. (2006, p. 1)

Such policy is silent about the possibility that a focus only on economic growth may not be the way to promote well-being and may even reinforce asymmetrical positions in society. The policy assumes that it is the responsibility of individuals to use their 'resources' and 'assets' to become and to be employable and marketable but 'very little attention is paid to the dimensions that are out of his/her control' (Bonvin and Galster 2010, p. 77). Moreover, the model does not seem to be working well. 'At-risk' youngsters now account for between three and four out of ten of all young people in the OECD (2009) and are at risk of long-term joblessness and reduced earnings (Table 13.1).

Moreover, human capital does not sit well with earlier more expansive interpretations of lifelong education and what it means to be human (Field 2000). Although having economic opportunities to be an employable agent is clearly important, it is not comprehensive enough nor does it necessarily direct us to ask why and who gets jobs, who is employed and what part education plays in this. Nor does everyone benefit from increases in a country's wealth. So long as economic growth is proceeding, the problematic of an uneven distribution of human capital and uneven labour market opportunities would not arise in a human capital model.

Human capital may indeed be very necessary – receiving fair income or a fair wage enables all kinds of other goods in life. And human capital has been conceptualised more expansively recently (Keeley 2007), so that economic growth is only one element of the human capital equation and that non-economic returns to learning include benefits like better health and community participation. However, it is still arguably the case that such benefits alone are insufficient if detached from the primary economic purposes; persons are still instrumentally conceptualised as the means to human capital, and measurable effects in the form of future earnings and wages are taken to measure productivity (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash 2010). Sen explains the problem:

The use of the concept of human capital which concentrates only on one part of the picture (an important part, related to broadening the account of ‘productive resources’) is certainly an enriching one. But it does need supplementation. This is because human beings are not merely means of production but also the end of the exercise. (1999, p. 296)

For Sen, one can have an improved human life without having to justify this by showing that a person with a better life is also a better producer of measured economic goods. Human capital cannot, as Robeyns (2006) explains, account for any non-economic goods from education, such as someone wanting to learn poetry for its own sake or for education’s contributions to social development.

At issue too is that young people will differ in their ability to ‘convert’ goods of income and liberties into freedoms (Sen 1999), shaped by their biographies, social structures and where they live. For example, women who confront entrenched sexist attitudes will have diminished opportunities to acquire and make use of their resources and social goods; yet, human capital does not explain the persistent gender gap in wages or discrimination in labour markets against the disabled or migrants (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sabadash 2010).

## Model Two: Human Capabilities

Sen (1999) therefore directs us to make judgements about equality in social arrangements based on people’s human capabilities. There are three key elements: (1) education would certainly be a means to having a job as is the case in human capital, (2) but, most importantly, education would be an end to well-being and agency and (3) the approach is sensitive to the rich diversity among people which shapes their ability to convert their opportunities and human capital into achievements, including labour market achievements, community participation, improved health and so on. Well-being is understood as someone having genuine opportunities for activities they want to engage in, and be whom one wants to be, while agency involves pursuing and realising one’s own goals (*Ibid*). An education capability might be ‘being able to be educated and to use and produce knowledge’ (Robeyns 2005, p. 74), and a paid work capability might be ‘being able to work in the labour market and undertake projects, including artistic ones’ (*Ibid*). Evaluating human development in relation to lifelong education would then require removing the unfreedoms from

which members of society may suffer in having such an education or work capability).

This approach offers a more comprehensive perspective on what it means to be human by incorporating human capital within an approach which values human agency and human well-being, and where each person is an end in herself or himself and not always or only the means to some other end. Thus, a rather richer picture of what it means to be fully human is involved. For Sen, capability involves 'having greater freedom to do the things one has reason to value' (1999, p. 18). For a migrant in Europe, let us call her Mariam, capability would reflect her freedom to lead different types of life; perhaps she might choose the freedom to move around without fear of racial discrimination, to be able to pay for a ticket, ask for directions, etc. In her education, it might involve the freedom to be treated without prejudice and to achieve high grades. Her capability set gives us information on the various functioning vectors that are within her reach and her natural talents to be who she wants and values being.

A second core idea in the approach is the distinction between capabilities and functionings. Functionings are achieved outcomes. Reading critically, taking part in the social life of a community, being able to appear in public without shame, are all functionings. Capabilities are the potential to achieve these functionings. Attention both to functionings and capabilities provides a richer informational base for inclusive lifelong education policies, where only looking at outcomes like similar achievements in examinations as the measure of equality would not be sufficient. For example, students from different socio-economic backgrounds with equal abilities and equal grades do still choose differently; hence the significance of looking at each students' capabilities. The capability approach requires that we do not simply evaluate the functionings, but the real freedom or opportunities each student had to choose and to achieve what she valued (to go to university, to become a lawyer, to become an apprentice, to attend part-time adult education classes and so on). Our evaluation of equality must then take account of freedom in opportunities – is there an adult education class operating within an easy distance, is it affordable, are the teachers good – and observable choices (choosing or not choosing to participate in adult education).

Applying this specifically to the world of work, Bonvin and Galster (2010) point out that to have opportunity freedoms means being able to choose a job one has reason to value, including not working for low wages, which they call the exit option, together with the process freedoms to negotiate the content and conditions of one's job, which they call the voice option. However, having these freedoms does not ensure that an individual does have such a job if such a job is not available. On the supply side, human capital and capabilities would be insufficient to enhance the capability for work if there were no labour market opportunities. Thus, on the demand side, the quality of jobs and working conditions would need attention through public action. While (lifelong) education is important, it needs to articulate with demand-side changes in the labour market and economic policy. This may be difficult, but it is arguably not impossible (see for example, Van der Hoeven 2010).

Importantly, Sen's concern with democratic accountability does extend to public deliberation and scrutiny of economic policy and arrangements rather



**Table 13.2** Capabilities model and outcomes

On being human	Policy value	Outcomes
Full human flourishing and dignity to choose a good life;	Human development;	‘Real freedom to choose the job one has reason to value’ (Bonvin and Galster 2010);
Well-being and agency	Human capabilities; economic policy to reduce inequality; Fostering voice and public reasoning about education.	More justice in education and society; More well-being and more agency.

than taking this for granted in the way that human capital and capitalist social arrangements are arguably accepted in most of Europe. This, in turn, further underlines the significance of voice and an education which equips young people to participate in the political public sphere where such debates take place. Thus, Sen writes that:

It can indeed be argued that a proper understanding of what economic needs are – their content and their force – requires discussion and exchange. Political and civil rights, especially those related to the guaranteeing of open discussion, debate and criticism and dissent, are central to the process of generating informed and reflected choices. These processes are crucial to the formation of values and priorities, and we cannot, in general, take preferences as given independently of public discussion, that is irrespective of whether open debates and interchanges are permitted or not. (1999, p. 153)

Evaluating capabilities shifts the axis of analysis to establishing and evaluating the political, social, economic and education conditions that enable individuals to be able to take informed decisions based on what they have reason to value. These conditions will vary in different contexts, but the approach sets out to be sensitive to human diversity, complex social relations, a sense of reciprocity between people, appreciation that people can reflect reasonably on what they value for themselves and others, and a concern to equalise not opportunities or outcomes but capabilities (Walker and Unterhalter 2007). It does require an integrated approach to education policy and economic policy, in much the same way as a human capital approach does. However, in this model, economic policies would be targeted at employment creation and reducing economic inequality. Van der Hoeven (2010) argues that this is possible provided that there is the political will, and while current conditions are not favourable, he points to examples from history where this has happened. Moreover, he argues that the current economic crisis might well provide the conditions ‘for renewed political coalition to again make employment creation and fair income distribution major objectives for economic policy-making’ (*Ibid*, p. 80) (Table 13.2).

To sum up, in a human capital model, the dimension to measure if equality has been achieved would be GDP and average income, however, unequally distributed to individuals and families. In the second model, the dimension for measuring equality would be each person’s capabilities. I suggest that the richest model and one most appropriate to an expansive understanding and practice of lifelong education is a model based on human capabilities.

## Capabilities, Learning and Lifelong Education

Capabilities, then, are crucial for full participation in life and work; education is a key arena where capabilities ought to be developed. The kind of education that forms capabilities is, for Sen (Dreze and Sen 1995), rich and ‘thick’, even if he does not pay attention to its realisations in actual sites of learning. For Sen, education as distinct from schooling has multi-dimensional instrumental and intrinsic value and transformative potential. Having education is a valuable achievement for a young person in itself for effective non-economic freedoms; access to education broadens one’s horizons brings one into touch with diverse others; and, education helps instrumentally to do many other things that are also valuable such as getting a job. Education is also valuable for its social contributions; it facilitates public discussion and informed collective demands; it has interpersonal effects in opening up opportunities for others, and it contributes to public and democratic life. From a social perspective, education can have empowerment and distributive effects; disadvantaged groups can increase their ability to resist inequalities and get a fairer deal in and through education. Crucially, having education affects the development and expansion of other capabilities, so that an education capability expands other important human freedoms.

Nussbaum (2006a) has written more extensively on the specificity of education. Unlike Sen, she is in favour of a list of central universal capabilities (Nussbaum 2000), and education is implicit and explicit in the development of these capabilities, for example, her universal capability of ‘senses, imagination and thought’ is defined in this rich way:

Being able to use the senses to imagine, think and reason – and to do these things in a ‘truly human way’, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including but by no means limited to literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing self-expressing works and events of one’s own choice, religious, literary, musical and so forth. Being able to use one’s mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one’s own way. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid non-necessary pain. (*Ibid*, pp. 78–79)

Nor does she discount the importance of work and lists as an element of the capability of having control over one’s environment, ‘having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others’ (*Ibid*, p. 80).

Nussbaum argues that public education is ‘crucial to the health of democracy’ (2006a, p. 385). More specifically, she has identified three education capabilities for both quality in education and the formation of democratic citizens. Her three-part model for the development of young people’s capabilities through education is a focus on critical thinking by which she means ‘the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one’s traditions for living... the examined life’ (*Ibid*, p. 388). Young people learn to deal with differences among themselves and their disagreements; they take responsibility for their own reasoning and debate ideas with others ‘in an atmosphere of mutual respect for reason’ (*Ibid*, p. 389). Second is the ability to see oneself as a

**Table 13.3** Capabilities and lifelong education

Capabilities	Lifelong education examples
Well-being freedom and achievement	<p>Conditions to engage in and succeed in education (e.g. availability and accessibility schooling or adult education classes; freedom from class, gender or ethnic discrimination)</p> <p>Suitable curriculum (e.g. the Citizen's Curriculum); inclusive pedagogies and good teaching</p> <p>Achieving desired qualifications (e.g. for a job) [<i>human capital</i>]</p> <p>Being able to engage in meaningful work and complete projects</p> <p>Being able to participate in community, social and political life as an equal among others</p>
Agency freedom and achievement	<p>Making an informed choice of adult education/schooling/ economic opportunities</p> <p>Being able to exercise the agency to act on this goal/s</p> <p>To be able to choose and realise a life one has reason to value</p>

world or global citizen bound not only to a local community but 'bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern' (*Ibid*, p. 389). In this way, students acquire the understanding that makes it more possible to solve common problems in the world, because these are everyone's problems and not just the problems of one group or one country. The third ability is that of 'narrative imagination', by which Nussbaum means the ability to understand how the world is experienced by someone different from oneself, 'to be an intelligent reader of that person's story and to understand the emotions and desires that someone so placed might have' (*Ibid*, pp. 390–391). We might expect to see these three capabilities being formed lifelong through education. Thus, for Sen and Nussbaum, something called 'lifelong education' and 'lifelong learning' would be fundamentally a positive process of deepening understanding and reflection in which learning forms our distinctive agency as rich human beings who are economic agents, but much, much more than this.

Turning more specifically to expansive versions of lifelong education, there is not much work on human capabilities, but there are promising directions to complement the ideas outlined above. For example, Schuller and Watson (2010) propose four important types of capability – financial (knowing how to keep control of one's money), health (being able to understand information, so that people can look after their health), digital (being able to find and use digital information) and civic (being able to feel part of one's community and to participate) – in relation to lifelong learning. These make up their 'Citizen's Curriculum' which would work to foster and enhance these four capabilities, as well as employability to give people greater control over their lives. We might argue that lifelong education for young people in Europe should minimally be constituted in terms of capabilities and functioning achievements, advanced through the Citizen's Curriculum sketched above. Nonetheless, it would be important to foreground agency and well-being – digital agency and well-being, health agency and well-being, financial agency and well-being, civic agency and well-being – to reduce the risk of these good ideas being domesticated as a free-floating curriculum not anchored in the philosophical and normative approach of capabilities (Table 13.3).

Genuine and expansive lifelong education would work to secure capabilities to all students, paying attention to the social arrangements in education (pedagogies, institutional culture and education policy) which enabled capabilities rather than diminished them. We would need to think more imaginatively about the direction of education policy. Thus, a policy which constructed education as primarily or only for economic growth and productivity would be challenged for its narrowing effects on student learning, identities and achievements. How factors of diversity, esp. gender, social class, ethnicity, disability and spatial segregation impede the development of young people's opportunities would be evaluated, as well as how – or if – lifelong education forms the capability to identify and aspire to goals and to produce valued outcomes.

## Policy Principles

Two central policy principles flow from these ideas. Both point us in the direction of action and require that we act to bring about changes.

### 1. *Equality in Education Capability*

The main policy principle (or value) would be having the capability (opportunity freedom) for lifelong education on an equal basis with others and to be able to develop one's education capability on an equal basis with others. For example, it would not be enough if only some people developed their capability for digital participation, while others were excluded (which is not the same as having digital capability but choosing not to use it).

### 2. *Obligations to Others*

However, the world cannot be changed only by the vulnerable, and it is certainly not only the vulnerable who engage in lifelong education and lifelong learning. The assumption is that education does not necessarily legitimise the interests of the powerful in society and can instil altruistic values and outcomes (Van de Werfhorst 2010). All people need to be 'well educated to understand the plights of other people' (Nussbaum 2006b, p. 412), both in their immediate neighbourhoods but also at a distance and in other countries, so that realising capabilities is a matter for those with advantages as well as for those who are marginalised. Sen (2009) argues that capability is a kind of power and a central concept in human obligation; we are enjoined to use that power for social betterment. Agency must then include 'other-regarding' goals and obligations to use one's power on behalf of other human beings by reason of our shared humanity to bring about the changes that would enhance human development in the world. Sen (*Ibid*) emphasises that, if someone has the power to make a change that he or she can see will reduce injustice in the world, then there is a strong social argument for doing just that. Having and owing obligations to others arises out of our view of ourselves not as isolated individuals but as members of communities, as social beings in social collectives, so that our acts bind us to others and form and reform the

institutions and structures that might guarantee equality beyond our individual actions. This seems fully within the remit of what lifelong education ought to do in reaching out both to the vulnerable but also the advantaged. It is further consistent with Sen's pragmatic idea of justice – we can aim for better education and improvements through lifelong education even as we acknowledge that there is more that needs to be done and that education alone cannot do everything.

A framework of capability-based Egalitarian lifelong education policy would then comprise something like this:

1. Human capabilities would underpin a lifelong education evaluation framework; we would evaluate how well we are doing in respect of lifelong education in the space of capabilities (well-being and agency) rather than income.
2. People would have the opportunity to form an education capability, including human capital outcomes but not limited to this, on an equal basis with others.
3. The formation of obligations to others would be important – each person's good affects and is affected by the good of others.

## Conclusion

Education – lifelong – is crucial to chances and achievements across multiple life dimensions; a good education and education policy informed by the ideas above can do something to develop young people's knowledge, confidence, resilience, imagination, compassion and navigational skills, even if it cannot compensate wholly for deficiencies in society. Such interventions require an expansive rather than a reductionist model of education – human capabilities as the normative starting point, rather than human capital. However enriched, the latter has been in its more recent conceptualisations, it remains philosophically and normatively wedded to seeing people first and foremost as the means to an end of economic productivity. Rather, we need to see lifelong education having a role in posing 'some new pictures of what may be possible' (Nussbaum 2006b, p. 415), including seeing each person as an end in themselves and examining economic activity for what and how it contributes to the well-being of citizens.

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# Chapter 14

## Focusing on the Heart: Lifelong, Life-Wide and Life-Deep Learning in the Time of HIV and AIDS\*

Shirley Walters

### Introduction

The key questions propelling this chapter are: How does the advent of the HIV and AIDS pandemic compel facilitators, trainers and educators to re-think and refine pedagogical approaches within a lifelong learning paradigm, particularly in countries of the South where medication may not be readily available for the majority? Are there new insights which have emerged that might relate to other contexts and which could enrich lifelong learning practices more generally? I will address these questions by reflecting on approaches that I, together with colleagues, have developed, over the last 10 years in Southern Africa. In particular, I will explore the courses we have designed and facilitated for community activists, educators, trainers and caregivers in HIV- and AIDS-saturated environments.

It is clear to us that lifelong learning in sub-Saharan Africa cannot ignore HIV and AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, no-one is unaffected by HIV and AIDS. It weaves through our personal, political and pedagogical lives. HIV and AIDS highlight some of the most difficult social, economic, cultural and personal issues that any adult educators have to confront. While it infects and affects children and adults, it is the women who are most susceptible. As Susser (2009: 45) says, ‘... biology, culture, social organisation, low incomes and lack of services conspire to render women extraordinarily susceptible to HIV infection’.

There is growing literature that tries to capture the complex interplay between individual behavior, politics, culture, economics, gender relations, power and history in HIV- and AIDS-saturated environments. In a seminal, 3-year study in a

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\*This chapter draws on collaborative work with my sister and colleague, Heather Ferris.

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South African rural village, Steinberg (2008) pursues the question: Why are people dying en masse when they are within a short distance of treatment? He walks alongside a villager called Sizwe, over a 3-year period, to understand the fear and the stigma relating to the disease. He describes, for example, how some villagers sit outside clinics and note how long individuals take to get their HIV test results. The longer they take the more likely they are to be HIV positive and word spreads. This instant 'public megaphone' dissuades many from being tested as they are 'silently separated' from society. Steinberg (2008: 326) quotes Posel as saying 'sex itself becomes the vector of death', so the intimacy of home becomes contaminated and the morality of men is most acutely called into question.

Gevisser (2007), in his penetrating biography of former South African President Thabo Mbeki, analyses the complex interplay of the politics of race, sexuality and global inequality in the shadow of AIDS. He says (2007: 730):

What made AIDS even more difficult ... was the particular way that stigma around it had rooted in South Africa, where the first cases... had been gay men, but where, towards the end of the decade the 'gay plague' mutated into 'black death', as black people began to become ill and die. Given the sweep of the epidemic southwards, it inevitably acquired a xenophobic tinge...

Lees (2008) centres the importance of the impact of colonialism and apartheid, which have led to systematic dehumanisation of black Africans, on how HIV and AIDS are understood. The need to work to counter the legacies of these processes of dehumanisation infuses his approach to 'rethinking AIDS education'. He echoes Freire (1993: 25) who states that 'humanization has always been humankind's central challenge'. Lees contends that AIDS is about people not simply about the virus therefore an approach to AIDS education must include the economic, social, psychological, spiritual and cultural dimensions of people's lives.

While statistics are only indicative, they are significant in order to imagine the pervasiveness of trauma and grief in the daily lives of all communities but particularly impoverished communities through increased ill health, death, poverty and discrimination. According to Steinberg (2008), about 2.1 million people died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 while another 25 million are living with HIV. In South Africa, about 13% of the population is HIV positive, with an adult prevalence rate of 18.8%. Some 800–1,000 people die of AIDS-related diseases on an average day. However, in case the impression is created that this is a particularly African story, the discrimination against HIV positive people is pervasive as illustrated in the Mail and Guardian newspaper of 22 August 2008, where it was reported that 67 countries deny the right of entry or residence to people simply because they are HIV positive; treating all HIV positive people as if they are intentionally going to infect others. This discriminatory practice drives the disease further underground and makes it more difficult for individuals and communities to confront head-on.

The impact of the pervasive trauma and grief within HIV and AIDS-saturated environments can also be likened to other environments where trauma and grief are caused by other diseases, substance abuse, poverty, discrimination, migration and violence, which are often exacerbated in times of war, economic, political or climatic turbulence or uncertainty. Given the global uncertainties, it is fair to assume that



trauma and grief are widespread and therefore cannot be ignored by educators as we design and facilitate interventions.

It is for this reason that we have designed and facilitated continuing education courses for facilitators and adult educators entitled 'The art and heart of the educator'. I reflect back on the approaches we have developed, highlighting illustrative workshops from which we draw insights for lifelong learning.

I will begin with some general observations about lifelong learning within HIV and AIDS saturated environments before focusing more deeply on insights arising from the 'Art and Heart of the Educator' courses.

## **Lifelong, Life-Wide and Life Deep Learning**

From our work, we realise that working with people infected and affected by HIV and AIDS brings into sharp focus the need for humanistic pedagogical approaches that include male and female, children and adults across generations (lifelong learning); recognises the importance of sustainable livelihoods (life-wide learning) and that engages with deeply personal issues relating to death and sexual relations, tapping into the cultural, spiritual and intimate aspects of people's lives (life-deep learning). We argue that while our major focus is on work with communities where HIV and AIDS are pervasive, our approach and insights may have more general relevance for education practice with the majority of women, whose key concerns are sustaining themselves and their children under difficult circumstances of trauma and loss and violence of various kinds.

### ***A Feminist Sensibility***

It is now commonly acknowledged that girls and women do experience particular social, cultural, economic and political circumstances that give them different abilities and opportunities to access learning and different experiences of learning when they get there. For example, even in well-resourced Western Europe, accessing adult learning is highly gendered, classed and raced. Research shows that of those women who do access training, it is usually the already highly educated who get the chance, and even amongst them, they find that they have to pay for their training out of their own pockets compared to many of the men who are sponsored by work. Women also have to cope with additional home and community responsibilities and they have less access to finances, which inhibits their learning possibilities. Poor and working class women's opportunities for learning are still more limited. Many women across social classes are subject to physical and emotional abuse and as Jenny Horsman (1999) elaborates, violence impacts learning and teaching in important ways.

Horsman's (2009) definition of violence is wide ranging, 'By violence I mean any way we violate the integrity and identity of another human being'. (See [www.learningandviolence.net](http://www.learningandviolence.net) for articles on the subject). Her research which first

identified the pervasiveness of violence against women and how it impacted on their learning was undertaken in a rural part of Canada – a place popularly associated more with tranquillity than violence. In South Africa, as in many countries of the world, violence against women is widespread. It is reported that one in six women is in an abusive relationship in South Africa; one woman is killed by her partner every 6 days; a shocking 80% of rural women are victims of domestic violence and an estimated 500,000 women are raped every year ([www.iss.co.za](http://www.iss.co.za): accessed 20 January 2009). Levels of violence will impact all aspects of family and work life. Where levels of violence are so high, it may seem that we must put all energies into trying directly to end violence. As Horsman (2009: 9) says:

Although educational programmes seeking to prevent violence are definitely necessary, they are not sufficient. If we only focus on such programmes, the aftermath of past violence will continue to have impact on society and this will impact not only on low self-esteem and to learning failure, but also to ongoing cycles of violence. We need interventions which are both systemic and individual.

She argues that this is possible if we work within systems of education and training, changing both far reaching policies and day-to-day practices that enable people of all ages to participate in respectful, peaceful environments, where they can learn in community, developing curiosity and understanding about their own and other people's struggles. Through this, they can begin to experience success, increased self-esteem and greater connection with others. As she says, this can help the processes of healing wounds created through violence and other trauma.

Horsman's point is that given the extent of all forms of violence, it makes sense for educators to assume that learners have experienced violence in some form and that our teaching should take this into account. It leads to an understanding that a feminist sensibility, by women and men, which defends and respects the rights of all girls and women without qualification, needs to be the default position of educators. (African Feminist Charter November 2006). In an HIV and AIDS-saturated environment, we know that significantly more women are infected than men. This can be explained by both biology and social conditions. HIV is often spread through unwanted sexual intercourse or through other forms of gender subordination which limit the ability of girls and women to insist on safe sexual practices. Therefore, the vulnerability of girls and women is even starker and magnifies the importance of the need for a feminist sensibility which aspires to greater gender justice.

### ***Girls, Boys, Women and Men, Learning Across the Life Span***

The recent study by Schuller and Watson (2009) introduces the four life stages/transition points as a response to the demographic changes in the United Kingdom (UK). From an international perspective, the question of the changing demographics raises interesting, paradoxical issues for lifelong learning. A key observation in a middle income country like South Africa is the very large proportion of young people. The demographic profile is diametrically opposite to that of most of the

developed economies. For example, the 0–14-year olds in Australia are 20% of the population, Brazil 28%, India 33%, South Africa 32% and UK 18%. The 60-year olds plus are Australia 18%, Brazil 9%, India 8%, South Africa 7% and UK 21%. In addition, life expectancy at birth has been falling because of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in South Africa and in 2007 was 50 years. This compares with UK figures for 2004–2006 of 77 for men and 81 for women. These figures are also highly determined by social class and race/ethnicity; whereas middle class people's demographic profile in South Africa may be similar to UK, the majority of people who are poor will carry the burden of ill health and premature death (Walters 2010).

The most telling situation which challenges a notion of 'front end loading' of the education and training systems is the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Steinberg (2008) shows how caring for the sick, dealing with the loss of economically active members of the family, mobilising to advocate and educate people around the epidemic, are all absorbing for many women, men and children in communities. There are more and more grandparents, and particularly grandmothers, who have to educate and support their grandchildren with their own children dying prematurely. This calls on social, economic and lifelong learning systems to support them to sustain themselves and their dependents.

At the same time, HIV and AIDS call into question what it means to be an 'adult' or more specifically an 'adult learner' aside from the notion of chronological age. The most significant dimensions in defining an 'adult' appear to be that adult learners carry 'adult responsibilities' through their economic, family or community commitments (e.g. Bourgeois et al. 1999: 3). They bring complex life experiences to the learning environments and their time is often very constrained precisely because of their multiple roles and responsibilities. The growing numbers of child-headed households, through loss of parents to AIDS or other illnesses, raise key questions as to who are 'adult', given that the children will be carrying 'adult responsibilities'. This then poses challenges for provision of learning opportunities for both children and adults. Contexts like this raise fundamental curricula questions for which capabilities are needed at each of the life stages to attain sustainable livelihoods. Therefore, researchers and adult education practitioners in the political South need to be wary of drawing down ideas too readily from curricula developed in UK-type contexts. In our workshops, we have women and men across a wide range of ages, and we facilitate communications, as best we can, across gender and age. Speaking inter-generationally and across gender differences is essential.

### *Sustainable Livelihoods*

HIV and AIDS are essentially about life. An example which illustrates this is told by Heather Ferris, a community educator, who immersed herself as an action researcher within a poor community in Cape Town over a 6-month period. During this time, she was invited to develop a full-time, month-long, leadership development course for 17 unemployed women, who were working as community activists in their impoverished community. They wanted to help others who were also living in

poverty and confronting trauma through the loss of family and friends to AIDS. As Heather reflected in an interview with the author in January 2009:

Through spending several days a week, listening, engaging, and supporting the women and their organizations with as much care as I could muster, it soon became clear to me that HIV and AIDS is integral to life, and cannot be separated from achieving forms of sustainable livelihoods. This meant that the course needed to incorporate deeply personal issues relating to gender relations and healthy living; building capacities for running small businesses, from financial management, to marketing and communicating in English; organizational skills for planning and managing meetings and mobilizing communities; to knowledge of health and social welfare facilities, plus abilities to negotiate with local councilors. A central group assignment was to work together to analyze the needs in the community relating to HIV and AIDS and develop proposals to provide care to those who were infected.

The course illustrates the integral connections between personal confidence-building, civic skills and knowledge and economic activity which are all essential to sustaining life. Most importantly, it validated the centrality of experiencing 'being fully human' in a society ravaged by racism, classism and sexism. The integration of the heart, the head and the hands, which is emphasised within feminist popular education (Walters and Manicom 1996), was graphically illustrated through life-wide and life-deep learning which combines personal, economic, social and political elements. The centrality for the majority of people of foregrounding sustainable livelihoods in approaches to lifelong learning and education in poor communities is also well illustrated by Von Kotze (2009) in an article entitled, 'But what shall we eat?'

With these broad themes as a backdrop, I turn now to a more specific focus on 'the art and heart of the educator' as a key concern in HIV and AIDS saturated environments.

## **The Heart and Art of the Educator**

In the last 3 years, in response to the context, we have designed and facilitated intensive 5 day continuing education courses for adult educators, community activists and care givers, from Southern Africa, ranging in ages from 21 to 70, which we have entitled 'The art and heart of the educator'. These courses focus on design and facilitation of learning processes in diverse, informal and formal settings, and foreground the importance of our own lifelong, life-deep and life-wide learning as 'educational practitioners'. I will begin by describing and elaborating the context and curriculum of the courses in order to tease out additional insights for lifelong learning.

### ***Context: What's in a Name?***

It is widely accepted that the current era of economic globalisation has hastened the process of the commodification of learning or what Mamdani (2007) calls the 'commercialisation of knowledge' that is transforming learning into a possession,

something to be traded for gain in the market-place. Happening at the same time – less visibly but nonetheless significantly – is the parallel processes of ‘learning as dispossession’, by which people are stripped not only of their individuality, but also of their very understanding of their own exploitation (Spencer 2007). Trowler (2001) describes how standardised units of learning are based on a market-place rationality in which knowledge is commodified and treated like money: it can be exchanged, transferred, ‘cashed in’ and assumed to be of equitable value irrespective of where and how it was ‘earned’. In South Africa, as in various other places governed by neo-liberal ideology, even the professional capabilities of educators have been commodified, as most graphically illustrated by the policy and practice to train and accredit assessors of learning programmes within ‘short courses’ of between 2 and 5 days, even when they have had no previous teaching experience. As this example testifies, professional competence often has been reduced to a set of ‘skills’ found in a ‘tool box’ which does not necessarily rely on the art and craft of an educator, honed over years which is integral to making sound professional judgements (Walters and Daniels 2009).

As a way of distinguishing ourselves and our understandings of what it takes to be an educator, particularly within an HIV and AIDS ravaged context, we entitled our course ‘The art and heart of the educator’, thus signalling that an effective educator requires much more than a ‘tool box’ of ‘skills’ – they need both ‘art’ and ‘heart’. However, we have had to accept that within the very constrained economic and social circumstances, educators, community activists and care givers, who are mainly women, have very limited time and resources to spend on their own continuing education. We have thus had to limit the course to 5 days, sometimes split into two parts, at venues that are easily accessible to the majority and which are inexpensive. While we have run some residential courses, which are preferred as they give participants more of a break from daily routines, this has not always been possible as many women cannot break away from their relentless domestic demands.

### ***Curriculum: A Focus on the Art and Heart***

During the workshop, participants reflect on and refine ‘the heart and art’ of facilitation and design. Opportunities for participants to practice designing and facilitating learning events are woven into the course. By the end, they agree that ‘the art is in the heart of the educator – you cannot have one without the other – as you can see from the spelling of “he(art)”!’.

For purposes of this chapter, I have decided to foreground the ‘heart’ which is a key notion within feminist popular education i.e. ‘seeing with the heart and speaking from the heart’. To see and speak from the heart refers to a focus on what matters to people; a path of learning that touches us at ‘the centre of our being’. No one can define this path for others, so one of the core aims of our pedagogy is to create space for the experience of stillness and deep listening, to encourage ‘mindfulness’ (Hyland 2010).

In our workshops, to set the scene for ‘seeing with the heart and speaking from the heart’, we ensure that there is the equipment available literally to sew red velvet hearts, which get filled with seeds. Seeing men and women, quietly and intensely concentrating on creating a heart, while also listening to serious discussion; hearing them talk with both excitement and contentment at their creative achievement; experiencing them holding the soft heart in their two hands as they lean forward sharing deeply emotional issues affecting their lives, is a useful way to bring ‘the heart’ into the centre of the workshop, using fun and creativity. These processes help to overcome senses of vulnerability and fear; to build trust and connection amongst the group which supports their abilities to share personal and sensitive issues and to learn more easily from one another.

The way we are using the notion of ‘the heart’ is to relate it to the spirit and to feelings. Eminent Buddhist psychologist John Wellwood (2002: 163) reminds us that in Buddhism heart and mind can be referred to by the same term (*chitta* in Sanskrit). Tibetan Buddhists refer to mind by pointing to their chests. Heart has nothing to do with sentimentality. Heart is the capacity to touch and be touched, to reach out and let in.

The course aspires to create a safe space to embrace the deep personal and communal concerns of each person by valuing mind, body and spirit equally in the activities; and encouraging silence, contemplation and reflection as a necessary part of each session. At the start of the course, facilitation of group norms which encourage deep listening, honesty and candidness, and courage to speak of that which is often not spoken, in an atmosphere of confidentiality, is very important to enable the creation of a safe container in which to work, play and be together.

As this course focuses on the educator, it emphasises the lifelong, life-wide and life-deep learning of the educators. The processes which we model for good facilitation echo many of those described by other colleagues’ work (e.g. Burke et al. 2002; Lopes and Thomas 2006; Lees 2008; Horsman 2009). Our own self-care and that of participants is seen to be central. In particular, we acknowledge that many of the participants have experienced violence, trauma and grief of various kinds, and an environment which recognises this reality is important. We understand *healing* in its multiple dimensions as central to pedagogy relating to people infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, where grief, loss, and trauma are ever-present.

Participants are introduced to a rudimentary understanding of ‘mindfulness’, which the Institute for Mindfulness in South Africa (IMISA 2010) describes as ‘simple in its essence, complex in its mechanisms, challenging in its practice, and transformative... mindfulness is a cohering human capacity, which is trainable through practice and which deepens self-knowing and connectedness’. As Simon Whitesman (IMISA 2010) elaborates, ‘The fundamental principles of cultivating awareness, kindness and non-judgement will deepen our connection to ourselves .....the deeper you connect to yourself, the less selfish you become’. Ways that we do this are to encourage awareness of the body through for example Capacitar (Cane 2000, 2005) forms of yoga and meditation which punctuate the programme. These body awareness exercises are introduced with cultural sensitivity as we cannot assume that all will relate to them equally. Participants begin to understand the

effects of trauma on their bodies and experience the cathartic value of working with their bodies. In the workshop, we remind participants that we can connect more deeply because of grief ‘as grief is full of heart, love and compassion’. We tend to freeze or harden against grief because it is so painful, and this manifests in our bodies. As my co-facilitator, Heather Ferris explains,

We encourage participants to practice the teachings that say, ‘Stay with the grief, see it as your link to all humanity’. In this way people begin to understand that grief is a doorway to life and hope. It’s important to stay with particularly strong emotions; the vulnerable open heart and loving mind and not harden over it (Pema Chödrön 2004: 33). We practice ways of breathing into the pain.

The first session each day focuses on quiet contemplation on issues of leadership and self-awareness and the last session is a reflection on the learning of the day in a ‘fish-bowl’ which enables participation by everyone. Through the workshop, participants are encouraged to journal, making observations and noting new insights for themselves. We also build in co-counselling activities which encourage deep listening to one another. Through these activities, the importance of self-knowledge by the participants, through quiet contemplation and critical reflective practice, is emphasised as crucial to being an effective facilitator.

In preparing for the activity of designing and facilitating learning interventions, various learning theories are taught, for example from Illeris (2008), O’Sullivan (1999), Taylor (2009) and Horsman (2009). They practice feminist popular educational approaches (Walters and Manicom 1996) which engage the heads, the hearts and the hands, like body sculpturing, and they ask ‘how do we engage the hearts of the people with whom we work’? This question is a constant reminder of the integration of mind, body and spirit in learning and teaching.

Several of the participants draw on their rich experiences within HIV and AIDS networks when designing and facilitating mini-workshops or learning events. One of the significant themes which emerges relates to sex and sexuality. It is clear that in different contexts, sexuality is addressed differently. A Malawian participant spoke about how in her ethnic group, young girls are inducted into sexual practices by older women and they are encouraged to see sex as pleasurable, not ‘as a service’ to their partner. The approach to sex and sexuality varies across cultures. There sometimes is a dynamic interchange amongst the older and younger participants. Those working with HIV and AIDS highlight the centrality of being able to work confidently with issues of sex and sexuality. This example illustrates the importance of the facilitators being able to work with deeply personal and often difficult issues.

The other themes that emerge relate to spirituality, heritage and culture, inter-generational relationships, importance of the facilitator ‘touching people’s hearts’ to encourage transformative behaviour, importance of working with boys and men, violence and trauma, health and healing. There is appreciation that the age range of participants, social class, cultural backgrounds, gender and degrees of wellness are all essential factors to be addressed when designing and facilitating successful programmes within an HIV- and AIDS-saturated environment. There was also recognition of the importance of opportunities to commune with nature in tranquil, peaceful, environments, especially for those who come from crowded,

noisy, busy township lives. This leads, for example, to drawing metaphors from nature by likening facilitation to a river, which is simultaneously soft and strong.

With this brief description of the ‘art and heart of the educator workshop’, within an HIV and AIDS saturated environment, and recognising the pervasiveness of injustice, poverty, disease, violence and trauma in many different places in the world, what can be gleaned to help to deepen theories and practices of lifelong learning?

## **Additional Insights**

### ***Pedagogy of Compassion***

Prevalence of HIV and AIDS reminds educators of the fragility of health, well being and life itself. While HIV and AIDS are not unique in this way, its pervasiveness and, importantly, the politics around it, heighten educators’ awareness of the centrality of life, health and wellness. The context challenges us to re-think approaches to our professional practices. As educators, we are not only divorced from the environment but are also deeply affected by it ourselves. This emphasises the importance of self-knowledge, of being aware of our own points of strength and vulnerability, and of self care. If we are encouraging learners to be self-reflective and mindful, it means that we too need to engage in restorative practices of our own. It demands pedagogy of compassion – this is a term that has been used variously in situations of hardship, exploitation and oppression, such as racism, sexism and chauvinism of different kinds (Jansen 2008). While it is sometimes used in situations to build bridges with others across ethnic or religious divides, in this instance, I am using it to highlight compassion both for ourselves and others.

In working with deeply unsettling situations which many learners and educators inhabit, the line between facilitation and therapy can feel very porous. Educators are called on to tread carefully to create ‘learning sanctuaries’ (Lange 2009) – safe, nurturing spaces, which construct group norms carefully in which participants can reflect on their affective responses. At the same time, the intention of education is to challenge taken-for-granted understandings and provoke insights that will incite the tenuous and difficult steps of change. This brings into play the art of knowing when and how to intervene, to push, to hold back, to encourage and to challenge in ways which help people to stay connected to one another. These have important implications for facilitation and design of curricula in a diverse range of settings.

Hyland (2010: 518) has pointed out the criticisms of the ‘therapeutic turn’ by Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) and others. While these criticisms may have some currency in places like the UK, in South Africa and other low or middle income countries, I am inclined to concur with Hyland who suggests that the educational climate is seriously impoverished through dominance of the ‘skill-talk’ and ‘behaviourist competence outcomes’. The relationship between therapy and education has been a theme for a long time and the continuum between the two is one with which educators have to live, recognising the purposes of educational interventions,



learners' circumstances, and educators' strengths and limitations. In HIV and AIDS-saturated environments, as well as, for example, in situations of war, poverty, climatic catastrophes and violence, the need for people to have the resilience and capability to cope with the waves of trauma and grief requires a great deal of compassionate design and facilitation from educators as violence and trauma affect capacities to learn (Horsman 1999).

The use of contemplative techniques like meditation and mindfulness can help learners to go beyond a merely cognitive understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and to find an authentic motivation to serve both themselves and others. As Hyland (2010: 526) elaborates, quoting Thich Nhat Hanh, a world renowned Vietnamese Buddhist teacher, 'mindfulness involves attention to the present moment which is inclusive and loving and which accepts everything without judging or reacting'. As Hyland says, Kabat Zinn and associates have been largely responsible for transforming the original spiritual notion into a powerful and ubiquitous therapeutic tool based on forms of mediation and mindfulness practices.

Particularly from radical, feminist political positions, the contemplative practices can be troubling. Are these encouraging people to look inward, dissuading them from confronting the structural economic, social, political and cultural conditions that undergird social inequalities and injustices? Do contemplative practices stand in opposition to theoretical analysis and social action for social justice?

There are various belief systems and traditions, some of which are encapsulated in a notion of 'engaged spirituality', which would argue that it is the very connection of deep personal and social transformation that enables change to occur. Engaged spirituality encompasses people committed to social change from all the major faith traditions as well as people who refer to themselves as spiritual but not religious; a kind of liberation theology that so influenced Paulo Freire and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, guides their form of engaged spirituality. The theme of spirituality also mirrors a significant trend in contemporary feminism which maintains that spiritual practice has the transformative power critically needed by radical and feminist political projects at this time (Fernandes 2003; Alexander 2005). Bell hooks (2010: 150) sees spirituality as providing 'the seemingly magical force that allows for the radical openness' needed for intellectual growth and transformative learning.

As O'Sullivan (1999) argues, we cannot adequately and effectively engage in the project of social change without addressing the spiritual dimension of our world and universe. The connection between the individual and collective is therefore seen as intimate as the deeper the compassion we have for ourselves the deeper our compassion for other life forms.

### *Individual/Collective*

The recognition of interconnectedness between the individual and the collective is certainly not new. However, in many progressive political contexts, the collective subject has most often been privileged. Democratic organisations of civil society

and broader political movements have been foregrounded sometimes at the expense of the individual. Given that the grand narratives of how to achieve social justice for the majority no longer have the persuasive weight that they once had, insights for lifelong learning that arise within the context of HIV and AIDS, and other conditions of trauma and violence, challenge the tendency to privilege the 'collective' over the 'individual'. What is highlighted in our work is that the privileging of the one over the other is neither necessarily helpful nor clear-cut. The practice of 'placing the heart at the centre' and 'touching people's hearts' through the design and facilitation encourages a tendency for people to open up and move from a preoccupation either with the collective or with individualised concerns to feeling compassion for and solidarity with others. 'Placing the heart at the centre' is inclined to create concentric circles outwards – like a pebble being thrown into a still pond – from the individual to the collective.

Life in poverty and AIDS-affected communities involves daily struggles to meet basic needs to find meaning and life-giving energy to meet each moment. People cannot easily do this alone and the reminder that we have 'spiritual intelligence' that connects us to something vast and greater than ourselves brings comfort and hope. Singing and dancing in groups, deep sharing, praying and meditating, participating in healing exercises (such as Capacitar) and often in silence, the feeling of solidarity is palpable. People are relieved to discover they are not alone. It is in our humanness that goes beyond religion, culture, class, age, race and gender that we feel the connections with one another. It is these moments of non-separation which we believe contribute to healing.

In our workshops moving from individual to small group to large group processes, helps to build confidence and keep the heart focus for the day. How, in one workshop, the group responded to the news of the death to AIDS of a feminist activist in Zimbabwe 1 day during the workshop provides an example of this movement from individual to larger group compassion. Through the processes at the start of the day, the harsh realities of ongoing personal and political struggles were embraced and held to enable those most directly affected to be supported and for others to keep in view the magnitude of the individual and collective challenges and the importance of solidarity with one another.

A context which has present within it, grief, loss, trauma of various kinds, cannot privilege the individual or the collective; they nest within one another. The key is to set a tone of 'heart' that pays attention to the human beings gathered together. This integral container seems to invite and enable deeper learning.

## **Towards a Conclusion**

I have argued that lifelong learning in the context of HIV and AIDS, and related situations of trauma, poverty and violence, has to include people across all ages; must connect with the 'life-wide' social and economic concerns of women, men, boys and girls; and must tap into the intimate which is deeply personal and 'life-deep'. Learning within an HIV and AIDS context cannot ignore any aspect of

people's lives individually or collectively. Jenny Horsman (1999, 2009) highlights the centrality of violence in many societies around the world and its impact on learning and how essential it is to acknowledge this when designing and facilitating learning. Where violence is endemic for the majority of the population, educators and learners need to understand how to work with trauma (their own or others), if they are to overcome the enormous barriers to successful learning which violence of all kinds can cause. It means recognising the role of spirituality which is educationally, ethically or politically invested and involves self- and social transformation. As Fernandes (2003: 109) sees it, 'spirituality is linked to a continual process of learning and understanding the world as well as the historical and contemporary forms of social justice'. For educators, 'our art is in our hearts', and this has significance for our engagement in a wide range of lifelong learning contexts.

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# Chapter 15

## Lifelong Learning, Mindfulness and the Affective Domain of Education

Terry Hyland

### Introduction

Recent discussions of trends in lifelong learning (Field and Leicester 2000; Aspin 2007) have been concerned to mark the differences between an older tradition of adult/continuing education which was holistic, idealistic and all-embracing and newer perspectives which are narrower and more utilitarian (Hyland 1999). The differences are well brought out in the contrast between, for instance, the 1972 UNESCO report *Learning to Be* (Faure et al. 1972) influenced by Lindeman's notion that the purpose of education is 'to put meaning into the whole of life' (1926/1989, p. 5) and the 1998 Department for Education and Employment Report *The Learning Age* which saw learning as the 'key to prosperity' since 'investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty-first century' (DfEE 1998, p. 7). The contrast is between a humanistic conception of lifelong learning which incorporates social, moral and aesthetic features of educational development and a predominantly economic model in which education is concerned mainly with industry and employment.

Given the narrowness of recent lifelong learning developments, it was refreshing to note in a recent issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* that the editor, Paul Standish, welcomed the fact that 'questions of happiness and wellbeing are prominent in contemporary social policy and practice, and in current policy initiatives they abound' (2007, p. 285). The idea here was that the ultimate ends of education – self-esteem, job and life satisfaction and the promotion of trust and social justice in the wider community – seem to be taken rather more seriously these days than they were in the drab neoliberal and utilitarian 1980s and 1990s. Standish went on, however, to qualify these observations by noting – in the context of a review of recent books recording the rise and fall of progressive education – how

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certain central features of progressivism (creativity and individualism) are grossly mutated and manipulated in current policy and practice to serve non-progressive and exclusively technicist ends.

This qualification is certainly necessary at a time when the affective dimension of learning – in the form of criticisms of an alleged ‘therapeutic turn’ – is under attack. A few years ago, I offered a tentative response (along with Veronica McGivney, Hyland 2005) to Kathryn Ecclestone’s (Ecclestone 2004a, b) concerns about adult educators’ obsession with developing self-esteem. Ecclestone (2004a) was particularly concerned about the growing popularity of notions such as ‘self-esteem’ and ‘emotional intelligence’ in educational circles. This has led to:

new professional activities in emotional management, life coaching, mentoring, counselling, and interventions to build self-esteem and make people feel good emotionally in the pursuit of motivation, educational achievement and social inclusion (p. 11).

Moreover, it was claimed that the ‘professional and popular support for these ideas’ is now so strong ‘that they have become a new social and educational orthodoxy’ (ibid.).

Hayes (2003) advanced similar arguments in investigating recent policy trends in vocational education and training (VET) in the post-school sector. The proposal is that – alongside the ‘triumph of vocationalism’ over the last few decades – there has been a ‘triumph of therapeutic education’, a ‘form of preparation for work’ arising out of the ‘changed nexus between work and education’ (p. 54). He goes on to explain that:

The new vocational skills that are required in the workforce are sometimes called ‘emotional’ or ‘aesthetic’ labour. If post-school students are being trained in personal and social skills as well as in relationships, this is training in emotional labour...training in emotional labour... requires and receives a personal and wholehearted commitment to workplace values (ibid.)

What results is a form of VET in which the pursuit of knowledge – and the values of ‘rationality, objectivity, science and progress’ – are replaced by a set of post-modernist relativistic values concerned only with developing ‘self-esteem’ (ibid.).

It seemed to me then and still does so now that the so-called therapeutic turn is no more than a proper concern with the affective dimension of learning and, moreover, that this needed to be emphasised in the face of the relentless economising of education – what Avis et al. (1996) described as the ‘vocationalisation of everyday life’ (p. 165) – under the label of behaviourist skills and competences (Hyland 1999). The original worries and concerns, however, still seem to be around. Ecclestone et al. (2005) continued to argue against the ‘idea that education should play a prominent role in fostering students’ emotional intelligence, self-esteem and self-awareness’ (p. 182), and Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) have recently collaborated on a book which charts the ‘dangerous rise’ of therapeutic ideas at all levels of the system. A central claim is that:

Sponsored enthusiastically by the British government and supported by numerous academic researchers and a huge professional and commercial industry, a deluge of interventions throughout the education system assess the emotional needs and perceived vulnerability of

children, young people and adults and claim to develop their emotional literacy and well being (ibid., p. ix).

Offering general support for these critics of therapy within the context of the discourse on adult education theory and practice, Jane Thompson (2007) has expressed similar misgivings. She observes that:

In the popular wisdom of adult education practice it is certainly the case that ideas about confidence, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem are commonplace. The literature of funding applications, project reports and evaluation exercises are full of claims by policy-makers and practitioners alike that interventions targeted at so-called non-traditional learners and socially excluded groups give rise to increased confidence and self-esteem (p. 303).

Such developments, Thompson argues, are dangerous – not only in their tendency to neglect or marginalise some of the traditional core values of adult learning concerned with developing knowledge and understanding for active citizenship, but also in their tendency to suggest that ‘developing confidence and self-esteem can remedy a wide range of personal and social problems’ with the result that this ‘distracts attention from the structural causes of inequality...and from the widening gap between rich and poor more generally’ (p. 304).

Does this dystopian vision of contemporary adult learning and education accord with reality? What do these claims about a therapeutic turn actually mean, and are they justified against the background of recent trends in post-school education and training? More significantly, for the purposes of my particular concern with the importance of mindfulness in personal educational growth and development, do the new emphases amount to anything more than giving due and proper attention to the affective domain of learning?

If it is indeed the case that traditional goals linked to knowledge and understanding are being replaced by personal and social skills for post-school students, this trend should be forcefully criticised and resisted. The alleged mutation of VET into some form of employability counselling also needs to be vigorously challenged, as does any transformation of the traditional social, political and cultural objectives of adult education into psychotherapy. Before completely endorsing this crusade, however, we need to ask whether the claims about the therapeutic turn are sensible, coherent and justified.

In earlier observations, it was noted (Hyland 2005, 2006, 2009) that the bleak picture of a post-school sector dominated by objectives linked to self-esteem and emotional intelligence was not one which was easily recognisable. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to suggest that the current educational climate is seriously impoverished through the dominance of prescriptive skill-talk and behaviourist competence outcomes (Lea et al. 2003; Hyland and Winch 2007). However, although the worries about the rise of therapy are, in my view, exaggerated and unjustified, the concerns of critics are sincere and need to be addressed. One way of doing this would be to show how educational and therapeutic processes are interrelated. There are two main ways of making sense of any such questions: through empirical investigation or by philosophical/conceptual analysis. I intend to examine the therapeutic arguments by means of each method in turn.

## English Education and the Therapeutic Turn

First of all we need to be certain of what exactly we are looking for in the form of a turn towards therapeutic education. Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) assert:

We define any activity that focuses on perceived emotional problems and which aims to make educational content and learning processes more ‘emotionally engaging’ as ‘therapeutic education’ (p. x).

As indicated already, I am concerned to advocate an enhancement of the affective domain of learning and would not naturally choose to use the term ‘therapeutic education’ but – since this seems to have become the label of choice which informs the debate in this sphere – I will use it as a short-hand way of referring to those features of educational development I wish to discuss. I would not object to the heavy emphasis on emotions revealed in the above quotation since standard accounts of affective learning include references to emotions. However, it needs to be pointed out here (and this will be stressed throughout the chapter) that the cognitive and affective domains can be viewed as integrally connected and mutually dependent (Peters 1972; Hepburn 1972), and that the references to emotions in an educational context directs attention to learning experiences which encapsulate quite complex activities such as receiving, internalising and organising information from a wide range of sources, in addition to ‘developing a value system and demonstrating self-reliance’ (Fawbert 2008, p. 90). There is a cognitive aspect of all emotions and an affective dimension of cognition; this is what Scheffler (1991) is wanting to emphasise in his work on the ‘cognitive emotions’.

There may be some truth to Furedi’s (2003) critique of contemporary society in terms of its fostering of a ‘victim culture’ in which a preoccupation with emotional well-being and self-esteem serves to anaesthetise people in times of social and economic risk and uncertainty. We might accept that there is simply too much emphasis on personal counselling and individual rights and not enough on active citizenship duties and responsibilities in current times. It must also be acknowledged that – if all this is true – it is regressive and disempowering. What is difficult to discern, however, is how this putative change in general attitudes and ethos is influencing educational trends to any great extent. Many of the actual examples cited by Ecclestone (2004a, b), for example, are drawn from the general field of counselling and the popular press, not specifically from educational contexts. She regrets the replacement of ‘optimistic Rogerian ideas about humans’ innate potential and drive for empowerment’ with ‘pessimistic images of people locked in cycles of social depression caused by emotional problems’ (2004a, p. 13). If this were true, it would be most regrettable. However, it could be argued that – apart from a highly theoretical, inspirational impact akin to that of Paulo Freire on adult literacy tutors – Rogers has never had any *practical* influence on the English post-school education system. I would suggest that the alleged pessimistic perspectives have no greater impact or influence on the business of learning and teaching in the post-16 sector.

Similarly, although there may be some evidence for the rise of the ‘diminished self’ (Ecclestone et al. 2005) in popular culture, claims about its transference to



specifically educational contexts require more justification than references to the use of Goleman's writings on emotional literacy and intelligence in a number of contemporary projects (this is discussed in more detail later). In this respect, we can reflect again on the popularity of Rogers and Freire in post-school learning texts, and the *actual* impact these have on everyday practices. The 'learning prescriptions' mentioned by Ecclestone, Hayes and Furedi (*ibid.*, p. 186) seem to be unduly distorted for the purposes of criticism and do not reflect the huge advances made in learning support services at all levels of post-school provision. More recently, Hunt and West (2006) have suggested that – far from offering a diminished conception of learning – the integration of educational and therapeutic processes through the use of psychodynamic notions can be empowering for learners and teachers alike. The discussion of mindfulness ideas and practices later is intended to engage with just such notions of selfhood by examining their place in educational debate.

However, staying with developments in the post-compulsory sector for the moment, I think the idea of a diminishment of learners and learning may, indeed, have some purchase as a result of the predominance of utilitarian and economic conceptions over the last decade or so. Policy studies of this sector (Ainley 1999; Lea et al. 2003; Hyland and Merrill 2003; Avis et al. 2009) suggest that the key trends at this level over recent years have been the rise of undifferentiated skill-talk, an obsession with prescriptive learning outcomes and the dominance of competence-based education and training (CBET). The so-called therapeutic turn pales into insignificance alongside the damage wreaked by CBET and the behaviourist outcomes movement, bringing with it the radical deskilling of countless occupations (including teaching), the downgrading of vocational studies and the rise to prominence of a perversely utilitarian and one-sidedly economic conception of the educational enterprise in general. Emphasising affective goals and fostering motivation and confidence in learners is, arguably, far less dangerous than suggesting that all that counts in education and training is providing bits of evidence to satisfy narrow, mechanistic performance criteria.

Moreover, many of the initiatives referred to by Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) in further education (FE) colleges which point 'towards a strong caring and nurturing ethos' (p. 66) are, as Cripps (2002) explains, a necessary counterbalance to the competitive, economic and managerialist ethos which has transformed those institutions in recent decades. Avis (2009) has argued that the resulting 'performativity...operates within a blame culture', where accountability becomes a means by which the institution can call to account its members' (p. 250) and that this has led to a decline in creativity, risk taking and trust in the post-school system.

Although I am primarily concerned with post-school education, it is worth referring to the arguments of Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) about the rise of therapeutic practices in the school sector at this point. Their account includes references to the use of 'circle time', 'feelings trees', 'worry boxes' and 'psychodrama' in primary schools (pp. 28–35) – in addition to a discussion of such initiatives as peer mentoring, personal, social and health education and citizenship modules in the secondary sector (pp. 55–60) – but there is little attempt to link such trends with the radical transformation of these sectors over recent years by the performance, accountability

and managerialist culture mentioned above. The obsession with standards and league tables in the school sector since the 1990s is directly connected with the emergence of concerns about the affective side of education. As Cigman (2008) suggests:

A standards agenda involves identifying and possibly shaming children and schools that fail. The social consequences of educational failure include disaffection, delinquency, violence and so on: the very problems that the standards agenda set out to address...It was this concern that led to a supplementary agenda focusing on so-called non-cognitive traits like confidence, motivation, resilience, well-being and self-esteem...The idea emerged that there are necessary affective conditions for successful learning, and that these can be usefully boosted, heightened or enhanced' (p. 540).

Writing in a similar vein about the revival of concerns about happiness and well-being in educational discourse, Smith (2008) observes that:

As I have described it, the 'long slide to happiness' begins with the unexceptionable observation that an education system dominated by targets and testing is experienced as arid by both pupils and students on the one hand and those who teach them on the other (p. 570).

Since the post-16 sector has been influenced even more than schools by the imposition of top-down policy changes (a fact specifically mentioned by Ecclestone and Hayes 2008, p. 65) linked to the skills and employability agenda, it is not difficult to understand why a post-16 counter-agenda concerned – as in the schools – with affective learning outcomes might well emerge. My argument, however, is that this reaction has been far too timid, lacklustre and indiscriminate, and that there should be a more vigorous and systematic re-emphasis of affective objectives in this sector. Most learners in the post-school sector are either studying (increasingly preparing to *resit* examinations these days) for GCSEs/A-levels or pursuing vocational qualifications, so the notion that such programmes are more than marginally concerned with building self-esteem or emotional intelligence is difficult to accept (basic skills or 'skills for life' discussed below is, of course, extremely vocational and employment led, and has little to do with the affective domain).

There is more than enough scope to argue that much of this post-16 learning is grossly *deficient* in precisely this affective area; it does not connect or engage sufficiently with the emotions, values and wider interests which learners bring with them to post-compulsory institutions (Hyland and Merrill 2003). Writing about American education in recent years, Palmer (1998) noted similar tendencies and criticised educators' 'excessive regard for the powers of the intellect...our obsession with objective knowledge' and recommended learning programmes which stress 'subjective engagement...the power of emotions to freeze, or free, the mind' (p. 61). The increase in mental health and emotional/behavioural problems in the post-school sector is now being acknowledged with a view to researching and implementing strategies to remedy the main problems (Warwick et al. 2008). All this is symptomatic of the wider emotional distress experienced by many people in Western industrialised states which Harvey (2005) has linked with the relentless rise of neoliberalism since the 1970s.

It does not seem sensible to suggest that a sector which has been dominated for the last decade or so with ill-founded skill-talk and behaviourist CBET is somehow awash with affective objectives. It is true that certain features of competence-based

learning have been perversely (mis)matched with progressive, individualised and student-centred strategies (Hyland 1999), but this pedagogic absurdity no longer confuses or misleads anyone working in the further and higher education sector. Moreover, it is difficult to make much sense of Hayes' idea that basic skills (2003, p. 55) – a self-evident prerequisite for learning of *any* kind – is an example of the reduction of education to therapy. For learners, young or old, who have achieved little at school and associate learning with anxiety, grief and failure, a 'therapeutic' concern with foundational skills, attitudes and motivations – that is, a focus on the affective domain of learning linked to feelings, values and processes – may be exactly what is called for.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) provide lots of evidence in their book based on conversations with teachers, and analysis of mission statements of schools and management industry – but, as Kinman (2008) noted in her review of the book, the 'authors provide little in the way of peer-reviewed evidence for the strong assertions in the book' and 'rely heavily on "pop psychology" texts and unsupported hypotheses' (p. 50). To be fair, Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) do confront this issue of evidence for the therapeutic turn fairly and squarely and argue that they are charting a broad 'cultural shift' in politics and society which has become a 'central focus for education policy' (pp. 146–7). However, even though I think it is better to maintain a reflective agnosticism about the precise extent of a therapeutic turn, my case is that, if there is little evidence of such a trend, then it is a great pity since the widespread transformations of the system mentioned above do seem to merit a resurgence of attention to this dimension of education.

## Education, Therapy and Well-Being

A central slogan in the progressive education movement of the earlier twentieth century was 'we teach children – not subjects', and this was, as Dearden (1968) suggests, a direct reaction to the drab authoritarianism and inhuman social utility of the elementary school tradition in England (graphically depicted and satirised in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* and D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*). What was to become the paradigm text of the progressive movement – the *Plowden Report* published by the Department of Education and Science in 1967 – described the ideal school environment as 'one in which children learn to live first and foremost as children and not as adults'. It was recommended that schools should set out to 'devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves', and special emphasis was placed upon 'individual discovery, on first-hand experience and on opportunities for creative work' (Plowden Report 1967, pp. 187–8).

Although there was always more rhetoric than reality (in a way similar to that surrounding the impact of Rogers and Freire on post-school education) about the claims that progressive philosophy was transforming English schools in the 1960s and 1970s (Hyland 1979; Lowe 2007), such ideas did inspire the open education movement in America as the earlier influences of Dalton and Dewey were

rediscovered and applied to new times. Rathbone (1971), one of the leading open education exponents of the period, claimed that Plowden's views on the nature of childhood underpinned the 'open education ethic' which entailed treating children with 'courtesy, kindness, and respect...valuing [the child] as a human being whose rights are no less valid than those of an adult' (p. 112). In a similar vein, the new openness in education was described as 'a way of extending the school's human dimension' (Pluckrose 1975, p. 3) and, more grandly, an 'attempt to create a new human and social world' (Bremer 1975, p. 18). In the stress on student-centredness and individualised learning, such perspectives later came to influence post-school education (Hyland and Merrill 2003) as well though – in an era of behaviourist outcomes – any such affective aims could never be more than marginal to the acquisition of qualifications for working life.

In the midst of all the rhetoric, it is not difficult to recognise a number of fairly unexceptionable notions about the fact that education is surely about personal development as well as acquiring knowledge and skills, and that even Peters' (1966) liberal conception of education as the development of knowledge and understanding for its own sake must, in some sense, be linked to more general ends such as human happiness and flourishing or the promotion of a just community. To be sure, the subject matter of education cannot just be, as Whitehead (1962) once grandiloquently put it, 'Life in all its manifestations' (p. 10) nor, as Dearden (1972) correctly argues, can the 'aim of education *simply* be happiness, quite without qualification' (p. 111). However, as Dearden goes on to emphasise, there 'is no question of whether or not happiness is valuable...the question is rather that of how important happiness is, compared with other values, in a specifically educational situation' (p. 109). Similarly, Smith (2002) suggests that 'self-esteem can usefully be admitted into our educational scheme of things as a significant good, but not one pursued directly, still less exclusively' (p. 99). For educational purposes, what needs to be attached to all-embracing external ends about self-esteem, happiness or human flourishing are internal objectives concerned with the development of knowledge, understanding, autonomy and values which will enable those being educated to construct and participate in communities which promote and reinforce such flourishing. The affective dimension of educational activity – linked to both processes in terms of stimulating learners' interests and motivation and also to content in the acknowledgement that knowledge and skills cannot be completely separated from human values and emotions (Palmer 1998; Hyland 1998) – is arguably what is being highlighted in referring to the therapeutic function of education.

Wilson (1972) has pointed out that there are many connections and overlaps between education and therapy. He observes that:

Education involves initiation into activities, forms of thought, etc. which conceptually must be...worth while or justifiable. Different types of justifications, or different descriptions of the mode in which they are worth while, may apply to different activities or groups of activities. Thus some may be called 'therapeutic', others described as 'enlarging the personality'... These justification phrases may be said to represent the 'aims of education'; and 'therapeutic' or 'contributing to mental health', may represent one such aim (pp. 91–2).

Peters (1972) has demonstrated the clear and distinct connections between human emotions, motivation and the sort of reasoning associated with the development of knowledge and understanding. In considering why we attach the label ‘emotions’ to concepts such as ‘fear, anger, sorrow, grief, envy, jealousy, pity, remorse, guilt, shame, pride, wonder, and the like’, Peters argues that our main criterion for selection is ‘the connection between emotions and the class of cognitions that are conveniently called appraisals’ (pp. 466–7). He goes on to suggest that such appraisals are:

constituted by seeing situations under aspects which are agreeable or disagreeable, beneficial or harmful in a variety of dimensions. To feel fear is, for instance, to see a situation as dangerous; to feel pride is to see with pleasure something as mine or as something that I have had a hand in bringing about (ibid., p. 467).

Since ‘emotions are basically forms of cognition’, we may legitimately refer to and recommend the ‘education of the emotions’ (ibid.). Wilson (1972) is getting at something similar when he argues that ‘we can say that certain educational processes just *are the same as* some processes which increase mental health: that some forms of teaching are identical with some forms of psychotherapy’ (p. 89, original italics). In a similar vein, Smeyers et al. (2007) forcefully ‘reject the idea that there is a sharp conceptual division between education and therapy’ (p. 1). The idea is that both learning and therapy involve the development of knowledge, values, emotions, understanding, reason, skill, experience and insight, and both are equally necessary for accessing work, social relationships and the wider communities of practice which constitute the good life.

In this sphere of philosophical conceptions of educational well-being, it is worth concluding this section by referring to the very last sentence in the book by Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) which serves to bring out the profound differences between us. They conclude with the claim that ‘What makes humanity is the intellectual and an education based on *cogito ergo sum* not *sentio ergo sum*’ (p. 164, original italics). Reflecting back on the open education literature mentioned above, my case is that an education based only on one at the expense of the other would be a diminished one since it does not develop the whole person.

Descartes’ infamous *cogito* has, arguably, been responsible for more philosophical wrong turnings than anything else in Western thought. Ryle (1973) demonstrated how ‘Descartes’ myth’ had resulted in the ‘intellectualist legend’ which wrongly assumed that there was ‘an antithesis between the physical and the mental’ (p. 32), and this led to the false dualisms between mind and body, theory and practice and knowing how and knowing that. Similarly, Searle (1985) criticises the legacy of Descartes on the grounds that it has led to an ‘inherited cultural resistance to treating the conscious mind as a biological phenomenon like any other’ (p. 10). Placing all this in the context of human evolution, Pinker (1997) explains clearly ‘why we have emotions’; he argues that the

emotions are mechanisms that set the brain’s highest level goals. Once triggered by a propitious moment, an emotion triggers the cascade of goals and sub-goals that we call thinking and acting...no sharp line divides thinking from feeling, nor does thinking necessarily precede feeling or vice versa. (p. 373).

This connects well with the earlier discussion of the education of the emotions, particularly with the analysis by Peters (1972) and Scheffler's (1991) notion of cognitive emotions. Commenting on Scheffler's thesis, Standish (1992) explains how it is a 'rationality which transcends the dualism of head and heart' and

explicitly rejects the common assumption that cognition and emotion are worlds apart and illustrates coherently the ways in which rationality and the passions are intertwined. What is of interest to the scientist and what is understood in the work of art...involve a combination of perception and feeling (p. 117).

Having argued the case for an education of the emotions, I want now to suggest that this form of therapeutic education may be enhanced by the theory and practice of 'mindfulness'.

## The Nature of Mindfulness

In advocating and seeking to justify a form of therapeutic education along the lines outlined above, I want to draw attention to both the intrinsic and pragmatic value of the concept of 'mindfulness'. This is a core concept in Buddhist philosophy and practice – traditionally the seventh strand of the eightfold path leading to nirvana and the end of suffering – and is currently attracting widespread attention in a large number of spheres far removed from its natural and original home. In the context of the *Dharma* (literally the fundamental nature of the universe revealed in the Buddhist canon of teachings and precepts, Keown 2005), mindfulness is of overriding importance.

Thich Nhat Hanh (1999) – the renowned Vietnamese Buddhist teacher and campaigner for world peace and justice – describes mindfulness as being 'at the heart of the Buddha's teachings'. It involves 'attention to the present moment' which is 'inclusive and loving' and 'which accepts everything without judging or reacting' (p. 64). Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990, 1994) and associates have been largely responsible for transforming the original spiritual notion into a powerful and ubiquitous therapeutic tool based on forms of meditation and mindful practices. Mindfulness simply means 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally' in a way which 'nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality'. Such practice – whether this involves breathing or walking meditation or giving full non-judgemental attention to everyday activities – can offer a 'powerful route for getting ourselves unstuck, back in touch with our own wisdom and vitality' (Kabat-Zinn 1994, pp. 4–5). Such a simple idea has proved astonishingly successful in a vast range of contexts including the treatment of depression, addictions of various kinds and the promotion of physical and mental health and well-being generally (Baer 2006). Harris' (2006) robustly secular notion of such strategies – which are applicable to any everyday activity such as driving, washing dishes or solving problems, not just to contemplative or meditative practices – describes them in terms of 'investigating the nature of consciousness directly through sustained introspection' (p. 209).

Like any process or activity which is concerned principally with introspection and a focus on inner thoughts and feelings, there seems to be a natural tendency to assign it a limited value because of its apparent passivity and subjective inward-looking character. The description of mindfulness by Williams et al. (2007, p. 48) brings out the active, developmental and educational features of such practice. They note that mindfulness is:

1. *Intentional* – concerned with cultivating an awareness of present moment reality and the choices available to us
2. *Experiential* – focussing directly on present moment experience rather than being preoccupied by abstractions
3. *Non-judgemental* – it allows us to see things as they are without a mental assignment of critical labels to our thoughts, feelings and perceptions

In a similar context, Smith (2002) observes that some sort of ‘inward turn’ is ‘often (but wrongly) associated with therapy in general’ (p. 95). However, mindfulness does seem to be able to deal with such criticisms effectively, particularly when the concept is interpreted within the context of its original home in Buddhist philosophy and practice. In recent years, there has been a lively debate about the relevance of Buddhist thought to Western psychology and psychotherapy (Segall 2003; Epstein 2007), and a consensus seems to have emerged about the commonalities and mutual objectives of the different traditions. Rubin (2003) explains how ‘Buddhism points toward possibilities for self-awareness, freedom, wisdom and compassion that Western psychology in general, and psychoanalysis in particular, has never mapped’ (p. 50). These possibilities are realised in the growing range of therapeutic mindfulness strategies used in health programmes (Garfinkel 2006; Williams et al. 2007) and in the demonstration of the educational value of mindfulness (Langer 2003; Siegel 2007).

The immense potential of paying close attention to our thought processes should not be underestimated. In its normal state, the mind is often in flux as it fixes on one object after another in a random and dissipated manner. By ‘cultivating mindfulness’, the Dalai Lama (2005) reminds us, ‘we learn first to become aware of this process of dissipation, so that we can gently fine-tune the mind to follow a more directed path towards the objects on which we wish to focus’ (p. 160). It is important to note that such attention has

a deliberate intention that helps us select a specific aspect or a characteristic of an object.

The continued, voluntary application of attention is what helps us maintain a sustained focus on the chosen object. Training in attention is closely linked with learning how to control our mental processes (ibid., p. 161).

This control – which can be an end in itself in the therapeutic uses of mindfulness – is linked to the central Buddhist enterprise in the process of eliminating unhelpful and misleading conceptions of the self. There is, of course, a similar critical tradition in relation to the concept of self-hood in Western philosophy stemming from Hume’s famous observation in his *Treatise* that ‘I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the

perception' (1964, p. 239, original italics). Within the Buddhist tradition, the notion of 'non-self' is remarkably similar to both Hume and the social constructionist perspectives of more recent times. Brazier (2003) explains the position clearly in observing that

the Buddhist approach is neither to build nor to abase the self. It is to recognise the reality of our existential position in relationship with the world. It recognises our dependency upon conditions, and especially upon our physical environment... The teaching of non-self is not a denial of the existence of the person as a complex entity, functioning in a complex world. Non-self theory places people in dynamic encounter with one another and with the environment they inhabit. It acknowledges the ever-unfolding social process and the ways in which people provide conditions for one another (p. 138).

In a similar vein, Epstein (2007) has explained how this conception of 'non-self' has proved so fruitful and valuable to psychologists and psychotherapists who have explored this tradition.

## **Mindfulness and the Critique of Therapeutic Education**

There seem to be two main criticisms of the therapeutic function of education and I will address each in turn, drawing on mindfulness conceptions and cognate ideas in the attempt to answer the principal concerns.

1. The emphasis on therapeutic objectives such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, confidence and the like is said to marginalise traditional goals linked to knowledge and understanding, thereby disempowering learners. Philosophical answers – in the form of explicating links between educational and therapeutic processes, between the cognitive and the affective – were outlined earlier, as were empirical considerations questioning the extent of this influence on learning and teaching as opposed to popular culture. It has been argued that much educational activity – both at school but especially at post-school levels – is affectively impoverished and deficient in its treatment of humanistic as opposed to employability matters (Langer 2003; Palmer 1998; Hyland 1998). The personal growth and development of learners – whether this is called fostering self-esteem, confidence or emotional intelligence – is an important educational objective, and the cultivation of mindfulness can assist in its achievement. As a dimension of the learning process, mindfulness practice can effectively link all forms of learning (perhaps especially the undervalued basic skills and vocational kinds) with the needs, interests and values of learners, thus fostering engagement, motivation and that form of 'studentship' which, as Bloomer and Hodkinson (1997) have shown, is crucial in allowing post-16 students to make sense and take ownership of the various programmes they are following. The 'present-moment reality' developed through mindfulness is widely acknowledged in educational psychology as not just 'more effective, but also more enjoyable' (Langer 2003, p. 43) in many spheres of learning, and there is now



a wealth of evidence aggregated through the Mindfulness in Education Network (<http://www.mindfuled.org>) about the general educational benefits of the approach. (There is also an established centre for mindfulness teaching and research at the University of Wales, Bangor, <http://www.bangor.ac.uk/imscar/mindfulness>.)

2. A related concern of critics of therapeutic education – particularly in adult education circles – is that the perceived inward-looking features associated with this activity sever the connections between learning and wider social and political issues. Thompson (2007), for example, is worried that ‘lifelong learning has given up on teaching an understanding of the world, let alone trying to change it’, and that there is ‘every encouragement for the belief that because you cannot change the world, you must strive to change yourself’ (p. 302). Such claims, if true, would indeed be a cause for concern, but I think they are misguided and unduly pessimistic. The world can only be changed by people, and often the reflective capacity to change ourselves is precisely what is required before any wider social change is possible. The power and potential of mindfulness in engaging with a wide range of such issues has been amply demonstrated in both the therapeutic (Baer 2006; Williams et al. 2007) and socially engaged aspects of mindfulness (Keown 2005; Brazier 2003; Garfinkel 2006).

The letting go of self in mindfulness practice results – interestingly in terms of the standard criticisms of the passive navel-gazing involved in fostering self-esteem and related qualities – in people stopping ‘relying on self-power and starting to rely more on other-power’ (Brazier 2003, p. 143). This is the definitive conception of empowerment which is prized so highly by adult educators concerned with social movements, and is fully realised in the impact of Buddhist mindfulness in countries around the world. In the form of ‘socially engaged Buddhism’ (Garfinkel 2006; a movement pioneered by Thich Nhat Hanh) – mindfulness practices are now employed in prison education, peace negotiations and the regeneration of village communities in deprived areas around the world. As Garfinkel explains, such practice is

being applied to augment mental and physical health therapies and to advance political and environmental reforms. Athletes use it to sharpen their game. Through it, corporate executives learn to handle stress better. Police arm themselves with it to defuse volatile situations. Chronic pain sufferers apply it as a coping salve. (p. 3)

## Conclusion: Mindfulness and Lifelong Learning

Smith (2002) is quite correct to locate self-esteem amongst the legitimate aims of education, and a qualified role for this dimension of education has also been advocated by Cigman (2004) and Kristjansson (2007). According to Smeyers et al. (2007), ‘education, rightly understood, is...one of the richest kinds of therapy’ (p. 6). I have

tried to provide a justification for a more general therapeutic function based on the notion of mindfulness. Mindfulness serves to remind us that – in addition to the important goals of developing knowledge, understanding, vocational skills and the critical examination of issues of inequality, prejudice and social exclusion – there are people with identities, needs, values and life stories who are engaged in the struggle to deal with all this. Much current educational practice fails to capture this struggle and does not fully engage with the emotional aspects of the enterprise.

In a number of writings over the last few years, Oliver James (1997, 2007, 2008) has argued that levels of emotional distress in industrialised, urbanised societies are much higher for English-speaking countries such as Britain, the United States, Canada and New Zealand than they are in other nations such as France, Spain, Belgium, Japan and the Scandinavian states. Using the WHO definition of emotional distress to include illnesses such as ‘depression, anxiety, substance abuse and impulse disorder’, James (2008, p. 10) contends that – contra recent trends – such distress has little genetic causation but is directly linked to both parental upbringing and the impact of ‘selfish capitalism’ which expounds radically materialistic values in conjunction with bringing about a deterioration of income levels and working conditions for millions of ordinary people in mainly English-speaking countries over the last 30 years or so. More recently, the report sponsored by the British Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, *Mental Health and Wellbeing*, noted that the most recent available national survey indicated that 16.4% of the UK population has some form of mental illness, and that this figure would be greatly increased if we looked at mental health or flourishing as opposed to illness (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 12). Estimated costs of mental illness have been placed at ‘£77 billion per year for England when wider impacts on wellbeing are included, and £49 billion for economic costs alone’ (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 21), not to mention the untold suffering to individuals, families and society. More recently, according to a survey conducted in March 2010 by the mental health charity *Together – UK* (<http://www.together-uk.org>), it was revealed that 62% of people in Britain (71% of women and 52% of men) have had at least one time in their life when they have found it difficult to cope mentally.

James’ solutions to these problems are strikingly simple, and now have a more urgent ring to them as the present economic recession seems to be deepening. Instead of the neoliberal selfish version of capitalism stemming from Reagan, Thatcher, Blair and others, ‘our politicians must start the work of persuading us to adopt the unselfish variety’ (ibid., p. 230) which eschews possessive, individualist materialism and values the emotional well-being of people as much as their economic productivity. Since this is an essentially educational task, the reassertion of the social and moral purposes of the endeavour in the face of the relentless vocational utilitarianism of recent years is, I would suggest, fully in line with what Thompson (2007) and other post-school and adult educators might wish to advocate. However, such a task will not be achieved by understating the affective/emotional dimension of learning but in recognising that our provision is deficient in just this crucial area.

This is where mindfulness comes into its own since its *raison d’être* (at least in its contemporary therapeutic role) is exactly that of maintaining emotional balance

and well-being in a radically destabilising, materialistic culture. There is now a body of evidence from neuroscientific studies pointing to the ‘neuroplasticity’ of the brain – the idea that ‘experience can create structural changes in the brain’ (Siegel 2007, p. 31). The idea is that by attending to our thoughts and perceptions, focussing on and reappraising various aspects of them, we can actually influence brain chemistry and function (see Bakhurst 2008 for a discussion of neuroscience within an educational context). Since such internal awareness and focus of attention is central to mindfulness strategies, such practices can serve valuable learning and therapeutic purposes, and this explains the successful use of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) strategies by Baer (2006) and by Williams and co-workers (2007). As Siegel (2007) concludes, ‘mindfulness not only helps us feel good and recover from negative feelings more quickly, but it can actually improve our medical health’ (p. 32).

Langer (1989) has similarly indicated how mindfulness can help older learners to maintain alertness, motivation and commitment, and utilising MBCT with patients suffering from depression, Segal et al. (2002, p. 315) demonstrated that major depression relapse rates were reduced using mindfulness techniques. In addition to helping to alleviate the emotional distress referred to above, such approaches can serve as valuable support mechanisms to learning at all levels, and the mindfulness and education networks are producing increasing evidence of such effectiveness (Langer 2003). The research in this field is now increasingly acknowledged in UK educational circles, and the *Mental Health and Wellbeing* report outlined evidence which indicated clear relationships ‘between positive emotions and cognitive processes’ and noted that such findings had led to an increasing interest in the positive benefits of ‘mindfulness meditation’ (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 11).

The Buddha famously said that he taught ‘one thing and one thing only: that is, suffering and the end of suffering’ (Salzberg 1995, p. 102), and this core teaching is of inestimable value in our current social, economic and political climate in which education has to function. In helping us to let go of the often mindless and restless striving which lies at the heart of our mental processes and habit-driven behaviour, mindfulness prepares the way for genuinely rich and deep learning and the journey from self-obsession to a fuller engagement with life and with others. This is a worthwhile educational ideal. As Thich Nhat Hanh (1999) puts it:

Mindfulness helps us look deeply into the depths of our consciousness...When we practice this we are liberated from fear, sorrow and the fires burning inside us. When mindfulness embraces our joy, our sadness, and all our mental formations, sooner or later we will see their deep roots...Mindfulness shines its light upon them and helps them to transform (p. 75).

All of us will at some stage of our lives have to engage with emotions such as hatred, love, joy, sorrow, pride and envy, and an education which failed to address such issues is bound to be one-sided and incomplete. Thus, contra Ecclestone and Hayes, I would want to conclude by saying that educational aims based only on *cogito ergo sum* would, indeed, be likely to produce diminished learners. Educational aims concerned with the development of the whole person require the *cogito* to be balanced by and harmonised with objectives based on *sentio ergo sum*.

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# Chapter 16

## Coming to Terms with the Learning Society: Between Autobiography and Politics

Kenneth Wain

### Introduction

This chapter is designated, more or less, as a follow-up to my “Rejoinder” to three commentaries in a 2008 symposium on my book *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* published in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Reading back on that “Rejoinder” it was intended in the first place to respond to the criticisms made in the commentaries, but I also saw it at the time as an opportunity to reformulate the thinking that went into the book both for the reader and for myself as a kind of a taking stock of where it had left me. Perhaps, in hindsight, I should have done more of the second than of the first. Indeed, this feeling came on me recently when I was looking at the “symposium” again. It was a feeling that stocktaking still needed to be done, a reassessment of the book, where it had left me, and where, if anywhere, I still needed to go – particularly with this notion of the learning society which I had first advocated in *maximalist* terms in an earlier book published nearly two decades earlier, in 1987, named *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*; that is, one which works with the assumption that lifelong education should be defined and organized in terms of the lifelong or vertical (in terms of individual) and lifewide or horizontal (in terms of social) organization of learning.<sup>2</sup> In the maximalist view, the learning society is a society

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<sup>1</sup>See Wain Kenneth (2008) ‘Rejoinder to Responses to an invitation to comment on the book: Wain, K, *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World*, by David Aspin, Padraig Hogan and Richard Bagnall’, in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Vol. 40, Issue 4, August, pp. 557–581.

<sup>2</sup>A good definition of the maximalist conception of the learning society is the following: The learning society is one that is exceedingly self-conscious about education in its total sense; that is, conscious of the educational relevance and potential of its own institutions and of the general social environment that is its way of life, and is determined to maximize its resources in these respects, to the maximum. (Wain 1987, pp. 202–203).

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committed to maximizing learning opportunities for its members by mobilizing its resources, human and material, for the purpose. The maximalist view supported the democratization of the idea that education should be a lifelong process (which had a long earlier history but elitist associations) and that it should be regarded as an individual right. In the same book, I had argued that educational theory must focus on the notion of a learning society, with schooling reconceptualized as an element of such a society. This promoted me to suggest an approach to philosophy of education that shifts away from its traditional concern as a discipline occupied with schooling and teachers toward issues relating to the learning society and educators in general – more generally theorizing the learning society politically as a society that promotes policies and practices of lifelong learning.

*Philosophy of Lifelong Education* also marked my first use of Richard Rorty's work, which was also to be a central influence on *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World*. The Rorty texts involved were *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) and *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982). What struck me with Rorty, especially at that time, was his criticism of the representation of philosophy as a discipline. Indeed, in both the books he had wanted to stop speaking about disciplinary matrices in general and to speak of cultures evolving in open conversation instead, with philosophy conceived as a strand of a certain sort (the sort that constitutes its history) that has grown out of our Western conversation with its beginnings traceable not to Plato, as one tends to do if one regards it as a discipline, but to the pre-Socratics. This idea of a conversational politics is the aspect of his thinking that I used in *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*.<sup>3</sup> Reading *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* also introduced me to the distinction Rorty made in the book between "normal" and "abnormal" discourse, which became important for me, on the other hand, in writing *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* later, where (corresponding with Kuhn's distinction between normal and revolutionary science) the former is conventionally theoretical, systematic, or constructive, and the latter therapeutic and deconstructive, or poetic. Rorty's assumption, which I share, is that we require *both* kinds of discourses for different purposes or to put to different uses – indeed that the former is necessary for the latter and the latter parasitic on the former, in the sense that a discourse is only abnormal relative to the normal and in the way it reacts to the normal. In subversive hands, abnormal discourse challenges with its strangeness, untimeliness, and unfittingness, unsettling the normal discourse being outrageous and even offensive in its more radical forms. In the sense that it constitutes itself as a challenge to the normal, the abnormal is always political, and its purpose, in this sense, is to destabilize the normal – this is the game of power that it plays.

This is Foucault's understanding of the abnormal discourse of genealogy as he works it, too. But while Rorty supports what represents itself as politically normal in the West, its liberal and democratic institutions, Foucault counsels a politics of

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<sup>3</sup> Reading Rorty's and Gadamer's politics of conversation, I was able to describe the learning society as an ongoing project created through the open-ended conversation of all the partners and stakeholders; educators (in the broadest sense), learners, policy makers, providers, and so on, more or less, also, in Dewey's fashion.



suspicion toward it instead. Indeed, he counsels suspicion of whatever presents itself or is presented to us as the norm, or normal, and describes his genealogies as a problematizing of normality and normalization.<sup>4</sup> In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989) Rorty tries to prevent this normal-abnormal formulation from being turned into a dichotomizing formula by reading the emerging discourse of his society poetically, as a utopian discourse, the discourse of an emerging liberal utopia, that is, by reading the abnormal into the normal. In this way, his work becomes coextensive or conversational with a project (a utopia) named America that he identifies as already in the making, articulated in the writings of Whitman and Dewey. It is understood that the utopia Rorty has in mind is not one that is constructed on a blueprint, or even on foundations of some sort (a constitution for instance) – indeed, it is not one that is constructed or theorized at all but grows in the conversation of generations to which the philosopher gives voice. The scope of Rorty’s utopianism is therapeutic, in a Wittgensteinian way, rather than constructive. The project is to help his fellow-countrymen break with the picture that currently holds them captive, the self-image they have constituted for themselves, and which has continued to remain largely metaphysical, by exposing it to ironist readings. In this way, the readings are part of the project itself, which he regards as a project of secularization, secularization (the de-divinization of culture) being how he defines progress in its broadest sense.

Rorty believed that the West has its politics fundamentally right. He thus often wrote about Foucault as though he were the arch enemy – Foucault was, he thought, too subversive, too Nietzschean, too distrustful of the liberal institutions of the West, and too negative to serve the American project – could it be different for the “European project” if, indeed, the expression stands for anything more than a slogan, as those with deep anti-federalist sentiments (who dismiss the notion of a European federation of states) would contend?<sup>5</sup> But then, it could be claimed that the expression “American project” is a slogan also, except that there is legally and constitutionally a federation of states that goes by the name of America and this is not the case with Europe today.<sup>6</sup> What is the criticism that something is merely a slogan, meant to imply? Probably, that there is nothing tangibly existent that it stands for, nothing beyond the words it uses. But this criticism assumes a narrow description of the tangible identifying it with such things as legal structures and institutions. A slogan *does*, however, have a certain tangibility even if it does not have these corresponding structures and institutions; the fact that it is used by people and falls within a discourse renders it tangible. A slogan is successful and has power if it resonates with the imagination or strikes a chord; its

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<sup>4</sup> In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault describes “the proper task of a history of thought, as against a history of behaviors or representations,” as being “to define the conditions in which human beings ‘problematize’ what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live” (p. 10). The question he tried to respond to in the book was “how, why, and in what form was sexuality constituted as a moral domain” (p. 10).

<sup>5</sup> See especially *Achieving our Country* (1998).

<sup>6</sup> The relevance of my reference to the “European project” will appear clearer subsequently when I refer to and discuss the evolution of the lifelong learning discourse within the European Union.

power is that it spurs or incites to action. This was the purpose to which the expression “learning society” was put when it was “merely” a slogan introduced into the language of lifelong education by the Faure report (1972) where it was projected as a utopian aspiration. And this is how Rorty understands the American project too – as an aspiration or group of aspirations that create programs of reform which produce a liberal utopia inspired by a politics of social democracy.

Rorty criticizes Foucault on the grounds that his politics of suspicion are entirely negative, that his Nietzschean influences render him suspicious of slogans, projects, and utopias – liberal ones in particular – and that his politics make for cynicism and despair. A Foucaultian approach to the learning society regards it *not as an aspiration but as a fact*; that is, his learning society does not await fulfillment it exists at the moment – it is what our societies *are*. This is the important difference he brings to the language of the learning society. A Foucaultian approach regards *every* society as a learning society and wants to ask how that society works politically by scrutinizing its institutions through the lens of power and the forms it takes. Hence, it does not deal either with slogans or with projects except insofar that a project already exists in the tangible form of institutions and practices. The outcome of Foucault’s own genealogical scrutiny of the modern Western state is well known and described in his reflections about the disciplined society and his vision of modern Western societies as disciplinary archipelagos constituted by economies of power that are supported by the various institutions that have created the modern state in *Discipline and Punish* (1991) in particular. Foucault’s genealogies have in common with utopian narratives that their power of persuasion lies not with their identification of what they describe with the truth but with their suggestiveness, their power to resonate with the imagination of the reader, to provoke the reader into a feeling of familiarity – a feeling that there is *something*, some *truth*, in these narratives, in what they say, and that truth renders them disquieting. In short, the power of resonance is not simply its appeal to the imagination but the power of truth it must have if it is to resonate, and if it fails to resonate it is precisely the power of truth that it lacks. And this is the case with slogans also.

I first encountered the notion of lifelong education in the late 1970s when, having just joined the academic staff of the new education faculty of the University of Malta, I was asked by my then faculty dean (who was not a philosopher) to do a course for student-teachers on the subject in its new bachelor’s teacher education course after advice to that effect from a UNESCO expert. I was naturally referred to the UNESCO literature, most particularly to the Faure Report (1972) but to other reports also for a start to my research, and immediately starting seeking out other literature in the subject of a theoretical nature. This quickly led me to the work of people such as Lengrand, Dave, Suchodoldski, Cropley, and Ettore Gelpi, an Italian founder of the Radical Party in his country, with whom I became friends some years later in 1984 when we together organized a conference on lifelong education in Malta. Gelpi, the then head of the lifelong education unit at UNESCO, Paris, was also one of the keynote speakers at the conference.<sup>7</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> The proceedings of the conference were later published as *Lifelong Education and Participation* (Kenneth Wain editor) in 1985.

others were adult educators all, his acquaintances and friends, and chosen because they shared a common experience; they had all played a major role in starting or reviving adult education in their countries that had emerged from a long period of dictatorship or colonialism in the Mediterranean region – a Portuguese, a Spaniard (Catalan to be more precise), a Greek, an Algerian, and a Yugoslav. The meeting was a classical example of the political agenda with which these writers and educators tied lifelong education, and an explanation of the importance given to adult education in particular in the literature. Dictatorships want to keep their adults dependent on children, hence their aversion toward adult learning. Schools are less problematic for them being conservative institutions by nature, and so is the teaching profession. Mass schooling has virtually monopolized educational resources in every sense in the modern world. In the popular mind, education still means childhood and schooling, that is, dependence. Adult education, on the other hand, is the territory where mostly nonprofessional educators operate and have the freedom to experiment, where the exciting and empowering innovations in learning are happening in the free world. So the future of social and political change lay with these educators not with school teachers – or at least this is what people like Gelpi and his friends at the conference were saying.

As a professional teacher myself with a longish career in primary and secondary schools now working with student-teachers who would teach in a school setting, never having had any experience in educating adults, and with virtually no knowledge of what was happening in adult education in Malta, the exchange intrigued and challenged me. I was convinced by the pragmatic argument for lifelong learning from the start, so I had no problems there – it seemed to me obvious (and still does) that in a fast-changing world like ours, people’s learning needs cannot be satisfied with a period of schooling restricted to youth and childhood; it must go into adulthood. I agreed that the scope of adult learning needs to be reconsidered in all the dimensions in which living in such a world presents challenges for individuals and their societies, as Paul Lengrand (1975) had argued. It also seemed obvious to me that reconsidering the role of adult learning in our societies could not occur separately from reconsidering the role of schooling, indeed, that the two must be reconsidered together. The operational, or strategic, notion that appeared to capture this idea for me was the notion of a “learning society,” defined strategically somewhere (I forget where, perhaps Ivan Illich but I may be wrong), as a “society mobilized for learning,” which on the maximalist principle would incorporate and synchronize both. How a society could be mobilized or, more accurately, how it could mobilize itself for learning in a “lifewide” manner, that is, over the whole spectrum of institutions and activities that constitute it, and how it could do so with an agenda of empowerment (which was the question that distinguished the discourse of lifelong *education* from the more generalized one of lifelong *learning*) was the focus of this Mediterranean meeting we held in Malta. The distinction announced by the words “more accurately” in the preceding sentence is evidently politically vital, because “could be mobilized” implies the activity of an external agency, the state in particular, mobilizing the society according to its agenda – and that state could well be a dictatorship; indeed, dictatorships have shown themselves to be particularly good at

using the state apparatus to mobilize their populations for learning, with the dictator, always a charismatic figure, represented as the great educator.

Apart from the Faure Report (1972) and the theoretical literature of the writers, published mainly by UNESCO, the other resource I would logically have turned to when I was designing my lifelong education course (which, as a matter of fact, was the only one, Gelpi told me, he had encountered anywhere in the world), as a philosopher wanting to give it a philosopher's orientation, was contemporary philosophy of education. But I knew that save for John Dewey who was clearly identifiable, and was already identified, as a precursor of lifelong education, the field was practically barren, at least where Anglophone philosophers were concerned. There were a couple of works on adult education that, I felt, could be helpful, like Paterson's (1979) exploring the ethical and political issues of adult education, and, a little later, an article by Kenneth Lawson (1982) in the newly published *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, the only one interrogating the concept of lifelong education philosophically, but nothing much besides that I could lay my hands on.<sup>8</sup> The reason was historical and ideological; the philosophy of education as it had grown as a discipline since the 1950s discounted any interest in adult education. This was clear from the lack of interest in the subject in the journals and books it produced. In those early days it was hitched to two objects – philosophically to an analytic paradigm which, in its harshest form, tended toward positivism, and which prohibited the consideration of substantive issues like the political ones that concerned the lifelong education writers; and strategically to the business of schools, classrooms, curricula, and so on – all taken aboard as concepts to be amply analyzed by philosophers for the understanding of teachers, whose responsibility then was to use this understanding in their practice. Much had changed by the 1980s, the time I wrote *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*. By then, analytic philosophy of education was challenged on several counts, both philosophical and in terms of its usefulness for teachers. In short, it was losing its status as *the* paradigm for the discipline. And the newer analytic philosophers had changed their attitude toward political detachment considerably, openly acknowledging their liberal allegiances and inverting the relationship between theory and practice by moving from practical issues and topics (meaning those teachers meet with in the classroom) to the theory rather than the other way around, thus hoping to improve the relevance of their work for teachers, who continued to be their clients.

Indeed, one thing that had not changed in philosophy of education in the 1980s, and still has not changed, was its general lack of interest in adult education; the discourse one meets with in its books and journals remained and still remains faithful to the agenda of schooling and teachers' issues which it received from the hands of its pioneers. The other thing that had not, and has not, changed was the nearly complete lack of interest of philosophers in the literature on lifelong education or, indeed, in the concept itself – perhaps partly because that literature was mainly European, and partly because lifelong education was, and still is, identified as

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<sup>8</sup> I used Paterson's book more extensively than in *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*, in an article published later (1992) "Making a Case for Adult Educational Rights."

simply another name for adult education.<sup>9</sup> I wrote my 1987 book *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*, based on my doctoral thesis supervised by John White (one of the leading analytic philosophers in London), which I submitted to the University of London in 1984, with the naïve hope of changing this situation; of exciting this interest and introducing it into the philosophical literature, which, I thought, was all that was needed, given the obvious force of the pragmatic argument for lifelong education, to persuade philosophers of its importance. Once the argument for lifelong education and for refocusing theory on the learning society is conceded, I thought, as it must be, the philosophy of education's focus on schooling and the concerns of teachers would become immediately problematic. I thought that there was enough of a case for the argument to persuade hands down. What would follow I thought, at the least, would be a fundamental problematizing of the institution of mass schooling from the angle of the learning society. This problematizing is what I took the literature on lifelong education to be about in the mid-1980s, following on the Faure Report and, more or less, on what Illich was doing at the time, but less radically – not necessarily to abolish it. It was what lay at the heart of my course on lifelong education as an educator of student teachers. From my very first encounter with the lifelong education literature, I was convinced of the need to reassess the scope and value of mass schooling for our times, its impact on the politics of teaching and the curriculum, within the broader reality of the politics of the learning society. Though, as Illich (1978) showed, it is always possible to theorize a learning society where there are no schools or formal learning institutions at all. This is where the question how to define the learning society itself, as the new focus of one's theorizing about education, as a political and pedagogical reality, comes in.

As I have explained elsewhere, the project that suggested itself immediately to me as the follow-up for *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* was to theorize the learning society politically as a project with a liberal social democratic normative core and an operational belt constituted by the operational terms created by the lifelong education literature.<sup>10</sup> I remarked in my “Rejoinder” in the symposium referred to in the beginning of this chapter that this could still be a worthwhile undertaking for theorists and policymakers with a social democratic agenda interested in the politics of implementation or governance but, on reflection, for reasons I shall give toward the end of the chapter (not the least the changed profile of social democracy since the 1990s), perhaps it could not. As I started to research my new book, however, the circumstances surrounding the discourse of lifelong education began to change and so did my own outlook as a philosopher, particularly as I found myself being taken more and more deeply into the thinking of Rorty and Foucault. Rorty, as I remarked earlier, had already featured briefly in my thinking when I wrote *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*. I was first attracted to him by his self-description as a Deweyan since Dewey had been an important influence on me; apart from pre-empting the *lifelong education literature* in a number of ways, he had contributed strongly to my

<sup>9</sup>For an extended discussion of the relation between lifelong learning and philosophy the reader is referred to my article “Lifelong Learning and Philosophy” (2009).

<sup>10</sup>In *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* (2004) for instance.

liberation as a philosopher from my early empiricist philosophical education. I had found his writing much more congenial to me than the analytic philosophy that was about at the time I started taking an interest in philosophy of education in the late 1970s. Later I could also see him, as I remarked in passing earlier, as a predecessor to the lifelong education movement.<sup>11</sup> I was not convinced, on reading him, that Rorty was Deweyan in his thoughts about education, but I was convinced by his attack in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) on the foundationalist philosophical culture that marked modernity, on the idea that epistemology validates or underwrites the work of the social sciences and provides philosophy with its remit. And I was strongly attracted by his case for a hermeneutic counterculture which replaces truth with understanding as the goal of all inquiry and, as I said earlier, views philosophy as a strand in the conversation that constitutes our Western culture (a way of looking at things that harmonizes with pragmatism) rather than as a legitimizing agent.<sup>12</sup> Rorty's distinction between "normal" and "abnormal" discourse and his account of philosophy in the latter form as having a therapeutic function was also mentioned in the same book. It was not, however, as I remarked above, these elements of his writing but his description of a conversational philosophical culture that attracted my attention then and that I used in *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* as a strategic tool that would energize the politics of the learning society. The situation was reversed when I eventually wrote *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World*, where the distinction provoked the question Rorty had raised in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, which I had not seen in the earlier book, and which now became fundamental for me; do I really want to write a *theory* of a learning society? Where Rorty himself was concerned, this was a question that he had returned to more forcefully in 1989 in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, where he drew the outlines of a liberal utopia *without doing theory*, that is, poetically.

At about this time when I was considering this matter, the fortunes of lifelong education as the concept guiding UNESCO's initiatives in education, and of the theoretical literature that had articulated it politically and pedagogically, had declined to the extent that they had practically disappeared from sight. I responded to this situation which developed toward the end of the 1980s by dropping my B.Ed. course on the subject and turning my philosophical interests elsewhere. Influenced to some extent by Rorty in this respect, I decided to correct the bias of my philosophical education further by reading the contemporary Continental philosophy being called "postmodernist." Other philosophers, beside who attracted my interest, were Alasdair MacIntyre and Jurgen Habermas. I had read MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981) long before at the beginning of the 1980s when I was still working on my doctoral thesis, but only out of general interest because a fuss was being made about it at the time. When John White, sensing that I would be interested, alerted me in 1985 (at the time I was well advanced in writing *Philosophy of Lifelong Education*) that MacIntyre was going to be in London to do a public lecture on the "educated

<sup>11</sup> See my article "Lifelong Education: A Deweyan Challenge" (1984).

<sup>12</sup> See my articles "Strong Poets and Utopia: Rorty's Liberalism, Rorty and Utopia" (1993) and "Richard Rorty, Education and Politics" (1995a).

public” in a series of three such lectures dedicated to R.S. Peters, I was naturally intrigued. It immediately seemed to me (as it must have seemed to White) that there must be some connection between MacIntyre’s subject and the learning society (the learning society as an educated public?). The upshot was that I went to the London lecture, attended a separate invited session on his paper after at the Institute, and obtained a copy of the paper. I knew, however, that it was too late to do much about it in my book at the present stage of writing. The “educated public” had to wait for later, for the book to follow perhaps. Meanwhile, my interest in the notion and its confirmed relation with the learning society generated by MacIntyre’s paper led me to read Habermas who had also theorized an educated public of a very different kind and who had worked extensively on the public sphere. Papers on these competing ideas of the educated public (1994) and on MacIntyre’s account of the educated public (1995) followed, and on Foucault (1996) who interested me differently by suggesting, in *Discipline and Punish* (1991), a very different perspective on the learning society. Far from being interested in education or sustaining educated publics of our modern Western societies, Foucault suggested, could be regarded as learning societies obsessed with disciplinary techniques related to policing technologies and experimented in “institutions of confinement,” prisons evidently but also schools and other establishments, and disseminated throughout the societies.

Foucault suggested what Gelpi had already suggested with respect to the learning society, that one could read modern Western societies as being already at work as learning societies, in Foucault’s case societies of the disciplinary kind described in *Discipline and Punish*. What was especially novel with Foucault’s account, from my perspective, was that he described the learning society in terms of economies of power that are hidden to the eye, and whose operations his genealogical sociological narratives undertook to unmask. These narratives resonated with my intuition of things. Though fictional, in the sense of not claiming the truth for what they said, and poetic in the sense of being unconventional or abnormal, they struck a chord of truth, or at least credibility and could not be dismissed as *just* fiction. Foucault shared Rorty’s view that there are two ways to do politics, coinciding very roughly with the latter’s distinction of the normal and abnormal. Doing normal politics means entering the conventional discourse of the politics of governance which, in Western terms, means the conversational (where the aim is consensus) or confrontational (where it turns agonistic), as the case may be, discourse of democracy from the competing political angles of Left and Right ideologies. The work of a philosopher here would be to subject the discourse to critique or to elaborate and justify its theories of justice, freedom, civil rights, democracy, and so on, according to the political angle one takes into it. My original follow-up project to *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* would have been of this kind, its angle would have been, as I remarked earlier, Left or social democrat. Or doing politics from the perspective of the governed anxious to resist whatever strategies of dominance there could lurk behind that discourse by problematizing or deconstructing it, for instance, by asking with Foucault how power works within specific institutions of the modern state that form the political framework of the learning society. Perhaps, following his work, investigating how we, its modern members, are made subjects to and by that power,

how it totalizes us into the normality we are as members of the collectives we belong to, and individualizes us into the kinds of individuals that we are by the freedoms it fashions us into – the two roles of the learning society Foucault describes as politics of governance.

The first half of the 1990s witnessed a resurgent interest in lifelong learning. It came with a changed political and economic climate in Europe following on the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989 and of communism in general as a politico-economic system and an ideology through the continent, and on the end of the cold war. The old discourse of lifelong learning (of lifelong education in the language of UNESCO and of “recurrent education” in that of the OECD), which was there and available for use, was appropriated by an emerging political agenda supported by a broad alliance of employers, politicians, and policymakers. It also made the same pragmatic argument for lifelong learning as had been made before. Like the Faure Report of two decades earlier, it presented itself dramatically as a “rallying call” (which one could call a slogan) addressed to all interested in the business of learning, to schools and teachers especially, but also to industry and business, to the state and its policymakers, to get their act together in the field of learning at all levels and ages, otherwise Europe risked losing its place among the competitive economies of the world. It took the European Union (EU) little time to endorse and take up this call and make it its own – lifelong learning was no longer a myth or a mere slogan, it was now the official policy of an organization of states with a very powerful bureaucracy, the European Commission – a very different agency from UNESCO. One recalls that one of the complaints made about the expression “lifelong education” at the time of its popularity in the 1970s and 1980s was its ambiguity as it evolved rather chaotically in the literature, but UNESCO, being mainly a debating club, could live with that. “Lifelong learning” was ambiguous also as it had been variously interpreted as lifelong education, recurrent education, continuing education, permanent education, and so on – notions with different strategic implications. Bureaucracies, however, are not comfortable with ambiguities; one universal term was needed, lifelong learning, the rest, lifelong education included, were dropped from the vocabulary which the bureaucracy of the European Commission standardized in a memorandum to its member states in 2000, also identifying “key messages” for policy in the name of lifelong learning.

All this became the subject of the narrative with which I opened the first two chapters of my book *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* (2004) (updating and improving the first chapter of *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* which had stopped with the earlier history of lifelong education) when I began writing it. Matters were obviously very different now, in the mid-1990s, from how they were when I finished *Philosophy of Lifelong Education* a decade earlier. Then, a case had to be made for lifelong education with governments, policymakers, educators, and, indeed, with the society at large, from the point of view of the objective of creating a learning society. There had also been work to be done to bring the literature together into a coherent theory which would render it approachable to these agencies and agents in different relevant ways for different purposes, strategic and pedagogical, and this was also the objective of that book. In the late 1990s, lifelong learning



did not need converts, to the contrary it named an established project on a continental scale, its policies driven by an effective bureaucracy, to the extent that there was a certain hegemonic taken-for-grantedness about its politics and its discourse. So that, my interest in it renewed, I returned to my project of writing a follow-up book on the learning society in very different circumstances and with a very different approach from that in the mid-1980s. Different also, as I remarked earlier, was the frame of mind with which I returned to it. Where my earlier attitude toward the discourse and politics of lifelong education was positive in the sense that I identified with it and wanted to join it in conversation with my follow-up book, I was now unhappy with this turn of events – with the new political discourse of lifelong learning. So I was certainly going to write a very different sort of book from that originally planned. Not a book that would enter into the mainstream of this discourse, the new normal discourse of lifelong learning, but one that would unsettle it.

That book, *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World*, was written over a period of about 6 years. The term “learning society” was still part of the discourse of lifelong learning in the EU documents and reports early on; even the idea of a European learning society was mooted! Or at least it was inserted into the vocabulary! But the social and political interest in the learning society that had characterized the agenda of the earlier debate was absent. The debate about the kind of the democracy it could be, the role the state would play, financial and political, in sustaining it, its learning culture, the environment it could produce for the individual and collective growth (in Dewey’s sense of the word), the kind of mobilization of learning resources and politics of collaboration it would promote, how it could define itself as socially just, and so on, questions which were on my original agenda for writing my follow-up book. The old discourse of self-directed learning in the lifelong education literature was taken from the context of a politics of collective supportive mutual responsibility implied by the notion of a learning democracy to be reinterpreted in a different way in terms of the individual’s complete personal responsibility for her or his learning. As the first decade of the new century advanced, the term learning society disappeared from the reports and policy documents, where there was already no reference to education either. Lifelong learning was now all about acquiring key vocational and technological skills and measurable competences related to employability and the construction of a knowledge society based on constant innovation that would be the machine for Europe’s economic competitiveness in the global economy.

As the book was being written, I came to see lifelong learning minus any interest in the notion of a learning society (i.e., minus any interest in the politics of equality, support, cooperation, inclusion, democratic empowerment, and so on, that the notion inspired), and endorsing a performativist technological agenda (i.e., one minus any interest in education) not as a positive thing as I had seen lifelong education earlier, but as a disturbing development, a problem, a project I wanted to resist rather than endorse or legitimize – not, however, by countering it with a competing project with a social democrat master narrative as I had originally intended – my “postmodernist” readings had cured me of that ambition. *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* served me as a clearing ground for ideas and uncertainties that

were circling around in my head at the time of writing engendered by all these circumstances I have been describing. In essence, I needed to sort out a number of issues in my mind that were provoked by the current discourse of lifelong learning and by the new directions my thinking had taken with my encounter with “post-modern” thinking, and I looked to the four philosophers I mentioned earlier, Rorty, MacIntyre, Foucault, and Habermas, each with his own very different take on modernity and its future as a project than the others – my view being that what was at stake at this stage of the game was the future of the modern notion of education as the cultivation of a free (meaning autonomous in some one of its understandings) mind in a postmodern performativist world. One task was to describe this world, that is, of our changing contemporary societies, as learning societies. The effect of the phenomenon of accelerating change created by a rapidly growing technological environment on people’s lives, with the instability it brought with it, which first instigated the call for lifelong education for all in the 1960s, continues to be their defining feature. If anything, the rate of change has been exacerbated in the interval, resulting in learning societies which social theorists define as “risk” societies. In any case, this feature of change is certainly a key feature of the transition from a modern to a postmodern world with its familiar social, economic, and political features. The political trigger for the transition, the collapse of communism in Europe in 1989, was also what triggered this renewed interest in lifelong learning which, without wishing to be too simplistic, I would explain in terms of the fast-changing economic and political climate that followed it. The new discourse of lifelong learning evolved as part of, and was made necessary by, the newly emerging postmodern reality at the heart of which, I agree with Lyotard (1999), beats this culture of performativity, of measuring and valuing everything in terms of efficient and effective outcomes.

In my new book I tried to show where the notion of the learning society was coming from and how it featured in the lifelong learning literature of the EU of the 1990s until, after some timid gestures toward the issues of democratic participation and social cohesion, it was withdrawn in the early years of the twenty-first century. To continue my sociology of the postmodern learning society that the Western society has become, I turned to Foucault’s account of the disciplined society and to Jean Baudrillard’s account of a media-saturated information society. In the case of the latter, to his account of the seductive effect of modern technology and, more especially, media technology, on the masses which, as he says, respond to this seduction with their complicity, their fascinated silence. Is our postmodern learning society today disciplined or seduced, or both at once, the first by the institutions of the state, the second by the media? I think both. What are the chances for reviving the notion of an educated public in this environment? Baudrillard’s account also, like Foucault’s (with which I do not see it as being in contradiction), resonates with my intuitions, rings with the truth. Before this line of thinking was pursued, I examined the respective features of Habermas’s and MacIntyre’s competing publics to represent what was at stake in each better. I hope I did enough to show my preference for Habermas’s liberal public which is close to Dewey’s and which could quite easily have been a central feature of the theorized learning society that was my original project, were

that still my interest. But, again, was it *my* interest? This, to repeat, was a fundamental question that faced me in writing the book.

Two other things, beside my reading of Foucault and Baudrillard, got into the way of replying in the affirmative and sticking to that project. One, this encounter with “postmodernist” thought I have been referring to, which refers (it must be explained in the light of the often ambiguous use of the term) to something different from “postmodern” as used by social theorists to describe the *character* of the contemporary world as one that exacerbates the features of risk, fast change, technology, globalization, and so on, that already characterized the modern world. Lyotard (1979) identifies an *attitude* of disillusionment people living in the postmodern world experience with respect to the master narratives that, to the contrary, held the modern world captive – those that drove the Enlightenment or modernist project, amongst which the narrative that speaks the language of the educated public and conceives of education as the possession of a rationally autonomous outlook achieved by participating in the public. Sharing Rorty’s feeling that the “postmodernists” were philosophically right and insightful to support this attitude of suspicion toward master narratives (whether they were “politically silly” also, as he also held, is another matter – I think not), I was forced to rethink my interest in theorizing a learning society with a master narrative of social democracy at its heart and sustained by an educated public and, effectively, to abandon it. The “postmodernist” rejection of the idea of an autonomous subject, as a rational center of consciousness, also demanded a new understanding of “education” – if one wanted to continue to operate with the word. I shall return to this point at the end of this chapter.

The other problem I encountered was with the way social democracy itself was being redefined, with the “new,” “Third Way” version of its politics that came to life and, in many countries, power, in the 1990s at the expense of its socialist roots. Articulated in the writings of such as Anthony Giddens (1998a, b) Third Way politics responded to the “crisis” of the European Left following on the events of the late 1980s that brought the collapse of Communism in Europe, by steering away from the politics of “ideological” confrontation, toward a political middle ground “beyond left and right,” to use the title of another of Giddens’s (1998a, b) books. And therefore toward a postmodern scenario or political landscape without master narratives – a move which coincided perfectly with the currently evolving politics of lifelong learning in the late 1990s, because of this distancing from “ideology” – this character of being beyond politics is precisely how a performativist culture which identifies itself with technological values presents itself. In the thinking of the new social democracy individual lifelong learning is sustained not by a learning society inspired by solidarity between learners but by a learning account in a learning bank financed jointly by the individual, the employer, and the state. In short, the politics of identifying lifelong learning as a project of personal responsibility that lay at the heart of the Third Way social democracy was hostile to the politics of collective responsibility that underpinned the old ideal learning society where individual lifelong learning projects are sustained by a culture of mutual support and solidarity, by an agenda of collective empowerment, and by the understanding that learning be regarded as a lifelong right. “No rights without responsibility” was the slogan (or at least one of

them) of the new Third Way social democracy. What kind of ice could theorizing a learning social democracy cut in such circumstances where its language was so much out of favor and where the prevalent language was performativist and economic?

In sum, the writing of *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World* left me with serious philosophical and political problems with my original idea of theorizing a learning society with social democratic political affiliations. And this left me, in turn, with the question where I wanted to go, if anywhere, with the idea of a learning society? I see little if any possibility that the concept will make any comeback soon in an EU policy landscape occupied politically by employers and governments now obsessed mainly with the problems of economic survival and revival, and by bureaucrats who have every interest to sustain a performativist discourse of lifelong learning which, because it seems to be “nonideological,” enjoys a broad political consensus. Foucault and Baudrillard tell us why we should remain interested in it, nonetheless. Not to theorize it in the old utopian way of the 1970s but, as Gelpi suggested, as an analytical tool to bring to bear on our societies; to remind them that no matter that the policymakers have dropped the concept from their language we shall continue to regard them as learning societies, and to concern ourselves with their social and political quality. This is not, however, the end of the story. Foucault and Baudrillard not only suggest *how* we can be made subject, or subjectivized, by the learning society we inhabit through its politics of learning, they suggest that we must be able to go the step further of working on ourselves, redefining or reinventing ourselves anew all the time, in the face of its oppressive or dangerous features, and I am calling that activity of working on oneself lifelong *education*.

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**Part II**  
**The Policy Challenge**

# Chapter 17

## Life Chances, Learning and the Dynamics of Risk in the Life Course

Karen Evans, Ingrid Schoon, and Martin Weale

### Introduction

Research into the ways in which life chances are shaped by structures of opportunity and risk has been increasingly influenced by theories of reflexive modernisation and the role of human agency, and the availability of large-scale data sets and cohort studies to model relationships from the early years into and through adult life. Arguments that the dissolution of traditional class, gender and family parameters has, in post-industrial societies, created the conditions for people to shape their own destinies (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991) are countered by consistent evidence of persistent social inequalities in aspirations and attainment (Bynner 2001; Evans 2002; Furlong and Cartmel 1997; Jones 2002; Schoon 2006). This chapter highlights variations in the processes and consequences of learning across different subgroups of the population and discusses the socioeconomic and wider benefits of different configurations of education and learning through the life course.

Although the polarisation of life chances and transition outcomes is increasingly debated, variations over time, within and between social groups, have received less attention. There has been a polarisation of transition experiences into fast versus slow transitions (Jones 2002), with young people from less privileged backgrounds following the traditional fast track transitions characterised by early school leaving and family formation, while their more privileged peers are participating in higher education and prolonging the step into paid employment and family formation. While a substantial body of research evidence on the wider benefits of learning through the life course has been established in the UK through the work of

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Schuller et al. (2001) and Feinstein et al. (2008), empirical research on the economic effects of learning beyond initial and conventional, front-loaded higher education<sup>1</sup> is also extremely limited (Beder 1999), with assumptions about the general benefits of adult learning based largely on extrapolation from the benefits of mainstream education. For example, Jenkins et al. (2003) showed little immediate earnings benefit from qualifications obtained in one's thirties, but indicated that enrolling for adult learning has a significant impact on the likelihood of unemployed adults re-entering the labour market. Their conclusions were limited, however, by the narrow definition of lifelong learning adopted and neglect of the wider benefits/social returns, and, hence, the importance of learning 'trajectories' (Gorard et al. 1999) has also only partially been realised.

This chapter evaluates the limits of previous work and the conceptual and empirical approaches that can provide missing evidence and take research forward in new directions. It argues for approaches that can differentiate between subgroups, contextualised capabilities and actual life chances and opportunities (Sen 1985) to achieve a better understanding of human development over the life course and in different cultural contexts (Magnusson 1995; Magnusson et al. 2003). Furthermore, it shows how strengthening the empirical evidence of the economic returns to learning is needed to provide better explanations of the variations in earnings (of which only about 40% is accounted for by previously identified factors) and to take fuller account of employment prospects as well as the effects of education of all kinds on the uncertainties people are likely to face during their working lives. Finally, the authors outline ways in which the combination of perspectives and evidence identified can shed light on the social, economic and cultural factors that influence and impede individuals' attempts to control their lives, and their ability to respond to and manage opportunities. The analysis is informed by latest life course perspectives and the potential for innovative research methods to map and model dynamics of learning throughout the life course in ways that can uncover diversity and fluctuation over time within as well as between social groups.

## The Need for a Unifying Framework

A comprehensive understanding of the multiple influences on individual lives requires the development of a unifying, interdisciplinary framework. Life course development is profoundly affected by macro-economic conditions, institutional structures, social background, gender, and ethnicity as well as acquired attributes and individual resources such as ability, motivation and aspirations.<sup>2</sup> The development

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<sup>1</sup>That is, end on to initial schooling for 18–21 year olds.

<sup>2</sup>Attempts to develop a common interdisciplinary or overarching transdisciplinary theoretical framework for the study of human development in context, bringing together expertise from the fields of psychology, sociology and economics are exemplified by Baltes 1997; Diewald and Mayer 2008; Elder and Caspi 1988, 1990; Featherman and Hauser 1978; Featherman and Lerner 1985.



of such a framework has to acknowledge, first, that development takes time and that it reflects cumulative experiences (e.g. the accumulation of individual resources such as educational credentials or capabilities). Second, the social contexts within which human development is embedded range from interactions with significant others to macro-social circumstances. Third, life course transitions, such as from school to work or work to retirement, are not only shaped by institutional and labour market structures but also involve developmental tasks that challenge the individual actors as well as institutional regulations. Fourth, individual decision making is bounded by social institutions and the wider macro-social conditions.

As Schoon et al. (2009) have noted elsewhere (2009b) despite these commonalities, there continues to be a discipline-specific focus on dominant explanatory factors and guiding concepts. Economic models of life transitions focus mainly on the supply and demand side of the labour market and examine transition experiences in terms of 'rational choice' based on a cost-benefit analysis that aims to maximise personal profit. Yet, the notion of rational choice does not necessarily take into account the role of social and cultural resources, individual values or preferences (Walther 2009; Jones 2009a, b). Cultural variations and the role of social structures in human development are the primary focus of sociology, whereas the multiple facets of individual functioning are the main concern of psychology. The disciplines meet where they aim to examine the interactions between individual and context. This interconnection had been recognised; yet, research has developed independently in recent decades. Within sociology, research has focused on the study of the life course as externally shaped by institutions, structural opportunities and historical change, in which life-course dynamics and expressions of individual agency are contingent on a given socio-historical context (Elder 1998). Psychology, conversely, has concentrated on the study of individual adaptation and development across the life span, conceptualised as lifelong adaptive processes. Its interests lie within the study of principles of self-regulation and psychological functioning, such as the model of selection, optimisation and compensation (Baltes 1997). Although the malleability of individual development and functioning through social influences is acknowledged within psychology, the focus is mostly on the more proximal social contexts, such as the family, social networks and peers, rather than on more distal socio-historical or institutional influences (Roberts 2007).

We ask here whether increasing the field of view of sociologists and economists to take into account individual motivation and preferences will result in a better understanding of individual decision making and choice processes involved in skill acquisition and modes of individual agency. For psychologists to take into account the role of institutions and social structures might contribute to a better understanding of individual adaptation in times of social change and provide the means to assess how social and institutional change is affecting individual functioning. Both might also learn from social anthropology in acknowledging how social processes are embedded in cultural and subcultural differences. An integrated approach would enhance our understanding of human behaviour in a changing social context and enable us to answer questions such as: How do economic and cultural factors influence and impede individuals' attempts to control their lives, and their ability to

respond to opportunities and to manage the consequences of their choices? In what ways do degrees of 'riskiness' in socioeconomic environments have consequences for individual life chances across the life course, the ways in which individuals react to these risks and the extent to which differences in socioeconomic outcomes are influenced by factors such as parental background, educational attainments and participation in education and training after entering the workforce. How do individuals respond to and cope with a sudden downturn in employment opportunities or increased pressure to continue with further education? What is the role of life planning and motivation in steering young people on their paths to adulthood? What are the incentives and disincentives to education, training and career change in adult life?

Insecurity prevails at every location in society. The number of those excluded might be growing, yet there is also much movement of individuals in and out of poverty (characterised by indicators such as income, education, housing, employment and temporal horizons). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) suggested that it has become necessary to develop new concepts and research methods to address typologically these fluid categories, differentiating between those at the top and bottom of the social ladder and the new 'hybrids' located in between. The diverse ways in which social roles combine within individuals and the way in which different typologies are associated with transition strategies are demonstrated by Garrett and Eccles (2009). Schoon et al. (2009b) have also shown that traditional templates are changing and that there is a polarisation of experiences in youth into fast versus slow transitions, calling for a more process-oriented rather than age- or situation-fixed approach to account for variations in role combinations at specific life phases. Future labour markets might accentuate this polarisation as the changing nature of job requirements calls for higher level skills, on the one hand, and increasing demand for jobs deemed to be low-skilled, on the other – especially jobs in the retail trade and in personal-care services.

## The Socioeconomic Benefits of Learning Through the Life Course

Schuller et al.'s (2001) research into the wider benefits of learning<sup>3</sup> has shown that there are six social domains beyond and separate from employment in which the social benefits of learning may be manifested. These are citizenship (social participation) family, health, crime, leisure and lifestyle and the 'third age'. Although treated as separate from employment and labour market matters for the purposes of research into the wider benefits of learning, the impact of learning on employment, status and income is recognised as having influence in all of the above domains. Since different forms of learning have consequences for employment status and income, and employment itself mediates the impact of learning on social outcomes in all of these domains (p. 59), a better understanding of the economic benefits of

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<sup>3</sup>Conducted through the WBL Centre: Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning at the Institute of Education, University of London.

learning is crucial to the understanding of life chances and well-being through the life course. There is, for example, evidence to suggest that the rewards associated with increasing qualification level are changing for the 1958 and 1970 British birth cohort, and that they have different consequences for men and women (Schoon 2007a, b). Cohort members with higher level qualifications are more likely to be in paid employment, are more likely to vote and be members of a trade union. The rewards associated with higher qualifications are decreasing, especially for men in the later born 1970 cohort, suggesting that post-16 education is becoming less effective in this respect. For women, on the other hand, returns associated with investments in skills and qualifications are increasing with respect to their employment opportunities, which might reflect the increasing participation of women in further education and in the labour market, even after child birth.

### ***Patterns and Socioeconomic Consequences of Participation in Education and Training for People of Working Age***

It is well established that education delivers economic benefits to its recipients. Well-educated people generally earn more than poorly educated people, although there are some exceptions<sup>4</sup>; most studies of the effect of education attempt to compare the earnings of people with different levels of qualifications. McIntosh (2006) provides a detailed and thorough account of the effects of education to different levels computed on this basis.

However the economic benefit of education arises not only because education raises people's earnings but also because, in many cases, people with high levels of education have higher employment rates than people with lower levels of education. In some circumstances this may reflect people's choices. For example, it is more worthwhile for a mother who can command a high salary to pay for child care and work herself than it is for a mother whose earning potential is lower. But it may also reflect other characteristics of the labour market, or the interface between the labour market and individual experience. People with high levels of education may be better able to adapt to changes to technology than people with low levels of education and this may make it easier for them to find work throughout their lives. Thus a full analysis of the return to education should take account of employment prospects as well as the impact on earnings for people who are employed.

But even when employment prospects are taken into account, analysis of returns does not take full account of the effects of education on the uncertainties that people are likely to face during their working lives. Wage dynamics are usually represented as a partial adjustment process, so that, after taking account of individual fixed effects, people with high wages should expect them to fall and those with low wages should expect them to rise. Dutta et al. (2001) suggested, however, that experience

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<sup>4</sup>For example, some degree subjects are found to be more valuable than others and Ph.Ds have been found to have negative economic returns.

could be better described by means of a variant of the traditional mover-stayer model. People are either stayers, in which case they receive a wage related to that which they earned in the previous period, or they are movers who take a wage from a random distribution with a fixed mean. Splitting the population into two groups, those with two A-levels or a higher level of education and those not educated to this level, it was found that the underlying processes were very similar except that education to A-level or better raised the expected earnings of the movers.

### *Measuring the Effects on Employment Dynamics of Lifelong Learning*

There has been only a limited amount of past work that effectively measures the effects of qualifications gained in adult life on earnings and employment dynamics.<sup>5</sup> Blanden et al. (2008) explore the question using the British Household Panel Survey which provides annual data on people's earnings and on their education and employment history. The studies mentioned above have found only limited benefits to lifelong learning where the latter is defined in its most restrictive sense, as participation in further courses and qualifications separated from people's first period of more or less continuous education by a significant gap, with the most obvious beneficiaries being women aged 35–49 and men aged under 35. There is also the suggestion of a favourable impact on women's employment. By contrast much clearer benefits are generally found for post-compulsory education as well as for qualification gains during the compulsory phase of education.<sup>6</sup>

The 2010 results of Dorsett, Lui and Weale, also based on the Household Panel Survey and development of a variant of the mover-stayer model,<sup>7</sup> represent an important step forward in the analysis of the benefits on earnings and employment dynamics of lifelong learning. They show powerful and significant effects of upgrading educational status through lifelong learning for men undertaking lifelong learning, with modest effects significant at the 10% level for men who undertake lifelong learning without upgrading their educational status. For men upgrading their educational status through lifelong learning, the influence of lifelong learning on employment prospects is an important influence on the overall return.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Most of the work in the UK (Jenkins et al. 2003; Jenkins 2004; Feinstein et al. 2004) has been built around either the 1958 or the 1970 cohort survey. Since participants in these surveys are interviewed only very intermittently, it is not possible to use them as a basis for exploring the impact of either conventional or lifelong learning on earnings dynamics.

<sup>6</sup>The literature also suggests there are differential private returns to academic and vocational qualifications, although the evidence is relatively sparse (McIntosh 2006), and to learning through formal schooling and job experience (Harmon et al. 2003). Existing study of learning spillovers focuses entirely on formal learning and pays little attention to different types of formal learning, with few exceptions (e.g. Murphy et al. 1991; Hanushek and Kimko 2000).

<sup>7</sup>See Dutta et al. (2001).

<sup>8</sup>The effects for women are being further investigated by Dorsett, Lui and Weale 2011.

## **The Benefits of Education and Training Are Uncertain...**

An obvious aspect of all of these studies is that the earnings and employment benefits of education and training, whether conceptualised as the traditional 'front-loaded' pre-employment form or as lifelong learning, are uncertain. People are asked to make a sacrifice in terms of earnings given up and other costs incurred which they can assess reasonably precisely in exchange for benefits which are risky in the sense that there is a large but reasonably well quantifiable margin of uncertainty surrounding them. Even if someone who embarks on a degree is confident that they will complete the course, the salary they can expect to earn afterwards is highly uncertain. While research generally finds that education and qualifications play a substantial and statistically highly significant role in explaining earnings, it is also the case that the major part of the variation of earnings across individuals is left unexplained. For example, the study by McIntosh (2006) found that only about 40% of the overall variation was accounted for by factors which he could identify. If people are averse to risk, in that any given expected benefit to them is more valuable the more certain it is, then there is the possibility that this uncertainty may limit the incentive to undertake both traditional and lifelong learning.

This uncertainty is not, however, the only factor which may limit the take-up of post-compulsory education. From an economist's point of view, people may be myopic, in the sense that, year by year, they discount the immediate future at a rate higher than that at which they discount the distant future. This might be expected to be a separate factor discouraging investment in education and learning. Paradoxically, it could also be a reason why people might prefer to 'save' by building up their human capital rather than by holding financial assets because myopic people know that they can be tempted to spend their financial wealth prematurely while educational capital is locked in. Separately, and quite differently, it is also possible that people discount the future more when they are young than when they are old.

## **Adult Learning in Life-Course Perspective: The Significance of Literacy and 'Basic Education' in Adult Life**

A life-course perspective can ensure that educational trajectories are studied in ways that recognise their 'complex intertwining' with social institutions and social roles as experienced at different stages of the life course. It explores the ways in which individuals' ages, work and family roles influence the dynamics of learning trajectories in and throughout adult life and also moves beyond the notions of transitions introduced earlier by focusing on socially positioned processes of learning in and through life changes (see also Hager and Hodkinson (2009); Ecclestone et al. (2009); Evans and Waite (2009). Life-course approaches have also underpinned the work of Gorard and Rees (2002) on adult learning trajectories. Significantly, Gorard

and Rees's modelling of the determinants of what they term 'lifetime learning' shows that those with no qualifications are more likely to return to learning later in life than those who do not 'achieve the benchmark of 5 GCSEs or equivalent'. Furthermore, in line with the theoretical prediction of life-course approaches, determinants of later participation are different, reflecting the circumstances of adult life and the access people have to learning, including through their work. According to Gorard and Rees, these findings provide important correctives to conventional views of participation in lifetime learning, showing also through their individual accounts (10% sample, semi-structured, in-depth interviews) how it is the diversity that is the most striking. Adult employees who engage in basic education programmes through their work are distributed, according to Evans and Waite's previous research, across Gorard and Rees' 'non-participants' in lifetime learning (prior to engagement in the workplace literacy courses), 'transitional trajectories', involving periods of further education and training end on to schooling but not beyond) and the 'lifetime trajectory' (which accounted for almost one third of the respondents in the Gorard-Rees study – defined as those whose experiences of education/work-based training extend beyond initial schooling and includes at least one substantive episode of education/training in adult life). These are adults held, in public policy discourse, to be most 'at risk' of unemployment and social exclusion. While there are no simple patterns (consistent with Evans and Waite's own qualitative evidence), the complexity is consistent with the theoretical perspectives that foreground the choices made by individuals over their own participation in learning – with the important caveat that any choices that were made are also heavily constrained by circumstances (Gorard et al. 1998, 2001). Gender differences in social role and expectations are highlighted; also highlighted are the learner identities that are rooted in prior experiences of education, particularly in schooling.

Studies that focus on differentials in participation rather than on what is gained through participation are very broad in their delineation of categories – they provide some (broad brush) backcloths. Skills, employment and earning gains from participation in adult programmes, including adult basic education, are elucidated by research investigations such as those of Reder et al. (2009), Comings (2009) and Bynner and Parsons (2009) in the UK; gains in the wider domains identified by Schuller et al. (2001) including gains of confidence and enhanced social capital are evidenced through other large-scale ESRC studies with a more qualitative orientation, such as those conducted by Field (2005), Tett and Maclachlan (2007) and by Appleby and Barton (2008). Using a life-course perspective, Reder and Bynner (2009) have used a combination of statistical modelling methods to analyse changes over time in measured literacy proficiency, literacy practices, programme participation, employment earnings and other variables.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Latent growth curve models, event history models, and modelling techniques from economics and programme evaluation (treatment effects models; propensity score matching) have been used to make quasi-experimental comparisons of participants and non-participants in adult education programmes.

## ***How Engagement in Literacy Practices Leads to Proficiency***

Age is found to be important in Reder's (2009) work, with evidence of both proficiencies and engagement in literacy practices tending to increase in early adult life, becoming constant in mid-life and declining thereafter. Both programme participation and self-study positively impact on engagement in literacy practices and this in turn may lead to increases in literacy proficiency, according to Reder's 2009 findings. The most direct and immediate impacts of participation are evident for literacy practices than for literacy proficiency. The latter appears in the longer term to be positively affected by participation. The evidence also tentatively suggests that better jobs that may engage a broader range of workers' literacy skills are likely to support the development of literacy proficiency, a suggestion further reinforced by Evans and Waite's (2010) findings in UK workplaces. Reder concludes a broader picture is needed of adult basic skills learners than just as participants in programmes – *active learners deploying different resources in and out of the workplace in efforts to improve basic skills over time are the ones who will improve* – and this needs to be viewed holistically within the context of an adult's life (a point which is consistent with Evans and Waite's 2009 qualitative evidence). Furthermore, both Bynner and Reder, in comparing US and UK findings, have shown that adults' persistence in literacy learning, irrespective of whether instruction and support are provided in episodic forms or in sustained longer-term programmes, is a key factor.

Recent literature also provides evidence of gains such as confidence, wider engagement in activities involving communication of different kinds and social capital as shown in an expanding circle of contacts and relationships. Tett and Maclachlan (2007) and Appleby and Barton (2008) have explored patterns of engagement qualitatively and, in the case of Tett and Maclachlan, with reference to some quantitative indicators. This evidence further strengthens the case for focusing on the wider gains (proficiency, practices and social engagement viewed holistically) as advocated by Reder et al. above. Furthermore, work-related training has been found to be linked positively to levels of adult literacy among men, and the experience of paid employment is generally associated with the development and maintenance of basic skills (Parsons and Bynner 1998). Wolf and Evans (2011) longitudinal research into the effects on individuals and on organisations of engagement in literacy learning through the workplace has confirmed that the workplace does provide access to learning for some adults who have not found it possible to attend conventional classes. It also underlines the importance of a far wider range of factors than the wish to improve job performance – boosting confidence, helping children with their homework and pursuing interests outside work. Most employees are able to cope adequately in their jobs with present skill levels, although a significant minority report struggling with some aspects of literacy and numeracy. The under-use of skills is a bigger problem that is now becoming more widely acknowledged in the literature (see also, Felstead et al. 2009). Wolf and Evans (2011) have shown, in congruence with Reder and Bynner

(2009), that perceived and actual gains come with practice and with application. Unless people's jobs demand and encourage literacy, the effects of workplace interventions are likely to be small and short-lived. Conversely, as Evans and Waite (2010) have shown, it was the learners who used their literacy skills actively, in and out of the workplace, who showed consistent gains. Changes in job responsibilities were positively correlated with progress in measured skills.<sup>10</sup> The relationship between job change and change in reading score was positive: learners whose jobs changed showed a larger improvement in reading scores between first and second tests. This was consistent with these learners utilising their new skills at work. While there is evidence that many workers in low-graded jobs cope well in their existing jobs with their existing skills, and have worked for their existing employer for an average of 9 years, these workers are held to be at higher risk of becoming long-term unemployed than more qualified workers in recessions and economic downturns (see OECD 1997; Social Exclusion Unit 2009).

## Exploring the Concept of Risk and Its Life-Course Implications from Different Perspectives

When Beck (1992, 1998) outlined the nature of an emergent 'risk society', the emphasis was on the increased uncertainty and unpredictability of the individual's life course. The person learns to 'conceive of him or herself as the centre of action, as the planning office with respect of his/her own biography' (p. 135) trying to minimise risk and maximise personal opportunities. Beck believed that individualisation heralded the dissolution of factors traditionally seen as determining many aspects of life in industrialised societies – class culture and consciousness, gender and family roles. In England, this work was paralleled by Anthony Giddens' more critical accounts of reflexive modernisation (1991, 1998).

Furlong and Cartmel (1997) and Engel and Strausser (1998) have both contested these accounts of individualisation as misleading, claiming that the social world has only come to be *regarded* as unpredictable and filled with risks that can only be negotiated on an individual level, while, in fact, structural forces operate as powerfully as ever and the chains of human interdependence remain intact. Evans' conceptual scheme (see Fig. 17.1) for further investigation of the individualisation 'thesis' sets out the dimensions of structure-agency, internal-external control, social reproduction-conversion that contribute to the search for an overarching interdisciplinary framework.

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<sup>10</sup>Using the specially designed 'Go' instrument developed by the National Foundation for Educational Research.



### ***Bounded Agency: Focusing on the Ways in Which Individual Agency Can Be Supported Without Losing Sight of the Structuring Effects of Contexts***

The exploration of ‘individualisation’ and risk requires a better understanding of social regularities and individual differences in the agency of individuals, their decisions and actions and the consequences of these. As Bandura (1995, 1998) and Elder (1994) have observed, all social transitions entail risk of losing personal control, with effects dependent on biography and on material (economic) and social situation. The empirically grounded concept of bounded agency developed by Evans sees the actors as having past and imagined future possibilities, which guide and shape actions in the present, together with subjective perceptions of the structures they have to negotiate and the social landscapes which affect how they act. Agency is socially situated and essentially ‘bounded’ (Evans 2002), influenced but not determined by environments and emphasising internalised frames of reference as well as external actions (Bourdieu 1993). By examining risk and the manifestations and consequences of ‘riskiness’ in the life course, the focus moves from ‘structured individualisation’ onto individuals as actors, without losing the perspective of structuration. As actors move in social landscapes, spaces open up for action which are not wholly reducible to the effects of social reproduction or underlying structural features. There are some constraints in a ‘social landscape’ that will be very difficult to move or remove, but others might be reduced through social and educational policies. Societies need to ensure that the greatest demands to ‘take control of their lives’ do not fall on those who are the least powerfully placed in the ‘social landscape’ they inhabit. By focusing our attention on how people with agentic beliefs about work and their social environment encounter frustrations in acting upon them, the concepts of riskiness and bounded agency can potentially be modelled in ways that inform research, practice and policy.

### ***Risk and Resilience***

An important perspective on risk comes from ‘resilience’ research within the field of developmental and social psychology. Individuals respond differently to exposure to adverse circumstances, depending on type and duration of risk exposure, as well as the resources, such as capabilities and support, available at the time of need (Rutter 1988). Not all individuals succumb to the negative effects of risk exposure, and some people seem to be able to ‘beat the odds’.<sup>11</sup> Fundamental to the idea of risk is the predictability of life chances from earlier circumstances. Resilience has been attributed to individuals who beat the odds, who avoid the negative trajectories associated with risks. What distinguishes a high-risk individual from others is not so

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<sup>11</sup>The notion of risk used in resilience research stems from epidemiological research, identifying expected probabilities of maladjustment (Rutter 1988).

much exposure to a specific risk factor, but rather a life history characterised by multiple disadvantages. Serious risk emanates from the accumulation of risk effects, and it has been suggested that it is the number of these factors and their combined effect that exert a deleterious impact on developmental outcomes (Sameroff et al. 1993).

Individuals exposed to particular adverse life circumstances are often treated as homogenous groups, despite possible variations in the degree to which their lives are actually shaped by the influence of the particular risk factors in question. Social class, for example, has been widely used as a risk indicator, although social class conveys little information about specific proximal experiences to which children within a given level of social class are exposed (Richters and Weintraub 1990, p. 83). A child raised by working class parents will not necessarily experience poor quality care giving. Moreover, the experience of adversity might only be temporary and not long-lasting. Without more comprehensive information about the risk situation, it cannot be assumed that there actually is a significant risk exposure. The identification of resilience might sometimes be more appropriate for resilient families than for the child within them, or a well-functioning child may not be resilient at all but may actually have experienced a low-risk situation.

Despite concerns regarding the variability of risk exposure, or the dissonance between interpretations of the situation by the individual experiencing it and the person observing it, the investigation of the factors and processes associated with variations in response to adversity appears still worthwhile. For example, if most individuals perceived a specific experience as difficult and harmful while others interpret it as relatively neutral, their interpretations could be useful for identifying protective factors (O'Connor and Rutter 1996).

### *Incentives to Learn*

Risk, as economists see it, has an important influence on incentives to learn. The basic tenet is that uncertain outcomes are regarded as less valuable than their average or expected values. It follows that, since to any individual the return to education, whether conventional or lifelong learning, is uncertain while the costs, in terms of fees and earnings forgone, are reasonably certain, people will, at least to some extent, be discouraged by that uncertainty from participation.

Of course willingness to undertake education will also depend on the extent to which people discount future benefits relative to current costs. Even without uncertainty, if this discount rate is greater than the rate of return, then people will not want to make the commitment, according to economists' rational choice theories. A more complicated situation can arise if people are myopic as indicated previously. As we have noted, a high discount rate applied to the near future might seem an additional reason for not investing in education. But if people know that they are myopic they might become keener to undergo education because, once gained, the benefits of educational capital are 'locked in' and endure over time.

In this connection, we note that economists' rational choice approaches, although having some overlap, differ from those of sociologists (e.g. Goldthorpe 1998) in that they tend to treat rational choice as something axiomatic and based on an individualistic notion of welfare. Very occasionally they may explore how rational choices are influenced by other people's behaviour. For example, a phone is of more use if other people you know have one than if they do not. Sociologists might argue, for example, that people might acquire qualifications not because they calculate that they will be helpful to them but because 'it is the thing to do' – a question of cultural expectations. The two perspectives may merge. If having qualifications is the thing to do, then employers may regard not having them as a bad signal, so that having them involves self-interest as well as being 'the thing to do'. But economists assume that people value their qualifications because of the impact on their earnings, irrespective of whether that is because that makes them more productive or simply because of the signal that they offer. The evidence so far that education produces returns to individuals is very strong, with similar effects from lifelong learning according to Dorsett et al.'s findings. However, if we find under-use of lifelong learning, economists may well attribute this to behavioural myopia or excess discounting, while other disciplines might see other possible explanations, including the exercise of contextualised preferences or other risk factors.

Individual characteristics clearly play a role in determining a life path, and the notion that individuals are active agents who strive for control over their environment is central to theories of life-course development (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Elder 1985, 1998). The person brings to the situation his or her own characteristics, comprising personality characteristics, abilities, motivation and self concepts. By recognising and exercising their own competencies, interests and values, individuals formulate expectations and life plans, projecting themselves into the future. It has been argued that the formulation of aspirations, or a life plan, helps to direct and guide the transition from present to the future (Nurmi 1993; Schoon 2006; Schoon et al. 2007). Human agency, however, has to be understood as being constrained by available options and opportunities. Social origin, gender and ethnicity influence the range of options available to the individual, as do historical events beyond individual control, such as changes in the labour market, economic downturn or the outbreak of war (Elder 1998). Young people and adults alike co-regulate their motivation and behaviour in response to the social context (Salmela-Aro et al. 2009). Recent socioeconomic changes, especially changes in education and labour market opportunities, place increasing demands on people's initiative and ability to navigate possible options and multiple demands. Although the polarisation of life chances and transition patterns has now increasingly entered current debates, variations between as well as within social groups have received less attention. Rational choice models do not fully account for the effects of uncertainty that people are likely to face during their working lives, and variations of the traditional 'mover-stayer' model (Dorsett et al. 2011) better conceptualise the dynamics of lifetime earnings.

In the UK, in common with many other countries, large numbers of young people are expected to participate in further education beyond compulsory schooling

age, once the preserve of a relative privileged minority. Schoon et al. (2010a) have shown that increased expectations may mask underlying issues of low academic performance and motivation. It has been claimed that rising education expectations results from beliefs that more education improves chances for attaining better jobs, higher wages and social status – although not all young people will be able to realise their ambitions, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, that is, those who lack the financial and/or academic resources.

Acknowledging that human development is based on the dynamic interactions amongst between changing individuals in changing contexts, whereby individuals affect the context that affects them, we see that life chances are not equally distributed and vary by social origin, gender and ethnicity. For example, young people from relative disadvantaged backgrounds have generally lower expectations regarding their educational and occupational careers than their more privileged peers, even after controlling for ability and motivation (Schoon 2010a, b). Those young people from less privileged background who express high aspirations during adolescence and who are doing well at school do, on average, not achieve to the same extent as those young people growing up in more privileged families, whose parents are generally better educated, have access to financial resources, to formal and informal networks, as well as knowledge about different career pathways. There is no completely individualised choice as social relationships, role expectations and opportunity structures create openings and constraints that the individual has to negotiate (see Evans 2006). This is captured by the notion of bounded agency (see Evans 2002, 2007). Social structures as well as the wider social context circumscribe the range of options that shape biographical agency processes, which can be understood as re-interpretations of cumulative experiences. Any point in the life span has to be understood as the consequence of past experience and as the launch pad for subsequent experiences and conditions. We need to know more about the ways in which processes and consequences of participation impact on ‘riskiness’ in the life course (or the probability of bad things happening to you, economically and, as a consequence, socially).

One conclusion from the foregoing review is that research should aim to obtain a clearer and more detailed understanding of the multiple interacting factors shaping the life transitions such as those that occur between education and within a work career, and the embeddedness of these transitions in other domains of experience. Adults in the future might increasingly have to combine the roles of student, worker, partner and parent and maintain a keenness to learn new skills throughout their working life and into ‘the third age’. Promoting extended participation in education is seen as a key leverage point for social policy makers to facilitate the school-to-work transition. There are, however, national differences in how related measures are implemented and individual differences in how such policies are perceived and responded to. Moreover, there appear to be continued differences in educational participation based on social background, race and gender, with people from disadvantaged backgrounds being less likely to pursue further education, regardless of their actual abilities. Motivating young people to engage in extended education, providing opportunities for re-engagement in adult life and providing the necessary

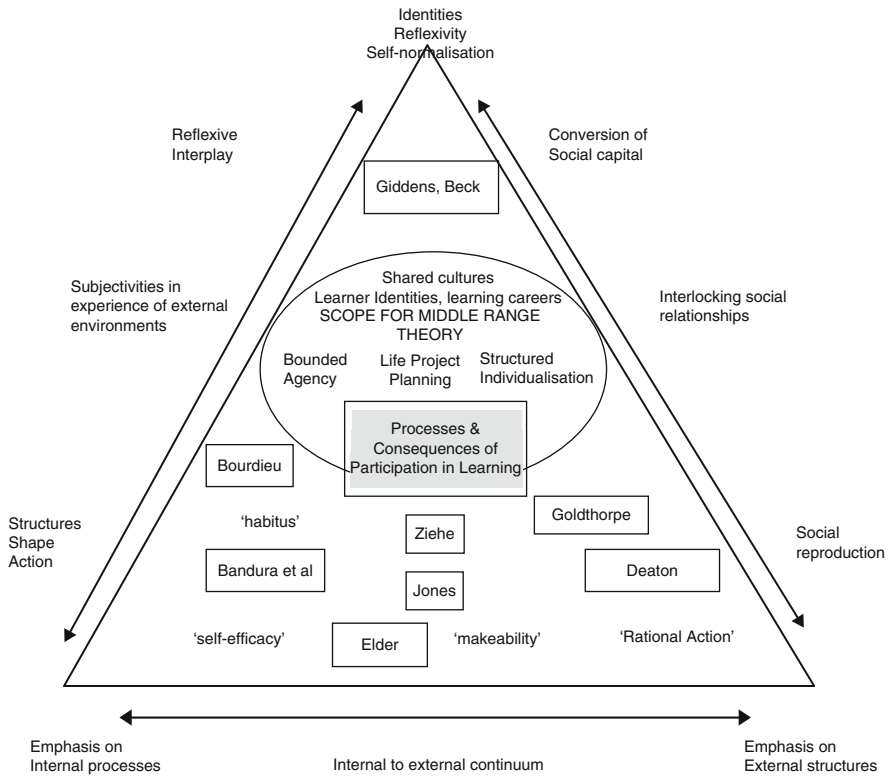
resources and scaffolding that enable lifelong learning mitigate risk and make uncertainty more manageable in the life-course changes and transitions (see also, Evans and Heinz 1993, 1994; Heinz 2009).

Furthermore, there is evidence that social benefits of learning investment can be larger than private benefits (Acemoglu and Angrist 2000; Moretti 2004). Learning investments may impact on the lives of others than those who undertake such investment; for example, through the influence of average wages in the wage bargain for low skilled workers (Riley and Young 2007) and through learning spillovers or other complementarities in production between high- and low-skilled workers, which in themselves are likely to be influenced by technical change (Goos and Manning 2007). Researching the spillover effects from informal learning such as work experience can highlight the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, how the social return to work experience is influenced by information and communication technologies and how in turn this may affect the fortunes of older and younger workers (Aubert et al. 2006). Comparisons between different European countries also allow the exploration of the extent to which variation across countries in these returns can be related to different institutional set ups in the labour market and in the skill formation process and to differences in technology adoption.

The rational choice theories (Breen and Goldthorpe 2001) that are dominant in current conceptualisations of how and why people take up opportunities such as those afforded by lifelong learning do not, of course, fully account for the cultural context in which decisions are made, or differences in belief systems. We have to turn to other disciplinary frameworks to take into consideration that there might be different cultural values and interpretations of social reality, and different definitions of success.

## **Making Disciplinary Connections and Developing Middle Range Theory: A Social Ecological Approach**

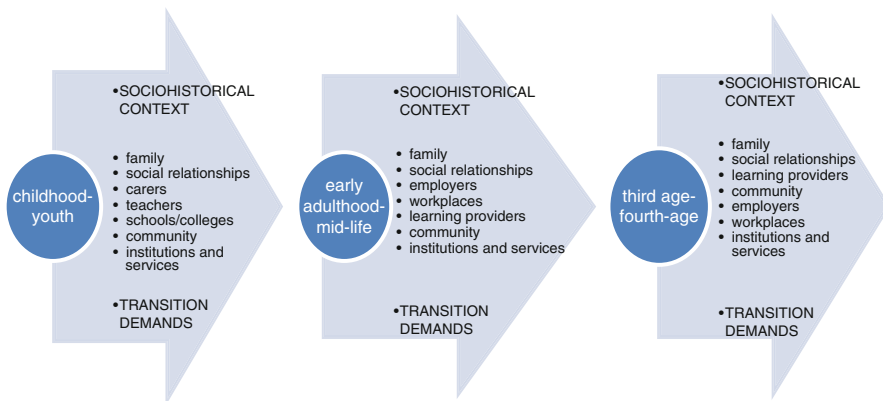
The challenges of making interdisciplinary connections in exploring the dynamics of risk and learning in the life course have been set out at the start of this chapter and illustrated throughout. Are there sufficient connections and areas of overlap between disciplinary perspectives; are there common aspects or are they completely disconnected? If there are common aspects, what are they and how are they connected? The common ground between the disciplinary perspectives in this domain is that they attempt to understand both the processes and consequences of participation in different forms of learning and experience. Economists focus mainly on consequences, but try to control for factors that other social scientists understand in terms of social influences (e.g. parental aspirations). Economists make the assumption that differences in human behaviour stem from 'circumstances'; sociologists see differences as stemming from social structures and processes; psychologists see differences as stemming from internal processes. Do all see individuals as productive processors of reality in different ways? All focus on 'social regularities' in populations



**Fig. 17.1** The scope for middle range theory in the middle ground of interdisciplinary overlap (Adapted from Evans 2002, 2007a, b)

in different ways and make different assumptions about the origins of these social regularities – ‘circumstances’, preferences and structures. The aim is to get a better understanding of both processes and consequences, building on our complementary understandings of what all these variations mean on the individual level and the population level – matching variables and social regularities. The interdisciplinary development of middle range theory starts with an elaboration of Evans’ conceptual schema to re-position research on processes and consequences along three dimensions: emphasis on external structures versus emphasis on internal structures; social reproduction versus conversion of social capital; structures shape action versus reflexive interplay (see Fig. 17.1).

A social ecological approach appears best fitted to the interdisciplinary exploration of the processes and consequences of participation in learning and the effects of different configurations of learning and experiences on risk in the life course. An exploration of sources and patterns of uncertainty in people’s lives reveals the scope for moving beyond conventional rational choice approaches towards the concepts and models of biographical negotiation in decision making. The elaboration of Evans’ model combined with extensions to Schoon’s life-course approach



**Fig. 17.2** Lifelong transition demands have to be understood in their socio-historical context

(see Fig. 17.2) offer a unifying framework for interpretation and elaboration research findings.

Learning and life chances are rooted in educational trajectories and their complex intertwining with social institutions (of labour market, workplace, family and community) and social roles (of employee, citizen and family member) at different stages of the life course. People's beliefs in their ability to change their situation by their own efforts, individually or collectively, are significant for the learning and development (Evans 2009). These beliefs change and develop over time and according to experiences in the labour market and beyond. The ability to translate these beliefs into action is achieved rather than possessed (Biesta and Tedder 2007) and capabilities are limited by bounds that can be loosened (Evans 2002, 2007a, b). In an integrated programme of research, three scales of activity – societal, local and individual-personal – have to be kept in view.

### **Policy Significance of Moving from 'Rational Choice' Assumptions to 'Biographical Negotiation' Models**

We have argued that the exploration of sources and patterns of uncertainty in people's lives reveals the scope for moving beyond conventional rational choice approaches towards the recognition that a longer-term process of biographical negotiation takes place in decision making about education, work and family. Policies that can respond adequately to socioeconomic changes could adopt a

broader and longer-term view in ways that are informed by empirical evidence on the multiple influences on life-course patterns and their dynamic interaction over time, while keeping in view the social returns to different forms of learning at different life stages and differences by gender, ethnicity and other characteristics. This includes keeping in view the ways in which particular educational experiences provide platforms for later development and can contribute to stability or instability in the life course. While for some people staying on in higher education is associated with personal development, for others the attainment of early financial independence is a primary goal and driver. There is also evidence to suggest that increasingly young people with good academic competences, including those from privileged and less privileged backgrounds, are becoming disengaged from school and are not motivated to pursue an academic career (Schoon 2008; Steedman and Stoney 2004). Not all young people are able or willing to prolong their childhood dependence until their mid- or late twenties, and there is need for flexible measures acknowledging differences in pacing and timing of education participation. Some young people with high ability and high expectations are leaving school early in order to make a living, although they might return to education at a later stage in their lives (Schoon 2006; Schoon et al. 2009). How can people develop a learning habitus, a motivation for learning that will endure and be renewed through a person's lifetime, and not just the schooling period? As adults, early school leavers are likely to be faced with a continuous process of incorporation of new technologies into lower-skilled jobs as well as expanding social responsibilities, making it necessary to provide opportunities to learn new skills and develop their capabilities throughout working life (Moynagh and Worsley 2005; Evans and Waite 2009). Thus, education and training systems have to provide opportunities for lifelong learning, whether through formal or informal training programs offered by employers or through education and training institutions in the public or private sector. In the later years, it is argued that the longer life span has created a 'second middle age' (Bronte 1993) in the 60–75 age period. In the second middle age, individuals continue their life activities in a modified form. They may work part-time in so-called bridge jobs that provide a gradual transition from a full-time career to retirement. Meanwhile, they may be doing volunteer work, maintaining a busy social life, and participating in recreational and cultural events (Jun and Evans 2007). And many will experience increasing risks of poverty and exclusion as income declines or as instabilities of earlier life stages intensify in their effects on income and well-being. This is sometimes termed the 'third age' of active older adults gradually giving way to a 'fourth age' often characterised by decline into inactivity, a characterisation disputed by those who question 'unwarranted assumptions about frail and very elderly people and very limited expectations about the possibilities of stimulating activities and the potential for them to learn anything new – and indeed to share existing interests' (Withnall, 2000). Learning is recommended to assist adjustment to ageing, to provide mental stimulation and to provide the



resources for new roles, for example, as community volunteers, grandparents and carers (Davey and Jamieson 2003, p. 267).

So what is needed for effective policies to support individuals' attempts to control their lives and the impact of risk factors on themselves and their families? What incentives and entitlements can be provided to enable people to participate in opportunities? What support should be available to help adults to manage the consequences of their choices?

Existing templates regarding the timing and sequencing of education participation are undergoing important long-term transformations (Schoon et al. 2009b). It is now widely recognised that a single training period before entry into the labour market will be no longer sufficient, and future workers have to be prepared for continuous learning as well as re-skilling throughout their working life, including sideways moves into new areas of the labour market. Policies, such as those introduced in England, of withdrawing funding for those pursuing lower or equivalent qualifications do not encourage labour market mobility or longer-term engagement with lifelong learning, which require a broader and longer-term view, with greater attention to the utilisation of knowledge and skills in and beyond the workplace, the quality of environments and incentives. A more flexible and permeable structure of education participation can enable people to return to education after a problematic or delayed start and can provide the necessary resources and scaffolding to enable lifelong learning as people change direction and pursue new opportunities or ways of realising their potential. To provide a stronger and more sustainable framework for action schools, colleges and educational organisations can potentially form coalitions with parents, employers, cultural and third sector organisations and the wider community in building up support networks and facilitating exposure for people of all ages to multiple positive influences from different sources (Schoon and Silbereisen 2009). In England, the idea of Local Learning Exchanges designed 'to connect people as socially networked learners and to provide spaces for local groups to engage in learning' with a focus on digital, health, financial and civic capabilities as well as employability offers one vision of how this could work (Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning 2009: 8). To overcome the social reproduction of disadvantage and the accumulation of risk means agreeing a framework of entitlement for adults as well as young people that can be 'locally interpreted to meet diverse needs', with a minimum offer guaranteed.

Effective policies for the future will include (1) an integrated policy approach, instead of a concentration of efforts on selected problems; (2) consideration for the interaction between labour market changes and other aspects of the transitions of adult life, such as living arrangements, family formation and retirement; (3) consideration of 'outsiders' and minority groups and approaches that facilitate participation, integration and empowerment; (4) support for second and third chances, enabling recovery and repair after a problematic start or unforeseen setbacks later in life and (5) opportunities for lifelong learning that expand human capabilities and horizons throughout the life course, into old age.

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# Chapter 18

## Lifelong Learning and Life-Wide Work in Precarious Times: Reversing Policy-Making Optics

David W. Livingstone

### Introduction

This chapter will argue that researchers and policy-makers on learning and work issues have been looking through the telescope backwards, and focusing narrowly on changes to formal education and training rather than looking at more pertinent larger problems of work reform.

We are immersed in informal learning and unpaid work throughout most of our lives. We engage in formal education and paid employment for smaller portions of our lives. Adult learning should be more fully understood as intimately related to both our unpaid as well as paid activities. While the notion of ‘lifelong learning’ implies such inclusiveness, there is a pervasive tendency to reduce policy discourse and much empirical research about learning and work to matters of formal training for employment.

The chapter suggests a more expansive conceptual framework for studying work and learning, including a continuum of formal and informal learning in both paid and unpaid work. Empirical evidence drawn from case studies and large-scale surveys in Canada will illustrate the rich extent of adult learning related to work across the lifespan. In particular, these studies document continual learning in relation to paid jobs by the employed labour force.

However, the findings of a growing number of studies also suggest serious under-employment (i.e. surplus of formal educational attainments to job requirements), underutilization and lack of recognition of the talents of a growing proportion of the labour force. A reversed research and policy optic is suggested, placing less focus on enhancing workplace learning per se and more on addressing work reforms to enable workers to use their knowledge more fully.

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Learning is inherently limited in its capacity to solve economic and ecological problems. A wider and deeper appreciation of the rich and extensive formal and informal knowledge already achieved by the labour force, as well as the extent of the waste of this talent in jobs beneath their capacities, should encourage greater attention and initiatives to reform work to address the economic and ecological problems at root of the looming crisis of human survival. Continuing investment in formal education will enhance many social purposes. But neither greater public investment in formal education nor financial bailouts of economic organizations as currently structured will resolve this economic and ecological crisis.

This chapter makes a case for much greater research, policy-making efforts and innovative practices to address economic and ecological change options – and much less reliance on appeals for still greater educational efforts by already highly educated and knowledgeable labour forces.

## Conceptual Framework for Studying Learning and Work

In modern societies, there are at least four distinguishable forms of basic activity (paid employment, household work, community volunteer work and leisure) and four forms of learning (initial formal schooling, further or continuing adult education, informal training and self-directed informal learning).

‘Work’ is commonly thought about as synonymous with ‘earning a living’ through *paid employment* in the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services commodities. Most of us must also do some household work, and many need to contribute to community volunteer work in order to reproduce ourselves and society. Household work and volunteer work are typically unpaid and underappreciated, but they remain essential for our survival and quality of life (see Waring 1988). *Household work*, including cooking, cleaning, childcare and other often complex household tasks, has been largely relegated to women and has gained some public recognition only as women have gained negotiating power through increased participation in paid employment. As community life has become more fragmented with dual-earner commuter households, time devoted to *community work* to sustain and build social life through local associations and helping neighbours has declined, and the productive importance of this work has been rediscovered as ‘social capital’ (Putnam 2000). All three forms of labour should be included in any careful accounting of contemporary work practices. Leisure refers to all those activities we do most immediately for ourselves, albeit often out of necessity, including sleep, self-care and various hobbies.

‘Learning’ involves the gaining of knowledge, skill or understanding anytime and anywhere through individual and group processes throughout our lives. The sites of learning make up a *continuum* ranging from spontaneous responses to everyday life to highly organized participation in formal education programmes. The dominant tendency in contemporary thought has been to equate learning with the provision of learning opportunities in settings organized by institutional authorities and led by teachers approved by these authorities. *Formal schooling* has frequently

been identified with continuous enrolment in age-graded, bureaucratically structured institutions of formal schooling from early childhood to tertiary levels (see Illich 1971). In addition, *further or continuing adult education* includes a diverse array of further education courses and workshops in many institutionally organized settings, from schools to workplaces and community centres. Such continuing education is the most evident site of lifelong learning for adults past the initial cycle of schooling. But we also continually engage in informal learning activities to acquire knowledge outside of the curricula of institutions providing educational programmes, courses or workshops. One aspect of informal learning is *informal education or training*. This occurs when mentors take responsibility for instructing others without sustained reference to a pre-established curriculum in more incidental or spontaneous situations, such as guiding them in learning job skills or in community development activities. The other aspect is all other forms of explicit or tacit learning in which we engage either individually or collectively without direct reliance on a teacher/mentor or an externally organized curriculum. This can be termed 'self-directed' or 'collective informal learning'. As Allen Tough (1971) first observed, informal learning is the submerged part of the iceberg of adult learning activities. It is likely that, for most adults, informal learning (including both informal training and self-directed learning activities) represents our most important learning for coping with our changing environment. No account of lifelong learning can be complete without considering people's informal learning activities as well as their initial formal schooling and further adult education courses through the life course.

All of these basic activity and learning distinctions are relative and overlapping. For example, volunteer work may be done as preparation for paid work and may also be paid. Among leisure activities, sleep may involve thinking about paid or unpaid work, hobbies such as making crafts may become works sold for pay and self-care can be seen as work particularly when needed to prepare for paid work. Virtually all other activities involve learning. To distinguish basic forms of activities, and even more so to distinguish different forms of learning, is primarily a means to emphasize the expansive character of both work and learning. The conceptual frames of many studies of work and learning have been too narrowly preoccupied with paid employment and formal education. Virtually all forms of human activity and learning are relational processes rather than categorical ones. Valuable flows of knowledge may occur among these four basic forms of learning and the other forms of our activities. The basic assumption in this framework is that in information-rich societies, all forms of work and learning are implicated in each other and cannot be effectively understood unless their interrelations are investigated.

## Theoretical Perspective

In the past generation, there has been a rapid widening and deepening of use of computerized information technologies. There has also been increasing problematization of unpaid work as a growing majority of women, who had previously done



the bulk of it, moved into paid employment. In this context, research and policy attention to lifelong pursuit of information and knowledge beyond formal educational institutions and particularly in various forms of work is timely.

The general, theoretical perspective used in the empirical studies reviewed here posits an intimate connection between the exercise of workplace power and the recognition of legitimate knowledge, with the greatest discrepancies between formal knowledge attainments and paid work requirements for the least powerful, including members of lower economic classes, women, visible minorities, recent immigrants, older people and those identified as disabled (Livingstone 2004). These studies of work and learning have been inspired by contemporary theories of learning that focus on the capacities of adults outside teacher-directed classroom settings, such as Malcolm Knowles's (1970) work on individual self-directed learning and Paulo Freire's (1974) reflections on collective learning through dialogue. Both theorists stressed the active practical engagement of adult learners in the pursuit of knowledge or cultural change. Subsequent empirical studies of self-directed learning documented extensive intentional informal learning among diverse social groups (Tough 1978). Freire's projects generally illustrated the untapped learning capacities of oppressed peoples (Freire 1994). This focus on learning in practical activity is consistent with earlier general theories of learning by experience which emphasized either the development of individual cognitive knowledge (Dewey 1916) or tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966), as well as with the cultural historical activity theory of cognitive development which takes more explicit account of subordinate groups' socio-historical context (Vygotsky 1978). All of these approaches to learning encourage a focus on informal learning practices situated in the everyday lives of ordinary people. Similar perspectives have been increasingly applied in recent studies of workplace learning (e.g. Lave and Wenger 1991; Engestrom et al. 1999; Livingstone and Sawchuk 2004).

From this perspective, we can posit that those in occupations which are dependent on recognition of their specialized knowledge to maintain their positions of economic power, such as professional employees, are most likely to engage in continuing reaffirmation of this knowledge through formal means. Secondly, those workers in less powerful positions will be as likely to engage in job-related informal learning both because they face comparable experiential changes that require continual learning and because they face greater barriers to participation in and recognition of formal further education.

All these learning activities occur within the context of advanced capitalist market economies, the most distinctive features of which continue to be (1) inter-firm competition to make and sell more and more goods and services commodities at lower cost for greater profits; (2) negotiations between business owners and paid workers over the conditions of employment and knowledge requirements, including their relative shares of net output and (3) continual modification of the techniques of production to achieve greater efficiency in terms of labour time per commodity, leading to higher profits, better employment conditions or both. These features lead to incessant shifts in the number of enterprises and types of jobs available while drawing more people into pursuit of waged labour. At the same time, popular demand for

general education and specialized training increases cumulatively as people seek more knowledge, different specific skills and added credentials in order to live and qualify for paid jobs in such a changing society. Technological change, including tools and techniques and their combination with the capacities of labour, has experienced extraordinary growth throughout the relatively short history of industrial capitalism. Technological developments from the watermill to the steam mill to interconnected mechanical and electronic networks continually serve to expand private commodity production and exchange, while also making relevant knowledge more widely accessible. The microcomputer era and the rise of global financial circuits have almost certainly seen the acceleration of the change dynamics of capitalist economies (Harris 1999). Workplace learning becomes increasingly linked to computerization and unpaid work becomes increasingly drawn towards paid work.

## Methods and Data

The empirical research briefly reported here is based on both survey and case study methods. All of the surveys and case studies included data on paid and unpaid work as well as formal and informal learning. A primary focus was on self-reported intentional informal learning. A large-scale Canadian national survey was conducted in 1998, building on prior case studies of self-directed informal learning (Tough 1978) and adding specific reference to both paid and unpaid work. Many related case studies focused on varied work and learning contexts were also completed in 1998–2003 through the New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL) research network (see [www.nall.ca](http://www.nall.ca)). On the basis of the NALL research, a further research network, the Changing Nature of Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL), was developed. This network again included large-scale surveys and a smaller number of related case studies. These surveys and the case studies were designed interactively, and the case studies used the results of the surveys to inform further in-depth inquiries. The WALL studies were conducted between 2003 and 2008 (see Livingstone 2010). The data included the 2004 national survey of work and lifelong learning ( $N=9,026$ ), a longitudinal 2004 survey of 1998 NALL survey respondents ( $N=600$ ) and 12 case study projects (see [www.wallnetwork.ca](http://www.wallnetwork.ca)).<sup>1</sup>

## Basic Findings on Learning for Work

Table 18.1 provides a summary profile of relations between formal schooling, further education and informal job-related learning for people in different economic class positions,<sup>2</sup> based on the 2004 national survey.

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<sup>1</sup> All of the findings discussed in this chapter are documented in detail on the research network website ([www.wallnetwork.ca](http://www.wallnetwork.ca)) as well as in Livingstone (2007, 2009, 2010) and Livingstone and Raykov (2010).

<sup>2</sup> For discussion of these economic class distinctions, see Livingstone (2009).

**Table 18.1** Post-secondary school completion, participation in further education and job-related informal learning by Economic Class, Employed Labour Force, Canada, 2004

Economic class	Post-secondary completion (university) (%)	Course/workshop taken in past year (%)	Participated in informal job-related learning (%)
Large employers	76 (35)	67	87
Small employers	54 (23)	46	88
Self-employed	54 (22)	46	87
Managers	71 (34)	68	92
Professional employees	83 (46)	67	92
Supervisors	56 (14)	54	88
Service workers	50 (10)	52	84
Industrial workers	34 (4)	41	84
Total (%)	56 (21)	53	87
N	5,366	5,436	5,428

Source: WALL Survey 2004

Canada has one of the highest rates of post-secondary school completion in the world; over half of the current employed labour force had completed either a university degree or a college diploma by 2004. Professional employees, managers and large employers were more likely to have completed post-secondary education than other economic classes, but even a third of industrial workers had completed some form of post-secondary schooling. University remained the main educational class divide, completed by 46% of professional employees compared to 4% of industrial workers. The rate of annual participation in further education was more similar between economic classes, ranging from two-thirds of professional employees, managers and large employers to about 40% of industrial workers. Engagement in intentional informal job-related learning was more widespread, with over 80% participation rates among all economic classes. The 2004 national survey also found that most of those who do household work or community volunteer work also spend substantial time in related informal learning, and that most people also do substantial informal learning related to their other general interests (Livingstone 2007).

These surveys allowed the following basic conclusions:

1. A very substantial amount of complex learning occurs in housework and volunteer work; some of this learning is transferable to paid employment, but virtually all of it is currently devalued.
2. Intentional informal learning generally exceeds and is more important to adults than further formal education; Tough's (1971) metaphor of the 'iceberg' of adult learning is confirmed.
3. Very substantial intentional informal learning continues through the life course into old age, as well as among the least schooled and the chronically unemployed.

4. Economic class positions are fairly closely related to schooling, less closely related to further education participation and very little related to informal learning.
5. Formal educational attainments increasingly exceed educational requirements for jobs; but in addition to increasing levels of underemployment (i.e. surplus of attainments to job requirements), especially among industrial and service workers, there is also continual learning and job reshaping by even the most underemployed.

The more in-depth NALL and WALL case studies involved workers at diverse paid workplaces as well those involved in unpaid household work and community volunteer work (see Livingstone 2010). These studies led to these further conclusions:

1. Most participants were engaged in extensive intentional learning activities, with various degrees of relevance to their jobs. More importantly, all participants were to greater or lesser degrees engaged in problem solving, during which they continuously acquired and reformulated their cognitive knowledge and abilities, and utilized them to modify their jobs.
2. Although most workers were immediately unaware of being engaged in much of their learning or of the abilities they were acquiring, those learning activities developed both their educational attributes and their jobs, and consequently modified the gaps initially measured between education and job requirements.
3. While many workers exercised some discretion in performing their jobs, they also reported limited opportunities to use their abilities in the design of their jobs and in organizational decision making. This limitation applied especially to clerical and auto workers as well as to disabled workers.

## Workers' Views of Learning

Consider the following comments by auto workers on the centrality of the informal learning they do with others and on their own.<sup>3</sup>

Pete, a young assembly-line worker:

Most of my learning is done with other workers. Whether it's fighting a production standard or whether it's a problem in a certain area, if it's an [employment] insurance problem or whatever. You seek out the advice of somebody else and there's always something to learn about a different part of the collective agreement or a different approach to how to handle a certain job or a specific problem that somebody's come to you with. So talking to other workers is a good way to do it.

Robert, a more experienced tool and die maker in another auto plant:

A lot of informal learning, that's basically how I learned almost everything. The best way to survive is to do this type of learning. There's so much variation in the field, and you learn by the seat of your pants right there on the job.

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<sup>3</sup> These quotes are all drawn from NALL- and WALL-related case studies (see Livingstone and Sawchuk 2004; Livingstone 2009).

Workers' accounts of working knowledge frequently refer to the tacit learning of processing techniques and decision rules that can be of vital importance to both health and productivity. Such informal learning takes much longer than the short time that many production workers say is required to perform their jobs adequately, and it often involves ongoing fine-tuning. For example, machine operators develop expertise in diagnosing operating problems by subtle sounds. As Tara, an auto assembly machine operator, said:

Just the experience of working it, knowing the sounds. I can tell by a sound whether there is something wrong with my machines.... There are certain things as noises that you pick up. I am always in tune to all my machines. There are things that you pick up after you know the job for years.... I can go to another machine and I am just as lost as you would be listening for those sounds because they are run differently. They are all the same machinery, but they all have their own little quirks, their own little 'behaviour problems' I call them.

In addition to learning within paid workplaces, many auto workers, who reflect on their learning beyond the plant, mention the relevance of hobbies, such as motorcycle maintenance and woodworking, in providing them with knowledge that contributes greatly to their paid work. Stephen, an electrician, reflects:

Sure, hobbies give you the ability to look at things in different ways. Because you've experienced different things, you can look at things from a different point of view. It gives you a more objective outlook. Like when I was in high school, I worked with ships, learned about their motors, took that and used it later with the machinery I deal with.

Katharine, an assembly machine operator, saw her knowledge developing in the plant, at home and between the two domains:

I apply the same principles to both things. I use stuff I learn at work, at home. Construction, stuff that I picked up along the way at work. I take the same principles of learning at home and at work and apply them to both.

When these case study participants were given the opportunity to talk about the relevance of the knowledge they had gained both formally and informally throughout their lives, the depth of their implicit knowledge somewhat surprised them. As Martin, an electrician, states:

From time to time, I need to draw on every bit of knowledge that I've got to fix a problem on a machine. And I thought to myself, never in my wildest dreams, did I think that what I learned 20 years ago... totally unrelated to what I'm doing now, that little snippet of information would be useful. And I can say that it is amazing. But it goes to show you that what's in here [head] is important, and from time to time that resource will be called on and if you're lucky enough, you can remember [laughter]. It is amazing.

Ethan, a certified tool setter, expressed similar surprise at the extent and interrelatedness of his working knowledge:

Basically, you realize all your information every time you step up to a new job. You have to keep a lot in your head. It is amazing how much you can catch and keep there, and keep it all together without losing it.... I do all my own home maintenance. You learn it as a matter of necessity... just by doing it, basically self-taught, most of it. Some friends will come over and give me hand... it was fun, I learned a lot. I love working with my hands... I am always into the computer and over the Internet checking out things, learning things.... It is ongoing. It just does not stop.

In day-to-day terms, auto workers and other industrial workers face tasks formally designed by engineers. They must pace themselves to perform their jobs, consider alternative routes to completing tasks and frequently deal with deficiencies in the design of parts or engineering. Even in the most menial jobs, these workers continue to have daily options to initiate more time-saving, work-to-rule or destructive responses to their designated jobs (compare Kusterer 1978). They continue to gain knowledge through informal peer training and ongoing individual experiential learning. But the case studies also revealed that many workers did their most passionate learning in sites beyond their paid workplaces – from repairing their automobiles or renovating their homes to learning about a particular point of interest in history, mathematics, studying an aspect of animal biology, delving into computers or languages. Often informal learning was viewed as an escape from the rigors and monotony of assembly-line work and as an outlet for job-related frustration and insecurities.

## Underemployment

Various surveys have made estimates of the correspondence between workers' capabilities and job requirements in terms of formal education credentials required for job entry and workers' actual educational attainments. Numerous other dimensions of the match between qualifications and job requirements have been distinguished (e.g. relevance, performance, general knowledge and subjective match). The general conclusion from surveys that are able to infer trends from comparable population studies is that the qualifications of the general labour force have been increasing faster than job requirements in recent decades (e.g. Felstead et al. 2007).<sup>4</sup>

Evidence from the 2004 WALL survey and a comparable 1983 national survey permits assessment of trends in the correspondence between credentials attained and credentials required for job entry in 1983 and 2004. There was a growing tendency for educational attainments to exceed job entry credential requirements. About 28% of employees needed a university degree or a college diploma to get their jobs in 1983. By 2004, this figure had risen to 45%, an increase of 60%. During the same period, post-secondary credential attainment increased from 22% to 56%, an increase of over 150%. Clearly, more people completed post-secondary education during this period than needed it to get their jobs. But it is also clear that these credentials, as well as high school credentials, were increasingly required for entry to all manner of jobs. Some who entered employment prior to 1983 with lower formal education may have found that entry requirements increased while they continued to perform their job without them. But generally, workers were keeping up with or ahead of required credential levels. This was also found to be true with regard to computer skills (Livingstone and Scholtz 2010). More specifically, as the surplus of

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<sup>4</sup> See Livingstone (2009) for discussion of various dimensions of education–job matching and an extensive review of prior survey findings.

credentials over job requirements has grown, service and industrial working class employees, with relatively the least formal education, have continued to experience the greatest underemployment of the credentials they do have (Livingstone and Raykov 2009).

Surveys have rarely asked workers to assess the more general connection between their job knowledge and what is needed to do a job. Such a question encourages workers to think beyond specific qualifications and credentials to the types of knowledge and the capabilities they really need to do their jobs. This question was asked in the 2004 EJRM survey of wage and salary earners in Ontario (Livingstone and Raykov 2009). The results are very different than those for more specific matching questions. Nearly three-quarters of workers in all economic classes express the view that they have more job-related knowledge than is needed to perform their current jobs. Most of the remaining workers say their knowledge matches their job. Hardly any say they have less knowledge than their job requires.

These survey findings on matching suggest a labour force generally keeping ahead of or keeping up with changing formal job requirements. The match between formal education attained and education required is weakening as credential attainment outpaces formal job requirements and credential underemployment grows. There are also intimations of a deeper story in these survey findings. Informal job-related learning is much more pervasive than prior surveys of matching implied. Workers report a closer subjective match between their qualifications and their jobs than formal education measures of matching generate (Livingstone 2009), which suggests substantial learning from informal job experience beyond formal education attainment. When asked, most workers say that they have substantially greater knowledge than their current jobs require. These findings suggest that workers' learning from experience generates reserves of knowledge they may rarely use on the job.

The WALL case studies begin to provide a deeper story. Auto workers' voices are again illustrative. While auto workers typically appreciate the need to adapt to continual changes in specific job procedures and equipment, many assembly-line workers especially feel that their job requirements do not involve using many of their talents. The view of Harry, an older line worker, is fairly common:

As far as education goes, the job itself, anybody can do it.... The job itself does not require education... it's wasted, there's no way that you can use it.

More generally, auto workers express disillusion with management's lack of interest in their production ideas. Many appear increasingly concerned that the now prevalent lean production model, with 'management by stress', ultimately means producing a poorer product. Martin, the electrician, expressed it this way:

It doesn't matter if you're skilled trades or production — we all have skill, we all have knowledge, and by and large you have dedicated people willing to do a good day's work and produce a good product. Some of these management decisions are making it difficult for us to do that.... It's a constant battle for time and money — it all boils down to money.... When some of us make suggestions to make improvement, you almost get the impression 'don't confuse me with the facts, my mind's made up'.... You walk out of there after eight hours... it is frustrating.

These veteran auto workers are continually learning to try to perform their jobs better, and also learning how to sustain themselves in their relations with a management that is primarily concerned with intensified production. The typical manufacturing situation in the developed countries for almost a generation has been a downsizing and aging workforce with little hiring (e.g. Livingstone et al. 2011). Labour force renewal strategies that combine new hiring with phased retirements are sorely needed. Otherwise, the vast reserves of working knowledge of these veteran workforces will soon be gone, and widespread plant closures will be the last testament of the experiment in lean production. More generally, these reserves of working knowledge cry out to be more effectively applied to socially useful production.

Just involve the people... This guy might run this machine every day for years. He will come up with ideas that will make his job easier for him and easier for management.... Give people some sort of a sense of importance ... rather than being treated like cattle. (Ethan, tool setter on auto assembly line)

Both the survey and case study evidence suggest that underemployment is a growing problem among professional employees with greater formal educational requirements as well. As vividly expressed in case studies of teachers and computer programmers (Livingstone 2010), a similar tendency of employees having greater formal education and informal knowledge than they get opportunities to use in their jobs is now apparent. Most employees are keeping ahead of, or at least up to, increasing educational requirements.

## **Reconceiving the Education – Jobs Paradigm and Reversing the Policy Optic**

The finding of an excess of formal education attainments over requirements provides preliminary survey evidence that many workers' capabilities could be better utilized. Surveys can offer only rough estimates of the correspondence or lack of it between education and jobs. But the evidence for increasing underemployment is quite consistent among recent surveys.

However, the paradigm of a static relationship between formal education and paid jobs should be replaced by that of a more dynamic and inclusive relationship between learning and work. The case studies demonstrate that workers continuously learn on and off the job; they also try to modify the design and content of their jobs in spite of limited opportunities for many to do so or to be recognized for their capabilities.

The purposes of education are much wider than to prepare for working life and paid employment, as several of our case study participants observed. The notion of 'overeducation' increasingly used analyses of education and job requirements by human capital theorists to refer to a surplus or excess of formal education is misconceived. This notion implies a narrowly instrumental and restrictive concept of



education as substantive preparation prior to employment and ignores the active role of a worker in performing and modifying a job. The pursuit of knowledge has manifold benefits for individuals and for society. Workers may be overqualified for their jobs but they can hardly be overeducated for life.

More generally, in the wake of mounting 'overeducation', advocates of human capital theory attempt to salvage a paradigm based on the primacy of educational investment for economic growth by making appeals to more emphasis on other forms of learning – including more early childhood education and more lifelong learning. More early childhood education may be inherently valuable, but will do little to address the subsequent problem of lack of commensurate jobs for well-educated youths. With regard to lifelong learning, such appeals are redundant in light of the above evidence.

There are evident reasons for some degree of underemployment of formal educational credentials, including lack of job experience or reluctance to leave relatively secure existing job conditions in the context of labour market competition. Knowledge-based economy advocates may now argue that faster growth of formal educational attainments than opportunities to use them in employment is a favourable state of affairs in preparing prospective workers for rapidly changing jobs. More generally, there is a systemic bias in all advanced capitalist economies to produce a surplus labour force – what Marx called the reserve army of labour – by encouraging training wherever a shortage might be anticipated. At the same time, many private employers whose priority is profitability may often find it advantageous to use overqualified workers for greater productivity in lesser jobs rather than spending time and money on job reforms.

In the 1960s, inner-city riots and student protests raised concerns in some countries that underemployment could lead to political upheaval among many whose rising expectations with greater formal education were not being met. Since then, the lack of adequate or commensurate jobs has most commonly led to pragmatic responses by more workers to seek even greater educational credentials and by employers to further raise formal job entry requirements. However, the extent of underemployment has now become such a widespread phenomenon that it seriously inhibits 'normal' adjustments of labour markets in advanced market economies. Underemployment is likely to become an increasingly serious social problem – unless there is a significant change in the ways that workers' abilities are utilized in their jobs.

It is time to reverse the dominant assumption in thinking about policies to address the relationship between education and employment. Lack of sufficient education is not the primary problem. Formal education should be recognized for its intrinsic value, but further expansions of formal education in themselves are likely only to accentuate the extent of underemployment. Further emphasis on greater investment in higher education as a solution to economic problems ignores the fundamental cause of such mismatches: *the job structure and the design of jobs themselves*. In a wider perspective, if educational systems passively adapt the labour supply to job requirements, there is a failure to recognize the potential of human beings as active agents of economic production and of sustainable social development.

A basic shift is clearly needed away from preoccupation with measures to adapt education to the needs of the economy and towards a focus on workplace reforms to make better use of the existing supply and abilities of workers.

## Economic Alternatives

In class societies, popular culture has always contained expressions of alternative, more liberating ways of life for the lower classes. In capitalist societies, these ‘latent potentialities’ appear in folk tales, fictional writing and performing arts (see Bloch 1986). Explicit outlines of a better world have been developed by many progressive thinkers in many fields (see Geoghegan 2008). Such utopian visions are especially pertinent in times of economic crisis when doubts about the sustainability of established ways of life are most likely to surface (e.g. Wright 2010). Now is such a time. Current forms of industrialization are now visibly associated with global warming and other threats to survival of humans and other species (e.g. McKibbin 2010). The great recession of 2008–2009 demonstrates increasing volatility and polarizing effects of global economic activity dominated by the accumulation of huge pools of privately controlled financial holdings, with mounting global unemployment and poverty versus the obscene rewards of hedge fund managers (e.g. Laxer 2009). In this economic and ecological context, with increasing underemployment and decreasing plausibility of appeals to more investment in education for economic salvation, efforts to address this global crisis by envisioning and experimenting with potentially sustainable economic alternatives which effectively utilize most peoples’ talents could not be more timely.

Some guidelines for thinking about the actual and potential abilities of the labour force in relation to economic alternatives can be suggested:

- Recognize that human thought and effort is the most fundamental resource that governs sustainable production and also cultural, political and social development.
- Value formal education for its role in forming character and abilities. Education is an internationally agreed right to which everyone is entitled. The current emphasis on the instrumental economic function of education is a distortion of its essential purpose.
- Value experience as an even more important source of learning in work than formal education. Learning by experience during work has the advantage that there is no loss of production as happens during formal training off the job. The experience of other kinds of unpaid work also enriches and is enriched by performing a paid job.
- Value people for their rich reserves of ability, notably the ability to learn continuously by experience, acquired during the experience of all forms of paid and unpaid activities. In the course of learning by experience, abilities are acquired to address the manifold problems that arise in personal and social life.

- Recognize that optimal conditions for enhancing human abilities are when experience is sustained in time and progressive in scope, as when formal education begins to endow students with the abilities for critical independent thinking, when the levels of employment are stable, and when the design of jobs allows workers to exercise judgement.

Several general principles can be identified as basic criteria for developing feasible organizational alternatives for sustainable productive work compatible with enhancing human abilities (see Cavanagh and Mander 2004):

- Productive activities reconciled with the needs to support future generations without compromising the ecosystem;
- The right to a decent job, that is, to make a living through work that permits full use of human capabilities in dignity and security;
- Participatory democracy, that is, decisions should involve all who are engaged in production;
- Equitable opportunities for those from all social backgrounds (economic class of origin, age, gender, race or with a disability) to use their abilities.

The extent to which these guidelines and principles can be implemented in different contexts will vary widely. Some examples of their application in developed economies to reform employment and jobs and to enhance relations between paid employment and education are:

- (a) Creation of *new 'green' jobs in use of renewable energy resources* to mobilize the ability of workers to confront new and demanding problems;
- (b) *Labour force renewal plans* that give priority to mentoring new workers in conjunction with phased retirement of older ones;
- (c) Policies that give the *right to a decent job*, defined as 'productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity' (see International Labour Office 2006: v);
- (d) *Participatory democracy* in paid workplaces in such forms as wider share ownership or consultative arrangements between the social partners;
- (e) *Redistribution of unequal paid working time* to permit more to work, some to work more and some to work less.

To take just one specific example, the unequal *distribution of working time* among the population of working age is an impediment to efficient work and learning. Some employees work longer than average days and weeks, while others work less than average and others not at all. The experience of the past century was that the annual hours worked per person employed in most advanced economies was reduced by about one-third. This was achieved by standard hours legislation, extended vacations and sick leave benefits, coupled with exponential increases in productivity per worker with technological change. It is surely feasible to continue to redistribute working time more equitably.

Various combinations of such measures could permit better opportunities to learn on the job and to apply knowledge to the job while also reducing stress. But

government policy-makers are still predisposed to respond to popular democratic demand for education by promoting educational reforms instead of more controversial economic reforms. Employers are unlikely to forego short-term profits for longer-term benefits, promised by such reforms unless they are pushed to do so. The fuller implementation of such economic reforms will require imagination and courage by workers and their organizations in demonstrating their abilities, by farsighted employers recognizing the hidden costs of personnel turnover and by visionary government policies promoting an expanded role of labour in effective workplace design and decision making.

Workers in each of the WALL case studies complained of constraints on using their capabilities to redesign their jobs and of management being unaware of constraints in production. Sustainable production could be enhanced by more widespread use of arrangements to mobilize the experience workers have acquired of practical problems of production and of dealing with them. It could be in the interests of both workers and employers to pursue better labour utilization by maintaining stable employment and by recognizing that their complementary functions entail continuous collaboration in problem solving. There is extensive prior experience of formal and institutional methods, variously known as *joint worker-employer councils*, participatory democracy, worker ownership or consultative arrangements between the social partners. But such collaborations will be effective in improving labour utilization only if managerial techniques and reward structures are changed to mobilize more equitably the practical knowledge and abilities of workers engaged in daily or routine operations. The 2008–2009 international crisis in banking and finance drew starker attention to the inequitable distribution of net outputs from production among executives, managers and employees. At the same time, it exposed underlying weaknesses in the operation of financial markets and the need to combine broad policy measures with selective interventions to maintain the viability of many employing organizations, and to preserve the employment and purchasing power of their personnel. The increasing risks to sustainability of the ecosystem should predispose employers and employees to make greater compromises of their immediate interests in profits and wages, respectively, within established work organizations driven by capital accumulation and economic growth imperatives. Whether this will occur is the overriding political question of our times.

## Conclusion

Chronic unemployment and a lack of commensurate employment are growing personal problems for many people with increasing levels of formal educational attainments. The empirical evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that both the employed and the unemployed are engaged in continuing extensive efforts to acquire job-related abilities, formally and informally. Yet the indices of underemployment and of unemployment with advanced qualifications continue to mount. Increasing

emphasis on formal education per se as an employment solution will only accentuate the extent of underemployment in this ‘educational arms race’. It would be a perverse logic that used growing awareness of this situation as a rationale for reducing government investment in formal education, thereby denying educational opportunities to economically disadvantaged people. However, employment and job reforms should be more relevant public issues than educational reforms are in the current context.

Further surveys of patterns and trends in the matching of job requirements and worker qualifications using representative samples of workers may continue to be useful to document changes in ‘education–jobs gaps’, as may further case studies to reveal the ways in which formally underemployed workers and others try to use their working knowledge in job conditions which limit its use. But, in spite of the mounting empirical evidence, many serious scholars continue to conclude that greater investment in formal schooling is the most relevant policy response to economic crises (e.g. Goldin and Katz 2008). It should be becoming patently obvious that contemporary developed societies would be more sustainable if current labour forces were more highly valued for their existing capabilities and potential to use reserves of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> Economic reforms, including redistribution of paid work, workplace democratization and creation of green jobs, are more pertinent measures to address the limits of our current economic system and the ecosystem than appeals for still greater learning efforts by labour forces that are generally already highly educated and knowledgeable.

Pete, the auto assembly worker, expresses well a common sentiment among ordinary workers:

There should be greater worker control in the workplace in order to allow employees to make fuller use of their knowledge....Anybody will say utilizing people is the most important part of the success of a corporation, of any kind of organization, fully utilizing people. We can argue about the tools that fully utilize...but to fully allow people to participate using their skills is, I think, a dream for most people, to be able to do what you do best... and perform in society....With all the profits being made, why aren't we employing people?

Further formal education reforms to provide more effective and equitable learning opportunities to the next generation are always welcome. Employers, trade unions, governments and employees themselves should more fully recognize the extent of informal learning that now occurs in paid workplaces and with widening media access (Livingstone and Sawchuk 2004). But surely paramount efforts must now be devoted to redesigning and reorganizing work to enable fuller utilization of current collective knowledge to try to ensure sustainable conditions for future generations.

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<sup>5</sup>Low literacy remains a serious problem for a small minority, but to claim that illiteracy is a major problem in relation to job requirements is now a fallacy of composition error of logic.

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# Chapter 19

## Liquidation of Labour Markets and Adult Education in China

Atsushi Makino

### Introduction

Along with a rapid economic development, the labour market in China is increasingly liquidizing, causing job changes or turnovers to become a normal state. This social phenomenon was triggered partly by the introduction of free labour market of school graduates after the abolition of the job-assignment system for higher education graduates in 1992, which was the last vestige of the socialist system of the Chinese government. The job-assignment system was a labour force management measure, where graduates of secondary education or higher were distributed systematically to production sectors in society based on the forecasts of human resources demand in a planned economy. Nonetheless, in connection with the introduction of market principle, the Chinese government had abolished this system first for secondary education, and then for higher education in 1992, thereby the human resources and labour markets were liberalized at a stretch. Until then, unemployment in socialist China was theoretically non-existent, and thus unemployed workers were called 'job-waiting' workers, or a labour force waiting for a work to be assigned to them. The concept of unemployment, however, was introduced in 1993, and in the following year, unemployed workers were statistically numbered as a 'job-seeking' labour force in the market. The transition of the figures is as shown in Fig. 19.1.

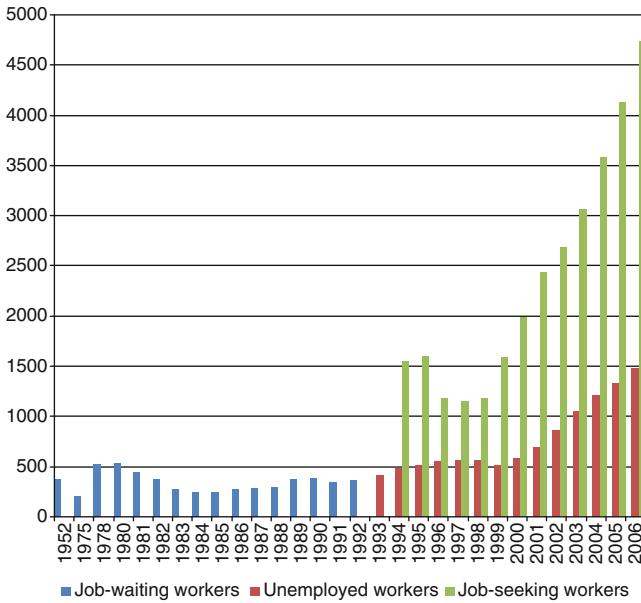
In fact, characteristically speaking, the movement towards the abolition of the above job-assignment system for higher education institutions was not specifically introduced by the government. Rather, it was first led by the actual market condition and later nationally confirmed by the adoption of corresponding political measures. In the late 1980s, the job-assignment system for university graduates was already not functioning properly due to the introduction of market economy. In those days,

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**Fig. 19.1** Transition in number of job-waiting, unemployed, and job-seeking workers (units of 10,000) (1952 to 1992: job-waiting workers/From 1993: unemployed workers/After 1994: job-seeking workers and job-seeking but unemployed workers/1994 and 1995: a total number of registered job-seeking workers/From 1996: number of newly registered job-seeking workers per year) (Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of China 1987*, compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics of China, published by China Statistics Press in 1987. All the source publications listed below are compiled by the National Bureau of Statistics of China and published by China Statistics Press: 1987 (1987 Edition), 1988 (1988 Edition), 1989 (1989 Edition), 1990 (1990 Edition), 1991 (1991 Edition), 1992 (1992 Edition), 1993 (1993 Edition), 1994 (1994 Edition), 1995 (1995 Edition), 1996 (1996 Edition), 1997 (1997 Edition), 1998 (1998 Edition), 1999 (1999 Edition), 2000 (2000 Edition), 2001 (2001 Edition), 2002 (2002 Edition), 2003 (2003 Edition), 2004 (2004 Edition), 2005 (2005 Edition), 2006 (2006 Edition), 2007 (2007 Edition))

a recruitment procedure termed as ‘demand-and-supply meeting and two-way selection’ (a job-seeker and recruiter contact each other and mutually make their decision) was normally practised; a job-seeking university student voluntarily visited a company he/she was interested in, received an informal appointment and then reported it to the university, which in turn ‘assigned’ that company to the student. The government had no choice but to approve that practice by 1989. The official abolition of the job-assignment system for college graduates was tantamount to approving the ‘demand-and-supply meeting and two-way selection’ already implemented and to declaring free labour market, which shifted (in 1995) to the process of ‘two-way selection and voluntary job selection’ (a job-seeker and recruiter mutually make their own decisions and the student voluntarily selects a job) (Zeng 2004, 29–30). This political measure raised the economic development to the second stage after the stagnation caused by the Tiananmen Square crackdown on the democratization demonstrations in 1989, and marked a milestone for the shift in Chinese

society after Deng Xiaoping's southern tour that triggered today's rapid economic development in the country.

After that, the labour market in China was rapidly liquidized and the pressure to proceed on to higher education was heightened. Particularly, since the end of the 1990s, while taking up higher education was rapidly promoted, pervasion of basic level education in inland regions was coming to full implementation and thus secondary education, mainly on vocational courses, began to be pervaded. This development exerted an effect of pushing out young workers in poverty areas to the urban areas in the eastern coastal zone as an industrial labour force. Along with the transformation in people's employment status, not only the labour force liquidity in the urban area was activated, but also the population fluidity intensified on a nationwide scale. Especially, a large number of migrant workers began to flow out and into the urban areas in the eastern coastal zone (Makino 2006, Chap. 6). The floating population of 34,127,607 in 1985 increased to 144,390,748 in 2000. Most of such floating population were migrants from rural to urban areas and from inland poverty districts to the affluent eastern coastal zone (P. R. China, Population Census Office 1993 and 2002).

In the midst of such a phenomenal social change, a community-based, educational security scheme called 'Community Education' has been rapidly disseminated and developed, especially in metropolitan areas, as a kind of safety net measure. This, on one hand, assures opportunities of vocational education and technical training for promoting stable life and employment against intensifying job transfer and turnover and, on the other hand, provides learning opportunities in rapidly liquidizing urban areas for fostering mutual understanding and recognition among the residents as well as for responding to the increasing interest in various cultures in order to stabilize urban life and public safety (Makino 2006, Chap. 7). This educational programme is integrated also with the trend for recurrent higher education and changes in advanced vocational education over the existing adult education.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to clarify the relationship between the current situation and the education provided in Chinese society, where floating populations are intensifying particularly in the urban area, focusing especially on the relationship between the drastic expansion of higher education and transformation in adult education, while giving consideration to possible measures for educational schemes that can address the social changes stemming from liquidation of labour market, with a view to comprehending the movement towards a new society wherein social changes and education are intertwined with each other.

## **Social Change and Education – From 'Unit' Socialism to Individual Market Economy**

### ***Trend of Educational Reform in the 1990s***

The transition in the decade of educational reform in China after 1992 can be generalized as follows (Makino 2006, Chap. 6): generally speaking, an education system structured as a national policy is socially established or reformed at times in the

process of conflict and formation of a mutually complement relationship between the national goal for economic development and the citizen's desire for improved household budget. Against this background, what kicks off a reform for an education system, which is a product of planning and calculated advantage on both sides of the state and the citizen, is the generation of a devastated condition among the children who receive the education and the collapse of mutually complementing relationship of the state and the citizen, which in turn causes failure in assuring the people of education opportunities, or stagnation in economic development, which curbs the prospect of improved household income despite acquiring higher education status.

The pervasion of public education system and the formation of an academic career-based society in China is also basically a reflection of the features of the modern public education system. This can be plainly recognized in the rapid pervasion of basic education and rise in university enrolment rate; the expansion, amplification as well as diversification of secondary education and the sharp transition to an academic career-based society, especially in the urban area, and worsening negative effects of such development, particularly after 1992. Against such a background, the following educational reforms had been attempted throughout the 1990s.

First of all, as for the devastated condition of school children resulting from excessive competition and selection in an academic career-based society, measures were taken for a changeover from the information force-feeding teaching style aimed at entrance exams (cram education) to a kind of education that helps students cultivate an inquisitive capacity for developing their own abilities by themselves and stimulate their various natural qualities (quality education). Further measures were also established for improving university entrance examination and for utilizing a variety of educational resources in local communities (Makino 1998a , b).

Secondly, vocational education, which was conventionally regarded as an adult education programme that can be received while being hired, was incorporated in the curriculum of secondary education or higher. In other words, it was shifted to public education, and consequently, a variety of vocational secondary schools as well as vocational universities were set up in each locality, thus promoting the structuring of an academic career assurance system for vocational education.

Thirdly, adult education, which was recently included in the official administrative terms of the Chinese government, quickly disseminated and was accepted among the general public after the Decision on the Reform of the Education System was made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1985. In addition, an adult education system was rapidly prepared in the 1990s as an independent education system, separate from the public school education system (Makino 1998c). Moreover, the contents that compose adult education underwent considerable changes as follows: (1) Adult education started as a measure against a loss of human resources and deterioration in labour force quality due to the Cultural Revolution, and to provide vocational training to employees and academic career-targeted education in response to the formation of an academic career-based society. (2) In the early 1990s, post-graduation education with a prospect of lifelong learning was incorporated. (3) And then in 1995, with the enactment of the Education Act of People's Republic of China, vocational training for employees was removed

from the category of adult education and in turn, a vocational education system was regularized, and also cultural and liberal arts education, which can be regarded as civic education, was incorporated in time (Makino 1998c).

Fourthly, as adult education came to be characterized more strongly as lifelong learning, although it still acted harmoniously with public education, it had begun to establish its new role as a unique education system rather than being a system that complemented public education. For example, Community Education had been actively implemented in each community in conjunction with the movement to form a learning community through structuring a citizen learning system in the smallest administrative districts. Also, adult higher education focusing on recurrent education had been rapidly promoted in connection with academic career education or continuous education.

Fifthly, while adult education had been established as a functioning public education system, much like the conventional one, its financial resources were diverse. For instance, Community Education was managed and funded not by the central government, but by each local community. Similarly, adult higher education was provided by private higher education institutions or new educational instruments managed by existing universities (i.e. adult education or continuing education graduate schools), which had grown quickly by accommodating the citizen's need for higher academic career and advanced continuing education. In this way, the provider of adult education was diversified (Makino 1998c).

### ***New Movement of Adult Education and Growing Liquidation of Society***

The trend mentioned above indicates that a rearrangement of education systems was advancing in China in the 1990s. Under a new situation where an academic career-based society was established especially in the urban area while the pervasion of basic and secondary education was almost completed, the role of vocational education was rearranged or exchanged between the public education and the adult education structured as an education system separate from public education. In a similar fashion, establishment of a new education system based on adult education as well as rearrangement of the existing education systems were promoted with a view to overcoming the negative effects of academic career-based society and to engage the government's goal of economic development and the citizen's goal of higher life standard into a desirable circle.

Additionally, what is signified by this rearrangement of education systems, particularly adult education, is the rapidly accelerating liquidation of Chinese society. Firstly, the speedy diversification and expansion of adult higher education suggest that a sharp increase in the number of people who desired additional or higher academic career in the existing academic career-based society where job transfer or unemployment was becoming a normalcy and a pervasion of recurrent education among the public in the urban area were taking place. It also meant that the liquidity in labour market was growing rapidly.

Secondly, the fact that vocational education was handed over from the conventional training provided under employment or at various in-house schools or training facilities to a standard public education system signifies that corporations or enterprises, which conventionally took the responsibility of providing vocational education, were finding it increasingly difficult to provide such education. In other words, the actual situation no longer regarded vocational education after employment as an appropriate measure.

Thirdly, in local communities in the urban area where basic education had been almost completely pervaded, a movement to acquire cultural and liberal arts education was promoted by the general public, while Community Education that provided a variety of education programmes as a civil service in such smallest administrative segments as towns was actively set up and pervaded. This movement denotes that, for one thing, the major part of the urban citizen life was shifted from the company or workplace of their own employment to the local community where their own lives were located. It could be said that the mode of urban life was being converted from working life as a labourer to community life as a citizen, and such a trend was recognized more and more clearly. As a second point, members comprising a local community were always moving in and out, and thus human relationships in a community had become vague. Thirdly, as a result of a large influx of migrants from outside the urban area, public safety and relationships between the residents were deteriorated, which entailed the need to address the related problems peculiar to each community by means of providing adequate education. In short, the population fluidity advanced rapidly not only inside the urban area but between city and city as well as between city and rural area, or, in other words, the labour market was being formed on a large scale beyond the conventional city borders during the process of the urban area accepting the incoming migrant labour force.

### ***From Unit Socialism to Individual Market Economy***

The above movements surrounding the educational reform since the beginning of the 1990s are interrelated with one another and collectively indicate the following: Firstly, while the rearrangement of education systems began to take place through liquidation of Chinese society and is promoting the liquidation even further, this liquidation of Chinese society has caused a great change in the life of the citizen, who had been a labour force or an employee of a corporations or an institution to which he had belong, to becoming a citizen of a local community away from his own workplace; secondly, interrelated to the first point, the labour market itself is also liquidizing and being formed on a nationwide scale geared by the citizen's desire for a better life, which in turn motivates the migration of labour force; and thirdly, as a result of the previous movement, although corporations or institutions conventionally carried out employee/staff education according to their own needs, provision of such in-house education or training has become difficult or unnecessary since each worker is developing or upgrading his/her own working capacity in his/her own responsibility. This trend implies that citizens are undergoing a process

of shifting from a life mode where their being and lives are regulated mainly by their employers, to where their being and lives are defined individually in the background of each local community in which their lives are based.

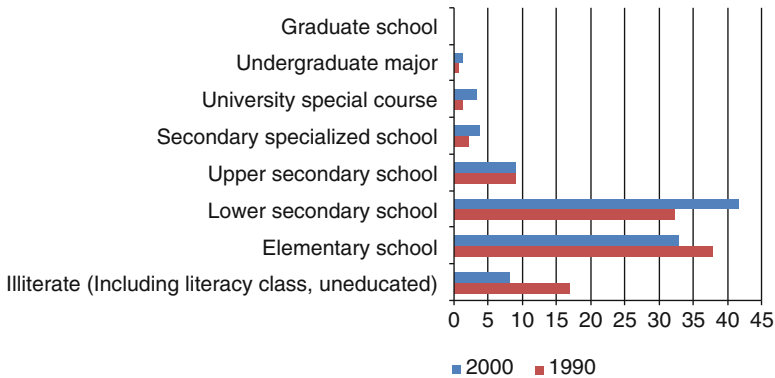
The above-mentioned structural transformation of Chinese society is founded on a large transition in the individual identity of the citizen. In China, a corporate entity (including various administrative institutions) to which a citizen belongs is termed as a 'Unit'. The Unit, as a basic unit of society, was what defined the conventional Chinese socialism, and the people formed their own identity by means of the Unit, while their lives were managed and assured by the Unit which also regulated their social relationships. In other words, the entire scope of citizen's life itself was represented by the Unit. Along with the rapid advancement of market economy, however, the Unit proved to be ineffectual as a welfare function for assuring civil life, and as signified by the bankruptcy of state-run corporations, giving priority to efficiency necessitated outsourcing of various services related to the lives of the people, and thus the people were cut off from the Unit and being forced to live as independent individuals, which in turn began to take on the meaning of free market for the Chinese people. Together with the progress of market economy, as the welfare function of the Unit was socialized and the labour-production function of the Unit was exposed to the efficiency-first principle, citizens were thrown out of the Unit to the market where they live as independent labours as well as consumers who work on their own to earn income and purchase services necessary for their own lives. I once termed this social transformation as a conversion from the Unit socialism to individual market economy (Makino 2006, Chap. 6).

It can be said that the above rearrangement of the education systems centred on adult education was a social reform, which was inevitably promoted for citizens who were thrown out to the market society where they had to live as independent individuals in the midst of transformation of life from the Unit socialism to individual market economy. On the other hand, it is already evident that in such a society, public education is utilized as a system or tool for assuring an improved life, and that along with the rapid advancement of people's awareness towards higher education, it undergoes a substantial change from information force-feeding, academic career-oriented society to a learning society that focuses on recurrent or continuing education in pursuit of ceaseless knowledge upgrading.

## **New Situation Surrounding Liquidation of Society and Education – Focused Higher and Adult Education**

### ***Drastic Expansion of Higher Education and Employment Shortage***

Such a rapid formation and progress of an academic career-based society is directly manifested by an upgraded academic career distribution of workers as well as a rise in the enrolment rate to higher educational institutions. As shown in Fig. 19.2, the



**Fig. 19.2** Transition in academic career distribution among employed workers (*Sources: 1990 Population Census of China (Volume 2)*, compiled by the Population Census Office under the State Council and the Dept. of Population Statistics of the National Bureau of Statistics, published by China Statistics Press in 1993. *2000 Population Census of China (Volume 2)*, compiled by the Population Census Office under the State Council and the Dept. of Population, Social, Science and Technology Statistics of the National Bureau of Statistics, published by China Statistics Press in 2002)

upgraded academic career distribution can be recognized outstandingly in the comparison between the figures of 1990 and 2000. The figures include employed illiterate workforces, whose ratio has been reduced to half in a decade, while the number of basic education career has decreased and lower secondary education graduates increased by about 10%, exceeding the 40% mark, testifying to the rapid pervasion of the 9-year compulsory public education. On top of that, although relatively small in absolute number (or percentage against total), secondary specialized school graduates increased by about 1.5 times, university special course graduates soared by roughly 3 times and those who completed undergraduate majors almost doubled, thus clearly indicating that the academic career distribution saw a substantial improvement in the 1990s.

Concerning the expansion of higher education opportunities, after the abolition of the job-assignment system for graduates of higher education institutions in 1992, the Chinese government adopted a political measure to suppress the rise in enrolment rate by fixing enrolment capacity during the twentieth century in an effort to avoid a rapid expansion in higher education. However, the public pressure to progress onto higher education drastically intensified while universities began to accept privately funded students, who were not included in a budget frame set by the state higher education policy. As a result, the state-led higher education policy was shaken and the measure for fixing enrolment capacity collapsed. The government officially approved in its ordinance in 1995 the acceptance of privately funded students and those not subject to job mediation (Zeng 2004, 30–31), and then issued a tuition collection standard in 1999 that thoroughly granted universities to collect school fees with a view to expanding enrolment capacity. Consequently, admission

capacity for higher education in China soared, and the number of enrolling and graduated students increased substantially.

As universities were allowed to admit a certain number of students to enrol as out-of-plan students and collect school fees from them in 1992, which was also the year the job-assignment system was abolished, the student admission capacity expanded. The number of graduates only slightly increased around 3–4 years later, but as the enrolment capacity boosted from 1999, the number of graduates also showed a remarkable increase after 3–4 years after that. (This phenomenon is due to the fact that in China, university students can choose between a special course of 3 years and a major of 4 years. In this chapter, the former is termed as the university special course and the latter, the undergraduate major.) As a result, the number of graduates from full-time regular higher education institutions, which was about 1 million in 2001, jumped to about 2.4 million in 2004, to 3.07 million in 2005, and to 5 million in 2007. In addition, a new type of higher educational institutions, namely, private higher education institutions have begun to send out their graduates to society since 2005 in units of half a million every year. As a result, graduates are facing difficulty in finding employment, which aggravated recruitment competition and avoidance from being employed.

As a remarkable tendency, the survey conducted by the Graduate School of Education of Peking University signifies that the expansion of opportunities for higher education triggers difficulty in job finding, thereby diminishing students' positive attitude for finding employment. Also, the following factors supposedly account for such a change in students' awareness: (1) the master degree holders have an overwhelming advantage in finding employment over undergraduates taking majors, and there is little difference between those who have completed undergraduate majors and university special courses; (2) gender has a large bearing on the advantage in employment with the male having an overwhelming advantage; (3) high-scoring students, those having a state-authorized English ability certificate, or those who have served on a student body association, have an advantage in finding employment, while scholarship, Communist Party membership, or double-major diploma does not have a meaningful effect; and (4) those coming from a family with rich social resources, especially financial and cultural resources, have advantage in finding employment, particularly those whose families are based in the urban area (Yang 2008).

Having said the above, in order to overcome such disadvantageous factors and to prevail over the competitors in the job market, students need to seek for even higher academic career. In other words, they would make it their goal to advance to a master's degree course to secure future employment, and consequently a situation called 'over education' would present itself, which refers to a condition where a person receives a level of education needlessly higher than the type of work intended to be engaged in. According to a survey taken by the Graduate School of Education of Peking University, due to the drastic expansion of higher education opportunities, over 46% of university graduates have constantly admitted to receiving over education on a self-assessment basis (Wen 2008). Such phenomenon and awareness of receiving over education seems to have an effect on further liquidation of labour market.



## ***Transformation in Adult Education and Learning Towards Vocational and Technical Education***

Against the background of the afore-mentioned transformation in Chinese society and changes in deployment as well as characteristics of adult education, the issues involving adult education in China can be grasped from the following three angles: (a) construction of adult education and lifelong learning/learning society, (b) relationship between lifelong learning and public education, and (c) relationship between vocational education or adult education and lifelong learning (Makino 2006, Chap. 7).

### **Construction of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning/Learning Society**

Conventionally in China, adult education was structured to be characterized as if ‘walking with two legs’. Adult education was designed as an informal education system, in comparison to the regular public education system, whereby a variety of educational services such as academic career compensation education or vocational education could be provided to adults over the school age or to employed adults with a view to cultivating human resources contributing to the society needs of the time, especially economic development, as well as to giving people an employment assurance. In there, all stages from literacy to higher education were incorporated. Moreover, the idea of ‘walking with two legs’ has come to be applied to the recent situation amid the quick development of market economy wherein the realm of public education assurance and that of private sectors are co-existing while maintaining their segregated scopes even in adult education system. In such a context, adult education has been advanced to a system that not only complements public education but has its own independent system.

In the wake of the expansion of labour market and economic development as well as subsequently intensifying population fluidity in China, particularly after 1992, the mode of civil life has shifted from the ‘one-off employment’ in the framework of job assignment in the Unit socialism system to ‘multiple employment opportunities’ or an employment mode of repeating job transfer or turnover as a free labour force in the labour market, which is becoming a standard employment practice, while the public demand for education is also shifting to a new mode of ceaseless upgrading of knowledge, skills, and techniques by means of recurrent education. At present, public education is required to make a changeover from the conventional function of providing academic career as well as succession, handover and accumulation of knowledge, skills and techniques to a function of lifelong learning, and this is where the fusing with the conventional adult education has become increasingly evident. Establishment of a lifelong learning system has become indispensable to reorganize public education from the standpoint of incorporation of adult education, with a view to building a learning society where public education and adult education are integrated together.

### **Relationship Between Lifelong Learning and Public Education**

In connection with constructing a learning society, the relationship between the intended lifelong learning system and the existing public education system shall be brought into question. What is being considered currently is a rearrangement of the functions of public education, while maintaining its function, from the standpoint of adult education to implement what is called a 'one-school, multifunction' system. The idea is that, while maintaining the system of schools and its function as a public education system, this function is to be modified to be multifunctioning by opening it to society in view of lifelong learning. This idea has been adopted in positioning schools in Community Education. Under the circumstance where a citizen is forced to change his/her identity from a worker whose life is ensured by the Unit to an individual who has to take the responsibility of living on his/her own, an attempt is being made to restructure a local community as an education community with an expectation for education to assume a new role as a measure to smoothly promote the changeover of social position of each citizen and their retention into a local community while supporting job transfer and turnover, ensuring their lives and promoting an integration between the existing and incoming citizens. The Community Education is the mean designed to handle such expectations. To open a school to a lifelong learning system equals to providing the educational function of a school to this Community Education. A school is not a place of cultivating citizens or human resources in isolation from society, but rather is one of Community Education bases open to the community, as well as one of important educational resources available to the local community, and further an important pillar for structuring an educational community. Moreover, through incorporating local educational resources, the unique educational function can be enriched and also the people in the community, who are a part of such educational resources, can receive educational impact in return.

By embedding and opening the school in a local community from the standpoint of lifelong learning, not only the school can be incorporated in the lifelong learning system but its innate, unique function itself can be reinforced. It provides a prospect of responding to the needs of people living in the local community and structuring a lifelong learning system that caters to the needs of the school.

### **Relationship Between Vocational Education/Adult Education and Lifelong Learning**

In addition to the above, when incorporating and reorganizing public education into adult education system, the positioning of vocational education becomes an issue to be addressed. The conventional vocational education was arranged exclusively in the framework of adult education and positioned as a part of employee education in the Unit. As already mentioned, however, the job-assignment system in higher education was abolished in 1992, and the distribution of labour forces through the market was institutionalized, even pushing some of the state corporations into bankruptcy, which consequently shifted Chinese society to the age of individual market economy

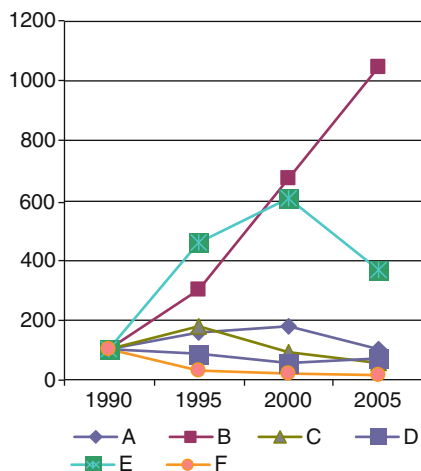
whereby workers constantly leave, change or find new employment. Since lifelong employment is no longer ensured for the employees in the above process, vocational education and training provided by the Unit had become a burden to the Unit, since assurance of employment came to lose its meaning. From this point on, the vocational education positioned as part of adult education was forced to be independent from the adult education system both from public and private standpoints and was required to establish its own system. Thus, the vocational school system began to be structured into the systems of lower education up to higher education as an independent system separate from the Unit. One of the manifestations of such a transition was the change in the designations of responsible departments. What were formerly called the Department of Adult Education of Ministry of Education in the central government administration and the Division of Adult Education of Education Bureau in a local government or similar were renamed as the Department of Vocational Education and Adult Education and the Division of Vocational and Adult Education, respectively, around 1995. In this way, vocational education was expressly designated as an independent administrative policy.

Against such a development surrounding vocational education, the adult education that had incorporated vocational education as one of its components was to expand its scope to continuous higher education, including short-term vocational training, recurrent education or evening schooling in response to the growing cases of job transfer or career build-up in the rapidly expanding labour market. For example, the existing full-time higher educational institution had set up an adult education school or continuing education facility for providing more highly advanced specialized knowledge and career. Also, Community Education collaborated with a full-time higher education or vocational higher education institution to open short-term training classes with a view to establish facilities and organizations that could accommodate the diversified education needs of the people. This trend had led to the establishment of a new role of adult education as a key system for structuring a lifelong learning system.

### ***Sophistication and Recurrence of Adult Education***

These three issues represent one major aim to which adult education shall be directed, namely, adult education is going to be reorganized into a lifelong learning system with recurrent-type vocational education as its core. Such a development is clearly suggested in the adult education reforms since the 1990s. The quantitative transition in adult education since 1990 is as shown in Fig. 19.3, which shows the changes in various types of adult education on an index basis with the figure of 1990 represented as 100.

As clearly recognized at a glance, in the 1990s, the ratio of the education for providing academic career, equivalent to primary education in terms of adult education (referred herein as ‘academic career education’), declined whereas the demand for higher education sharply grew. Also, the demand for the adult secondary school as



**Fig. 19.3** Quantitative transition in adult education (Index: 1990=100) *A* Adult higher education (majors and university special courses, except for the adult education department such as correspondence and evening courses at full-time higher education institutions), *B* The adult education department such as correspondence and evening courses at full-time higher education institutions (the figures of ‘*B*’ for 1995 and 2000 include the full-time adult education department in addition to correspondence and evening university courses), *C* Adult secondary specialized schools (2 years or more), *D* Adult secondary schools, *E* Adult technical training schools, *F* Adult primary schools (Sources: *Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 1990*, compiled by the Department of Planning Construction under the State Education Commission of the People’s Republic of China, published by People’s Education Press in 1991. *Educational Project Statistics Yearbook of China 1995*, compiled by the Department of Planning Construction under the State Education Commission of the People’s Republic of China, published by People’s Education Press in 1996. *Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 2000* (the cover is entitled, *Educational Project Statistics Yearbook of China*), compiled by the Department of Development & Planning of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, published by People’s Education Press in 2001. *Educational Statistics Yearbook of China 2005*, compiled by the same department as the previous yearbook, published by People’s Education Press in 2006)

an academic career education institution that provided specialized vocational education increased in the early 1990s, but started to decrease in the latter half of the 1990s, while adult technical training schools that offered short-term vocational training on technical matters were constantly and strongly demanded. Such a transition implies that the compensation education or academic career assurance education for adults who lost the opportunity for learning due to the Cultural Revolution finished their mission, and through the great change in the governmental policies targeted for market economy, the demand for vocational education and technical education was to expand throughout the 1990s even in the realm of adult education.

However, the age in which acquired career or learning given by public education could be effective in one’s working life had already gone, and in turn, an economic structure has been rapidly created wherein the workers are required to learn and upgrade their own knowledge, skills and techniques continuously even after being employed. Also, as already mentioned, as a result of the formation of a new labour

market in the early 1990s that included those with higher education diploma, the pervasion of primary education in the public education system as well as the normalization or institutionalization of vocational education had been promoted, causing highly academic career structure of the workforce, which in turn accelerated the liquidation of the domestic labour force in China that consequently enhanced the level of and extended the period of adult education to be a lifelong learning process.

In addition, the demand for adult technical training schools that provide short-term vocational training constantly increased during the 1990s, which indicates that as the market economy quickly developed and the distribution of the workforce was shifted from the Unit socialism to individual market economy throughout the 1990s, the employee education, which was conventionally carried out inside the companies, were being outsourced, which in turn further promoted the liquidity of the workforce.

Furthermore, since 2000, the demand for short-term vocational training has declined, but the market has grown for a continuous, more advanced type of education provided by regular higher education institutions that can be received while still being employed. This trend suggests that, in the process of growing liquidation of labour market, the required intelligence and technical standard exceeds the level of secondary education and advancing even higher, while the education demand in response to such a development is also increasing. It can be observed that the demand for human resources was becoming higher and extending over lifetime.

Another interesting point is that the quantitative transition in various adult education schemes mentioned above has been following almost the same track as the shifts in the priority of the Chinese adult education policy, or the changes in the issues to which the adult education policy places the highest priority. The term 'adult education' was clearly entered into the official document of the Chinese government for the first time in 1985 in the Decision on the Reform of the Education System made by Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, wherein adult education was positioned as an important, integral part of the Chinese education system along with primary education, vocational education and regular higher education. Later, in 1986, a national adult education work conference was held for the first time since the foundation of the country, which gave importance to adult education in the frame of the national growth strategy, and in 1987, the Decision on the Reform and Development of Adult Education was promulgated by the State Council, expressly stating a strategic emphasis on adult education. At that time, the scope of adult education was (1) vocational training while employed, (2) complement for primary education, (3) academic career education (especially, higher education and secondary specialized school level), (4) continuous education (upgrading of knowledge and skills after finishing the major of higher education), and (5) culture and liberal arts education, but an emphasis was given to (1) vocational training while employed and (3) academic career education of the five elements.

After that, in 1993, based on the results of the educational reform and development that took 15 years after implementing the Reform and Open-Door Policy, the Chinese government promulgated the Guidelines for the Reform and Development of Education in China, jointly signed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the State Council, which stated the basic policy and goals of educational

projects in view of the Chinese education prospects in the 1990s and beyond. In this guideline, adult education came to be positioned as a backbone ‘system’ that comprises a lifelong learning system closely linked with public education. Thereby, an emphasis was given to adult education as a ‘system’. Also, the guideline stipulated the priority of adult education to be (1) vocational training while employed, (3) academic career education, and (4) continuing education for further advancement of this education system of the above five elements.

Furthermore, in 1995, the Chinese government instituted and promulgated the Education Act of People’s Republic of China that fundamentally characterized education in China. This act gave a new role to adult education. Specifically, the structure of lifelong learning system was reviewed on the premise of pervasion of the 9-year compulsory education and normalization of vocational education, or in other words, improving it as part of public education, while positioning adult education as a basis of such learning system. However, a clear demarcation was drawn between the vocational education and the vocational training provided by the company after being employed, giving them clearly different roles. In this stage, a direction was given to the restructuring of the scope of adult education, that is, to remove the above (1) vocational training during employment from it, but to incorporate (3) academic career education (at the level of higher education), (4) continuing education as a more sophisticated form of education, and (5) cultural and liberal arts education as a type of civil education.<sup>1</sup> The liquidation of workers in labour market is now growing and expanding beyond control, and in response to such a movement, adult education is intensifying its recurrent characteristic with vocational training or technical training at its basis.

As can be clearly observed, the Chinese policy on adult education itself has been developed to respond to social transformation, through reorganizing its substance in such a way to adapt to the manner of economic policy changed from the already mentioned Unit socialism to individual market economy, and was even forced to accommodate the demands from the market, which was further liquidized beyond the political intention. Its phenomenal quantitative transition is what represented in Fig. 19.3 exhibited above.

### ***Intensifying Liquidation of Chinese Society and Transformation in Education***

The above-mentioned transformation in higher education and adult education in China presumably indicate the following: for one thing, population fluidity on a national scale; secondly, a change in academic career distribution among the employed population; and thirdly, increase in job transfer and turnover cases. In other words, (1) along with the introduction of free market economy, the job transfer and turnover of workers, especially that in the urban workforce, became a normal practice, which stimulated the liquidation of labour market and in turn, promoted the population migration, while an academic career-based society was formed in the urban city

through ongoing economic development wherein the people came to give importance on higher academic career or new knowledge and skills for new job opportunities or career build-up, which in turn promoted the sophistication and pervasion of education. (2) The rapid development of economy, particularly the second industry in the urban area and growing liquidation of the labour market, had expanded the urban population fluidity over to the inland area that was capable of supplying lower cost labour forces, which in turn triggered a shift from the fluidity within the urban area to the migration outside the area, especially a population influx into the urban area. In this process, the sophistication of the inland education level had raised their cultural standard and equipped the people who otherwise could not have been employed as industrial labour forces, enabling the substantial and smooth migration of labour forces from the inland area to coastal metropolises. (3) In addition, such a constant demand for new knowledge or higher academic career stemming from the economic development and population liquidation expanded the physical basis and social demand of education, and thus rapidly advanced the educational undertaking. (4) Each of these three factors were the causes and likewise the effects of one another in a circle relation, but the stage wherein these three factors form a closed loop to promote economic development has come close to an end. Nonetheless, utilization of this loop by the general public is further accelerating the social liquidity that creates a new demand of a higher level of human resources, which then necessitates the society to provide recurrent education based on vocational technical education, or the recurrent education equivalent to higher education for advanced technical and specialized profession.<sup>2</sup> In this context, ever since China adopted the policy of Reform and Liberalization, the mutually dependent relationship of economy and education, based on the slogan of educational development that ‘economy should rely on education, and education should serve economy’,<sup>3</sup> has begun to be disintegrated and has stepped forward to the next stage. The new stage has already passed the period of shifting from the Unit socialism to individual market economy and has moved onto the phase of market liquidity.

In this process, education is what accelerates the looped circle by mobilizing the people, and with this circle functioning as a main axis for population fluidity, education itself acquires a new function to develop itself into a new being. In other words, the afore-mentioned transformation of higher education and adult education, which are phenomenally represented to respond to the growing social liquidity, generates the movement of people which keeps this loop functioning as a reality, and by also applying a force to change this loop to be more open, the liquidity of people is promoted further.

## **Conclusion: Future of Adult Education in the Urban Area – As a Measure Against Growing Liquidity of Individuals**

As discussed above, liquidity of the population is rapidly accelerating especially in the urban area along with the economic development in China. It is an indication of the social transition that began around 1992 when the Chinese society shifted its

helm from the Unit socialism to individual market economy, wherein the people's identity changed from the Unit staff, with their life protected and assured, to a mobile labour force who voluntarily repeat job transfer and turnover in the labour market for better employment while improving their value as a labour force. What the people found valuable under such a circumstance was academic career and upgrading of it as well as a continuing process of developing their own labour ability through recurrent education, mainly based on vocational and technical training. Subsequently, in the midst of a large influx of migrant labourers from the inland area into the urban area, the need for education on civil integration and cultural refinement for the formation and stabilization of a new community was concurrently emphasized. In addition, most of these migrant labourers are dispatched workers who always play a role of labour market adjustment, repeatedly losing employment and constantly flowing about in the urban area. An employment assurance by means of vocational education will be required also for social stability. In this way, the governmental goal of economic development and civil desire for improved life have been combined by means of the national system of public education and gone beyond the formation of a favourable complementary promotional relationship.

At the same time, the improvement and upgrading in their material life along with the economic development as well as the excessive interest and education that the parents give to their child, promoted by the only-child policy, together with the sophistication in public education, namely, the advancement of higher education and escalation in career competition, a concept of taking employment as a means of self-realization has been formed among the young labour forces. With the spread of individual market economy, the changing labour awareness has generated intense liquidity of the labour market. In that situation, it is necessary to provide vocational education and cultural/liberal arts education as a recurrent learning scheme given to and for stabilizing the life of low-income labourers, low academic career holders and migrant bread earners, or collectively those who are underprivileged in the market economy. Putting it another way, Chinese society has entered into an age of expedient recombination of its fundamental education system in the background of growing social liquidity wherefore, not public education but adult education shall be provided in local communities on various subjects widely ranging from cultural education to highly advanced academic career or vocational technical education at higher education institutions, particularly in the urban area.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Interviews conducted by the author on Zhang Chiming, Manager, Vocational and Adult Education Division, Shanghai City Board of Education; Yifeng Luo, Deputy Manager, Shanghai Institute of Vocational and Technical Education, Shanghai Academy of Educational Science (March 29, 2002 at Shanghai City Board of Education); Wei Hu, Manager, Non-governmental Education Institute, Shanghai Academy of Educational Science (on March 30, 2002 at the Institute); Min Han, Chief Researcher, National Centre for Education Development Research, Ministry



of Education of the People's Republic of China; Xia Gao, Researcher, China National Institute for Educational Research (on March 25, 2002 at the residence of Min Han); and Zhimin Gao, Professor, Research Institute of Vocational and Adult Education, East China Normal University and Suju Liu, Lecturer, East China Normal University (11 December 2007 at the institute).

<sup>2</sup>Similar points have been mentioned in the above interviews on Zhang Chiming, Yifeng Luo, Min Han, Zhimin Gao and Suju Liu.

<sup>3</sup>The educational reform slogan termed from the statement of Deng Xiaoping, 'science and technology are the primary productive force', in the speech at the opening ceremony of the National Science Conference (18 March 1978) and also from *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975–1982)*, Beijing, People's Publishing House, 1983, p. 83. The slogan was quoted in Article 3 of the General Regulations of the Education Act of People's Republic of China (draft), drawn out and deliberated in the formulation process of the Education Act of People's Republic of China that was institutionalized in 1995.

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# Chapter 20

## Three Translations Revisited: Lifelong Learning in Singapore

**Kaori Kitagawa**

### Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the development of lifelong learning in Singapore, using a conceptual framework developed in the author's previous work (Kitagawa 2008, 2010). The origin of the idea central to those pieces of work was convergence and divergence of lifelong learning. On the one hand, internationally, lifelong learning became a discursive norm in the educational arena; on the other hand, nationally, approaches to the development of lifelong learning diverged from one another. It was argued that the concept 'lifelong learning' has unusual adaptability and legitimacy, which has permitted multiple translations<sup>1</sup> in the different contexts. This chapter aims to test whether three translations can be identified in the case of Singapore – a city state that is well known for its high economic achievements and educational standards.

Lifelong learning in Singapore was drawn to my attention professionally and intellectually through my recent involvement in a course delivered in Singapore, which enabled me to accumulate good academic and practical evidence of lifelong learning in that context. My interest grew with a speculation that the unique historical,

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<sup>1</sup>For the concept 'translation', instead of the Czarniawska and Joerges/Latour's (1996, pp. 23–24) approach to sociology of translation applied in the Compare article, the chapter uses Cowen's (2006, p. 566) definition. 'Translation is the shape-shifting of educational institutions or the re-interpretation of educational ideas which routinely occurs with the transfer ("the movement of an educational idea or practice in supra-national or trans-national or inter-national space") in space: "the chameleon process"'. Cowen's differentiation between 'transfer', 'translation' and 'transformation' – three important concepts in the field of Comparative Education – has been significant in the further analysis of lifelong learning in this study.

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demographic and geographical characteristics that Singapore has must have contributed to the shaping of lifelong learning policy.

This chapter supports and further develops the argument about the adaptability and legitimacy of the concept 'lifelong learning'. Adaptability refers to the key feature of lifelong learning, 'context adaptive' (Kraus 2002), which allows 'recontextualizations and renegotiations' (Edwards and Boreham 2003) of its meaning. Legitimacy is twofold: governments have used the international discourse of lifelong learning as a legitimator to convince citizens of the benefits of lifelong learning; nationally, lifelong learning policy has been legitimated politically in different domestic contexts with similar arguments about necessity and benefits to justify different policies.

This chapter suggests that three translations have occurred in the development of lifelong learning in Singapore as well, which can be identified: (a) through discourse, (b) in the development of policy and (c) as a shift in the political ideology. At the level of discourse, the international discourse of lifelong learning has been echoed nationally in Singapore, as happened in England and Japan. At the level of policy, a specific educational policy was reshaped into a large-scale social project. At the level of an ideology, Singapore has experienced a political transition, although it was not as manifest as that of England and Japan. The chapter follows the three translations to explore the Singapore's case and finishes with an account on the three translations of the three countries.

## **Translation from the International to the National**

Lifelong learning had been discussed by international agencies and national governments prior to the 1990s; however, it was not until then that lifelong learning became a widespread educational policy concept. National governments were keen to borrow this flexible and positive concept, and during the borrowing process, the international discourse of lifelong learning was reiterated to legitimise the need for lifelong learning. This is the first translation.

Before examining the international-to-national translation in Singapore, this section first summarises the major characteristics of the international discourse of lifelong learning. This helps to understand the reasons why lifelong learning prevailed globally at the particular timing. The argument is that it is the international discourse of lifelong learning which entails an undisputable twofold argument of 'global change' and 'social justice' that has driven the wide acceptance of the concept.

The 'global change' argument links 'globalisation' with 'lifelong learning' with the focus on four forms of change – economic, cultural, technological and demographic (Edwards 1997). 'Economic change' refers mainly to diversified labour structures and high skills requirement. In global market mechanisms, the world of work is increasingly becoming 'knowledge based' and 'technology driven'. Employability, flexibility and competitiveness are 'the requirement', which resulted

in the focus on lifelong learning ‘in the realms of economic policy’ (Edwards 1997, p. 41; pp. 175–181). ‘Cultural change’ is represented in the culture of individualisation, choice and self-responsibility. In ‘a risk society’ (Beck 1992), individuals are to take responsibilities of and control over their own biographies through continuous learning. The major claim of ‘technological change’ is that in the ‘knowledge-based society’ and ‘the information age’, citizens are expected to adapt to ICT environments (European Commission 2001, p. 6). ‘Demographic change’ relates to the rise in the proportion of the elderly and increased multiculturalism and diversity (Field 2006). The expectation is that learning will contribute to coherence and understanding in the globalised world.

These four forms of global change have necessitated lifelong learning. Through actualising ‘lifelong’ and ‘lifewide’ learning opportunities ‘for all’, social justice can be achieved. Lifelong learning brings national prosperity and industrial development, enhances inclusion and cohesion and extends people’s life chances and self-actualisation. The international discourse of lifelong learning has acquired a status with the extraordinarily credible arguments of ‘global change’ and ‘social justice’.

The section now turns to look at whether the international discourse of lifelong learning characterised by ‘global change’ and ‘social justice’ has been translated into the national discourse in Singapore. In Singapore where human resources have been the major resource, education and training has been one of the prioritised policy areas of the government. Since the second half of the 1990s, the significance of lifelong learning has been discussed by various ministers on a number of occasions (Kumar 2004, p. 561).

The discourse of change has been prominent as the then Prime Minister Goh illustrated in 1997 that the future:

will be one of change, and increasingly rapid change.... Change will be unpredictable but it will affect everything we do at work, in society and at home.... Strong nations and strong communities will distinguish themselves from the rest by how well their people learn and adapt to change.

Lifelong learning has become a coping strategy:

Learning will not end in the school or even in the university.... What we learn in school will have to be continually reviewed, updated and expanded throughout our working lives (Radm 1999);

The capacity of Singaporeans to continually learn, both for professional development and for personal enrichment, will determine our collective tolerance for change (MOE 2010a).

The linkage between global change and lifelong learning is apparent.

A particular reference to technological change has been made: ‘IT will play a critical role in fostering creative thinking, and the skills for lifelong learning’ (Radm 1998). Urgency to catch up with the change has been stressed:

Singapore’s ability to survive in the face of globalisation and rapid technological changes depends critically on her ability to transform into a knowledge-based economy to compete with the developed economies (Radm 1999).

The speech went on to address ‘the human dimension’ as well: ‘We also need to cater to the social and mental well being of individuals.’ It is claimed that ‘the spirit

of a lifelong quest for knowledge and skills' (MOM 2003) enhances people's quality of life as well as their employability. This is where the aspect of social justice can be recognised. It is persuaded that with the provision of lifelong learning, individuals can pursue their aspirations and interests. The government's involvement in lifelong learning is justified as a means for 'achieving a gracious and enlightened citizenry' (Radm 1998). 'Learning in the twenty-first century will have to be a lifelong process, akin to a long-distance race' – this statement of the former Minister of Education illustrates that the keenness of the Singapore government in promoting lifelong learning.

In Singapore as well, political discourses on lifelong learning spread globally have overlapped the two major themes of 'global change' and 'social justice'. These common arguments have been presented by the government in a range of settings. At the policy level, however, lifelong learning has been shaped and reshaped, reflecting events that Singapore has experienced. The second translation is about the shift in government's treatment of lifelong learning.

## **Translation from a Targeted Education Policy to a Broader National Project**

The adaptability and legitimacy that lifelong learning entails has allowed lifelong learning policies to be translated through time within a country. When lifelong learning was first borrowed, it was applied as part of education policy reform which emphasised 'continuous learning'. Such a limited approach was soon expanded to address more ambitious aim of the country, projecting political purposes and aspirations onto 'lifelong learning'. This section examines whether this shape shifting occurred in England and Japan can be identified in Singapore.

Perhaps the most significant momentum in terms of the initial development of lifelong learning in Singapore is the launch of Ministry of Education's (MOE) vision statement *Thinking Schools, Learning Nation* (TSLN) in 1997. 'Thinking schools will be learning organisations in every sense ... will be the cradle of thinking students as well as thinking adults' (MOE 2010a). The second part, a 'Learning Nation', envisioned 'a national culture and social environment that promotes lifelong learning in our people' (MOE 2010a).

TSLN had four foci: critical and creative thinking skills, the use of IT in education, citizenship education and administrative excellence. Lifelong learning was 'a logical progression' (Radm 1998) because Singapore had shifted its provision from 'mass general education to meet the needs of a basic industrial economy' to 'mass higher education to meet the needs of a services and technologically based economy'. Looking forward, 'mass continual education where everyone in the workforce is continually upgrading themselves' is required to form 'the basis for the knowledge-based economy'. TSLN was in fact one of the responses to a challenge put to education policy, which was the acquirement of critical and creative skills. An overall framework for education reform had been developed over a decade;

compulsory schooling had already been extended to 10 years in the 1990 reform to prepare young people for further learning (Ashton et al. 1999, p. 42). Since its launch, TSLN has continued ‘to be the over-arching descriptor of the transformation in the education system, comprising changes in all aspects of education’ (MOE 2010b) in Singapore.

From the viewpoint of lifelong learning development, the role that TSLN played is twofold. First, it was the first major official manifestation and documentation in which lifelong learning was brought into the education policy domain. In TSLN, however, despite the strong emphasis on lifelong learning as essential for the population, there was nearly no attempt to clarify the meaning for ‘lifelong learning’. The term was welcomed as a synonym for ‘post-secondary education and training (PET)’ and ‘continuing education and training (CET)’,<sup>2</sup> which had already been well developed by the time the discourse of lifelong learning was widespread internationally. It can be suggested that the Singapore government did not see the need for developing ‘lifelong learning policy’ separately from PET and CET policy. One adjustment was that lifelong learning was adapted as a term which could mean *both* PET *and* CET (PCET). Lifelong learning was comfortably fitted into the context of Singapore without policy makers and professionals having to debate about its definition.

It should be noted that there was some reference to lifelong learning prior to TSLN. One of the earliest pieces of evidence of the use of the term in policy discussion is the MOE strategic planning exercise of 1996 (Pan 1997).<sup>3</sup> When it comes to verbal referencing in official contexts, the list can go on.<sup>4</sup> In both settings, lifelong learning was used as an equivalent to PCET. The argument is that no preceding case had treated lifelong learning as substantial as TSLN did; TSLN can be seen as the major point of reference for lifelong learning development in Singapore.

This flexible adaptation of lifelong learning largely derives from the historical development of education and training systems in Singapore. The Singapore government has taken human resource development extremely seriously since gaining self-government in 1959. Education in the post-independence period focused on the nation-building project, which had three agendas: mass primary education, increased English language literacy and the development of national identity (Green with Sakamoto 2001, pp. 89–90). Soon education came to play an economic role in ‘export-oriented industrialisation’ (Ashton et al. 1999, p. 34) to produce a literate and disciplined labour force for multinational corporations (MNCs). This was the emergence of the state apparatus that permits state policy – including education and training policy – to promote industrialisation. The government soon recognised skills beyond basic levels were necessary. Some technical subjects were made

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<sup>2</sup> In Singapore, PET tends to target school-leavers whose age is above 16, and CET is more focused on adult workers or jobseekers.

<sup>3</sup> Its report identified ‘a positive attitude towards life-long independent learning’ (Cited in Pan 1997 p. 46) as one of the knowledge, skills and values required of graduates.

<sup>4</sup> For example, just before the TSLN Launch, the Minister of Education (1997) addressed ‘lifelong learning’ as one of the four goals for the Masterplan for IT in Education.

compulsory to every male lower secondary student from 1969 (Ashton et al. 1999, pp. 34–35). By the mid-1970s, the government-driven supply-and-demand mechanism was already shaped; it enabled skills supply through post-secondary vocational education and training (VET) to meet economic demands in manufacturing industries (Green with Sakamoto 2001, pp. 89–90).

The discourse of ‘upgrading’ spread to Singapore in the late 1970s when protectionism amongst industrialised countries increased against low-skilled production in Singapore as a result of the oil shock. The Singapore government shifted its industrialisation strategy to higher value-added production to attract MNCs and to upgrade the skill level of existing labour forces (Ashton et al. 1999, pp. 35–38). The Vocational Industrial Training Board (VITB)<sup>5</sup> was set up in 1979 to strategically raise intermediate level skills (Goh and Gopinathan 2008, p. 19) by providing a range of programmes<sup>6</sup> to both school leavers and working adults (Law and Low 1997, p. 120). A range of opportunities for learning were already available.

The emphasis on high value-added production continued throughout the 1980s. The recession of 1985 reinforced a need for redirecting economic emphases from upgrading manufacturing to becoming ‘the business hub of the Asia Pacific’ which was a regional economic integration (Green with Sakamoto 2001, pp. 89–90). VITB was reorganised as the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) in 1992, with a renewed technical education provision of higher-level courses. ITE raised the recognition of continuing technical education (Ashton et al. 1999, p. 42). In fact, the ITE initiatives were by some authors considered to be the Singaporean ‘lifelong learning system’. Law and Low (1997, p. 124) evaluated the ITE system as the example of ‘well-established national worker education and training programs, part of an overall strategy for lifelong learning’. The ITE initiatives surely served the purpose of lifelong learning.

With this background, in the mid-1990s, when ‘lifelong learning’ was introduced to Singapore, the idea was already familiar to policy makers, practitioners and learners, with the systems of PET and CET already in place. Initially, lifelong learning was used interchangeably with either of those terms and to mean both areas at the same time.

The second point about the significance of TSLN in relation to lifelong learning is that TSLN aimed at ‘a continuum that should seamlessly extend’ from ‘primary, secondary and tertiary education’ to ‘on-going adult education and training’ (Radm 1999). This had not been discussed before. Until then, each sector had been conceptualised and managed relatively independently, although each system had been well delivered.

Lifelong learning promoted via TSLN had a focused purpose that was to cultivate in young people critical and creative ability and to provide them with further learning in a new integrated, continuing system. In this sense, the initial application of lifelong learning was to address the weakness in Singapore’s education and training system.

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<sup>5</sup> An amalgamation of the Adult Education Board and the Industry Training Board.

<sup>6</sup> The programmes were, for example, the Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) and the Modular Skills Training (MOST).

Singapore experienced a major economic crisis in 1997, shortly after the launch of TSLN. This had a large impact on the country both politically and socio-economically. Neoliberal analysts assessed that the recession brought about by the economic crisis had been the result of state intervention in the economy (Gopinathan 2007, p. 57). Coupled with the recession, a threat from the new economies of China and India was increasingly pressurising Singapore. With huge and low-cost workforces, those economies prompted 'a new international division of labour' (Gopinathan 2007, p. 58), which forced East Asian countries to reform their economic strategies.

Singapore was 'at a crossroad' (MTI 2003, p. 37), as the economic review report produced by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) indicated. The country had to 'prepare for slower and more difficult growth' as a result of the complex external environment in the regional economies and the US economy, along with the maturity of the domestic economy. Moreover, educational achievements and living standards were reaching developed country levels.

One of the decisions of the Singapore government was to increase investment in new industries including biotechnology, creative industries and education. This led to a renewed emphasis on PCET. In the knowledge-driven, technology-driven economy, 'innovation, flexibility, entrepreneurship, creativity and a commitment to lifelong learning' (Gopinathan 2007, p. 60) became compulsory. The Prime Minister Goh (Cited in Kumar 2004, p. 561) reemphasised the importance and urgency of fostering the persona depicted in TSLN:

we must focus on lifelong learning and employability for the long term. ... Thinking workers and a learning workforce ... the whole country must become a Learning Nation. We must make learning a national culture. We will have to evolve a comprehensive national lifelong learning system that continually retrains our workforce, and encourage every individual to learn all the time as a matter of necessity.

The Singapore government began rigorous research and development into the area of lifelong learning. One of the pioneering events was in 1998 when a delegation led by the Permanent Secretary for Labour conducted a study visit to Denmark which was known as a country with a tradition of lifelong learning (Moving Images and Sound Archives Singapore 1998). In parallel, ministerial restructuring was undertaken; the Ministry of Labour was reformed as the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), and its remit became national manpower planning. The Committee on Singapore's Competitiveness (1998) was set up to discuss the vision of Singapore as a globally competitive knowledge economy, which was then formulated into a policy plan in 1999 called the Manpower 21 Plan (M21). M21 was 'a holistic approach' addressing 'all aspects of the manpower value chain' to transfer Singapore into a 'Talent Capital, a centre of ideas, innovation, knowledge and exchange' (MOM 1999).

What was significant in relation to the development of lifelong learning was the transfer of responsibilities to the newly established MOM. Lifelong learning was increasingly treated as employment policy rather than education policy. This was manifested in the new policy concept 'lifelong employability' introduced in M21. MOM clearly defines M21 as 'a hub of continuous learning for lifelong employability'; it was an explicit official presentation to promote learning throughout life for the purpose of enhancing employability.



Pursuance of the M21 vision continued. The Lifelong Learning Endowment Fund was established in 2001 to ‘support our lifelong learning efforts to improve the employment and employability of Singaporeans’ (Lee 2001). As the Minister of Manpower himself expressed, the Fund clearly demonstrates the government’s ‘strong commitment to continually upgrade and re-skill’ the workforce. There was a structural development as well. The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) was created under MOM in 2003 to develop national CET infrastructure ‘to enhance the employability and competitiveness of employees and jobseekers, thereby building a workforce that meets the changing needs of Singapore’s economy’ (MOM 2003).

Initiatives were implemented one after another. A national credentialing system called the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) was introduced with an aim to train workers and to recognise their competencies (WDA 2010). ‘The WSQ system must enable mid-career adults to train for new vocations’; it should ‘provide multiple tracks of training’ and ‘serve our workforce through their lifetime of employment’ (Ng 2005). As an opportunity for recognition of people’s achievements, the Lifelong Learning Awards were created. At one of the award ceremonies, the Minister of Manpower reassured: ‘the Government is committed to build a world-class national infrastructure to help workers upgrade their skills and progress in their careers’ (Ng 2007).

One of the strong drivers behind the emergence and promotion of ‘lifelong employability’ is a rising concern about the ageing population. The MTI economic review report (2003, p. 37) explicitly stated:

our ageing workforce makes it harder for our economy to adapt to restructuring. Our workers will experience painful dislocation and structural unemployment, which were never serious problems in the past.

Similarly, the MOM annual report (2005, p. 20) identified:

The employability of older workers is on the national agenda because the Singapore labour force is rapidly growing.... The employability of older workers is a medium to long-term issue. Hence, it is important that measures can be effectively implemented and sustained over the years.

Moreover, an explicit linkage between lifelong learning, employability and ageing population appears in the report (MOM 2005): ‘Lifelong Employability for Economic Security (LEES)’. The government message of this slogan is that you will be economically secured throughout your life if you continuously upskill and increase employability.

The infrastructure for the M21 vision and LEES is being consolidated through the CET Masterplan launched in 2008, which is a new ‘lifelong learning system’ (MOM n.y.) with two main aims: first to ensure that by 2020, 60% of the workforce will have at least a diploma qualification (36% in 2007), and second, ‘to equip Singaporeans with the skills for job opportunities in new growth industries’. In support for the CET Masterplan, the government increased the Lifelong Learning Endowment Fund by S\$800 million<sup>7</sup> in 2008 and promised to increase up to S\$5 billion.

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<sup>7</sup> As of October 2010, 1 Singapore Dollar (S\$)=0.48 British Pounds (£).

WDA's parallel approach to promote lifelong employability is to build 'the national training capacity' (Gan 2008a). As part of the CET Masterplan, the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL) was founded with the mission 'to grow, support and professionalise the adult educator community' (IAL 2010). The role of adult educators and trainers is perceived as central to helping workers 'realize the benefits of lifelong learning', which are to advance 'you in your life and career' and sustainable employability (Gan 2008a).

The reformulation stage of lifelong learning policy in Singapore was largely prompted by an economic crisis. Lifelong learning policy, which emerged in the education reform action plan TSLN, was extended and expanded as systematic comprehensive manpower policy with a new rigour: lifelong employability. Embracing education and training for older workers and for educational professionals as well as PCET, lifelong learning has become the government's central strategy to compete in a global knowledge economy.

## Translation from 'Efficiency-Driven' to 'Knowledge-Driven' Principles

The third translation is about the shift in political ideology, which has occurred simultaneously with the second translation, that is, the policy change within the area of lifelong learning within a country. Singapore has gone through an ideological transition, although within a single political party, which had had an impact on lifelong learning, and this translation is the topic of this section.

Singapore has been 'government-made under the continuous regime' (Low 2001, p. 412) of the People's Action Party (PAP) since gaining self-government in 1959. The PAP government has developed ideologies along developmental stages, which have been predicated on the union of political leadership and economic growth. A number of authors have identified Singapore as a typical 'developmental state' (e.g. Low 2001; Gopinathan 1997; Green 1999; Castells 1992). According to Castelle (Cited in Gopinathan 2007, p. 57), 'a developmental state' is 'one which gains legitimacy through its ability to promote and sustain development':

At the centre of the modernisation effort was the state, which both facilitated the economic activity by managing external capital but was in many cases, a major economic player itself (Gopinathan 2007, p. 57).

PAP as a strong and autonomous state has actually managed the market.

In addition, proactive engagement in building national identity and legitimating state power is a key characteristic of a developmental state. Education and training is placed as the central instrument to foster 'the attitudes and motivations in individuals which will ensure continuing collective commitment and to and active participation in the goals of national development' (Green 1999, pp. 47–48).

The return on investment on education was such that the state could justify the expansion and diversification of education as high priority.... A virtuous circle of

investment in high skills creation, which enabled high wages and therefore higher standards of living, was created in developmental states (Ashton et al. cited in Gopinathan 2007, p. 57).

In other words, ‘a tight coupling of education and training systems with state-determined economic policies’ (Gopinathan 2007, p. 57) has contributed to the modernisation process in a developmental state.

Singapore as a developmental state has rapidly progressed from ‘a factor-driven economy’ (Law 2008, pp. 116–117) in the 1960s and 1970s to ‘an investment-driven economy’ in the 1980s and 1990s and to ‘the innovation-driven economy’ of the 2000s. In each phase, the government has advocated an ideology, which was projected onto the instruments for human resource development through effective and universal education and training systems.

During the 1960s and 1970s, PAP’s ideology was ‘survival’ (Ashton et al. 1999). Individuals were sacrificed for the ‘national interest’ (Goh and Gopinathan 2008, p. 12) to survive and shift quickly towards modernisation. Domestic low-skilled labour forces were trained, and technocrats were imported. Soon the economic strategy focused on enabling rapid industrialisation by attracting foreign investment for export-oriented manufacturing. The developmental state was now named ‘Singapore Inc.’ which tied up the government and government-linked companies (Low 2001, p. 412). The major purpose of education and training in this factor-driven economy was to foster basic technical skills in the workforce to support the labour-intensive manufacturing activities (Law 2008, p. 117).

By the 1980s, the entrepot economy of the city state was progressed to a newly industrialised economy and to the more advanced developing economy of the 1990s. PAP’s emphasis in this second developmental phase was ‘efficiency’ (Goh and Gopinathan 2008). For the economic restructuring towards higher value-added production and more ‘capital-intensive industries’ (Law 2008, p. 119), such as biotechnology and financing, a new approach to human resource development was required. The education and training system embodied by polytechnics and VITB/ITE was a calculated investment to expand capital (Law 2008, pp. 119–121). This efficient manpower planning was the key characteristic of the ‘investment-driven economy’ of this period.

It was in the second half of this ‘efficiency-driven’ (Goh and Gopinathan 2008) phase that lifelong learning emerged in the policy domain of education and training. As a pillar concept of TSLN, lifelong learning was applied as a powerful alternative to PET and CET with an emphasis on a continuum between school and adult learning. The argument of the PAP government was that constant and continual learning was crucial for upgrading the workforce for the purpose of the ongoing economic restructuring. Lifelong learning was situated as an important efficiency strategy for PAP to increase human capital suitable in the investment-driven economy.

‘Knowledge’ has been increasingly stressed in political discussions since the end of the 1990s. In the third developmental phase, ‘knowledge driven’ (Law 2008) became the principle of the PAP government to pursue ‘a globalized, entrepreneurial, and diversified economy’ (Law 2008, p. 121). The emphasis has been on emerging sectors such as biomedical science as well as high value-added

manufacturing which had been Singapore's strong area. 'In the innovation-driven economy' of the 2000s, 'as industries become knowledge-intensive, the threshold of knowledge and skills required for jobs also rises' (Radm 1999). Lifelong learning has been increasingly seen as one of the important drivers in ensuring Singapore's transition to a knowledge-based economy (Kumar 2004, p. 560). The principles of TSLN were reemphasised and also extended to address 'employable skills throughout working life' (Goh cited in Kumar 2004, p. 561), that is, 'lifelong employability':

Our future prosperity will be built on a knowledge-based economy.... The types of jobs change, and change rapidly. This means that workers must have broad basic skills and the capacity to learn new skills only then will they have employable skills throughout their working lives. So we must have Thinking Workers and a Learning Workforce.

The quest for lifelong employability has become the key agenda for the PAP government in response to external threats that grew throughout the 1990s as well as national concerns. Singapore is now challenged by other nations that have 'an abundance of human capital and other resources to compete with' (Kumar 2004, p. 561), and revision is required of the conventional strategies which brought about successful economic growth since independence. Internally, the implications of demographic and labour changes for the building of a knowledge-driven society have been widely discussed. Slogans such as 'Thinking Workers and a Learning Workforce', 'Lifelong Learning for Lifelong Earning' and 'Lifelong Employability for Economic Security (LEES)' have been promoted to make the population prepare for the ageing society.

The former two in fact address another dimension in terms of lifelong employability: transferability. The government perceives that the labour market is experiencing 'faster skills obsolescence and shorter job tenures' (Gan 2008b), and lifelong learning is the solution because it allows workers 'to switch to new sectors and progress further in their careers' (Gan 2010). Transferability has been more and more stressed:

there are many skills upgrading and job opportunities out there for Singaporeans. What matters most is that Singaporeans are willing to learn new skills to open up new job opportunities for themselves (Goh 2010).

The Singapore government views knowledge and its transferability as power to compete with emerging economies as well as developed economies. The fundamental strategy is lifelong employment, which is to raise the overall skill levels of the whole population and also to enhance mobility in labour markets.

Since the early stages of the development of lifelong learning, when it replaced PCET, the national project to realise lifelong employability has been pursued in Singapore. PAP's principle of efficiency – human resource investment to meet market needs – has shifted to knowledge-driven, innovation-driven approaches to economic growth. Lifelong learning is placed as a central mechanism for skilling and upskilling in preparation for changing labour markets and the ageing society. A fundamental strategy of the developmental state has become 'a tight coupling of *lifelong learning systems* with state-determined economic policies'.

## Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the promotion and implementation of lifelong learning policy in Singapore. The framework of three translations was applied. This final section reflects on the three translations of the case of Singapore and addresses the counterpoints from the cases of England and Japan. Then, the chapter ends with a brief proposal on sustainable analysis for lifelong learning.

The first translation is the translation from the international discourse to national discourses. Potent debates about ‘global change’ and ‘social justice’ are recognisable in Singapore, as happened in England and Japan. One distinctive characteristic of lifelong learning in Singapore is that there is hardly any documentation specifically on lifelong learning policy. In England, starting from a visionary publication *The Learning Age* of 1998, there have been a number of Green Papers, White Papers and reports on lifelong learning. In Japan as well, lifelong learning has always been on one of the top agendas in White Papers on education since the early 1990s. The Singapore’s approach to lifelong learning has been to integrate the idea into existing frameworks. Being introduced as a synonym for PCET, lifelong learning was not a novelty policy. With the well-established systems for PET (focused on school leavers) and CET (focused on adult workers and jobseekers), the process of integration and dissemination was quick and smooth in Singapore.

The second translation refers to national policy change. The Singapore government introduced lifelong learning into the area of education and training through TSLN. Its aim was to foster critical and creative populations through a continuum system of education and training. The weakness of the prior education and training system was the front-ended ‘paper chase’ which promoted passive learners. TSLN was a turning point to shift learning and teaching towards innovation and creation. The role of lifelong learning in TSLN was to join PET and CET to allow long-term cultivation of critical and creative assets. In England, the formulation of lifelong learning policy was driven by intermediate skills shortage, and in Japan, excessive stress on graduate diplomas. In this light, it can be suggested that in all three countries, lifelong learning was originally a policy to address specific weakness in the education system. However, it should be noted that the remedy policy planning in Singapore was represented as TSLN, and lifelong learning was rather a low-profile sub-policy which was to support TSLN.

The shape shifting of the sub-policy, lifelong learning began shortly after the launch of TSLN. Under a new ministry MOM’s leadership, an employment agenda was also included under the lifelong learning umbrella, which was described as lifelong employability. Coupled with the concern of demographic ageing, raising the skill levels of workforces of all age groups has become the priority. With lifelong employability, the government aims to upgrade the capacity of the nation to be able to compete in the global economy. Both in England and Japan, lifelong learning policy was reformulated to contribute to social restructuring. In England, the Labour government’s Third Way permitted them to bring the social inclusion agenda into lifelong learning policy; whereas in Japan, a range of unexpected events such as a large-scale earthquake and so-called collapse of school continued, which

challenged the country's infrastructure and value systems, which then influenced lifelong learning policy to shift towards community-focused. In all three places, through time, lifelong learning was translated from a focused education policy to a broadened national project. What varies is translation processes. In the cases of England and Japan, the translations were complex and took a decade, while in Singapore, the sub-policy was shifted swiftly to a mainstream employment policy. This variation in processes can be understood by looking at the third translation.

The flipside to this policy change is the shift in a political ideology, and this is the third translation. Both in England and Japan, originally, lifelong learning was a component of neoliberal reform policy. Divergence for England was when the Labour government adopted 'advanced liberalism', a sophisticated version of neoliberalism which encapsulated the notions of inclusion and cohesion. For Japan, communitarianism was developing through the emphasis on participation and community bonding, but without self-governing capacity, it remained as 'quasi-communitarianism'. The Singapore's experience was not as dramatic as how the ideology shifts took place in England and Japan. This probably derives from PAP's dominant governance since the independence. Although there has not been an explicit change in a political ideology, shifts can be identified over the years within PAP's principles. When lifelong learning was advocated through TSLN, the PAP government was still aiming at an investment-driven economy emphasising efficiency. The role of lifelong learning was to produce high-performance skilled workforces. This approach was challenged by an economic recession and outnumbering cheaper labour from neighbour countries. 'Knowledge' has taken over 'performance'. Singapore's decision at the 'crossroad', which was identified by the MTI report in 2003, has been to move towards an innovation-driven economy with lifelong employability as a solution. Thus, the third translation which is about the projection of political stances onto lifelong learning policy can be identified in parallel with the second translation which refers to policy change.

This chapter has suggested the framework of three translations in studying lifelong learning. What the analysis of lifelong learning in Singapore has revealed is another convincing illustration of the adaptability and legitimacy of lifelong learning. Despite the resonance of the 'global change' and 'social justice' arguments of the international discourse, lifelong learning has been interpreted and implemented differently and flexibly through times and across spaces.

For the purpose of sustainable analysis of lifelong learning, this chapter concludes by proposing the rethinking of this context-adaptive concept with the question, 'what's next?' Has the translated policy 'lifelong learning' moved, is it moving or will it move towards the 'transformation'<sup>8</sup> phase, as categorised by Cowen? Indeed in England, the term 'lifelong learning' in the education policy domain has been seen less in the past decade, and instead, 'skills' are dominating. Is this going

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<sup>8</sup> According to Cowen (2006, p. 566), 'transformation' refers to 'the metamorphoses which the compression of social and economic power into education in the new context imposes on the initial translation: that is, a range of transformations which cover both the indigenisation and the extinction of the translated form'.

to be the pattern in every country that has adopted lifelong learning? If the translated policy is not being transformed, where is it going? These are the questions that would be worth pursuing in understanding 'lifelong learning' further.

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# Chapter 21

## Lifelong Learning: Innovation, Policy and Institutions

Catherine Casey

### Introduction

Extensive debates in academic and practitioner circles over the last two or three decades, on the expansion of a liberalized knowledge-based economy and the learning society conceived as its corollary, continue to raise many critical questions. Theorists and practitioners in fields of education and lifelong learning are brought prominently into these debates as lifelong learning is elevated, at least rhetorically, in policy discourse to a key role. The European Union has famously articulated its aspiration towards achieving competitive knowledge-based economic advantage in the global economy. Its Lisbon Agenda of 2000 was relaunched in 2005 and its current policy strategy, *Europe 2020* (European Commission 2010), continues to reinforce the key economic objectives and strategies of the Lisbon framework. Lifelong learning is promoted as a vital route to aligning the learning society with the knowledge economy. Yet the conceptualization of the ‘learning society’ and of lifelong learning promoted in the knowledge-economy policy models leaves, to educationists, very much to be desired. Many educationists argue that a dominant policy model of the knowledge-based economy and learning society binds education and lifelong learning into the service of a commanding yet narrow economic agenda – an agenda that now extends in reach to encompass notions of citizenship and social cohesion. That economic policy pursuit, moreover, risks a further weakening of the social rudiments of cohesion and inclusion which are similarly much extolled in policy discourse.

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Influential European Commission policy statements in the last decade, including the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000), *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* (2001), *Europe for Citizens* (2007a) and *Europe 2020* (2010), declare the objective of increasing social cohesion, as well as economically productive skills, as a major task of education and lifelong learning. Yet that worthy objective of social cohesion has been pursued under terms set predominantly by a neoliberal economic model and a highly privileged role of market action in society. For many critics, conceptualizations of lifelong learning oriented to a much wider sociocultural agenda are being undermined and marginalized. The economic model taken up in European Union policy discourse promotes lifelong learning for the generation of knowledge-rich and innovative production of goods traded on highly competitive global markets. It imagines that learning for economic productivity also enables an efficient model of citizenship simply conceived as labour market participation. It demands of education and lifelong learning systems that two-fold provision. Critics protest at the new burdens being placed on education and lifelong learning which are now directly tasked with producing skilled and qualified workers demanded by highly flexible and dynamic labour markets, and good citizens. Still other critics point to grossly unfair burdens placed on workers and would-be workers in regard to the costs and risks of skills investment in conditions of labour market uncertainty which manifestly unfairly advantage employers (Casey 2009).

A policy alignment of employment, education and lifelong learning, citizenship and social cohesion may propose a grandly inclusive agenda befitting the European Union's project of economic and social integration. But the sociocultural costs of privileging an economic agenda over social and education domains may prove too great a price to pay. The rich cultural wealth of lifelong education offers much more than economic resources and a truncated model of citizenship conceived as labour market participation.

Lifelong learning policies that are formulated under an overarching economic agenda have sorely challenged many lifelong learning theorists and practitioners in recent decades. Yet, despite an apparent economic capture, the economic agenda for lifelong learning remains by no means the only one. Lifelong learning as an innovative and aspirational project promotes a remarkable resource of concepts, values, demands and international networks that are enduringly effective in diverse projects of learning throughout the life course. Even as many educationists worry at the trivialization of lifelong learning into empty slogans, recognizing that rich resource of concepts, values and practical experience in lifelong learning draws us to reflect freshly on current challenges. Can the visionary project of lifelong learning – despite oppositional forces – contribute to a re-imagining of the relationships of education institutions, economic agendas, social cohesion and a renovation of notions of citizenship? What are key obstacles and challenges to the viability of this prospect? This chapter offers a critical social analysis of particular innovations and institutional challenges facing lifelong learning policies and practices in the European Union in regard to economic learning agendas, and citizenship aspirations.

## Lifelong Learning: The Problems of Policy

An international academic literature on lifelong learning focuses on many aspects of educational systems of lifelong learning in theory and practice and engages the policy debates in an expanded agenda of concerns. A comparative literature discussing lifelong learning and models of the learning society in different national or regional settings is growing in importance (Antikainen et al. 2006; Kuhn 2007; Scheutze and Casey 2006). Recognizing and understanding underlying differences in conceptions of the ‘learning society’ enables further insights into the way those differences affect the design of policies and their practical implementation. Divergence in models of the ‘learning society’ and ‘knowledge-based economy’ has, in recent years, been given much attention. Yet, notwithstanding the varieties of policy models, a strong policy accord on the need to promote and provide lifelong learning as the chief route to a learning society and knowledge-based economy – and good citizenship – is clearly evident.

Importantly, the comparative approach to analysing and understanding lifelong learning also widens research approaches to the field. Taking a perspective of lifelong learning viewed in its wider social, economic, cultural and political dimensions extends the scope of international and comparative debates. Moreover, that perspective draws lifelong learning issues into the mainstream of education and social policies. That approach, which is the one adopted in this chapter, also draws attention to the role of supranational policy institutions and policy promulgation. Supranational policy bodies, such as the European Union Commission, influence the vision, formation and implementation of policy agendas in education and lifelong learning at national levels. The influence of policy bodies such as the OECD and UNESCO is more frequently recognized in lifelong learning research. But the significance of European Union policy remains, remarkably, under-recognized in many European national contexts and education and lifelong learning circles. Moreover, when that significance is recognized, it is often greeted with alarm and excoriative criticism. Many critics fear that the European Union’s policies on lifelong learning, as formulated and disseminated by the European Commission, are singularly intent on economic objectives and in service of a globalizing market competitiveness.

Griffin (2006), for instance, proposes that policy-makers are the ‘other’ of lifelong education. They may be categorized disdainfully as ‘hegemonic’ or ‘accommodating intellectuals’, rather than more desirably as ‘transformative’ like lifelong educators. Moreover, Dale and Robertson (2009) see geopolitical intent in the European Union’s project of integration and reform of a vast array of economic and social institutions, including education, across the European Union’s 27 member states. For Dale and Robinson that project of EU integration is interpreted as a project of ‘global imperialism’ and ‘neocolonialism’ rather than as perhaps one of expanded distribution of sociocultural goods, creative transnational mobilities and integration of lifelong learning conceptions in the remodelling of elitist and byzantine education systems of many European countries. For Dale and Robinson, the European Commission’s policies and programmes for education and lifelong learning must be viewed, *a priori*, with great

suspicion. Still another writer, Fields (2006), regards the European Commission as a ‘temple of human capital thinking’, while a chorus of many others regards lifelong learning as having degenerated into ‘human resource development’ and crude economic rationalism. That sketch of critical perspectives captures a certain air of affronted disdain and policy-taking retreat that is a current leitmotif of the habitus of lifelong educationists in the academy. That critique may be well founded, and its moral origins almost certainly lie in the visionary ideals of an earlier model of lifelong education associated with Faure and UNESCO. But its unreflective normative cast poses great challenges to forging a dialogical engagement of educationists with policy-makers. It may unwittingly foreclose a socially progressive agenda that the education community is eminently well placed to demand and activate.

My discussion below considers some key challenges in the field of lifelong education and learning in particularly the European Union context. In short, these challenges comprise three sorts: challenges that lifelong learning continues to pose to extant policy-makers and processes, challenges that lifelong learning faces from the prevailing institutional and economic conditions and challenges to both lifelong educationists *and* policy-makers in regard to policies on citizenship and lifelong learning that are assuming high visibility on the current agenda. I propose that a very first challenge to lifelong educators and theorists may be that of venturing beyond conventional communities of practice and professional prejudices and entering into transdisciplinary territory and knowledge sharing in fields of economics and political analysis. In doing so, they may find that new cross-border dialogue opens relationships and sources of contribution to policy debates.

I wish first to review key accomplishments and innovations of lifelong learning. These innovations in theories, conceptualizations and practice developments have made an enduring impact on the larger arena of education in the formulation of lifelong learning models and programmes and in the rethinking and reform of established education and training systems. They remain vital challenges to policy. That is followed by discussion of economic and social forces that continue to forge the knowledge-based economy model and that present immense challenges to the field of lifelong learning in theory and practice today. Finally, I address two matters that pose challenges to lifelong learning policy. They are both of an institutional character. The first is in regard to educational institutions and the second in regard to conceptions, norms and practices of citizenship. Institutional factors pose considerable challenges to lifelong learning. But the matter of citizenship and learning for citizenship, which now feature prominently in EU policy formulation, may open rich prospects. A freshly imaginative and politically savvy lifelong learning field may participate with renewed vigour in these current debates.

## **Lifelong Learning: Innovation and Challenges**

Some debates in the literature on lifelong learning suggest that the concept is so wide and variable that it can be invoked liberally to support any political cause. There are recurrent conceptual wrangles over whether notions of lifelong learning

and lifelong education ought to be regarded as distinct or essentially the same. Others, though, identify the concept of lifelong learning as a significant innovation that is based on three principles (Schuetze and Casey 2006 and Schuetze 2006; Wain 2001). These principles break with the traditional notion of ‘front-end’, or young age, formal education. Lifelong learning is ‘life-long’, ‘life-wide’ and centred on ‘learning’ rather than on ‘education’ and the latter’s assumed formalities and established institutions. The education expansion of the last four decades has largely occurred in the formal sector of education and at the front end. Lifelong learning proposes that people can, perhaps should, continue learning throughout their lives through organized learning in formal and non-formal settings. Lifelong learning advocates have succeeded in bringing the notion of further or continuous learning after the phase of initial and compulsory education into general policy recognition. The conceptualization of lifelong learning used in EU policy discourse focuses predominantly on post-compulsory or post-secondary learning activities. However, as lifelong learning scholars have consistently argued, the extent and quality of education during the formative years are of crucial importance for the ability and motivation to engage in further learning later in life. Therefore, a strategy of lifelong learning must genuinely span the life course and include these formative years.

Lifelong learning scholars and activists have promoted these considerable innovations to, indeed departures from, conventional models of education. They have more recently been informed by and readily integrated new knowledge from fields of neuroscience regarding human brain development. Far from earlier assumptions regarding brain maturation and fixity, modern neuroscience reveals the plasticity and malleability of the human brain and the learning propensities of adults throughout the life course (Merriam et al. 2007). Others, notably Jarvis (2009), include attention to learning experiences of the body, of emotion and of spiritual and numinous senses that ‘teach’ us and draw us to meaning-making learning. Policy-makers are called to recognize these dimensions in the ongoing work of making ‘lifelong learning a reality’ in the EU.

The key understandings of the concept of lifelong have become an enduring contribution – both to the research and practitioner fields and to policy-making. Current policy models readily reiterate the emphasis on post-compulsory, continuing learning and the wide diversity in the settings in which learning takes place. Policy attention to early childhood, and parental, education similarly demonstrate the impact of lifelong learning conceptualizations and demands. The policy emphasis on linking different sectors and stakeholders in education and lifelong learning, alongside differing life-course needs for different forms of learning, is a vital one. The implementation of these policies conceptualizations is, however, extremely fraught and contradictory.

Lifelong learning theorists have won recognition that organized learning occurs not just in formal institutions, but in a variety of forms and settings outside the formal educational system. That now widely commonplace recognition has been accomplished through the dissemination of a notion from the lifelong learning discourse of ‘life-wide’ learning through diverse media and experiences. The assessment and recognition of knowledge learnt outside the formal education system have become a fundamental necessity. While this has become recognized in research and policy circles, it continues to pose a major challenge to the established institutions

and hierarchies of persistently traditional education providers. Traditional education institutions have struggled to accord validation of different kinds of knowledge, including the places where, and the mode in which, knowledge and skills have been acquired. The challenges of the concept of life-wide to formal education institutions and their vested interests have seen policy efforts to extend formal recognition to skills and competencies taught and learnt by persons formerly on the periphery of formal institutional contexts. The European Union's current *New Skills for New Jobs* (EC 2008) is one such effort. But getting educational institutions, and employers, to change their habits and to operationalize these life-wide objectives poses persistent problems.

The third principle of lifelong learning, that of 'learner-centred learning', has posed perhaps an even more radical innovation. The traditional education system of prescribed and rigidly structured and sequenced curricula with a plethora of age-specific standardized tests and formulaic outcomes herds individuals into passive recipients of expert knowledge and methods. Lifelong learning's innovation shifts the perspective from 'education' and 'schooling' to 'learning'. Beyond the early childhood years, the proposition is that *what, when, where* and *how* learning occurs should be determined, in principle, by learners themselves. Learner-centred learning opens a wide course of options and democratizes power in their pursuit. Learner-centred agency entails greater responsibility for taking action and making meaningful choices among the various options. It can enable greater avenues of cooperation and imaginative goal setting beyond the conventionally prescribed and delimited. It certainly poses a more negotiated power relationship among learners and institutional providers. Yet it has been education institutions themselves, not least those of secondary and tertiary education, that have been most resistant to the changes required to practice a learner-centred education.

All of these aspects of lifelong learning continue to effectively challenge and influence debates in theory and practice in diverse fields of education. However, there can be no doubt that a powerful political economic policy climate casts a long shadow over these accomplishments and challenges of lifelong learning. For many commentators, that climate has effected a capture and a vacuous rebranding of lifelong learning for bare-faced instrumental ends.

## **The Economic and Business Challenge**

The rise and influence of an economically rational vision of the learning society and model of lifelong learning in relation to the demands of a knowledge-based economy are now widely debated. My brief discussion scrutinizes crucial factors of that model that pose core challenges to lifelong learning understood according to the principles described above. The knowledge-based economy discourse is predominantly characterized by a neoliberal political and economic model that promotes significant contrasting and oppositional elements to humanistic models of lifelong learning. Firstly, the neoliberal model is made concrete through the application of

human capital theory in ways that powerfully, if sometimes subtly, undermine and contradict humanist conceptions of education and learning that insist on irreducibility to economy. Human capital theory, which first emerged in the 1960s in economic theory, was taken up to a critical degree only in the 1980s. Its chief proposition is that human labour, knowledge and skills in production are resources of production rather than costs of production as conventionally economically conceived. Skill development requires investment. The rapid acceleration of the technological expansion in the 1970s and 1980s was led by firms that utilized more highly skilled workers. In short, the post-Fordist regime of flexible production and diversification of products and markets demanded the innovation that could only be generated by more highly educated and skilled workers.

The formation of skilled workers quickly became the task of national education and training systems, and of lifelong learning. As the World Bank succinctly expresses it: ‘lifelong learning is education for the knowledge economy’ (World Bank 2003). The human capital model of lifelong learning as a continuing training system appropriate for a knowledge-based economy demands a well-educated and flexible workforce. The powerful demand for higher-level skills among a wider population alongside volatile market conditions saw business interests persuade governments to facilitate employer release from responsibilities in industry and vocational training. In their place, business interests demanded that the state take responsibility for mass provision of employment-useful education, lifelong learning and skills development. Across the European countries, which have variously adopted neoliberal strategies encouraged by the EU supranational economic programme, governments have taken action to provide that mass provision of higher skills. But the mass expansion of higher and further education systems has been accompanied by the state’s off-setting of its costs through placing new demands on individual students and workers. Rather than relying on ‘front-end’ educational provision and industry training, formerly more typically provided by a welfarist state and industry bodies, students and workers must take individual responsibility for acquiring and updating their skills and qualifications in order to enhance their employability and career chances. That immense business demand mediated through the state continues to present a considerable challenge to lifelong learning conceived as a sociocultural good and demanding of substantive institutional changes.

There is no question that the neoliberal, human capital-oriented model of lifelong learning has achieved a powerful hold over the field of education and lifelong learning. The European Commission has been much influenced by the views on lifelong learning promulgated by human capital enthusiasts (namely, Rodrigues 2003). There is a distinct indication of preference for a *primary* agenda of lifelong learning in which the objectives are carefully aligned with the presumed demands of a knowledge-based economy. But the European Commission’s policies also express, variously, articulations of plural goals and agenda for learning and education of workers (EC 2001, 2007a; European Council 2007). The obstructions to their pursuit are more complex than solely those of economic hegemony, and capitulation to business interest demands.



## Policy Challenges: Institutional Dynamics and Viscosity

The plurality of goals, aspirations, meanings and priorities in lifelong learning, notwithstanding the powerful persuasion of economic models, provides rich potential for continuing effort to promote and expand diverse lifelong learning visions and actions. Taking a *real politik* view, a powerful economic agenda influencing social arenas must be an expected force. Lifelong learning advocates pursuing sociocultural aspirations and agenda face a persistent task of political negotiation with economic forces. The powerful economic agenda has always been effective even in the heyday of the emancipatory humanist lifelong learning programmes. At the present time, a concerted effort towards reconfiguring a sociocultural regulation of productivist demands is required. As part of that endeavour, I want to draw attention to two matters that are pertinent to lifelong learning challenges and prospects. The first matter, which is much neglected in lifelong learning discussions, is that of the institutional level and its embedded patterns of relationships. The second is a consideration, also with an institutional focus, of the new attention to citizenship and civic skills in EU policy discourse.

Both lifelong learning theorists and policy-makers have shared an emphatic attention to the individual level of learning. But the emphasis on lifelong learning for persons for all of its humanist richness (or methodological individualism) has tended to overlook attention to the level of institutions. Institutional factors including the problems of institutional continuity and change and ‘institutional learning’ have slipped from imagination. Institutional resistance to the changes demanded by lifelong educationists may well have been significantly underestimated by both educationists and policy-makers.

The aspect of ‘lifelong’ raises immense questions about the structure of extant educational institutions and the interrelationships between different sectors of the educational system. These questions, while noted by lifelong learning scholars perhaps as early as the 1970s (Jarvis 2007), remain just as relevant and as difficult today. Lifelong learning theorists point to the differing prominence of interests and goals for persons at different times in their biographical lives and the demands on institutional providers in different sectors of learning that ensue. Emphasizing the lifelong aspect identifies a crucial prerequisite for lifelong education as a system that allows and promotes smooth progression, which has multiple access and exit points, pathways and transitions. Transitions do not only entail pathways between different parts of the education system but also enable the passage from school to work as well as between work, and education and training. As well, they imply an open-endedness, an individualized fluidity of movement in and out of formal learning occasions. These implications, which lifelong learning scholars and activists have persuaded policy-makers to recognize, have experienced immense difficulty in gaining recognition and response at institutional levels. They have, more typically, encountered considerable obstruction.

The regularity of policy and practitioner repetition of demand for more and better lifelong learning is just as frequently accompanied by bafflement at the

difficulty in implementing it and measuring its results (EC 2007a). Moreover, the rhetorical appeal of notions of the 'learning society' and of 'learning organizations' has been variously welcomed or disparaged in lifelong learning debates. The notions are at once attractive and fuzzy and defy the standard measuring devices more readily applied to conventional schooling and training. Importantly, a grasp of the intricacies of institutional and organizational change required in really carrying out individual lifelong and system-collective learning has scarcely been achieved. Few in lifelong education and learning circles have anticipated and recognized the complexity of the web of structures and normative attachments in institutional practices.

Sociologists understand institutions as rules and norms that govern social and economic interactions. They are contextual sociocultural scripts that include a logic of appropriateness and legitimation and that institute role-following behaviour. Organizational action is embedded in norms and routines as coordination devices and in power, interests and conflict relations. Similarly, normative institutional attachments and rules of life are embedded in diverse features of educational practices. They comprise and permeate structures, cultural norms and regulations, expectations, exclusions, and privileges as well as formal regulatory environments. They include methods, goals, values and tastes and rehearsed patterns of professional and interest group behaviour. They include, for example, cultural norms of school terms, demarcation disputes over sectoral turf and conventional practices of curriculum design, qualifications standards and names (e.g. dispute over the term 'university', diploma, trade certificate; the length of a course of learning in terms of hours taught or years studied). These everyday institutional features of organizational life support certain ways of doing things. They make feasible or obstruct the demands of change and aspirant visions. Innovation, which lifelong learning requires, is constrained – even defeated – by the institutional environment and the strength of maintenance of behavioural regularities in the organization (i.e. school, university, community centre and workplace).

In recognition of institutional embeddedness, economic research addresses notions of 'organizational learning' and the 'learning organization' (e.g. Argyris and Schon 1996; Hodgson 2007; Stewart 1997). Many in education and lifelong learning have suspected this interest as being simply a managerial discourse of little substance and intent on greater extraction of effort and surveillance of employees. There is surely good reason to suspect that agenda. But there is also very good reason to seriously consider its science. Sociological organizational analysts draw important focus to that level of learning and development (Casey 2002, 2009). That research can usefully inform lifelong educationists. I focus on one key aspect, a matter that may be understood as 'institutional viscosity'.

A growing field of socioeconomic research addresses the ways that firm demands for innovation are operationalized. It focuses on innovation capacities in organizations, on knowledge flows, dispersion and regeneration and the factors that stimulate them. Economic researchers point to ways knowledge, including new ideas, is made shareable or is 'stuck' among expert technologists or other professional groups. Economists of knowledge (e.g. Foray 2004) speak of knowledge as 'sticky' – as

viscous. Unless facilitated into flow, knowledge sticks among those who possess it. Stickiness and bottlenecks, which obstruct knowledge flows and restrict absorption capacities, can occur for diverse reasons. These include lack of workplace trust and collegiality, subgroup competitiveness or 'ownership' of expert knowledge, volatility of change and uncertainty in the organization's industry environment and bureaucratic or wage-level disincentives. These factors greatly influence the generation or retardation of innovation capacity and implementation of organizational strategies.

Taking a sociological vantage point, we can recognize that institutions are themselves, indeed necessarily, 'sticky'. Institutional viscosity refers to the retarding effects of embedded institutional norms on knowledge flows and development in organizations. These effects may be powerful yet scarcely visible; they can be both facilitative and obstructive. These institutional factors are effective across diverse systems including those of education and lifelong learning. For lifelong learning researchers, their recognition can widen an angle of critique of policy and the search for new actions. The various obstructions to maintaining visibility and effectiveness of a plural and humanistic agenda for lifelong learning are not simply those of a neoliberal human capital triumph capturing EU policy-makers. They include the very professional organizations many lifelong educationists work in and reproduce. The knowledge of the innovative conceptions of lifelong learning and their radical implications is 'sticky'. It has stuck among its enthusiasts and found obstructed flow into institutional change.

The higher education sector, for example, has readily taken up the policy encouragement for expansion and marketization. But the character of the expansion reveals an adoption of the imperatives of the market rather than those of lifelong learning, either culturally or neoliberally conceived. Universities in the United Kingdom, most notably, have adopted managerial models once more typical of corporate business organizations and they have forged new markets for their goods and services in unprecedented manner. But these actions were facilitated by a considerable injection of the employment of non-educational professionals – the new university managers (Deem et al. 2007). The viscosity of institutional attachments to older models of university education and professional norms, that were disinclined to favour massification and marketization, was to a large extent overcome by supra-organizational change demanded and funded by market-favouring governments. That recent pattern of institutional change has obscured and obstructed the demands of lifelong learning imperatives. Economic efficiencies, rationalization, competitiveness and market expansion have won out over lifelong learning-oriented reforms. Lifelong learning institutional change in response to the needs of learners for multiple entry and transition points in lifelong learning opportunities (Sursock and Smidt 2010), qualifications and life relevance has been spectacularly neglected. It is practically easier to yield managerial results of efficiency reforms, system expansion and market generation than to grow a culture of lifelong learning reform and effectively alter embedded power relations and professional interests.

In addition, embedded professional norms and rules of appropriateness have influenced the retreat of professional academics from more effective political contestation of the tide of managerialism and marketization, as well as their refusal to surrender

elite privileges to the imperatives of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning reform of traditional educational institutions requires as much development of traditional educational professions to modify institutional and professional norms and territories as does market-oriented reform. Universities and secondary schools have, as many note, scarcely implemented the objectives of lifelong learning according to any of the criteria outlined earlier in this chapter, and as promoted in EU policy directives (Sursock and Smidt 2010). Rather, they have selected and co-opted particular aspects of learner centredness and used that concept primarily as a marketing slogan.

Greater recognition of institutional factors including those of economic and managerial, and of entrenched professional class, vested interests strengthens the research capacities and analytic depth of lifelong learning research and policy work. An immediate policy intervention, for instance, could usefully develop the education and lifelong learning of managerial and bureaucratic practitioners. Obstructions to policy implementation in other sectors of lifelong learning provision also arise out of institutional weakness. A recent study commissioned by the European Commission (Research voor Beleid 2008) reports that the current situation regarding the education and ongoing formation of adult learning professions in a range of settings and by a wide range of non-higher education organizations in Europe shows a marked under-education of practitioners. If lifelong learning for civil society and cultural interests is to be activated, much greater quality in adult and lifelong learning professionals needs to be stimulated. A broad and inclusive agenda of lifelong learning is a substantively greater demand than that of job skills. It requires full recognition of the range of institutional challenges.

## Policy Challenges: Social Citizenship and Lifelong Learning

The European Union has recently reiterated its wish to strengthen its social model (EU2020) and to pursue its complex plural goals. That plurality opens, once again, sites for practical engagement for plural models of lifelong learning to contest. In an apparent recognition of the limits of the EU's economic model to achieve its grand social agenda, a renewed interest in social development and cohesion is now being more strongly expressed. A 2007 communication of the European Parliament and Council, *Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning* (European Council 2007), proposes as its first principle that lifelong learning strategies 'identify and define the key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society'. That recommendation was followed by the European Commission's communication, *Action Plan on Adult learning: It is always a good time to learn* (EC 2007b), that explicitly reiterated the objectives of lifelong and life-wide learning, and endorses the earlier recognition of lifelong learning as 'much more than economics' (EC 2001).

Both of these European Union communications open spaces for the economic predominance over education and lifelong learning agenda to be moderated. As the Council recommendation states:

“Skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. This involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community or neighbourhood activities as well as decision making at all levels, from local to national and European level, in particular through voting”.

None of these competences can be achieved under the instrumentalist agenda for employment skills. There are two immediate challenges in the policy discourse on renewing citizenship. The first is that of the powerful hold of a notion of ‘employability’ and the second is one of re-imagining and revitalizing a much wider conception of citizenship. The term ‘employability’ attracts various connotations. For many workers and policy-makers, learning to acquire and maintain skills that will enable a person to find and keep jobs in uncertain and dynamic labour market conditions is an essential aspect of education and lifelong learning. However, more critically, ‘employability’ expresses more deeply the agenda of the neoliberal shift in welfare state policies that places considerable new demands on citizens of European model welfare states. Employability carries the state’s demands that persons must take individual responsibility for competing in flexible, risky and liberally regulated labour markets distinctly more favourable to business and employer interests. The liberalized state has enacted substantive weakening of social provisions and securities won a generation ago. That highly controversial yet effective strategy has apparently also included adoption of a weak notion of citizenship reduced to labour market participation.

The first challenge from a lifelong learning vantage point is to expose that impoverished notion of citizenship and to put forward a more robust and re-imagined conception – the seeds of which are already implicit in EU policy (EC 2007a, 2007b). The policy programme of employability, citizenship and lifelong learning requires in the first instance a disruption of their unified schema. The term ‘employability’ is useful in regard to the practical provision and gaining through forms of lifelong learning of skills and qualifications necessary for persons to participate in the world of work. Lifelong learning always refers to a vast range of agenda, goals and demands that are sought and provided across the life course. Citizenship, however, has potential for much more debate and meaning-making than its normative, and economic, conceptions might suggest. I offer just one sketch of such a re-imagined conception. Political scientists, Wagner and Zimmerman (2004), argue that institutionalized political conceptualizations of citizenship are no longer adequate to sustain the European social model. Certainly, their reduction into economic policy notions of employability effectively negates the value of citizenship as comprising social, cultural and political dimensions. They, among others (Casey 2009; Magnusson and Strath 2004; Schuller 2001), argue for a *social* citizenship that includes, and requires, recognition of plural forms of participation and value and in diverse sites of action. That accomplishment requires education and lifelong learning as conceived under the humanistic and emancipatory vision. It requires continuing development and refinement in its practice, and application in an array of social settings, not least economic and workplace settings.

The domain of lifelong learning – its conceptualizations, theories, policy accomplishments and activity in a vast sweep of settings – is richly placed to enter fully into the heart of debates on new forms of social citizenship. Social citizenship is learnt essentially in its practice. Learning across the life course, especially through adulthood, in various social settings can bring the practice of citizenship to bear on diverse decision-making actions. Citizenship necessarily encompasses both individual and collective demands and responsibilities. Learning and doing the practice of social citizenship may well be a key intervention into the problems of institutional and organizational obstructions to the practical changes necessary to the implementation of lifelong learning policies. Life-wide provision, access and participation in the design of learning institutions may be claimed as a right of social citizenship. Lifelong learning researchers may find rich possibilities in taking up these explorations and scope for further policy development and activation.

## Conclusion

The concept of lifelong learning continues to pose a considerable innovation to established practices of education and learning. The fortunes of the policy elaboration and implementation of the vision and agenda of lifelong learning continue to be very mixed. Many lifelong educationists worry that a hegemonic economic policy agenda activated at European Union level has forcefully truncated the emancipatory vision and transformative agenda of a lifelong learning for all persons and for myriad sociocultural purposes. Despite the predominance of economic and business interests in shaping the main lines of European Union policy discourse on education and lifelong learning, as on much else, in recent decades, the current turn of policy interest to a renewal of the European social model offers real opportunities. Lifelong learning's relationship to citizenship is well recognized in EU policy discourse. The current heightened interest in citizenship opens space for a reinvigorated lifelong learning agenda and culturally rich citizenship. Of course, economic interests will contest and employability may prove a hard conceptualization to redress. But conflict and contestation are to be expected.

I have proposed in this chapter that attention to institutions – including education professions – in regard to their institutional viscosity, as well as power, casts further light on the dynamics and outcomes of policy interventions and lifelong learning aspirations. Such attention may add new scope for analysis and further conceptual and policy development. Certainly, considering processes of 'policy learning' includes a grasp of the need for continuing efforts of lifelong learning expertise on the influence of policy-makers and policy-making. It includes equally a grasp of the complexities at institutional levels of policy implementation and refusal.

A new site of contest arises as EU policy-makers are learning to recognize the distinct limits to the EU's neoliberal economic model and its inability to achieve far more social goals that the citizens of European member states desire. More vigorous contest among the current models and aspirations for learning societies and

knowledge economies presents prospects for a potentially generative development of further education and genuinely lifelong learning across the life course, and across a broader population, in democratic societies.

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# Chapter 22

## Higher Education and Lifelong Learning: Renewing the Educational and Social Mission of Universities in Europe

Lynne Chisholm

### Introduction

The view that higher education in Europe finds itself in a critical period of structural change imbues current research and policy debate across Europe. Modalities of governance, funding, internal organisation and qualifications are seeing considerable reframing and reform. The key drivers are deregulation and harmonisation.

Deregulation takes varying forms. In those countries where modern universities (but not necessarily higher education as a whole) were established as directly state-regulated public institutions (broadly termed the Humboldt model), policies increasingly foresee autonomous public higher education institutions that enter into periodic service contracts with the competent ministry or its equivalent. In those countries where universities were never directly part of the state apparatus (broadly termed the Anglo-Saxon model) and have relied on various kinds of mixed funding models, policies have increasingly led to quasi-market models of provision. Throughout Europe, private-sector higher education provision is also on the rise.

Harmonisation refers to the restructuring of higher education degrees into the three-tier B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. introduced by the intergovernmental Bologna Agreement and the processes it engendered for mutual recognition of European higher education qualifications. Many European higher education systems have formally completed the transition, some are still in the process of doing so and there are some instances of non-standard transition, as in the case of Greece, which, for example, demands a 4-year B.A. degree (240 ECTS, instead of the standard 3-year 180 ECTS B.A.) for entry to an M.A. degree course.

It is much less widely realised that the Bologna Process equally enjoins universities to integrate lifelong learning principles and practices into their structures of

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provision, into their admission and assessment procedures and into course content and pedagogy. These issues are understood as linked with the policy priority (at both European Union level and to varying extents at national level) accorded to the ‘social dimension’, which translates most directly into the aim of widening access to higher education and making its courses relevant and attractive for the population at large and throughout life. The social dimension was first mentioned explicitly under the Bologna Process in the 2005 Bergen Communiqué (with particular respect to encouraging mobility between higher education systems), was strengthened in the 2007 London Communiqué (introducing reporting and monitoring on national strategies) and brought to forefront in the 2009 Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, which defined lifelong learning as an important mission for higher education and enjoined all 46 countries participating in the Bologna Process to set measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing the participation of under-represented social groups in higher education by 2020 (EACEA 2010; see also the European Universities’ Charter on Lifelong Learning, EUA 2008).

All three aspects of current reframing and reform have been accompanied by considerable controversy and unrest, both within universities themselves and in academic and public debate. The burning points coalesce around concerns that together, these policy changes dismember the European vision of *universitas* – an independent community of scholars devoted solely to the pursuit of knowledge – and its humanistic tradition of education and scientific endeavour, whilst simultaneously endangering academic standards and undermining collegial professional relations. Lifelong learning is here seen to be synonymous with the injunction that universities equally regard employability as an important mission – and indeed, in the 2009 Communiqué these two terms appear in tandem, which does reflect a widely held view in European Union and international policymaking circles as well as in some national policy strategies that lifelong learning is above all about work-related continuing education and training for adults. The risk of foreshortening the reach and meaning of lifelong learning to overly instrumental perspectives towards higher education is by no means a mirage, as numerous educationalists have trenchantly observed (see e.g. Field 2006).

The Bologna Process spearheads ongoing efforts to create an open European higher education area (EHEA) and the European Commission is a full member. Paradoxically, it was a group of national governments that set the Bologna Process into motion, but the initiative meets with widespread suspicion of what is understood as standardisation imposed by ‘Brussels’ (i.e. the European Union institutions), which serves but to erase valuable national diversities in the interests of economic efficiency in a globalising world. With the notable exception of the Nordic countries, this all takes place against a backdrop of now chronic public underinvestment in higher education (and in some countries, specifically of universities) across much of Europe.

In autumn 2009, rumbling discontent surfaced into an acute crisis in Austrian universities, spreading rapidly to campuses in Germany and finding resonance in the Baltics and parts of southeast Europe. The student movement ‘university in flames’ (*die Uni brennt*) forced a broad set of grievances within and beyond the

universities into the forefront of national political and public attention, making it clear that a reformulation of the educational and social mission of higher education is the fundamental issue at hand.

On the surface, making lifelong learning a reality in higher education has played no role in this debate. The movement sought to reclaim the concept and practice of the humanitarian educational tradition and the democratic university in the face of utilitarian reforms and deteriorating conditions of study. Inadequate funding (leading to poor staff-student ratios and too few courses on offer), the transition to 'Bologna degrees' (seen to over-standardise and restrict free choice of studies) and the prospect that *numerous clausus* (system capacity-based ceilings on student numbers, generally regulated by the standard reached in the upper-secondary school certificate, the *Matura*) could be widely introduced – these became the core symbolic expressions of the policy-induced dissolution of *universitas*.

Redressing social inequalities in higher education access, participation and outcome were also taken up by the movement, but generally from the perspective that it is precisely these utilitarian reforms that decisively deepen, if not expressly produce, social inequalities in higher education. In this scenario, lifelong learning – a suspect template that adopts a different, though no less critical, diagnosis of causes, corollaries and effects of current higher education ills – becomes part of the problem rather than a contribution to the solution. In this sense, the Austrian student movement agenda – which found much sympathy and support amongst university staff and in progressive political circles – mirrors a set of quandaries with respect to the relations (or more accurately: the largely absent relations) between higher education and lifelong learning. This chapter seeks to consider the tensions and contradictions embedded in these 'non-conscious relations', and argues that higher education must engage constructively with lifelong learning if it is to renew its educational and social mission appropriately in response to the educational needs and demands of contemporary democratic societies.

## Adult Learning and Universities

European first modernity created education and training systems that are fundamentally structured by age and stage (of life and of development), whereas modern educational theories took their cue from theories of child development and specific historical constructions of childhood and youth. Andragogy (teaching and learning for and with adults) is a marginal concept in most European research and policy discourses (the Baltic states, Hungary and Denmark are exceptional in this respect), whilst education and training systems and pedagogies are built on the assumption that it is the young who need to learn and in principle (should) want to learn. That children, young people and adults have differing learning needs and demands goes largely and ultimately strangely unquestioned, yet relatively little attention has been devoted to adult learning and adulthood itself is a poorly theorised notion.

Universities position themselves in relation both to the level of knowledge (higher education) and to the kind of knowledge (abstract and discipline based) with which they are concerned. They do not see themselves as providers of adult learning – this term signifies lower-level, more concrete and thematically organised knowledge and learning that is closer to everyday life. Universities thus cater to adult learners of a very specific kind. They offer theoretically based higher education studies to those who, at first admission, have successfully completed a designated type of upper secondary education (or its recognised equivalent).

It follows that those eligible to enter university will be at least 18 years old, which is also the legal age of majority in Europe: university students are adults, although universities as organisations and as learning environments may not always treat them as such. University students over 40 remain a rarity in most European universities and in most degree subjects, including through to Ph.D. level. The tradition of extended initial higher education studies in some countries (such as Germany and the Nordic countries) means that above-average proportions of the student population are aged in their mid-to-late 1920s. As reported for 2006 (EACEA 2009), participation rates in tertiary education reaches a peak for those aged 20–24, falling rapidly from this point onwards; 7 in 10 full-time higher education students in the European Union are aged between 18.7 and 27 years old. Universities hence still cater largely to 18–30-year olds, most of whom hold conventional entry qualifications. However, as Teichler (2004) points out, normative entry ages and qualifications were introduced only relatively recently in order to improve efficiency and quality through standardising the level and kind of knowledge with which students begin their courses.

Despite higher education expansion from the 1960s onwards, standardised access routes remained firmly in place until the 1990s, when widening access policies brought greater flexibility. Education policy in the Nordic countries had long since set its sights on a genuine democratisation of access to higher education, not only by increasing the supply but also by widening access and with generous arrangements for study leave, grants and allowances. Nordic countries return the highest rates of university students aged over 30 (in 2006, at least 15% of the student population; in Iceland, 15% are aged over 35), just as they achieve high participation rates in all forms of adult learning, both general and vocational (Kailis and Pilos 2005; Pont 2004). The shift in the UK from binary to unified higher education provision at the end of the 1980s prompted rapid diversification of course provision within the universities, old and new: interdisciplinary degrees and courses combining general and vocational specialisms, together with a wide variety of continuing professional education diplomas, have proliferated. In addition, some new universities are consciously committed to bringing higher education into the community and to making university studies feasible and attractive for older age groups and the socially disadvantaged.

However, in countries whose university systems have experienced little structural change in the past 30 years (Austria and Germany are paradigmatic examples), general higher education participation rates are comparatively low, social inequalities in access to university education remain exceptionally strong and opportunities for

adults to take up university studies after a period of working and family life are relatively constrained (see OECD 2009). In addition, the continuing diplomas and certificates that such university systems offer are typically detached from the mainstream degree system, that is, they do not form part of an integrated qualifications currency that provides for straightforward exchange and progression between sectors and levels. This kind of problem is proving to be a stumbling block for the development and the acceptance of national qualifications frameworks in several parts of Europe, since these are predicated on the assumption that a common currency is possible (with the European Qualifications Framework as a translation instrument).

Extramural studies is the traditional model of university-based adult learning provision, largely serving relatively well-educated, older adults with time to invest in learning for purely intrinsic purposes; in recent years, it has typically lost ground to specialist adult learning providers outside the university sector. Two models are now replacing it: second-chance access routes for those without conventional entry qualifications (via recognition of prior learning, preparatory courses, mentoring and counselling) and professional development courses for maintaining, enriching and upgrading occupationally relevant knowledge and competence. Both developments accelerate modularisation and part-time study options, which offer much greater opportunity to structure and to time higher education studies according to personal circumstances and preferences throughout adult life. This reframes the concept of *universitas* in terms of what, how and when people participate in the community of scholars – they once more do so of their own will and to their own taste, which was indeed the original idea.

## Open Universities, Open Societies

*Universitas* signifies a European vision of an open community that is committed to the discursive and open pursuit of knowledge and innovation. However, under first modernity, universities became highly institutionalised within the bounds of nation states and increasingly insulated from wider society, which in practice – despite the quantitative expansion of higher education – produced deformations that can be traced via closure and exclusion tendencies. Today's societies are becoming ever more open in a variety of ways, and universities can no longer avoid the question of what this means for their educational and social mission.

The principles of diversity and social relevance place the sustainability of first modernity's *universitas* in question. Thus, Barnett's (2003) account sees universities on the threshold of a structural change to 'multiversities' characterised by super-complexity and engagement. In principle, universities symbolise autonomous spaces that are open to and belong to all citizens. They are indispensable for the cultural, political, social and economic survival capacity of contemporary societies (Kalleberg 2000; Clark 1997). But the structure and composition of contemporary societies and populations are changing apace: objective and subjective heterogeneities together with multifaceted old and new inequalities set the contours of the social environment,

and universities are slow to respond. For Scott and Harding (2007), openness towards the social environment is now the core challenge for European higher education systems, and it is universities' response to this challenge that will decisively frame their social legitimacy in the coming decades.

European higher education traditions are not all of a piece and national policy strategies place distinct accents, but all systems face three kinds of challenges: massification (higher student numbers), diversification (internal differentiation of systems, institutions and course provision) and rationalisation (organisational structures and working cultures). Trow's (1974, 2006) threefold typology presaged these developments: (1) university as an elite institution (education of the upper class), (2) university as mass education (preparation for professional occupations in economically and technologically advanced societies) and (3) university as universal education and qualification. This last category approximates to Barnett's multiversity, which offers differentiated and flexible study options, so that all citizens can keep up with the multifaceted challenges of modern life – including universities as spaces for learning and living active democratic citizenship.

This ideal typology is not necessarily chronological, but in Europe the first two have emerged consecutively and the third is on the doorstep – and in North America long since a reality. The three types also cumulatively coexist. Trow's empirical analysis concluded that elite university systems can absorb up to 15% of the relevant age cohort before internal structural changes become mandatory in order to continue to provide effective and appropriate education. This marks transition to mass higher education capable of absorbing up to 30% of the relevant age cohort. When higher education systems take in more than half of the relevant age cohort and seek to attract a socially broader public, transition to universal higher education takes effect and restructuring is once more inevitable. This may well encounter ideological resistance within the universities (see Streeck and Thelen 2005; Shore 2010), and policymaking may adopt delay and avoidance strategies, not least because universal higher education is an expensive proposition and new, often controversial, funding formulae have to be devised.

The rationalisation of higher education organisation cross-cuts deregulation and harmonisation; it is directed in the first instance to improving efficiency rather than strengthening effectiveness and social relevance. With few exceptions, new public management practices are gaining strong foothold in the universities and are changing established organisational cultures and working contracts and conditions (Enders and Musselin 2008). Critical analysis of these developments abounds, but little attention has been paid to the challenge of external democratisation of the university, that is, towards the society in which it exists. Higher education research may have become more prevalent and incisive, but in the main it has focused on universities as institutions and organisations *sui generis*, that is, from the internal perspective. Given the lack of focus on higher education's educational and social mission, lack of engagement with the theoretical and practical implications of life-long learning for universities in the research literature is unsurprising (Teichler 1999). Barnett's analysis would conclude that university actors are insufficiently engaged, thus placing their social legitimacy at risk.

Comprehensive research-based analyses and studies that consider university perspectives and practices in adopting lifelong learning principles remain rare. Most information derives from policy studies commissioned by the European Union and its agencies or carried out directly within their orbit. Dunkel et al. (2009) make the connection via the importance of improving arrangements for progression and transfer between subsystems, specifically between general and vocational higher education and training. They identify generalised trends towards convergence, complementarity and what they term mutual ‘friendly takeovers’ between the two subsystems, which lead to a certain de-institutionalisation – links between specific kinds of institutions and specific kinds of degree courses are weakening, boundaries between higher education and upper-level vocational education and training are blurring and courses that combine elements from both subsystems are multiplying, within an overall picture of two-way drift between academic and vocational content and purpose. On the whole, this is a positive account of transition to the multiversity, albeit possibly an unpalatable vision for university actors working in more classical institutions and systems.

The latest European Universities Association Trend Report (EUA 2007; see also EACEA 2010) concludes, however, that by and large Europe’s higher education institutions still cannot collectively visualise lifelong learning as a principle for the comprehensive restructuring of education and training systems and processes. The study analysed questionnaire responses from over 900 individual institutions in the Bologna Process countries and made 15 site visits to higher education institutions in ten countries. The majority of those responding regard lifelong learning as a significant strategic planning issue, but rarely as a top priority. Given that there are some 4,000 higher education institutions in the 27 European Union Member States alone, it is likely that this presents a comparatively optimistic picture, since universities little interested in the topic will have been less likely to respond to the survey in the first place. National lifelong learning strategies are under way in most countries, but universities do not take a very active role in the relevant policy consultation and development debates. Nor have they noticeably taken up the cue to give greater priority to the social dimension, to which the Bologna Process also lends explicit priority.

The social dimension essentially refers to system openness in terms of making education and training through to the highest levels possible and attractive for the population at large – it forefronts inclusion and recognition, and this can only work via the provision of multifaceted, differentiated structures and contents, in higher education as in other subsystems. Europe’s higher education institutions – according to the EUA 2007 Trend Report – regard these aims as at least important, but fewer than one in five expect the present situation to improve, whereas over half take the view that their institution has already adopted sufficient measures. Clearly, universities do not see themselves here as key actors – responsibility and competence rests in the first instance elsewhere in the education and social system. Furthermore, universities are inclined to view diversity and quality as incompatible antipodes, and this is hardly surprising, given the narrowly defined quality indicators to which higher education institutions must respond in order to maintain levels of public funding in many European countries.

A recent Lisbon Council Think Tank study (Ederer et al. 2008) returns interesting and provocative findings in this respect. It developed a composite indicator to index higher education system performance – not the aggregate performance of individual actors in these systems. In contrast to existing international ranking indices (such as the Shanghai index), it privileges the social dimension. Inclusiveness (participation rates relative to the relevant population), access (the ability to accept students with lower levels of scholastic aptitude) and effectiveness (graduate salary advantage as a measure of labour market integration) are the most important features, joined by attractiveness (proportion of students from abroad), age range (registered students aged 30–39) and responsiveness (stage of transition to Bologna degrees). Inclusiveness, access and student age range are key issues for lifelong learning implementation strategies; the extent to which higher education systems are attractive to students from other countries can also suggest the extent to which they respond to heterogeneity.

Evident methodological problems (operationalisation and validity) notwithstanding, broadening concepts and measures of higher education quality and performance is an important agenda. From the 17 OECD countries for which data was available, the index places Australia, the UK, Denmark and Finland at the head of the ranking. Their higher education systems are open to participation and diversity without sacrificing academic quality. Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Spain take up the rear: their higher education systems are relatively closed in several ways, university continuing education is underdeveloped and taking up university studies beyond young adulthood is difficult. Despite the provisional and incomplete nature of the social dimension index, the contrasts point to clear system differences in capacity to adapt to universal higher education and the emergence of the multiversity.

## **Open Architectures of Higher Education**

The need for greater openness towards new ways of structuring fields of knowledge together with more diversified, autonomous and action-oriented modalities of learning pose considerable challenges to the discipline-based, theoretical and reproductive traditions of academic culture as these have developed in Europe's first modernity. Enabling learning and qualification biographies that facilitate fluid movement between different fields of knowledge and competence, between different contexts of their application in personal and professional life and between different levels of development and accomplishment – all these demand universities that, as systems and as cultures, are genuinely open settings for adult learning across a much broader spectrum of purpose and benefit than has been the case.

The transition to the multiversity thus implies 'positive borderlessness' as a core feature, since narratives of separation do not sit well with the realities of people's learning lives in second modernity. Contemporary life-course flows and contingencies clash with rigid divisions between general and vocational education and training



and between initial and continuing education and qualification. Aims and motivations, needs and demands are essentially and demonstrably mixed (Chisholm et al. 2004). Barrier-free architectures better suit societies of flows and networks, in which personal, social and professional trajectories are much more differentiated and individualised in terms of their subjective meanings and objective features.

Ultimately, this implies not relinquishing, but reclaiming and reshaping the classical concept of *universitas* to render it once more consciously responsive to today's *multiversitas*. Bringing lifelong learning into a conscious and actively constituted relation with higher education is inherent to this transformation, which equally sets relevance at the core of renewal. Unless people see the relevance of higher education for their lives in the here and now, they will generally not see it as an attractive and worthwhile prospect. Relevance can take on many forms and meanings – it does not automatically privilege instrumental as opposed to intrinsic motivations for shaping provision or taking up studies, though it does give space to both. The more heterogeneous higher education communities become, the more differentiated their constituent understandings of relevance are patterned.

It is unclear whether the transition to the Bologna three-tier degree system will shorten the average length of initial university studies in those university systems whose previous structures foresaw 5 rather than 3 years to first degree completion. Initial unsystematic information suggests that students registered under old regulations are completing a little earlier and students under new regulations are more likely to complete 'on time'. However, such systems are prone to have defined the new B.A. and M.A. degrees as directly consecutive, expecting and encouraging students to complete them as such, and in these parts of Europe there is continuing uncertainty about how the labour market and employers will respond to B.A. graduates. For Europe overall, the length of initial studies is unlikely to fall significantly in the short term, but 'punctuated' trajectories of higher education studies throughout life are likely to rise in the medium term as people return to follow a first or second M.A. or Ph.D., including in order to change their specialist field of knowledge and work, but equally in combination with personal and family exigencies. The student body is destined to become more heterogeneous for these reasons alone, and demographic change in Europe is more likely to lead to a wider spread of age groups and life phases in higher education than to a fall in student numbers (Vincent-Lancrin 2008). This will inevitably shift the profile of demand for higher education, with rising emphasis on further degrees and continuing education.

European universities face a future in which adults of all ages, and in diverse circumstances, will come to their studies with diverse needs and purposes. Some will be hoping that higher education can help them to change the course of their personal and professional lives, others will be focused on becoming higher qualified in their chosen field, some will want to make up for what they could not achieve earlier in life and others will have purely personal and hedonistic reasons. Changing life direction demands time for reflexion and experiment; professional advancement needs targeted response and part-time courses; second-chance students benefit from tailor-made advice, accompaniment and mentoring opportunities and intrinsic education aficionados insist on the freedom to choose what and how they

will study. Providing quality and relevance in diverse ways will also improve higher education experience and outcome for young adults entering university in conventional ways – and all the more so, should it prove possible to dismantle social inequalities of higher educational access at the beginning of adult life. All the evidence available indisputably shows that the best predictor for continuing to participate in learning of all kinds throughout life is successful and satisfying participation in initial education and training from preschool onwards. The more higher education can succeed in bringing young adults into the university, the more likely it is that they will return to the university as they move through their adult lives.

Under current circumstances – not least the deepening consequences for public and private expenditure of the global financial crisis since 2009 – the extent of restructuring of resources, provision and mindsets needed to achieve the multidimensional openness to which this chapter has referred is likely to be seen as way beyond Europe's capacity to deliver in the foreseeable future. The pace of higher education change and development in Asia and on the Pacific Rim, generally less affluent than Europe and less constrained by ingrained patterns of provision, could suggest that mindsets ultimately pose the most entrenched obstacle.

At first glance, lifelong learning seems to have little to do with higher education and much more to do with early childhood education and with adult learning – especially work-related learning – outside universities. From this standpoint, universities do not really need to review their mission. Negatively interpreted, the incursion of lifelong learning is to be actively resisted by the universities – it appears as the neoliberal Trojan horse that will undermine humanistic educational tradition and standards of excellence. From this standpoint, universities must protect and defend their mission. That lifelong learning also symbolises an essentially positive paradigmatic change across education and training systems as a whole and in which universities are inherently and crucially implicated – this is an argument still to be made and won, for universities are still, for the most part, set somewhat apart from the mainstream of the societies that nourish them. Academic freedom demands institutional and professional autonomy, but autonomy does not require separation from the social environment. Opening up participation in the academy as a responsive, democratic space not only for excellence but also for inclusiveness – each as multifaceted concepts and practices – is a challenge that Europe's *universitas* can and must meet, if it is to live up to its own original aspirations and those of the world in which today's Europeans live.

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## Key Weblinks

ASEM-LLL, <http://www.dpu.dk/asem/aboutus/>

Bologna Process and EHEA, <http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/building-the-european-higher-education-area> bologna-process/

EU: Education and Training 2020, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm)

EU: European Qualifications Framework, [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/vocational\\_training/c11104\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/vocational_training/c11104_en.htm)

EU: Higher Education in Europe, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc62\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc62_en.htm)

EU: Lifelong Learning in Europe, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.htm)

EUA – European University Association, <http://www.eua.be/about-eua/>

OECD: Higher Education and Adult Learning, [http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,3373,en\\_2649\\_39263\\_238\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_37455,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/topic/0,3373,en_2649_39263_238_1_1_1_1_37455,00.html)

UNESCO: Global Report on Adult Learning 2009, <http://www.unesco.org/en/confinteavi/grale/>

# Chapter 23

## The Institutionalisation of Lifelong Learning in Australia, Hong Kong and the United States: A Bridge to the Community or a Competitor to the University?

Wing On Lee and Josephine Fleming

### Introduction

The term ‘lifelong learning’ appears on the surface to be as innocuous as it is self-evident. By the turn of the century however, it had become a contested concept embedded into debates and anxieties around the role and function of education. It is for example a key concept in attempts, in particular by governments, to re-engineer the relationship between education and economic development. Models have emerged, such as the knowledge economy, and as a result the traditional boundaries between formal, informal and non-formal education have become more fluid. This presents a number of challenges in the form of threats and opportunities to the formal university sector. As pointed out by Aspin and Chapman (2007), over the last three decades the idea of lifelong learning has been mentioned by a number of key policy documents, such as the 1972 Fauré Committee Report to UNESCO entitled *Learning to Be: The World of Education for Today and Tomorrow* (Faure et al. 1972); the 1996 OECD ministerial report entitled *Lifelong Learning a Reality for All* (OECD 1996); the 1996 Delors Report to UNESCO entitled *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors et al. 1996) and the 2007 OECD report on nine policy responses to lifelong learning entitled *Qualifications Systems: Bridges to Lifelong Learning* (OECD 2007). The advent of the notion of lifelong learning is idealistic, for example, in societal terms, being regarded as a means to achieve economic advancement, an inclusive and democratic society and personal autonomy and

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choice, through the provision of diversified pathways within the education system. These pathways are viewed as a means to avoid invidious choice between selection by ability, which increases the number of academic failures and the risk of exclusion, and the same education for all approach, which can inhibit talent (as described in the Delors Report) (Aspin and Chapman 2007). In personal terms, the idea of lifelong learning promotes and requires self-directed learning motivation (Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001, Art. 5), according to what individual learners will learn as needed, in response to changing market needs.

Although being presented as idealistic, the idea of lifelong learning also emerges as *pragmatic*. There is a passive and responsive side to lifelong learning. Where it becomes commonly viewed as the means to build a strong knowledge economy, the perceived role of lifelong learning shifts to that of service, responding to workplace needs and, as job cycles quicken, the continual re-education of the workforce. Lifelong learning units become a necessity as the conventional education system cannot provide the manpower needed for such swiftly changing market needs. Taken to the extreme, given the emergence of such economic and societal circumstances, the development of lifelong learning becomes essential. Even in Asia where lifelong learning is an imported idea, its necessity for lifelong learning is often advocated in relation to the frequency of job changes and the decline of job security (Lee 2007). For example, in Japan, a report on lifelong learning pointed out that without lifetime employment, Japanese companies no longer provide on-the-job occupational skill development, as they did in the past as a common practice. Skill upgrading has become an individual responsibility. A new market demand for retraining (or lifelong learning) has been created, and universities start to open their doors to such people's need to continue learning work-related knowledge and technology by developing flexible education delivery systems (Yamada et al. 2003). In China, Han (2003) noted that 3,000 types of occupations disappeared in 2003 as compared to 1998, and only less than one-third of the recruitments in spring of that year were without explicit technical and/or qualification requirements. In 2000, one-fourth of the workforce aged 16–35 had changed their jobs. The strategic adjustment of the industrial structure in China, and the large-scale mobilisation of the workforces among different trades and professions, especially the redundant cheap labour from traditional labour-intensive industries, have made the needs of pre-job training, on-job training, job-shifting training, and continuing education after school education growing as never before. In Singapore, 33.4% of residents aged 15–64 were engaged in some form of job-related structured training in 2000. In Hong Kong, 14.6% of 15–50-year olds had attended job-related training arranged by employers and/or on their own initiatives during the year 2002 (Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong 2003). In Korea, data from the Vocational Ability Development Programme (VADP) suggest that 4.4% of the 15–64 age group received training in 1999 and 7.0% in 2001. During this period, the number of participants increased by 60% (International Labour Office (ILO) 2004).

Focusing on the responsibility of the individual to prepare oneself to face changing workplace requirements, lifelong learning is a concept distinguishable from its earlier term 'lifelong education' (Duke 2002). Lifelong education in the early 1970s

was associated with a more comprehensive and integrated strategy to develop the capacity of individuals and communities to face rapid social change (Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001). This was a more provider-led model of learning activity (Preece 2005). In the 1990s, as elaborated by the Delors Report (1996, p. 18), lifelong education attempted to 'reconcile three forces: competition, which provides incentives; co-operation which gives strength; and solidarity, which unites'. In sum, lifelong education is more focused on strategic provision of education with more emphasis on the structures and institutions of learning. The concepts of continuing education and adult education are more in line with those of lifelong education. Continuing education usually refers to short-term, programme- and qualification-related post-compulsory education (Harvey 2004). Adult education has been described as a set of organised activities carried on by a wide variety of institutions for the accomplishment of specific educational objectives (Knowles 1980), improvement of technical or professional qualifications (UNESCO 1980), with more emphasis on the action of an external educational agent purposefully ordering behaviour into planned systematic experiences (Verner 1962).

However, the more dominant interpretation of lifelong learning in the 1990s was linked to retraining and learning new skills that would enable individuals to cope with the demands of the rapidly changing workplace. It also seems that lifelong learning as it is presently promoted has become more individual orientated, whereas lifelong education often referred back to the community. The emphasis of lifelong learning on the learner could also be interpreted as assigning more agencies to individuals in contrast to lifelong education's thrust on structures and institutions (Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001).

It may be more appropriate to say that the shift in terminology (from lifelong education, continuing education and adult education to lifelong learning) reflects a conceptual departure from organised educational provision to the individualised pursuit of learning. The former emphasises organisations and central strategies of provision with the decisions on what is to be taught residing within the organisation. The latter emphasises self-agency and self-motivation on the part of the individual to learn what is required for his or her own adaptation to a world in perpetual transition. This conceptual shift facilitates the growth of an education service industry developed around meeting, or responding to, the learners' needs (Young and Ng 2000). More broadly, the former emphasises structures, and the latter emphasises culture. The former emphasises state-led provision, and the latter private initiatives. In relation to this, the state has been criticised for abdicating its responsibility to provide both educational and economic opportunities (Kennedy and Sweeting 2003; Medel-Añonuevo et al. 2001).

### ***Institutionalising Lifelong Learning in Higher Education***

Although lifelong education began as an informal mode of learning, the rapid growth in its popularity as an alternative learning pathway has led to its institutionalisation.

Increasing numbers of academic institutions and private providers offer courses that lead to a sub-degree qualification which in some instances can accumulate towards academic qualifications offered by traditional universities or other higher education institutions. This can be demonstrated by the emergence of the Credit Bank System in South Korea (UNESCO APPEAL 2001), the Credit Transfer and Accumulation System in European Union (European Commission 2004) and the National Qualifications Framework in Australia. This makes lifelong learning move from an entirely informal way of learning (by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment) towards becoming non-formal (as any organised, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system) and finally resembling formal education (highly institutionalised and hierarchically structured) (Coombs and Ahmed 1974).

Where there are sufficient individual demands for lifelong learning, as a market force, there will be providers to meet these demands. As noted by Aspin et al. (2001b), lifelong learning has been offered by both traditional and non-traditional institutions and agencies in the community. Duke (2002, p. 11) further points out that lifelong learning in the twenty-first century 'has become popular and "commercially viable", not just in the United States where it entered common parlance earlier but globally'. What is more, lifelong learning has become an educational policy of many governments of today. The growth of lifelong learning has at the same time led to the growth of institutionalisation, to the degree that the difference between the former more organised lifelong education and the latter more individualised lifelong learning has become blurred (Duke 2002; Aspin et al. 2001b).

Moreover, reviewing the development of lifelong learning in Asian countries and the centralised efforts in organising learning activities or courses, lifelong learning in Asian countries tends to be closer to the traditional concepts of lifelong education, continuing education and/or adult education (Lee 2007). This is particularly revealed from a comment that 'The Japanese government believes that, in order to promote lifelong learning in Japan, institutions of formal education should play an important role in offering a basis of lifelong learning' (ASEM-Lifelong Learning 2002).

The institutionalisation of lifelong learning has led to a multifaceted, and sometimes paradoxical, development of the field. Although starting with a focus on individual initiatives and thus learning is informal, the institutionalisation effect offers a formal structure for learning, and the divide between formal and non-formal education has become unclear. There are authors arguing that it is actually difficult to draw a line between them, as there can be formal elements in informal/non-formal education, and vice versa. As Duke (2001, p. 510) has acutely put it, lifelong learning 'can be a matrix with formal and non-formal education'. Aspin et al. (2001b, p. xliii) also argue that the distinctions between the traditional divisions of education (primary, secondary and tertiary/higher) become less important, as lifelong learning 'presupposes an integrated, holistic and seamless approach to the whole of education'. Rogers' (2004) study of the relationship between formal and non-formal education can be useful for the discussion here, as he conceives a continuum rather



**Table 23.1** The relationship between formal and non-formal education

	Formal schooling	Flexible schooling	Participatory education
<i>Learning mode</i>	Formal schooling	Flexible schooling	Participatory education
<i>Context</i>	Decontextualised	Context adjusted	Contextualised
<i>Education type</i>	Formal education	Non-formal education	Informal education

*Source:* Constructed, based on Rogers (2004, pp. 255–260)

than a dichotomy between the two types of education, depending upon the degree of participatory and contextualised learning on the one hand, and formal and decontextualised learning on the other (see Table 23.1).

A number of questions arise when lifelong learning becomes institutionalised:

- What is the resemblance between informal/non-formal lifelong learning and education that takes place in traditional academic institutions?
- What is the function and role of lifelong learning in meeting market needs or community needs on the one hand, and providing education and learning which resembles that of traditional academic institutions on the other?
- How will the institutionalisation of lifelong learning alter the higher education landscape?
- What are the concerns of these institutions, when offering lifelong learning programmes, especially when compared with the academic institutions?
- How will the relationship between traditional academic institutions and lifelong learning units be affected as the latter becomes more formalised and performs academic functions?

This chapter will consider these questions by examining the changing role of lifelong learning units which reside within traditional academic institutions.

### ***Blurring the Boundaries: Knowledge Production by Lifelong Learning Units in Higher Education***

The concept of lifelong learning has emerged in this century as a major policy strand of higher education institutions and governments worldwide. It has, however, arguably influenced the shape and direction of higher education for a much longer period. With the establishment of extramural education, universities offered lifelong education in a non-formal mode since the late 1800s. The British tradition was focused on the liberal arts and offering a ‘proper’ education to those previously denied access. The American agricultural extension tradition was based around providing ‘a useful education’ (Williams 1991), which was vocationally orientated and was expected to be self-supporting from the outset (Knowles 1994, p. 87). Both traditions regarded these extramural activities as separate to the core academic mission of the university with no institutionalised means for learners to transition from non-award into award programmes. As such there were debates about the appropriateness of using university

resources for those outside the formal academic programmes. From the 1980s, demands were made on universities worldwide to drastically increase student numbers while at the same time they were expected to survive on reduced funding (see for example Marginson and Considine 2000; Mok and Tan 2004; Slaughter and Leslie 1997). This led to a reassessment by cash-strapped universities of what they regarded as 'non-core' activities. Continuing and professional education units began to replace former extension units with the directive to become self-financed and even profit centres. Thus, as teaching-only units they became dependent on enrolments for their survival, and by focusing attention on responding to the educational needs of those outside the academic institutions they ceded some power to the learners. As their popularity increased so did their range of programmes expand to the point where units in some countries, including the United States and Hong Kong, offered courses which built towards academic qualifications like those offered by their traditional parent universities. They provided an alternative learning pathway which had become increasingly institutionalised, and in some cases their students outnumbered those enrolled in the university's core academic programmes.

The growing presence of lifelong learning units within universities challenges the definition of what constitutes legitimate knowledge within the context of higher education. Once these units become institutionalised, they have a formal claim towards knowledge building. Cervero (2006, p. 171) challenges the tradition of ascribing legitimacy to knowledge that is 'formal, abstract and general' while devaluing that which is 'local, specific and based in practice'. This has had the effect of transferring learning from the place of practice to the university. He argues, for example, that continuing education should be more practice orientated, emphasising the importance of developing professional action. Murphy and Fleming claim that a central focus of lifelong learning has been the recognition of prior experience and that this puts lifelong learning in a fundamental conflict with traditional higher education which devalues experiential knowledge and instead gives status to general and abstract knowledge (Murphy and Fleming 2000). Tennant and Morris (2001), however, argue that shifts in rhetoric and policy place an increasing emphasis on the importance of experiential knowledge and the application of knowledge to problems.

A common theme that emerges is the changed status of knowledge within the context of higher education, with legitimacy no longer solely defined by the university. Related to this, universities can no longer afford to isolate themselves from the community, and arguably their lifelong learning units have an increasingly important role to play in community engagement (Fleming 2008a). The idea of a 'knowledge economy' has gained currency in particular with governments keen to hold universities accountable to the State (see for example Bradley et al. 2008; Robbins 2007; U.S. Department of Education 2006, p. XII), emphasising their critical role in 'the economy's supply capacity' (The Federal Government of Australia 2007). This changing and sometimes unwilling relationship of the university to outside communities 'raises sharp epistemological questions' which has led to a reassessment of the criteria used to judge legitimacy or validity within the context of universities (Barnett 2004). It has also been a period when new providers have entered the field, and as a consequence universities are no longer the sole providers of high status knowledge.

### ***Knowledge Contribution from the Periphery: Moving from a Bridge with the Community to the Academic Core***

However, concerns have been raised over the growing influence and demands of outside communities on the academic research and teaching agenda of universities. Terms such as ‘epistemic drift’ (Elzinga 1985; Kogan 2005) and ‘mission creep’ (Duderstadt 2000; Duderstadt and Womack 2003) emphasise the implications of responding to these external demands while straying too far from fundamental academic values such as pure and independent research and teaching full-time students and future scholars (Bok 2003). While Duderstadt and Womack (2003) assert that universities will need to adapt to the demands of lifelong learning, they caution that there are tensions inherent in meeting diverse needs and expectations and argue that universities must resist the pressure to undertake commercially successful but peripheral activities that are not aligned with core academic missions. Nowotny et al. (2001, p. 75), however, note that ‘every “periphery” shares with its “centre” a special kind of relationship, which may be one of diffusion or imitation but may also be one of aspiration, of moving in closer’.

Lifelong learning providers have always relied on what Nowotny et al. (2001) define as ‘social robust’ knowledge which is characteristic of Mode-2 knowledge. Their educational programmes are highly contextualised, and their relevance to real-world educational needs make them appealing to communities outside the university. Bagnall (1992) noted that whereas education is regarded as having intrinsic value for those programmes within universities, its value is regarded as extrinsic for those outside. Lifelong learning generally emphasises the connection between knowledge and application, a connection that is not always tied to the workplace. Learning a language for instance, an area which has attracted growing enrolment numbers in two of the three case studies examined in the current research, is usually promoted in the marketing material for its ‘can do’ properties, such as being able to communicate while travelling overseas and even improving memory.

Kogan conceptualised knowledge along a spectrum ranging from hard to soft science. Hard science is based in specialist knowledge not accessible to those outside its epistemic community. Soft science is based in application; it emphasises inclusiveness and accessibility. He speculates that the appeal of soft science may well increase as ‘consumers demand more power’ in knowledge production processes (Kogan 2005, p. 18). The differences between specialist and secular knowledge and the resulting tensions are pivotal to discussions on the place of lifelong learning within the university. In the university, epistemic communities gain power through their specialism, and this power is confirmed through the process of peer evaluation. Their lifelong learning units gain power through being accessible, and significant resources are allocated towards achieving this via targeted research, such as the demand surveys conducted in Hong Kong and the biannual statistical survey published in the United States by the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA, 2006) and detailed marketing strategies (see for example Durkin 2004). This concentration of resources suggests that success is measured in the unit’s

ability to develop educational programmes that appeal to community needs (Ashcroft 2006). Focusing on needs in this way is regarded as central to transforming students into consumers and goes hand in hand with strategies to become ‘student focused’ (Liu and Wan 1999). It is this focus on appealing to student needs which has been a defining feature of lifelong learning that distinguishes it from its precursor, lifelong education (Jarvis 1999).

Lifelong learning units also have the potential to empower universities, which have a tradition of reacting to change rather than directing it. In his study of five successful ‘entrepreneurial’ universities in Europe, Clark concluded that one of the five ‘transforming elements’ critical to the success of each of these universities was the presence of an expanded developmental periphery. The developmental periphery, which usually encompasses the work of lifelong learning units, facilitates and accelerates the way universities develop contacts with outside communities. The result is greater control to manage the growing service demands being made on universities as they ‘extend, cross, and blur boundaries’ (Clark 1998, p. 139).

## **Case Study of Lifelong Learning Units in Australia, the United States and Hong Kong<sup>1</sup>**

To further examine the effects of the institutionalisation of lifelong learning in higher education, this chapter now turns to selective case analysis research recently conducted in three higher education institutions: in the United States, Hong Kong and Australia. The three cases chosen through purposive sampling were one college of professional studies in the United States (The College), one continuing and professional education school in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, PRC (The School) and one continuation education centre in Australia (The Centre). These cases were selected after a methodical examination of the web sites of 50 university continuing and professional education units. The cases are known for their work in the field and have high profiles within their external communities. They are self-financed and are attached to established universities with past involvement in non-award lifelong learning through extension education, as summarised in Table 23.2. The cases are illustrative of the potential interactions and tensions experienced by responsive and proactive lifelong learning units which exist within traditional universities. The cases also show whether and how lifelong learning units play a different or similar function and role in their knowledge contribution acting either as a bridge between the university and the community (as a unit on the periphery) or as a competitor with the university (at least partially moving to the core) vying for the attention of the community. The case studies were conducted using qualitative research approaches by means of documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and site observations. The interviewees included

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<sup>1</sup> The fieldwork reported here was conducted by Josephine Fleming in 2007/2009 as part of her ongoing research at the University of Sydney.

**Table 23.2** Transition from university extension to continuing and/or professional education (C/PE)

Country	Precursor	CPE established	Financial status
Australia	1980s – extension education	1970s	Extension education funded, continuing education self-funded
United States	1880s – agricultural extension	1910s	Primarily self-funded with increasing expectations of profit sharing
Hong Kong	1950s – extramural education	1980s	Extramural studies partially funded, continuing and professional education profit sharing

key decision makers such as the head, programme directors and advisory committee members. Documentation analysis included institutional documents (such as strategic plans, annual reports, programme proposals and programme evaluation documents) and marketing materials.

### *The Institutional Setting of the Case Studies*

The College's university was founded in the United States in the early 1800s as a private university, and from its inception aimed to educate students in practice as well as theory. The university always had a close relationship with its local community, and established disciplinary areas and curriculum that unashamedly focused on meeting the quite specific needs of this community. The Head of The College began work at the university in the 1990s, with the responsibility to draw together the disparate non-award activities and to make them more profitable. He achieved results in a remarkably short period of time and soon became Associate Vice President of Academic Development and Continuing Education. With the encouragement of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, he put forward a plan to establish a college of professional studies, which he argued was an area about to assume a central and profitable role in higher education. His strategy to achieve this was significant – to embed The College, within the university's governance structures.

This was actually an initiative built on a conceptual narrative that I constructed which was about the potential of a new enterprising, entrepreneurial unit that could foster both academic initiative plus some business ventures to create resources for the University but also to extend the intellectual footprint of the University into the community, engage new audiences, attract students otherwise inaccessible to the institution ... and so this was a unit that would not compete with or be redundant with the existing University. (*Personal correspondence*)

The proposal to establish The College met with some resistance particularly around concerns over academic standards, allocations of revenues and programme competition. As one respondent noted, there were some 'very tense' discussions. The College was established in 2001 as a self-financing college with degree-granting status and with the full authority to hire non-tenured faculty.

The School's university was a leading Asian university, focused on the education of high achieving matriculation students with no provision in its early years for extramural or part-time studies. The government-funded university sector in Hong Kong was and arguably remains elitist. In 1951, Hong Kong's Committee on Higher Education issued a report which argued that Hong Kong's higher education institutions needed to focus more on the economic future of Hong Kong, preparing its citizens for the challenges ahead. In that same decade, the university established a department of extramural studies and began offering liberal arts and vocational programmes. From its inception, there were tensions over its status within the university and the head was initially excluded from participation in the senate.

In 1986, a former dean of the university's faculty of arts was appointed as The School's first Chinese Director. In appointing a senior academic who also had, as it turned out, entrepreneurial abilities, the university had, whether intentionally or otherwise, set The School on a path of rapid growth. With a newfound confidence, The School showed little of its previous concern of being marginalised. He recalls his reactions on taking up the position:

Then looking at the shop, that's traditional English adult education, so that, well that's not so good (laugh). We should strategically think of new developments, that's not the, what's the word, that's not the right ethos. It should also be enhanced by opportunities in international education. So that's how I started. (*Personal correspondence*)

The head (at the time of the fieldwork) had also held senior academic positions. He grasped the central role that continuing education could assume as Hong Kong restructured its economy around the service sector and he was determined to further extend the types of programmes The School offered. The School had become an increasingly important source of income for the university through the rental of facilities and other administrative fees it pays to the university and the direct income contribution it makes to funding university-wide activities such as research.

The Centre's parent university was a leading Australian research university, also referred to as a 'sandstone university', a term used not only to identify age through the early sandstone buildings, but also as a metaphor for a long; some argue conservative, academic tradition. The university had been instrumental in the development of university adult education in Australia with the first extension lectures held in the late nineteenth century. In the 1960s, the university established and funded an adult education department which became home to the university's various extension activities. The position of director was classed as academic and answered directly to the vice chancellor. The 1970s, however, became a time of financial hardship for universities in Australia following the contraction of government funding. Ambivalence was expressed by some academic staff towards funding 'non-core' activities such as extension education. A working party convened in the late 1970s to

review the university's adult education activities recommended restructuring the department into an administrative unit. Shortly following these recommendations, a report from the Australian Tertiary Education Commission concluded that extension activities should directly relate to the disciplines taught within the parent university, thus giving an indication of the explicitly literal way that alignment has been defined within the Australian context. The Centre was established in the following decade on the recommendation of the university's senate to increase revenue, discontinue the appointment of academic staff and emphasise continuing and professional education. The position of head was classified as managerial, and The Centre was given a clear directive to become self-financed, which it did within 5 years.

### ***Mission or Missing: The Relationship of Lifelong Learning to University Mission***

The chapter now reports on the findings of a documentary analysis that was undertaken on the mission statements of the three universities. This analysis was framed by three interrelated questions: What is the academic mission of each university? How does each university position its relationship with the wider community as part of this mission? In what ways does the work of each unit reflect or not reflect this mission and in what ways can it be seen to be shaped by this mission? The purpose here is to investigate whether lifelong learning and the notion of community connectedness form a natural part of the mission of each university and how this relates to the academic mission.

The analysis reveals that The College and The School operated on an 'extended developmental periphery' which connected university to external community in line with their universities' mission. The operations of The Centre, however, were not identified as part of its university's mission, and therefore could be more accurately defined as taking place on the margins, in as much as its operations were 'marginalised'. The relevant strands of the mission statements are summarised in Table 23.3.

### ***Academic Mission of the Universities***

The differences in academic missions across the three universities are significant. The academic mission of The College's parent university emphasised connectedness in its choice of words – 'dissemination', 'integrative' and 'linkage'. It made this connectedness explicit in two instances – 'To emphasise the linkage between basic and applied scholarship' and 'To draw upon the rich array of resources' from the surrounding community 'to enhance' its educational work. This language suggests a dynamic periphery where the university and external communities interact, an

**Table 23.3** Mission statements of the case universities

Statement	United States	Hong Kong	Australia
<i>1. References to academic mission</i>	<p>The university commits itself to excellence in the creation, dissemination and application of knowledge</p> <p><b>To promote the process of lifelong learning from both global and integrative perspectives</b></p> <p>To offer outstanding learning experiences for full-time and part-time students in undergraduate, graduate and professional programmes</p> <p>To emphasise the linkage between basic and applied scholarship, insisting that the practical be grounded in knowledge and theory</p> <p>To draw upon the rich array of resources from the National Capital Area to enhance the university's educational endeavours</p>	<p>To advance constantly the bounds of scholarship, building upon its proud traditions and strengths</p> <p>To provide a comprehensive education, developing fully the intellectual and personal strengths of its students while <b>developing and extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community</b></p> <p>To produce graduates of distinction committed to lifelong learning, integrity and professionalism, capable of being responsive leaders and communicators in their fields</p> <p>To engage in innovative, high-impact and leading-edge research within and across disciplines</p> <p>To serve as a focal point of intellectual and academic endeavour in Hong Kong, China and Asia and act as a gateway and forum for scholarship with the rest of the world</p>	<p>A fundamental moral commitment to intellectual discovery and development, responsible social commentary and the promotion of cultural and economic well-being.</p> <p><b>To combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense to serve the needs of the community while preserving academic freedom.</b></p> <p>What 'we' choose to research and teach is ultimately determined by that purpose</p> <p>To deliver the highest levels of achievement in everything we do at a national and international level</p>
<i>2. References to the university's connection to the wider community (in order)</i>	<p>To act as a catalyst for creativity in the arts, the sciences and the professions by encouraging interaction among its students, faculty, staff, alumni and the communities it serves</p>	<p><b>Developing and extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community</b></p> <p>To act in partnership with the community over the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge</p>	<p><b>Purpose</b></p> <p><b>To combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense to serve the needs of the community while preserving academic freedom</b></p>

(continued)



**Table 23.3** (continued)

Statement	United States	Hong Kong	Australia
	<p><b>To promote the process of lifelong learning from both global and integrative perspectives</b></p> <p>To contribute talent and knowledge to improve the quality of life in metropolitan Washington, D.C.</p>		<p><b>Values</b></p> <p>Responsibility and service through leadership in the community</p>

*Source:* Based on the mission statements of the three cases with our emphasis added

idea which permeated the organisational culture within The College. There were two references to the application of knowledge as part of its academic mission.

There is more sense of separation between university and community in the academic mission of The School’s parent university. There is a distinct sense that the university is self-reliant when it comes to advancing scholarship – ‘building upon’ its traditions and strengths, ‘developing and extending’ lifelong learning opportunities and being an academic/intellectual ‘focal point’ and ‘gateway’. Lifelong learning was included as part of the university’s academic mission. To contextualise this, the university was one of the eight Hong Kong universities publicly funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). All UGC-funded universities had been assigned differentiated roles that they were expected to fulfil, and this university had set lifelong learning as one of its mandated roles. The research confirmed through interviews with respondents and official documents that the differentiated role was primarily selected by the UGC because of the work of The School.

The statement of purpose by the Australian university was focused on the institution itself; in fact, it was the only mission statement to use the first person and to give the impression that in part its audience was the university rather than a wider public. It emphasised separateness – a commitment to ‘social commentary’ and ‘to serve’ community needs while ‘preserving academic freedom’. The statement ‘We combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense to serve the community’ was not attached to an object (e.g. by the fruits of its research) but rather to a condition – academic freedom. Unlike the other two universities, there was no reference to lifelong learning.

### *Connectedness with the Wider Community*

The College’s parent university made two statements in reference to communities outside the university; the first was implied rather than directly stated. In the phrases ‘acting as a catalyst’ and ‘encouraging interaction’, the university emphasised an

active and guiding role in this interaction. However, it is important to note that as a private university, it was also dependent upon outside communities for survival; it was from these communities that it drew its students and much of its research funding, and therefore its income. These statements were carefully constructed around what was not said as much as what was said, suggesting that if not dependent then at the very least the community had something to gain – if the university had not acted as a catalyst there would have been stasis. A key informant asserted:

We're bringing new students in that wouldn't be part of [the university] otherwise and that we are providing a pretty important psychological service in demonstrating to the [local] community that [the university] is a good corporate citizen of this town, and I think they realise that that's a pretty important deal.

The statements made by The School's parent university were quite perfunctory. The second statement reads as a contract laying out partners – university and community, and obligations – generation, dissemination and application of knowledge. This may have been in part because of its differentiated role; however, there may also be another cultural level at play here as the university was deeply embedded within the community, and therefore as elite as the university may have proclaimed itself to be, it could not escape its duty to work with and for Hong Kong. The role of The School was therefore critical to the execution of its lifelong learning mission, freeing up the university's core academic units to focus on undertaking high-level research and educating the elite. There were indeed inherent tensions in the relationship between the university (emphasising its elite role) and The School (emphasising accessibility); however, this rather paradoxical relationship was embedded within the mission statement. In the words of The School's head:

If you ask the average academic what is the mission statement of the university, I don't think they could tell you. (Laugh). But I remind them whenever they talk about the role there are still faculty members saying 'oh competition' and/or 'this is not our business, if you want to do low level stuff leave it to other universities'. I will remind them of the agreed role and mission of the university, which is not only agreed by us but is dictated by the government, by the University Grants Committee.... gradually they come to the conclusion that we serve a very useful purpose for the University. (*Personal correspondence*)

The statements made by The Centre's university in reference to the wider community suggest complexity and underlying tensions. The first statement, to 'combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense', appeared to engage with the liberal arts versus profitability discourse but from a position that normalises the relationship between the two through the use of the word 'practical'. The mission statement linked the idea of doing business to serving community needs and indirectly inferred a financial transaction. The following statement intertwined two discourse strands: service and autonomy, with the former being qualified by the latter. The statement was perhaps a declaration of not relinquishing autonomy (and control) to commercial activities. While 'preserving academic freedom' was a dependant clause, its inclusion suggested this was a sensitive area or at the very least a point that needed to be made. In summary, although this statement appeared to be about a commitment to community service, it was in reality somewhat non-committal.

One key informant commented that he believed that ‘community education hasn’t been positioned well as a natural part of what a university should be doing’ in the case of this university.

These mission statements show that the academic missions of the parent universities encompassed the work of The College and The School, and thus gave their roles legitimacy. For The College, there was consistency between its focus on providing professional degrees and the university’s emphasis on both application and theory. For The School, there was a mandated role for the university to develop and extend lifelong learning for the community which was formalised as part of its academic mission. For The Centre, however, there was no clear indication as to its role within the academic mission.

By being engaged with external communities, both The College and The School fulfilled a function that was expected of their respective parent universities. This requirement was not purely idealistic on the part of the universities but rather, as discussed above, was also connected to other imperatives. The interactive engagement that these three cases required to develop programmes in consultation with a variety of external stakeholders, for example, students, employers and professional associations, has in this sense legitimised the programmes. However, the connection to external stakeholders in the case of The Centre was not so clear cut, and the assertion by the university of its will to preserve academic freedom may in fact have been an obstacle to interacting with external communities.

The documentary analysis of the mission statements shows the tension of the lifelong learning units in relation to their parent universities. However, it also shows how the connectedness with the wider community had created the legitimacy of their programmes and an academic role in knowledge production, or at least as a catalyst in the process. The interviews reveal further insights into their role in knowledge production, their unique interpretation of entrepreneurialism and their responsiveness to community needs as a foundation for these new perspectives.

### ***The Emergence of More Open Systems of Knowledge Production***

As discussed above, the three lifelong learning units were evolved out of previous non-award extension units within their universities. Extension education was built upon a one-sided perception of community needs, resulting in a one-way flow of ideas from the university to the community, ‘established on the unquestioned assumption that the university’s accumulated academic tradition and knowledge rightfully gave it sole decision-making powers in academic matters’ (Fleming 2008b). Interaction between each unit and its multiple stakeholders was viewed by the respondents as having an impact on their programme decisions. The cases in this study behaved as network hubs, connecting the university with external communities and bringing together market research, practitioner expertise, academic expertise and students.

The College and The School had more formalised structures set in place to facilitate interaction, which was considered essential to making effective programme decisions. Strategies they adopted included establishing subject-specific advisory committees, consulting with students and even, in the case of The School, contributing high-level advice on relevant governmental and industry regulations. All programmes went through formal proposal processes using a standardised template. Each programme had to provide evidence of academic and community needs, market analysis, positioning and articulation in the field, related government policy and target students. This consultative approach highlighted their two-way interaction with external stakeholders as programmes were developed in response to input and then fed back to the community. This served to emphasise the different imperatives of these self-funded lifelong learning units in comparison with the other academic units in their universities.

Tensions arose with the parent university when the lifelong learning unit made decisions that were not considered appropriate. One of the most sensitive areas for The College and The School was being viewed as competitors by the universities' core academic units when their programmes were perceived as being too similar to those offered by the parent university. Both cases were sensitive to this issue because it highlighted their marginality and vulnerability within the power structure of the university. The heads of both units claimed that such concerns were unfounded; however, when they were raised they would consistently withdraw their proposed programme. It is worth noting that there were also examples of programmes developed by The School which were ground breaking and were later co-opted by the university's academic faculties, for example, in law and Chinese medicine. A second tension arose around issues of alignment with the parent university. For example, the parent university would make a judgement from a traditional university perspective whether a programme of their lifelong learning unit would be 'suitable' as a university programme, even though the programme was offered by the extension arm. This issue had greatest impact on The Centre. Resolution in all cases was the suspension of the programme or the withdrawal of the programme proposal. Both these tensions suggested that the interaction with the parent university may have been one-way.

However, even though such tensions exist, the three cases made their own way in justifying knowledge production. The programme leaders in The Centre had two primary strategies: taking guidance from teachers as to content, usually in the form of programme proposals, and using field research to develop ideas. Many of their teachers were professional practitioners rather than academics and in all cases were part-time. The Centre's explanation was that the communities they served expect high standards from the university, and in the context of lifelong learning this equated with employing teachers (and programme developers) who had strong professional rather than academic expertise. Frequently, the teachers developed and assumed ownership of the curriculum, standing in marked contrast to the university's core academic units. Both The School and The College also utilised external professionals to consult with and assist in curriculum development. This challenges the conventional assumption that the university is the sole owner and provider of academic knowledge, especially within its own domain.

The School had sophisticated ways to gather input from outside communities to feed back into programme development. An example was their response to the Hong Kong government's decision to build a large cultural centre: The School contracted a high-profile consultant to lead community consultation and develop related diploma programmes around projected employment needs. The School, like The Centre and in contrast to The College, did not have degree-granting status and had to partner with internal faculties or, more frequently, with overseas universities to offer degree programmes. In these instances, The School did not have control over the curriculum, and tensions arose from time to time particularly over the issue of adapting overseas content to meet local needs. They also offered non-degree programmes that were built around professional qualifications and required validation from professional bodies that are outside the university.

The College had gained degree-granting status, and therefore had the greatest level of academic autonomy among the three cases. Paradoxically, it also had the most deeply embedded internal consultation processes when it came to formulating new programmes. A range of academic faculties regularly participated in generating ideas, and this resulted in some cross-faculty collaborations to develop interdisciplinary practice-based programmes. As discussed by the dean, such cross-fertilisation generated rich sites for 'curricula innovation', and this was made possible because of a 'willingness to think about higher education in a way that is not traditional in terms of being a single discipline'. Significantly, The College soon had an expanded jurisdiction as two departments previously operating in other academic faculties, and were granted the right to transfer across to The College. The programmes of both these departments were practice based. The departments argued that their traditional academic faculties were unable or unwilling to grasp their quite specific imperatives, such as offering flexibility for part-time students who also worked, whereas The College was more closely aligned to their purpose and values. Such a move was only made possible because The College had academic autonomy.

### ***Entrepreneurialism from Lifelong Learning Perspectives***

The term 'entrepreneurialism' was initiated by the head of these lifelong learning units in discussions around organisational culture and values. It is an unexpected finding of this study, as the term itself was deliberately never introduced by the interviewer. It was most frequently discussed by the head of The College who referred to entrepreneurialism in each of his three interviews as a core principle which encompassed both economic and academic outcomes. The benefits were both 'resources' (financial) and the expansion of the university's capacity to reach beyond traditional boundaries without sacrificing academic integrity. Entrepreneurialism was explicitly linked to being responsive, having the capacity to take risks and being academically innovative. It was 'the ability and the willingness... to notice opportunities to increase institutional effectiveness'. A number of those interviewed at The College were emphatic that entrepreneurialism was not guided by financial

opportunism, and the distinction between being profit driven and being entrepreneurial was an important one.

Entrepreneurialism was defined somewhat differently by The School. Significantly, the head differentiated being entrepreneurial from being academic, believing both were important but separate. Respondents in The School associated entrepreneurialism with commerce while viewing The School's commitment to academic rigour as setting the parameters within which that commerce took place. The separation of academic and financial imperatives permeated The School's decision-making processes with the academic merits and the financial projections of programme proposals assessed by separate committees to ensure both aspects were considered independently.

Entrepreneurialism was not directly referred to by those interviewed at The Centre except in one instance where the head referred to the need for research universities to have a dynamic periphery which encouraged entrepreneurial activities. The Centre was in fact established on the recommendation that any profits should be reinvested back into programme development, thus recognising the entrepreneurial nature of such a venture in academic rather than financial terms. But whereas entrepreneurialism was not a term shared by respondents in The Centre, the idea of responding to opportunity was seen as a guiding principle.

All the three cases shared an expectation of growth and an understanding that achieving this required the capacity to take leads from the external environment. It was a narrative based around the imperative of being receptive to new opportunities as a founding principle and a financial necessity. This required a culture that was deeply connected to communities outside the institution itself. However, a significant distinction emerged between creating opportunities and responding to opportunities during the analysis of the findings. The distinction between agency and reaction is an issue that is debated at length in the management literature on entrepreneurialism and yet is largely ignored by the literature dealing with entrepreneurialism in higher education. In higher education, entrepreneurialism is almost always associated with commerce even when it is referred to as academic entrepreneurialism (see for example Bok 2003; Marginson and Considine 2000). As Mars argued in his recent discourse analysis of 67 journal articles, 'this slice of higher education literature demonstrates how entrepreneurial terminology has been commonly used in discourse specific to the intersections of the academy as an institutional sector and the private marketplace' (Mars and Rios-Aguilar 2010, p. 6).

Shane and Venkataraman developed a conceptual framework which highlighted the central role played by opportunity in the actions of entrepreneurs. They argued that research into entrepreneurialism should involve 'the study of *sources* of opportunities; the *processes* of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of *individuals* who discover, evaluate, and exploit them' (*Our emphasis*, Shane and Venkataraman 2000, p. 218). The research presented here focuses on the organisation rather than an individual entrepreneur, although recognising the crucial role played by the head of the lifelong learning unit. However, in accord with their observation, the findings of this study revealed the profound way in which the idea of noticing and responding to opportunities permeated the structures, processes and

**Table 23.4** Measures taken by lifelong learning units to identify community needs

Measures taken to respond to or interact with stakeholders	The school	The college	The centre
Relevant external representation on advisory committees and boards	***	***	–
Surveying students on educational needs and programme suggestions	***	***	***
Establishing satellite campuses in locations considered convenient for students	***	***	*
Pre-programme market analysis	***	***	*
Membership of relevant professional and/or academic associations by programme decision makers	**	**	*
Seeking relevant and external professional accreditation of courses	***	**	*
Programme information targeted to specific external communities through communications materials	**	**	**
Commissioning research into community-wide demand for continuing and professional education	**	–	–

*Note:* \*\*\* policy, \*\* regular practice, \* some practice, – not undertaken

indeed culture of each of the case studies. This is significant as it potentially leads to a deeper understanding of the forces that guide decision making within these self-financed units, and hence may yield a better understanding of their role within higher education.

### ***Building a Responsive Culture***

The processes of knowledge production and the interlinked concepts of entrepreneurialism and opportunity found in these case studies were closely related to the fundamental nature of lifelong learning – responsiveness to community needs. This was a recurrent theme in the interviews. The self-financed status of the three cases had a profound effect on their organisational culture. This culture had developed around imperatives that were different to their universities' other academic units as they were dependent on income from enrolments. Each case focused attention on communicating interactively with a range of external communities, attempting to make them stakeholders as students, sponsors, collaborators or advisors. They invested significant resources to develop this capacity; as shown in Table 23.4, this was most apparent in The School and The College.

Those interviewed believed it was essential to respond rapidly to changing demands. As the head of The School argued: 'Our attitude is different... we have to respond to the market demand – this is our role, this is our responsibility. So the mindset is entirely different.' Their ability to achieve this was primarily measured through the dimensions of time and flexibility, and often these were interlinked. One of the programme managers from The School, for example, explained that once a

new subject area was ‘discovered’, there was some urgency in launching a programme before their competitors had the time to do so. This often meant finding ‘some way to speed up the process’ while upholding standards and quality. The School’s complex quality assurance system generated some concern over balancing timely decision making with satisfying QA requirements. The way of resolving these competing demands was often discussed in terms that suggest an adaptive culture which found ways to turn potential impediments into opportunities. In the words of one senior programme director and confirmed by others:

That’s why we have designed some short cuts you know, if we have to go through all these procedures it may take half a year or even more so that’s why we have developed something we call executive diploma or executive certificate whereby we can skip some of the steps in the validation process.

The head of The College also cited the importance of ‘pre-competitive’ programme development and the need for ‘an expedited programme development strategy’. Such a strategy was largely achieved by gaining the approval of the university’s board of trustees for three new award programmes – the associate, bachelors and masters of *Professional Studies*. In effect, these programmes could specialise in a range of disciplinary areas after gaining approval from the unit’s council rather than at board level. Therefore, the unit was able to circumvent the lengthy approval processes demanded of the other academic faculties, making the period from original proposal to validation significantly shorter.

The primary reporting body of The Centre was in theory an advisory committee which met once a term and oversaw academic matters in relation to the programmes. In practice, however, the committee was not directly involved in The Centre’s activities and by all accounts ‘weren’t interested’ and saw it as an onerous task rather than a commitment to upholding academic standards. There were no formal processes by which programmes could be validated or reviewed, and yet there were expectations that a systematic and appropriate decision-making strategy should be in place. The Centre initially made decisions at the level of programme leader with nominal sign off given by the head of The Centre. A policy enacted during the period of fieldwork assessed individual courses against a matrix of risk/alignment to the university which created three levels of decision making dependant upon where the course was placed.

This study reveals that placing an emphasis on being responsive can result in a highly adaptive culture. This is not without risk to the university (and to the value of lifelong learning), if responsiveness results in loss of academic autonomy, integrity and transparency. Arguably, as the responsibility for lifelong learning shifts from the state to the individual, enrolment becomes a purchase and students become consumers. As consumers, they exercise tacit and sometimes explicit power in relation to programme decisions. The extent of this power will be largely determined by the parameters of what is and is not acceptable, and this becomes critical as external stakeholders play a growing role in curriculum development. The findings from the current research suggest that the degree the lifelong learning unit was embedded into the culture and governance structures of the university affected the degree of



influence external stakeholders exercised in relation to programme decisions. This is an important issue as those outside the university and not connected to the core mission and values of the university have increasing levels of involvement, and thus would increase the likelihood of conflicted decisions. As this lifelong learning sector expands, there is a growing tension between meeting mission and market imperatives and a critical need to be able to map at what point decision-making shifts from complementing to compromising core values. As asserted by Cervero, 'This process will be marked by fundamental struggles over the educational agenda and the competing interests of the educational agenda and the political-economic agendas of the multiple stakeholders of continuing education' (Cervero 2001, p. 28).

## **Conclusion: Sectorisation and De-Sectorisation Between the Academy and Lifelong Learning**

Our highly partitioned system of education will blend increasingly into a seamless web, in which primary and secondary education; undergraduate, graduate and professional education; on-the-job training and continuing education; and lifelong enrichment become a continuum (Duderstadt and Womack 2003, p. 210)

Robertson (2010, p. xvii) observes that 'Over the past three decades, education systems around the world have been faced with a series of major structural transformations, with the borders and boundaries around the "state," the "nation", the "sector," the "citizen-subject," and "knowledge" being substantially reworked'. Our study of the three lifelong learning units shows how this re-engineering can take place when examining their unique contribution to knowledge in higher education.

Responsiveness to community needs forms the fundamental foundation for this unique contribution. It begins as a simple response to community needs by providing opportunities to learners outside the academy, initially 'filling the gap' to enable individuals to cope with the rapidly changing job environments in the knowledge economy. It then gradually formalises the knowledge that is originally non-formal or informal in order to gain wider recognition by various stakeholders in the wider community. The formalisation of the knowledge further functions as a bridge between the community and the academy, as the newly produced/organised knowledge has the potential of being gradually immersed into, and accepted by, the parent university as a part of the academy. This is why the parent university is so concerned about the perception of whether a programme from its lifelong learning arm can be regarded as a credible offering by the university. Two of the three cases presented here, the School and the College, evolved out of units which had operated at the margins of their universities primarily offering non-formal academic programmes. Through adopting deliberate strategies, to answer governmental demands in the case of The School and to expand the university's capacity in the case of The College, their academic programmes became formalised and they were able to transform into a dynamic periphery with increasing access to the academic core of

their universities. They have arguably become a feeder to the parent university, bringing in new knowledge paradigms and strengthening links between the community and The Academy. These lifelong learning units, despite tensions with their parent universities, potentially have a role as the university's testing arm in meeting community needs. Referring to Boyer's classification of scholarship as discovery, integration, application and teaching, the lifelong learning units would play some role in at least three of the four aspects (save discovery), and their contribution to knowledge cannot be undermined.

The recent literature in higher education has charted the rise of such notions as 'universities in the marketplace' (Bok 2003), 'the university in ruins' (Readings 1996), 'the enterprise university' (Marginson and Considine 2000) and 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Leslie 1997). All these mark the emergence of an environment of decreased funding for higher education, and thus a call for increased entrepreneurial skills in university management. In a landmark study into the future of public universities in the United States, Duderstadt and Womack cited 'mission creep' as one of the great challenges facing the modern university. Moreover, universities are being increasingly pressured to 'demonstrate their commitment to public service' (Duderstadt and Womack 2003, p. 24). Although these seem to be deploring comments about the erosion of the traditional role of the academy, the emergence of the new form and function of the university has indirectly justified and required the contribution of the lifelong learning units. Thus, even though at the periphery the ability of these units to respond to community needs in the changed academic environment means that they now have the potential to contribute to the academic core.

It is thus worthwhile to reiterate Duke's (2001) point in this conclusion that lifelong learning can become a matrix with formal and non-formal education. Likewise, Rogers' (2004, p. 265) remark about the continuum of formal and non-formal education is noteworthy in the sense that lifelong learning and the traditional academy should not be seen in dichotomous terms but as a continuum between them, depending upon the degree of participatory and contextualised learning (in the form of informal education) and decontextualisation (in the form of formal education). While the academy has to become contextualised if it wants to offer public service and be responsive to community needs, lifelong learning, in the process of institutionalisation and formalisation of knowledge, can contribute to knowledge that fits the decontextualisation framework of the academy; however, the interaction of the two will eventually blur the differences between them.

The above discussion sets forth further thinking on the sectorisation and de-sectorisation of education, especially in view of the relationship between lifelong learning units and the academy. Lifelong learning units in the process of asserting their function and role in knowledge building also assert themselves to be seen as an emerging sector of education that warrants formal recognition, perhaps as a 'fourth sector' of education, in addition to the existing primary, secondary and tertiary education. Even though it may be difficult to recognise their formal status as a sector, their active contribution to learning, as argued in this chapter, may at least set forth this sector as a 'quasi-sector'. However, the more the contribution of the lifelong learning sector is felt, the boundary between the academy and the lifelong learning

units will become blurred. And this blurring effect may also lead to a converse blurring effect upon the sectorisation of education, that is, de-sectorisation. Apollon (2001) challenges whether the traditional sectorisation framework is still relevant in post-industrial society, as the term 'sector' connotes the partition of activities into easily recognisable frames of reference. In particular, he views that 'lifelong education and learning' denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system, and this may have impact upon the sectoralised education system. In her keynote speech presented at the 14th World Congress of Comparative Education, Robertson (2010) points out that de-sectorisation is an observable trend of education systems of today: 'Constituted through and legitimated by discourses of lifelong learning and the need to build competitive knowledge-based economies to compete in the global economy, the social contract is being reworked through the collapsing of old borders [sectors]'. Our analysis of the contribution of lifelong learning units witnesses this trend.

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# Chapter 24

## Perspectives on Lifelong Learning in Africa\*

Moses Otieno Oketch

### Introduction

There are very few books and journal articles written on lifelong learning in Africa compared to other parts of the world where lifelong learning has already become a discipline of study in universities and as a framework for socioeconomic and political discourse. Skills in knowledge economies and citizenship education are some of the areas where lifelong learning is increasingly utilised as a framework of discourse. The OECD has produced several publications on lifelong learning, mainly emphasising that the competitiveness of the club of rich countries will only be sustained if there is investment in lifelong learning (see e.g. OECD 2000, 2004, 2005, 2007). There are also many exchange programmes and scholarships such as Erasmus Mundus that clearly emphasise lifelong learning. Olivier Sagna (2005) in contextualising lifelong learning in Africa with practical examples from Senegal has captured this succinctly in saying: ‘The importance of the concept of lifelong learning for the world of the twenty-first century is forcefully captured in a memorandum published by the European Commission in 2000 in which the vision of education and training presented therein features a combination of initial and in-service training, formal and non-formal education, self-directed learning, learning through practice and experience and wholly or partly ICT-based distance education designed to benefit learners not just at the level of occupational skills, but also in regard to their own personal development’ (p. 51). Yet in Africa, these opportunities are lacking, and students are even unwilling to apply for scholarships which are open on the theme of lifelong learning.

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In many instances, the students cannot be blamed as they do not understand what they would do with themselves with a qualification such as masters in lifelong learning from a European university back in the continent of Africa. This is because there is lack of emphasis and interest in lifelong learning, and it is not a subject commonly studied in universities. The justification advanced for lack of attention to lifelong learning in Africa is that the continent needs to first place emphasis in achieving universal access to primary education and accelerated transition to secondary education (see e.g. Atchoarena and Hite 2001). There is also a claim that there is lack of 'reading culture' in the continent that would sustain or call for emphasis on lifelong learning. Both these claims are unfounded, and in this chapter, I aim to offer perspectives on the theme of lifelong learning in Africa. I will mainly draw from the recently assembled book edited by Maurice Amutabi and Oketch (2009) which is one of the very first attempts to bring into academic discourse a focus on lifelong learning in Africa, what it means to the continent, how it has been practised and policy message to governments.

### *Emphasising Lifelong Learning in Africa*

There are several compelling reasons for placing emphasis on lifelong learning in Africa. First, in terms of human resources in research and development (R&D), UNESCO UIS report on the distribution of researchers in the world in 2002 and 2007 notes that only 0.6% of world researchers are located in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, UIS 2009). UIS defines researchers as 'professionals engaged in the conception or creation of new knowledge, products, processes, methods and systems and also in the management of the projects concerned' (Frascati Manual 2002). In recent global development indicators regional brief (World Bank 2010) Africa is projected to grow at an impressive positive rate, indicating that there is going to be expansion of R&D intensity. The continent is home to 840 million inhabitants (World Bank 2010), the third in the globe and it is here that lifelong learning needs to form part of the framework for understanding the transformative changes that will be brought about by the rapid economic advancements. It is also in Africa where there have been conflicts and for which nationalism and peace could benefit from a framework of lifelong learning in the same way citizenship education is enriched through lifelong learning due to recent immigration to Europe. The perspective offered in this chapter will mainly draw on ICT as a framework upon which lifelong learning in Africa can be reinvigorated and embedded strongly within the education policies. I start by reiterating what others have said before that Africa has been a site of lifelong learning for generations (see e.g. Amutabi 1997, 2009; Avoseh 2001), and that information and communication technology (ICT) can play an important role in facilitating new forms of lifelong learning in Africa that go beyond those traditional forms of knowledge referred to by Amutabi and Avoseh. I will argue that lifelong learning is relevant for Africa's development contrary to the view that Africa must first concentrate on basic education (Atchoarena and Hite 2001). I will also argue that Africa has not



been left unaffected by the benefits and challenges brought about by information technology era (Lelliot et al. 2000; Amutabi and Oketch 2003; Polikanov and Abramova 2003; Saint 1999) but like in universalising education, key challenges remain particularly in spreading the benefits of ICT to the vast majority living in rural and urban slum dwellings, and developing relevant ICT policies that foster lifelong learning.

Discourse in lifelong learning has highlighted the following: (1) Lifelong long learning is a rallying cry rather than a specific policy. It is mainly a tool to help people manage change and deal with economic uncertainties occasioned by rise in technology and changes in the labour market. (2) Lifelong learning is a tool to combat social exclusion as a result of globalisation. (3) Lifelong learning is centred on the individual which is seen to empower learners, hence employees taking more responsibility to improve their skills and learn more. (4) Lifelong learning can widen participation in education. (5) Lifelong learning is dynamic, hence responds to changes in society flexibly and allowing actors and interest groups to become more influential. (6) The idea of a learning society is made possible through lifelong learning to combat challenges that have emerged in the twenty-first century (Edwards et al. 1998). These highlights are in sync with the assertion by Aspin et al. (2001, p. xvii) who not only argue that lifelong learning is a concept whose time has come, but that the notion that education and learning are activities and processes that do not begin and end with the commencement and closure of people's attendance of formal institutions of schooling goes way back in some cultural contexts (also see Amutabi and Oketch 2009). The first point as raised by Aspin et al. fulfils some of the expectations contained in the Faure et al. (1972) UNESCO report *Learning to Be* in which it was stated that *we propose lifelong education as a master concept in the years to come for both developed and developing countries* (also see Amutabi and Oketch 2009). The Delors report of 1996 reemphasised lifelong learning with a better defined framework than the predecessor Faure's et al. (1972) lifelong education which was interpreted to be synonymous with adult education.

Much of subsequent literature on lifelong learning even when they emphasise one single aspect of the tenets highlighted by Edwards et al. (1998) have given 'life' to lifelong learning as a framework to both organise and practise education in ways that make the education offered meaningful to the present challenges of humanity (see e.g. Dodds 2001; Duke 2002; Field 2006; IIEP 2007; Maruatona 2006; Avoseh 2001; Walters 1999). It cannot be concluded that Africa is not confronted by the modern challenges of humanity, including those that have resulted from the explosion of information technology. Indeed, technology has become an instrumental vehicle in facilitating lifelong learning (Dodds 2001; Chapman 1996; Duke 2002). The challenge, however, remains in that much of lifelong learning literature is, first, rare for the case of Africa and, second, analysis of the role of information and communication technology in facilitating lifelong learning is only beginning to pick up even in the industrially advanced countries with far superior spread and use of ICT compared to Africa. There is, therefore, dearth of guiding material on the issue of ICT and lifelong learning in Africa, which this chapter aims to fill. The lack of guiding materials is, however, the motivation rather than a limitation in writing this chapter.

## *Lifelong Learning and Development of Africa*

Although I have noted that Africa has been a site of learning for generations, contemporary and formalised forms of learning that can be associated with lifelong learning are those that took place in community libraries where they existed in Africa (Lowe 1971). In most places, these community libraries were initiatives of faith organisations, such as the Catholic Church but governments also initiated some of them, particularly to facilitate adult education. But much of the education in Africa before community libraries were initiated early in the 1960s and 1970s was handed over from one generation to another orally. Education, in the traditional sense, was aimed at developing a responsible member of the community who would contribute to the stability of the community (Amutabi 1997). This role of education has not changed in contemporary times as education is still considered to be important and being the key to the alleviation of poverty in the region. Just as at the time of independence in the 1960s when education was assigned a developmental role today education continues to be regarded as the surest route to tackling the myriad problems facing Africa.

There has been tremendous effort to expand access at the primary level through initiatives such as Education for All (EFA) and associated Free Primary Education Policy (FPE) in numerous countries and to push for improved coverage at secondary and tertiary levels (see e.g. Oketch and Rolleston 2007). But at the same time, there is agreement that ICT must now be part of any education policy that African countries pursue, and that learning needs to be continuous beyond the walls of classrooms and lecture halls in universities. Two things have prompted this: one, Africa is by large not left out by the so-called knowledge-based development and, two, urban centres in Africa have rapidly embraced technology, particularly the Internet, however outdated and slow their services may be (Polikanov and Abramova 2003); both have combined to provide a fertile ground upon which lifelong learning can flourish. It is therefore important that the pursuit of expansion in education must be in line with the professional skills of this new knowledge-based economy in which IT features significantly with clearly spelt out framework that embrace lifelong learning. Lifelong learning as a framework of educational organisation if fully incorporated in the education policies of the African countries can form part of policy strategies that work to reinforce inclusion and participation while tackling outdated forms of selection (Champan 1996; also see Duke 2002). Many countries however do not have any policies that embrace lifelong learning explicitly. It is only in the Republic of South Africa where lifelong learning is now increasingly a topic of academic discourse and government education policies. Yet, in many countries in Africa if the long-standing goal of equity through programmes such as universal primary education is to be sustained effectively, then lifelong learning offers a safe ground to start from for reasons outlined next.

First, the price paid for missing out on learning is high in Africa. This is made worse by a projected growth in service sector and the decline or, in some cases, complete collapse of subsistence farming economy that supported African rural

living and which had traditionally employed those with few qualifications or those without formal education at all. Second, as information and communication technologies (ICT) become an increasingly important way of delivering lifelong learning, a new dimension of exclusion referred to as the 'digital divide' is created (Dodds 2001). This digital divide is happening within African countries just as much as it has been documented to happen between Africa as a third-world region and the more industrialised countries of the North. Third, urbanisation is growing rapidly in Africa than any other parts of the world, and this has led to fragmented families and communities with weaker social bonds and identity, and yet it can also be the means to realising the nationhood that has been elusive in several countries in Africa due to a lack of common national bond beyond ethnic identities. It is not surprising, therefore, that the mission for education has been expanded to include the building of social cohesion, cementing social identity, networks and community involvement, otherwise known as social capital by the work of Coleman (1988). This has to happen alongside education's critical role of skills development (also see Duke 2002). Fourth, in our rapidly changing world in which knowledge and trade have become the common currency of interaction, educational equity can no longer be addressed only in terms of what happens in schools and colleges but throughout our lives (see Aspin et al. 2001; Duke 2002). The scope is now much more ambitious, and countries in Africa should aim to make lifelong learning available to all by first developing policies that embrace it as a framework for delivering quality education (see e.g. Aspin and Chapman 2000).

The emphasis in this chapter borrows from what was once observed by Lowe (1971) while writing on adult education that Africa's socioeconomic development depends upon winning popular support for rapid change. 'That support can only be won if adults perceive the relevance of the aims of development to their own particular condition', and are persuaded and committed to labour both hard and ingeniously to fulfil them (Lowe 1971, p. 146). Paraphrasing Lowe (1971), the following would be the task for developing explicit policies for lifelong learning in Africa: (1) ensuring that it is widely accepted as a framework for education expansion and quality; (2) to encourage citizens to work towards the same purpose of lifelong learning as this would be a means of fostering what is referred to as 'reading culture' and a shift from the conception that Africa is a folklore oral society; (3) to encourage learning at all places, both formal and informal, and to recognise these in employment – this would provide incentives for both employees and employers to accept the essence of work-based learning.

A well-endowed, nationwide lifelong learning service would undoubtedly be a vital prerequisite of national development throughout Africa much the same way as was advocated for by Lowe when he wrote on adult education. Lowe noted that 'Economic progress can be achieved only through the creation of an agricultural surplus and some measure of industrialization and this entails applying scientific and technological skills to the methods of agricultural and industrial production at all levels' (p. 146). Here is where skills acquired through higher levels of formal education along with indigenous knowledge can work along together to facilitate development. As noted by Lowe (1971), and which is as relevant today as it was

then, ‘...since most of the problems facing Africa must be solved before the next generation grows up, such skills have to be taught to the existing adult population’, just as much as they are taught in the classrooms to young learners. The human capital becomes of unique importance and requires to be stressed precisely because it can encourage endogenous development. But at the same time, reasonable balance is necessary so that not too much weight is attached to investment in education alone without commensurate levels of physical capital to absorb human capital (2006). However, as economists have now agreed, concentrating upon the development of human skills is the ultimate factor in human development, and ICT and lifelong learning can be viewed in the same light.

Lifelong learning service is also vital as a means of encouraging people of Africa to welcome innovation and to adjust to disruptive social change of urbanisation, rapid economic growth and changes in subsistence means of living. In this era of the widespread democratisation in many African countries, the rise of Internet, intercultural exchange and diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the importance of lifelong learning is obvious. I agree with what Lowe wrote over three decades ago in saying that ‘...in order that development may take place at an acceptable rate it is necessary not merely that people should take part in formulating and implementing plans on their own initiative. They cannot carry out that role unless they are sufficiently well informed to be able to choose selectively from among the options open to them. Not that the task of engaging people in the development process is easy to define since unsophisticated people have difficulty in grasping concepts about the nature of change’ (Lowe 1971, p. 147). Lowe went on to observe that a field [education] officer in the rural areas of Africa, for example, must realise that she or he cannot translate government directives into action unless the local population first accepts them and understands what must be done to implement them. She or he must also be aware that the local people are sometimes extremely bewildered by what is happening around them (Lowe 1971, p. 147).

For all this, Lowe (1971) rightly observed that money would be necessary. One argument persistently advanced to reject the idea of lifelong learning which has some parallel to what Lowe (1971) lamented upon in relation to adult education that Africa must first concentrate in meeting basic education before it can think of placing any emphasis on lifelong learning (see e.g. Atchoarena and Hite 2001). But this type of argument misses the point – as with ICT, there are those who have argued that there is no infrastructure to support ICT. While this is a valid point, Africa cannot sit and wait. It has to make do with what is available, which is why there has been tremendous growth of ICT in numerous African cities, and now, some countries, such as Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Ghana, to mention but a few, have initiated ICT policy within their formal education framework. As with education, and as was once noted by Lowe (1971) that large expenditure upon adult education is frowned upon by governments because they (adults) represent a poor investment since they are resistant to new ideas and often have only a short productive life left to them, and in the same light, lifelong learning is seen by some, including African governments as being only feasible in Africa of the distant future. In agreement with Lowe (1971), there is a germ of truth in both those

reservations but no more. Adults in even the most traditional societies can be induced to change their attitudes if they are sufficiently and strongly motivated, and ICT together with lifelong learning offers a fertile ground for this motivation. As Amutabi (1997) observes, traditional societies in Africa had an all-rounded education that was a continuous process. This type of education was premised on the common understanding of relevance, compromise and commonality.

Moreover, it is self-evident that in societies where the great majority of the population has had little or no more formal education, there is a large pool of underutilised intelligence just waiting to be activated by the appropriate stimuli. The suggestion that adults represent only a short-run educational investment falls to the ground mainly because it fails to take account of the fact that an adult, in his role as parent, trade union leader, politician or manager, can immediately apply what he learns, whereas much of what the young are taught cannot be applied or is obsolescent by the time they are of an age to apply it. Thus, if reforms designed to make the school curriculum socially more relevant are introduced in school today, it will probably be another decade before they affect the performance as adults of the new intake of children and by that time a host of unforeseen changes may well have rendered the reforms irrelevant (Lowe 1971, p. 149). There is tendency to equate lifelong learning with adult education, and there is a danger in doing so – Africa ends up lacking clearly developed policy on lifelong learning, allowing the opportunity for pessimists to relegate the region to sequential education, with the view that Africa must first ensure basic education. In any case, if it is true that adults resist new ideas, then we should despair of progress in the rural areas. For while young people can be educated to accept change, experience shows, as was once observed by Lowe (1971, p. 148) and continues to be the case today, that when they run up against the conservatism of their parents and undesirable rural subsistence agricultural environment, they tend not to stay and fight but to throng into the cities and towns. In short, it is arguable that in Africa money spent upon adult education offers not quicker but more certain dividends than expenditure on traditional education (see Lowe 1971).

Needless to say, as Lowe argued for the case of adult education, it would be politically naive to expect governments in Africa to shift their emphasis from young people's education to that on lifelong learning if they perceive lifelong learning as being an adult education. 'It would also be educationally undesirable' (Lowe 1971, p. 148). What is required is the general acceptance of lifelong learning, along the lines suggested by Lowe for adult education, which treats education as a continuing process and not something confined to formal schooling (Lowe 1971; also see e.g. Aspin et al. 2001). Since technology and the physical environment, which we live in is increasingly changing and doing so very rapidly in recent years, as are the methods used in industry and commerce, Lowe's argument that '... people of Africa must be helped to respond flexibly and imaginatively by their governments' is still true today. To paraphrase Lowe, this would entail the development of four levels of education, namely, basic/primary, secondary, tertiary/vocational and post-tertiary education of which lifelong learning cuts across, fused with information technology. The adoption of such an encompassing framework which promotes lifelong

learning, as Lowe noted for adult education, presupposes that no sector of education will benefit at the expense of others and that the limited resources that are available to education are allocated such that it fosters lifelong learning. Such approach also aims at making the purpose of continuous education that of enabling people to adapt to their globalised environments by becoming functionally more effective (Edwards et al. 1998; also see Lowe 1971). This obviously would entail a serious reflection on how we look at education and the idea of lifelong learning in Africa, far beyond formulation of lifelong learning policies that are relevant to the continent and/or which simply respond to global trends.

It must not go without mention that Africa is vast as a continent. Each of the nations has its own special problems as well as its own special goals and special approaches in trying to reach them (Lowe 1971). Nonetheless, there are numerous problems common to all African countries, which can be resolved through infusion of technology into the concept of lifelong learning. It is common knowledge that the Internet has indeed created a 'global village'. It is not uncommon these days to receive an e-mail while staying in the hi-tech cities like New York, Tokyo, London or Chicago from a relative or friend in a remote town in parts of Africa or Asia. Even those whose educational level could not comprehend the idea of a computer and associated Internet just recently are now more aware and understand what it means. This implies that throughout Africa, there is the yearning of a new dimension to education and/or learning. The idea of defining education and especially learning to the confines of teaching villagers how to read and write, as was assigned to adult education, is long gone and obsolete.

Lifelong learning has now entered a sophisticated era itself in which top company CEOs are going back to college to upgrade their knowledge to fuse in well with the current level of technology that is permeating the society. Africa may seem at the bottom in terms of technological use (see e.g. Lelliot et al. 2000), but it would be naive to think that the daily lives of many Africans both in rural and urban setting are not influenced and affected by the increasing use of technology. Nothing portrays this rapid infusion in technology than the use of mobile phones in the continent. Those with limited levels of education in developing countries, but can afford a mobile phone now have sets (also see e.g. Veen and Preece 2005, p. 386). They not only make telephone calls, but they can also send text messages and even money. Farmers can compare prices of their produce, and media houses are able to send headline news through text messages. Safaricom, Kenya-based mobile telephone provider, has even invented what is referred to as M-PESA, the mobile banking system whereby money is transferred through the mobile telephone. It has opened banking transactions to many poor people who were hitherto locked out by the conventional banking systems with cheques and large cash. This invention and utilisation of the M-PESA in Kenya is an illustration of the potential of fostering lifelong learning in Africa.

The whole concept of learning is getting redefined in the minds of most people in Africa, and the thirst for more knowledge is now something of commonality despite the increased levels of poverty. One can wonder how and why people so poor as many are in Africa are ready to sacrifice everything they have to gain knowledge, yet

the relatively poor in the Northern Hemisphere consider poverty as despair to educational aspirations. Africa has practised lifelong learning in many forms (Avoseh 2001; Amutabi in this book), and now the use of technology is by all means encouraging and reshaping lifelong learning in the continent in a new manner. If the meaning attached to lifelong learning as offered by Aspin et al. (2001, p. xvii) in arguing that 'lifelong learning is a concept whose time has come; the notion that education and learning are activities and processes that do not begin and end with the commencement and closure of people's attendance at formal institutions of schooling goes back in some cultural context' is acceptable, then the argument by Atchoarena and Hite (2001) that African must first concentrate on basic education does not prevail. Even with low levels of infrastructure, ICT is already playing a significant role in transforming lifelong learning in Africa from what it was in the traditional sense of indigenous knowledge (Avoseh 2001; Amuabi in this book) to more contemporary tenets of the concept (Edwards et al. 1998; Duke 2002).

## ICT and Lifelong Learning in Africa

The positive picture painted through inventions such as M-PESA in Kenya is not common throughout Africa. Many countries are still saddled with what many have referred to as inadequate communication infrastructure (see e.g. Jensen 1999; Saint 1999; Lelliot et al. 2000; Amutabi and Oketch 2003; Unwin 2005; Polikanov and Abramova 2003). Continued development of information technologies (IT) for lifelong learners in African countries is bound to be influenced by a number of factors including, the economic benefits that IT brings to the learners, IT policy within the continent, and its impact on government, society, business and even the security of the state. The formal meaning attached to lifelong learning by governments in the region will also inevitably influence it. It is not clear how these concerns will be addressed, although as evident in the 2007 E-learning in Africa Conference that was held in Nairobi and which drew participants from many countries of Africa demonstrate, African countries are keen, albeit in the face of limited resources and competing needs, in putting in place the required incentives and support mechanisms for the infusion of IT in the educational and training services.

However, it is also a known fact that individual entrepreneurs have exceeded the performance by African governments in providing avenues through which IT can be exploited; itself an existing infrastructure that African governments can tap on to advance systematic policies of lifelong learning. These can be noticed by the prevalence of the cyber-coffee shops in both the major cities and shantytowns in the region. IT has already gained acceptance among lifelong learners because of its perceived benefits such as instant communication, flow of global information, and spread of liberal ideals as well an emerging infusion of African ideals within the Internet, in particular. But it is worth mentioning that the African diaspora, particularly those in the USA and the UK, plus other European regions, including Australia have been instrumental in encouraging the spread of technology in the region. They

have done so at two levels: first, by encouraging IT-facilitated communication with their relatives and friends in the content; second, by investing in IT infrastructure in the region through their higher earnings compared to those residing in Africa. The diaspora has thus been very instrumental in the spread of technology in the continent. The Africa-Online, the pioneer Internet service provider in the continent, is a case in mind for encouraging Internet access and usage. It was started by those who had been exposed to the benefits of ICT in encouraging learning, while themselves they were students in the West. The African Virtual University (AVU), the brain-child of the World Bank, was inspired by the view that Africa could benefit from the application of technology (Amutabi and Oketch 2003) and to facilitate lifelong learning. Although it has been highly criticised (see e.g. Amutabi and Oketch 2003), the AVU provided a platform by which most African universities and other institutions of higher learning are now embracing ICT not as a skill on its own, left to those studying computing, but as a platform for the delivery of all forms of learning. These examples demonstrate that ICT is spreading rapidly in Africa, in spite of the myriad challenges that are equally prevalent in the continent. There is, however, the worry of a divide, an issue that was touched on earlier. The poor and the rural populations are still being left behind. Saint (1999, p. 9) picked on this issue when he observed that Internet connectivity while was rapidly expanding in the Africa, it was doing so quite unevenly. Clear policies in lifelong learning by African governments will supplement and propel further the voluntary learning by the citizens of Africa that is already taking place because of ICT. To suggest that lifelong learning is for the North while basic education is for the South as others have done (Torres, nd.; Atchoarena and Hite 2001) does not seem to portray the reality in Africa.

## Supporting ICT Infrastructure

African nations, by virtue of their potential market size with nearly 900 million people, should not be relegated to the level of simply reacting to the trends of the use of IT in educational solutions, but should play an active role in making IT part of lifelong learning goal. A proactive approach rather than a reactive approach should be adopted in the development of IT in Africa. Rather than saying the infrastructure is not there, it should be a matter of saying how can the infrastructure that supports IT be put in place, and as rapidly as possible. This means anticipating problems and designing strategies to overcome them before they get out of hand. Africa should strive to catch up with the other developing regions in setting up an incentive that will promote the use of IT. This way, lifelong learning will be expanded. Many activities are today done online, and it is known that the younger adults are more aware of the advantages of the use of IT in their continuous learning and have become used to such activities as browsing or sending e-mail. E-learning has already become part of the learning both in the classroom but even more so outside the classroom. There is already growing acceptance that more needs to be done to facilitate the use of technology, broadband width rather than dial-up services



is now being put in place in several countries. There is also growing use of computers in schools, and even in schools where computers are not available, the youth who can afford spend after school hours and holidays studying computer packages.

The challenge remains the poor and rural populations where the infrastructure for Internet access is unavailable. But the sheer spread of the mobile phone does signal that Africa is ready to embrace technology and that learning will be supported tremendously the more there is proactive effort by the African governments to establish at least one computer centre in each local town in each district. Just as was done with local district libraries in the 1960s and 1970s, Internet resources can also be established. The beauty of ICT is that learners tend to be attracted by technology itself unlike libraries and books, which require reading culture. Most people reading on the Internet may not even be aware that they are learners, and yet they are indeed. The often-quoted example of successful adaptation of technology is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which rents cell phones to villagers who become sellers and buyers of services (Adeya 2003, p. 19 in Veen and Preece 2005, p. 386), and this type of initiative can also be experimented on in Africa.

It is therefore important that African governments put in place incentives that will encourage not only lifelong learning but the development of technological skills among its population. Technology must be made affordable to the people. There are already encouraging signs through the NEPAD initiative on ICT in schools as well the various development visions such as Kenya's Vision 2030, Ghana's Vision 2020, Rwanda's Vision 2020 which aim to make these countries fully developed and industrialised by the specified years. In these mega visions, inclusions of technology are encouraging signs of proactive measure towards the infusion of technology not only in the development of the region, but by itself an encouragement of the idea of lifelong learning.

## **The ICT Policy**

Policy issues remain central to most development efforts in Africa. Analyses of most sectors of the African economy usually show policy issues at the base, driving everything else. In most countries, there was a policy vacuum in IT about a decade ago, but going by recent activities, it appears most countries are now putting in place an active IT policy. Rwanda is a good example where ICT has been made key in all the development initiatives that the government is taking, sometimes at odds with international goal of simply expanding access to basic education. But there is logic in what Rwanda is attempting to achieve – if ICT is now important in every aspect of development, then what is the point of expanding education without incorporating ICT in the first instance, when it is obvious that only in a short time in the future, technological know-how will be required. But even with such encouraging evidence, there is still inadequate IT policy in much of the continent. The policy aspects of IT therefore need to be addressed, in terms of formulation, dissemination and implementation. In the absence of clear and enforceable policy, the IT is likely

to evolve in a haphazard manner in reaction to the uncoordinated external motives, thus allowing improper practices that would impair the growth of enthusiasms for IT. In the absence of a clear-cut policy on IT, it would be difficult to see how it can foster lifelong learning. Such policies must be broad enough to encompass a new definition of learning, which would include highly educated people seeking additional skills through Internet education as well as inclusive learning. The fears expressed by others (e.g. Young 1999 in Dodds 2001, p. 504) that 'lifelong learning is all very well as a noble slogan, but it would be of little overall value if it were only lifelong learning for the few and not the many' will need to be addressed and avoided by making ICT available to as many people as possible.

## **What is the Role of Universities in Lifelong Learning?**

There is rapid growth in universities in the continent of Africa, both those supported by governments and private ones which charge full tuition fees. There is also a growing tension of the traditional elite university that never fostered lifelong learning and massified university system that is perceived to be favourable to the notion of lifelong learning (Oketch 2009).

As I noted earlier, African universities have not yet developed courses in lifelong learning and this is because there are no comprehensive government policies on lifelong learning. The examples of learning that take place outside the formal school system are as a result of individual efforts rather than incentives and policies developed by governments to foster a culture of lifelong learning. But it is not lost to the fact that universities in Africa have begun to consider how to tap into the web-based Internet courses to meet the needs of the working population who are going back to school to advance in their knowledge. In Kenya, for example, the United States International University (USIU) wants most of its evening business course to be web based. As Saint (1999, p. 9) reiterated, distance education is the modern form of adult education that is associated with technological application. Dodds (2001, p. 503) adds, 'Another element of the debates which dominate both higher and adult education at the turn of the century is the startling growth of the new information and communication technology. I believe the link between lifelong learning and open and distance learning approaches are essential: without the techniques of open and distance learning, the virtues of lifelong learning will continue to be reserved for the few, as they have traditionally been'. As noted earlier, the definition of lifelong learning adapted in this chapter is not that for promoting literacy among the illiterates. It is more of a lifelong learning definition that recognises that learning throughout life takes many forms, including things that people learn in their daily lives such as sending text message on a mobile phone, or browsing the Internet. Africa has been active in distance education, associated with adults for several decades, and now, it is also becoming active in the use of technology. The University of South Africa (UNISA) was established as a correspondence university in 1946 and now enrolls over 100,000 students. Botswana, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia have

all applied information technologies to their distance education programmes. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon and Central African Republic, distance learning has been used to upgrade teacher skills and other civil-service employees (Saint 1999). However, most of these were print, radio and TV based, but they still formed the rubric of the application of IT in the education of an adult population.

Lifelong learning has made giant strides since the 1960s (Duke 2002), and the same can be said of Africa, although again more generally Duke is quick to observe that the giant strides have not been without mixed blessings. Duke (2002, p. 24) notes that 'many forms of study, professional continuing education, off-peak radio and television broadcast of study materials and various forms of diploma and degree study are publicized simply as lifelong learning, often a synonym for post-full-time and post-experience study by adults'. However, Duke also notes that this is positive in the sense that 'lifelong learning, thus equated, accepts that adults go on learning, a new recognition within' today. Adult education, as Duke notes, 'was formerly an entirely marginal activity unconnected to the real business of education, schools and colleges' (p. 25). So was the case in Africa as Amutabi (1997) reports in the case of Kenya, where it was classified under leisurely activities. It was merely for those who had missed out on formal education, and was only aimed at literacy and nothing more. It can be said, therefore, that lifelong learning breathes new meaning to adult learning and education.

Today, in places like Kenya where universities have introduced evening courses, most if not all the students are in the business of lifelong learning. This brings home the magnitude of the lifelong learning revolution, despite persisting confusion of education with learning (Duke 2002). What is happening in African universities reinforces the view as expressed by Duke (2002, p. 25) that 'there is no longer anything remarkable about universities catering for older clients/students; for people who combine diverse life roles rather than occupy a discrete student identity in premature socialization and transition to full adult participation in society'. This is currently more of a reality in some African universities and institutions of higher learning than had ever been possible. As Duke (2002, p. 25) argued, 'this is a precondition for the idea that tertiary education can be for all, across society and throughout life and adult education is no less important' (also see Dodd's 2001). Lifelong learning is therefore a growing mission of universities, but a university that is geared towards promoting lifelong learning would have the following features according to Dodds (2001, p. 504): Opens opportunity for all, teenagers and adults, to go to and to return to university-level studies if and when they are ready and opt to do so, and to do so with reasonable chance to succeed and to obtain qualifications from their studies; concentrates in all its teaching and learning at all levels and in all forms on the creation of critical thinkers who will, throughout their lives, be the pillars of learning society, and, therefore, on developing the skills and attitudes of lifelong learning among all its students; opens up through whatever means are possible, including both modern and traditional technology, access to the specialist knowledge, intellectual power and research findings of the university to all members of society, in ways and in language that is directly relevant to their lives.

Duke (2002, p. 25) notes that in 1996 UNESCO Delors report, following the 1972 UNESCO Faure report, 'shifted priorities to support lifelong learning, rather than question the premise'. The World Bank, OECD, EU and other development temples, as Field (2006) calls them, have all increasingly included lifelong learning as a sub-theme in their education sector strategy papers and development imperatives (also see Duke 2002, p. 25). The IT has undoubtedly revolutionised the way adult education is defined. In many African countries, the movement for lifelong learning is gathering momentum without explicit use of the term. At the University of Nairobi, parallel degree programmes (which cater for full fees-paying students as opposed to those subsidised by the government) have opened opportunity for those already in the workforce led by a one-time Nairobi City Mayor who went back to university and graduated with a degree in philosophy. A Kenyan Mayor of coastal province town known as Mombasa also sat for Kenya Secondary Education Examination (taken at the end of secondary school) following government threat in 2001 that those without secondary-level school certificate should not occupy public office, be it a political one. All these were staples of media debate on the quest for lifelong learning and the changing attitude among the general population that learning was not confined to specific age group and the usual formal school parameters (BBC 24 October 2001).

Lifelong learning is still a conceptual morass – Duke (2002) cautions. Learning and education remain hopelessly confused, and lifelong learning as a grand idea is under threat for three reasons which Duke (2002, p. 25) lists as follows: first from trivialisation; second from reductionism, more obviously manifest in the notion of the learning society. Third, it may fall out of favour as contested space where old battles are conducted over core values and purposes. Duke sums up the challenge, dilemma and battles as follows:

These occur in general educational discourse across the generations, but more starkly in the literature of adult education and training. Finally, there is the skepticism that persists in a 'deschooling' tradition about the colonization of life and learning by the professions and agents of the state. It is a not unproblematic context for universities and tertiary education coming to grips with lifelong learning. Dichotomous alternatives are common: liberal vs. vocational; intrinsic vs. extrinsic; education vs. training; accredited or non-award-bearing. The economic is set against 'access and equity'. Personal development, occupationally related and civic or citizenship agendas represent a broad typology of intent. The forces of good and evil range along the lines of education (training or indoctrination) for domesticity and learning for liberation. (Duke 2002, p. 25)

In this sense, according to Duke, nothing has changed. The same struggles about the good society and the part education play in advancing or obstructing its coming continue. Yet, still, lifelong learning has come of age as a popular and commercially viable proposition (Aspin et al. 2001; Field 2006). The African Virtual University, even now that it has ceased to be a full-fledged university as was originally planned, is serving both the adult population and the traditional students, fusing technology into the whole unit of lifelong learning. It would be difficult to find a nation in which educational policy is not committed rhetorically to enabling lifelong learning and ICT. Its practical attainment in Africa is, however, to some extent, a central policy dilemma.

Duke (2002, p. 25–26) outlines six changes that provide context for a renewed interest in lifelong learning, and these are of relevance to Africa too: First, he notes

that global cultures have undergone a transformation. He is of the view that this transformation is necessary in order to match at the right pace through information revolution to a knowledge-based society. Technological change, ever-accelerating and with ever-wider ramifications, demands continuous learning so that people have knowledge, skills and adaptability to keep up in knowledge-based society. He contends that it is obvious that universities must be central to the development of such a society. Wider participation and more purposeful updating, as Duke notes, for universities in the globe must equally be on the African universities agenda if Africa is not to divide more between those who can and those who cannot cope and benefit.

A second significant change that Duke notes is the new concern of social exclusion – the idea that some individuals are excluded from ‘knowledge’ when this same knowledge is now a prerequisite for active participation in a knowledge-based economy. His concerns, which are of relevance to Africa, are those to do with the impact and cost to individuals, communities and economies of exclusion from mainstream society driven by technology. In this context, his work links to that of Coleman (1988) regarding the link between social capital and human capital when he (Duke) observes that the idea of social capital has also won of equity, access and opportunity and its role as a means to achieving participation and prosperity. As a result, he notes that civic agenda is reappearing, along with individual general education and development, and vocational skills acquisition. The social is added to the individual and economic higher education agenda, all of which then make lifelong education an all-encompassing framework and of great relevance to Africa.

A third factor, which is of specific theme to this chapter, is that of information technology applied to learning. In Duke’s view, technological change should imply rapid obsolescence of the curriculum in most occupational areas, but his reference to the IT revolution is in relation to teaching and learning which according to him suggests new means of accessing and ‘delivering’ information. This would be exemplified by what he terms as flexible and self-directed learning, and he notes further that mixed and multi-mode delivery appears to offer new kinds of lifelong learning with implications for lifelong learning, as various forms of the virtual university.

Fourth is the continuing influence of economic rationalism fuelled by globalisation. There is an obvious battle here as has been seen by the intense demonstrations by the antiglobalisation, anti-market organisations, who have grown in number every year that there is G8 summit or the World Trade meeting. The recent events in Germany during the last G8 meeting during which the anti-market group and those opposed to what they term inequalities in the globe vehemently protested and had to be dealt with by what some may have seen as excessive police force. It appears, as Duke noted, that the tide has turned with the end of the twentieth century and some loss of confidence in the idea of a free market which does not address the vulnerability of some individuals and regions. There has also been a growing concern among several government administrations, particularly those in the developing world over what Duke termed as the increasing power of corporations and the threat they may represent to national sovereignty. Duke quotes *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 9 January, which pointed out, then, at the time when he (Duke) wrote his article, that 71 of the world’s largest economic entities were not nations but corporations, and

then Microsoft, the technology giant, was placed in the 11th position. Operating locally in this global village economy is a new aspect of lifelong learning for the university. The University of 2000 is more prone than the University of the 1970s to anchor in its local region, context and culture as a way of engaging with the overwhelming pace and ambiguity of the global (Duke 2002, p. 27). Duke sums up the challenge that the university of the twenty-first century that is geared to promoting lifelong learning as follows:

In an increasingly unstable environment where economies, cultures, and employment and the very nature of knowledge appear contingent, it becomes incumbent on whole societies to become learning organisms. For universities survival requires that they become open systems. This means being regionally embedded. (Duke 2002, p. 27)

This quote is of significant relevance to African universities if they are to become relevant in promoting lifelong learning in the continent.

## Fostering Learning Society in Africa

In writing about what he calls *in search of the learning society*, Duke cites the work of Jarvis 1968 which described the learning society as:

One that, in addition to offering part-time adult education to every man and woman at every stage of grown-up life, had succeeded in transforming its values in such a way that learning, fulfillment, becoming human, had become its aims and all its institutions were directed to this end. (Jarvis 1997, p. 176 in Duke 2002, p. 27)

Lelliot et al. (2000, p. 41) argued that ‘...the premises and pitfalls in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are tied to two quintessential motifs of our times: globalization and the learning society’. But they are quick to note that both ideals ‘...have a rather different purchase in Africa than they do in Europe, North American and Australasia... and so too, do the promises of information technology’ (p. 41). They cite the work on Hughes and Tight (1995) who have argued that the idea of a learning society is a contemporary myth. The argument goes that ‘...current political, social, and economic and education problems... may all be addressed through the development of a learning society’ (p. 41). The authors note that calling learning society a myth does not mean dismissing it outright, but rather to suggest the complexity of this concept and associated benefits that it offers to society (also see Duke 2002). In reference to Africa, they note that ‘whereas the nature and likely consequences of globalization are hotly debated (as are the nature and possibility of a learning society), the prevailing view is that the African continent, along with the rest of the developing world, needs wide access to ICT if it is to compete in a global economy’ (Djamen 1995 in Lelliot et al. 2000, p. 42).

Judith Chapman has also added voice to the importance of ICT in creating what might be called a learning society when she notes that ‘...the vision of a networked society with equal access to knowledge and information, made up of communities and individuals, themselves in charge of their own learning environments, and governments, educators and the private sector working in partnership, is fundamental

to the evolution and achievement of a democratic, free, economically stable and just society in the 21st century' (Chapman 1996, p. 52). Lelliot et al. (2000) concurs with Judith, at least in some ways when they observe that 'Judith Chapman rightly suggests that the question to be asked about ICT is how society can exploit technology in order to provide the most effective education for a democratic, socially inclusive and economically advanced community' (Chapman 1996, p. 51 in Lelliot et al. 2000, p. 47). Here, it appears, they are in agreement with Duke's suggestion that the civic element has been added to the learning, to the education and to the vocational skill in lifelong learning discourse. It is in a way, going backwards, when the civic alongside theology was dominant only to be overtaken by the vocational, term economic, in the later years.

## Universalising Lifelong Learning

Education is universal and what is good for humanity in one continent must be of good to another. To define lifelong learning to mean learning from birth to death and then to argue that some regions are better prepared for lifelong learning than others is rather ambiguous. If the elements of the 'modern' society as expressed by Duke (2002), Dodds (2001), Edwards et al. (1998) and Field (2006) are now universal, then it would follow that lifelong learning should equally be universal. To paraphrase Duke (2002, p. 27), one measure of success in Africa's lifelong learning will be the breadth of access of the relevant population, now lifelong learners as well as school-leavers, from the system. Access in Africa's case will mean wider not just more. Expanding education that simply give advantage to those already destined to higher levels of education by virtue of their socioeconomic background merely promotes a middle-class intake and fails to address major inequalities and the exclusion of old and new disadvantaged individuals in the growing slums in African cities as well as rural population. As Duke (2002) noted, massive expansion of higher education has made it to become politically visible as an arena for adult education, but it must equally be made accessible to those who have traditionally been locked out, by whatever means possible, including giving the poor some advantage over the better-off in terms of incentives that would allow them to break from intergenerational lack of access to higher education. It is by doing so that higher education will promote lifelong learning as was earlier noted by Dodds (2001). Here too ICT can be instrumental in increasing opportunity, but offering ICT-based teaching and learning to those who can easily access the Internet and thus freeing space for those completely locked out of tertiary education and who may never have the opportunity to access it through ICT may be a better way forward in Africa. Given the digital divide, simply applying ICT equally will not promote the sort of lifelong learning benefits that are being proclaimed by the literature.

But as Duke (2002, p. 29) noted:

...conflictual issues familiar in adult education and lifelong learning reappear: liberal education vs. vocational training; individual development vs. corporate interests; social and

civic vs. service to the economy. Superficial dichotomies entangle with disputes about the traditional, conserving and reproducing functions of the university as distinct from its innovative and knowledge-creating tasks; about its socializing or finishing school and professional updating or continuing education functions; and about the balance between teaching, research and community service. The successful implementation of national schemes for adult education depends, finally upon securing the active participation of community leaders, establishing vigorous adult education profession, making full use of schools, and selecting appropriate methods of communication.

Outside the sphere of the traditional distance education, Internet connectivity is expanding throughout Africa. Most of the 54 countries of Africa now have some form of access to the Internet in their major towns. The concern however is that only those who are reasonably wealthy can afford to use these IT facilities and they are a tiny minority in Africa. Particularly, active Internet markets are found in South Africa, Ghana, Senegal, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and the Ivory Coast (Saint 1999). So critical is technological competence now to social and economic life that there is now a new dimension to exclusion, that of the digital divide. Studies show that better access to computers and the Internet is linked to social advantage, ethnic and educational background, and even where someone lives. Access is important but there is a risk of the digital divide being oversimplified. Instead of being narrowly technological, to be bridged primarily through investing in more computers and Internet connectivity, it has deep social and educational roots calling for a broad range of policies. Wider access to ICT is needed in libraries and community centres as well as schools. Developing expertise in ICT use among all students and (especially) teachers is also critical. Partnerships have to be built with the telecommunications companies in Africa. An ICT dimension should be integrated into broad social and educational equity strategies that African nations pursue if they are to promote the idea of lifelong learning.

In Africa, inequalities persist in basic and post-basic schooling. Participation in lifelong learning is likely to follow closely the patterns of success in initial education, with the alarming result that inequalities among young people grow even wider as they go up the education ladder. The same holds true for participation in job-related training or even access to these jobs in the first place. For Africa, lifelong learning, along the lines that have been discussed and with the support of ICT, must first seek ways of lessening the inequalities of educational access that exists between the rural and urban and the urban well-off and growing urban slum dwellers. There is hope that technology can speed things up but caution is necessary so that expansion of ICT has an equity element. It has been known that employers in Africa would devote on average significantly more resources for training high-skilled, well-educated employees than others, reinforcing skill differences. There is also evidence by various researches in many countries which point out that workers who are already skilled will tend to receive company support for professional development than the low-skilled ones who would need it in the first place. Clearly, equity strategies for education must continue well after people have left school and college and here is where lifelong learning should play a role. Public strategies for adults should be targeted to those who missed out early on. And tax incentives can



encourage investment in training by small- and medium-sized enterprises, including for older workers in Africa like has happened in other parts of the world. It is by this that entrepreneurship and lifelong learning can be linked.

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide perspectives on lifelong learning in Africa. Apart from South Africa which is already having explicit government policy on lifelong learning, many countries in Africa have not paid attention to lifelong learning as framework for the organisation of education that empowers all generations. There is still a focus on universal primary education and accelerated access to secondary education. But there is a quiet revolution in Africa brought about by the rapid use of information and communication technology. It is through ICT that there is potential for the fostering of lifelong learning in Africa, and I have attempted to provide examples of initiatives by citizens and entrepreneurs which only await for incentives from governments to accelerate a lifelong learning agenda in the continent. Universities have a role to play and while there are already several aspects of lifelong learning happening, there is need to recognise these as so, and to develop disciplines that focus on understanding what lifelong learning would mean in the African context. Africa has been a site for lifelong learning, though folklore need to be surpassed by developing courses in lifelong learning. It is also necessary that African governments implement national schemes for lifelong learning. Moreover, lifelong learning as a framework is very much in sic with African indigenous knowledge although currently, technology and economic determinism are said to be the driving forces behind the governments and international organisations rallying around the idea that there should be lifelong learning. There are two issues that the chapter has also attempted to highlight. One, the basic tenets of lifelong learning, as being inclusive and accommodative of all forms of knowledge and learning, both in school and out of school is appealing to Africa. Two, technology is playing a central role in the everyday lives of Africans and that to assume that Africa has not embraced technology or that it requires higher levels of education to do is inaccurate. What the mobile telephone technology is doing in the continent demonstrates the potential of technology in driving lifelong learning and in facilitating lifelong learning at the same time. The quest for knowledge is rapidly growing in Africa with universities now catering for adult populations. In line with what others have argued, and specifically to paraphrase Lowe (1971, p. 155), in Africa, the successful implementation of national schemes for lifelong learning in each of the African countries depends upon securing the active participation of community leaders, establishing a vigorous adult education profession, making full use of schools and selecting appropriate methods of communication. These four factors will now be considered.

As Lowe noted, ‘...the enlisting of community leaders is very high priority. Occupying influential posts or playing dominant roles in local communities there

are many people whose social contribution would be greatly enhanced if they were better informed about the economic and political situation and instructed in the elementary techniques of communication and business procedures' (p. 155).

Beyond targeted approaches, a number of general lessons can be highlighted for educational policy. First, it is important to set clear goals, targets and priorities, and to monitor progress on equity at all levels of education systems in the continent. Equity should be an integral aspect of all education policy and practice, not treated as a matter apart. To this end, much improved pertinent information is needed at all levels, from the local to the international.

Much more than good data is needed, of course. The adult education system, especially at tertiary education level, should be diversified, flexible and open to the application and use of IT along the lines suggested by Dodds (2001) if they are to support lifelong learning. Co-operative programmes between the adult learners, teachers and community-based partners, including employers, should be fostered in Africa just as they have become integral aspect of education in other parts of the world. These positive features can be enhanced through distance learning and if ample recognition is given in study programmes to informal learning, such as work experience fused with IT rather than insisting on formal qualifications alone.

It is known that resources need to be deployed strategically to maximise the output. Equity policies often call for additional resources, but their quality and use are just as important for effective change as the quantities involved, particularly if lifelong learning is to be fostered. As Lowe noted in his argument for adult education, it can also be said that lifelong education policies alone will not suffice. Progress in lifelong learning will also depend on more coherent, co-coordinated public policy, embracing employment and welfare, in partnership with education and training.

Africa's lack of adequate infrastructure, particularly in terms of ICT at first glance, may be seen as a disadvantage, but it can be argued that this could at the same time serve as an advantage in the sense that Africa need not reinvent the wheel and in doing so can avoid all the pitfalls that have been experienced elsewhere. This advantage should be made use of by pushing for the cutting-edge technology rather than simply consuming obsolete technology. In doing so, African nations should be willing to learn from the experience of more advanced countries the ways and means of providing the greatest social benefits to a larger fraction of the population while avoiding unpleasant side effects of technology.

To sum up, it is without doubt that lifelong learning appears appropriate as a framework for organising education in Africa. It has a much wider appeal than adult education which it may have been associated with in the recent past, and has already, in a sense, completely replaced adult education which for the most part of the more than 40 years of African countries' independence remained on the periphery of education policy and development (Amutabi 1997). The department of adult education where they existed was aimed at teaching older people how to read and write and drew very limited interest from government and policy makers. Lifelong learning, to the contrary, is appealing and some even think it is a mega issue that Africa is not ready for. It is framed as a learning society, only possible in the first world where citizens are already accustomed to the culture of reading, where basic education are not

issues but rather its standards and relevance, where technology is widespread, and where resources arguably available to support a culture of lifelong learning. Africa, as would be argued by authors such as Atchoarena and Hite (2001), must first put its house in order and forget about lifelong learning. To this author, Africa must first be able to provide full basic education and have the infrastructure that is necessary to support lifelong learning. In short, the discourse on lifelong learning is of no relevance to Africa, one because it is still poor and two, it needs to aim at meeting basic education needs. In this chapter, I have attempted to respond to this issue, even if in some ways I have become incoherent, by focusing on one aspect that has fuelled the growth of the idea of lifelong learning, that is, information technology.

When it comes to information technology, Africa is sort of a paradox. People lack electricity, they lack food, they cannot afford school fees, but travel all corners of some African countries, and what is evident is the use of technology. First, the Internet has become common in most small and large African cities, and even some illiterates now understand what an Internet is and what it does. The mobile phone has changed the face of communication and business in Africa from the simple chats, to sending money to knowing prices of goods by farmers with little education. If these events are considered aspects of lifelong learning, then one must question the validity of narrow arguments that the continent is not ready for lifelong learning as argued by some.

As noted by Walters (1999), Lifelong learning appeal is as a result of its link to capitalism, with the idea of the need for high skills and flexibility within the workforce. Candy (in Walters 1999, p. 217) 'points to the extraordinarily rapid pace of social, technological, cultural, economic, legal and educational changes throughout the world, combined with increasing global connectedness of many societies and economies, which emphasize the need for people who are adaptable are responsive-in short, who are capable of continuation lifelong learning'. Taking this quote as it is, its relevance in Africa is no less, as would be the case in the advanced economies. Africa is affected by the technological changes, social and economic transformation just like the rest of the world, and even much worse, there are growing poverty and more complex challenges that present patterns ways of education have failed to address. If lifelong learning is what it is claimed to be, then it is indeed in sync with both the present and past ways in Africa.

This same point is highlighted by Walters (1999, p. 217) when she notes that: 'The even more dramatic changes in South African society render it particularly important for the South African education system to produce lifelong learners and to provide for continuing learning throughout life'.

There is now a growing insertion of lifelong learning in most education and economic policy documents in Africa, but this is not adequate. What is required are explicit policies that support and provide incentives for lifelong learning. South Africa is a head of other countries in Africa on this and as noted by Walters, inclusion in the global economy now requires lifelong long learning. To expect education systems in Africa to respond to the challenges of globalisation and to ask for more entrepreneurship in Africa while at the same time denying that the continent is ready for lifelong discourse is in itself contradictory and ambiguous.

To conclude this chapter, it is useful to re-visit the meaning of the term ‘lifelong learning’. The definition offered by Paul Belanger is perhaps one that best captures the reality of learning in Africa both now and in the past because it sees learning as being an integrative process. ‘Lifelong’ means that learning and education are possible at any stage – from the cradle to the grave. It is also integrative because it refers to learning both in the formal education system and through everyday life, either at home, through a social movement, through work or through local community activities. It includes formal, non-formal and informal education. The concept, therefore, is integrative in two dimensions: horizontal (between home, community, the media and work) and vertical (between different life stages) (Belanger in Walters 1999, p. 218).

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## Chapter 25

# Lifelong Learning and the Teaching Occupation: Tracking Policy Effects of Governing Ideas on Occupational (Re)Ordering

Terri Seddon and Amy Bohren

‘Lifelong learning’ is a theme that highlights ‘learning’ but the meaning of this term has shifted over time. In the 1970s, UNESCO advocated a humanist-democratic agenda around learning throughout life. Supporting lifelong education, by recognising informal, non-formal as well as formal learning across the life course, was endorsed as a means of building learning societies. By the 1990s, these themes had been reoriented to support economic and employment agenda that were advocated by business and governments. Learning societies would tap ‘learning’ as a contribution to economic development.

This chapter examines how the idea of lifelong learning affects the teaching occupation. We approach ‘lifelong learning’ as a key policy theme, which has the effect of bringing learners and their labour to the centre of policy debates while sidelining the work of teachers and teaching. We track this discursive reordering of learning and teaching through the construction of lifelong learning as a governing idea that travels through globally networked localities and is translated into nationally endorsed policy instruments. We show that these policy instruments disturb the occupational boundaries of teaching and the teaching occupation’s capacity for occupational boundary work.

## Lifelong Learning and the Teaching Occupation

Lifelong learning is a policy theme that has developed at a particular moment in history, the turn of the twentieth century. The early ideas about the value of ‘learning through life’ popularised in the 1970s through UNESCO had a distinctly humanist orientation. By the 1980s, they had been replaced by a more economically oriented

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policy agenda, which affirmed markets over states as the most effective and efficient means of coordinating education. The idea of lifelong learning was reframed by this policy agenda that mobilised particular economic knowledge as a resource in policy making and implementation. As a policy theme, lifelong learning emphasised ‘learning’ as a means of building skills for work and de-emphasised older humanist conceptions of learning (Wain 2009).

The idea that ‘learning’ was a means of building skills, which would enhance national international competitiveness in the global economy, travelled globally (Alexiadou and Jones 2001). It was not always explicitly named ‘lifelong learning policy’ but was pervasive in the culture of policy making and implementation. In Australia, for instance, the term ‘lifelong learning’ did not gain much purchase (Smyth et al. 2005). In Europe, it was used to name policy texts (e.g. European Commission 1995) through the 1990s but tended to fall out of use as a title in the 2000s. The direction of travel was not always linear but moved networked conversations, decision-making processes and became embedded in technologies that enabled and framed the work of government in dialogue with stakeholders (Axford and Seddon 2004).

By the 2000s, the idea that all citizens, communities and societies needed ‘learning’ as a foundational competence had become commonplace. A study of 30 countries found that all were working to build up their knowledge economies and that forming citizens with the capacities to prosper in this new global economic order was important for national economic and social goals. This pattern was consistent across countries, regardless of their economic development or political system (Kuhn 2007). The result was a process of reform, which has made a ‘lifelong learning educational order’ (Field 2006) that is increasingly globally distributed.

The generalisation of lifelong learning as a policy theme has disturbed the established structures and cultures of modernist schooling. National education and training systems had developed through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a negotiated compact between nation-building states and education workforces (Lawn 1996). Dale (2009, pp. 371–373) identifies its four key defining characteristics as follows:

1. The link between modernity and education gave national education systems convergent tendencies. They shared enlightenment commitments to individual equality and collective progress within the frames of nation states (Meyer), were networked through governments to wider international agencies that structured capitalism and were influenced by modernist scientific rationality that professionalised an increasing range of social issues and problems.
2. This institutional configuration oriented education to persistent problems within capitalism; specifically, it has helped make the social and cultural infrastructure of capitalism by preparing the workforce, disciplining identities to ensure social order and cohesion and legitimising social ordering despite inequalities. Education policy and the capability of the national education system, exercised through the teaching workforce, mediated these contradictory imperatives without ever solving the problems they create (e.g. between meritocracy and equality).
3. The ‘grammar of schooling’ developed in ways that normalised organisational assumptions and practices with the work of educating. These norms include a

spatial and temporal disconnect between education (in schools for children) and production (in workplaces for adults), a distinct calendar of the academic year and school day, compulsion on citizens and the assumption that schooling is the job of professional experts. These norms of educating institutionalised a culture, which endorsed universality, equality and professionalism, with consequences for the resources required and the way they were supplied through the organisation of national societies.

4. Education was historically sedimented as national systems, a repository and agency of national traditions and identity. They were key governing instruments in societies that were designed to ‘define, replicate and ensure their national distinctiveness; to strengthen their national economies; to address their social problems; to influence the distribution of individual life chances’ (Dale 2009, p. 373).

The teaching occupation was formed within, and helped form, these modernist terms and conditions of educational work. However, this established occupational ordering and its terms and conditions of work were said to be ‘designed for old economies’ (Miller 1996). The projection of new visions of society, of a ‘knowledge economy’ that rests on lifelong learning, provided a warrant for reform that would build an innovative educational regime and workplace culture.

It is this reordering of educational work that makes lifelong learning significant for the teaching occupation. Yet, this nexus between lifelong learning and the teaching occupation has received less research attention than might be expected. The research tends to examine either the policy end of this process or the practice end, focusing on teachers in particular learning locales. Its ambivalence is evident in the ‘despair’ (Ball 2009), the uncertainty about directions implicit in strong critiques but less effective charting a forward course (Bottery 2009; Foss Linblad and Linblad 2009), and the different ‘voices of hope’ that suggest programmes of action but only sometimes politics (Nixon et al. 2001; Halpin 2002; Sawyer et al. 2007).

Our aim is to look beyond narratives of teacher de- and re-professionalisation (Ozga 1995) and accounts of ‘activist professionals’ (Sachs 2003). Instead we interrogate the way knowledge mediates policy and occupational agency in the ongoing politics that reregulates, reorganises and reauthorises teaching (Seddon 1997).

## Methodology

This research into the relationship between lifelong learning policy and the teaching occupation is part of a larger research programme (Seddon et al. 2009). We build on prior cross-national research that documented occupational agency in human service work (teaching, nursing and social work) in five countries (Seddon et al. 2010). Our problematic is anchored in critical education policy studies and research on occupational agency and globalisation. It is framed by



feminist and historical sociology (Abrams 1982; Bonnell and Hunt 1999; Haug et al. 1987; Sennett 1998), which draws attention to the contradictory social and cultural practices that constitute workers as they make the world of work and politics and highlights:

... what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future *out of* the past, of seeing that the past is not just the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed. (Abrams 1982, p. 8)

This perspective orients our inquiry towards the agency of policy makers and practitioners in their workplaces and working lives. We approach 'lifelong learning' as a significant policy theme that travels through globally distributed knowledge networks is deployed as a cultural resource in the work of governing (Alexiadou and Jones 2001; Ozga and Jones 2006). Our empirical research tracks these policy effects through three networked localities, at the transnational, national and local workforce scales.

At the transnational level, we document the narrative construction of 'lifelong learning' as the motive force in the knowledge economy. This argument, using critical discourse analysis to re-read a key OECD conference paper, is elaborated in more detail elsewhere (Seddon 2010a).

At the national level, we follow the notion of 'learning' into the design of administrative technologies in a national jurisdiction. Our case is Australia and we focus particularly on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). Like other Standard Classifications of Occupations, ANZSCO is a tool for organising jobs into 'a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job' (ISCO 2010). These classificatory schema provide a rule-governed framework for international data exchange, comparison and reporting related to occupations. They also support client services related to labour demand and supply. In this way, they are expected to have effects in the social organisation of everyday life.

Finally, we use the structure and definitions of ANZSCO to represent an image of the 'lifelong learning teaching occupation'. Using the ANZSCO four-digit codes, we prepared a diagram of those occupational groups whose text descriptions included references to 'teaching' or proxy terms, like 'train', 'instruct', 'coach' and 'lecture'. The design of this image is informed by our keyword search strategies, web-based information and personal communications with key informants at the Australian Bureau of Statistics who were able to explain more detailed features of this administrative technology and the way it is designed and used in Australia. This representation allows us to reflect on the impact of lifelong learning on the teaching occupation. We comment on the patterns of occupational groups (at four-digit code level) constituting the 'lifelong learning teaching occupation' and the implications of these developments for occupational boundaries and the definition of teaching as work. We suggest that these data show reduced capacity for occupational agency in the teaching occupation but also offer resources that could be mobilised in occupational boundary work oriented to occupational renewal.

## Policy Knowledge and Policy Effects

### *Mobilising Knowledge in Policy*

Policymaking is the work of governments or other decision-making authorities. It entails working with knowledge to ‘make problems’ that can be solved, within prevailing relations of power (Young 1971). It generates governing ideas that are taken up by agencies throughout state, market and civil society, where they are received, translated and renegotiated in relation to embedded practices that make local places (Ball 1990, p. 349; Grek 2010; Ozga 2005). These ideas become policy implementation by creating a ‘knowledge culture’ (Somers 1994), a cultural infrastructure that frames and sustains commonsense thinking and facilitates public agreements through multi-agency dialogues. Problem solving becomes framed by the prevailing knowledge culture that has currency within particular jurisdictions. Problem solutions become governing ideas when they are codified and authorised through the state as endorsed and legitimised institutional rules, resource allocations and ways of knowing that operate at particular scales (Robertson and Dale 2002). In this way, ideas like lifelong learning come to embody a particular ‘authoritative allocation of values’ (Prunty 1984).

Policy has effects because knowledge ‘about what’ and ‘for what’ is applied in practical problem solving (Ball 2010; Kaznelson 1996). Knowledge *about what* recognises ‘lifelong learning’; it provides the terminology that names the possibility of learning throughout the life course. It problematises prior distinctions between schools for children and the wider world of adult learning in ways that make alternative social organisation thinkable. It invites imaginative interpretations and innovative actions. In this sense, the idea of lifelong learning is a cultural resource for agency, that can be used in thinking and doing by governments and by other individual and collective actors, like occupations. The effects of such resource mobilisations are always framed by the interplay of structure and agency, the moment-by-moment movements between conscious choices and processes of regulation and subjectification that govern agency (Stehr and Meja 2005; McLeod and Yates 2006).

Knowledge *for what* is about ‘doing things with words’ (Pels 2005). In this fluid, actionist, sense, lifelong learning is a policy discourse, an instrument of governing. The practice of lifelong learning consolidates symbolic meanings, which constitute and shape entities (knowledge and things) that are also identities (webs of meaning and ways of being in the world). These discursive practices form social spaces and their rhythms of time, define boundaries and construct patterns of inclusion-exclusion in ways that order everyday life. These symbolic orders of discourse create hierarchies of value and spatial configurations ordered as centres and margins, cores and their peripheries (Foucault 1987). This way of understanding knowledge in policy highlights policy effects in terms of ‘what can be said, and thought, and about who can speak, when, where and with what authority’ (Ball 1990, p. 17–18).

Language mediates these knowledge-policy processes. Using one lexicon rather than another creates a particular narrative that orders the world. For example, privileging

'lifelong learning' has the effect of highlighting 'learners' while simultaneously obscuring teaching and teachers. In this simple way, the teaching occupation is affected by the lifelong learning policy theme because teachers' work becomes background to learners' learning. This reverses the ordering of teachers and learning in modernist schooling, in which teachers were the more visible and agentic element, and teaching defined the work that governed learning. As these particular lexicons are generalised, they become embedded in the instruments and practices of governing. They shape everyday life because particular ways of knowing the world become sedimented in commonsense and embedded in everyday activities (ways of doing), representations (ways of thinking) and the constitution of particular identities (individual and collective ways of being) (Weedon 1987, p. 108).

### *Travelling Ideas*

As the idea of 'lifelong learning' travelled, it gained endorsement by governments and had effects in local spaces (Alexiadou and Jones 2001). The movement was from policy-research workplaces where policy knowledge is crafted as problem-solving strategies to policy-making workplaces where policy themes and their associated assumptions are endorsed and authorised by governing agencies. This movement translates an idea that travels into governing ideas that are materialised as agreed policy texts and social technologies, which are designed to support the art of governing (Rose 1999).

This translation of policy knowledge into governing ideas and instruments is shaped by the terms and conditions of policy work. Lifelong learning, as a policy theme, is contextualised by changes in the global economy and the agency of national governments. When the world was organised predominantly through nation states, sovereignty meant that national governments could exercise power in more or less autonomous ways within their territories. Increased global interconnectedness disrupts these terms and conditions of governing. National governments continue to exercise authority as 'government' within their own national jurisdictions but also participate in 'governance' within the network of nation states. At the global scale, there is no privileged or sovereign authority but, rather, multiple voices, considerable cultural diversity and a variety of decision-making centres that are networked together (Rhodes 1996).

Networked governance occurs between and also within countries. Resources that support the art of governing flow through globally connected policy networks and multi-agency partnerships where governments and communities work together to address complex social problems. In these different settings, at and between different workplaces operating at different scales (e.g. local, national and global), the agency of governing is distributed and negotiated through networks. These knowledge networks present significant challenges in reaching agreements. Policy work no longer operates within closed systems through bureaucratically organised, control and command processes. Rather, the work of making governing ideas occurs in complex

but open systems in which cooperation and coordination must be carefully managed (Kickert et al. 1997).

These knowledge networks produce and relay ideas as two-way flows between policy-research agencies and governing agencies. The policy makers whose labour enables this work are a 'policy magistracy' (Lawn and Lingard 2002). They sit outside the institutions of democratic governance but are intimately interconnected with the work of governments. These globally networked policy and governing agencies create an institutional and technological infrastructure for building and communicating policy knowledge. The OECD, for instance, currently networks 31 countries, including Mexico, Turkey, Korea and most recently Slovak Republic (in 2000), funded by member states. The USA provides 24% of the 328 million Euro budget, which sustains relationships between governments and R&D agencies (OECD 2010).

These transnational terms and conditions of policy work support significant policy innovation and policy activism. This is because policy ideas forming in transnational networks are not constrained by path-dependent thinking at the national scale. As in the past, policy makers identify issues in everyday life that require attention and formulate them in ways that can be readily taken up by decision-making bodies. But policy themes, like lifelong learning, develop through globally interconnected knowledge flows embedded in conversations in the transnational policy space. This labour occurs at some distance from national governments but is informed through flows of information and data that construct policy problems and frame policy solutions (Nóvoa and Yariv-Marshall 2003; Ozga 2009).

Innovations occur in both the content and form of policy knowledge that constitutes resources for governing. Alongside new policy ideas, data and narratives, there is also considerable innovation in the design of instruments for governing. These social and administrative technologies build in particular economic understandings of social action, which privileges the use of positive and negative incentives in shaping preferred behaviours. They encourage the deployment of sophisticated classificatory and data-gathering technologies that enables governing by numbers (Grek and Ozga 2009).

### *Governing Ideas and Occupational Agency*

These governing ideas endorsed through policy and governing processes have effects in the ordering and self-regulation of work and working life. The process of translating particular ideas into instruments of government is mediated by the work of different occupational actors in workplaces. Policy makers, bureaucrats and researchers and educational workers within national education and training systems constitute a kind of supply chain for governing ideas. Yet these occupational groups involved in the making of knowledge for policy are also subject to its circulation, as travelling ideas authorised by governments are implemented as means of governing workplaces.

This supply chain for travelling ideas is visible in different workplace cultures and occupational territories. Within the social relations of workplaces, occupational identities negotiate the nature of jobs, the working knowledge needed to do this job and the ordering of identities triangulated by occupational and organisational relations of power. In this politics of work, occupational groups are collective actors that cohere because of their shared experience of work; what might be termed their 'vocation'. As collective agencies, they are made and make themselves through their work and position within the wider societal division of labour. They do a job and also engage in occupational boundary work that consolidates and secures their agency as a service to society, while asserting their occupational value and visibility in ways that justify recompense and recognition (Hughes 1958; Larson 1990; Henriksson 2010).

Occupational boundary work determines occupational capability and orders occupational identities in workplaces. The primary objective is to negotiate jurisdiction, licence (permission to work) and mandate, the elbow room to do that work (Abbott 1988). These agreements about territory, permission and recognition of expertise secure occupational identity and capacity. They are determined through practical politics in working life relative to wider social (system) forces, mediated by state regimes, and through inter- and intra-professional conflicts. This political work serves to defend vocation, assert particular ways of knowing and acting, delineate insiders and outsiders and codify occupational skill and expertise.

Success in occupational boundary work is therefore a political outcome that is evident in terms of visibility, recognition and reward. More powerful identities are able to build visible occupational groups because they can access knowledge, networks and organisational capabilities to mobilise status, regard and other resources. This differential occupational capability means that some occupational groups become more 'visible' than others because their labour and skill is recognised as the basis for reward, while other labour remains more marginal. The latter is what might be termed 'non-work'; it has social and cultural effects but is not seen, acknowledged or rewarded as 'work'. Such invisibility is particularly evident in relation to the work of women and minorities, and the occupations in which they are concentrated (Daniels 1987).

Occupational ordering is an outcome of occupational agency mediated through policy and state regimes. Different state regimes privilege different patterns of occupational formation. The US welfare state privileged individual entrepreneurship, which advantaged the development of the old professions (Law, Medicine), while in Europe professionalisation occurred through state collectivisation of labour in nation building (Henriksson et al. 2006). Such state endorsement was particularly important in the development of human service occupations (teaching, nursing and social work) because it recognised socially reproductive labour that sustains human societies over time, but is underestimated in value terms because it is not a source of profit and tends to be women's work. State endorsement enabled women and minorities to build up occupational organisation and profile. Their 'professional projects' were based on 'complex interactions between professional groups and their audiences' (Henriksson 2006, p. 175). They secured terms and

conditions of work and also anchored forms of ‘democratic professionalism’, an ethos of public service, which was distinct from the self-interest that characterised old professionalism (Preston 1996).

State-based nation building through the twentieth century endorsed the value of teaching as an occupation. In the twenty-first century, as rationalist transnational policy making has been unlocked from national cultures and traditions, state regimes around the world have re-engineered human service work as an instrument of governing in their own rationalist image that approaches human relationships as an externality. As a result, the teaching occupation has been reregulated, reorganised and reauthorised, presenting new challenges in securing occupational identity and agency (Seddon 1997). In the next section, we use Australia as a case to show that the discursive abstraction of ‘learning’ from teaching has disturbed the capacity of teaching occupations to engage in occupational boundary work.

## Tracking Lifelong Learning Policy Effects

### *The Transnational Level: ‘Learning’ as a Governing Idea*

The idea of lifelong learning institutionalises a particular concept and definition of ‘learning’ as a policy input to the work of governing. It codifies the policy imaginary of ‘knowledge economy’, operating through immaterial labour (learning and innovation) and with ‘learning’ as its driving force. So ‘learning’ comes to be seen as a foundational competence required by citizens, communities and societies on a ‘global scale’ (Kuhn 2007), while also materialising competent labour as a commodity in the global knowledge market. This economic notion of ‘learning’ became a travelling idea that was endorsed by national governments. Reframed by notions of human capital formation aligned to economic development, this particular conception of ‘learning’ reconstituted the knowledge culture that anchors everyday thinking.

This concept of ‘learning’ is elaborated in detail in Foray and Lundvall’s (1996) synthesis paper at a 1994 OECD conference on the ‘Knowledge Economy’. In this paper, they draw on their analysis of economic history and changes in the global economy to construct ‘knowledge economy’ as narrative of economic development. It has three elements: a genealogy; an ecology; and a motive force, learning and forgetting, which explains the dynamism in economies and societies.

The genealogy highlights the trans-historical significance of knowledge in economic life but the distinctive status of knowledge in the late twentieth century. Presuming ‘a period of radical change’ (p. 13), Foray and Lundvall identify ‘human competence’ as central to economic development across history and see the late twentieth century as a turning point. There is greater emphasis on knowledge in economic life, technological development and changing patterns of industry which all have wide social consequences. These times are not ‘business as usual’ but a historical discontinuity, when it is ‘especially pertinent ... to focus on learning and on the knowledge base’ (p.13).

Their ecology represents and establishes a lexicon to name human society and economy in the era of knowledge. Their narrative translates everyday life, made up of things and relationships, into concepts and classifications of knowledge, organisations and people. The 'economy' defines the landscape, which elides and serves as a proxy for 'society' (Kenway et al. 2006). This 'knowledge economy' is divided into two sectors: the knowledge producing 'innovation system' centred on codified knowledge, and the other sector of 'routine activities in economic life' which is a source of tacit knowledge generated through 'learning-by-doing, learning-by-using, and learning-by-interacting' (p. 13). The information marketplace links these two sectors. It is the space of transacting knowledge between economic agents (p. 15).

This genealogy and ecology constructs the world of knowledge economy as an ecosystem; a dynamic and complex whole in which people, organisations, countries, technologies, relationships and processes work together as a complex globally distributed system. The production of new knowledge (i.e. 'innovation') is fundamental to system sustainability, the core of economic life and the foundation for profitability. This knowledge system is not defined through established classifications of agents (e.g. individuals, firms, countries and regions) but is imagined as an information marketplace, with distinct nodes of knowledge production, exchange and consumption. Within this global network, some agencies (like universities) are repositioned as sites of global knowledge work. Others deal mainly in non-information products as spaces that locate the residual population as a source of tacit knowledge, which can be mined for knowledge resources (ideas and people) that serve as input (intellectual property) to the innovation system.

'Learning' is the positive motive force in this knowledge economy. Foray and Lundvall's history of innovation highlights the significance of interaction and knowledge-sharing arrangements in prompting new ideas. It justifies their emphasis on 'knowledge networks' as key organisational forms in the knowledge economy. They describe knowledge building as a spiral between tacit and codified (i.e. tangible and exchangeable) knowledge which, they argue, is 'the most fundamental aspect of learning ... where tacit is transformed into codified knowledge, followed by a movement back to practice where new kinds of tacit knowledge are developed' (p.13). This spiral movement, 'at the very core of individual and organisational learning' (p. 22), constitutes innovation – the source of profit, which is realised through the codification and materialisation of knowledge into tradable goods and services.

'Forgetting' is also a critical dynamic in the process of innovation. Innovation happens when learning is unchained from the past and positively directed towards economic development. But change requires individuals and groups to relinquish old practices and ways of acting and relating, and adopt a proactive orientation to innovation and its returns. Economic innovation therefore depends upon social innovation. 'Forgetting is a crucial and necessary element in the process of creative destruction. Unless we can forget the old ways of doing things, new procedures will be blocked' (p. 19).

This narrative of knowledge economy and its dynamic anchoring in learning and forgetting repositions education as an instrument of governing. The imaginary of knowledge economy reconfigures the functions of education and training. Universities

are visibilised in the innovation system. Schools, early childhood education and vocational education and training are located alongside dispersed workplaces and communities, as part of the non-information sector. They produce tacit knowledge in the form of people and ideas, which becomes useful insofar as it can be codified and extracted by the innovation system. Schooling is the place to develop learners' learning capacities and manage residual and resistant populations as a source of tacit knowledge. This embodied human capital, codified as competence through qualifications, is transacted in labour markets ordered by knowledge.

### ***Travelling into the National Level: 'Learning' as a Policy Instrument***

The narrative of the 'knowledge economy', its lexicon and webs of meaning, justify organisational innovations in and beyond education. Its notion of 'learning' is a means of managing human and intellectual capital as knowledge flows through the information market. Its utility is realised as this policy knowledge is embedded in conversations, coordination mechanisms and information management instruments that steer behaviour in preferred directions.

This particular concept of 'learning' initially travelled through people's interactions in global policy networks. For example, the 1994 OECD conference was jointly organised by the Danish Ministry of Business and Industry and the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry. Two hundred and fifty representatives from government, academia and business attended the conference and claimed 'wide agreement across all layers of society on the critical role of knowledge in economic production, and the wide scope for policy action in the area' (OECD 1996, p. 3).

The machinery of transnational policy networks further relayed these ideas about learning. For instance, Foray and Lundvall are frequently cited and self-proclaimed 'network entrepreneurs'. Their work is taken up and also endorsed through conventional citation processes. In 2010, Lundvall recorded over 23,000 abstract, and over 9,000 full working paper, downloads (LogEc 2010). His ideas are authorised by his relationships with international agencies, like the OECD. At the time of the conference, he was Deputy Director of the Science, Technology and Industry Directorate at the OECD (1992–1995) and then moved to the University of Aalborg (Denmark). He identifies three major achievements, which each enable ideas to travel: communicating his notion of innovation through interaction, being a network entrepreneur and manager with a predisposition to lead and teaching (Lundvall 2010). In 1994, Foray was a global R&D manager-networker occupying the role of Research Director at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS) and Professor at the *Institut pour le Management de la Recherche et de l'Innovation* (IMRI) at the University of Paris-Dauphine (Foray 2010).

The critical dissemination threshold is the take-up of travelling ideas and their institutionalisation as policy instruments by governments. This materialisation mobilises the authority of national governments in fixing and authorising the travelling



idea as a routine part of the prevailing knowledge culture. These practices of organising translate policy knowledge generated through the policy magistracy into national contexts and processes of democratic government.

This labour that enables knowledge to travel and be fixed is mediated by language that works through data sources and information. These cultural resources make organisational possibilities thinkable and then translates these policy imaginaries into instruments of governing that are 'fit for purpose' within the knowledge economy. As Miller (1996) argued in his contribution to the 1994 OECD conference, this knowledge work mobilises the idea of 'competence', 'the specific attributes of a person's human capital' (p. 70), as a basis for signage that will convey information about knowledge stocks (fixed human capital) and flows (human capital changes through learning and forgetting). This lexicon is used to highlight a person's skill not just as a capacity for competence, which may not be realised or may be directed in perverse ways, but as a 'capability', which recognises the way individuals perform learning and forgetting in a workplace or other institutional matrix that endorses the value of practical knowledge. Monitoring competence means that increases in tacit knowledge can be codified as a resource within the innovation system. Miller is quite explicit: the old system of learning and signage in education, 'framed by the classroom' and focused on the acquisition of knowledge as its marker of success, is too rigid. Instead, the knowledge economy finds 'more supple, content related and transparent signals' and positional goods useful. Such institutional redesign will 'clear away vexsome bottlenecks' and 'may pose a serious threat to the rents collected by certifying institutions' (Miller 1996, p. 73).

Qualifications that recognise capabilities or learning outcomes are key policy instruments in remaking the institutional architecture of national education systems. The result is worldwide reform that uses the idea of competent performance as the signage that communicates capability. The Australian Qualification Framework (AQF 2010), for instance, uses qualifications to 'certify the knowledge and skills that a person has achieved through study, training, work and life experience'. This definition disconnects the development of competence from its recognition; it institutionalises the separation of 'teaching' and 'assessing'. It is assessing that is the really useful work in the lifelong learning educational order because the work of assessors creates the institutional linkage between national qualifications (codified knowledge) and the human interface with tacit knowledge that is mediated through the 'highly visible, quality-assured national system of educational recognition that promotes lifelong learning and a seamless and diverse education and training system'. This policy architecture de-emphasises the work of teaching that actively develops (and evaluates) knowledge and skill as a means of enhancing individuals' life chances. It is more focused on providing 'a measure of Australia's intellectual capital'.

Less obvious policy instruments have also been redesigned around the concept of 'learning'. For instance, international and national Standard Classifications of Occupations institutionalise a foundational language for talking about occupations. This lexicon is mostly an unacknowledged cultural resource but it sits behind important knowledge structures that organise everyday life. The first classification of its

kind was mooted in 1923 at the first International Conference of Labour Statisticians. It was formalised as the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), published by the International Labour Organisation in 1958 and subsequently revised in 1968 and 1988 with ISCO 2008 still under construction. Australia produced its own Standard Classifications of Occupation in 1986 (ASCO 1986), which was revised in 1997 (ASCO 1997). The current version, ANZSCO (2006), integrates prior Australian and New Zealand classifications to provide a regional instrument.

Early classifications assumed a holistic notion of occupation. International agreements, in 1949, defined nine major occupational groups and three guiding principles for classification: ‘occupations’ identified types of work undertaken rather than the ‘branch of economic activity’; with business owners as well as employees included, if they were doing the same work; and were based on information regarding the type of work, employment status and industry that would permit a classification of jobs (ILO 2010).

Classification systems began to be redesigned using the competency-based notion of skills with ISCO-88 and ASCO 1997 (ABS 1997). ASCO 1986 defined ‘skill’ in terms of the level of education, on-the-job training or experience required to complete work tasks. ASCO 1997 revised this approach and defined skill through the Australian Qualifications Framework’s specification of the level of education and/or training and experience required to enter an occupation. This definitional shift prioritised experience in terms of competence rather than time served. It also recognised skill specialisations based on field of knowledge, tools and equipment used, materials worked on and goods or services produced or provided (ABS 1997). The ANZCO (2006) brought New Zealand into this skills-based model. It was not a ‘major time series break’ for Australia but it was for New Zealand.

These conceptual changes in classifying occupations were justified with reference to structural changes in the Australian economy. The review, which informed the revisions formalised in ASCO 1997, drew attention to ‘widespread industry and award restructuring, technological change and competency-based approaches to career entry and progression’ (ABS 1997, p. 1). These changes were particularly evident in the service and information technology sectors (p. 12). They were marked by a change in lexicon, from ‘goods and services produced’ to ‘goods and services provided’ (ABS 1997, p. 7), which embraces ‘non-production based operations’, like education (p. 7). The term ‘tools and equipment’ also expanded to include intellectual tools, such as ‘personal interaction’. ‘Materials worked on’, became inclusive of ‘people and organisations’ (p. 7).

These changes in the ANZSCO helped to consolidate the economic notion of ‘learning’ and lexicon of ‘lifelong learning’ in everyday knowledge cultures. These cultural resources provided a language to describe changes in the Australian economy and re-imagine the social organisation of learning on a ‘self-service’ model. CEO of the Australian National Training Authority, Moira Scollay (2000), narrated a vision for Australian education and training ‘as the cornerstone of Australian democracy’; in the ‘creation of a “learning society”’; in enhancing ‘national economic performance, sustainable growth and ... international competitiveness’; and

in which ‘intellectual and human capital [is] acknowledged as the heartbeat of national, enterprise and individual wealth creation and prosperity in the 21st century’. Yet the choice she presented, ‘between becoming lifelong learners and a learning society or missing out on controlling and creating our future’ (p. 12), was silent about the labour that mediates learning.

This labour that supports learning is, however, recognised in the ANZSCO. In the next section, we examine what ANZSCO tells us about the ‘lifelong learning teaching occupation’.

### ***Effects at the Workforce Level: ‘Learning’ as a Means of Reordering Occupations***

The institutionalisation of lifelong learning discursively reorders the relationship between teaching and learning. The economic conception of ‘learning’ and the self-service imaginaries encouraged by knowledge economy narratives fail to acknowledge that learning is mediated by labour. The effect is to reduce the visibility of the teaching workforce relative to learners. Yet teaching is identified in ANZSCO (2006) both in occupational groups that consist of at least 300 full-time jobs (ABS 1997) and in task descriptions. This classificatory instrument therefore offers a way of documenting the discursive construction of teaching as an occupation and offering some evidence of the occupational reordering that has accompanied lifelong learning reforms.

The ‘lifelong learning teaching occupation’ is not defined by established education and training associated with modernist schooling. Our analysis of task descriptions in ANZSCO indicates much wider involvement in teaching across Australian occupations. This is represented in Fig. 25.1.

Figure 25.1 shows the occupational groups (at four-digit code level) that have some involvement in teaching, according to the text descriptions in ANZSCO 2006. The criteria for inclusion were the keyword ‘teach’ or some reasonable proxy for teaching (e.g. train, educate and coach). The term ‘train’ identified a very large number of occupational groups (11 pages based on six-digit occupation level codes), which were mainly located outside established educational settings in workplaces and communities. Occupational groups which provide training were roughly grouped by industry sector in Fig. 25.1 (e.g. hospitality, community service work and primary producers). In those instances where it was difficult to identify industries, they were located as ‘other managers’, ‘other professionals’ and other services.

These data suggest that the lifelong learning teaching occupation is dispersed across a dual labour market. The work of teaching occurs in established educational settings (schools, VET, universities and early childhood), while training occurs in other workplace and community settings. This disturbs the established institutional alignment between the boundaries of the teaching occupation and formal schooling, which characterised modernist education and training. Instead, teaching in formal education and training settings appears as just a small part of the wider lifelong learning teaching occupation.

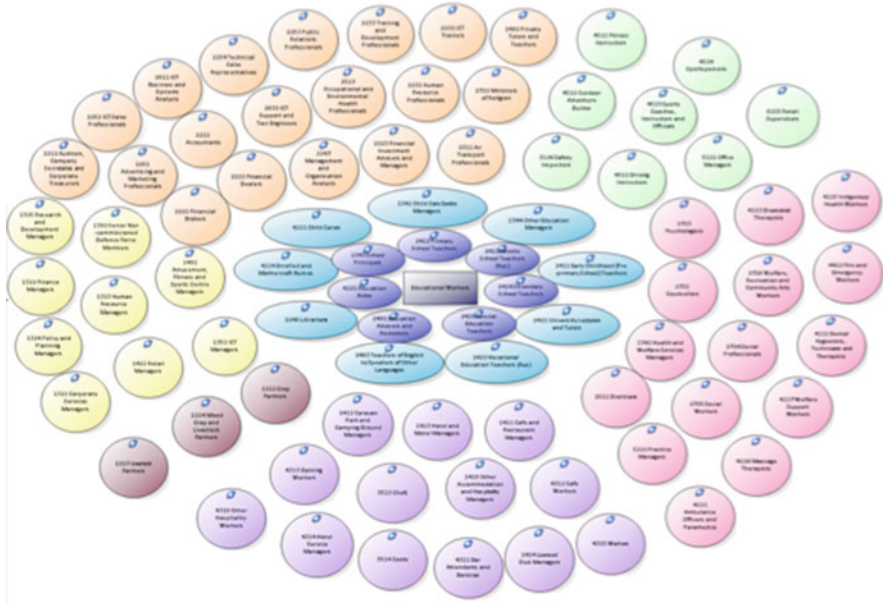


Fig. 25.1 The 'lifelong learning teaching occupation': a data-driven representation

This shift in occupational boundaries also disturbs the modernist core-periphery occupational structure. That occupational ordering of teaching was centred on schools and universities, and located VET and early childhood at the occupational margins. Now both the core and periphery modernist teaching occupation confronts a huge range of other teaching, which problematises what counts as 'teaching' and the identities that should be seen as 'teachers'.

These data from ANZSCO 2006 suggest the 'lifelong learning teaching occupation' is both rescaled and more fragmented than the modernist teaching occupation. These changes extend teaching work to embrace learners of all ages and circumstances and also stretch it from compulsory school education into the boundary zone between education and work. This re-territorialisation means that teaching work develops within very different social relations of learning, which creates new fracture lines within the rescaled teaching occupation. These are additional to modernist age-related, sectoral and public-private divisions in teaching and have implications for teaching identities, practices and the negotiation of terms and conditions of work.

The identity of 'teacher' is redefined by the delineation of new occupational categories involved in teaching. For example, in Australian vocational education, the category 'assessor' is emerging as an employment category. It is consistent with the Australian Qualification Framework's disconnection of skill development from its recognition for the award of qualifications. It is also encouraged by the development of training packages, sets of competency standards that define the award of a qualification, with optional supplementary teaching support materials. These policy

**Table 25.1** Frequency and distribution of occupational levels with some involvement in teaching across segments within the lifelong learning teaching occupation

Occupational segments (see Fig. 25.1)	Occupational levels in ANZSCO				
	Code 1 Managers	Code 2 Professionals	Code 3 Technicians trade	Code 4 Community- personal service workers	Code 5 Clerical admin workers 6–8 <sup>a</sup>
Schools	1	5		1	
Other education	2	5		2	
Community service	1	6		7	1
Hospitality	6	–	2	7	
Agriculture	3				
Other services			1	6	1
Other professionals		19			
Other managers	9				
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b> <b>0</b>

<sup>a</sup>Codes 6–8 are sales workers, machinery operators, drivers and labourers

instruments that disaggregate assessment from teaching also have the symbolic effect of suggesting that ‘teachers’ teach without assessing. They discursively redefine the expertise required to be a teacher, which has had effects in the qualification requirements to teach in Australian VET. The diploma and degree-level qualifications that were previously required have been downgraded to a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (Smith 2005).

The redefinition of ‘teaching’ is also evident in its disaggregation from ‘managing’ that makes organisational hierarchies more explicit. The modernist teaching occupation operated as a flat hierarchy with considerable horizontal variation. Consistent with older notions of ‘occupation’, seniority was recognised in promotion processes but not delineated as a specific occupational category. ANZCO orders occupational groups on a more hierarchical basis. For instance, School Principals (Code 1343) is a distinct occupational group, distinguished from School Teachers in Primary, Middle Schools, Secondary and Special Education (Codes 2412–2415). This emphasis on organisational hierarchies is also evident in occupational groups that have some involvement in teaching beyond schooling. They are mostly located in Managerial, Professional and Community-Personal Service Worker categories (one-digit codes: 1, 2 and 4), which in ANZSCO delineate broad occupational groupings distinguished by their level of skill (see Table 25.1).

This more fine-grained occupational and organisational classification of occupational groups suggests that regulation of teaching has increased. This is evident in shifts in terminology describing teaching-related tasks done by Secondary School Teachers (Code 2414). In ASCO 1989 their function was to ‘instruct students’. In ASCO 1997 they ‘present subject matter’, and are engaged in ‘presenting [the] prescribed curriculum’ in ANZCO 2006. This terminology suggests a repositioning of teacher agency from an authoritative ‘instructing’ role to a more subordinated role involving the implementation of decisions defined elsewhere. This trend is also evident in Vocational Education Teaching (Code 2422). ASCO 1997 described their

work as teaching, advising students, curriculum development and the preparation of teaching resources, with assessment referring to students' competencies. ANZSCO 2006 is more explicit about regulation and downplays teaching. It states that the teacher's primary task is 'creating effective learning options'. The term 'teaching' is used once to describe 'teaching aids'.

In the lifelong learning occupation beyond schooling, regulation is not only more explicit but also the terminology of teaching seems to be disappearing. For instance, firefighters and community development workers are engaged in significant non-routine work, which demands learning, such as community development workers going on overseas postings and firefighters travelling to fight fires in other countries or interstate in Australia. In ASCO 1989, 'Welfare Support Worker' (Code 4117) teaching is mentioned only briefly, related to evaluating training resources and coordinating programmes. ASCO 1997 extends the responsibilities but without talking about teaching (adding 'develops, evaluates and maintains community resources and programs'), as does ANZSCO 2006, which conveys a more proactive, problem-solving emphasis ('facilitates community development initiatives and collective solutions within a community'). ASCO 1989 includes a training and instruction role for Fire and Emergency Worker (4412). They 'may co-ordinate [the] training of industrial and volunteer fire-fighters and give instructions in fire-prevention, fire-fighting, rescue, evacuation and use of breathing apparatus'. ASCO 1997 describes 'advises on fire safety', while ANZSCO 2006 includes 'training recruits in emergency procedures and practices'. Task descriptions for firefighters refer to 'learning' related to participation in drills and courses, but the classification does not refer to the person who teaches these courses. ASCO 1989 identified the person who coordinates the drills, while ANZSCO 2006 removed reference to the coordination of training drills. These shifts in terminology may seem minor, but they prompt questions about way teaching-related work is being represented in the classification and its discursive effects as the classification is applied in knowledge-based policy and governance.

These occupational patterns suggest that lifelong learning policies are affecting the visibility of teaching and, hence, occupational agency. The collective agency of an occupational group is revealed by its capacity to define and protect its vocation and the dignity of work embedded in its role. Occupational boundary work is fundamental in consolidating occupational identity and negotiating jurisdiction, licence and mandate, which define occupational territory.

Yet this reconfiguration of occupational agency is complex; it does not just de-professionalise teaching but, rather, shifts the terrain of occupational boundary work. From the standpoint of the modernist teaching occupation, there is evidence of eroding occupational agency. From the standpoint of the lifelong learning teaching occupation represented in Fig. 25.1, the policy effects of lifelong learning appear more like a re-spatialisation.

These developments are undoubtedly threatening to the modernist teaching occupation. For instance, the scale of the lifelong learning teaching occupation represented in Fig. 25.1 positions the modernist teaching occupation as a minority. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) confirms this minority status in terms of student enrolment

data, which shows that 5.9 million people did work-related training courses while 3.4 million students were in school and just under a million in universities. This distinction between schooling and work-related training confirms the discursive delineation of 'teaching' from 'training', which was traditionally read hierarchically, through the notion of a mental-manual division of labour. These developments could justify defence of the teaching occupation's established boundaries that were anchored historically in schooling. Professional projects that build alignments with parents, communities and government in order to recognise the teaching occupation's service to society is the traditional way of doing this.

Yet these transformations in teaching as an occupation could also encourage reflection on the value of teaching that might be mobilised in professional projects. ANZSCO redraws teaching as a division of labour, through increasingly fine-grained categorisations and classifications but also visibilises different experiences and ways of thinking about teaching as a job. For instance, the ABS identifies 1.7 million learners in VET and 600,000 in adult and community education. These data reveal the labour of adult educators who have long been positioned at the margins of the modernist teaching occupation. Vocational teachers' dual identity as specialist industry experts and also teachers makes them ambivalent about essentialist distinctions between 'teaching' and 'training' because these ordering concepts are a historical consequence of occupational boundary work that delineates hierarchies of teachers. Such recognition opens up understandings and ways of aligning across occupational groups in support of teaching but in ways that acknowledge different work practices needed to support learning in different learning locales, workplaces as well as schools.

The dilemma for the modernist teaching occupation is how to engage in occupational boundary work given the re-spatialising effects of lifelong learning policy. Building alignments that cut across the discursive distinctions that have traditionally ordered core and periphery in and beyond the modernist teaching occupation is an option.

Our research suggests that one strategy uses the mediating effect of knowledge to negotiate common cause with audiences who value the labour that supports learning. We suggest the term 'educational work' (Seddon 2010) provides an analytical device that can be used to translate between audiences in ways that grasp commonalities in the historically and culturally specific forms of labour that supports learning in different learning locales. This process provides a way of delineating the particular contribution of the modernist teaching occupation to enabling learning from that of other occupational groups working in different space-time parameters, but without over generalising or eternising these historically specific forms of labour and their particular terms and conditions of work. In this way, it is possible to recognise the specific societal contribution of the modernist teaching occupation to learning outcomes and securing occupational terms and conditions, and also in institutionalising the notion of 'teaching' as a cultural resource, which names a particular form of labour that is valued across occupations, communities and nation states. The term 'educational work' recognises the normative character of this labour that, unlike lifelong learning, is enacted through the grammar of educating and oriented in ways that

enhance life chances for individuals and communities. It therefore provides a way of clarifying and potentially mobilising around what is being lost and gained in the reconfiguration of modernist schooling as a lifelong learning educational order.

## Conclusion

Lifelong learning is a policy theme that mobilises knowledge *about* 'learning' in ways that are *used* for governing. In this chapter, we have shown how a particular economic conception of 'learning' throughout life was constructed in transnational policy-making workplaces, travelled through policy networks into national jurisdictions, and was taken up into national decision-making processes. These institutions of democratic government created policy instruments, which endorsed and institutionalised lifelong learning in a national knowledge culture.

The significance of lifelong learning policy lies in the way it reorients national policy and governance practices. As policy instruments institutionalise lifelong learning as a governing idea in national jurisdictions, they create a policy architecture and a policy culture that is attuned to governing in globally connected times. As Dale (1999) suggests, these policy mechanisms and knowledge flows are not just framed by national education and training priorities but also look outwards to developments in the wider globally distributed network of states and their systems of learning and innovation. They are not neutral in their effects but shape what happens within national education and training systems. As they are built into foundational lexicons and codified in classification systems, their reach extends into everyday commonsense and practices of individual and collective self-regulation.

Tracking lifelong learning as a travelling idea shows that lifelong learning has effects on the teaching occupation. The modernist teaching occupation was anchored in nation building but in reconstituting the order of discourse, 'lifelong learning' leaves those formed within the grammar of modernist schooling with no place to stand. The lifelong learning terms and conditions of work destabilises what counts as 'the teaching occupation', the job of teaching, the identity of 'teachers' and the occupational frames that anchor occupational identity and ethos. The consequent uncertainty is not just conceptual but has practical effects on the work and identities of teachers and on their occupational agency.

What is at stake in this politics at the policy-practice interface is not the existence of the teaching workforce but its occupational culture and spatial reach. We have used the term 'educational work' to delineate the normative labour that supports learning in ways that enhance the life chances of individuals and communities, and to distinguish this trans-occupational labour from the specific features of modernist teaching and the rationalist instrumentation that realises lifelong learning. This analytical distinction, we suggest, is knowledge *about learning* that re-recognises the teaching occupation and can be *used in* occupational boundary work that renegotiates occupational identity and spatial configurations of the teaching occupation.



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# Chapter 26

## Transformative Environmental Education Within Social Justice Models: Lessons from Comparing Adult Ecopedagogy Within North and South America

Greg Misiaszek

### Introduction

Inherently political, environmental destruction benefits some while negatively affecting many others. The most crucial environmental concern is learning to critically and dialectically determine the connections between environmental degradation and social injustices (socio-environmental issues). Such knowledge allows for critical understanding of the deeper roots of the causes and effects of environmental devastation. Connections between the environmental and the social are often hidden by those who, in many cases, benefit from specific environmental devastation. Although biocentric view<sup>1</sup> is essential to determine the effects of environmental devastation, anthropocentric perspectives are necessary for determining political reasons. In addition, socio-environmental factors tend to be ignored because environmental devastation is often tangibly and/or ideologically removed from social conflicts, often intentionally, in terms of polity, time, location and hegemony. Ecopedagogy, defined as progressive environmental education which critically and dialectically deconstructs how social conflicts and environmental devastation are connected, allows for a deeper understanding from which possible solutions can emerge.

This chapter is constructed within a progressive sociology of education framework in which the ‘effectiveness’ of education is a result of politics *outside of* the classroom rather than teaching dynamics *inside* the classroom which, in turn, is inherently guided by the outside politics (Teodoro and Torres 2007). In this chapter, ecopedagogy is viewed through this framework by focusing on society’s effects

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<sup>1</sup> A biocentric view considers holistically, all human and non-human, effects of environmental devastation.

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upon education rather than pragmatic classroom techniques. First will be determined some of the gaps in traditional environmental education models for the critical, transformative learning necessary to understand and then change socio-environmental ills. Next, the need for comparative education approaches to teach and research the teaching of ecopedagogy, due to their interdisciplinary nature and dialectical methods for viewing the local and global, will be discussed. Then, the author's own adult non-formal and informal ecopedagogy research in North and South America will provide some examples of these approaches. Finally, the conclusion will discuss the essential tenets of ecopedagogy practice and research inside and outside the framework of comparative education. It is important to note that although ecopedagogy is this chapter's focus, the lessons learnt are translational to pedagogy practice and research on other topics which focus on transformation towards increased social justice.

## Comparing Ecopedagogy to Shallow Environmental Education

... [it is] well known to all that environmental degradation generates human conflicts.

Moacir Gadotti, Ph.D., an author of the United Nations Earth Charter and Director and Co-Founder of the Paulo Freire Institute, São Paulo, Brazil (p. 43; 2008)

The well-being of a society's environment defines the society nature and biophysical dynamics that define social dynamics (Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). However, the connections between humans and nature<sup>2</sup> are often ignored in many environmental education models (Commoner 1971; Gadotti 2008). Though environmental issues do not exist within disciplinary vacuums, many environmental education models are taught within mono-disciplinary models. Social sciences and humanities disciplines are ignored in environmental education or, at best, separated from ones within the hard science disciplines. *Shallow* environmental education models ignore the social complexities of environmental issues as well as possible transformations of current social systems and ideologies. Philosopher and environmental activist Arne Naess defined *shallow ecology* as one that develops environmental solutions within current social, economic and political systems, as opposed to *deep ecology*, which seeks more complete solutions through revolutionary change of these systems (Somma 2006). Shallow models are often fatalistic by limiting knowledge development within current systems. Assimilation towards current societal systems rather than transformation of these systems limits solutions within current systems of oppression.

*Ecopedagogy*, a deep alternative to shallow models, focuses on ending/decreasing social oppressions by critically learning how and why environmental problems are both the causes and effects of social conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Ecopedagogy, by definition, is critical

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<sup>2</sup> Although humans are part of nature, nature here is defined as everything else on Earth other than humans.

<sup>3</sup> There are numerous definitions of ecopedagogy.

and dialectical (Kahn 2010). Ecopedagogy allows for individual and social transformation by critically questioning what is being taught and why (Freire 1970, 2005a; Mezirow 1991, 2000). Critical, horizontal dialogue is essential for ecopedagogies to democratically construct possible alternatives to oppressive systems, a process that moves towards utopian social justice teaching models (Gadotti 2008, 2009). Student(s) and teacher(s) teach and learn together to determine the results of and incentives for environmental devastation.<sup>4</sup>

People cannot care about socio-environmental issues if they are not taught their causes and resulting negative effects (Postma 2006). Ecopedagogy allows for the unveiling of complex social structures to uncover the politically hidden reasons for and effects of environmental devastation. It is argued that more effective solutions emerge from comparative approaches because they provide a deeper understanding of the complexities constructing socio-environmental problems. In contrast, shallow models aid in sustaining oppression by diverting focus away from dominant political reason and focusing on solutions that do not counter hegemony. Possible solutions develop by revealing systems of oppression caused by environmental devastation and then determining what transformation must take place. Solutions emerge from critically analysing social aspects of environmental issues and determining the necessary changes towards possible utopias (Freire 1998a, 2004; Freire and Freire 1997).

## Comparative Approaches to Ecopedagogy

In my view, no other disciplinary or professional field [comparative education] has such a broad, interconnected vantage point from which to view the dilemmas of our time. (Klees 2008)

An ecopedagogue must be the opposite of Max Weber's definition of a narrowly focused 'specialist without spirit'. Understanding the complex interconnections between environmental devastation and social injustices requires interdisciplinary learning and analysis from various perspectives outside of one's own to develop effective pedagogies – this is the essence of the field of comparative education<sup>5</sup> (Crossley and Watson 2003; Foster 1998). Comparative educators focus on '... explaining how and why education relates to the social factors and forces that form its context' (Epstein 1992, p. 409). Within the realm of ecopedagogy, methods of comparative education allow for revealing the often hidden connections between education, mis-education and non-education of socio-environmental issues due to politics. Ecopedagogy's challenges reside in the complex relationships between the environmental and the social: environmental problems are often international in

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<sup>4</sup> Education in all spheres (formal, informal, and non-formal (public pedagogy)) is analysed.

<sup>5</sup> International education has the same characteristics with the only difference being that comparisons are between two or more nation-states.

scope<sup>6</sup>; negative effects are often insignificant or dormant for very long time periods<sup>7</sup> and many negative effects are difficult to witness through an anthropocentric lens.<sup>8</sup> Comparative education gives the advantage of being ‘literally constituted by border crossings, and comparative educators, by necessity, roam[ing] far beyond education’; in essence, giving context within specializations (Klees 2008, p. 309).

Processes of globalization can further hamper the identification of the source(s) of socio-environmental problems since dominant ideologies often tend to normalize the idea that environmental devastation is necessary for human survival and ideals of progress that, in turn, increase livelihood. In the same respect that the local is affected by distant politics within processes of globalization (Giddens 1990, 1999), environmental ills often do not respect geo-political borders – resulting in social conflict far away from the source. Since globalization influences the formal, informal and non-formal educators that develop socio-environmental knowledge, it is essential that pedagogies and their research cross geopolitical borders to understand the dynamics of local and global politics. Holistic views of politics, society and education are necessary from both micro and macro perspectives (Bray et al. 2007; Bray and Thomas 1995; Masemann 2007; Welch 2007). Brazilian ecopedagogue and Freirean scholar Moacir Gadotti stressed that ‘fixing one room in a house is not enough... [one must] include all rooms of the house in its different dimensions: economic, social, cultural, environmental, etc’ (2009, p. 30).

Globalization might be irreversible, but its processes are transformable (Gadotti 2009; Carlos Torres 2007). To develop a broader, macro view of ecopedagogy, comparative education delves into both differences and similarities, developing rich dialogue and curiosities to learn from, collectively and individually (Morrow and Torres 2002). Effective research develops initially out of curiosities which can be developed more rigorously into research: ‘...human curiosity, as a phenomenon present to all vital experience, is in a permanent process of social and historical construction and reconstruction’ (Freire 1998a, p. 37; Morrow and Torres 2002). Paulo Freire defined the following two types of curiosities: ingenuous curiosity which ‘characterizes “common sense” knowing. It is knowledge extracted from pure experience’; and epistemological curiosity, which ‘becomes more methodologically rigorous, progresses from ingenuity to epistemological curiosity...’ (1998a, p. 35; Morrow and Torres 2002). Processes of globalization prioritize this need with the nation-state unit of analysis being redefined by globalization, resulting in the need for critical education (Welch 2007, p. 30). Critically viewing environmental and social processes from both micro and macro perspectives is required to develop multi-layered methods of research which use and build upon the richness of other ecopedagogy programs, by determining their evolution (King 2000; CA Torres 1995).

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<sup>6</sup> For example, air pollution does not only affect the area near polluting sources but pollutants are carried with wind without regard of local, national or international borders.

<sup>7</sup> For example, it often takes several generations for ill effects of toxic waste disposal to become apparent due to long period of container degradation, or slow seepage to surface.

<sup>8</sup> For example, species extinction is often not directly negatively affected by humans but there is an intrinsic right for a species to not become extinct.



Comparative education methodologies allow for critical comparisons between ecopedagogy programs, a process essential for determining which methods to lend and borrow (Altbach 1998; Arnove 2007; Steiner-Khamasi 1998, 2004). An effective ecopedagogy program in one area cannot be simply cloned for another area because programs are contextual and thus unique (Noah and Eckstein 1998; Watson 1999). However, an interdisciplinary, comparative approach allows for borrowing and lending that aids the construction of ecopedagogies developed with similar, but not identical, environmental and social characteristics, problems, questions and solutions. Global educational trends must be transformed and modified dialectically to develop programs and policies which meet needs for both national and local spheres (Arnove and Torres 2003; Rui 2007). Methods of comparative education utilized in ecopedagogy research allow for critical comparison of re-occurring themes and characteristics, measurement of translational results for effective praxis to emerge, development of problem-solving skills and development of effective ecopedagogical tools and curricula based on praxis.<sup>9</sup>

## **A Horizontal, Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach Towards Defining Effective Ecopedagogy**

The following approach was constructed from qualitative, comparative education research of 35 progressive adult environmental informal and non-formal educators (mostly social/environmental movement leaders) in Buenos Aires and Cordoba, Argentina; São Paulo, Brazil and Appalachia, USA. The overall research question was: How do adult ecopedagogy educators define effective characteristics for ecopedagogy programs within these regions? Subset questions included the following: (1) What pedagogical tools do ecopedagogy educators utilize to develop critical thought processes of the interconnections between environmental degradation and social justice? (2) How do ecopedagogy educators determine successful ecopedagogy programs? and (3) What are ecopedagogy educators' perceptions of the effects of processes of globalization on ecopedagogy? The research compared and contrasted the vertical relationships between The North and The South, within regions, nation-states and communities to critically determine oppressor/oppressed relationships. The constructed theoretical model emerged from the research participants' voices. The resulting ecopedagogy developed within the theoretical underpinnings from the participants through horizontal discussions rather than through vertical interview methods with authority placed upon the interviewer. In other words, the interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical framework was developed from the participant educators themselves.

Although there always exists a vertical positionality between researcher and research participant, the interviews were as loosely structured as possible to encourage horizontal

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<sup>9</sup>Praxis here is Freirean defined as theoretical reflection to determine action.

dialogue. Discussion topics were determined mostly by the participants, outside of two questions which, for most interviews, were addressed preemptively by the participants.<sup>10</sup> There existed no pre-determined list of interview questions. Interviews began with a general question asking for the participant's thoughts on, experiences with and background in environmental education. From these initial remarks, participants then guided the discussion and self-selected topics of importance.

This bottom-up approach to interviews is a reinvention of Freirean pedagogy. The participants, rather than the researcher, dictated the path of research, thus avoiding a highly structured format prone to limiting participants' interests, context and space. As in Freirean pedagogy, this interview process is founded on '...love, humanity, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence' (Freire 2005b, p. 91). Research methods are based on respect for the knowledge of participants. Participant knowledge and curiosities are considered essential to the definition of the research and its conclusions. If information is gathered without regard for the participant(s)' voice(s), the process would turn data into something that would be ultimately flawed, by being consciously or unconsciously shaped by the researcher(s). If information is gathered by ignoring (or silencing) the voice of the people who stated it, the processes of the research itself as an entirety would be skewed towards the single perspective of the researcher. This research method allows for a better analysis of the topic selections because they are determined by participants; thus, what they identify as important in their discussion of ecopedagogy is what becomes significant. Freirean pedagogy emerged as the foundation of environmental education and research with the need for horizontal and democratic dialogue to read and re-read complex and often hidden links between environmental and social injustices. Other theoretical lenses include the following: theories of globalization and neocolonialism; critical race theories; theories of feminism; critical media cultural theories and theories of sustainable development. Individual theories were found not to be isolated but interconnected with each other. The connections between the topics that developed into theories were complex and depended on multidisciplinary understanding. The research found that theoretical themes were not discussed in isolation but within complex theoretical webs within one another. Figure 26.1 illustrates the theories utilized in the ecopedagogical research conducted. The following description of each theoretical component emerged from what the participants believed to be necessary for effective ecopedagogy.

### ***Freirean Pedagogy: Reinvented as Freirean Ecopedagogy***

Paulo Freire's last book, incomplete on account of his sudden death, was to be focused on the topic of ecopedagogy. Some of Freire's ecopedagogical work was included in his book *Pedagogy of Indignation*, published after his death.

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<sup>10</sup>The two questions were the following: (1) How do you define sustainable development; and (2) What do you do when someone says 'Environmental devastation is bad, but its actions determine my, my family's, and/or my community's livelihood?'.

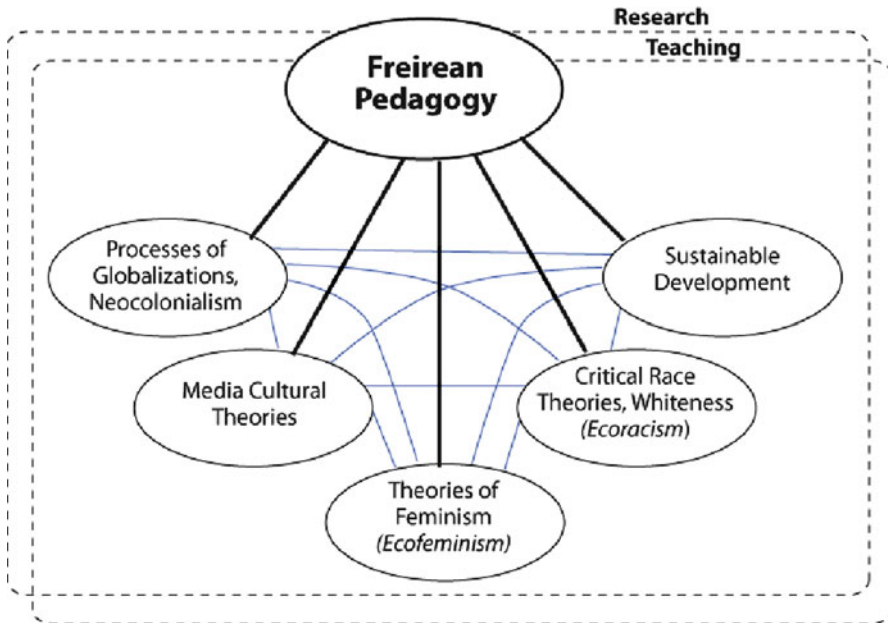


Fig. 26.1 Ecopedagogical Theoretical Framing

I do not believe in loving among women and men, among human beings, if we do not become capable of loving the world. Ecology has gained tremendous importance at the end of this century. It must be present in any educational practice of a radical, critical, and liberating nature. (Freire 2004, p. 25)

A reinvention<sup>11</sup> of Freirean pedagogy towards a Freirean ecopedagogy focuses on raising consciousness (*conscientização*) about societal oppression caused by environmental degradation. Environmental problems must be deconstructed and re-constructed within social justice frameworks, through critical dialogue to enhance ‘reading of the world’ through various knowledges and theoretical frameworks.

A central question for ecopedagogy is: Who is benefiting from destruction and who/what is negatively affected? To obtain Weber’s ideal, environmental interest actions must evolve out of ecopedagogy practice and research by viewing environment holistically outside of instrumental terms involving benefit analysis, seeking intrinsic value from the whole, rather than looking at how to utilize parts for oneself. Participants in this study stressed the need for ecopedagogy to challenge existing knowledge concerning hegemony-constructed solutions, and read environmental problems within a larger macro societal framework in order to become conscious of oppressive sources that lead to environmental degradation. Freire described how

<sup>11</sup> Reinvention of Freire’s work is a key tenet towards how he defined *praxis*. He believed that coding and re-coding of theory was essential towards theory becoming relevant.

'[peasants were] engendered [with] their unauthentic view of the world. Using their dependence to create still greater dependence is an oppressor tactic' (2005b, p. 66). Without questioning the current social systems which oppresses those who are negatively affected by those who benefit, environmental destruction is viewed as negative but necessary and beneficiary. Freirean pedagogy calls for horizontal and democratic discussions between teacher(s)/student(s) and researcher(s)/participant(s) to determine how learning and curiosities (research catalysts) will develop (Freire 1998b, 2005b; Morrow and Torres 2002; O'Cadiz et al. 1998). Freire stressed the need for the oppressed to expand their own *thematic universe* – a frame of reference in which individuals view themselves within society. Educational and research spaces must provide acceptance for critical discourse so that participants may determine oppressions and develop solutions to end them.

Freirean ecopedagogy stresses a *radical discourse* that is critical and empowering, rather than a *technical discourse* that seeks change through co-operation without systematic change; nor a *liberal discourse* that promotes individual growth rather than collective growth<sup>12</sup> (Whelan 2003). Freirean praxis allows for people to theorize, dream and dialogue about a better world, and then determine actions needed to transform towards it. Freire expressed that education is necessary for social progress because '...human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world' (Freire 2005b, p. 125). Dialogue needs to be full of love and understanding, so there can be progress to 'recreate the world' for the better, with actions defined by dialogue's conclusions.

### ***Theories of Globalization: Proliferation of Neoliberalism and Neocolonialism***

Globalization is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon with contrasting positive and negative effects on education focused on social justice. Analysis of globalization depends upon context, purpose and who is using this term (Kellner 1998). Two globalization typologies are 'globalization from above', which promotes neoliberalism and sustains hegemony, and 'globalization from below', which '...use[s] its institutions and instruments to further democratization and social justice' (Kellner 1999a, p. 301). An example of *globalization from below* is increasing awareness and participation in environmentalism, democratic governing and human rights by increasing communication and oversight (Kellner 1998). *Globalization from above* normalizes neoliberal ideology that views environmental ills as unfortunate but necessary to increase livelihood. These oppressive processes devalue environmental and social welfare, by determining all decisions according to neoliberal goals of

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<sup>12</sup> Knowledge must inspire action towards reversal and prevention of environmental problems, beyond concern for their own self-interests. Learning and action must occur beyond liberal sphere, which Weber would define as *ideal action behaviour* (or *value rational behaviour*) (McIntosh 1977).

increasing monetary profit and determining all actions to achieve this end (Chomsky and Macedo 2000; Kellner 1998; Stromquist 2002). Freire believed that globalization created an unsustainable pressure from distant but economically and politically influential Western markets that have neoliberal interests in high production, high development and low cost.

Ecopedagogy was found to need to critically deconstruct globalization through many related theories such as oppressive neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Comparing socio-environmental globalization processes was seen as essential to determine oppressive from empowering processes. In the past, imperialistic nations had colonies around the world which fulfilled natural resource needs that were unattainable on their own lands. Critically and dialectally deconstructing the local and global was considered necessary to understand the dynamics of economic neocolonialism in which more economically developed nation-states construct a global society in which less economically developed nations yield to pressures to fulfil demands. Globalization that sustains hegemony allows more economically developed nation-states to purchase natural resources at excessively low prices, without regard for current and long-term ills caused by producing or removing these natural resources from economically under-developed nation-states. To maximize profit, natural resources are removed, processed and/or altered (i.e. into fuel) without regard for the resulting oppression of environments and societies. Progressive pedagogies, such as ecopedagogy, must bring about the 'decolonizing of the mind' by bringing forth and critically analysing normative, false knowledge from a colonized education (Dei 2006). In addition, participants stressed that ecopedagogy must be a utopian pedagogy that strives for transformation rather than globalization processes which promote the belief that there are no viable alternatives to neoliberalism. Persons discussing alternatives to current Western systems are viewed by many as 'dinosaurs' (Cole 2005; McLaren and Farahmandpur 2005). Radical and revolutionary pedagogies can aid students in seeking alternatives to current oppressive systems and transcending false consciousness by helping them realize that education indoctrinates citizens to alienate those who seek alternatives (Cole 2005; Giroux 2001). Ecopedagogy must be placed within an anti-colonial, historiographic framework that does not infer that indigenous peoples are foreigners on stolen, colonized land, and that whites were saviours of 'savages' (Kempt 2006). Colonial education and schooling, in general, shifts the benchmark of goodness from working within nature, to dominating it (Illich 1983).

### ***Critical Race Theories – Ecoracism***

Critical race theories were found to be extremely significant to understanding connections between negative environmental/ecological actions, social injustices and theories of whiteness. Racism sums up and symbolizes the fundamental relation between the colonialist and the colonized (Memmi 1991, pp. 69–70). Remnants from a colonial past provide education that instils *white supremacy*: viewing non-whites as

inferior and justifying oppression and viewing actions of social justice as a form of white generosity rather than an intrinsic right (Dei 2006; Freire 2005b). The *mark of the plural* allows the destruction and exploitation of the environment, because nature is seen as non-holistic and wasted upon *others* which include the colonized. One important example is the *Not in my Backyard* (NIMBY) syndrome, which de-locates and re-locates environmental hazards to a low socio-economic, often non-white community, where citizens are too powerless to defend their own welfare within the courts and halls of government, and where community members are often so systematically desperate for employment that they agree to unacceptable levels of environmental and health hazards. Ecopedagogy must critically analyse neoliberal benefits stemming from poor environmental policies, ecoracism (e.g. cheap products; out-of-sight, out-of-mind environmental problems, etc.), and the seduction of whiteness for those who benefit (Yancy 2004).

Environmental problems originating from ecoracism are often due to ‘...ontological structure, a true immanence, a thing unable to be other than what it was born to be, a thing closed upon itself, locked into an ontological realm where things exist not “for-themselves” but “in-themselves”, waiting to be ordered by some external, subjugating, purposive (white) consciousness’ (Yancy 2004, p. 12). For example, NIMBY places environmental problems in non-white communities, due to the temptation for white communities to displace problems at hand, and their political power to do so. The NIMBY solution makes it difficult for the privileged not to choose actions that benefit them, much like the dilemma of whites not wanting to ‘unbecome’ white, because of benefits which have become normalized (Yancy 2004). Most whites would not define themselves as racists, but racism must be re-defined according to anti-whiteness standards that dis-establish non-earned benefits according to skin color (Mills 2004). Ecopedagogy must critically analyse this discrepancy within ecoracism fuelled by a hegemonic white population.

### ***Theories of Feminism – Ecofeminism***

There are many theoretical constructs of ecofeminism but the framework of ecofeminism that emerged from this research ‘includes a systemic analysis of domination that specifically includes the oppression of women and environmental exploitation, and it advocates a synthesis of ecological feminist principles as guiding lights...’ (Lahar 1991, p. 29). Ecofeminism critically analyses ideologies that construct what are men, women and nature – ideologies that are mostly developed under the influences of dominance and oppression (Warren 2000). Dominance differs from oppression, because oppression is limited by degrees of choice. Nature does not have choices to be suppressed, but it can be unjustly abused (Warren 2000). This type of ecofeminism calls for a “cognitive dissonance” to motivate a re-examination of one’s basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions – one’s conceptual framework’ – to dismantle thought processes of superiority of humans over nature, and false vertical relationships between humans (Warren 2000, p. 56). Ecofeminism is not viewed as a solely

binary analysis between feminist issues and environmentalism, but instead provides a framework for critically re-thinking this relationship as a dominant foundation for fighting against all forms of domination (Lahar 1991; Warren 2000). This concept is similar to Paulo Freire's theories of *conscientização* (Ress 2006).

The terms *feminism* and *ecofeminism* were only directly stated by a few participants, but the concepts that develop the foundation of the theories were significantly represented in the research. The representation of the philosophy of ecofeminism stressed the need to respect, without exception, theories of feminism, indigenous knowledge and environmental well-being – which is model ecofeminism, according to Karen Warren (2000). Warren describes the context of ecofeminism as being a 'quilt' in which patches are different when viewed individually, but become holistic when all types of ecofeminism are sewn together. This philosophy can also be described as a 'fruit bowl' in which praxis of ecofeminism represents different typologies of fruit, but remains fruit in a bowl as a whole (Warren 2000). Warren stresses that ecofeminism does not look at ecology only through analyses of gender, but also as a starting point for thought and praxis to critique dominance and oppression (Warren 2000).

### *Critical Media Culture Theories*

The research found that the media's large role in influencing the ways we interpret reality makes it essential to critically question the politics that influence the construction of media, and thus the construction of prevalent socio-environmental ideology. Critical media culture analysis allows for systematic uncovering of alternative *truths, realities* outside the normalized and hegemonic *hidden curricula* that form persons' *thematic universes*, as defined by Freire (Freire 2005b). Analysis of the media must be multi-perspective, so that these lenses can be used to de-construct and then re-construct its messages, avoiding use of only a singular theory to delve into the politics of what representations and messages are being developed for our eyes to see and for our ears to hear (Durham and Kellner 2006; Kellner 1995b). Much like contrasting processes of globalization, the media is a contested terrain which can be both oppressive and empowering with regard to social justice. Media *from below* can be '...both critical of corporate and mainstream forms, as well as to support technologies that advocate re-construction of technologies to further projects that advance progressive social and political struggle' (Kahn and Kellner 2006). Dominant media has the ability to counter rather than sustain hegemony; however, politics of media often hide hegemonic effects. Global communication technologies must be evaluated as to how they can be used to spread messages for the sake of attaining a purer democracy and more effective social movements, and to assist in political struggles of all persons (Best and Kellner 2001; Kahn and Kellner 2003; Kellner 1995a, 1997, 1999b).

The media is a powerful tool and an influential public pedagogy which could develop ideologies insisting that environmental stewardship is necessary and

beneficial on many levels or it could express the opposite view that environmental devastation is unfortunate but necessary, and assist this belief by obscuring connections between environmental and social problems. Participants believed that ecopedagogy must ask how the media portrays environmental issues within socio-environmental frameworks.

### *Sustainable Development and Livelihoods*

The research indicated that the ways in which sustainable development is framed and how it relates to pluralistically defined *livelihood*<sup>13</sup> is essential to understanding socio-environmental issues. Sustainable development is seen as necessary to provide for an improved livelihood that allows for improved economic status, security and dignified lives, without compromising our planet's sustainability for current and future generations (Roseland and Soots 2007). All participants discussed how sustainable development has overwhelmingly focused on economic development, rather than '...bottom-up, participatory, holistic, and process-based development initiatives' (Mahadevia 2001, p. 243). Globalization *from above* has altered the definition of *development* worldwide, defining progressive development as what benefits the global economy. Benefiting the global economy is often measured by what benefits and sustains hegemony, rather than what is good on the local, as well as global scale.

Similar to environmental education, which can be *deep* or *shallow*, education for sustainable development can be of either model. Some participants believed that *development* might be better defined as *maldevelopment* for the masses (Gadotti 2009; O'Rourke 2004; Pieterse 2006; Zimmerer and Bassett 2003). Sustainable development is often narrowly viewed through limited anthropocentric and neoliberal lenses, placing environmentalism within a rubric measuring economic gain and personal pleasures (Bell 2004; Bolscho 1998; Jickling 1994; Postma 2006; Sauv e 1998, 2002). Many deep environmentalists stress that sustainable development is overwhelmingly a concept that promotes neocolonialism, by grouping the development of economically under-developed nation-states according to a framework generated by hegemonic nation-states (Hesselink et al. 2000; Postma 2006). Shallow sustainable development framed within current neoliberal goals results in sustaining and often increasing hegemony (Hoardoy et al. 1992; Mahadevia 2001).

Research indicated that the use of hard sciences was often an oppressive force in defining sustainable development due to how they were used by those who commit environmental ills. Although stressed by the dominant as unquestionably objective,

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<sup>13</sup> Livelihood has many definitions. According to this chapter "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (both natural and social) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood" (Chambers and Conway 1992, p. 7). Livelihood goes beyond alleviation of poverty, to include improved local access and control over necessary assets that help lessen one's vulnerability to environmental shocks and stresses (Roseland and Soots 2007).



participants stressed the need for ecopedagogy to critically question the politics, access and definition of Western sciences. As development is often measured economically, shallow sustainable education and research models use a *positivistic view*. Processes of globalization *from above* have promoted an ideology that values Western, ‘hard’ Sciences (denoted by Sandra Harding with a capital ‘S’) as the only method to view nature, and to give objective views of its unchanging ‘laws’ (Bonnett 2003; Elliot 1992; Harding 1991, 1998, 2006). Science views observation and manipulation of nature not as subjective, but instead as an objective method towards observing, stating and manipulating what *is reality*. Within this framework, there develops a binary between ‘good’ Science and all other types of sciences (denoted by a lowercase ‘s’). Harding stresses that Science is defined by methods, analyses, outcomes and final products that are racist, without requiring the scientists who constructed them to have racist intentions (2006). She also notes that the hegemonic relationship between science and ‘development has brought de-development and maldevelopment to the “have-nots”, and economic benefits to the investing classes of the Global North’ (2006, p. 42). Rather than Science helping the oppressed by creating solutions to end environmental degradation, neocolonial oppression is furthered by destroying their environment, taking their natural resources, and exploiting their labour to maintain and intensify hegemony (S. Harding 2006). Science conducted inside the laboratory has promoted systematic ignorance, by eliminating any accountability for environmental and/or societal harms produced by their ‘discoveries’ (S. Harding 2006; Hutchins 1995). Science is seen as having the sole mission to create what is possible, without providing a socio-ecological context. Lacking critiques of social issues caused by Sciences forms a perfect platform for exploiting the environment. This system stresses that after-effects caused by Science are not any cause for concern.

However, the Sciences are also a contested terrain, with participants discussing how the Sciences have increased consciousness of environmental problems central to organized environmental movements, allowing for the definition of salient issues among public and political leaders. Held has argued that *s/Science* has brought to light environmental problems which would have been otherwise invisible to the public (Haas 1990; Held 1999). Rather than looking for answers to problems between society and the environment in a multi-disciplinary approach, many participants believed that Science looks only to inventing new technologies to solve problems. All the participants who discussed *s/Sciences* to define sustainable development stressed the need for this multi-disciplinary approach to critically view Sciences within social spheres.

## Conclusion

[Environmental pedagogies must] ‘see the importance of translating this concept [ecopedagogy] into different realities and different pedagogies, such as Paulo Freire’s pedagogy, which starts from reading the word, from respecting every person’s context, and which offers an emancipating and dialogical methodology.’ (Gadotti 2009, p. 86)

The research indicated overwhelmingly that critical and dialectical discussions were necessary for effective adult environmental education. The diversity of topics the participants discussed and the interconnections among them strongly suggested the need for an interdisciplinary approach to ecopedagogy. 'Comparative', 'multi-perspective' and 'multi-disciplinary' are all essential characteristics of ecopedagogy, as well as essential characteristics for comparative education. Knowledge of environmental devastation's causes and effects cannot be simplified towards a single framework, come from a single perspective and/or be compartmentalized within a single discipline. Problem-solving constructed from shallow environmental or socio-environmental knowledge does not have the depth to develop meaningful, sustaining praxis. Lack of depth in problem-solving results in simple, positivistic conclusions ultimately fails to comprehend the complexities of the societies in which the solutions must take place. In addition, shallow approaches ignore non-anthropocentric frameworks and social issues which negatively affect all that is non-human. The inadequacies of shallow environmental education practices and research help to sustain socio-environmental ills by focusing on solutions which further obscure knowledge of 'inconvenient' society-environment issues which, in turn, sustains hegemony (Giroux 2001). Difficult and inconvenient socio-environmental questions are not asked due to ignorance – often politically motivated lack of knowledge.

Dialectical approaches allow for the viewing of socio-environmental problems through multiple theoretical lenses and perspectives. These approaches comprise the essence of critical theory which, by its nature, opposes closed philosophical systems, in order to view the world according to perspectives which are 'open-ended, probing, [and with an] unfinished quality' (Jay 1996, p. 41). Comparative education's interdisciplinary nature (Crossley 2000) allows for such dialectical processes. As processes of globalization dialectically affect, in a give-and-take fashion, the global, national, and local spheres (Arnové 2007), comparative education scholars need to view the education of socio-environmental issues from various theoretical lenses and individual perspectives to develop effective ecopedagogy programs, relevant research and well-developed praxis.

The ecopedagogy practice and research completed provide only one example and by no means account for all of the complexities of environmental and social issues. The effectiveness of these and other approaches falls upon determining the reasons of their construction and then critically determining the strengths of an approach, the factors which were not being sufficiently accounted for, and ways to compensate for the weaknesses.

Entirely ending nature's destruction and the accompanying social injustices is unlikely to become a reality, but such a utopian ideal needs to be the overarching goal for any pedagogy (Teodoro and Torres 2007). Without the ability to dream of utopia, education cannot be transformative and fatalism will override the ability to comprehend any alternatives (Freire 1998a). Critical, horizontal and democratic dialogue is the most important factor towards reaching this horizon to develop transformative understandings resulting in action. Freirean pedagogy is central to this approach because dialogue, as defined by Freire, must be full of truths not defined by dominant ideologies, but by all participants (including teachers, students, researchers and research participants).

Solutions to socio-environmental ills are not easily answered because of the diverse continuum of those who benefit from and are negatively affected by these ills; however, critical and dialectical dialogue allows incremental understanding of these issues from various perspectives, local–global spheres, situations and disciplines. It is important to remember that beneficiaries of environmental destruction are not always massive hegemonic agents aiming towards economic profiteering but are often communities and individuals who act for the purpose of acquiring life’s basics for survival and increasing livelihood as they define it. For example, a mother might try to provide for her family by deforesting a small part of the Amazon, to sell the wood, and to open up land to grow agriculture and/or graze animals. Such environmentally devastating actions are inherently more difficult to argue against than actions taken for the purpose of transnational corporate profit. Ecopedagogy and its research must be constructed from horizontal dialogue from everyone (teachers, students, researchers, research participants, etc.) to collectively determine what factors are needed to be taught and learned. The theoretical foundation in ecopedagogical practice and research must emerge from all voices.

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# Chapter 27

## Current Trends in Lifelong Learning in the Russian Federation: Current Developments

Joseph Zajda

### Introduction

Lifelong learning throughout the world, and particularly in the USA, the UK, Germany, Japan and Canada, has been influenced by a tide of economic rationalism and neo-conservative ideology. Since the 1990s, in Europe, lifelong learning increasingly reflected a neo-liberal ideology, focusing on economic, rather than humanistic, goals. Hence, lifelong learning policies were more strongly orientated towards vocational aims (Lifelong Learning in Europe 2006, p. 12). Lifelong learning in the Russian Federation appears to follow a similar trend – borrowing and adapting Western-driven paradigms of credentialism, skills and human capital (OECD 2007). The ideals of collectivity, social justice and equity have been exchanged for key concepts from business management discourse, namely productivity, efficiency, competitiveness and quality – or the “bottom-line” of the language of profit maximisation.

As the 1960s UNESCO humanistic, social justice and human rights tradition gradually weakened, the economic, human capital-driven and techno-determinist paradigm of the OECD, the World Bank and the IMF began gaining in prominence (Zajda 2008b). Reich (1993) argued that the future standards of living in any country will depend on the ability of the population to sell its labour power in a global labour market. In short, the neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideology, which has re-defined education as an investment in “human capital” and “human resource development”, has also influenced the thinking of policy makers, teachers and students in Russia (see also Zajda 2007).

The new entrepreneurial culture in the global society has become a new cultural and economic hegemony, replacing the welfare provisions and influencing the career plans of many Russian school leavers (Zajda 2008a):

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The new entrepreneurial culture has a new cultural hero: the successful “fast-track, high-flying business man...Admiration for *biznesmeny* (businessmen), Russia’s new “cultural heroes”, has interrupted the career plans of school leavers...the young people can often earn a hundred times more than their university educated, professional parents.

The crisis of the welfare state and the weakening of civil society have affected adult education in Russia, as elsewhere. As such, it has shifted its focus, from the “learning of meanings” to the “learning of earnings” (Zajda 1999, p. 159). Like all educational reforms, the current changing nature of lifelong learning in Russia needs to be perceived ‘within the dynamics of social inequality and the polarization of social classes’ (Zajda 2008a). Similarly, Evans (1998) when commenting on effective education for the future, focuses on free and equal access and the ‘redistributive mechanisms for resources and social support’ (Evans 1998, p. 135). As she puts it:

Lifelong and comprehensive educational opportunity made equally available and accessible to all is ultimately to its advantage. Only education, which develops citizenship and competence in their maximal senses, and promotes favourable conditions for their practice, will ensure empowered and participatory communities able ...to play their part in the social and political processes, which will shape the socio-economic scenarios of the future (p. 135).

### ***The Impact of Globalisation and Economic Reforms on Adult Education in Russia***

In 1989 alone, some 70 million people, or 42.7% of the 164 million, took part in adult education in various forms. The inherited system of vocational education and training (VET) and adult education from the former Soviet Union in January 1992 was closely aligned with the needs of Soviet economy. As such, there was a vast network of extensive enterprise-based VET. Similarly, European Union’s (EU) policy statements on lifelong learning always stressed employability (Jarvis 2009, p. 272). Lifelong learning continues to play a significant role in offering knowledge and skills for jobs. At the same time, lifelong learning is also a key element of EU.

During the 1990s, as a result of globalisation, decentralisation and privatisation in the economy, enterprise-based training ‘dropped sharply’ (Dar and Gill 1999, see also Zajda 2009). Furthermore, between 1990 and 1996, the size of the work force declined by 20%, from 90 million to 72 million. Some six million were unemployed in 1996 (Dar and Gill 1999). Russia’s renewed emphasis was on human capital and re-skilling, to some degree, global and local economic transformation, or what Robertson (1995) called, when referring to global economy, ‘globalisation’, a term aptly suited to the emerging Russian economy and new employment opportunities.

Forces of globalisation and privatisation affected the extent and the nature of enterprise-based training. It was reformed to meet the emerging needs of the new entrepreneurial economy. In some ways, the reforms, associated with the transformation of Soviet-type VET sector and adult education, were prompted by external pressures, especially the World Bank, with its numerous policy reports on globalisation, human capital and lifelong learning. The World Bank’s policy report



*Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy: Challenges for Developing Countries* (2003) particularly focused on the roles of lifelong learning, citizenship education, problem-solving pedagogy and poverty reduction. According to Rivera (2009), the report concluded that countries needed to create 'high-performance, lifelong learning systems' (World Bank 2003). While in the Russian Federation during the early 1990s, the system tended to focus on pre-employment VET far too early, during the middle secondary school, vocational training started only in senior secondary schools. It was now more focused on job training and responded to skill shortages.

Human resource development has become the global economic framework for social and economic development to which the Russell report (1973) linked education and training (Jackson 1997, p. 55) in many countries, including the Russian Federation. Thus, Jackson (1997) suggested that the 'reservoir of human resources' was required both for 'economic development and for cohesive and stable democracy' (Jackson 1997, p. 55).

## Adult Education in Russia After 1991

The main feature of adult education in Russia was the evening school and the correspondence schools/colleges, so that young adults and others could upgrade their qualifications, without leaving their jobs. Due to economic and social transformation in the Russian Federation after 1991, the term "*adult education*" is losing the concrete meaning it had in the 1950s and 1960s when it referred to evening schools (*vechernye shkoly*) and correspondence schools (*zaochnye shkoly*) for working adults only:

The term became even more obscure during the emergence of continuing education in Russia. In the 1960s and 1970s adult education included many other organisations, both voluntary (including the People's universities and the *Znanie* Society) and government institutions. In the 1990s the newly restructured adult education centres offered courses for a heterogeneous audience, which now included young adults, adolescents, unemployed, migrants, ex-convicts, adults with special needs and pensioners (Zajda 1999, p. 154).

The system was becoming one of social and educational rehabilitation. In 1999 there were 3,083 such centres, and 1,706 evening schools, with a total enrolment of 487,401 students, representing 6.3% increase on the 1998 figures. About 30% of the population of Russia are covered by all types of adult education (2008). ([www.unesco.org/ui/en/UIILPDF/nesico/confintea/Russia\\_English.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/ui/en/UIILPDF/nesico/confintea/Russia_English.pdf))

The structure of lifelong learning and adult education in the Russia after 1991 is illustrated in Table 27.1.

Due to rapidly changing labour market, as a result of decentralisation and privatisation, lifelong learning and adult education after 1991 had become increasingly vocationally oriented. As Zajda (1999) has argued, adult education centres focused on preventing structural unemployment by providing the necessary re-training programmes, and preparing qualified personnel for the economy in the post-communist Russia (Zajda 1999, p. 154). According to one estimate, the changing

**Table 27.1** The structure of lifelong learning and adult education in Russia

General education	Vocational training	In-service education and training	Industry-related education and training	Community-based education and training	Self-education
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nature of jobs due to economic restructuring, including the closure of state-run industrial enterprises, and the downsizing of the military sector and its industries, was expected to generate 20 million redundant workers.

One of the most significant developments in Russian adult education was the launching of the first Open University (Otkryty Universitet) in 1990. The Russian Open University attracted about 100,000 applicants in 1991. One of its institutes was the College of Adult Education. In an interview with the author in January 1992, Professor B.M. Bim-Bad, Vice-Chancellor of the Russian Open University had this to say:

By September 1992 the Russian Open University (ROU) had more than 60,000 students. It had 21 different faculties, 10 research centres, and 6 experimental laboratories, with many other campuses outside Moscow – including Krasnodar, Vilnius and Nizhni Novgorod. ROU was Russia's first independent and private higher education institution. It was founded in August 1990, on the initiative of the Russian Teachers' Creative Union.

Another equally significant development, this time at the policy level, was the publication of the “Draft on Education Centres” in 1993, which laid down the principles for establishing new education centres, designed to meet the needs of school dropouts, school leavers and adults. L. Lesokhina (1993), coordinator of the Adult Education Research Centre of the Institute of Adult Education (St. Petersburg), at the Russian Academy of Education, wrote that the document provides the necessary legitimacy and unity of purpose for a vast network of other adult education centres – including TSOMs (Youth Education Centres), TOVs (Adult Education Centres), TSONs (Community Education Centres) and TSNOs (Continuing Education Centres). These adult education centres had different academic and professional profiles, ranging from vocational, academic to cultural. The vocationally oriented TOVs prepared young adults for such occupations as home tutors, economists, and family-oriented nurses (Lesokhina 2008, p. 20). The pedagogical rationale for these new centres was based on the following five principles of education and training:

1. By means of varied methods of education and moral training enrich the social aspect of one's identity and contribute to civic, professional and moral development.
2. To maximise the nexus between education and life.
3. Contribute to the socialisation process, social adaptation and the necessity for social rehabilitation of one's identity.
4. Contribute to the internalisation of democratic principles of social life.
5. Provide active and focused influence on the labour market (Document of the education Centre, *Otkrytaia Shkola* 2008, 4, 21).

The newly defined education centres provided a more unified and common structure in adult education. These were operating as a vast umbrella framework for a variety of adult education centres “aimed at the provision of social justice by means of compensatory education and social rehabilitation of adult education learners dislocated by economic restructuring and social transformation” (Zajda 1999, p. 159). Such centres, as Zajda (1999) has argued, “would have filled a void in the infrastructure in 1991, the re-structuring year” (Zajda 1999, p. 155). Unlike the old-type *vecherka* (evening schools), which were not always popular, the new education centres had acquired a more desirable social status and, more importantly, they were locally funded and managed.

The Education Centre Document had four articles defining aims, structure, organisation, management and financing. As a policy document it provided a sense of coherence in adult education programmes. As one of the dominant education discourses in post-communist Russia, this policy statement re-affirmed principles of participatory democracy of the bottom-up model of social thought. Article 1 in the document stated that the fundamental goal of the Education Centre is “the concern for social justice” and means of achieving it through education:

to give all individuals, irrespective of their age, sex, ethnicity and educational qualifications an opportunity to continually supplement and develop their knowledge and skills in various spheres of life (p. 13).

## New Curriculum for Adult Education Centres

During the last two decades there have been major and significant curriculum reforms in the Russian Federation, affecting content and standards in all educational institutions – both formal and informal. Hence, adult education centres/evening schools have been restructured and have implemented the national curriculum and state standards. This has impacted on the curriculum and teaching in adult education schools. If, in the 1990s, one of the most commonly cited problems of these centres was their low academic status as diploma-awarding institutions, after the implementation of the national curriculum and state standards, especially from 2008, a new problem has emerged: inability for students to cope with the new and demanding academic curriculum and state examinations. Table 27.2 illustrates the new curriculum and total weekly hours, per subject per year level, for lifelong learning centres in the Russian Federation.

Table 27.3 illustrates the new intensive (nine 11-h class sessions yearly) curriculum, per academic areas/disciplines in grades 10–12, for lifelong learning centres in the Russian Federation. Students have a choice in selecting a particular stream, ranging from four to nine intensive class sessions. The curriculum shows an emphasis on academic disciplines, especially mathematics, language and sciences. This is designed to enable students to gain knowledge and skills for both jobs and possible entry into specialised technical colleges and universities.

**Table 27.2** School programme for evening schools/adult education centres (2004)

Subjects	Year levels/hours per week							
	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Russian language	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Modern languages	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
History	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Social studies						1	1	1
Mathematics	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
Geography	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Biology	1	1	1	1	1		1	1
Physics			1	1	1	1	1	1
Chemistry				1	1	1	1	1
Total	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Electives	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Source: *Otkrytaia Shkola* (Open School) 2004, 4, 22–23

**Table 27.3** Adult education core curriculum – evening schools for Grades 10–12 for 2008/2009 academic year (nine class sessions yearly/11-hour week)

Areas	Academic disciplines	Grade10 h	Grade11 h	Grade12 h
Philology	Russian language and literature	108	108	108
Mathematics	Mathematics	72	72	72
Sciences	Biology, physics and chemistry	108	144	108
Social studies	History, geography and civics	72	36	72
Languages	Languages other than Russian	36	36	36
	Total	396	396	396
	Electives and group work	72	72	72

Source: *Otkrytaia Shkola* 2008, 4, 28–29

The standard curriculum models for adult education centres throughout Russia in Table 27.3 offer a nexus of academic and vocational knowledge and skills characterised by:

1. Cultural dimension (knowledge, skills and abilities for societal participation)
2. Professional dimension (knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful work as a professional)
3. General knowledge (including skills, abilities and values and other personal qualities required for the profession)
4. Special knowledge (including specialised vocational skills necessary for successful employment) (see *Otkrytaia Shkola* 2008, 3, pp. 21–24).

## Major Models of Lifelong Learning

There are many approaches to lifelong learning, ranging from vocationally oriented models to compensatory models. There are at least nine dominant models of lifelong learning and adult education globally that Russian adult educators were able to draw on:

- The *functionalist model*, focusing on “human capital”, offering knowledge, skills and credentials for jobs.
- The *critical literacy model*, as promoted by writers such as Paulo Freire, who coined the term ‘conscientisation’, or developing consciousness that has the power for social transformation, through dialogue and praxis.
- The *social justice model*, sharing some elements with the critical literacy model and including such dimensions as social justice, human rights and equity.
- The *reflective learning model*, focusing on the development of meta-level skills whereby the individual can critically assess different theories, discourses and knowledge paradigms. This model could be characterised as ‘learning how to think’.
- The *compensatory/social rehabilitation model*, in which the educational content is intended to remedy some deficiency in education.
- The *humanistic model*, exemplified by the Folk High School movement of N.F.S. Grundtvig, in which the aim is essentially to broaden learners’ horizons and enrich their minds (see also McIntosh and Varoglu 2005).
- The *pedagogy of engagement/progressive model* of lifelong learning.
- The *life/leisure model*

While the functionalist model in education is very dominant (with its stress on educational outcomes, skills and standards) it is worth to note as McIntosh and Varoglu (2005) remind us that other models also have an important role to play. For instance, Suzy Halimi (2005) in her *Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion* emphasises that the other models are integral to a holistic conception of lifelong learning.

Furthermore, UNESCO, in its vision of lifelong learning, has tended to promote a wide spectrum of models. The seminal Faure report, issued under UNESCO auspices in 1972, saw education not only as a means of promoting vocational competence and economic progress but as a way of expanding individual freedom and enabling people to live fulfilled lives in a variety of roles (McIntosh and Varoglu 2005).

The report *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (1972) became the leading policy document in the area, and spelled out for the first time a coherent philosophy of lifelong learning. It adopted an idealistic view of human nature and the power of education to change society, arguing that lifelong learning, if properly organised, is capable of making every citizen participate fully in this scientific humanism and of enabling individuals to play a creative role in the forthcoming technological revolution (Kallen 1979, p. 52). Building on Faure, the Delors report of 1996 postulated “four pillars” of education – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (Delors) – to which the UNESCO Institute for Education has added a fifth: learning to change (McIntosh and Varoglu 2005, p. 5).

Elena Kudryashova (2007) in ‘Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Russia: Problems and perspectives in international context’ argues that Russia relies on international experience and documents of UNESCO and EU, including the Bologna declaration, which determine the main directions, essence and content of adult learning and lifelong learning. This philosophy of enabling individuals to live fulfilled lives as active citizens – contributing to the community and the economy has found its way to adult education/evening schools in Russia after 1993.

## ***Young Adults, Adult Education and Social Rehabilitation***

Delors' "four pillars" of education – learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be – had influenced adult educators in Russia. For instance, one of the emerging trends in adult education and lifelong learning during the 1990s and after 2000 was social and economic rehabilitation of young adults, designed to change once unemployable and unskilled youth to skilled and employable workers. Young adults in need of social rehabilitation tend to come from difficult or broken families, in the atmosphere of alcoholism, substance abuse and physical abuse (see also, Ovchinnikov 2008, p. 31). There were also school drop-outs, who left the school due to inability to cope with the academic curriculum, low motivation or social problems. These young adults were at risk – due to 'difficult families, being migrants, culturally and socially disadvantaged, and anti-social values' (Khateeva, *Otkrytaia Shkola* 2008, p. 9). Other adult education centres offer similar educational and vocational programmes – designed to offer education and vocational training for young adults, including 'difficult' adolescents, and adults in need of re-skilling and re-training for new jobs (Kamerdinerov 2004, p. 12; Makusheva 2008, p. 17; Mikhailova 2008, p. 23; Ovchinnikov 2008, p. 30).

Shcheglov (2008), Principal of a rural adult education centre (Narimanovsky region, near Astrakhan), reminds us that his evening school offers compensatory education for adolescents and young adults (grades 5–12), who are in the main 'problem adolescents', who are socially disadvantaged and at risk. He argues that it is difficult to use criteria of quality and excellence with such students, some of whom were street kids and homeless:

They are in the main street kids, who were out of school for two or three years...Our goal is to save them and safeguard them from alcoholism, drugs, prostitution, crime, and often – from their own parents (Shcheglov 2008, p. 22).

## ***Education and Vocational Training Issues***

The role of VET becomes more explicit during the 1990s, when adult education was seen as preparation for emerging jobs in the newly restructured economy.

As jobs became scarce during economic downturn in the Russian Federation between 1991 and 1996, unemployed young adults were increasingly interested in continuing their VET in evening schools. According to Vershinin (2008), evening schools and adult education centres played a significant social and vocational role during the transitional stage of the economy (Vershinin 2008, p. 62).

The Adult Education Centres in the contemporary Russia operate as a vast umbrella framework for a variety of adult education and lifelong learning initiatives. The Centres are designed to promote inclusive schooling, vocational training and social justice by means of compensatory education and social rehabilitation for individuals dislocated by economic and social restructuring (see Lomova 2004, p. 3,

who develops the social pedagogy in her evening school). These Centres play a very important role in helping to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and values for active citizenship and work in a participatory and pluralistic democracy.

V. Musatkin (2004), Principal of the Open Evening Secondary School, at Ulianovsk, observes the changing role of the rural school for young adults. He believes that without adequate education and committed individuals, who love work, it is impossible for the nation to exist and equally impossible for the renewal of Russia to be realised. During recent years his college attracts an increasing number of young adults from surrounding secondary schools. They include students at risk (*problemnye podrosterki*) and others who are attracted to learning skills for jobs. Thus, the college offers VET, 'social safety net' and 'differential schooling' for different skilled professions (pp. 4–6). Musatkin lists the following four essential functions of the evening college for young adults in his community:

- Enable students to receive quality education and training
- By the use of special needs pedagogy and social rehabilitation to turn 'difficult' young adults round to learn a profession and master knowledge needed for participation in the community
- To create safe and comfortable environment in order to activate the student's potential, best qualities of civic education and the want for work
- To help students to acquire the skills of a given profession (p. 6).

This is also reinforced by Davidovich (2004) who argues that the most important function of the school is to prepare young adults for 'honest work', those who take pride from their work (p. 8).

Evening schools have become known, according to some teachers and school principals as schools of equal opportunities (see Kamerdinerov 2004, p. 12). These VET evening schools accept young adults and adults in need of VET, including those requiring re-skilling. Such schools have a number of VET curricular streams (between one and five), tailored to students' professional needs. For instance, one such school in St. Petersburg offers five streams of VET, including a compensatory and rehabilitation stream, targeting young adults at risk, those who are unskilled and school dropouts. It includes elementary VET, education for work plus a social psychology unit (an elective) on the self and society. This particular stream is designed for young adults who are 'struggling' in normal schools but have a chance of completing education and obtaining vocational qualifications. Providing compensatory education for individuals, who were unable to cope in increasingly academically oriented schools, and others, displaced by the changing nature of the labour market, was always a defining pedagogy of adult education (see Zajda 2003).

Increasingly, adult education centres offer a chance for young adults to complete their formal schooling. There are many secondary school students, who experience learning difficulties or who come from broken homes, ready to get transferred to the evening school to complete their schooling and gain vocational training (Editorial, *Otkrytaia Shkola* 2008, 5, pp. 3–4).

Nina Shipilova (Principal) and Tatiana Suchilina (Deputy Principal, curriculum) at the evening school number 40, in Moscow, describe the school curriculum and its

policy towards lifelong learning for young adults. The school has 400 students, mainly 15-year olds and 18-year and above. Half have low-skilled jobs and many come to the school due to social and economic factors – shortage of funds and inadequate schooling and skills for higher skill occupations (Shipilova and Suchilina 2004, pp. 12–15). Similarly, Makusheva (2008), Mikhailova (2008) and Vychugghanina and Shtentsova (2008) focus on social rehabilitation of school dropouts and adults, by offering them relevant vocational training, skills and knowledge. Makusheva (2008) reports on the use of the ‘social passport’ in her evening school, which details the student’s background, previous employment record, schooling and academic performance. In the case of Mikhailova (2008), the focus is on value education and moral training, in addition to skills training. She deals with adolescents with behavioural problems and those who could not cope at school – low need achievers, who have low self-esteem. This phenomenon of difficult and problem students and adolescents was reported earlier by V. Chapaeva (2004), Principal of the Open College number 4, in the city of Perm; he also observed the changing social make up of the student. She noted that many young adults lacked knowledge and training for jobs and are ‘reluctant to study’ (p. 14). In her school 74% were 15- to 18-year-olds and the majority were from socially disadvantaged families.

## **Evaluation: Towards a New Pedagogical Model of Adult Education in Russia**

In recent years many developed nations are experiencing a policy shift of paradigm in adult education, from a humanistic pedagogy, with focus on democracy, culture and human needs, to a “neoliberal agenda with focus on employability, global economy and development of competences for the working life” (Bauters 2008). EU’s programmes for lifelong learning tended to reflect values of pluralist democracy, active citizenship and personal development, with focus on the civil society. In Russia, however, due to neo-liberal ideology, adult education programmes have been forced to focus on promoting employability for the labour market. Globalisation and global markets are placing intense pressures on many economies and societies to become more competitive – including Russia. Igor Shuvalov (2008), Russia’s First Deputy Prime Minister, has set out a new direction for the development of Russia’s higher education system and its role in lifelong learning. ‘Russia must focus on lifelong learning, student mobility and “educational individualization” in order to remain a modern and competitive economy’ (Shuvalov 2008).

Given Russia’s radical ideological and economic transformation during the 1990s, with its relentless drive towards privatisation and global capitalism, there is a need for a new paradigm in adult education. Jackson (1997, p. 54) suggests that the need for a new approach to adult education and training “which takes into account people’s relations to *civil society* as well as to *the labour market* is most apparent in areas where *high unemployment* and *industrial restructuring* are reducing the quality of life and *life chances* most dramatically” (italics mine). This is particularly applicable



to countries like Russia, which has experienced a monumental politico-economic transformation and social dislocation. It has already produced a significant inequality gap between the rich and the poor, by creating a new stratum of the underclass or “semi-citizens”, or those “with little power in the marketplace and little purchase on obscure democratic processes” (see also Jackson 1997, p. 53).

Evolving paradigms of adult education in Russia can be perceived as pedagogy of emancipation and engagement and include, among other things, ethical (values education framework in various self-help courses), social and instrumental (knowledge and skill-enriching) dimensions.

The above demonstrates that the policy of adult education centres encapsulates the following three core pedagogical principles:

1. New academic and vocational skills for all (to guarantee access to lifelong learning and offer skills necessary for work)
2. Investment in human capital
3. To adapt vocational training to individual needs

There is also an increased emphasis on knowledge and skills education and training, as demonstrated by the academic curriculum for adult education centres. However, for Russian adult educators who are struggling to find an authentic and engaging *ethical* and *social* basis for their pedagogy of social justice and inclusion, it could mean the following principles:

1. Adult education needs to reflect ethical and social dimensions.
2. Adult education should promote social rehabilitation and social justice.
3. Adult education should be based on pedagogy of emancipatory learning.
4. Adult education needs to respond to global imperatives of human resource development, which is both just and democratic (Zajda 2007).

Restructured adult education centres are now seen as places where adolescents, young adults and workers can complete their secondary education and upgrade their vocational skills. Some adult education centres in Russia report on their success with educationally and socially disadvantaged adolescents and young adults. Attendance rates are high, thus demonstrating high motivation and the success of teaching methods and the relevance of adult education curricula. Students, including those who were expelled from secondary schools, like the evening school where they learn knowledge and vocational skills, are treated with respect (Musatkin 2004; Gorshkova 2004; Kamerdinerov 2004; Khateeveva 2008, and Shcheglov 2008).

## Conclusion

Economic and political reforms in post-communist Russia, which re-defined the nature and direction of adult education and training attempted to respond to the market forces and demand for privatisation, deregulation and decentralisation. Having been influenced by the Western-inspired paradigms of neo-liberalism and

neo-conservatism in the economy and education, Russian adult education policy makers are hoping to create a new cultural and economic synthesis that would meet the needs of a changing world. Russian adult educators' pedagogy of inclusion and social rehabilitation indicate their active involvement in educational renewal. In some ways it seems to reflect some of the cultural ideals articulated in the Russell report (1973), the World Bank (2003), the UNESCO's globally influential Faure report (1972) and Delors report (1996), particularly the theme recognising the importance of adult education contribution to the general quality of life (Delors 1996, p. 21).

Russian adult educators are beginning to focus more and more, as discussed above, on the individual's social, cultural and personal needs. It is for this reason that compensatory and rehabilitational roles of adult education are gaining so much attention of Russian educators. Russian adult educators will need to continue refining their adult education pedagogy. They also need to consider education policies of the EU regarding key competences for lifelong learning, where the main aims are not only to "promote employability in a global knowledge economy, but also to promote personal fulfilment, active citizenship and social and cultural cohesion in a human world" (Bauters 2008). As shown earlier, this is already happening in some places, where adult education pedagogy is more collaborative, and cooperative (see Petunin 2008, p. 50), capitalising on learners' background knowledge, vocational experiences, and cultivating critical and reflective thinking (Brookfield 1991). In this sense, this new pedagogy seems to encapsulate the philosophy of lifelong learning promulgated earlier by influential UNESCO reports, especially the notion that lifelong learning is "a continuous process of forming whole human beings" (Delors 1996). Finally, having been influenced by forces of privatisation and decentralisation during the last two decades, adult education in Russia needs to increase individuals' economic and cultural capital. Thus, it is essential to develop in adult education learners their knowledge, skills and competencies for inclusion and participation in the knowledge society and the economy.

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## Chapter 28

# Regulating the Professionals: Critical Perspectives on Learning in Continuing Professional Development Frameworks

Miriam Zukas

### Contextualising Professional Regulation and Learning

Whilst professional bodies recognise that learning is ongoing and needs to be sustained throughout professional careers, those same bodies have, increasingly, required professionals to account for their learning in order to remain in good standing. Thus learning has become the principal focus for the regulation of professionals, post-qualification. What is meant by learning is, however, taken for granted, in common with many other arenas in which learning is invoked in relation to working life. Assumptions about learning are therefore usually beyond question and critical examination.

So, for example, in order that professionals remain registered, many professional bodies require members to undertake a minimum number of hours in dedicated learning activities (sometimes specified, as in the case of British dentists, sometimes not, as in the case of British pharmacists). This policy approach assumes that learning takes place in education and training outside the workplace. However, although there is benefit in such experiences, much that could be understood as learning is excluded from the discussion. Furthermore, as discussed below, because learning itself and its relation to practice may be unexamined, such approaches often fail to take account of professionals' learning in practice, and to recognise that educational activities do not necessarily change practice.

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Other professional bodies have attempted to develop a more sophisticated understanding of professional learning. They may, for example, require individuals to be involved in ‘deliberate practices of self-conduct in which professionals engage in processes of improvement and further exploration of knowledge on a discretionary basis’ (Nerland 2008, p 50). Often, such ‘discretionary’ learning forms the basis for ongoing regulation. For example, professional bodies might require members to write reflective accounts from time to time as a demonstration of learning; these accounts might then be assessed by other professionals, or ‘measured’ in some way to ensure that members are engaged in appropriate learning on the job. Whilst recognising the significance of learning in practice, these reflective approaches prioritise the individual’s internal thought processes and responsibility for their actions. Again, whilst there is value in this, there are limitations. For example, there is usually little recognition of the implication of working with others, the place of the socio-material world (‘contexts’) in learning, complex issues such as the increasing need for professionals to engage in defensive practices, ideological differences and so on. These are all integral to professional learning. And because assumptions about learning remain unquestioned even in this broader approach despite more inclusive understandings of the sites and even the processes of learning, the approaches to measuring and assessing professional development – an inevitable concomitant to regulation – betray the same limitations.

Why might this have happened? Professional learning and its promotion lies at the nexus of a number of different academic research areas. Educational research, for example, has concentrated on the early stages of teachers’ careers, with newly qualified teachers especially under the research spotlight (e.g. Day 1999; Edwards 2001). Those working in specific professions such as medical and dental education have concentrated on researching the pre-qualification stages although there is interest in ongoing learning. A few have examined the transition from qualification to practice (e.g. Higgs et al. 2004; Eraut 2007) whilst those in what might loosely be called the learning and knowledge fields, including human resource development, organisational learning, and science and technology studies, have looked at the workplace more generally. This rather fragmented picture has meant that, with the exception of the notion of the reflective practitioner, there is often little opportunity for conceptualising professional learning alongside the development of systems of regulation for specific professions. The take-up of the idea of the reflective practitioner has, in some quarters, become hegemonic. Despite the concerted critiques of reflective practice emanating from adult education and related quarters (e.g. Bradbury et al. 2009), this could be explained by the relative isolation of these different interest groups; a paucity of opportunity for exchange and debate between educational experts and those involved in the development of regulatory frameworks may have resulted in somewhat depleted conceptualisations of professional learning.

This chapter will therefore explore and critique the theoretical assumptions underlying the most common forms of professional requirements for lifelong learning and suggest that contemporary theories of learning offer alternative perspectives on professional learning and development; it will also suggest quite different implications for the regulation of those professionals.

The scope of the chapter is limited. First, it focuses on learning, rather than broader issues of knowledge, particularly professional knowledge, about which others have written extensively (e.g. Eraut 1994; Knorr Cetina 1999). And although the theoretical questions about the relationships between learning and knowledge are relevant to this discussion, a proper engagement entails more space than is available here. However, suffice it to say that in many of the examples from professional bodies which regulate post-qualified professionals, knowledge is assumed to be the outcome of learning. Second, my background is in the education of adults; my understanding of the term 'education' is broadly defined – indeed, is much broader than generally understood by some of those working on professional learning. I would include workplace and other social arenas as pedagogic sites (e.g. Billett 2001; Chappell et al. 2003; Fuller and Unwin 2004), and everyday work as involving pedagogical functions. Later in the chapter, I will explore the theoretical justifications for such a position. My own research has been concerned with professional learning in a number of arenas: doctors, academics and computing graduates and therefore is restricted to certain professional contexts.

The third limitation is that in order better to ground the discussion, the chapter will focus on the underlying assumptions of only two professional bodies, taking the British General Dental Council (GDC) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) as cases for closer examination. There are many other approaches to continuing professional development (CPD), but most share at least some of the operational features of either or both cases. Further, although both examples are British, in common with many other professional bodies in other countries, they have the intention to regulate professional members through some form of regular assessment or scrutiny of learning.

As Fenwick (2009) points out, the justification for such measurement of professional development and/or learning lies in the conceptualisation of professionals as holding specialised expertise and operating as autonomous and self-regulating workers. In the case of the GDC, continuing professional development is understood to reflect a duty of dental professionals to 'keep their skills and knowledge up to date so that patients receive the best possible treatment. ...CPD maintains public confidence in the dentists register by showing that dentists keep up to date so that they give their patients the best possible treatment and care' (GDC no date).

The GDC defines (CPD) as 'the study, training, courses, seminars, reading and other activities undertaken by a dental professional which could reasonably be expected to advance his or her professional development as a dental professional'. In contrast, many other professional bodies have a broader understanding of CPD than this somewhat restricted definition. For example, the RPSGB defines CPD as 'ongoing learning during your working life that helps you to: Improve your service to patients and public and your professional ability; Develop and improve job related skills, knowledge and behaviour; Keep up to date with the latest developments in pharmacy' (RPSGB no date). The notion of ongoing learning suggests that learning takes place in many sites, including work, and therefore leads to a more flexible approach to the monitoring and assessment of professional learning.

A final limitation is that these are only two cases, both in the health care sector. Nevertheless, to reiterate, the general points to be raised throughout the chapter apply to the conceptualisation of CPD across many professional bodies, whether regulating practitioners in the private and/or public sectors. They also apply to professional bodies in many other countries. The concern here is not with the details of specific practices, but with the broad conceptualisations underlying these regulatory practices.

There are some further preliminary comments to make about the contexts in which professionals work. Many professions have developed competency-based frameworks and standards to describe professional knowledge, skills and actions; values are often incorporated into such standards as well. These competency-based frameworks have often been used to assess professionals making the transition from one level to the next, as well as those preparing to enter the profession. They have also been used to evaluate professional performance. Such competency frameworks may be used by employers as a technology within a broader scheme of development, management, performance measurement and appraisal, but they may also be used by regulatory bodies to make explicit what competencies a professional is expected to exhibit in order to remain in good standing.

The wider context for professionals is also changing. Increasingly those in both the public and private sectors work within a climate of responsabilisation in which individuals are held to be accountable for systemic and other failures; further, professionals are increasingly involved in what might be called defensive practice because of the ways in which professionals, their employers and regulatory bodies may be called to account for their actions. So, for example, in the case of something going wrong, regulatory bodies and employers may well have to account for their endorsement of an individual as competent.

In the section that follows, I will describe in more detail the British dental and pharmacy regulatory frameworks of CPD. In the following section, I will analyse the learning assumptions implicit within such frameworks. In subsequent sections, I will introduce a vignette from my own work which depicts what might be called CPD on the job and suggest that there are other (and better) ways of understanding professionals' learning. I will conclude by suggesting some implications for the regulation of professionals' ongoing learning.

## **Models of Continuing Professional Education and Development Within the Professions**

As already outlined earlier, many professional bodies regard lifelong learning as a critical aspect of membership of the profession. Their challenge, as Fenwick (2009) so succinctly puts it, is how best to measure the professional's actual learning. As already noted, whilst there are many variations on the same theme, two different approaches seem to have emerged.

One approach presumes that learning occurs separately from work. Dentists, for example, are required by law to 'do and keep records of 250 hours of CPD over every five-year cycle' (GDC no date). At least 75 of those 250 h have to be



verifiable, in that professionals have to keep certificates that prove that they took part in a CPD activity. CPD activities which ‘count’ are those with ‘concise educational aims and objectives’, ‘clear anticipated outcomes’, and ‘quality controls’ (opportunities to give feedback in order to improve quality). Furthermore, some of the verifiable hours are required to focus on to be in certain areas (e.g. 10 h at least in each cycle on medical emergencies, 5 h at least on disinfection and decontamination and five on radiography and radiation protection). Professionals are required to obtain a certificate proving that they participated in the learning event.

A number of different kinds of activities are legitimate for inclusion in the overall count – formal education and training, individual learning, learning related to practice – but only certain forms of activity are ‘verifiable’. For example, reading journal articles is a legitimate activity, but only certain articles contribute towards verifiable hours: these selected articles are published by the British Dental Journal and have an associated multiple-choice test on-line which professionals are required to take, presumably to demonstrate learning. Furthermore, if professionals attend CPD events, the ‘verifiable’ hours do not include lunch, breaks and travel time, ironically often recognised to be the most productive periods for learning (e.g. Rooney and Solomon 2006).

Other approaches entail less prescribed frameworks and methods of recording. In the case of the RPSGB, it is assumed that the learning cycle is at the heart of the CPD process. This cycle, derived from Kolb (1984), is regarded as having four stages: reflection (what do I want to learn?), planning (what is the best way of learning what I want to do?), action (doing the learning) and evaluation (what have I learnt? Who is benefiting? How and why?). Professionals are required to keep a legible record of CPD which demonstrate their engagement in the learning cycle, with at least nine entries per year. The entries require professionals to reflect on and record how the CPD has helped to develop or improve the quality of practice. CPD records may then be ‘called in’ for review from time to time, to ensure that professionals meet the regulatory requirements.

The activities which are classed as CPD are wide-ranging: the regulations give a number of examples including finding new knowledge or learning a new skill relevant to the professional’s job; changing the way in which things are done by, for example, changing procedures as a result of learning from an incident or complaint and anything where an individual can claim to have learnt from their actions and improved their performance such as setting up a new service, participating in recognised courses and even discussing with colleagues. The point here is that professionals have both to record such events (at least nine a year!) and to reflect upon them adequately enough for those scrutinising returns to be able to assess that learning has taken place.

## Learning Assumptions

Despite the considerable difference between these two approaches, they share some assumptions about learning and knowledge. These may be characterised as an acquisitive perspective on learning and knowledge; a reliance to a greater or lesser extent on the notion of the reflective practitioner; and assumptions about the

assessment of learning. In order better to explore this, I make use of Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) framework. They, amongst many others, have identified that there are a number of conceptual lenses for understanding learning, and by association, knowledge. They suggest four: the propositional learning lens, the skills learning lens, the learning through participation in human practices lens, and the learning as transformation or reconstruction lens. The first two lenses epitomise the CPD approaches outlined earlier.

### **Propositional Lens**

For Hager and Hodkinson, the propositional learning lens assumes that learning means the accumulation or acquisition of products, knowledge, facts and so on. This is based on what Bereiter and Scardamalia (1996) called a 'folk' theory of knowledge: that is, what is learnt – knowledge in this case – is a product or thing that is independent of the learner. So, for example, in order to confirm that learning has taken place during the reading of a journal article, a multiple test is required to ensure that (enough) learning has been extracted; a CPD session is only defined as such if there are pre-defined specified learning outcomes for learning; a change in practice is only defined as learning if a professional is able to reflect upon the circumstances in which this learning was brought about.

Thus once learning is understood to be a product or thing, it becomes possible to think about it as something which may be moved from place to place, such that it is independent of and separate from the context in which it is learnt. For example, whilst recognising that discussions with colleagues might involve learning, it is only once that learning has been abstracted from the context and separated out in a written record (for regulatory purposes) that it is recognisable.

### **Skills Learning Lens**

Hager and Hodkinson (2009) argue that the second lens of skill learning works in exactly the same way with the same assumptions as the propositional learning lens – but here what is acquired is not 'knowledge' but 'skill'. So what is learnt is still a product or thing which is independent of the learner (and capable of assessment by others through, for example, examination of reflective accounts); the skill learnt is independent and separate from the context in which it is learnt, and its learning involves the implied ability to move the skill from place to place.

Thus, returning to the earlier examples, we can see that the learning is presumed to take place inside professionals' heads or sometimes, in the case of skills, within their bodies. In the dentists' example, the learning processes are specially designated, usually separate from professional practice, and usually intentionally 'educational' (almost by definition); the learning outcomes are assumed to involve the acquisition of new knowledge and skills which may be pre-determined or predicted; and importantly, it is assumed that this new knowledge and skills will be transferred to new sites (i.e. back into professional practice).

In the case of pharmacists, whilst there is a more liberal interpretation of the contexts for learning, the same propositional/skills lenses still pertain in relation to the recording and assessment of learning. The invoking of the learning cycle suggests that learning is predictable and derived sequentially with some intentional phase (planning), an acquisitive phase (action – ‘doing the learning’), some kind of mental transformation (‘evaluation’) and then condensation, movement, transfer or reapplication to practice through ‘reflection’. The mentalist activity is demonstrated by ‘making an entry’ on the record. This time, suggests Fenwick (2009), there are further problems because evidence of learning relies on ‘individual mentalist recall and disclosure of experiences – translated as learning’ (p 235). The requirement to begin some of the nine entries at the point of reflection amplifies the idea that learning entails the movement of something (knowledge) from one place to another in order to solve a problem.

Hager and Hodkinson (2009) suggest two further lenses for thinking about learning. The next section begins with an example from the field before discussing the lens of learning as participation in human practices and the lens of learning as reconstruction or transformation. The subsequent section considers the lens of learning as becoming, before concluding with the implications for our understanding of professionals’ continuing learning and education.

### **Example from the Field**

The following vignette is taken from an observation that was part of a recent study examining doctors’ learning during the transition from one level of responsibility to another. Details of the study may be found elsewhere (Kilminster et al. 2010). Briefly, the study focused on two points in junior doctors’ careers when they take on higher levels of responsibility: the first post-graduate year when doctors are able to prescribe for the first time; and the specialist trainee period when doctors become responsible for case management. We interviewed doctors before and after observing them in their everyday work on wards for the elderly. During my observation of Dr. Patel, the specialist trainee, we went on a ward round with the consultant and two other junior doctors. The ward, a large airy space, housed eight elderly women patients, some surrounded by visitors, and others lying quietly. My field notes record the following:

A moth flies through the ward and a number of people notice. The consultant notices people looking about them and goes to find the moth. A visitor comes up saying he’s an entomologist. The consultant rushes around and finally corners the moth; he knocks it to the floor, either killing it or stunning it. After the entomologist identifies it, the moth is thrown out the window and a conversation ensues within the team of doctors as to whether the consultant should have killed the moth or not. One junior doctor jests that he is a murderer. The consultant’s view is that “you couldn’t have something like that flying around which might fly into patients’ mouths”. He goes on to elaborate that there is no point being concerned about preventing cross-infection through hand-washing if there is a moth flying around. He then tells the team about a health and safety course he’d been on where he’d been asked what he would do if a man with a hammer came into a ward and started trying to attack the patients. He points out that all doctors are responsible for patients’ safety, regardless of what that might entail.

This vignette illustrates several points in relation to professional learning. At its most mundane, the story appears to illustrate a concern with hospital-acquired infection. But whilst this might be understood as a routine aspect of patient care, the matter is highly politicised in the UK; hospital consultants are called to account by senior hospital managers for any such cases, not least because league tables of hospital performance are published by the government department, and hospitals may lose money and standing if results (i.e. the levels of patients with hospital-acquired infection) are deemed to be unsatisfactory. But we may also understand this vignette in terms of learning responsibility (the subject of our original study): the consultant made it abundantly clear that cross-infection in all its manifestations (including moths) was everyone's responsibility, even if it meant someone in his elevated position running about the ward in a rather undignified fashion. A third point has to do with the way in which the consultant appears to 'transfer' learning from a health and safety course to the workplace, and thence to 'transfer' that learning to his more junior colleagues.

### **Learning Through Participation in Human Practices Lens**

Since the ground-breaking work of Lave and Wenger (1991) which drew attention to the situated nature of learning, many educationalists have formed the view that learning is part and parcel of participation in practice (be that work or any other form of human activity), whether or not learning is intended. Much of the early work focused on newcomers (legitimate peripheral participants) who moved over time to participating in more significant aspects of practice. Instead of conceptualising learning as the acquisition of some object or thing, learning increasingly came to be understood as being able to engage in work (and other) practices. Those practices, which undergo continual change, are greater than the individual learner; instead, as in the earlier example, knowledge is seen to be embedded in everyday action, rather than in the heads of individual learners. The action of the consultant upon the appearance of a moth was contextually bound and unpredictable, but engaged doctors (and others) in learning responsibility. The consultant's actions cannot be separated from the context in which he and the other doctors found themselves; nor can the learning of junior doctors be separated from the daily practices of the ward, even if these involved unusual occurrences. Clearly, both the learning and the participation of the learners depended on what was happening in that specific context.

Thus, a number of assumptions are involved in the learning through participation lens, as summarised by Hager and Hodkinson (2009, p 8–9): what is learnt is a complex social construction, subsuming the individual learner; the learner, rather than an object of learning, moves between contexts (in the case earlier, the consultant moves between the health and safety course and the ward) and learning itself has contextual features such that both learning and the learner change as contexts change.

Whilst this lens might reflect better professionals' learning in daily practice, and their continuing professional development, nevertheless there are a number of criticisms which have been made. First, there has been a tendency to focus on newcomers,

rather than what Lave and Wenger (1991) have termed old-timers (those we are interested in here). Secondly, and importantly, there has been little consideration of the individual learners themselves. Nevertheless, the move away from the metaphor that learning involves the acquisition of some thing (knowledge, skill) to the metaphor of learning as participation (Sfard 1998) could transform the way in which professionals' learning is understood and accounted for by their professional bodies.

### **Learning as Transformation or Reconstruction**

Hager and Hodkinson suggest that a fourth metaphor, derived in part from constructivism and in part from Engeström's (2001) version of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), has emerged. Here learning is an evolving process in which the learner is integral, and also evolving. It also assumes that learning involves the 'emergence of novelty' (p 11) as new understandings and new contexts develop. The problem is that few researchers employing this lens have so far tackled both the changing learner and changing context. So, in the earlier example, we can see how the consultant comes to transform his health and safety course learning to create new meanings and interpretations of professionally responsible practice – in other words, we have an instance of continuing professional development. But we have few theories that are able to deal with the inter-penetration of consultant and context to produce learning.

### **Alternative Views**

#### ***Learning as Becoming***

In an attempt to circumvent some of the problems mentioned earlier, Hager and Hodkinson (2009) suggest a new lens for learning: that of becoming. From this point of view, they assume that learners bring themselves to learning. What they mean by this is that learners bring their histories, their experiences and their classed, raced, gendered beings, as well as their knowledge, skills and understanding, to learning. Viewed through this lens, learning is inherently part of and shaped by the context, but importantly, it is also practical, physical and emotional, as well as cognitive. In short, it is embodied. In addition, an even more complex understanding of learning emerges, in which it is understood as part of a changing relational web, rather than as a 'thing'. Since the learner is part of that relational web, learning can never be independent of the learner, nor can it ever be independent of context. Learning is thus part of an ongoing process of change in which the material and social worlds are constantly in flow.

To return to the continuing professional development of professionals, this helps better to theorise learning which involves processes of ongoing change. Learning occurs whether or not activities are deemed to be 'educational', whether or not they are planned as per the learning cycle. There may be deliberate interventions to

ensure that learning happens, but, as Saljö (2003) points out, ‘people simply cannot avoid learning’ (p 315), whether or not they are conscious of it. There is no end point to professionals’ learning – ‘people become through learning and learn through becoming, whether they wish to do so or not, and whether they are aware of the process or not’ (Hager and Hodkinson 2009, p 15). Thus, learning might be recognised to be happening in the relational web of consultant, junior doctors, patients’ relatives and so on. We might also draw attention in that relational web to the power relationships within the team, the policy context in which health and safety is a primary concern, the inter-professional relationships on the ward, amongst other elements. However, some have argued that, as complex as this picture of learning is, it still does not suffice in understanding learning in work. Although the material world is recognised as integral to learning, nevertheless non-human objects (e.g. the moth, the beds, the window) still tend to be sidelined.

### **Socio-Material Approaches to Learning: Learning as Emergence, Learning as Expansion, Learning as Translation**

Alternative perspectives on professional learning could also emerge from socio-material accounts of learning. Fenwick (2009) provides a summary of three which could help to extend our theorisation of professionals’ learning, and to offer new possibilities for the continuing development of those professionals. The first, complexity science, derived from work by Davis and Sumara (2006), focuses on the concept of emergence, which entails ‘the understanding that in (complex adaptive) systems, phenomena, events, environment and actors are mutually dependent, mutually constitutive, and actually emerge together in dynamic structures’ (p 237). Learning is therefore considered to be ‘expanded possibilities for action, or becoming capable of more sophisticated, more flexible, more creative action’. The second socio-material approach, CHAT, was mentioned earlier in relation to the view that learning may be considered as transformation. As outlined earlier, CHAT is concerned with both collective and individual learning in activity systems. It focuses on the ‘object’ or problem towards which activity is directed, suggesting that this, together with the system’s culture and history (for example in terms of its rules, division of labour and so on), shapes work and learning. Learning occurs in ‘the expansion of the system’s ‘object’ and reconfiguration of the system’s practices’ (p 238).

The third, actor-network theory (ANT), derives from science and technology studies. Although ANT is less a theory and more a collection of loosely related conceptions (Latour 2005) or, as Latour suggests, good accounts ‘where all the actors *do something* [italics in the original] and don’t just sit there’ (p 128), nevertheless, those conceptions have a common premise: relational materiality. This means that ‘materials do not exist in and of themselves but are endlessly generated and at least potentially reshaped’ (Law 2004, p 161). Actors might include humans, technologies, animals, laboratory tests, texts, policies and so on, but they become actors only when they succeed in translating or mobilising another actor to perform knowledge in a particular way. In the earlier example, the moth is an actor just as the consultant

and entomologists are actors; so too is the health and safety policy which operates at the hospital. The moth translates the patient visitor as an entomologist; the entomologist translates the moth as a specimen; the consultant translates the moth as a health and safety risk; his junior staff member translates him – even if only in jest – as a murderer. The actor-network of health and safety calls these entities into being in a way which we could regard as a struggle between different enactments, different translations. Fenwick argues that ‘This process of enactment, this interplay of force relations among technology, objects and changes in knowledge at every point in the network is a continuing struggle – and this struggle is learning’. (p 240).

## Implications for Professional Learning

Before being able to answer the question about the implications for professional learning, it has, I hope, become apparent that there is a fundamental disjuncture between professional learning and attempts to police, regulate and assess that learning, in order to judge whether or not individuals are able to continue to call themselves professionals. A number of questions could be asked: what are the purposes of professional regulatory bodies? How has the test of professional standing come to reside in measures of learning and development? What are the (unintended) consequences for professionals’ becoming, in view of the ways in which forms, hours, journals and other technologies of recording come to stand for learning? This is not the place. But, accepting that regulators view professional learning as the main focus for their regulatory practices, regardless of the form they take, even this brief overview of alternative views of learning should challenge the assumptions and taken-for-granted practices described earlier.

What might be the ways forward? I will outline several. The first would be to disentangle the regulation and ongoing licensing and measurement of professionals and their competence from their ongoing learning and professional becoming. This may be heretical, given that many professional bodies have tried hard to open up spaces in which to encourage professionals to reflect in order to advance their practice and to develop their knowledge.

A second would be to pursue this understanding of learning as emerging through changing relational webs of things, people, activities and contexts, rather than inside professionals’ heads. Some suggestions might include focusing on non-human as well as human parts of the system (Nespor 1994), not as technical developments but as ways of considering learning systemically.

A third would be to recognise that learning takes place in practice, in the relations between, and not within, separate things and separate beings; from this point of view, collaborative practice, work exchange, peer review, work shadowing, even role exchanges might catalyse ‘critically intense learning periods’ (Kilminster et al. 2010) in addition to everyday learning. If the regulators seek to promote learning as a central feature of professional identity, perhaps they might encourage activities which start – rather than end – with practice.

Fourth, spaces for educational opportunities might and should still be part of the learning of professionals, but regulators' prescriptions as to their form and intention, let alone the content, seem unnecessarily restrictive. The conflation of such activities with regulation could and indeed sometimes does lead to professionals viewing learning as a necessary but tedious evil. And yet, if professional bodies were to expand their ways of viewing professional learning, this could lead to much better engagement with continuing professional development.

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**Part III**  
**Programmes and Practices**

# Chapter 29

## Lifelong Learning in OECD and Developing Countries: An Interpretation and Assessment

Abrar Hasan

### Introduction

It is approximately 50 years since the concept<sup>1</sup> of lifelong learning (LLL) was first proposed, in its modern usage.<sup>2</sup> It has gone through considerable transformation since then but much confusion continues to permeate discussion on its meaning, policy orientations and added value compared to alternative approaches. Although the initial proposals were meant for all countries, subsequent development of the concept has occurred mainly in the context of the OECD<sup>3</sup> countries, and questions might well be raised about its relevance for the developing<sup>4</sup> countries.

As a sequel to the author's earlier work,<sup>5</sup> including the chapter in the Handbook's first edition (Hasan 2001), the present chapter reinterprets the lifelong learning framework, identifies its distinguishing features from alternative approaches to education policy and assesses its relevance and implications for education policy for two aforementioned stylised groups of countries. The following section

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of lifelong learning is discussed below.

<sup>2</sup>The history of the concept goes back much farther; see Hasan (1996). See also, Papadopoulos (1994).

<sup>3</sup>The terms 'OECD countries', 'advanced industrialised countries' and 'high-income countries' will be used interchangeably, recognising the fact that there are large differences among these countries. The OECD, in fact, includes some middle-income countries in its membership.

<sup>4</sup>The terms 'developing countries', 'developing nations' and 'low-income countries' will be used interchangeably to denote a group of countries with some common features, without discounting the large differences that exist in their educational or income profiles.

<sup>5</sup>See references to the chapter, (Hasan 1996, 1999, 2004, 2010).

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reformulates the lifelong learning framework, with an analysis of the forces driving its evolution in the OECD countries. It lays out criteria for assessing the added value of the framework. The section that follows assesses the influence of the framework on education policy developments in the advanced industrialised (OECD) countries, where the framework has been officially endorsed. The next section examines the case of the developing countries, where the framework has neither been officially adopted<sup>6</sup> nor widely discussed. The main conclusions are summarised in the final section of the chapter.

## Interpreting the Lifelong Learning Approach

### *Evolution of the Concept*

Modern conceptualisation of lifelong learning (initially lifelong education) has its origins in the 1960s.<sup>7</sup> Even though it began with several different strands, the basic idea was that post-school education should be provided on a recurrent basis, involving alternation between work and study; and educational opportunities should be available effectively to all individuals throughout their active life. The concept was broadened and re-orientated through the initiatives of several international organisations in the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> The word ‘education’ was replaced by ‘learning’, to signal an emphasis on the learner, the learning processes and outcomes, as opposed to a focus on imparting of education.<sup>9</sup> The coverage was extended to all purposeful learning activity, not just for the adults, but over a truly ‘cradle to grave’ or lifelong span, and

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<sup>6</sup>This refers to an officially adopted policy by a developing country as a guiding framework for its education policies. Developing countries have on many occasions endorsed the lifelong learning principle as part of the declarations from international organisations, such as the UNESCO. See, for example, UNESCO (1997).

<sup>7</sup>As a forerunner, the concept of *Education Permanente* was launched by the UNESCO conference on adult education in Montreal (1960) and in a follow-up document to that conference, *Education Permanente*, (Legrand 1965), which linked adult education to the wider educational system. The outlines of the concept were discussed at the Versailles Conference of European Ministers of Education in 1969 (G. Papadopoulos, *Education: The OECD Perspective*, 1994). The basic ideas crystallised more formally in UNESCO (*Learning to be: The Faure Report*, 1972), OECD (*Recurrent Education: A Strategy for Lifelong Learning*, 1973), and the Council of Europe (*Permanent Education*, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>*High Quality Education and Training for All*, Meeting of OECD Education Ministers, November, 1990, (OECD 1992); *Lifelong Learning for All*, Meeting of OECD Education Ministers, January 1996 (OECD 1996a); *The Treasure Within* (UNESCO: 1996); and European Commission (*White Paper on Education and Training: Teaching and learning – Towards the learning society*, 1995).

<sup>9</sup>With this shift well understood as a key feature of the lifelong learning approach, this chapter will use the two terms, learning and education, interchangeably.

learning activities in all settings (OECD 2009),<sup>10</sup> from formal education to informal and non-formal learning, sometimes called life-wide learning, were included.

### ***The Driving Forces: An Interpretation***

The evolution of education policy and the structure of educational provision may be interpreted as an interactive process between provider (or supply side) interests and the demand side needs of the learners.<sup>11</sup> Development of the formal education system over the last century can be viewed, in the main, as a response to meet the skills requirements of both the economy (including the government sector and the educational establishment itself) and citizenship. Traditionally, provider interests have dominated in shaping the arrangements for and scale of educational provision, which were under-written by the government, and were based largely on the industrial (manufacturing) model, which limited the role of informal and non-formal learning.

Though it is still by far the dominant force, provider hold has been gradually weakened by the demographic, economic, social and technological forces operating since the Second World War, forces that have gathered greater momentum since the 1970s. With the widening use of knowledge in the production process, both higher levels and more diverse sets of skills were needed to support economic performance. Economic transformations – the increasing importance of the service economy, faster pace of job creation and destruction, shorter shelf lives of products and skills and growing international competition – generated greater diversity and adaptability of skills needed by the economy. They also generated instability of jobs, raising the demand for more frequent refreshment and upgrading of labour force skills. Rising standards of living contributed to learners demanding more quality and choice in educational provision. As the demand for learning grew, learner groups found stronger voices. As captured in the concept of human capital, the learner potentially gains in strength relative to the suppliers of education because of the greater marketability of the skills acquired. Employers as a group, in their role as demanders of skills, became more vocal for getting the skills they needed from the provider institutions, rather than undertaking to provide specialist skills themselves,

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<sup>10</sup>These take three forms in the literature: *Formal learning*: the system of formal schools, colleges, universities and other formal institutions that normally contribute full-time education for children and young people; *Non-formal learning*: comprises any organised and sustained education activities that do not correspond to this definition of formal education; it can take place both within and outside educational institutions and cater to persons of all ages; and *Informal learning*: all intended learning that cannot be classified as formal or non-formal. See International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED 1997, [www.oecd.org/edu/eag](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag) (OECD 2009).

<sup>11</sup>The demand side includes the demand for skills and competence from different sectors of the society, from individuals as well as the government and the private sector labour market.

and hence put much greater pressure on the educational institutions to open up to changing skill demands.

The same conglomeration of forces acted to weaken the strength of provider institutions. Educational institutions that were previously in quasi-monopoly positions were threatened by new entrants to the education market. New technologies, especially the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education, brought education closer to the learner, overcoming the difficulties caused by physical and time disjuncture and raising the importance of non-formal and informal learning. Formal educational structures were found wanting in dealing with the altered forces of demand for educational provision needed for the emerging knowledge economy. They were under pressure to open up to accommodate the diversity of learner needs. Governments strapped for funds in coping with the rising demand for education, insisted on greater efficiency and accountability from the educational establishments. Stronger international competition put pressures on higher education institutions to be more responsive to the needs of the economy, especially in the transmission of knowledge and in contributing to innovation.

The net effect of the interaction between the demand and supply side forces may be interpreted as putting pressure for continuing democratisation of education. It took the form not only of wider access but also of greater attention to the emerging learner needs and learner diversity, which meant that education in all settings needed to be considered. With universal secondary education virtually assured, there was a push for ‘massification’ of tertiary education, and demand for such education came from a more diverse group of learners than previously. But the massive expansion had at best a limited impact on changing the socio-economic profile of learners. Research was pointing out that a significant part of educational inequity was linked to socio-economic factors such as household incomes, parents’ education and occupation, and educational inequity, in turn, formed a major element of income inequality. It was evident that established approaches to educational expansion had failed to exploit education’s potential contribution to social cohesion. Hence, interest in social cohesion was an important factor in the democratisation process.

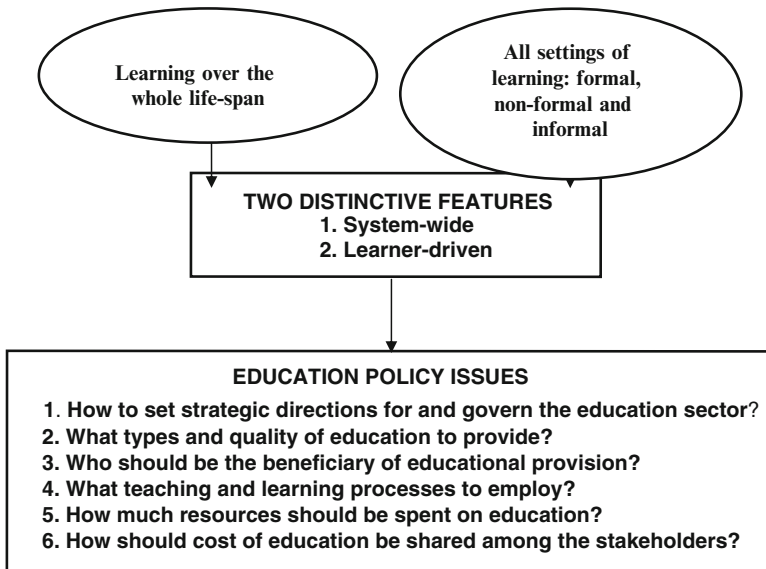
### ***The Lifelong Learning Framework: A Re-statement***

The foregoing analysis helps to re-state the lifelong learning framework. As depicted in Chart 29.1, they can be summarised in two distinctive features (centre box) flowing from its building blocks (top two boxes).

These features signal two major shifts for the orientation of education policies. The first is from an approach to education policies that are designed and implemented within the context of individual sub-sectors<sup>12</sup> of education (made up largely

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<sup>12</sup>The term sub-sectors of education will be used to refer to components of the education sector such as early childhood education, pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary, tertiary, and adult education.



**Chart 29.1** The lifelong learning approach and education policies

of the formal sectors), to a system-wide (or sector-wide)<sup>13</sup> approach to education policy. This system<sup>14</sup> comprises a lifelong – from cradle to grave – and a life-wide element – covering learning in all settings. The system-wide view defines the *scope* of education policies and argues that education issues cannot be properly understood or addressed without considering the system-wide scope of education. In contrast, existing education policy literature and practice do not offer an alternative system-wide approach; the idea of education as a system is a contribution of the lifelong learning approach.

The second shift is from the supply side dominance of educational provision to a larger role of the demand factors, from a dominant focus on provider interest to a greater recognition of the interest of the learner. Learner needs, as seen over the life cycle and in all learning settings, spell out the objective and the normative principle that underlies the framework: education policies should place learner interests and objectives as the central criterion for choosing among options concerning all education policy issues ranging from teaching and learning processes to governance of the educational enterprise. This guiding principle calls for a progressive democratisation of the learning process by giving learners a greater say in all aspects of the learning enterprise compared with the traditional provider-driven systems.

<sup>13</sup>The terms 'system-wide' and 'sector-wide' will be used interchangeably.

<sup>14</sup>The term 'system-wide' is used here to include all sub-sectors of education mentioned in note 12, from early childhood to adult learning, as well as the linkages between the sub-sectors through legal and technical infrastructures and practices.

## *Assessing the Implications for Education Policy*

### **Assessment Criteria**

The added-value of the lifelong learning (LLL) framework can be best appreciated by examining (1) whether it covers all the important education policy issues faced by a country; (2) whether it has useful guidance to offer on them and (3) how these compare against what is proposed by alternative approaches to education policy.

*A Moving Target:* The contribution of the LLL framework should not, however, be assessed on the basis of a one-off event – for example, whether the framework is adopted or not adopted – or as a particular change in this or that policy. The LLL approach proposes a profound change in the mindset, whose impact should be reflected in continuing changes in policy to accommodate the changing technological, social and economic contexts of education. Application of the lifelong learning approach, therefore, represents a moving target.

*Basis of Comparison:* Whether they do it explicitly or implicitly, and by design or default, all societies must make decisions on a number of education policy issues, such as those in Chart 29.1 (bottom box). The issues listed there are from a societal perspective; decisions at the level of individual learners or provider institutions are not of concern here. Countries may not conceptualise or address policies in these compartmentalised terms and they do recognise inter-relationships among them. For example, issues of types and volume of educational provision are not isolated from issues of equity or who benefits.

The point of spelling out these six policy areas separately is that they each need to be and are addressed by all societies in one form or another, even if the objectives and decision processes are inter-linked or opaque. These six issues will be used below to compare the lifelong approach with its alternatives. It has already been pointed out that available alternative approaches are exclusively sub-sector in their coverage and policy orientation. Hence, the lifelong learning framework has a clear advantage as the alternatives fail to address system-level issues.

However, a basis of comparison between the LLL framework and its alternatives exists at the level of education sub-sectors. For the tertiary education and adult learning sectors, the major alternative view comes from the human capital perspective where the rates of return to investment in human capital are the major decision criteria. This economic calculus is also being increasingly used in the early childhood education sector, where ideologically based views on the role and prerogatives of the parents also offer competing paradigms. For the primary and secondary school sectors, the role of the state in providing education to its citizens has been universally recognised in the OECD countries, supported largely but not exclusively on the basis of education being a public good.



## ***Strategic Directions and Governance of the Education Sector***

All countries need to set the overall priority of education against competing societal priorities, ensure coherence between education and other socio-economic policies, identify roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in education, implement governance and management principles for a large and diverse sector, and shape the legal and other infrastructures for the sector. Given its sector-wide scope, the lifelong learning approach has a distinct advantage in offering guidance on shaping these decisions compared with the alternative approaches.

*Societal Valuation of Education:* A society's valuation of education derives from its vision of the role education should fill in shaping an individual's life in relation to the economy and society. In practice, such valuation has emerged out of the roles of the push and pull of stakeholder forces operating in the context of individual sub-sectors of formal education. This has led to debates about the value to be given to learning for the sake of learning versus education's instrumental service to the economy, or the role of the market in determining under- or over-education. From the lifelong learning perspective, these debates miss the point. An individual participates in learning activities for a variety of reasons ranging from satisfying the spirit of enquiry, functioning as a citizen in various roles in society, contributing to one's own and society's economic life or simply enjoying the treasures that lie within and without. These objectives evolve in their mix and relative importance over the life cycle. They each have to be accommodated in different ways, and a life-cycle approach is essential for capturing all these multiple motivations. This suggests that if a society evaluates the importance of the education enterprise in all its dimensions it would likely give it a higher value against other competing societal goals than it would under other education policy approaches.

*Volume of Educational Supply:* The volume of education may not be a policy target or variable as such. However, given what has just been said about societal valuation of education, lifelong learning would imply a larger notional volume of total education activities than would be the case under alternative approaches to education policy, such as those based on the rate of return calculus or on approaches that do not take account of learning in the informal and non-formal sectors.

*Cohesion and Mutual Reinforcement among Education and Other Socio-Economic Policies:* Given its multiple roles, education policy necessarily involves close interface with a range of socio-economic policies, such as the policies for economic development, technology, environment, culture, health and international trade, to name a partial list. The nature and significance of the interface differs among the sub-sectors of education. For example, the links between education and health policies are far more important for the early childhood education sector than they are for the sector dealing with adult learning. These differing inter-relationships can neither be properly understood nor coherence among the different policies assured from an exclusively sub-sector perspective. A system-wide perspective, offered by the

lifelong learning approach, adds value by taking account of all the important inter-linkages among different socio-economic policies.

*Intra-sector Priorities and Infrastructures:* Almost universally in all countries, under current arrangements, the value accorded to each sub-sector of education is determined largely by the strength of the lobby groups within each sub-sector. There are usually no mechanisms for considering relative valuation of the sub-sectors from the societal perspective. As a consequence, the education system stands composed of largely disjointed structures, cultures and impermeable hierarchies. Similarly, building of system-wide infrastructures – such as qualification structures that can link learning acquired at all levels and in all settings – falls between the stools and is ignored sub-sector determined thinking. The lifelong learning approach brings these issues to the surface.

*Governance and Management of a Large and Diverse Sector:* Under this rubric fall such issues as common principles and approaches to governance (overarching principles such as ‘hands-on’ governance versus ‘arms-length’ steering) and management (lower level rules of the game), the respective roles and responsibilities of the public and private sectors, standards of accountability, and so on. In addressing these issues, the guiding principles proposed by the lifelong learning framework are to keep at the very forefront learners’ interest and the expected impact on acquisition of learning as seen in a dynamic context of learning over the lifetime. The LLL approach argues for governance and management arrangements that aim to best serve learner objectives. One implication of this approach would be that policy decisions should be best taken by those closest to the learners so that learners’ views can be best taken into account. This is not to say that alternative approaches to education policy do not take learner interest into account; it is to say that the LLL approach highlights the impact on learning and puts it front and centre. The choice between different governance and management approaches are to be made with this central objective in view.

## ***Types and Quality of Education***

A country’s educational profile is often described in terms of the volume, types and quality of education being provided. The volume issue was noted above and the type and quality of education are now considered.

*Types or Composition of Education Supply:* The composition of education supply, such as by the level of education or by vocational and academic orientation, is an important policy variable. The guiding principle proposed by the LLL framework is that the structure or composition of educational supply should be aligned with the structure of learners’ needs, which have to be well articulated. Without its clear articulation, the composition of education supply is, by design or default, dominated by providers’ interest. Educational providers may, for example, favour a more academic

type of education; or they may invest vocational education with less status (an issue that is at the centre of the binary divide in tertiary education). Mismatches in the composition of demand for, and supply of, educational provision are a common occurrence. The lifelong learning approach suggests that close attention be paid to the composition of learner need as a way of removing such a mismatch.

*Educational Quality:* All educational provision has some standards of quality built into it. These standards are largely determined by providers' views of quality measures – whether input or output based. The LLL framework suggests three guiding principles to focus the quality debate. First, the impact on the learning acquired, or competence, should be the cardinal focus of quality reforms. Second, relevance in terms of the learner interest ought to be included as an element in determining educational quality. Third, quality should be viewed in dynamic, learning over time, terms. It should consider not only the learning outcome of a particular learning activity but also how well the episode prepares learners with motivation for future learning.

### ***Who Should Be the Beneficiary of Educational Provision?***

A central tenet of the LLL framework is that learning needs of all its citizens, including the disadvantaged, should be taken explicitly into consideration. Educational equity should be evaluated in the context of how the whole system functions, how it promotes or constrains distribution of educational opportunities over the life cycle. Viewing education equity issue from the sub-sector perspective is fundamentally defective; there are many elements that are left out, which can be captured only in a system-wide and life-cycle perspective. Furthermore, educational equity is not just a matter of equitable access – but requires addressing the causes behind poor educational performance. This is because educational performance at one level is a strong determinant of access to educational opportunity at the next level. This approach directs attention to a concerted action among education and other policies for addressing educational inequities. It has been well established, for example, that educational performance at the primary and secondary school levels is highly affected by the socio-economic status of the child and addressing these institutional obstacles goes well beyond education policies as such.

### ***What Teaching and Learning Processes to Employ?***

The guiding principle offered by the LLL framework is to keep the learner's interest, as opposed to suitability for the teacher or the provider, at the centre, and to concentrate on the impact on learning outcomes or the competencies acquired. The guiding principle has implications for many aspects of the teaching and learning process, such as choice of the curricula, pedagogy, teacher training approaches and

assessment of learning outcomes. The need to take account of and foster learner motivation has already been noted earlier. As another example, assessment measures should be individual-based and give primary importance to promoting learning rather than to other, albeit important, objectives such as its use as a screening tool.

### ***How Much Resource to Invest in Education and How to Find These Resources?***

The resources devoted by a country to education depend on the value the country places on education in competition with other societal goals. These are reflected in decisions regarding access, equity, quality, teaching and learning processes and governance mechanisms. As discussed earlier, the LLL framework has implications for each of these policy parameters. Taken together, they would imply a larger proportion of resources for education than what comes out on the basis of alternative, sub-sector and supply-driven approaches or the market profitability approach of investment in education. This follows from the LLL framework's wider scope of education needs, such as covering the needs for neglected years of the life cycle, and for the value it gives to greater democratisation of education as a goal in itself and as a potential contributor to social cohesion. Its concept of social benefits goes beyond the typical economic calculus of social benefits based upon a narrow view of externalities or limited to a few social sectors such as health and the labour market.

This being said, it is also important to recognise that many elements of the life-long learning agenda can be pursued without necessarily requiring additional resources. Many of the policy implications for equity, quality, governance and teaching and learning processes can be pursued through a reallocation of the existing resources. Taking teaching and learning processes as an example, teacher training programmes can be reshaped for greater learner-centred applications. As another example, ICT access policies can be shaped to give greater attention to the equity objective.

### ***Who Should Pay for Education?***

If, however, additional resources are required for a major thrust along the lifelong learning direction, where could the extra resources come from? Three options suggest themselves.

First, the LLL approach requires a careful evaluation of the relative importance of all competing societal goals. Using the sector-wide approach of lifelong learning will likely raise education's importance as seen against other social goals outside

the social sector (although it needs to be proven). If such is the case, a reallocation of resources among competing societal goals would be one source of additional allocation to the education sector.

Second, the sector-wide approach can also identify ways in which education can serve as an important element of programmes in other policy domains. For example, many countries see education as critical for enhancing productivity and international competitiveness. Similarly, education can be a key element in poverty reduction and sustainable environment strategies in poor countries. Thus, mainstreaming of education can find new resources for the education sector.

Finally, governments can do a better job of mobilising private resources, both corporate and individual, through effective use of incentives. Co-financing arrangements for promoting adult learning is a case in point. Co-operative arrangements among employers can pool resources for labour force skill development by avoiding human capital market imperfections or poaching by competing employers. Public-private sector co-operation can be effective in lifting the overall level of resources for education in many areas. In using this approach, however, it is critical that the equity objective, which is a central plank of lifelong learning, is not compromised. Governments need to ensure that they can maintain supplementary arrangements to protect and promote educational equity. For this reason, in general, the lifelong learning framework implies greater contribution by the public sector than is the case under market efficiency approaches.

## Lifelong Learning and the OECD Countries

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the nature of policy guidance offered by the lifelong learning framework. It used the six policy areas identified in Chart 29.1 as a basis for demonstrating that the LLL framework does indeed offer guidance in each of these areas, and that the orientations it proposes are different from alternative approaches to education policy. At a conceptual level, therefore, the framework offers considerable additional value compared with the alternatives. Using this conceptual context, the purpose of this section, and the one that follows, is to review policy experience.

For the OECD countries, the LLL framework was officially endorsed by their Ministers of Education at their meeting in January 1996 (OECD 1996). They committed to making 'lifelong learning a reality for all' of their citizens who wanted it.<sup>15</sup> However, what this endorsement actually prescribed was not wholly clear. While the OECD and other international organisations have made considerable efforts in

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<sup>15</sup>They called for 'lifelong learning for all' and asked the Organisation to develop strategies to implement lifelong learning for all *Lifelong Learning for All, Communiqué*, Meeting of the Ministers of Education, January 1996.

giving policy content to the concept, lifelong learning remains steeped in much confusion. For the wider public it means all things to all people, often as a nice but vague slogan. Among many academics and politicians supportive of the approach, the concept remains limited to its 1970s definition, which equated it with adult learning. Even the academic journals devoted to lifelong learning carry majority of their articles with this limited interpretation of the concept.

Using the wider definition of LLL that emerged in the 1990s, Sect. 2 has reinterpreted the policy content of the framework in terms of its implications for six education policy areas, as noted in Chart 29.1. These will now be used to explore the degree to which the framework has influenced the education policies of the OECD countries.

### ***Strategic Directions, Governance and Policy Coherence***

*Strategic Directions and Governance:* Lifelong learning comprises a large sector, composed of many sub-sectors, both formal and informal. This large field is typically not and possibly cannot be covered under the auspices of one single ministry. In practice, there are divided ministerial oversight arrangements for formal education sub-sectors, which are often further divided between national-, regional- and local-level jurisdictions. In addition, each sub-sector has a different mix of the stakeholders, which would be difficult to accommodate within one ministry. Covering the wide spectrum of policy areas and issues as it does, lifelong learning is something of an institutional orphan: there is no well-defined institutional homeland for addressing system-wide issues. It does not have an institutional champion when it comes to speaking up for the sector as a whole in the context of other social and economic sectors.

Countries do bring together some education sub-sectors under one jurisdiction. Areas such as adult learning or literacy are often appended to one or the other ministry. Early childhood education is often linked up with ministries dealing with health and social affairs. These attempts fall far short of covering the education sector as a whole. Nor is this necessary: the LLL framework does not call for the establishment of one ministry to handle all education policies. What it does require are mechanisms and fora where sector-wide policy issues could be considered and policies co-ordinated both within the sector and in relation to other social and economic sector policies.

A review of the policy landscape in the OECD countries suggests that such mechanisms are lacking even in the case of the Nordic countries, which have been the most ardent supporters of the lifelong learning approach (OECD 2002). The policy issues identified in Chart 29.1 are mainly handled at the sub-sector level. As a consequence, many issues of interface and transitions between sub-sectors are being neglected. Despite these limitations, the system-wide approach of lifelong learning has had some impact, which is noticeable in three areas: qualifications frameworks, data development (OECD 2009) and decentralised governance.

Many OECD countries, especially the EU members, have made efforts for developing national qualifications frameworks that identify clear progressions and

learning pathways. They have also made conceptual breakthroughs in defining levels of competencies in generic terms (OECD 2004). Many countries have introduced policies for assessing prior learning, regardless of whether learning was acquired in formal or non-formal settings (OECD 2010). Some but fewer countries have attempted to link such assessments with specific qualifications and qualification requirements, thus in some limited way attempting to integrate non-formal and informal learning.

The emphasis placed by the lifelong learning approach on learning outcomes is well reflected in the field of data development. OECD countries have made significant breakthroughs in developing data on direct assessment of competencies,<sup>16</sup> both for the school-age and adult population.

With its focus on learner interest, the LLL framework implies that education policy decisions are best taken by the education specialist working in close cooperation with the learners themselves. A decentralised approach to educational decision making is in this spirit, which is a universal trend in the OECD countries. There is, as well, a shift towards reducing direct ‘hands-on’ governance in favour of an ‘arms-length’ steering of educational institutions. This is visible in the treatment of tertiary institutions, which have been granted greater autonomy in recent years in many OECD countries (Hasan 2007).

*Policy Coherence:* There are continuing attempts at improving coherence among policies, for example, between the health, social and educational policies, in the early childhood phase of education, and between education and labour market policies at the levels of upper secondary, tertiary and adult education. Most countries are attempting a stronger link between the tertiary sector and innovation and economic growth policies.

Greater attention is being paid, as well, to linkages between the formal and informal sectors of education (further described below).

## ***Types and Quality of Educational Provision***

*Types of Educational Supply:* Taking fuller account of learner needs is a central concern of the LLL approach. In this spirit, a general trend in the OECD countries is to cater to the increased diversity of learners and learner needs. This can be

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<sup>16</sup>The focus on direct measure of competencies began in 1994 with the pioneering work of International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS 1994–2000), which was followed by a second round of data gathering for adult competencies on an expanded number of competencies in ALLS (Adult Literacy and Life Skills). A modified approach was applied to the school-age population (15-year-olds under PISA) in OECD and many non-OECD countries under the PISA programme on a 3-year cycle, beginning in 2000. The Programme for International Assessment of Competencies (PIAAC) follows on the lead provided by IALS and ALLS. AHELO (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes), now being developed, aims to assess learning outcomes for the higher education sector.

observed in a range of policy reforms: from the development of a wider variety of institutional forms and delivery modes to more diversified qualifications, programmes and courses.

Increased choice at the tertiary level can be seen in greater institutional diversification and differentiation, flexibility between learning streams (academic–vocational) and greater variety in programmes and course offerings. There is a virtual explosion of post-secondary tertiary and non-tertiary institutions and qualifications (OECD 2008b). Germany has led the way with institutions that grant Master-level qualifications in vocational and technical education, and this has been followed in several countries such as Denmark, Finland, Switzerland and others.<sup>17</sup> The UK and some other countries have removed the binary divide between the universities and the polytechnics as a way of recognising the importance of research in vocational and technical education and for improving their status. Universities are under pressure to open up to demands from the economy at regional, national and global levels and to add a third dimension ‘service to society’<sup>18</sup> to the two missions they typically have (teaching and research). At the school level, reforms are attempting to pay more attention to student motivation, including through elimination of early streaming, greater use of experiential and cross-curricular content, experimentations with ‘production schools’, options for community service and a variety of formal and informal links with the job market (OECD 2000). In the sphere of adult learning, there is a burgeoning market of courses on employment-related skills development opportunities for the adults.

*Quality:* With secondary education virtually universal and a ‘massification’ of tertiary education well underway, quality of educational provision has become a major preoccupation in the OECD countries. Quality discussions and measurements have traditionally focused on input measures. The LLL framework, on the other hand, emphasises the output aspect, the impact on learning outcomes. It also adds relevance to learner needs and learner motivation as important considerations in quality. The progress OECD countries have made in developing competence-based measures of educational output has been noted above, as have been attempts to respond to the greater diversity of learners and learner needs.

## ***Access and Equity***

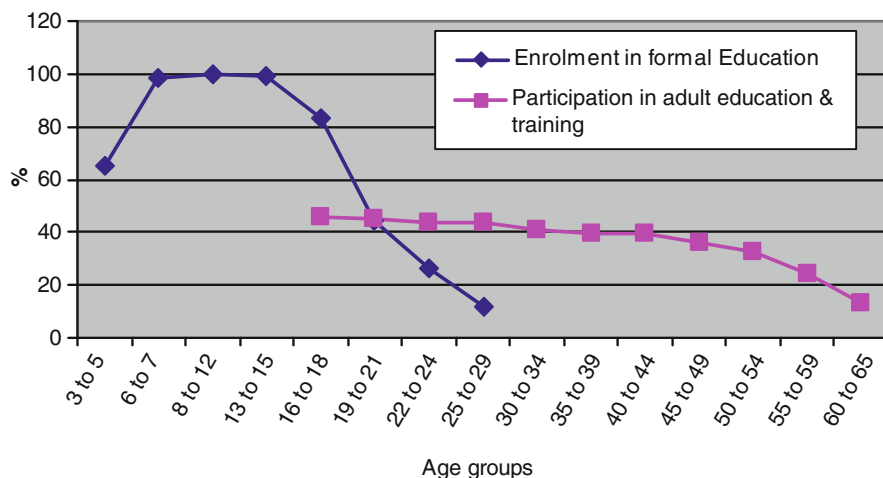
*Access:* According to a stocktaking exercise performed in 2001, the overall picture for the OECD countries is that lifelong learning is not ‘a reality for all’

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<sup>17</sup>See OECD’s reviews of national education policies for these countries.

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, the 2003 University Act of Denmark, *Reviews of National Policies for Education in Denmark*, (OECD 2005d). This mission might be interpreted as a return to the role universities originally played in society. In the current context it refers to universities’ responsibility to cater to the adult population, to contribute to the public debate on critical issues confronting society and, above all, to contribute to innovation and economic competitive advantage of the country. This call is meant to counter the ‘ivory tower’ tendencies of the universities.





**Chart 29.2** Enrolment in formal education and participation in adult education and training, Country mean, 1998 (Source: Data from *Education Policy Analysis 2001a*, OECD, page 144)

(OECD 2001b, Chap. 2). As shown in Chart 29.2, participation in educational activities in early childhood and late adult life is weak. Studies show large unmet demand in these areas. There are, of course, considerable variations among countries around these averages (OECD 2008a). In general, four groups of countries were distinguished in terms of the overall provision of lifelong learning: the Nordic countries perform at the top of the league, followed by a second group of countries comprising Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands and New Zealand. In the third, and still weaker, group fall countries like Australia, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. The weakest group is made up of countries such as Ireland, Hungary, Portugal and Poland (OECD 2001b, Chap. 2).

Progress has been made in access to educational opportunities since the aforementioned stocktaking exercise; and this is also reflected in the percent of GDP devoted to education over preceding decade (OECD 2005b). The expansion of education finds its most obvious expression in the expansion of tertiary education, such that as much as 90% of the relevant cohort is now entering tertiary education in many OECD countries (OECD 2008b, Vol. 1). Expansion has also taken place in early childhood education (OECD 2006) and adult learning (Statistics Canada and OECD 2005) opportunities. Nonetheless, there remain significant degrees of unmet demand, especially in early and adult years of life. On average, 65% of children 4 years or younger participate in some form of formal provision of early childhood education (OECD 2006). Only about 5% of adults in the range of 30–39 years are enrolled in full or part-time in formal education, and around 18% of all adults (25–64 years) participate in some form of job-related non-formal education and training (OECD 2005c).

*Equity:* Despite impressive improvement in access to tertiary education, the record on ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities has been unsatisfactory (OECD 2008b). Research is documenting the importance of contextual and institutional

forces in determining equity of access as they play out over the life cycle. More than two-thirds of school level performance is attributed to the socio-economic background of the student, and performance at school level is a key determinant of access to future learning opportunities, including to adult learning. Countries are becoming aware of the usefulness of the lifelong learning optic on equity, which suggests that educational inequities are best addressed at a system-level and through a concerted effort involving several socio-economic policies.

### ***Teaching and Learning Processes***

Concerned with poor performance, student disinterest and high dropout rates, reforms in many OECD countries are focusing attention on improving learner motivation. Curricula, pedagogy, learning environment such as the appropriate use of ICT and approaches to assessment are being rethought. A large range of experiments are being tried, too long a list to be cited here. Experiments have introduced more experiential forms of learning, even ‘production schools’, and service to community as part of the curriculum. These attempts are in the direction proposed by the LLL approach but the developments so far have been limited. In regard to recognition of non-formal learning, a small example that may be mentioned concerns granting of certain secondary-level qualifications in part on the basis of work experience in a field. Even at the highest level, regulations have emerged in many nations where a Ph.D. by publication or demonstration is a standard practice.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Investment in Education***

The level of investment in education depends on the value society places on education, which in turns depends on how the society views the role of education. As noted earlier, the LLL approach to education would suggest a larger investment of societal resources for education than would be the case under the currently used alternative approaches to education policy. This follows from three elements of the framework: recognition of the full range of educational needs, putting a higher premium on equity in educational opportunities, especially meeting the needs of the disadvantaged, and more demanding standards for educational quality.

There is no doubt that education has become a higher priority in many OECD countries over the last decade, as is reflected in a higher proportion of GDP being devoted to education. This increase in priority stems largely from the perception

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<sup>19</sup>In such cases a past body of work can be assembled for examination with an accompanying text that provides evidence of a research methodology designed for practice-based research.

that education can contribute to higher rates of economic growth. This explains why most expansion of investment has been at the tertiary level, especially in funding research and R&D. Increases in investment have also occurred in the early childhood education sector, thanks to the research that has shown positive economic returns, but the increase has been modest. For adult learning the increase has been marginal still. Addressing the deficiencies in access to early childhood education and adult learning opportunities would, itself, involve significant additional educational investment in many countries. Further additional investment would be required if functional standards required of adults are set higher. For example, according to some calculations, as much as 2% of GDP would be required if all adults were to be brought up to the level of skills required to function effectively in society, as opposed to the 1 ¼% that is currently being spent in the high-income countries.<sup>20</sup> Applying the more stringent quality proposals of the LLL framework would require still more resources.

### *Paying for Education*

The issue in question here is the relative roles of the public and the private sector. The economic argument for investment in human capital does recognise the role of state but these are basically when the public good nature of provision is established, when the market either does not exist or works with serious imperfections. In comparison, the LLL framework suggests a higher share for the public sector in view of the larger emphasis it places on equity considerations and the role of education in supporting other social objectives. Its emphasis on public sector role in addressing the equity objective is well justified: research has shown that in the areas of early childhood education and adult learning, the equity objectives are better served with a larger role for the public sector.<sup>21</sup> In the tertiary sector, despite its large growth, there has been little improvement in access of students from the disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD 2007, 2008b).

In practice, the public sector responsibility for providing primary and secondary education is firmly accepted in the OECD countries on the ground of such education being in the nature of a public good. The debate turns primarily on the public role for other types of educational provision: early childhood education, post-secondary education and adult learning. While individual country circumstances with respect to public–private share of responsibility in the three sectors differ significantly, there is a general trend in favour of increasing private sector role. This is most evident in the tertiary education sector. While charging student fees for tertiary education is unthinkable in countries with social democratic tradition, such as the

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<sup>20</sup>*Lifelong Learning for All*, OECD, Chap. 6.

<sup>21</sup>For the early childhood education sector, see OECD (2006). For the adult learning sector, see *Global Report on Adult Learning*, UIL, UNESCO (2009).

Nordic countries, other countries have moved to introduce or raise fees, such as Australia and the UK. The argument is that those who benefit from such education should also contribute a proportionate share. To make the equity argument palatable, better access to student loan arrangements, including loan repayment contingent on income, has been introduced in several countries. In the adult education sector, private sector contribution dominates the public sector by far. Some countries are experimenting with co-financing arrangements for the employed labour force, with contributions coming from the employers, employees and government. In early childhood education, public share dominates in some countries but not in the majority of the countries. Over the last decade there is modest growth of investment in the sector but no general trend of a shift in the weight of public–private shares.

The foregoing suggests that the lifelong learning approach has had a limited impact on education policy development in the OECD countries. One of the main reasons is the power of the entrenched paradigms. Each of the education sub-sectors appears to be working under a dominant paradigm. For post-secondary education it is an instrumental view of learning as a contributor to skills for the labour force, innovation, competitive advantage and economic growth (Papadopoulos 1994). For the primary and secondary school sectors, government budgetary constraints have placed cost efficiency and performance as the main driving forces for policy choices. The sector is resistant to changes requiring adaptation on the part of teachers (OECD 2005a). The tertiary sector has shown considerable dynamism in addressing the diversity of learner needs but has made limited progress in catering to adult learners. In the early childhood education area there is strong resistance in many countries to publicly supported organised provision because it is seen as an intrusion of state in parental prerogatives.

## Lifelong Learning and the Developing Countries

The lifelong learning approach has been routinely invoked by UNESCO and other international organisations for dealing with education issues in the developing countries (World Bank 2002). UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning has promoted adult learning through its conferences and activities within the framework of lifelong learning.<sup>22</sup> The Dakar Declaration (UNESCO 2000) included both early childhood and adult education as part of the UNESCO's Education for All Programme (EFA UNESCO 2008); the OECD's Development Assistance Committee has pushed for

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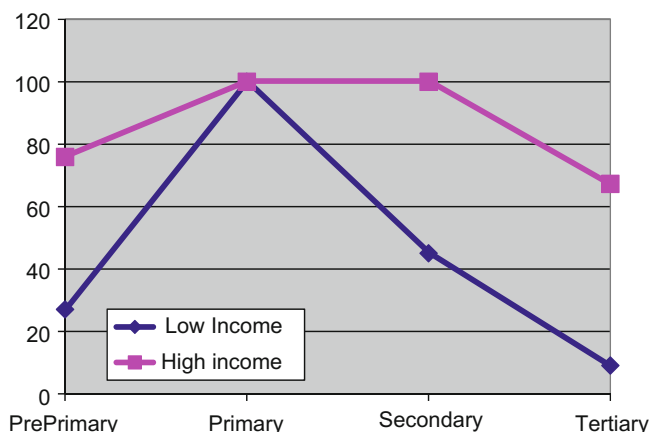
<sup>22</sup>In a long series of conferences every 10–12 years since 1960 has promoted adult learning. The CONFINTEA V (1997) conference framed adult learning within the lifelong learning context. See also *Global Report on Adult Learning*, COFINTEA VI Conference, UIL/UNESCO (2009).

a ‘sector-wide’ approach (SWAp) (OECD 2005e; see also Ryland and Schmidt 2000) as a condition for receiving assistance; and the World Bank endorsed the concept of lifelong learning (World Bank 2002). Despite these endorsements, there is ample ground to conclude that the international organisations have not wholeheartedly incorporated the implications of the lifelong learning approach in their development assistance policy. In particular, the World Bank’s approach to education sector assistance does not correspond to its support of the lifelong learning approach. Among the decision makers in the low-income countries, the lifelong learning approach is not widely known and it has been of marginal significance in guiding education policy (UNESCO 2009).

It could well be argued that the forces pushing for lifelong learning in the high-income countries are not present in the developing countries and the approach, therefore, has less relevance for them. The contrary is argued here: the lifelong learning approach is more, not less, relevant for the developing nations: the dysfunctional nature of the education in the developing countries requires a systemic approach for developing a more functional education system, which is more responsive to the needs of learners and the wider society.

### *Three Features of a Dysfunctional System*

While many developing nations have reached universal primary education, educational attainment of the population is, unsurprisingly, very much lower compared with the high-income countries (Chart 29.3). What is surprising is that the value



**Chart 29.3** Government enrolment ratio, 2005 (Source: World Development Indicators 2007, World Bank 2007; (figures = % of relevant age group))

accorded to education, as reflected in the percent of GDP spent on education, is lower in the low-income countries: While the OECD countries spend, on average, around 5½% of their GDP on education, the figure is more like 4½% for the developing countries. Abstracting from the enormous variation across the developing countries, three contextual features of the education scene argue strongly that the lifelong learning approach can play a potentially powerful role.

*Small Formal Sector with Major Gaps and Dualistic Features:* The two weakest sectors in the lifelong learning profile for the OECD countries – early childhood education and adult learning – are even weaker in the case of developing countries. The formal sectors contain a high degree of duality: some high-quality provision, often in the private sector, is available for a small elite minority, and poor-quality provision (especially in the public sector) for the majority of learners.

*Large and Invisible Informal Sector:* Much of the non-industrial labour force acquires skills in non-formal settings through apprenticeship arrangements (mostly unpaid) and other traditional methods of skill transfers. This is not only the case in the traditional agricultural sector but also in the newly emerging service sectors. Provision of educational opportunities for the adult population for vocational qualifications or for the upgrading of skills obtained in the informal sector is very limited.

*Serious Disconnect with the Economy and Society:* The most striking feature of developing country educational set up is the overwhelming domination of provider interest and weak attention to learner needs, whether these relate to the labour market or to effective functioning in society. For example, there is heavy emphasis on academic and theoretical learning, both at the secondary- and tertiary-level education, with limited relationship to practical application. Tertiary education, in particular, is structured to producing academic skills without much regard to the skills needed in the labour market. Learner needs in early years of life, or in adult years are, to a large extent, ignored. The methods of teaching and learning in use treat students mostly as passive recipients rather than as active participants. The notion of quality in education does not include relevance to learner needs as an element. In general, the neglect of the demand side of the learning equation reflects the weak forces of democratisation in society. It also accounts for the dualistic features of education.

### ***The Development Context***

*The Growth Fixation:* To the extent that a conscious approach can be said to have existed, for much of the 1960s to the 1990s, education policy in developing countries was shaped by a preoccupation with economic development. The conceptualisation of economic development, in turn, was heavily influenced by the international development assistance community, which saw economic development in the

narrow terms of economic growth, specifically growth in per capita incomes. For much of the 1970s and 1990s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund supported the influential Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP) approach to international assistance. It proposed policies based on the idea that economic growth was best promoted through freely functioning markets and with least intervention from the government. The role of education, including the newly found concept of human capital, was defined in instrumental terms of the contribution it could make to economic growth, which was measured by the rates of return to such investment. The role of government in education, in this view, was limited largely to situations where the markets either failed or performed sub-optimally. The question of quality of growth, for example, in promoting egalitarian distribution of income, was not an issue for SAP, nor was education's role in social development relevant.

*A Broader Conception of Economic Development:* Prompted by the failure of SAP to take account of the quality of growth (Ishikawa 1994), a number of concepts were developed to capture broader aspects of the development process. The capability development approach saw development as a process of expanding substantive freedoms individuals enjoy in society (Sen 1999). Expanded freedoms, according to this view, expand human capability to perform effectively in all walks of life. Since educational capability is central to many other freedoms, it has especially important role to play in the development process. This broader view of economic development was embraced by the World Bank in its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and by the UNDP in its focus on human development,<sup>23</sup> in which education was a major component.

### ***Relevance of the Lifelong Learning Approach***

While the capability development approach was not meant to deal with the details of education policy, an elaboration that has been taken up elsewhere (Hasan 2010), it well complements the lifelong learning approach. In highlighting educational capability as a key element of the development process, it provides a basis for the learner-driven approach of the lifelong learning framework. The potential of the LLL framework for addressing the three problematic features of education in developing countries, identified earlier, can be illustrated with reference to the six education policy areas of Chart 29.1.

### ***Strategic Priorities and Governance***

*Determining Education's Overall Priority:* Judged from the percentage of GDP spent on education, low-income countries appear to place a lower societal value on education relative to the high-income countries. If the LLL approach was to be

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<sup>23</sup>This approach was captured in the Human Development Index, UNDP (1989), Chap. 3.

followed, this ranking would likely be higher because it would take better account of the educational needs currently being ignored. It would take fuller account of both economic and social demand for education, based on considerations of the role of education in the development process, social cohesion, equity, and use of education in poverty-reduction strategies. In comparison, under current practice, only the formal sector needs get considered and the non-formal and informal sectors get very limited hearing. A sub-sector approach often pits one sub-sector against another for resources within a given education envelope. What the LLL perspective suggests is that the overall envelope should itself be based on an assessment of all learning needs, which could then be considered against other societal goals. Inter-relationship between the sub-sectors falls between the stools in a policy-making regime based on sub-sectors of education. The LLL approach provides a better basis for understanding and choosing the appropriate value to be allotted to each sub-sector of education, including the non-formal and informal sectors. The approach does not suggest establishing a ministry encompassing all learning but the setting up of effective mechanisms for assessing all types of education needs.

*Volume of Educational Provision:* A higher ranking of education in societal priorities would imply a larger volume of educational provision compared with the outcomes under currently used policy approaches. Under current practices, decisions regarding total supply of places come out of an aggregation of decisions at the formal sub-sector levels. The general practice is to update historically attained levels with marginal accommodations for the push and pull within sub-sectors. Economic viability (on the basis of rates of return) is used as one criterion for some sub-sectors, especially at tertiary level to determine the offer of places. The lifelong learning approach would imply a much larger volume of learning activities than based on the market test, because the latter does not take the full account of social benefits, as for example conceptualised in the capability development approach.

*The Need for Policy Coherence:* Compared with the industrialised nations, lack of policy coherence is an even more challenging problem in the developing countries because of their generally poor state of policy development. The system-wide perspective of the lifelong learning approach is more useful in understanding and addressing different policy interactions compared with a sub-sector perspective. Some of the policy inter-connections will be missed if only the formal sub-sectors were considered. For example, the supply of skills and competence to the economy is not simply a matter of the formal sector. Tapping the skills formed in the informal sector is an important consideration in development policy. Similarly, the nature of the policy linkages differs by sub-sectors, and these differences need to be taken into account in the overall sector-wide view, which is proposed by the lifelong learning approach.

*System Infrastructures:* Establishing mechanisms for assessment, validation, recognition and integration of learning is particularly important for the developing countries because of their relatively large informal and non-formal learning sector compared with the industrialised countries. There is a strong need to assimilate the



large informal sector within a properly developed qualification structure in order to both improve quality and provide incentives for expanding the supply of non-formal provision. The quality of these forms of learning can be greatly enhanced by adding the necessary minimum of theoretical component, which can both improve performance and provide motivation for further skill acquisition. However, this implies that new and potentially quite different qualification structures will need to be developed, since it is clear that structures developed for the formal education will not translate easily into this quite different non-formal processes.

### ***Types and Quality of Education***

*Types or Composition of Education Supply:* The composition of educational provision by types and sub-sectors should be determined, according to the lifelong learning framework, by the relative importance of their needs. This suggests that greater attention should be paid to early childhood education and adult learning – sectors that are particularly weak links in the lifelong learning system in the developing countries. This is not meant to be at the expense of primary education or other sub-sectors of education. The argument is that higher level of resources for the education sector as a whole is required to address the weak elements of the system. In regard to the balance between the academic and vocational types of education, the lifelong approach would suggest greater attention to vocational and technical education both at the secondary and tertiary levels. These types of education have been neglected because of the supplier-driven focus of provision to the relative neglect of learner needs.

*Quality:* As noted previously, the lifelong learning framework emphasises three aspects of educational quality: the competence acquired, relevance to learner needs and motivation to learn. These three elements are even more important for the developing country context because of the serious problems of disconnection between societal needs and what the education sector currently supplies.

### ***Equity of Educational Opportunities***

The broader issues of income and social inequities are particularly vexing for the developing countries. The lifelong learning approach sees educational equity as key to social development and as an integral part of the broader development process. Its system-wide approach highlights the two-way links between educational inequities and social and economic stratification. The life cycle dimension is important for understanding and combating the vicious circles that can be generated by the interaction of social and educational arrangements: socio-economic factors play a large role in educational performance in early stages of life, which can then shape educational

participation and performance in later years of life (OECD 2007). Policies for educational equity therefore need to go beyond education policy and be linked to family and social policies.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Learning and Teaching Processes and Assessment of Performance***

The learner-driven focus of the lifelong learning approach is particularly relevant for the developing countries. Implementing it would imply a major overhaul of the learning and teaching processes. Pedagogies, curricula, teacher training, use of ICT, approaches to assessment, all would require major reshaping. Much will need to be learnt from the culturally relevant modes of teaching, most easily seen in the non-formal and informal educational settings, and how these can influence known strategies that have worked well in formal educational settings.

### ***How Much Investment?***

For the reasons advanced earlier in the chapter, implementing the lifelong learning approach to education policy would, in general, imply a larger slice out of the national resources, both as a proportion of government budgets (currently around 25%) and in relation to GDP (currently around 4.5%). The level of this additional investment would, of course, depend upon the societal valuation of educational provision, its desired volume, type and quality. At the same time, it is important to recall that many aspects of the lifelong learning inspired reforms can be budget neutral.

### ***Who Should Pay?***

In regard to who pays, the issue centres on the balance between the private and the public sector contributions, and the contribution of individual learner versus the government and the employer. The guiding principle proposed by the lifelong learning framework would be to adopt approaches that would produce higher overall level of resources. This would imply developing incentives for the private sector to generate the maximum contribution it can make, subject to meeting the equity criterion. The same criterion, and the importance of the social demand for

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<sup>24</sup>For an analysis of the interaction of social and economic inequities, see Wilkinson and Pickett (2009).

education, would imply a much larger state contribution than under the alternative market-tested approaches to educational provision. This does not mean that the public sector should expand to replace the private sector, which in many developing countries plays a large role, but that the public sector contribution itself would need to be expanded, especially to promote educational equity.

## Conclusion

This chapter views the forces that shape the educational enterprise of a country as an outcome of the interaction between the interests of the providers and those of the learners, the supply and the demand side, respectively, played out in the economic, social and technological context. Seen in this light, the LLL framework is interpreted as comprising two core features: one, a system-wide optic that views all conscious learning activities as part of a system of learning; and the second, a learner-driven approach suggesting that learners should have greater say in making education policy choices. This second element may be interpreted as a call for a strengthening the process of democratisation of education.

Both these elements are essential: a lifelong approach cannot be said to have been embraced with only one of them being in place. The chapter sets out six areas of education policy that can be used to assess the guidance offered by and the impact of the lifelong learning approach. Interpreted as an ongoing long-term process, progress in applying the lifelong learning approach is not to be seen as a one-off change in policy. It is better understood as a moving target. Implementing the learner-driven approach requires constant adjustment to changing educational technology, economic and social contexts.

Even though they have officially endorsed the lifelong learning approach at the ministerial level, OECD policy makers have not moved to address the full scope of its implications. For the general public, the politicians and the education policy makers, as well as for a majority of the academics, lifelong learning remains equated with the provision of learning opportunities for the adults. As a consequence, policy developments in the OECD countries show some but rather limited progress at the system level, mostly consisting of efforts to develop infrastructures such as qualifications framework and mechanisms for recognition of some forms of learning acquired outside the formal sector. Policies at the sub-sector level show greater progress, in the sense that a wide range of reforms being undertaken follow in the spirit of the lifelong learning approach. However, this is not due to a conscious embrace of the lifelong learning philosophy but more a consequence of the pressures being put by the contextual changes.

Compared with the OECD countries, the lifelong learning approach is even more relevant for the developing countries, for three main reasons. First, the approach accords well with the requirements of the new paradigms of the development process. It can therefore fit well with other policies pursued in support of economic development. Second, reforming the dysfunctional nature of the education sector

requires system-wide reforms, which is a key strength of the LLL approach. Third, there is an overwhelming need for strengthening the demand side of the educational system in all aspects of education. Contextual changes, which are helping such a shift to the demand side in the OECD countries, are not strong enough in the developing countries. The change in the mindset that is needed can only come through a conscious adoption of a focus that allows a greater say to learner interests and needs, a focus suggested by the lifelong learning approach. While a wholehearted embrace of the lifelong learning approach would imply raising the level of investment in education, it is useful to remember that in many policy areas the democratisation process advocated by the lifelong learning approach need not necessarily require additional resources, as progress can be achieved with a different use of the existing resources.

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# Chapter 30

## No Royal Road: Mapping the Curriculum for Lifelong Learning

Malcolm Skilbeck

*All natures by their destinies diverse,  
More or less near unto their origin;  
Hence they move onward unto ports diverse  
O'er the great sea of being, and each one  
With instinct given it which bears it on.*

(Alighieri and Longfellow 1890)

### Introduction

‘Curriculum’ in its ordinary usage refers to learning content and processes which are structured, organised, timetabled, taught and assessed according to institutional requirements and expected outcomes. This is curriculum in the formal setting of school, college, university and so forth. Through a variety of elaborations and distinctions, the understanding of curriculum has been extended: the intended, the constructed, the experienced, the hidden and so on. Common to all of them is the institution which provides the setting and exercises authority over the learning. In this sense, schooling in one form or another is the primary vehicle or instrument of curriculum (Oakeshott 1971; Skilbeck 1984).

There is another sense of curriculum, however, as in the term *curriculum vitae* (c.v.), meaning an account of the course over time of a person’s learning, achievements, attributes, interests and qualifications. A feature of the c.v. is what has been learnt and achieved over time, not only in formal educational institutions, but in other spheres of life. ‘Curriculum’ thus refers both to a course of study and to how one has spent time in ways that are perceived to be productive and of worth. In both cases, there are explicit and implicit educational standards and values, according to

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which judgements are made – about the courses of studies and how people undertaking them have used their time, their opportunities for learning.

In this chapter, both senses of ‘curriculum’ will be brought to bear on the idea of lifelong learning conceived of as a process of mapping and construction, both personal and social. Initially, in childhood and into early adulthood, the curriculum is largely mapped and constructed for the individual learner by social means, and through the educational institution. Thereafter, the responsibility becomes more diffuse, with a key role for the individual learner, drawing upon a wide and varied array of sources, cultural and social. Beyond schooling in the broad sense noted above, the curriculum is largely mapped by the learner, interacting with a range of social agencies: employment, societies, clubs, libraries, museums, galleries and, increasingly, the world-wide web.

Much of the literature that deals with directions being taken in policy and practice, together with desirable futures for lifelong learning, builds on but extends beyond the teacher – institutionally directed approach. Its strengths are acknowledged while arguments are advanced for greater diversity of opportunity and freedom from constraints, whether personal or social. The formal educational institution, yes, but also the worksites, the home, community organisations and associations and so on have been singled out in a wave of national and international reports on recurrent, continuing lifelong learning from the 1970s and into the first decade of the twenty-first century (Faure et al. 1972; Cochinaux and de Woot 1995; Bjarnadottir et al. ca 1995; European Commission 1996; OECD 1996; Delors 1996; Coffield 1997; Ministry of Culture, Education and Science, The Netherlands 1998; Department of Education and Science Ireland 2000; Rubensen 2001; MCEETYA 2002). How to plan, finance and provide for all of this are complex policy issues, many yet to be resolved. Issues of access, equity, partnerships between government and the voluntary sector, personal responsibility and ways of establishing society-wide learning pathways must be resolved if lifelong learning for all is to become a reality.

The curriculum issue is not, however, just one of institutional provision, workplace learning, community settings or programs of continuing professional education, important as all of these are. Whereas for institutional and professional settings, it is the relevant authority that determines the parameters of the curriculum (whatever scope there may be for individual choice and creativity within or as an outreach from it), lifelong learning for all requires a broader understanding of curriculum mapping, conceived of as a process whereby individual learners creatively and critically engage with subject matter and situations in a continuous, lifelong journey. This entails a range of personal capabilities and interests – the ability to search for information, to collaborate with others, plan and design learning tasks, monitor and evaluate progress and an inquiring mind. Naturally, these requirements of the rational mind tell only part of the story. Of fundamental importance is an emotionally attuned disposition to see life as a voyage of discovery and personal fulfilment through continuous learning. To differentiate this learning from mundane or everyday life, people will need some sense of its educational worth and value, with criteria for appraising its worth. This means learning which is purposive and structured.

Of course, not all depends on individual dispositions and values since, increasingly, people are being required or find it necessary as adults to address formal

learning requirements, for example, on-the-job training, professional upgrading, obligations of civic life and meeting administrative requirements which require that learning skills and capabilities retain currency. Much of this involves mutual or shared responsibility.

Lifelong learning has an ineluctable and growing social function; no less, it is a creative process of self-fulfilment for individuals. Thus, of particular interest is how this personal dimension of lifelong learning might be framed through a systematic analysis of a lifelong curriculum with roots in a reformed schooling. As yet, curriculum planning, design and development with this idea of learning for a fulfilling life, throughout life, have received relatively little attention. Lifelong learning for all people is still an aspiration or a prospectus for the future.

## **The Curriculum Challenge of Lifelong Learning**

### *Schooling in the Educative Society*

Translating the ideals of universal lifelong learning and establishing policy frameworks into action which meets the needs and interests of society as a whole pose massive challenges. The belief that the next great wave of educational reform and development will incorporate lifelong learning in some systematic way for everyone is of the same order as the commitment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to universal, compulsory schooling and its progressive extension from a few years of childhood to encompass the adolescent years and beyond. The schooling model – an expression that encompasses beliefs, assumptions, structures and programs of formal education from childhood into adulthood – is highly developed and will remain an integral part of universal lifelong learning. Restructuring and reshaping will be required, however, if it is to continue to serve as a vital foundation and point of reference. The difficulties facing reformers seeking changes in schooling and setbacks encountered have been extensively documented both in historical studies and contemporary research. There is much to learn about the complexity of large-scale educational reform (Bennis et al. 1969; Cremin 1961; Connell 1980a; Goodlad 1984; Huberman and Miles 1984; Cuban 1990, 1998; Sarason 1990; Tyack and Tobin 1994; Miles 1998; Fink and Stoll 1998).

The lifelong learning challenge is in some ways greater than that facing nineteenth century reformers and governments. On the one hand, it calls for rethinking many aspects of schooling and, on the other, there cannot be reliance on a single kind of institution – school, college, university. Sources as wide and diverse as the employment sector, health and welfare agencies, voluntary and community bodies, arts and sports organisations, museums, galleries and libraries and all levels of government, from local to national and including intergovernmental organisations must be drawn on. Indeed the enterprise of learning, universal and over the whole life cycle, is inconceivable unless society itself becomes educative and the culture of society embraces education as one of its primary values for the whole of life. It is as much a matter of developing social capital as intellectual capital, of elevating human values as raising



skill levels (Putnam 2000; Hager and Halliday 2006, Chs. 1 & 2; Aspin 2007). The contemporary expression 'learning society' or the older 'the educative society' point towards a goal – quite remote in some parts of the world, more nearly approached in others – still to be realised anywhere (e.g. compare UNESCO 2005; OECD 1995).

While the scope and scale of the challenge today is greater than when national school systems were being established, the resources are greater and the experience of more than a century of universal schooling is a substantial asset to draw upon. Notwithstanding their limitations as an adequate foundation, and the difficulties to overcome in reforming them, the institutions and processes of schooling in the generic sense of institutionalised, formal education provide an indispensable pillar of universal, lifelong learning.

Even so, reservations have been expressed about 'the schooling model' and undue emphasis on the formal sector generally. To introduce the notion of a curriculum for lifelong learning on the analogy of schooling might thus seem to beg some questions. After all, the school curriculum, or that of colleges and universities, is tied to the institution and its authority and has better served the interests of some groups – or classes – in society than others. The outcomes of schooling have not advanced the interests or met the needs of all learners. Moreover, many adults, including those who reached creative heights in adulthood, have themselves rejected schooling or found it profoundly inadequate. Nobel Prize novelist Thomas Mann was not alone among creative artists, scientists and business leaders in saying, 'I despised school, scorned it as a milieu, criticized the manner of its leaders, and early on found myself in a kind of literary opposition to its spirit, its discipline, its methods of obedience training. I had to look elsewhere for my education, that is, in the sphere of the intellect and literature' (Kurzke 2002, pp. 22–23).

Yet, in his writing, Thomas Mann expressed qualities which lie at the heart of the ideals and values of schooling, if not always its performance: mastery of expression and communication in language, empathy with the problems and dilemmas of others, imagination and creative thought and a breadth of knowledge and understanding. It is not the school as such that has failed, but there has undeniably been failure, of particular institutions and those responsible, to live up to declared aims and values.

As one of the greatest social and cultural inventions, schooling provides the strongest foundation for universal lifelong learning, despite its shortcomings. Obviously parental care and nurture are fundamental as is the social experience of life in communities. The school is the only institution, however, designed for the systematic educational care and development of everyone over the years from childhood into adolescence, and adulthood. Its impact is extended over the formative years and its values and procedures are central to growth of the whole person. The curriculum of schooling at primary, secondary and tertiary levels needs to be reconceptualised as the educational foundation of universal lifelong learning.

The importance of primary and secondary schools in providing curriculum foundations for lifelong learning can be illustrated by considering ways in which school curricula have been designed and modelled beyond the kindergarten years. The specialisation at tertiary level requires a rather different approach.

## *Curriculum Models*

Modern curriculum theorising has traversed a wide territory, including: the social and political choices in policies for schooling and their implications; autobiography and personal narrative as ways of framing the experienced curriculum; systems theory as an analytic tool; and, post-structuralism and post-modernism as ways of challenging older ideas about structure, sequence and continuity in the curriculum.

A wide range of social, philosophical and psychological aspects of curriculum planning, design and development, and their consequences for learning, have come to dominate curriculum studies, providing insights for future action (Short and Waks 2009, *passim*). At the same time there is value, in the context of curriculum mapping, to recall earlier studies of typical ways in which schools, colleges and universities have organised subject content and ways for students to study and learn (Taba 1962; Smith et al. 1950).

## *Subjects and Syllabuses*

The most familiar of the ways of structuring or modelling school curriculum, often either defended or attacked as ‘traditional’, is the curriculum planned, organised, taught and examined as both discrete and inter-related subjects or their derivatives. Subject matter is organised through syllabuses, texts and other learning resources, tests and examinations. Subject references are to mother tongue, both written and spoken (‘literacy’), mathematics (‘numeracy’), science – nature study – environmental education, history, geography and civics, arts and physical education. The accretion of subject matter has led to subdivisions, combinations, ‘credit units’, the designation of ‘pathways’ and guided student choice. Throughout, the defining characteristic of the curriculum is the prescribed subject of study, with or without ‘optional’ subjects. Most apparent, at the secondary stage, where study of some grouping of these subjects is a requirement for all students, the subject model also colours the primary curriculum notwithstanding looser structures and innovative methods of teaching, and tertiary education.

A common defence of the subject-based curriculum is that its purposes and structure are clear and that its elements serve as the starting point of a journey, developing skills and strategies and providing tools for future as well as present learning (hence the essentiality of ‘literacy and numeracy’ at the primary stage). Furthermore, the subject-oriented curriculum is justified as an introduction to major domains of human knowledge and experience, or ways of knowing the symbolic systems which are themselves defining features of civilisation and humanity (Cassirer 1944; Langer 1953; Cassirer 1953–1957; Phenix 1964):

- Language
- Literature
- Mathematical reasoning

- Science
- Art
- Music

Closer analysis of these domains draws out their potential value in developing inquiry, reasoning powers, problem solving, imagination, insight, empathy, enjoyment, happiness, spirituality, personal values, health and social solidarity. In short, they have been elevated into the structure of civilisation itself and the constituents of a good life for those who have immersed themselves to the full. In some settings, notably the undergraduate programs of American colleges and universities, these realms, forms and domains have been drawn upon in designs for general education (Keller 1982). More often, in the secondary school, they have been reduced to an assembly of discrete subjects.

Criticisms have been made of the subject-oriented curriculum as a model for universal schooling – and therefore as an adequate foundation of lifelong learning for all. Difficulties arise for many students, in that the subjects they study and the elevated reaches of the symbolic systems are too remote from their everyday life and interests. Because the connection is not seen or is of no interest, the potential richness of dialogue and encounter is not realised. The subjects of schooling are often seen even by successful students as something to leave behind, or they linger as a fading memory. Hence, the nostalgia of ‘the good old school days’ or the unreflective belief that the essence of schooling is, and should remain ‘the basics’ or the distinct subjects set out in the syllabus and as constituents of the weekly timetable. Nevertheless, the immense potential of the subject-centred curriculum, reshaped to connect with the everyday life of students, is one of the strands for a curriculum of lifelong learning, woven into a fabric of continuing personal growth and fulfilment. This is a particular challenge for tertiary education where a combination of specialisation and fragmentation is widespread even where the values of a broad general education are proclaimed.

### *The Activity Curriculum*

A second form or structure of the school curriculum which provides, at its best, a strong foundation for lifelong learning is the so-called activity curriculum, developed in opposition and as an alternative to the subject curriculum but capable of being integrated with it when, in the words of American philosopher John Dewey, the subjects are treated as ‘working resources’ for the educator (Dewey 1916, p. 214).

By ‘activity’ is meant the present and continuing activity of the learner or, better, the interactions between learners and teachers and among the whole group of learners and their teacher(s) drawing upon wide, diverse and often adventitious subject matter and the experience of the class. By contrast, the subject curriculum derives primarily from prior human knowledge and experience, structures and domains which have evolved and been established through centuries of discoveries, inventions and creations, distilled through analysis, texts, formulae, code and symbolic

systems into the distinct languages of the ‘disciplines’. Through this coding, quite precise and detailed subject content can be specified and taught and student learning assessed and measured accordingly. The activity curriculum, by contrast, resembles flux, a continuous creation (Smith et al. 1950, Part Four ‘Patterns of Curriculum Organisation’; Kliebard 1978).

The activity curriculum is a fluid, flexible construction, a becoming rather than a being, which cannot be fully mapped in advance but is being continuously developed through the experience of learners and teachers together. Its roots are less obviously in the subjects of the subject curriculum but they are not disconnected since the content of the activity necessarily draws from and draws together subject matter which is linguistic, mathematical, scientific, historical, ethical, and so on. Importantly, this subject matter also includes the students’ own experience, ideas and values. The origins of ‘activity’ is in psychological theories of learning, the insights and critiques of a long line of educational critics and reformers from Comenius, Rousseau, Froebel, Pestalozzi, Herbart and on to present day philosophers and psychologists interested in the processes of inquiry, creativity and criticism in the growth of knowledge and understanding. There is also, through John Dewey, a connection with the Darwinian theory of evolutionary adaptation, involving problem solving and constant interaction with the immediate environment.

Of particular interest for lifelong learning is the orientation of the activity curriculum towards the interests and experiences of the learner, individually and in groups, and the opportunities for the learner to interact with, shape and modify the immediate environment, that is, everyday life. The starting point of learning is, as it were, present in immediate experience, conceived of as providing momentum for inquiry and open to interrogation, hence to reflection. In this way, the activity curriculum is a challenge to the ‘formal’/‘informal’ learning distinction. It is formal in that it developed within and for the formal structure of schooling and is mapped progressively and retrospectively against learning criteria including those derived from subject content mastery. The activity curriculum is ‘informal’ as a curriculum of spontaneity, dialogue, active engagement with immediate life issues and reflection. These features are well brought out in a historically rich and diverse array of educational programs and ideas ranging from J.-J. Rousseau’s *Emile* to contemporary examples of school life as a context for informal citizenship learning.

The activity curriculum relies on the (outstanding) qualities of the teacher and a learning–teaching regime which is at once highly structured, flexible and responsive to changing needs and interests. In the early stages of its development, the activity curriculum gave rise to numerous innovations and experiments collectively referred to as ‘the new education’ (Boyd 1930). They include: the project method, the Dalton and Winnetka schemes, and schools such as the Chicago Laboratory School and progressive schools in the USA, Europe and Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Germany and many others (Rousseau 1974; Makarenko 1955; Pinkevitch 1929; Ferriere 1927; Cremin 1961, Ch. 8 ‘The Changing Pedagogical Mainstream’; Connell 1980b, Ch. 10 ‘Individual Development and Social Reconstruction’; Scheerens 2009).

Except in the schooling of young children, the momentum of ‘the new education’ was not sustained in the later part of the twentieth century, due to difficulties in

realising the demanding requirements of the activity curriculum, and a changing political and economic landscape together with waves of academic and popular criticism. There are, nevertheless, legacies in primary and middle schooling that are relevant to policies and programs for lifelong learning. Perhaps most important of all is that the focus of curriculum thinking moved from the subject or prescribed learning tasks to student encounters, dialogue, interactions and the processes of negotiation and inquiry. For lifelong learning, beyond the security and structure of the institutionalised curriculum, this is of immense significance, summed up in the slogans ‘learning how to learn’ and ‘learning to be’.

### *Core curriculum*

A third pattern of organisation of particular interest for mapping the curriculum of lifelong learning is the core curriculum. In some manifestations the core is a particular way of organising the subject curriculum, whereas in others the emphasis is on student activity and social inquiry. In popular educational parlance and as currently used by government departments and agencies and often by schools themselves, ‘core’ is another word for the syllabus of compulsory, timetabled subjects. With associated age-based standards of performance and testing of outcomes, as measured by students’ test results, this is the meaning given to core in the large-scale changes in schooling introduced in England and Wales late in the twentieth century, in a number of American states, Australia and other countries where concerns about international competitiveness became a dominant policy motif. In this meaning of the core, subjects normally include mother tongue, a foreign language, mathematics, science and history, with a variable penumbra which might extend to geography, civics, art and physical health education.

‘Core subjects’ or ‘core learnings’ have been similarly defined in many countries, such that ‘core’ is equated with compulsory subjects, syllabus and textbook-based instruction and formal examinations as opposed to ‘elective’ subjects where student choice can be exercised. Notwithstanding efforts made by teachers to encourage an inquiry mode of study or active engagement with social issues and students’ declared interests, this form of core is highly prescriptive, with the stamp of authority of the state, the institution, the syllabus, text and examination.

Teachers are commonly required to teach to the syllabus of the core subjects and, while variations and divergence play a role, there is an ‘essence’ of required learning over which schools and teachers have no discretion. Core curriculum is in these usages highly formal – pre-planned, structured by expert views about the nature of systematic knowledge, its scope, sequence and distinctive features (concepts, modes of inquiry, ways of testing validity, etc.) and capable of translation into precise and measurable performance tasks for students.

The very wide political, professional and public currency of this highly prescriptive concept of ‘core curriculum’ presents considerable difficulties for an alternative

concept of core which, introduced into American educational thinking following the Second World War, is of considerable theoretical interest (Smith et al. 1950). This more critical approach to core curriculum is of potential value in mapping the curriculum of – or for – lifelong learning.

Among the interesting precursors of this alternative concept of ‘core’ is the so-called ‘social foundations’ movement in American educational theory post-Second World War. This movement was grounded in philosopher John Dewey’s ideas of human experience as socially interactive, and education as a continuing process of reflection and reconstruction of that experience (Dewey 1920/1948, Ch. IV ‘Changing Conception of Experience and Reason’; Dewey 1925, Ch. 1 ‘Experience and Philosophic Method’). Taking as a cue the role of schooling as an agency of cohesive social participation and renewal, theorists mainly at the universities of Columbia and Illinois developed the idea of a core curriculum framed by social values and directed towards social issues and problems and their resolution. This development, in the aftermath of devastating wars, reflected a deep concern over nineteenth and twentieth century irrationalism (or supra-rationalism), endemic conflicts, social injustice and inequality, but also the fracturing of society into classes and self-serving special interest groups. More generally, the social core is a response to the idea of schooling as itself a form of democratic social life, leading the student into the wider realm of adult social and community life.

The ‘social issues’ core was not, however, restricted to what at first glance might seem to be an enlarged social studies curriculum. Rather, it treated the principles and ideals of democratic life as ways into the major domains of knowledge and experience as expressed in the subject curriculum. Similarly, social inquiry and problem solving in this concept of core echo the activity curriculum. With their roots in democratic political theory, social philosophy, social psychology and social research, the American theorists of core curriculum anticipated later pedagogical interest in social constructivist theories of knowledge (Bruner 1960; Young 1971; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1977; Apple 1979).

Other versions of core curriculum have emerged, for example, in Australia where a national authority, the Curriculum Development Centre, issued, in 1978, a discussion document *A Core Curriculum for Australian Schools* (Curriculum Development Centre 1980; Skilbeck 1984, Chs. 6 ‘Possibilities and Problems in Core Curriculum’ and 7 ‘Designing the Core Curriculum’). This document was influenced by the early American work but also by the European interest in ways of structuring knowledge, understanding and experience. A broad framework of ‘areas of knowledge and experience’ was proposed for Australian schools to work towards in developing student-centred or activity curricula:

- Arts and crafts
- Environmental studies
- Mathematical skills and reasoning and their application
- Social, cultural and civic studies
- Health education
- Scientific and technological ways of learning and their social applications
- Communication

- Moral reasoning and action, values and belief systems
- Work, leisure and lifestyle.

Beyond these ‘areas of knowledge and experience’, two further dimensions of core curriculum were identified: learning processes and learning environments. This three-dimensional concept of core was intended to suggest a framework within and through which schools, teachers and students could work together to develop curricula appropriate to the specific circumstances of the schools, the communities in which they were located, students’ capabilities and interests and the broader needs and interests of society.

In Australia, neither the American social core nor the approach adumbrated by the Curriculum Development Centre has been taken up by the state and territory school systems. The heavy onus that would have been placed on schools and teachers, the endless debates over ‘standards’ and ‘child centrism’ and the powerful, long-established structures for decision making such as state bureaucracies, syllabus and examination boards, textbook publishers, together with insufficient advocacy and follow-through, have seen at the political level, and then in the systems and schools, quite different moves towards a set of required subjects with attendant syllabuses, texts and state-wide and national testing.

Core curriculum, in the sense of an open invitation to engage with social issues and the world of ideas about how understanding can be advanced through dialogue across broad fields of human culture and experience does, however, suggest possibilities for a more adventurous and inclusive future curriculum of lifelong learning.

### ***Information Technology-Constructivist Curriculum***

Although the term ‘curriculum’ only occasionally features in their discourse, in the learning design/learning technology community a fourth model of curriculum has emerged. Thanks to the rapid growth of on-line communication and information technology, learners of all ages are ranging far and wide, seeking answers to questions, checking the latest developments in their field of interest, reinforcing or clarifying existing knowledge, broadening understanding – or simply randomly ‘surfing the web’. This is something of a technology-transformed activity curriculum, or even an outreach of the subject-centred core curriculum as the searches extend from material for an assignment for a particular course in school, college or university to self-directed inquiries on any topic of interest. Taking a sharp instructional theory turn, and drawing on cognitive and personality psychology, a new model has emerged – an information technology-constructivist curriculum. It is the searcher who directs the interactions and puts together the items collected, creating new mental structures, or reshaping existing ones. There are historical antecedents, for example, in Herbart’s psychological theory of interest and ‘apperception masses’ whereby, through teaching, the pupil’s interests and experiences were connected, and in Vygotsky’s and Wittgenstein’s insistence on the fundamental role of language in the development of thinking. Learning is seen as directed by mental and linguistic structures and as the technology-mediated means for constructing new

understandings, not simply assimilating existing knowledge and practice (Compayre 1908; Vygotsky 1962; Piaget 1971; Visser and Visser-Valfrey 2008).

### ***Reforming the School Curriculum as a Foundation for Universal Lifelong Learning***

What has been suggested thus far is that much that is already existing, under the rubric of schooling curriculum models and recent developments in cognitive psychology and instructional design, provides what the English educator, T.P. Nunn, once described as ‘the data and first principles’ of education for future development (Nunn 1947). In short, we have data for mapping a curriculum for lifelong learning. The long established, very large, and generally effective schooling model and its system-wide structure of institutions, personnel and resources for teaching and learning have been engineered to enable everyone, in principle and at least in the early years of childhood and adolescence, to participate in organised and programmed education.

Increasingly, formal schooling, including its communication and information technology outreach, is the norm for young adults and large numbers of ‘mature age’ students, for example, through open and distance learning. This is true of the developed world and increasingly of many parts of the so-called developing or underdeveloped world as well. The weaknesses and imperfections of the schooling model) are known researched and well documented; with the further commitment of intelligence and material resources, known deficiencies are capable of being substantially overcome, depending on political will. Some people will still leave the ‘system’ dissatisfied, poorly educated and hostile to further study but, on the whole, most are or can be variously equipped with the mental tools necessary for continuing study and learning. Henceforth, as their learning proceeds beyond the period of formal, institutionalised schooling, they will be mapping their own curriculum. This does, however, call for improvements in schooling.

Many people need a better understanding of just how they are to do this mapping, of how the formal stage of education will have enabled them ‘to learn how to learn’, to manage their own learning. To see life as, among other things, an educational journey requires further reforms in schooling itself, specifically the repositioning of the school as the starting point for everyone to continue learning, rather than as a fixed entry point to college, university programs or working life.

College and university also have to be repositioned, not only as entrees to working life, but as stages on the lifelong learning journey. A step in this direction is the effort to define graduate attributes, to help academics and students to understand the learning process (not just courses and examinations) entailed and to steer them towards the idea of the undergraduate program as a curriculum for lifelong learning (Squires 1990; Candy 1994; OECD 1998, Ch. 5 ‘The Design and Development of the Curriculum: Teaching and Learning’; Skilbeck 2001; Hager and Holland 2006, Parts I and II).

Since it is by no means the case that everyone completes schooling at either secondary or tertiary level with necessary attributes of the self-managed learner, with unquenched curiosity and the desire to continue learning, we must continue



questioning the existing schooling model, the directions it is taking and associated teaching and learning. The quality of teachers and teaching, the suitability of schooling as an environment for learning for everyone and the home and community life conditions of students, all come with questions, as does the adequacy of directions of public policy as the major steering mechanism. All have been questioned and criticised and there have been decades of well-considered proposals for reform. It seems, at times, that there is a flourishing industry of proposals and recommendations, arising from research and government inquiries, which is virtually self-sustaining but has tenuous links with effective change in the relevant fields of action. For effective lifelong learning for all, steps to overcome the well attested deficiencies and weaknesses in schooling must continue to be taken. Concurrently, the drive towards universal lifelong learning must become a policy imperative, not a well-meant slogan.

Instead of needed school reforms being seen as *sui generis*, they should be undertaken from the perspective of continuing learning by all people over the life cycle. This perspective, there are directions for action and further inquiry, as follows:

- Shifting the focus of the level of attainment of all students on completing formal education, from the terminology of numerical scores and 'subjects mastered' towards appraisals of capability for processing ideas and information in the conduct of inquiry, generic problem solving, transferable learning, insight into issues, puzzles and conundrums, and persistence in the face of difficulties. What is important is not the comparative rating (and inevitable ranking) of students and institutions but the distinctive attributes of all students as potential lifelong learners, individually and not as part of an age grade, a cohort, a numerically differentiated mass;
- Better understanding by teachers and improved ways of identifying the interests and motivations of students, their perception of their own learning difficulties and inhibitions. Students graduating from secondary schools, colleges and universities need to be fully alerted to opportunities for continued systematic learning, whether or not they enrol in tertiary level institutions;
- The overhaul of existing structures and the creation of new modalities to enable people not continuing in some form of continued, organised learning to sustain interest in learning whether as individuals or as members of communities. Studies are needed on a much larger scale than hitherto into the enhancing/inhibiting conditions for lifelong learning in workplace, home and community, especially for those whose attainments in the formal system have been modest;
- Identification through research of the kinds of learning and the learning experiences which in the formal (school) sector are most likely to enable students to become makers or mappers of their own curriculum; and,
- Greater attention in initial and continuing teacher education to the means of developing in the teaching profession at large a stronger orientation towards lifelong learning for all;
- Improved teaching conditions including better remuneration and systematic, continuous professional learning for teachers, as part of a strategy of enhanced professionalism.

There are other lines of inquiry to pursue in the continuing reform of schooling, but the emphasis here is on those best calculated to improve the transition from

school learners to lifelong learners. Of these, the development of understanding and capability of the student as a 'curriculum mapper' is the most important in the final years of schooling. It is questionable whether the present system at school of terminal external examinations and the pressures of vocational qualifications at college and university provide much scope for meeting this requirement. Clearly, competence in handling subject matter and in vocational skills is required, but debate over reforms in these areas also needs to draw in the preparedness or otherwise of students for self-directed, continuing learning. Governments need to move beyond the declarations and clarion calls of the last third of the twentieth century to develop and implement coherent policies directed at a society-wide momentum for universal, lifelong learning.

## **Beyond Schooling: Personal Responsibility for Mapping the Lifelong Learning Curriculum**

### *What Is Curriculum Mapping?*

The term curriculum mapping has gained some momentum in recent years, both at the higher education and school levels, following earlier exploratory work on cultural analysis and the school curriculum. The curriculum was discussed by theorists as a map or way of framing for pedagogical purposes the major domains of culture, in an echo of the social core curriculum. Mapping is now used in some groupings or networks of universities and colleges as a collegial way of interrogating the curriculum in real time, identifying strengths and gaps and making adjustments. It is also used more precisely, for example in medical education, as a managerial tool to strengthen internal coherence, match performance by students to stated goals and achieve quality improvement (Reynolds and Skilbeck 1976; Lawton 1983; Skilbeck 1984, Ch. 2 'Designs for the School Curriculum'; Anderson 2007; Willett 2008; Uchiyama and Radin 2009).

In this chapter, curriculum mapping refers to a process initiated by the individual or a group to design and undertake their own learning, building on the foundations of initial schooling and extending over the life cycle. It thus refers to the role of students, in association with other learners, in planning, constructing, initiating, reviewing and continuing their own learning. The map is a prospectus for, but also an account of, educationally rich personal and social living.

### *Mapping the Curriculum Leads to Making the Curriculum*

Since a major difference between the school curriculum and that for lifelong learning is the responsibility for decision making that falls on the learner, not the external authority or institution, skills referred to here as 'mapping' are required. A variety of

processes is called into play, depending on which particular designing, planning, research, critical, or theoretical perspective or strategy is to the fore, and individuals will make their own informed choices. As learners become more knowledgeable about what is involved in shaping their own lifelong learning curriculum, they will become more able to select among these perspectives. Similarly, they will project their own learning strategies as those of meta-cognition, problem solving, reflective inquiry, self-management and constructivism, even if they never use this academic language. Common to all approaches is the self-determination and decision-making role of the learner in a learning situation which is not given but has to be constructed or created.

The image of 'mapping' naturally presupposes some awareness and understanding of the territory to be mapped, of the features likely to be encountered and of ways of making maps. The learning situation in a rapidly changing environment is fluid, perhaps indeterminate, but there are some familiar landmarks from previous experience. There are also instruments, procedures and approaches and a body of tested experience on how best to proceed. In other words, the mapper is already technically prepared, to some degree, knows what to expect, and is – presumably – interested and ready to engage with the project of making the map. The territory to be mapped is not so much a discovery, as a personal invention or creation, the fruit of knowledge and inquiry in action.

It is necessary, here, to reiterate the central role of schooling in setting directions and providing motivation in lifelong learning for all. It is a reasonable and increasingly important criterion of the success of schooling that it brings all learners to the point of capability for independent, self-managed learning. This, however, is still a revolutionary idea, even if often proffered as a worthy goal. The school as the one universal institution in society must reach beyond itself to form partnerships – with health, welfare agencies, community groups, families and others if the capacity for and interest in self-directed learning is to become a reality for all. The responsibility will be shared but for the foundations of systematic lifelong learning the school is the primary agent. Failure in this mission becomes a lifelong failure for some individuals and a weakening of the social fabric.

As indicated above, the school curriculum might be conceived as itself something of a map of the culture covering a wide territory of past and present human experience, serving as an introduction to a systematic ordering of human endeavour, achievements and setbacks, values and beliefs. A major weakness in traditional schooling is that the organisation of teaching, syllabus making, assessment and reporting of student progress all tend to represent subjects and subject matter in separate silos and not in their interrelations – a collection of parts instead of an integrated whole. Correspondingly, cross-curriculum processes of inquiry, analysis and reflection have tended to be submerged, although reporting procedures in this respect have improved. Schooling needs to present itself as an integral and effective partner in the human endeavour to adapt, change, solve problems and project a worthwhile future for humanity.

In negotiating the school curriculum thus conceived, the student will acquire and exercise the skills of inquiry and 'learning how to learn'. These have become part of the stated missions and aims of educational institutions at all levels. It is an

imperative of lifelong learning that they become quite central to the practice of a reformed schooling.

### ***Beyond Schooling***

Leaving institutionalised forms of education, or engaging with them periodically and episodically for professional updating, retraining and so forth, lifelong learners must turn to their own resources – their interests, ambitions, motivations, habits, circumstances, opportunities, friends, family and associates. ‘If (or since) I am a lifetime learner, how do I go about it, what, where, how and indeed why do I learn?’ That these are not hypothetical questions is shown by the reasons adults give for taking up formal study, sometimes quite late in life, relating long held ambitions, thwarted perhaps in youth or changed over time due to work experience, relationships and personal crises.

Whether the learning is situated in the school, the home, the office, the workshop, community centre or whether largely book-based, computer-managed, theory-bound or hands-on practical, what matters is that it be curiosity-based, problem-solving, life-centred, adaptive, constructive and creative. Across the spectrum of school reformers, adult educators, cognitive and personality psychologists, learning designers, curriculum developers and philosophers of education there is a harmonious family of understandings and beliefs about learning that have effectively undermined some of the intellectually dubious dichotomies and competitive battlegrounds between the ‘formal’ and the ‘informal’. The common interest in learning, its conditions and enhancement provide a way of achieving a dialogue across previously divided cultures. Contestable as they are, criteria and standards for successful, effective learning within the structure of schooling have been established. There is a continuing dialogue about their meaning and value. This needs to extend into the arena of learning over the life cycle.

### ***Learning as the Search for a Good Life***

The idea of personal responsibility in mapping the curriculum is a natural extension of the idea of learning for life, since once beyond the realm of schooling it is for the individual to inquire into ‘learning for what?’ This question can only be satisfactorily addressed in the context of the life conditions of the individual and perceived possibilities for a fulfilling and sustainable life. At this juncture it is necessary to return to the question raised earlier in the chapter about the nature of educationally worthwhile activities. Of course, linguistically the term education is used in a purely descriptive sense without normative implication. In the use of one’s time or the choice of life activities, however, questions inevitably arise about the value of one kind of activity compared with possible alternatives. The interesting debates about

educational aims and values throughout history and continuing to the present day have not been about definitions of terms, but about the ways in which individuals and societies can best learn to fulfil desires, achieve goals, express values and lead happy, rewarding lives. There does not have to be agreement about either ends or means, rather an enabling of individuals and societies to reflect, analyse, converse and develop coherent and mutually respectful beliefs – and to act. It is the meeting of that enabling requirement which sets the direction for curriculum mapping for universal lifelong learning.

## **Worthwhile Learning**

### *A Wider Understanding of Worthwhile Learning*

As an educational quest, the path to be followed, the curriculum to be mapped, will thus embody a self-conscious, deliberate, reflective, critical analysis of what one has already learnt in previous educational settings and a projection of how through learning one can express one's beliefs and aspirations. Here, the mapping model takes a leap into the future to embrace the idea of learning as a normative way of life informed by and expressive of cherished values. This, of course, is a claim about the nature of the educated life. It has a long history of illumination and advocacy: in the intellectual spirit of Socratic self-examination and dialogue on the streets of Athens; the soul searching of St. Augustine following the youthful pursuit of pleasure; the Latinised piety of the mediaeval monk; the heavenly city of the eighteenth century philosophers; perfectibility through the progress of science; the conception of universal happiness in nineteenth century Utilitarianism; and the popular contemporary language of well-being, wellness and happiness (Plato 1935; The Confessions of St. Augustine 1937; Le Clercq 1961; Becker 1932, Ch. IV 'The Uses of Posterity'; Halevy 1934, Part II, Ch. 3 'Bentham, James Mill and the Benthamites'; Passmore 1970, Ch. 15 'The New Mysticism: Paradise Now'; de Botton 2006; Dunn 1961). The challenge this claim poses is to appraise the life one wants to live as a continuous learning experience.

In this sceptical, secular, post-modernist era and following a century of unparalleled violence, the quest for the good life, as understood in Antiquity, by theologians, by the eighteenth century philosophers of perfectibility, or the nineteenth century Utilitarians, can seem as remote from daily life as to be of little interest to other than scholars and undergraduate students of the Humanities. However, that quest continues, sotto voce, as people seek happiness and fulfilment, not simply in fragments and passing episodes but as a sense of well-being and a meaningful, fulfilled life, both personal and communal.

A greater awareness of what is involved in the quest, and of how it has been pursued over time and in different ways is needed to counter reductionist policies, on the one hand (e.g. job-related learning to improve productivity and

economic competitiveness), and a tendency to evade the issue of what kinds of learning should be fostered, on the other.

Naturally, there are different ways of 'learning for life' just as there are different concepts of the good life. Philosophers, from J.S. Mill to R.S. Peters, have sought to differentiate 'worthwhile' from 'worthless', to privilege poetry over pushpin, to identify with Socrates rather than pigs (Mill 1963, p. 9; Peters 1966 Ch. V 'Worthwhile Activities'). In a relativist age, are there firm, clear, defensible directions to pursue? Living with uncertainty rather than absolutes, with a sense of constant change, where fixed points are dissolved by philosophers and physicists alike, calls for robust personal values and a highly developed learning capability. John Dewey argued against 'the quest for certainty' in life, while twentieth century physics undermined the old confidence in the certainty and universality of physical laws (Dewey 1929; Planck 1936). In this context of scepticism over beliefs and ethical claims, and of critical inquiry in all domains of culture, individuals and communities will make diverse choices, which are more or less defensible preferences and beliefs. For learning purposes, these preferences and beliefs set directions to pursue. Freedom in a democracy does not entail entitlement to any kind of learning activity – the open society which subscribes to ethical values does not permit unrestrained access to international child pornography sites or encourage learning how to carry out terrorist acts, for example, or incite racial hatred. But, beyond the constraints on learning in the context of unlawful and morally indefensible activity, is there any justification for elevating some directions for learning over others?

As indicated above, one argument, over the centuries, is that everyone seeks happiness, personal fulfilment, a sense of well-being, of 'the good life'. This might be in the form of the Socratic formulation: 'the unexamined life is not worth living', or Alexander Pope's lines 'Know then thyself, presume not God to scan. The proper study of mankind is man'. Alternatively religious mystics have raised entry to the Heavenly City as the object of life's journey and set out the requisite disciplines. In their desire to restore the classical age the humanists' goal is a lifelong pursuit of the seven liberal arts, a continuing thread through nineteenth and twentieth century theories of liberal general education. In the secular, democratic spirit of the Enlightenment, Jeremy Bentham set a goal for the whole of society: the greatest happiness of the greatest number. As to what that consisted of he was on the side of a continuing, secular humanist education in modern subjects.

A difficulty with this approach to happiness and fulfilment is that it has tended to privilege the intellectual and moral over the aesthetic and the practical, to favour cognitive learning over practical skills, reflecting the ancient dichotomy between 'head and hand', and in turn reinforcing invidious distinctions in society. It was for this reason among others that John Dewey set 'growth' as the goal, or aim of education, although he also had views about the worthwhileness of kinds of growth, influenced by the Utilitarian concept of action that leads to mutual benefits and shared values.

So what curriculum does the lifelong learner map, in the quest for a personally fulfilling life? The quest is not for certain knowledge, for unchallengeable beliefs; nor is the manner in which the quest is conducted free of doubt and uncertainty.

## *Signposts for Mapping the Lifelong Learning Curriculum*

The territory to be mapped is fluid and shifting but there are signposts and there are constraints and requirements arising from changing life conditions, economic circumstances, personal and community health conditions and global threats to an orderly way of life. Again, whether in the labour market or the regulatory environment, the maintenance of professional and vocational proficiency is a pressing requirement for a growing number of adults. These will set directions for and impose limits on continued learning.

Learners do, however, have at their disposal a rich material – ‘the data’ deriving from what thinkers, movements and whole cultures have designated ‘the good life’ or ‘life worth living’. They have, too, as a result of previous learning, ‘principles of procedure’ or ways to carry out their inquiries. These signposts are those used in widely adopted statements of the aims of education, and in their curriculum correlates. Thus in innumerable and seemingly uncontroversial statements of the aims of schooling we commonly find the development in all students of qualities and attributes designated as:

- Spiritual
- Moral
- Emotional
- Intellectual, and
- Physical.

Pursuit and development of these qualities may be in the domains of literature or sport, science or travel, history or wood-craft, botany or bushwalking, foreign languages or gardening. Whether in the domains of leisure, recreation, interpersonal or working life, the scope is enormous. Such lists provide pointers while suffering from excessive generality. The aim must be to explore all avenues to the development of human potential, guided by visions and well-reasoned beliefs about the good life for all. Such a life evokes the values of fairness, justice, freedom and respect for common or shared interests. Those values to become substantive in the common life have to be continuously created in the process of learning over the life cycle. Students, young and old, are on a continuing journey for which there is a presumption that the development process will continue and continue well if a carefully considered course, or curriculum, is followed beyond schooling and on the initiative of the individual learner or the voluntary community of learners.

If the course being pursued is governed by the reasoned, reflective ideas of personal and communal fulfilment and happiness, it must also be sustainable. Hence the moralists’ denunciation of licentiousness and the mindless pursuit of pleasure. ‘Sustainability’ refers to several dimensions or contexts for personal effort – economic, social, political and environmental – whose challenges can be fulfilling or destructive in their impact. So people need, as far as practicable, a constantly developing capability to understand how to meet such challenges, and

there is, no less, a collective, society-wide responsibility. In short, lifelong learning entails a readiness to address the conditions of life constructively if the goal of fulfilment is to be attained. The curriculum thus becomes a way of steering and managing complex change, challenge and opportunity in one's own life, on a quest for what the Hellenistic Greeks saw as the aim of human existence, 'the fullest and most perfect development of the personality' (Marrou 1956, p. 98).

## **Conclusion: Finding One's Personal Pathway**

It is the individual, initially under close tutelage but ultimately through resolute individual and shared choices, who will make the learning decisions, working with others on ways to bring about satisfaction, enjoyment and happiness. The maps of others, including those thinkers and writers who have drawn up utopias, spiritual guidelines, roadmaps to the good life and so forth will be consulted by some and drawn upon indirectly by many. In their quest for fulfilment adults will choose to pursue their interests whether they be esoteric or mundane. For everyone, however, there are challenges and opportunities for learning in all spheres of everyday life. The curriculum map of lifelong learning embraces them all through the question: How can I learn to meet these challenges and take up these opportunities in a fulfilling, sustainable way? The objective is to turn the incidental learning of everyday life into activities which are deliberate, purposeful, meaningful and consciously valued.

Life from this perspective is both a flux of unpremeditated, unreflective experience and a continuous, structured learning process whereby learning is equated with purposive, adaptive behaviour to meet changing environmental conditions and changes within the organism itself. People can be motivated through incentives and sanctions to learn specific things and much learning by adults in society is for specific purposes. But learning for adults is also episodic or saltatory and may take pathways which from some critical perspective can seem meandering or aimless. The idea of mapping a curriculum, by contrast, is to foster purposive learning that is grounded in inquiry and generates the reflectiveness which leads to further, purposive learning.

Educators concerned with schooling commonly see it as their role to foster learning which they can justify as of value, worthwhile, beneficial to the individual and society. Many more educators of that disposition will be needed if learning for all throughout life is itself to become dispositional. At the same time we must be prepared to acknowledge that in the open, democratic society, people have freedom to choose how, what and where they learn and will have their own reasons for the choices they make. Sources for mapping the lifelong curriculum in that sense are as rich and varied as life itself.

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# Chapter 31

## Schools and Lifelong Learning: The Importance of Schools as Core Centres for Learning in the Community

Judith D. Chapman and David N. Aspin

### Introduction

In this chapter we have proposed a set of agenda for schools and school leaders, arising from the notion of lifelong learning and acknowledging the importance of schools as core centres for learning in the community, having a key function in the provision of an enduring basis for learning throughout people's lives. We argue that the aims of this undertaking may be realised through:

- The provision of educational opportunities throughout life that adhere to such principles and policy objectives as economic efficiency and advance; social justice, social inclusion and democratic participation; and personal growth and fulfilment.
- The re-assessment of school curricula and pedagogies in response to the educational challenges posed by key economic and social changes and trends both within countries and across the international arena.
- The re-appraisal and re-definition of places in which learning can take place and the creation of flexible learning environments that are positive, stimulating and motivating for a far more extensive range of learners and which overcome the constraints of standardised curricula, age- and subject-divisions, narrow timetables and rigid approaches to pedagogy.
- The acceptance of the importance of an increased emphasis on individualised learning, the development and monitoring of personal development plans, assessment of

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success in achieving personal learning targets, and the development of cross-curricular competencies integrating cognitive growth and the emergence and the cultivation of moral awareness and the capacity for moral judgement and action.

- The awareness that, whilst schools may be starting to be seen as less important as primary authorities for and sites of the acquisition of knowledge, they are becoming more important in the socialisation of young people and their acceptance of civic responsibility and the need for community involvement and service.
- The evolution of inter-connected learning pathways among and between schools, further and higher education institutions, employers and other education providers, impacting on the formation of relationships between schools and a wide range of constituencies and stake-holders in the community having an interest in and a concern for the education of citizens for tomorrow.
- Promoting schools as learning communities and functioning as core social centres of lifelong learning catering for the widest possible range of needs and interests among all members of the community.

In the revitalisation of schools, we argue that the school committed to the idea of lifelong learning will be strengthened in its mission through leaders committed to the development of a clearly articulated strategy for change; a re-conceptualisation of the place and function of schools for learning in the community; a preparedness to re-culture the school; a readiness to invest in people; a willingness to adopt an evidence-based approach to change; an expansion of the outreach of the school to the local, national and international community; a commitment to maintaining the momentum of change, sharing good practice and celebrating success and a commitment to the idea of leading for learning in schools functioning as core centres for learning in the community.

## **The Indispensable Place of Schools in Lifelong Learning Provision**

In recent years, as policy makers and educators examine the principles for educating children to prosper and grow in changing social and economic environments, a number of questions have needed to be addressed. If governments adhere to such principles and policy objectives as economic efficiency and effectiveness, social justice, democratic participation, social inclusion, equity, and personal growth, what implications arise for the provision of education for children during the period of compulsory schooling? In respect to equity, for instance, gaps continue to exist in the provision of educational services for some young people labouring under disadvantage; school organisation, curriculum, teaching and assessment practices are not always favourable to the necessity of engaging all students in a broad-based achievement-orientated and complete cycle of compulsory schooling; and a divide remains between academic and vocational education and differentiated status persists between such programs and those emerging successfully from them.

Since the late 1990s considerations of policy documents issued by international agencies such as OECD and UNESCO, the European Parliament, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum, and governments in countries including Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Singapore, Taiwan, the UK and the USA have confirmed the place of schools as vital elements in the whole spectrum of educational undertakings and initiatives in societies committed to realising the vision of lifelong learning for all their citizens. A number of themes have run through the work of these international and governmental organisations. These include the acceptance of a new philosophy of education and training, with institutions of all kinds, formal and informal, traditional and alternative, public and private, having new roles and responsibilities for learning; the necessity of ensuring that the foundations for lifelong learning are set in place for all citizens during the compulsory years of schooling; the need to promote a multiple and coherent set of links, pathways and articulations between schooling, work, further education, and other agencies offering opportunities for learning across the lifespan; the importance of governments providing incentives for individuals, employers and the range of social partners with a commitment to learning to invest in lifelong learning; and the need to ensure that emphasis upon lifelong learning does not reinforce existing patterns of privilege and widen the existing gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged, simply on the basis of access to education.

From these considerations emphasis has been placed on the need for a more integrated approach to educational provision and the importance of schools in lifelong learning provision. This approach has constituted a significant departure from traditional models of educational provision. These more traditional approaches were characterised by sharp divisions between sectors and providers; compartmentalisation of territory and remit between different institutions operating in the provision of academic and professional/vocational courses and programs; an emphasis upon on-campus attendance with little attention to the possibility of off-campus course availability or multi-mode delivery; a distinction between the acquisition of knowledge and the development of generic lifelong learning skills and competencies (such as self-starting curiosity, doing research, managing information, taking independent action and initiative in problem solving, working with teams in the achievement of common goals, communication and literacy skills, adaptability and flexibility in response to challenge and change, and building and deploying creativity and imagination); and the assumption of sharp cognitive demarcations between discrete forms and categories of knowledge, distinctions between disciplines and subjects, and separations between theory and application.

Recent discussion has placed emphasis on the need for a new concept of schooling, which is more flexible than that which has had pride of place hitherto. In these considerations a number of questions have been identified:

- What are the best responses to people's learning needs, in a world where the concept of learning is changing, where many learning needs do not get satisfied, and where there are many unreached potential learners?
- What happens if schools are not the universal institutions of education that we know them to be today?

- If schools are a place in lifelong learning provision, what sort of places do we want them to be?
- What particular tasks and responsibilities do we see schools as being charged with, above and beyond the imparting of information and skills that can be obtained by other means and in other fora?
- With respect to the other models of education and training that have been put forward, such as home schooling, what are the actual individual and social costs to set alongside the claimed benefits?

It is our contention that, although schools may be becoming less important as primary sources and repositories for the acquisition of knowledge as traditionally conceived, they are becoming more important in other aspects of learning, in the socialisation and acculturation of young people, in the nurturing of young people towards the development of a sense of moral awareness, in a movement towards an acceptance of the requirements of civic responsibility and in the development of the need for community involvement and service.

There are many other reasons for our insistence on the point that there will continue to be a vital need for the place and functioning of schools in the future. From the point of view of communication and employment, it is clear that the role and significance of information technology will grow at an almost exponential rate and that communicative competence will remain and increase as a major requirement for all members of a society and a productive economy. Moreover, as Ackermann (1980, 1989) has insightfully shown, such communication can take place only in a group setting, where conversations are underpinned by the need to observe certain norms and conventions a good many of which are moral in character. Schools are excellent places in which young people can be helped to develop a sense of moral awareness in a social setting and, through their conversations and communications, to begin to have some awareness of the importance of the idea of moral obligation towards one's fellow members in the community.

In school it will be possible for the citizens of tomorrow to be helped along the road to maturity. This will both make possible and involve them in learning under guidance to weigh issues, to make judgements and to engage in courses of action, the responsibility for the consequences of which they gradually come to see the necessity of their becoming bearers. This is especially important at a time when modern technology offers students access to untold possibilities of both beneficial and harmful knowledge, advance and development, when there are, in some parts of the world, increasing threats of social and economic instability and personal insecurity, and where in many parts of the world, they are required, as future members of participative democracies, to give their opinion on matters of vital civic, national and international importance and consequence.

This kind of learning cannot be picked up from an impersonal set of instructions: children and young people need more mature people to model appropriate forms of conduct to them on a daily basis, for it is only through living in such an atmosphere overtly concerned with the institutional expression of education as a moral concept that they will acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding of the requirements of community obligation (see also Aristotle 1934; Peters 1963). The best

place for this is, of course, in a family; but a vital and indispensable part is also that which is played by the requirement for young people to have to live in and among a supportive range of significant others, beyond the family. This is an argument for the indispensability of schools as core centres for the learning of good inter-personal relationships in the wider community and of the principles and practices necessary for good citizenship.

There is, also, a further argument to be made for the indispensability of schools as agents of community education (Chapman and Aspin 1997). Young people need to be introduced to the widest possible range of activities and pursuits, from among which they make their own selection for constructing a satisfying and enjoyable set of life options for themselves. If we value individual growth and extended personal development, we shall want to offer our young people some vision and experience of those things that will conduce to the enrichment of their sense of identity and self-worth and will lead to the increase of their autonomy. Such a wide range of forms of activity, pursuits and interests are unlikely to be found solely in the home: children and young people often prove to have interests, abilities and aims that are either unfamiliar in the home setting or impossible to cater for there. Schools do not have a monopoly of such provision in a wide range of sources for personal satisfaction (the arts and sports and outdoor pursuits come to mind here), but schools can provide access to these and many more such pursuits, in abundance. Additionally, they can help young people and provide guidance in learning how to discriminate between them and the various benefits they confer as well as the various problems they might betoken. Helped by the counsel of more mature leaders, young people can begin to make decisions as to taking up activities that will, upon reflection, bestow upon them sources of satisfaction that will act as wellsprings for their continuing personal enrichment throughout their lives (see also White 1982).

All these activities, ends and ideals demonstrate the need for the continuance of people's access to opportunities for adding further increments to their existing knowledge and skills throughout their lives: for economic advance, for democratic participation, for sound inter-personal relationships and for personal growth and increased autonomy. This is the argument, not only for the indispensability of schools for getting young people started on the right path to these learning gains, but for their learning to be able to extend their learnings in these and other realms throughout their lives, and to acquire the stable and settled disposition necessary for engaging in such learning and taking up such opportunities in the community more broadly.

Key social and economic developments and trends also pose a large number of challenges to which schools are well placed to respond. As industry and commerce are repeatedly transformed by new technologies and changing economic circumstances and demands, many skills and occupations are undergoing changes or becoming obsolete. The risks of high and continuing unemployment, low self-esteem, possible marginalisation and low wages have been identified as the likely outcomes and costs of the lack of access to, or success in, learning. Curricula and pedagogy in schools of the future will need to address the imperatives of promoting confidence in students of all kinds to engage in learning, a readiness to take up and capitalise upon opportunities for learning and the skills of adaptability and flexibility to learn throughout life.



Changes in society are also significant in extending and diversifying the provision of education in schools. Changes in family structure and relationships are occurring contemporaneously with an increase in longevity. As people are now living longer and as non-salaried discretionary time increases, new and varied demands for personal fulfilment are emerging. It is vitally important that schools offer all young people the requisite education to give them knowledge and access to a wide range of life choices and the development of a sense of self-worth, a capacity for developing positive and fulfilling inter-personal relationships, and an awareness of the importance of being involved in and capable of responding to the responsibilities as well as the benefits of membership of the various communities of which they are a part. This will necessitate a re-assessment of the traditional school curriculum, especially in respect of education for personal development and well-being, for social and community service learning, a renewed commitment to overcoming the feeling of failure experienced by a considerable number of students in today's schools, an attempt to eliminate the various dysfunctional factors and phenomena that militate against the increase of students' interest and enjoyment in learning and the provision of proper counselling, guidance and support, especially for those students who may be in danger of dropping out or being in other ways at risk of losing out on educational achievement.

In an age of rapid economic change, increasing technological sophistication and the growing number of elements proliferating in societies undergoing continual transformation, schooling is a necessity. Only if societies undertake educational reform will it be possible for them to maintain the capacity for economic advance in an increasingly competitive global economy at the same time as maintaining social order and stabilising social cohesion in the community.

## **Schools as Core Centres for Learning in the Community**

In responding to the opportunities and challenges generated by the rapidly changing and globalising world there is a growing impetus for internationalisation of many policy issues and initiatives that were previously more domestic in character. The challenge, however, is that the global economy involves a widening range of actors that often operate in ways that are not amenable to government or inter-governmental control. Globalisation in the economic domain is largely driven by the private sector in the activities of the great multi-national corporations, through their global strategies, movements of capital, labour, finance, exchange, production, goods and services, and the global flows of information and culture that these precipitate. This phenomenon constitutes a major challenge for individual national and state governments, particularly at a time when they face increasing pressure at home on the funds they have available for the provision and running of such major services, utilities and societal necessities as education, social welfare, health and safety, and public order and national defence. At a time when many governments are withdrawing from the role of monopoly providers of education, particularly in the years of

compulsory schooling, and are moving towards a position of 'steering from a distance', a number of challenges is posed for the provision of schooling. One challenge is to provide education for all young people, which gives them access to a global society, in regard to employment opportunities, cultural literacy and sensitivity, and inter-cultural understanding, adaptability and flexibility, when access to an internationally orientated education that will confer these benefits is going to come only at considerable financial cost, both to its beneficiaries and to its providers.

Another challenge is to ensure that national cultures and traditions, and a sense of community identity can be sustained and perpetuated, at the same time as countries and their citizens are being prepared for functioning in increasingly international and global settings and are increasingly coming under the pressure of international and global trends. It is perhaps significant that, at a time when the dangers of the loss of a sense of identity and the diminution of the sense of significance and worth residing in local cultures and traditions, betokened by the seemingly irresistible onset of internationalising tendencies and the impulse towards globalisation has become evident, that there has been growing interest in and attention paid to the re-instatement of the importance of the idea of the community as a central feature in discussions about political, social and individual life and the place of schools in educational provision. In that part of the debate on education reform, this has found expression in focussing on communities as key sites for identifying the changes necessary to encourage and enable people to adopt learning as a way of life. This in turn has led to an emphasis on the school as a core centre for learning in the community.

Since the later part of the 1990s notions of the community, as articulated and developed by such writers as Sandel (1981); Etzioni (1993, 1995) and Gray, have been enormously influential in revitalising and re-directing social and political thinking. The development of a philosophy around the notion of community has laid the basis for the establishment and elaboration of new ways of thinking about political morality, public policy and social relations, and the creation of new social forms, structures and interactions that have wide-ranging implications for education and schools. Proponents of this philosophy argue that community provides people with history, tradition and culture, all of which are deeply imbued with values and upon which versions of and approaches to agreements about the common good can be cast. John Gray (1997) highlights the way in which the philosophical perspective focussing on the community:

can aid thought on the central dilemma of the age, which is how revolutionary changes in technology and the economy can be reconciled with the enduring human needs for security and for forms of common life. As it arises in the context of a liberal culture, this dilemma can be expressed as that of balancing the interests in choice and autonomy, which are thought - often mistakenly - to be promoted by free markets, against the benefits, responsibilities and duties of community. [Gray 1997, p. 15]

Individual autonomy, from this perspective, is established and developed in a context of a set of cultural traditions and institutions that affirm the dependence of that autonomy on a strong network of reciprocal obligations made intelligible and possible within a framework of shared meanings, understandings and purposes.

Thinkers such as Gray and Etzioni reject the view that society can be conceived of as merely an artefact of individual choices. Etzioni argues (1996: 26) that 'not

only are human beings social by nature but also that their sociability enhances their human and moral potential... Communal attachments and individuality go hand in hand, enrich one another and are not antagonistic'. Thus social institutions are conceived of as expressions of tradition and continuity in society, without which the lives of individuals lose meaning and become impoverished (Gray 1997, p. 81).

However, as Etzioni points out (1996, p. 189), the complexities of implementing a view of community in a pluralist society involve facing the twin challenges of achieving pluralism within unity and order and autonomy among communities. Dangers exist if individual communities limit their moral concerns to members of their own community; '... just as individual rights must be balanced with a commitment to a shared core of values, so the commitment to one's community (or communities) must be balanced with commitments to the more encompassing society' (1996, p. 191). The image that Etzioni employs to symbolise a society in which various communities maintain their specific identities, traditions and commitments at the same time as recognising that they are integral parts of a more encompassing web of communities is the image of the mosaic (see also, Aspin 1986). The concept of a 'community of communities' is advanced by Etzioni to provide a framework for the idea of tolerable diversity within a set of shared substantive core values which most people in a society find compelling and upon which the wider social order is able to sustain itself. Such substantive core values might include a commitment to democracy; a set of 'layered' loyalties; concern for tolerance, respect for others and reconciliation; the provision of society-wide dialogues; and an acceptance of the moral norms and conventions of civility and courtesy they rest upon and presuppose.

The challenge that follows from this is twofold: firstly, how to create forms of the good society and common life based on a moral and social order that is considered legitimate by their members; secondly, how to accommodate different forms of common life in shared common institutions. The challenge of creating forms of the good society and common life and the need to accept the tolerable co-existence of different forms of common life in shared common institutions have wide implications for educational policy making and for institution building, repair and renewal in the education sector, particularly in regard to the model of schooling as core centres in the provision of lifelong learning in the community.

Among other challenges, this will require a re-definition of schools as places to learn; an increased emphasis on the development in schools of a young person's sense of social and moral agency and the development of multiple pathways for learning linking schools with a range of learning providers in the community.

### ***Re-defining Schools as Places to Learn***

When, in most Western societies, free and compulsory education became mandatory for all, schools were designed upon the basis of what was then believed and accepted about the nature of institutions, the functioning of the mind, the processes of learning, effective learning environments, and the nature of work and society. The world

view of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stressed the idea of learning as linear, sequential, generalisable and mechanistic, and organised approaches to learning were predicated upon that idea. Schools became characterised by organisational structures designed along the lines of rigid divisions and departments in the arrangement of efficient learning; learning was compartmentalised into discrete and manageable parts and sequences; assessment came to be based on the measurable and the quantifiable; and approaches to and methods of learning promoted the acquisition of facts and information constituting worthwhile knowledge.

Such assumptions concerning human mental processes, such approaches to learning and such models of the proper organisation of schooling are no longer considered adequate, even if they were ever valid, to meet the demands of learners preparing for the changed economic and social conditions, cognitive climate and intellectual demands of the twenty-first century. It is now widely accepted that new thinking about the nature of learning and new conceptions of the styles of effective learning, that students find best suited to their own modes of cognitive progress and achievement, must lay the basis for work in schools of tomorrow. Approaches to learning constructed along such lines will more accurately reflect the findings and implications of current accounts of learning and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding worked out in accordance with the findings and directives of the cognitive and meta-cognitive sciences of our times.

In line with recent developments in differing conceptions of efficient and effective styles and methods of learning, there is an increasing acceptance of the model of schools as learning communities, promoting conditions that enable learners to enjoy and exercise greater independence in the design of their own learning, connecting and integrating concepts, constructing and participating in their own communities of discourse and learning, and becoming self-conscious and aware members of their school, their neighbourhood, their society and the global community. To achieve such an outcome, substantial reforms will be required in the fields of curriculum, pedagogy, learning provision and school organisation, including approaches to scheduling and the restructuring of time to enable more effective approaches to learning and teaching to be developed and applied.

### ***The Development of a Sense of Social Responsibility***

With the growth of the knowledge economy and learning society, changes in societal and family relationships, advances in learning technologies, and the availability of learning in sites and places other than formal educational institutions, schools and teachers are becoming less likely to be regarded as primary authorities on, and sources of, knowledge. At the same time they are becoming more important in the socialisation of young people and the development of a sense of civic responsibility and the need for community involvement and service.

One good place in which schools may make a start in this undertaking is to address the question of their duty of care: creating safe and caring environments for

teaching and learning; creating caring relationships in the classroom and the wider school environment; and promoting in young people at school a sense of belonging and personal dignity and intrinsic value as human beings worthy of respect. This means helping teachers, educators and students themselves to become aware of the need for, to internalise and to act out in the classroom, the school and the community, a set of principles concerned ultimately with the establishment and regulation of positive relations between themselves and others – principles such as social inclusiveness, social justice and democratic participation.

A vitally important part of this endeavour is to address such issues as education for social responsibility and community leadership; equity in the social distribution of student access, engagement and participation; nurturing a sense of democratic community in the classroom; developing inter-personal awareness and responsiveness, cultural sensitivity, civic competence and democratic commitment; teaching for the skills of conflict resolution and prevention of discord and, in so doing, countering dysfunctional features of the life of some schools, such as the recourse made by some students and teachers to conduct involving personal demeaning, bullying and violence.

This will involve a renewed commitment to nurturing young people's social growth and improving the quality of students' social and civic learning in a whole school approach to the development of the skills of moral reasoning, ethical decision making and responsible social action, through consideration of practical moral and ethical dilemmas and the creation of a just and caring community in the life of the school.

## **Multiple Pathways for Learning in a Community**

More fluid relationships and combinations of school-based learning and work, and formal and informal learning, are increasingly becoming a feature of the life of schools committed to the principles of lifelong learning and the learning community. This will necessitate the provision by schools of innovative ways and means for young people to use the workplace and the community more widely as sites, opportunities and occasions for learning. Work experience programs can be regarded as an important way of enabling students to identify, understand and articulate their learning, career development and future professional needs. School-to-work experience constitutes an important foundation of and stage in lifelong learning.

In schools committed to lifelong learning young people will need to become active agents planning for and managing their classroom, school and further learning opportunities; their work experience; and the unfolding, extension and protraction of their careers. Particular attention will need to be paid to the ways in which schools might assist students moving away from being 'at risk' to being 'on target' in respect of their future educational and career decision making and management. Part of this will involve more effective career counselling in schools to help prepare students for coping with and managing their own career pathways in an uncertain world of work and an often unstable and rapidly changing work environment. Work-based and

community-based learning, and parallel learning programs, will necessitate considerable inter-and intra-professional collaboration and organisational change.

With the growing acceptance that learning is continuous and lifelong, it must be acknowledged that people will be going into and out of learning and that the end of secondary education will no longer be the single transition point in people's learning. The idea of the 'stove-pipe' leading upwards from secondary to further education as the only permissible funnel for educational progress is no longer relevant. As Smethurst (1995, p. 85) suggests, the new model for the building of articulated and inter-connecting pathways in learning for life will be one based not upon the notion of linear progression by climbing a consequential series of ladders, but rather upon the notion of a progressively complex and expanding climbing frame, in which students will learn of the existence of numerous possibilities for personal development and career advancement and will acquire competence and increasing confidence in creating and moving along a diverse range of pathways of learning for increasing the personal and professional learning gains and satisfactions that these make possible.

## **Revitalising Schools with a New Sense of Mission: Leading Schools for Lifelong Learning**

Policy makers, system administrators and school leaders committed to lifelong learning need to articulate and develop a set of strategic plans for facing the challenges of change and helping their school communities to engage in a joint enterprise of lifelong learning for vocational and economic purposes; for social inclusiveness, civic responsibility and democratic participation; and for personal growth and fulfilment. The challenge of change will involve the continuing generation, cultivation and acquisition of the knowledge, skills, problem-solving capacities, values and attitudes that will enable all members of the school community, on an ongoing basis, to identify needs, recognise openings and opportunities, and take personal initiative and group responsibility for advancing individual welfare and social benefit.

The school committed to the idea of lifelong learning and working with that idea as its principal driving motive – the 'lifelong learning' school – will be strengthened in its mission of the revitalisation of its educational imperative through the development of

- A clearly articulated strategy for change
- A re-conceptualisation of the place and function of schools in the community
- A preparedness to re-culture the school
- A readiness to invest in people
- A willingness to adopt an evidence-based approach to change
- An expansion of the outreach of the school to the local, national and international community
- A commitment to maintaining the momentum of change by sharing good practice and celebrating success
- A commitment to the idea of leading for learning

### ***Settling the Place upon Which to Stand***

Those schools and school systems that have been most effective in re-vitalising their policies and practices and in facing the challenges of change positively and confidently have, as a vital preliminary, determined upon a unifying concept, idea or philosophy, upon and around which the change effort can be centred. Invariably this philosophy is focussed upon students and their learning. This is then clearly articulated by people in leadership positions, promulgated through professional development for teachers and educative experiences for members of the broader community, and practised and demonstrated daily in the hands of teachers in the classroom and elsewhere throughout the school. The unifying philosophy must be one that is active and that provides connectivity between ideas, people and groups, and institutional structures and administrative arrangements. An initial concept such as 'The School as a Core Centre for Learning in the Community' may be added to, layer by layer, with themes such as multiple forms of intelligence, brain theory, performance assessment, and self-directed learning. A unifying concept, idea or philosophy, which can be articulated clearly, enables a leader in an educational environment to provide a vision of where the organisation is going, a feeling about the ethos, the culture, and the nature of the organisation that provides a message, that can be spoken about every day and become part of the shared language and experience of all people in the school community. The ability to enunciate clearly this unifying idea, in ways that can be quickly and easily grasped and rendered intelligible and memorable, helps to communicate the message about change and contributes to openness and transparency for all a school's stakeholders.

### ***A Re-conceptualisation of the Place and Function of Schools in the Community***

In the last 30 years we have moved through important stages in our conception of schools. In the 1960s and 1970s many people held the view that the main function of schools was to conserve and transmit existing cultural norms and beliefs; other people viewed teaching as a subversive activity and called for society to be 'de-schooled'. During the 1980s and 1990s the ideology of the market penetrated our conceptions of schools and schooling, to the point where schools began to be seen by many as producers of products and marketable commodities obtainable in exchange for the educational dollar. As we move further into the twenty-first century schools are beginning to be conceived of as agents of social cohesion and as places where the dysfunctions of fragmentation and isolation of modern societies can begin to be redressed by the educational endeavours of schools, viewed as agents of social inclusion and community involvement and responsibility. In a society where some important social institutions are beginning to disintegrate or fall away, there is an increasing awareness of the vital importance for schools to respond to the needs of

students to belong and to be cared for. There is also an increasing awareness of the part school programs can play in helping students to develop their sense of moral responsibility to those within the community of their school and further into the broader community. In a time when it is increasingly possible for students to acquire knowledge, information and skills in fora and from sources outside the school, those schools that are succeeding in the process of transformation and in gaining the support of their community are those which are succeeding in promoting their function as learning communities, assisting in learning for economic self-sufficiency, personal fulfilment and social cohesion. Increasingly such schools are emphasising their role as agents of socialisation and the development of a sense of responsibility in young people. Schools with a commitment to increasing the sense of community in and around them embark on a number of purposely designed programs to establish a sense of community among students and staff within the school and among stakeholders outside it. Through programs of community and service learning students are given the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the complex character of the community of which they are a part, together with a commitment to serving that community and especially those parts of it, which, for one reason or another, may be experiencing difficulty or disadvantage.

### *A Preparedness to Re-culture the School*

The process of re-vitalising a school, especially as a core centre for learning in the community, is a lengthy and continuing one. The hoped-for transformation is not something that can be achieved overnight. Numerous lines of advance, innovation and progression will be needed in order to achieve the overall goal of re-vitalisation. Old or rigid structures will need to be dismantled; traditional practices and habits will have to be gradually slowed down and stopped and old assumptions and modes of operation will have to be abandoned. All new lines of advance will be part of the re-culturing process. This will involve purposely trying to change people's beliefs, behaviour and mindsets, by placing them in settings where they can be introduced to and experience the value of different ways of thinking and operating. Experiential-based professional development is one way of achieving this objective. Another way is by helping people to develop a common language so that they can discuss issues and share concerns in settings in which they can address such matters in a professional manner. The setting up of school decision-making groups, the establishment of multi-disciplinary work areas and the deliberate and informal coalescence of colleagues into work clusters or teams will be an important aid in the re-culturing process.

In the process of re-culturing, initially there will always be those people who like new ways of doing things and who are keen to become involved in developing responses to the challenge of change. It is important to capitalise on this kind of enthusiasm, for the successes of such people will become contagious and will generate a wider capacity for change among others. In any organisation, however, there will be another group of people who will find change to constitute a large risk and it will be



far more difficult to engage such people in an ongoing enterprise of re-vitalisation than it will be in the case of those who were enthusiastic from the beginning. For those who are less willing to expose themselves to risk, an environment must be created in which risk taking is acceptable and non-threatening. The efforts of such people need to be applauded and their progress and achievements celebrated, for change is far more difficult for them than for the early innovators. Understanding the process of change will require an acceptance that some destabilisation and principled and constructive conflict is inevitable, if the change undertaking is to succeed. This requires a change in the mindset of many people who feel secure in stable environments and uncomfortable in uncertainty. In today's world, however, constant change and rapid transformations are facts of life; it is a part of preparing for life in the twenty-first century that individuals who are going to succeed in coming to terms with its exigencies must be ready, willing and able to cope with those uncertainties and instabilities.

### ***A Readiness to Invest in People***

Of prime importance is how people feel and think about their school. Schools and school systems that successfully bring about change help teachers to develop the tools that are effective in giving them a 'fighting chance' to meet the needs of students in the twenty-first century. When teachers begin to feel good about the job they are doing and when they find that students are being responsive and enthusiastic about their own learning, they will be themselves enthused to keep on doing well and continue their success and aspirations for even higher levels of achievement. Schools and school systems, that have been successful in bringing about change, have learnt how to solve their own problems and to grow and develop a solution from the resources that exist within the community. A focus on helping people to learn, to solve their own problems and to invest in the development of their own capacity to improve, is far better than throwing money at a problem and depending upon external expertise. A part of this is providing the opportunity for discourse among teachers, parents and members of the community, so that they can learn from each other continuously: providing the opportunity for sharing best practice on what works is an important strategy for bringing about change. Creating a culture of sharing, getting teachers, parents and members of the community to introduce and exhibit their work to others, instils curiosity, creativity and a commitment to the advantages and methods of learning and induces a feeling that the work that is done in the school is important. Mentoring one another, building teams and cadres of people, is a way of ensuring ongoing support.

### ***The Willingness to Adopt an Evidence-Based Approach to Change***

One of the questions that is constantly being asked of schools by the members of the broader community is 'How do we know that what the school is doing is going to make a positive difference to our children and their learning?' With an increasingly

well educated and thoughtful community, schools have to be able to address and attempt to answer such questions in an informed way. Schools that have succeeded in gaining the confidence and support of their community, as they guide members of the school through the process of change, have been able to address community concerns and articulate answers to their queries with material gathered by the application of an 'evidence-based' approach to establishing outcomes and other measures of attainment in the work of the school. The idea of researching a proposal, hypothesis or question, collecting data relevant to it and assessing whether any difference is made over the short and longer terms helps to facilitate the process of development and change and the discarding of those policies and practices that are no longer seen to be effective. In the past, schools have tended just to keep adding on new ideas and practices to existing forms and conventions and not taking away the things that were not working. However, action research on matters of curriculum, pedagogy or organisation and administration allows schools to develop new lines of thinking and adopt new practices, and discard those that are no longer effective, in a thoughtful manner.

### ***An Expansion of the Outreach of the School to the Local, National and International Community***

Through effective partnerships with business, schools are able to identify the changing needs of employers and the world of commerce and industry generally. The development of more generic skills, such as the capacity to work in teams, to engage in problem solving and to forge effective inter-personal relationships around mutual achievements in the workplace, reflects the increasing awareness of and responsiveness of education to the worlds of business and industry. Effective corporate connections also facilitate the development of work experience placements for students, and in some instances the promotion of broader employment experiences for members of school staffs. It is also very important that a school is 'plugged in' to the rest of the world. In this way a school can ensure that its students are being prepared for the demands of the global knowledge economy of the twenty-first century. A school needs to be linked in with networks that will promote cross-visitations and the use of modern information technologies to engage with others around the world.

### ***Maintaining Momentum***

Schools that have succeeded in bringing about change have a commitment to providing fora for sharing good practice among teachers and building upon success. Sharing good practice enables people to feel valuable, supported and empowered. Schools committed to success create a sense of goodwill which provides a powerful resource for generating co-operation and enthusiasm for new initiatives. That enthusiasm in turn encourages people readily to share their thinking about successes they

have had and moves they would like to try in the future. There are several ways in which this kind of atmosphere might be created and built upon. Keeping classroom doors open, welcoming people into classrooms, being invited into other classes, collaboratively planning inter-disciplinary studies and curriculum work, providing openings for staff to 'shadow' other professional colleagues, both inside and outside the school and allocating time for sharing news and ideas about good practice in teaching and learning are some of the ways in which success can be confirmed and good practice communicated and celebrated. Celebrating good practice and success can take many forms: exhibitions of student work in the school and the wider community, articles in the local press and other media, creating and bestowing awards in the school and encouraging staff to apply for awards in the broader community, making presentations to key community groups and providing the academic and professional worlds of education with examples for further analysis, development and expansion.

### *Leaders of Learning*

In this changing context leaders in educational institutions need to be able to stimulate learning and create the organisational structures and conduits for learning to occur. Leaders must also have strong inter-personal skills and be strongly connected into a team. They need to be excited by the prospects offered by change and able to communicate that enthusiasm to others. As leaders of learning they need to develop among teachers a sophisticated knowledge base about learning and teaching. They need to identify the most effective ways to ensure that teachers keep abreast of the latest scientific developments and innovations in cognitive science, emotional intelligence and ways of learning.

This has implications for the professional development made available to teachers in schools and also to the types of linkage that might be made between schools and teacher training institutions. Strategies also need to be in place at the level of the school to provide the opportunities for recent graduates to share their newly acquired knowledge and skill with more experienced members of the teaching profession. Leaders also have to ensure that a balance is struck between the innovatory practices of a school and a respect for community traditions, needs and expectations regarding the provision of a secure and relevant education for their children. This requires that leaders have credibility and are connected with the various constituencies of the school, breaking down barriers where necessary and facilitating interaction where appropriate. Leaders have to help people to decide upon what is important and to be able to recognise when there is a need to slow down on certain changes, when the pressure may be becoming too great. Leaders must always be sensitive or attuned to posing and helping colleagues try to answer the question 'how do we know that something is going to make a positive difference?'

Change can be facilitated by the application of both pressure and support. Pressure may be exerted in the clarification of expectations and the setting of targets

but it is counter-productive if this is not accompanied by measures of support and assistance to achieve targeted goals, whether this be in the form of supplements to resources, schemes of professional development or assistance with building projects or minor works. Engagement and creativity are important dimensions of education that do not lend themselves to easy formulas. Nurturing alone is not sufficient. Leaders need to help staff and students to set expectations and to enable them to become self-motivating, self-starting and self-regulating. Leaders need to engage in community outreach, particularly reaching out to the diverse set of constituencies in the community. They need to be comfortable in engaging with a wide range of parents and those in the community who are able to offer support and service in the interests of improving educational provision. Leaders also need to be prepared to inform the community of the contribution made to society in, by and through education and schools.

## Concluding Remarks

Only if societies undertake educational reform in the schooling sector will it be possible for them to maintain the capacity for individual learning, economic advance in an increasingly competitive global economy, at the same time as maintaining social order, stability and cohesion in the community. Robert Browning, the British poet, once said: 'Our aspirations are our possibilities'. It is such aspirations that can give shape, form and substance to our plans, projects and policies for extending the benefits of education to all people in the future. This is a matter of the most pressing importance, if we are properly to serve and promote the interests of all young people for economic advance, personal fulfilment, democratic participation, social justice and lifelong learning for all.

This is a revised and updated version of the chapter 'Schools and the Learning Community: Laying the Basis for Learning across the Lifespan' published in the first edition of *The International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*.

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# Chapter 32

## Schools and the Foundation for Lifelong Learning

Phillip McKenzie

### Introduction

Governments have long emphasised the need to improve school completion rates, lift educational attainment and improve young people's transitions from school. In Australia the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* agreed in December 2008 by education ministers in collaboration with the Catholic and independent school sectors expressed this goal in the following terms:

The senior years of schooling should provide all students with the high quality education necessary to complete their secondary school education and make the transition to further education, training or employment. Schooling should offer a range of pathways to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of all young Australians, encouraging them to pursue university or postsecondary vocational qualifications that increase their opportunities for rewarding and productive employment. (MCEETYA 2008: 12)

Young people with low levels of education, defined as less than successful completion of secondary schooling or a vocational equivalent, experience greater difficulty in making a successful transition to the labour market than do school completers (OECD 2005). It is clear that school non-completers are at greater risk of underemployment and unemployment than those who do complete Year 12 or its vocational equivalent. Young people with poor skills in literacy and numeracy are most at risk of poor outcomes as they leave school and enter the workforce. Reports based on the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) have emphasised the key role of low achievement in literacy and numeracy in the non-completion of Year 12, which in turn affects participation in post-school study and employment (McMillan and Marks 2003). The lack of engagement in further learning increases the ongoing risks of not being employed and social marginalisation (Hillman 2005).

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Projected changes in the job market underscore the importance of young people completing secondary school. Detailed projections by Shah and Burke (2006) for Australia over the period to 2020 indicate that:

- Employment will grow more quickly in higher skilled occupations than in lower skilled occupations.
- The number of people with qualifications is growing at a faster rate than overall jobs growth, meaning that both new entrants to the workforce and existing workers will need to become more qualified.

Young people who do not complete Year 12 or its vocational equivalent are likely to become even more disadvantaged in this increasingly competitive labour market.

In recognition of the importance of schooling in providing young people with a solid foundation for further learning, in 2009 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) set the following targets for young people's educational attainment and transition from school:

- Lift the Year 12 or equivalent (Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate 2 or higher) attainment rate to 90% by 2015 (up from about 80%).
- At least halve the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.
- Ensure more young people make a successful transition from compulsory schooling to full-time employment including further education and training.

This chapter seeks to better understand the factors involved in young people's decisions to complete secondary school. It focuses particularly on what schools themselves can do to positively influence students' attitudes and intentions.

## Conceptual Framework

Khoo and Ainley (2005) provide a detailed review of the research literature on factors associated with leaving school before completing the final year. Disengagement in the early secondary years has a long-term effect on identification with school, as well as on behaviour and achievement in the later years. Poor school performance is linked to declining motivation to learn, disengagement from school and early leaving. The decision to leave secondary school before completion is influenced by attitudes concerned with social relationships in school, commitment to the institution and beliefs in the value of schooling. Ethnographic studies have supported these claims by suggesting that an emotional connection to school is a protective factor that keeps 'at-risk' students in school (Mehan et al. 1996). Overall, there is evidence in previous research that favourable attitudes to school are associated with remaining at school to the final year, but the ways in which that relationship operates are less clear.

There appears to be a complex set of links between engagement, attitudes and motivation in terms of their influence on intentions to complete school or enter tertiary education. Distinctions made between behavioural, emotional and cognitive forms of engagement help provide a perspective on these links (Fredericks et al. 2004):

- *Behavioural engagement* refers to participation in schoolwork-related and co-curricular activities.
- *Emotional engagement* refers to identification with or attachment to school. Emotional engagement would be manifest in attitudes to school and to learning.
- *Cognitive engagement* refers to a personal investment of effort in learning that results in a person pursuing an issue with the intention of achieving mastery.

Khoo and Ainley (2005) argue that the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen and Fishbein 2000) links attitudes to behaviours. The theory of planned behaviour assumes that attitudes influence actions through reasoned processes (that are manifested as intentions). It recognises that there may be alternative links between attitudes and behaviour that bypass intentions, but the major pathway is through intentions. According to this theory relevant attitudes are shaped by beliefs, norms and peoples' perceptions of their capacity to attain the intended outcome.

## Empirical Work

Longitudinal data make a distinctive and significant contribution to knowledge about influences on educational attainments. Longitudinal data provide opportunities analyses not readily available with cross-sectional data to facilitate causal analyses because data are collected in a temporal sequence and do not rely on concurrent or retrospective data. Through the linkage of individual records over time from the same group of young people, a longitudinal survey permits the study of relationships between factors measured in one period – such as achievement, aspirations and behaviours – and outcomes measured in future time periods.

The findings reported here are drawn from the LSAY. LSAY commenced in 1995 with a national sample of Year 9 students (average age 14 years) that was surveyed annually until they were around 25 years of age. Further commencing cohorts were included in 1998, 2003, 2006 and 2009. The latter three cohorts were based on the national sample of 15-year-old students who took part in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). LSAY collects information on students' attitudes and intentions towards education and learning, their achievements in literacy and mathematics and their transition through school and into post-school education and work. There are few data collections that have all these elements. Although cross-sectional studies can and do use statistical controls for the influence of background factors, and to infer change over time, the conceptual grounds for doing so are stronger in longitudinal designs.



**Table 32.1** Year 12 intentions and non-completion outcome

Gender	Intention category	Cohort proportion <sup>a</sup> (%)	Non-completion outcome <sup>b</sup> (%)
Female	Intends not to complete Year 12	4	89
	Intends to complete Year 12	94	8
	Unsure about Year 12	1	60
	Total	100	13
Male	Intends not to complete Year 12	7	88
	Intends to complete Year 12	89	11
	Unsure about Year 12	3	73
	Total	100	19
All	Intends not to complete Year 12	6	88
	Intends to complete Year 12	92	9
	Unsure about Year 12	2	69
	Total	100	16

Source: Curtis and McMillan (2008: 14). The data refer to the LSAY sample of 15-year olds from 2003

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Column subtotals may not sum to 100 due to rounding

<sup>b</sup>This column shows the percentage of those whose intention translated into non-completion

Studies based on the 1995 LSAY cohort found that students' stated intentions to remain at school provide a good predictor of actual completion (Marks et al. 2000; Lamb et al. 2000). Marks et al. (2000) calculated that Year 12 participation (relative to non-participation) was seven times as likely for those Year 9 students who intended to proceed to Year 12 than for those students who did not intend to proceed to Year 12. They concluded that the magnitude of the effect of intentions is greater than the effect of achievement in literacy and numeracy, although it should be noted that achievement is strongly associated with intentions. Plans to continue through secondary school are influenced by factors such as achievement and attitudes to school, as well as a number of background characteristics (such as gender, socio-economic background and ethnicity).

Curtis and McMillan (2008) provide recent analyses on these issues using the LSAY data for the national sample of 15-year olds from 2003. Table 32.1 shows Year 12 intentions, expressed at age 15 years, by school completion outcome. When surveyed at age 15 years, 92% of young people intended to complete Year 12 at school. Of those who intended to leave school before completing Year 12, almost 90% of both females and males did indeed fulfil that intention. Of those who intended to complete Year 12, 8% of females and 11% of males left without realising that goal. Overwhelmingly, young people's actions were consistent with their plans, with nine out of ten young people acting as they had intended. Amongst those few who were unsure about their educational goals, approximately two-thirds were non-completers. These findings underline the strategic importance of building positive intentions about schooling as early as possible.

Khoo and Ainley (2005) used multivariate analyses to examine the range of influences at play. After the social background and Year 9 literacy and numeracy achievements of the LSAY respondents are taken into account:

- Attitudes to school significantly predict the intention to participate in Year 12.
- Intention to participate in Year 12, in turn, significantly predicts actual participation in Year 12.

The formation of positive attitudes to school thus influences educational intentions and subsequent participation through to the final year of school. These influences carry through to participation in education and training after leaving school:

- Attitudes to school significantly predict the intention to participate in tertiary education.
- Intentions towards tertiary education, in turn, significantly predict actual participation in tertiary education.

The LSAY data indicate that having favourable attitudes towards school has a positive effect on intention to complete, which in turn has a positive influence on actual completion. What is particularly noteworthy is that even for those who did not perform well in the early years of secondary school in literacy and numeracy, having favourable attitudes towards school and planning to finish school and participate in further study have a positive effect on actual participation.

Thomson and Hillman (2010) examined this issue further with a sub-group of the 2003 LSAY cohort that had performed at relatively low levels on the PISA mathematics assessment (below proficiency level 3). In general, it could have been expected that this group of relatively low achievers would have been much less likely to finish Year 12 and to experience positive post-school outcomes. Their study aimed to identify the factors that differentiated those who went on to succeed and those whose outcomes were not as positive in the years following secondary schooling.

Despite their low performance, the majority of the young people actually remained at secondary school until late 2005 (when the majority would have been in Year 12) and, when interviewed in 2006 (or subsequent years), indicated that they had completed Year 12 and had been awarded the appropriate qualification for their state. After leaving school, over one-third of the young people moved into employment – part-time or full-time – while under another third went on to further learning in university or some other form of tertiary education.

Those among the students with relatively low levels of mathematics performance who were most likely to complete school and have a successful post-school transition were those who:

- Could see the value of study such as mathematics for their future success more likely to achieve this success.
- Enjoyed being at school, enjoyed learning and had felt safe and secure at school.
- Those for whom their school had provided extensive information about post-school opportunities and developed with the students some sort of career or strategic plan for how to achieve their goals.

## Conclusions

Education faces the challenge of equipping *all* young people to effectively participate in, and contribute to, a rapidly changing society. Governments and other key stakeholder groups have set targets for near-universal completion of Year 12 or its vocational equivalent. A substantial number of policy initiatives have been put in place both within schools and in tertiary education and training to lift educational attainments.

This chapter drew on findings from a substantial longitudinal data set of young Australians to examine the role that schooling plays in influencing young people's educational intentions, and their likelihood of completing secondary school and participating in post-school learning through education and training.

Students' stated intentions around Year 9 to remain at school are a good predictor of actual completion. These findings underline the strategic importance of building positive intentions about schooling as early as possible. An improved school climate in terms of student-teacher relationships, teacher morale and student behaviour is likely to increase school completion rates.

Poor school performance is linked to declining motivation to learn, disengagement from school and early leaving. The decision to leave secondary school before completion is influenced by attitudes concerned with social relationships in school, commitment to the institution and beliefs in the value of schooling. The development of favourable attitudes to school provides an important avenue for influencing participation through school and into education beyond.

Engagement in school and positive attitudes contribute to the completion of secondary school and participation in tertiary education, over and above the effects of achievement in literacy and numeracy. Most of the social background factors associated with school completion operate by influencing intentions that are formed by relatively early in secondary school. The LSAY analyses also show that attitudes to school are relatively independent of both proficiency in literacy and numeracy and student background. These findings underline the importance of lifelong learning policy focusing on what happens early in schooling.

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# Chapter 33

## The Learning Journey: Lifelong Professional Learning for Leaders in Faith-Based Schools

Judith D. Chapman and Michael T. Buchanan

### Introduction

Over many years research has highlighted the increasingly complex and multifaceted nature of the roles and responsibilities of leaders in all types of schools and school systems. Recent educational reforms have added to the complexity of leadership and have demanded that leaders need new kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In many international settings changing expectations of the leader and reformulated visions of educational leadership in the context of lifelong learning have emphasised the need for leaders to develop a deeper understanding of a range of areas pertaining to the exercise of leadership in schools, particularly in regard to learning. Work of international and intergovernmental bodies such as the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2007) has highlighted the need to review the ways in which the conceptualisation of leadership roles and the allocation of responsibilities and tasks meet both the needs of the school and the quality of learning provision for students and the various personal and professional stages of individuals' careers, lives and professional lifelong learning needs. As the literature reviewed in this chapter reveals, there is a need to develop, support, renew and revitalise leadership exercised at all levels of every school and across all stages of an individual's lifelong learning journey.

In regard to leadership in faith-based schools, it will be argued in this chapter that contributions derived from much of the international body of research and policy-oriented work on lifelong professional learning and leadership, though relevant and

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vital to the needs of all leaders in all types of schools, should be regarded as necessary but not sufficient for the development of leaders in faith-based schools. Whilst the concepts and categories emerging from this work provide major insights and understandings relevant to the lifelong professional learning of school leaders in all types of settings, there needs to be other considerations brought into play to deepen and enrich the formation of effective leadership in faith-based schools. In this chapter we are informed by research (Chapman and Buchanan 2009) initiated and supported by the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne, Australia, designed to identify the additional elements and factors called for and appropriate for leadership in Catholic schools. We identify the concepts and categories that are distinctive in the lifelong professional learning needs of leaders in Catholic schools, and synthesise and integrate these insights with additional sources of knowledge that might inform and enhance their lifelong professional learning and renewal.

## **Current Emphases in Leadership and Leadership Learning Research**

Recent research efforts, particularly those employing meta-analyses of data, are now broadening and strengthening the knowledge base about school leadership, especially in regard to the relationship between leadership, student learning and school outcomes. In a study undertaken in the USA, Marzano et al. (2005, p. 7) claim that research over the last 35 years ‘provides strong guidance on specific leadership behaviours for school administrators and those behaviours have well documented effects on student achievement’. Synthesising the research literature using a quantitative, meta-analytic approach the authors identified the following 21 leadership responsibilities as correlating with student academic achievement (p. 42): affirmation, change agent, contingent rewards, communication, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideal/s beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment, knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment, monitoring and evaluating, optimiser, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness and visibility.

The New Zealand scholar, Viviane Robinson (2007), sought to identify and explain the types of school leadership that make an impact on a range of academic and social student outcomes. In her investigation a systematic search produced 26 published studies that sought to characterise and quantify the relationship between types of school leadership and a range of student outcomes, and 11 of the studies included sufficient data from which the effects of particular types of leadership could be calculated. From Robinson’s analysis five dimensions of leadership were identified as having an impact on learning outcomes in a school setting (p. 8):

1. *Establishing goals and expectations*: relating to the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals.

2. *Strategic resourcing*: involving aligning resource selection and allocation with priority teaching goals, including provision of appropriate expertise through staff recruitment.
3. *Planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum*: relating to direct involvement in the support and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and the provision of formative and summative feedback to teachers; direct oversight of curriculum through school-wide co-ordination across classes and year levels and alignment to school goals.
4. *Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development*: involving leadership that not only promotes but directly participates with teachers in formal and informal professional learning.
5. *Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment*: protecting time for teaching and learning by reducing external pressures and interruptions and establishing an orderly and supportive environment both inside and outside classrooms.

The Leadership for Learning project *Carpe Vitam*, centred at Cambridge University in the UK which involved seven countries (Australia, Austria, Denmark, USA, England, Greece and Norway) and operated on the basis of a set of democratic values about leadership and learning, has identified from research, experimentation, reflection and collective debate, a number of ‘principles for practice’ for transformations in leadership and educational practice especially through leadership for learning (MacBeath et al. 2006). These key principles include: maintaining a focus on learning as an activity, creating conditions favourable to learning as an activity, creating a dialogue about leadership for learning, sharing leadership and fostering a shared sense of accountability.

## **International Policy Initiatives on Leadership and Learning**

In 2007 the OECD brought to conclusion its international activity on ‘*Improving School Leadership*’. Participants included Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, England, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The OECD (2007) highlighted the importance of proper preparation and ongoing learning for people in positions of leadership. At the final OECD meeting for this activity held in Copenhagen in April 2008 there was agreement that leadership exercised in four areas of responsibility is central to improved student learning: teacher quality, goal setting and accountability, strategic management of resources and collaboration with a wide range of partners external to the school. The OECD argued that these four areas of responsibility do not necessarily have to be the responsibility of one person. They provide a framework for school leadership, not necessarily for an individual school leader. The concept of ‘co-responsibility’ for shared leadership that is distributed among staff at all levels of responsibility is relevant in this regard.

A review of Country Reports submitted as part of the OECD activity on *Improving School Leadership* (Chapman 2008) showed that there is immense variation among countries in the degree to which they have put in place policies and strategies designed to improve school leadership; however, an intensive examination of particular countries, with very different histories and traditions in the provision of education, demonstrates that significant advances are being made in some settings. Chapman argues that from an examination of research and country-based practice across the OECD it is clear that change can be brought about in improving school leadership, especially in linking leadership with improved student learning and that many lessons can be drawn from successful reform efforts that have applicability to other settings. Chapman (2008) suggested that these lessons include:

- *Acknowledgement of the complex 'web' of relationships and effects:* The effects of leadership on student learning and school impacts and outcomes can be both direct and indirect; it is linked to an evidence-based approach to learning and school outcomes; a range of leadership skills, commitments, capacities and beliefs, working through a range of mediating conditions and moderated by features of the social, demographic and organisational contexts.
- *The development of school leadership skills and attributes:* Reform efforts are supported by leadership that displays an emphasis on distributed, collaborative leadership; the ability to build internal capacity and bring about collective action and responsibility; the capacity to create organisational expectations for high achievement by staff and students; the development of a learning-centred philosophy and approach; the ability to implement school improvement through changes in structure and culture; the capacity to leverage external pressures for achievement to focus on the school's performance objectives and student learning; the preparedness to integrate transformational leadership with shared instructional and pedagogical leadership; the ability to develop a shared sense of accountability for learning and school outcomes; the ability to communicate effectively about learning and open up dialogue about learning with students, staff and parents; and the ability to 'centre' the school on learning.
- *An awareness of the need to attend to mediating conditions:* In bringing about improvements in student learning and school impacts and outcomes leadership works with, through and upon a number of mediating conditions including the degree of school and leadership autonomy; the professionalism, engagement, suitability, selection, evaluation and accountability of staff; access to relevant resources including information to analyse, monitor and assess individual and school performance; the professional learning culture of the school; the level of engagement and support for learning by staff; curriculum organisation, development and flexibility; the management structure, especially in regard to middle management; system-wide support for school improvement, quality assurance and performance assessment; and the nature of the relationship with education system authorities and school decision-making bodies.



## **Lifelong Professional Learning and the Development of Leadership Capacity**

In the past education systems around the world have been heavily reliant on a process of self-selection in the identification of future leaders. Few, if any, of these self-selection processes consciously draw on the research literature and policy initiatives we have reviewed above. Internationally it is now recognised that a more systematic, lifelong and collaborative approach involving employing authorities, schools, universities, leadership centres and individuals is required. Strategies might include the use of generic calls for those interested in leadership or the use of more personal and direct approaches from people in more senior positions. Future principals and leaders will be more easily recruited when they have had positive experiences of opportunities to lead and the experience of working collaboratively with others; thus incumbent principals themselves have an important role to play.

A review of the literature undertaken for UNESCO (Chapman 2005) revealed a range of practices is available for the development of those with future leadership capacity. These include: mentoring and coaching, internship, shadowing, education platform development, special assignments and targeted learning experiences, formal university award bearing study and engagement in programmes organised by international learning institutes and academies. A carefully conceived and comprehensive programme of leadership learning would involve the incorporation of many of these strategies in a portfolio of leadership experiences shaped in accord with a personal learning development plan.

Newly appointed leaders require engagement in a systematic programme of learning, and induction based on an analysis of a person's previous experiences and capabilities integrated with the needs of the particular school and context in which they serve, and drawing on what the research literature tells us about what successful school leadership is and how to grow into being a leader. To retain effective leaders in their key positions in educating institutions, it is vital that their morale, professional commitment and sense of professional value and personal worth are maintained and their creativity and enthusiasm are promoted. Leaders are subject to the effect of a complex array of factors that have the potential to impact negatively on their performance and continuing survival in the role. Leaders must be given support to face the challenges of their responsibilities and to renew and reinvigorate their professional performance. Experienced leaders should be able to look to system support, professional networks and leadership centres for the provision of renewal experiences and activities. These could include: sabbatical leaves; professionally expanding work engagements; the utilisation and affirmation of their wisdom and competencies in the mentoring and coaching of the next generation of leaders.

In studies of the professional development needs of experienced principals (Peterson 2002) attention has been drawn to the need for experienced principals to have available to them a range of learning opportunities from which selection can be made in accord with specific needs. These learning experiences may involve: study groups; advanced seminars; reading and discussion groups; presentations by

current thinkers or expert practitioners; attendance at national and international academies or conferences and opportunities to become coaches, facilitators or trainers themselves. Their learning should not, however, be haphazard or fragmented. Rather the curriculum should be: carefully designed and sequenced with attention to prior learning; co-ordinated and aligned across all learning providers and activities; provide core skills and knowledge that will enhance leadership, but also knowledge and skills related to the specific administrative procedures, contractual requirements and community characteristics of the environment in which they are working. Other initiatives that have had success among experienced principals are those based on peer learning involving a number of practices including inter-visitations and buddying.

## **The Distinctive Nature of Leadership in Faith-Based Schools**

These lessons derived from the international research community and from the international policy context are necessary to the development of leaders in faith-based schools, just as they are necessary to leaders in other school systems. However, in faith-based schools these areas of professional knowledge, skills and competencies are necessary, but not sufficient for the preparation, formation and renewal of educational leaders.

A growing body of literature has pointed to the distinctiveness of leadership in faith-based schools (Bezzina et al. 2007; Miller 2007; Holman 2007; Duignan 2007; Cook 2008). For example, leaders of Catholic schools must create opportunities to ensure that the Christian message and Catholic vision permeate the school's curriculum and culture (Cook 2008). Leaders require the skills and ability to recognise that the potential culture has to inform and form the 'soul' of the school (Miller 2007, p. 9). Leadership in Catholic schools also requires an awareness of the context in which schools function in the twenty-first century together with a commitment to the fundamental characteristics of Catholic education. In order to achieve this writers and contemporary analysts such as Holman (2007) have argued that it is imperative that leaders in Catholic schools have ongoing religious, faith and theological formation.

Formation is a distinctive feature of faith-based leadership, which is embedded in the belief that the purpose of education is the integral formation of the human person. This '... includes the development of all the human faculties of students, together with preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, becoming aware of the transcendental and religious education' (SCCE 1982, n. 17). As Duignan (2007) has argued the formation of leaders in Catholic schools must foster the social conditions that allow colleagues to grow as persons and become more authentic, wiser and autonomous educators and leaders. 'Faith-based organisations need faith leaders, people who will stand up, set the organisational course, and persevere, as a result of their belief in both faith and in the mission of the organisation' (Brinkerhoff 1999).

There are certain skills which are appropriate and required for effective faith leadership and most leaders need to develop these skills in order to lead others in the direction that they are leading.

In faith-based schools, one of the key leadership challenges facing leaders today is the ability to provide religious leadership that is able to preserve and strengthen the particular identity of the school (Belmonte 2007). Increasingly religious leadership in Catholic schools as well as other faith communities is undertaken by lay individuals (Litchfield 2006) and the school principal as the recognised leader of the school has responsibility not only for the educational and personal well-being of the students but for their faith development. The religious leadership dimension requires a school leader in a faith-based school to be open to continuous growth in knowledge of the tradition of that faith. In Catholic schooling, this includes a deep understanding of the philosophical, theological and historical insights into Catholic ethos and culture as well as the purpose of Catholic education (Belmonte 2007).

Leaders can transform teaching and learning to provide unique and authentic experiences for students and teachers alike. In a Catholic school transformative learning must be anchored in faith and in the values and ethics of the Catholic Church (Bezzina et al. 2007; Buchanan and Rymarz 2008). In contemporary times the faith dimension of a leader's role is increasingly important because for many families the school is often their first and sometimes only contact with the Church and its religious traditions (Holman 2007). For school leaders attention to the spiritual dimension is not just personal but it is also public as leaders must show the way for others to be attentive to the spiritual dimension within the school community and within their own lives (Buchanan 2009).

## **Some Guiding Principles, Concepts and Concerns for Lifelong Professional Learning in Faith-Based Schools**

In 2009 the Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne commissioned research to provide a rigorous, evidence-based programme for the learning of educational leaders in Catholic education. The Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) works in partnership with Catholic schools to provide an educational foundation that develops the whole person within a school environment imbued with Christian values. The study reinforced the importance of the ongoing professional formation of leaders especially in the transformation of learners and learning in the educational setting – promoting quality learning and teaching in faith-based and values-driven approaches to education. In addition the data suggested the importance of the following distinctive dimensions of lifelong professional learning for leaders in the Catholic education setting. These distinctive dimensions were found to be: (1) faith, religious and spiritual formation; (2) formation in the identity, culture and mission of the Church and (3) personal formation.

1. *Faith, religious and spiritual formation* was conceived as a well-developed formation experience where spiritual growth and religious understanding are in harmony and through which faith can be lived and celebrated by the leader in the school, in his/her life and beyond.

The findings of the study revealed that leaders in faith-based schools need to be very committed to their own faith journey. It is the experience of faith and being able to see everything that one does through the lens of faith, the prism of faith, a world view, ‘..the first thing that a leader in a Catholic school needs is to understand what their faith means to them and to have opportunities to reflect on that, to engage in dialogue with other people about that and to practice it,’ noted one primary principal. Moreover a leader needs to be able to nurture their own spirituality and the spirituality of other people, living the faith in relationship with others. Among the knowledge, understanding, commitments and capacities to be developed in a lifelong approach to the formation of leaders in faith-based schools our data suggested the importance of: understanding of self in relationship to God, one’s self and other people; being committed to the formation of the whole person; being committed to leadership inspired by faith; being engaged in ongoing dialogue and study of theology, religion and scripture; being committed to nurturing a person’s spirituality and being engaged in a faith journey; living the faith in relationship with God and others; celebrating faith and involving people in dialogue about faith, religion and spirituality; supporting others in their spiritual journeys; providing pastoral support; and having an understanding, awareness and knowledge of different faiths and religious traditions.

2. *Formation in the identity, culture and mission of the Church* – as expressed through culture, social teaching and mission for the exercise of Christian leadership in the tradition of the Church especially through pastoral leadership, leadership in faith and leadership in the Church.

The research revealed that leaders need an understanding of ecclesiology, the history of the Church, Church teachings, traditions and culture and where they are placed in the history of the Church at this time. They also require an understanding of and commitment to the identity, mission and social teaching of the Church. At the same time leaders need a vision of the Church in the future, as one leader in the Catholic community commented. ‘Schools will be very different in the future, teachers need to be very different in the future, the leaders of Catholic education need to be prepared for a very different world. It is a world unknown but it’s not a world from which we can’t take what we already know now and build on it, change it, develop it.’ An understanding of the history of the Church; commitment to Church traditions and teachings; understanding of the identity and mission of the Church; awareness of the vision of the Church as it finds expression within a contemporary context; knowledge of Church institutions and agencies across the community; commitment to and understanding of the Church’s social teachings as they apply to frameworks of equity, inclusion and family-school partnerships; being conversant with the laws, canons and structure of the Church as they apply to education; awareness of the deep story and traditions of religious orders and congregations and the capacity to exercise leadership in the dimensions

of faith, parish, pastoral support and ministry were identified a part of the agenda for learning and formation for leaders of faith-based schools.

3. *Personal formation* – embodying and exemplifying personal and interpersonal qualities.

Leaders in all schools and school systems need to be good at interacting with people and able to communicate with a wide range of people. They need the ability to mobilise people towards a common goal and build a sense of teamwork. Leadership is about relationship building. But in faith-based schools the personal and interpersonal qualities and skills need of a leader should be more than this, as one senior administrator commented: ‘A principal should be involved in this communal endeavour of bringing people to wholeness. The holistic nature of leadership exercised in-situ honouring the situation of people, honouring formation as a permanent pursuit.’ The findings of the research suggest that this will involve: the capacity to communicate, interact well with people and work in teams; the ability to model leadership and enable leadership in others; the capacity to lead for transformation and change; the ability to build personal, professional and leadership capacity in others; the ability to engage others in the articulation of an educational vision and provide leadership to others in bringing about its realisation; the ability to make wise judgements; an awareness of self in relationship to others; a commitment to ‘being one’s best self’; an ability to overcome resistance and resolve conflict and build resilience; a commitment to lifelong learning; an ability to manage stress and stressful situations and a commitment to ethical and moral decision making.

## Conclusion

In addition to the generic skills required for leadership in every school setting the research reported in this chapter shows that the lifelong professional learning needs of leaders in faith-based schools must incorporate ongoing religious, faith and spiritual formation; formation in the identity, culture and mission of the church and personal formation. Ongoing religious, faith and spiritual formation is important in order to ensure leaders in faith-based schools are able to effectively integrate faith leadership and educational leadership. Leaders in faith-based schools require a deep understanding of identity, culture and mission so that the school can effectively participate in the mission of their Church. The understanding required is not solely knowledge centred but it is integral to the formation of the person/leader and therefore central to the lifelong learning of the educator.

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# Chapter 34

## Lifelong Learning as a Reference Framework for Technical and Further Education

Nicholas Gara

### Introduction

Governments have often forwarded the proposition that education can be employed to address many of society's challenges: community development, skills shortages, unemployment, economic progress, health and lifestyle issues are just some of the more recent assignments. The concept of education as an institution having the potential to shape society, empower individuals or meet utilitarian ends, however, is not new. Aristotle previously identified this potential:

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth (BYU 2009).

What often follows from this proposition, however, is that the inherent demands placed on the institutions as a result are either marginal to their accepted charter or characterised by a multiplicity of objectives some of which are competing or contradictory in nature. With related policy planning, conflict also arises between the need to consider short-term, industry-specific skill requirements and the longer-term needs of the individual and state. Similar tensions arise as a result of the need to underpin economic growth against community needs, incorporating issues such as access and equity, while still operating within a model based on efficiency and market orientation (Gonczi 1996; Shann 1996). While the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission (EC) still continue to support a policy framework which recognises the interdependence of educational, labour market and economic policy as a primary issue, they have now increased the linkages with and widened the boundaries of existing policy, to include an emphasis on issues of social inclusiveness, personal fulfilment, equity, justice, citizenship and democracy.

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The concern for the future of the individual and society, in an environment of increasing international competition, economic, industrial and social change, has led to an ongoing re-evaluation of the traditional education policies and processes. Janssens (2002, p. 10) notes significant job enlargement in 'horizontal, vertical and social terms' and argues that the major investment in information and communication technologies (ICT) and globalisation of markets and manufacturing have changed traditional work organisation and production methods. Accordingly, employee skills now need to be constantly updated or adapted and new skills learnt.

In an ongoing review of the OECD 'Jobs Study' (1994), the Australian Treasury (2008) notes that amongst the original economic and structural reform recommendations to better address changing labour market requirements was the 'diffusion of technological know-how' (p. 28) and the call for reform in existing education and training systems. This review confirmed a strong link between employment and the ability of each of the member countries to embrace relevant reform and adapt to change. The impact of technology and the new employment demands are now considered to exceed the capacity of both the traditional teaching and learning patterns and the restricted time-scales of the existing 'front end' educational system. A lifespan approach to education is now considered essential to deal with the new and ever-changing demands.

This chapter examines how the lifelong learning concept can provide an organising framework for technical and further education (TAFE) provision while taking into account the context of existing systems, roles and service functions, as well as the various political and economic overlays impacting across the sector.

## **The Australian Concern Within the International Context**

### ***Policy Formation***

The increasing interdependence of nations and the 'globalization of economic, cultural, political and intellectual institutions' (Morey 2004, p. 131) has been a major force for change in higher education, as well as in the operations and activities of the various related institutions. Marginson and Van Der Wende (2007, pp. 4, 13) note, however, that across the OECD the education sector has always remained open internationally to the exchange of ideas, to networking and policy borrowing, elements of which are key to the implementation of changes in economic, social and cultural life.

The nature of the policy borrowing that often occurs can vary from modelling through to mimicry and according to Ganderton (1999, p. 401) is commonly initially filtered at a federal level, then adapted through a number of state and local layers as part of implementation. Existing historical and cultural legacies, mixed with national imperatives, regulatory requirements and government funding models, ensure that the various institutions remain consistent with state and local area



needs; however, the OECD has remained a significant reference point for a number of member countries and beyond. This was exemplified by events in the middle and late 1980s when the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training in Australia used both statistical information and policy recommendations obtained through the OECD to justify the restructuring and closer alignment of the Australian tertiary education sector, including TAFE, to the economy (Henry et al. 2001; Vickers 1994). On this, Ryan (1999b) also confirms that the OECD has played the role of the ‘traditional legitimiser of foreign ideas for Australian governments’ (p. 8) and notes that the nation’s position on various OECD league tables has also been used to justify calls for change (see Bradley 2008). The more recent Australian interest in the ‘Bologna Process’ which in 2001 included lifelong learning on its manifest (Jakoby and Rusconi 2009, p. 51; DEST 2006, pp. 3, 7) further reflects the ongoing concern about remaining connected to OECD/European initiatives. Of particular interest have been recognition arrangements, student mobility and institutional interaction on a policy ‘convergence’. Similarly, the OECD (2009) international review of Vocational Education and Training (VET) across 14 countries exhibits a significant contribution from Australia. While the accent in this report remains on the links between the economy, labour market, skills formation, employment, work-based training and related issues, an essential requirement of balancing industry-specific skills with generic, transferable and lifelong learning skills is confirmed.

### *The TAFE Heritage: A Lifespan Ethos*

The origins of technical education in Australia can be traced to the events leading to the establishment of the original Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts (Hobart:1827 and Sydney:1833), where lectures were supplemented by access to libraries and reading rooms (Goozee 2001, p. 11). Originally developed to sponsor the cause of the non-matriculant through part-time opportunity, the TAFE/VOCED sector came to be characterised by the range of its provision, its diversity, accessibility and the achievement of more instrumental outcomes. In terms of being able to clearly articulate a lifelong learning ethos, Ryan (1999a) traces the development of the 1974 Kangan Report on which the new national TAFE system was established. Here the influence of UNESCO and the OECD are again clearly evident and while the initial discourse followed a recurrent education model, the inference is that it was largely from this point on that ‘Lifelong education became a key ingredient in the new vision for TAFE’ (p. 3).

Adoption of the lifelong terminology was in a way a restatement of the sector’s original mission: from inception the technical/vocational education service has traditionally had a key role in providing an opportunity for self-improvement, re-entry and recurrent education. The provision is also substantial and representative, services a wide community sector and has often been the instrument for delivery of specific/targeted government programmes. Powles and Anderson

(1996, p. 107) argue that, although there is a large variation between streams, the socio-economic profile of vocational streams in TAFE parallels that of the total population. It has also been shown that the sector is one of the few that consistently deals with the needs of individual groups (e.g. literacy) and so also plays an important role for a wide cross section of people in permanent and continuing education. Government bodies which argue that TAFE should maintain its diversity (Moran 1995) seem to confirm that TAFE has a significant educational role, not only due to its present activity level, accessibility, links to enterprise and the range of sectors which it currently serves, but also because its lifelong learning ethos is appropriate and could lead to a more effective role in a wider, coherent framework.

## **Integrating Lifelong Learning Principles into Existing Provision**

Traditional systems and processes commonly come under scrutiny during periods of change. Cropley (1977), Cross-Durant (1987) and Sutton (1994) argue that it is now not feasible to provide education for life in the few years of compulsory provision, and they raise two major issues regarding the present education system. First, that the existing approach during the compulsory years does not adequately address the essential lifelong learning skills and abilities. On this the OECD (2004, p. 12) indicates that preparation should now include knowledge-related tools, including language and technology, working with others and exercising personal autonomy (taking responsibility for one's learning). The focus then shifts onto the ability to access information – think in the abstract and have the ability to adapt (Reis 1990, p. 14). Second, that the traditional/compulsory school-based educational system developed to prepare individuals for their future is now increasingly being seen as having a limited capacity to adequately service the continuous and diverse learning needs of a society in change. The stocks of knowledge gained during the compulsory period are hence considered to have a limited utility, since technological change demands constant skills' updates and there is no longer an expectation that people will have the same job for life.

The spectrum of issues which can inhibit effective ongoing learning go beyond the activities of the education and training institutions and can also be found in the attitudes and operations exhibited within the workplace, labour and product markets and industrial relations policy (CEDEFOP 2004). Here, Fernandes (2010) outlines the particular challenges faced by teaching staff involved in work-based training, both in the nature of the skills-based delivery and in balancing individual needs with client requirements. The new and increasing demands on the individual and society then have major implications for the design of future educational systems, particularly if they are to facilitate the provision of lifelong learning skills and attitudes and produce self-directed learners (Candy 1991). Linked to this are the teaching and learning strategies, consideration of individual differences, curriculum design and the institutional approach to these issues.

### ***An Assessment of the Current Approach to Provision: Developing Lifelong Learning Attributes***

Education, as described by Sanderson (1993, p. 1) has previously been seen as being self justifying, an end in itself (liberal), or a means to achieve an end (utilitarian). While there are a number of variations on this divide, a major issue which falls out of this relates to the liberal/specific approach and the debate on how best to prepare individuals for ongoing study, for work and their future as effective citizens. Others argue that events have now overtaken this divide and that the content debate often subsumes other important issues such as the learning experience itself. On this theme and as part of his argument for a 'generalist' strategy Wilkinson (2006) argues that 'it does not matter nearly as much what subject matter our undergraduates study, as it does how they study it' (p. 6).

The associated discourse confirms the need to now consider a wider more encompassing educational approach. One example is forwarded by Shepherd (2009, p. 2) who calls for a more integrated schools curriculum in the UK and claims that schools are stifling motivation and creative thinking by having linear and rigid subject, course and assessment structures; elevating some disciplines above others; remaining isolated in their community and being removed from local enterprise. Issues of rigidity in Australian schools are echoed by Ryan (1999a), who also argues for a more integrated teaching strategy: 'theoretical, technological and practical at the same time' (p. 2).

On this theme, Loos (2002, p. 64) argues that the most important innovations in learning have incorporated alternative strategies, using problem-solving exercises through project work linked with local enterprise. Hayes et al. (2009) report on inequalities across regional areas in Australia where often there is still limited interaction in disadvantaged schools. While the inequities reported may not be representative of the entire system, the classroom issues were most familiar. Here teaching was described as 'being to the script, involving teacher centered, passive styles of learning' (p. 4), whereas collaboration, interaction, problem solving and constructive dialogue between teachers and students were missing.

In reference to undergraduate programmes, Wilkinson (2006) and Candy (2000) argue that too often discussion tends to be dominated by discipline content rather than the learning process or experience gained, with only a thin veneer of broader contextual studies, generic or 'learning to learn' skills being included or even considered. Narrow curriculum also remains an issue and on a related theme Wilkinson (2006) argues that 'early specialization results in learning that soon will have to be unlearned' (p. 5) and that the quarantine effect (on such a cohort) also limits their opportunity to interact with learners in other disciplines.

Commenting on lifelong learning in Australia, the National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET 1994) observed that lifelong principles were not well integrated into existing education and training provision and indeed, that much of the current curricular, structural and assessment practices in post-compulsory education 'actively militate against the development of lifelong learning attributes

in graduates' (pp. 7–12). A more tactical approach was recommended within the report, where effective lifelong learning systems are considered to have five basic characteristics: the incorporation of a suitable introduction to learning; for this to be conducted in a contextual framework; the provision of generic skills and flexibility; a structure for incremental development and the opportunity for self-directed learning. The more recent strategies listed by the OECD (2004) are complementary in nature, reinforcing the notion of the learner being central to the process and further, including consideration of those factors which enhance the motivation to learn.

### *Lifelong Learning Skills and Abilities: A Flexible Approach*

Curriculum, teaching and the institutional approach to learning encompass a number of structural, environmental and process issues, but often the literature does not clearly identify aspects of learning theory as distinct from those related matters that facilitate or support learning. Candy (2000) developed a taxonomy of the types of learning to be encountered by those leaving university and then used aspects of learning theory to identify the personal attributes essential for the individual's lifelong learning armoury.

These are listed as: an enquiring mind, 'helicopter vision', information literacy, a repertoire of learning skills and a sense of personal agency (p. 109). Interpersonal/group skills were added later and this is consistent with the need for individuals to be able to work in teams and with others.

Central to this theory is the consideration of such pedagogical issues as the most appropriate learning styles and delivery strategies to suit individual needs. MacKeracher and Tuijnman (1994, p. 343) indicate that adults exhibit diverse learning styles, and that learning abilities are determined more by previous experiences of education and work, than by age. The associated theory on learning styles is then presented in a two-way matrix, which along one dimension includes concrete versus abstract learning and on the other includes active versus reflective learning. It is argued that according to context, adults proceed through the four stages of this learning circle and accordingly, the four abilities required for learning lie in the domains of experience, reflective observation, abstract concept formation and experimentation.

The level of participation and achievement during the compulsory and early post-compulsory period is also particularly important, since as Sutton (1994) notes, the level of initial education is also normally an indicator to subsequent participation. Cross-Durant (1987) notes that Dewey indicated that positive adult learning would continue throughout life if the earlier education had sown the seeds for a desire to continue the learning process. Similarly, Sweet (2008) argues that it is clear that educational achievement and competence at an early age is a 'very important correlate and determinant of educational and labour outcomes' (p. 9). Social and family environments are also significant factors and Sticht (2008) notes that as the parents' educational levels increase, so do the educational levels and achievements

of the children – ‘this intergenerational relationship persists into adulthood’ (p. 29). Accordingly, notions of learning through enquiry, the motivation to learn and exposure to a variety of learning and teaching styles all require attention at the earliest possible stage to facilitate the development of lifelong learning skills.

The implication of this theory is the notion that effective learning can take place within a range of transmission modes which can vary according to life cycle, context and environment, hence calling for a more flexible approach to teaching and learning. Lifelong learning proposals therefore have major policy implications for the educational institutions, indicating the need for a revised approach to teaching and learning, curriculum design, assessment and articulation structures. Opportunities can also be increased through access to a range of networked providers – formal, non-formal, public and private – where the provision is linked through recognition of prior learning or credit transfer arrangements. With the inclusion of a revised pedagogical approach, TAFE with its diversity, accessibility, range of programmes, articulation arrangements and varied funding sources is in a pivotal position to provide an enhanced lifelong learning framework.

### *Literacy, the Basic Skills and Transition*

Throughout the literature, there is a recurrent theme which identifies literacy as one of the key enabling tools in lifelong learning. The EC (2001) describes literacy as one of the essential basic skills and similarly, Benavot (2008) states ‘Literacy is the foundation for all learning. It carries benefits running from the deeply personal to the political, the social and economic spheres of life’ (p. 1). The interpretation of literacy in this case is not restricted purely to language acquisition, since in a broader sense it also includes technological and information literacy. The latter is more fully described by Bruce (2003, p. 37) as including the effective use of information processes and IT, finding and controlling information independently, using information wisely and then working with knowledge to build a foundation or personal inventory to gain new insights.

Literacy skills are often also seen as a subset of the essential learning skills inventory: the ability to access information independently, organise, critically evaluate and utilise evidence to inform and enhance existing foundation knowledge or understanding. These basic important elements are often still missing during the transition to higher education or work, thereby limiting the individual’s potential to progress effectively in ongoing learning opportunity. Whilst some of the related issues can be sheeted back to an often disparate approach in the secondary school system, Sweet (2008) observes that successful transition from school to work is a result of a number of factors, and indicates that too often those who enter the labour market at an early age are poorly qualified and inadequately prepared. The claim that students often lack the broader capabilities of critical thinking and related development is also argued by Wilkinson (2006) who notes that 40% of students who arrive on American College campuses need remedial work: ‘they arrive hungry

to learn, but poorly prepared' (p. 4). The development of independent learners who are adequately prepared with the required skills is addressed by writers such as Taylor (2001, p. 180), who calls for a more transformational approach to learning using a 'task-oriented problem-solving strategy' and Candy (2000, p. 109), who argues for the appropriate curriculum to support lifelong learning in an integrated approach, a contextualised framework and for the development of generic skills.

An extension to these strategies is described by Hultberg et al. (2008), who outline a dual programme to facilitate the student transition and adjustment process. Here students moving into higher education undergo an introductory/induction programme, which is held in parallel and integrated with a course in higher education pedagogy for teachers to enhance their delivery. Transition programmes are not new and their effectiveness can vary, but one example is provided by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where such programmes are considered critical to ensure success for those entering tertiary education (HCT Directors 2009). Here students are challenged not only by the new intellectual demands and the mature learning environment, but also by the requirement that this be done in English – this in a country where literacy rates have traditionally been depressed.

The reported literacy rate amongst Arab States in the 1970 is quoted by Hammoud (2006, p. 2) as having been around 40%. Although there are wide variations quoted in the different sources, Hammoud claims that a rate of over 90% has now been achieved for the 15–24-year-old age group. The focus here is not on the rates themselves (which are contestable), as much as on the rapid change experienced in a community which retains a high premium on existing culture and traditions, and yet operates a unique system offering free government funded tertiary education to UAE nationals in English, the medium of instruction. At these institutions, foundation (transition) programmes are considered essential for later academic success and this rests as much on the need to remediate deficiencies in parts of the high school sector as the need for English proficiency, effective literacy and improved study skills.

Related issues, which are universal and not quarantined to the region, refer to sections of a school system (undergoing continuous improvement) that have relied on rote learning and a restricted curriculum. Students commonly lack critical thinking and problem-solving skills and remain reluctant to ask questions, possibly due to a lack of interaction in class previously. Resulting from a teacher centred, passive 'pay attention' didactic environment, students have often been observed to be initially uncomfortable when asked to work independently, when challenged to think for themselves or in working with others. Both Shepherd (2009, p. 3) and Wilkinson (2006, p. 11) raise the importance of students being able to ask questions, test and take risks as part of learning, the accent on conformity being seen as an anathema to creativity and risk taking. There is also little evidence to show an awareness of the wider world, self-management in learning, or the most limited basic research skills necessary in searching for information and knowledge (HCT Directors 2009). Here, the foundations programme, which normally lasts 12 months, comprises a major component of English, with mathematics, computing and a professional development unit (designed with project work to aid critical thinking, self-management and

autonomy, teamwork and study skills). Science, a career awareness unit and Arabic can also be included in a programme, which is conducted in an integrated manner, commonly with dedicated staff. A significant aim of the programme relates to the enhancement of learner confidence, competence and self-management/independent learning skills. HCT Directors (2009) argue that the remarkable progress achieved during the 1-year programme by the greater part of the cohort shows how students can benefit from and respond in a short period of time to a well-developed curriculum incorporating an integrated approach, good quality teaching and a supportive environment.

On being immersed for a period in the new academic climate and having successfully undergone the demands and rigour of tertiary study, the students who progress are transformed, demonstrating increased confidence, motivation and autonomy. Through experience they then willingly articulate those needs that would further enhance their progress. When surveyed by the writer (2005) on those issues that new incoming teachers undergoing staff induction should be made aware of, sample groups of graduating female degree students gave a range of responses which they grouped under three headings:

1. 'Don't judge my natural ability by my proficiency in English'.
2. 'Give us credit for having the ability to think for ourselves'.
3. 'Please exercise some patience and understanding'.

The first matter relates directly to the range of literacy issues discussed above and also highlights the students' own perception that their cognitive abilities are often judged to a large extent on their literacy proficiency, expression, written work and ability to communicate in class. The second issue addresses their frustration with the didactic approach and calls for a fair chance to be able to express themselves or give their opinion, for increased class interaction, for opportunity in problem solving, risk taking and group work. Included in this was their observation that because they were all similarly covered in national dress, teaching staff (invariably of English-speaking Western origin) often had difficulty in recognising and exploiting individual attributes and differences. The third issue in part referred to cultural matters, but the focus here was also on the plea to be given to the 'time and space' for reflective thinking: time 'to connect', to adapt, to build, adjust or renew concepts. Here, the issue of staff exercising patience and providing effective feedback and encouragement through positive interaction was critical to students and reinforces the theory of Taylor (2001), whereby critical reflection incorporating feedback, and moving back and forth, is considered an essential part of effective learning. This is also coincident with Broad (2006) who outlines the need for individuals to have the ability and capacity to manage and organise their own learning, in a way that can be incorporated in both a personal sense and in a wider context. A significant outcome of this informal survey was the similarity in theme between the three student issues and the elements of the OECD's DeSeCo (2005) education and life-skill competencies: the use of interactive tools (language and technology); personal autonomy (taking responsibility) and interacting with others (an essential part of the feedback cycle mentioned).

## Policy Outcomes: Assessing Progress

Since the initial UNESCO and OECD declarations on lifelong learning, a series of member countries and others have incorporated many of the concepts, values and principles in their own policy announcements. The ongoing assessment of tangible outcomes against the various statements, however, has led to the view by a number of writers that there has been little progress and that generally the limited projects have been associated with utilitarian outcomes, without any acceptance or application of the broader ideals. Further, an examination of the various impediments to implementation and the related complexities has led to a closer scrutiny of the feasibility of progressing some of the principles outlined. Accordingly, we now have a range of articles on lifelong learning which reflect a ‘rhetoric or reality?’ type of scepticism on intent: ‘Mere platitudes or realistically achievable?’ (Cornford 2009), ‘The theory and rhetoric of the learning society’ (Smith 2000), ‘Governing the ungovernable’ (Field 2002) and ‘Who wants to learn forever? Hyperbole and difficulty with lifelong learning’ (Halliday 2003).

Against this theme is the argument that the incorporation of the ‘lifelong learning’ terminology and principles in the various strategic plans and policy documents now demonstrate a broader perspective, a valuable added dimension and that these are in themselves a catalyst for reflection and change. On this, the generation of a number of initiatives (including blended learning, e-learning, online delivery and integrated work-based project work) are seen to be tangible outcomes of related review processes. Apart from the Marxist interpretation that the true (hidden) function of any structured educational initiative (lifelong learning included) is for capitalist control and suppression of workers, generally the issues raised seem to fall into four categories: First, the feasibility of converting policy statements into action; second, the source and application of funds; third, the apparent lack of research principles and relevant learning theory being incorporated within the various strategies; fourth, the inability to coordinate the players effectively, or to structure effective networks between the various institutions, agencies and stakeholders.

On the policy issue, Cornford (2009, p. 1) highlights a recent quote attributed to government, which states that Australia does not have a lifelong learning policy because it has the highest post-compulsory participation rate in the OECD and therefore it does not need one. Seemingly, there is little evidence of, or much genuine interest in, establishing an effective framework and so ‘no major initiatives in rectifying lifelong learning policy deficiencies have yet occurred’ (p. 3). The challenges to implementation are seen to be significant: Field (2002) notes that ‘lifelong learning is much more of an amorphous policy goal, delivery of which lies beyond the capacity of any government’ (p. 202). Others argue that the effects of change attributed to globalisation and the impact of technology have been overstated, that for many people everyday activities at home and work have altered only marginally, therefore not providing any motivation to change their normal routine (CEDEFOP 2004, p. 14).

The perceived bias towards employment and related skills remains and is reflected by Cornford (2009), who argues that successive Australian federal governments



have shown 'very narrow conceptions of education and training values' (p. 14). Similarly, Field (2002, p. 202) notes that lifelong learning has been driven by economic considerations with the more humanistic components being only a recent consideration. On this, Taylor (2001, p. 180) presents one view of lifelong learning, which operates in the same manner as banking, where learners simply 'top up' the required labour market skills and abilities on a 'just in time' basis.

Member states of the OECD are not exempt from scrutiny. Dehmel (2006) notes that it can be reasonably concluded that little progress has been made since the consultation process, even though it was the EU which took the lifelong learning concept seriously by translating it into policy statements, programmes and projects. Unfortunately, a number of the core statements associated with the original intent have also become clichés, diluting the impact of some of the concepts. Hence learning from the 'cradle to the grave', which was part of the early OECD documentation describing the lifespan approach, has become learning from 'womb to tomb' or 'basket to casket', lessening the impact and adding to the notion that there is more rhetoric here than real intent to achieve anything tangible.

Funding the necessary framework remains a contested issue and seems to remain a hurdle to progress and implementation. In the present structure where funding is shared in a complex arrangement between state and federal authorities with very few effective cross-sectoral partnerships, a government spokesman is quoted in Cornford (2009, p. 6) as declaring that due to a lack of funds, the lifelong learning concept is not viable in policy terms. That the current funding processes do not support lifelong learning needs is also argued by McNair (2009, p. 2), who indicates that educational disbursements are uneven and unbalanced across one's life course, between different parties and different purposes of learning. Sweet (2009, pp. 1–2) registers a similar observation on the discontinuities in current funding priorities and notes that to effectively address universal access issues, new government funding models may be required to create a more even and efficient balance between sectors. Of relevance here is the adult education sector which has long been seen as having a viable role in any integrated learning framework. Although universally identified by some as the key to the 'survival of mankind', Field (2002) argues, almost everywhere it remains a 'widely neglected and feeble part' (p. 205) of the educational landscape – what has been retained has often focused on work-related matters. Traditionally, further education provision in Australia has to a certain extent featured a 'user pays' and market system where private, enterprise and alternative funding sources, such as loans, have played an important part. Costly state interference in an activity or provision, which normally results in individual benefit, is then viewed as having limited electoral support. Government is thus seen as being reluctant to enter into what may become an open-ended obligation, when matters such as the compulsory education component, health, housing and welfare are also pressing.

The focus on developing appropriate frameworks to support lifelong learning has led to a debate on the perceived lack of relevant learning theory within the various reform proposals and strategies. Alheit and Dausien (2002) argue that the lifelong learning perspective looks at the 'science of education' rather than some of the related functions or structures and that the system should move away from didactic

strategies, formal curriculum, measures of efficiency and accountability and look at the learning process itself, including quality in the classroom. The accent on recent institutional reform in education, however, has generally been on quality, accountability, performance indicators, accreditation and registration, with less regard to curriculum reform, learning styles, training teachers for adult learning or developing student support (Field 2002, p. 212). Introducing 'lifelong learning' into this mix can then be problematic, particularly since the term lacks clarity and can be broad in concept, leading to different interpretations on scope, intent and desired outcomes. Within the general discussion, issues of learning theory have thus become mixed and confused with providing planned learning opportunities (Taylor 2001), or related system matters. The main argument here can be compared to human capital theory: simply providing increased learning opportunity will not necessarily raise productivity. The learning objectives, quality, content, the delivery strategies and the learning experience itself, all require attention in a planned, integrated approach.

Effective coordination of the various stakeholders has been considered essential to underpin an agreed, systematic approach to lifelong learning. On this Cornford (2009) examines the work of Kearns (2005), Karmel (2004) and Watson (2004) and claims that there is no overarching policy mechanism or framework linking schools, higher education, (ACE) Adult Community Education and VET; also that current federal/state relationships are seen to hinder any prospect of an agreed, cooperative or integrated approach to policy/implementation. Cornford (2009) goes on to note that lifelong learning is seen to be poorly understood in Australia and 'this acts as a barrier to concerted action by all stakeholders in progressing opportunities for learning throughout life for all Australians' (p. 5). National policy frameworks of 'a more inclusive kind' (p. 3) are seen as essential to progress the wider aspects of any common or integrated proposal in a system where currently the state and federal bodies are often seen to be fragmented in their strategies, their purpose and direction. Valuable and creative projects have been undertaken on an individual basis, but they remain in isolation due to a 'lack of coordination and a framework' (p. 6) to interrelate the elements. This then leads to the conclusion that overall, the likelihood of a national framework or a serious agreed policy being developed by federal government 'is not great at present' (p. 1).

In summary, the general tenor running through the various assessments is typically reflected by the OECD (2001), which admits that despite the importance of the lifelong initiative, it is 'matched by agreement that it is far from easy to achieve in practice' (p. 2). However, despite the various hurdles and issues that are highlighted, the overall interpretation on the assessment of outcomes is that progress is slow, not that the lifelong learning concept does not have merit.

Invariably the various problems and issues which are identified as affecting implementation are then complemented by observations or recommendations to facilitate progress. In Australia there is a call to reform the curriculum, teaching and learning processes (Candy 2000, p. 109) and similarly, Kearns (2005, p. 6) identifies the need to empower individuals as self-directed learners; for action against deficiencies in literacy; on the utilisation of technology; for effective collaboration between institutions and, engagement by industry. In considering the long-term

contribution that the VET system could make, Sweet (2009) calls for the need to reconfigure the institutional types and relationships to one which ‘reflects a wider and more integrated view of human capability than that which characterizes the system at present’ (p. 2). This concept also supports in part the argument put forward by Halliday (2003, p. 208), who notes that learning can occur formally and informally, at work, in society (community initiatives) and in everyday life: the facility is there. Any funding directed towards lifelong learning should then be directed in a manner that provides new opportunities or integrated frameworks and does not simply duplicate existing provision.

In Europe the ‘Nordic model’ (Rubenson 2006) is often quoted as a reference point on achievement, since a substantial institutional framework to support learning across a lifespan has been a tradition here, albeit under a welfare state. While the 29 member states can point towards the Bologna Declaration (1999) and various targeted initiatives against lifelong learning such as ‘Erasmus’ and ‘Leonardo Da Vinci’ (EC 2007a, p. 3), the general observation is that progress on the establishment of a lifelong system, either through funding or established frameworks, is slow. There also remains a universal theme that government needs to remain as the driver in policy formulation (Cornford 2009), as well as in developing funding models, where a redirection could facilitate a more equitable access for all (Sweet 2009, p. 1).

## **Issues Impacting on TAFE Delivery in Australia**

### ***The Role of TAFE in the Education and Training Environment***

The TAFE system reflects a large government investment evidenced through the provision and maintenance of its infrastructure; an extensive national/urban/regional network and a diverse, well-trained workforce. This is an educational environment with state and federal funding sources, where base infrastructure grants to address issues such as employment, the disadvantaged, literacy and various community service obligations are matched against industry-specific funding allocated through market mechanisms. While Goozee (2001) indicates that TAFE has also had a role in filling the various ‘education and training gaps’ (p. 10), Burke and Noonan (2008, p. 1) confirm that the key objectives for VET remain related to industry and skills development, which are then balanced by consideration of social inclusion and equity issues.

The traditional TAFE strengths as Byrne (1995, p. 5) and Moran (1995, p. 7) indicate have included its diversity, accessibility and multifaceted services, whilst also assisting those unable to pay, those requiring basic skills or those wishing to train in areas of little interest to private training providers. To a certain extent these ‘strengths’ have worked against the clarification of the perceived role and function of TAFE in post-compulsory provision. The diversity aspect is a case in point, where TAFE has often been described as trying to be ‘everything to everybody’ including

as an agency of democratic experience, or as a ‘handmaiden’ to the concept of material advancement in the industrial field (Sweet 1994, p. 32).

As a result, enterprise, government, the community and individuals all expect a service response, seek partnerships or compete for a place in provision. These series of overlays have led to competing demands as well as some confusion on the function, charter, identity and status of the service. TAFE’s heritage is another related issue, since although the institutions now deliver higher-level qualifications including degrees, due to the banal origin of the service the institutions remain well aware of the difficulties they face in their ‘parity of esteem’ when compared to the university sector (TDA 2009a, pp. 8–9). So there are issues in addition to its image and status: Where does it fit? Who is it for? What are the boundaries of its provision? (Summerfield and Evans 1990, p. 17).

### *Implications for Policy Development*

While the lifelong learning concept may provide the organising framework against which an effective strategic response for the future can be developed, the research has indicated that for TAFE there are historical, political and contextual factors that should be taken into account in the development of any new proposal or change in policy direction. These include consideration of the following:

- The implications of policy transport: Whether this involves direct borrowing, adaptation, or the utilisation of overseas data, both the context and the rationale for the original work need to be examined, because any new developments need to consider existing political constraints and then commonly build on, or be consistent with, established values and practice. For TAFE the historical antecedents also need to be considered/incorporated, as these still impact on present operations, systems and structures.
- Existing strategies: Governments have traditionally used TAFE as an instrument to implement various policies and priorities, particularly with skills training at employment level. Arguably, these programmes commonly also reflect ‘new right’ philosophies in their implementation, since they have incorporated a demand-driven, industry-led model, utilising user choice, competition and market principles. This, when more recent OECD policy initiatives go beyond the instrumental/economic dimension to one which considers the development of society as a whole and emphasises the importance of the complete individual (encompassing social justice, personal development and citizenship needs).
- The more contemporary issues impacting on TAFE: These have resulted from such factors as globalisation, internationalisation, rapid changes in technology and the economic rationalist approach to both economics and education. There is the call for merging the vocational with the general and for recognition of the multiple objectives of education. Allied to this is the call for a fresh approach to education beyond the ‘front end’ strategy, enabling individuals to better respond

to issues of workplace change, the need for flexible skills and the new and emerging occupations in the 'knowledge-based economy' (ABS 2002, Ch.1).

- Recognition of the need for learning that now has to occur throughout life: The revised framework now places the learner as being central to the process. Provision which is developed to address specific skills formation requirements should also engage in developing self-directed independent learners. Here, learning-to-learn, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, information literacy and the ability to adapt are also critical. The proposal calls for a strategy where empowered, independent learners have the ability to make significant educational choices in a self-regulating environment which includes learning alternatives, articulation and access to the various formal and informal networks and providers.
- The claim that lifelong learning principles are not well integrated into current teaching and learning strategies: Issues such as learning through enquiry, exposure to a variety of learning styles and the motivation to learn all require attention at the earliest stage. Inherent in this is consideration of the appropriate learning theory, lifelong learning competencies, the curriculum, an integrated approach and requirements of adult learning. On this, the relevant aspects of learning theory should not be conflated with those issues such as the institutional approach to facilitate or support learning.
- Equity issues: Within the existing educational response structure, government goals for education are seen to remain as highly job related and economic policy dependent. Access, equity and social justice objectives should be maintained and this requires strategies to ensure that the provision for literacy and numeracy, socialisation to competence, community service obligations and general education are balanced against industry-specific funding allocated through various market mechanisms.
- Placing due emphasis on the provision of a minimum level of educational survival skills: On this, a universal entitlement should enable the individual to achieve effective literacy, numeracy and learning skills to facilitate effective access to, and participation in, ongoing lifelong learning opportunity. Literacy has been described as a fundamental human right (UNESCO 1996 Declaration 11) and accordingly an effective government provision should remain in a number of key areas to ensure the 'public good'.
- Funding issues: These remain central to the lifelong learning implementation debate. A redistribution of existing post-compulsory funding arrangements to better address adult requirements has been proposed. Consideration of both the public and private benefits to education has increasingly led to the notion that co-investment beyond the compulsory period may be essential to any future framework. Accordingly, the merit of both the 'learning entitlement' and the 'drawing rights' funding model should be assessed. Since any change will likely have significant wider implications, proposals need to remain compatible with, or build on, the prevailing government ideology.
- The framework or integrated pathways structure necessary to underpin an effective ongoing learning opportunity: Here the role of government as either

'funder', provider, regulator or purchaser needs to be made clear. With regard to system issues, the most responsive model is arguably one that is able to fund at the delivery level (guarantee of a place), or to fund the user. Once government could ensure that the equity, access and community service obligations were met, its main role could be to pay for outcomes, not to be directly involved in provision or in determining process. The requirement would be to provide the effective framework, coordinating and enabling structures, as well as information to aid informed choice, thereby allowing individuals to self-manage their own learning.

## **A Lifelong Learning Approach: Implications for TAFE**

A review of the lifelong learning principles, the related literature, as well as the related policy issues has indicated at least six themes that have the potential to provide a series of reference points to underpin a lifelong approach in TAFE. These are forwarded with due consideration of some of the current challenges to the sector which include: existing economic and political overlays; diminishing funding (Long 2010); its charter (which then links to the boundaries and balance of its programme delivery) and, the status and future role of the sector in the mosaic of provision which is becoming increasingly market led.

The first issue concerns the nature of TAFE, its heritage and the possible congruence with any proposed lifelong learning framework. As indicated previously, among the traditional strengths of TAFE have been its affordability, accessibility and diversity, these being the result of a series of developmental changes, which have underpinned technical education since first settlement. Following the 'Kangan' reform era and events during the 1970s, which saw the formation of TAFE nationally (Ryan 1999a), the focus swung briefly towards the needs of the individual and the intrinsic outcomes to education. More recent philosophies, however, have established an economic rationalist approach to education, linking the desired outcomes to employment, the improvement of international competitiveness and the economy. Despite these overlays, history demonstrates that TAFE has a strong heritage and culture in providing varied opportunity across the community spectrum and also in servicing learning needs across a lifespan. TAFE has the potential, structure and facility to address the triadic principles inherent in the lifelong learning concept, namely, learning for economic progress, personal development and democratic participation (Chapman and Aspin 2001, p. 3). Field (2002, p. 212) also confirms that government commonly resorts to VET for action because it is safe in political terms, has a heritage in human capital formation and a diversity of services. Because it has this legitimacy, with strong links to industry and the community, the sector is then also easily utilised for intervention purposes and as such has an unrivalled potential as an agency for change.

Second, the educational aims and priorities resulting from the current focus on economic imperatives need to be examined in light of the changing needs of enterprise/

industry, individuals and the community as a whole. TAFE Directors Australia (TDA 2009a, b) in their response to the 'Review of Australian Education' (Bradley 2008) confirm that 'TAFE is distinguished by the centrality of its relationship with industry...' (p. 8). However they also highlight the role of TAFE in community development and present a 'Three Pillars Model: which informs the broad sense of direction and action of TDA' (TDA 2009a, b, pp. 7–8). The pillars include contestability, quality and social inclusion, the latter focusing on social justice issues, the unemployed, 'thin' markets and specific target groups. Noonan (2002, p. 18) in his review of TAFE in Victoria similarly identifies education for citizenship, building social cohesion, enhancing cultural life and identity as important partners to the employment priorities. Clearly, the aims of education have now progressed beyond the narrow utilitarian and instrumental view and this raises the issue of a broader curriculum (encompassing a wider range of the more relevant theories, addressing underpinning knowledge and practices), as well as the balance in provision. The objectives have now broadened to assist in the development of the complete individual and to provide a more effective foundation for the changing needs of society and the workplace. Accordingly, these themes need to be incorporated in TAFE provision. There is increasing recognition that a healthy society is necessary for a thriving economy or, to put it another way, the achievement of economic goals and social cohesion are intertwined (Kennedy 1997, p. 16).

The third theme concerns funding, including the consideration of a revised model essential to support a lifelong framework and where the responsibility for financing such an approach should lie. The existing government response is to focus on youth, the unemployed and school to work transition, even though new entrants represent only a small percentage of the overall workforce. A long-held view by senior TAFE educators (W.A. sample) is that the current political focus on the young and on entry-level training is unbalanced and quite discriminatory against adults, as well as those who have not enjoyed the benefits normally accrued through access to tertiary study (the non-matriculants). While there is also strong argument that a minimum entitlement (the minimum remains undefined) should be supported through the public purse, there is also a submission that all education to the end of the year 12 equivalent should be fully subsidised (OECD 2009, p. 12). Any change in emphasis in this regard, however, will depend on a change in values and the subsequent reappraisal of existing priorities. The latest federal policy recommendations for higher education (DEEWR 2009, pp. 9, 17) where 'funding follows the student' is not an entitlement as such, rather a 'guarantee of a place' for those eligible and initially only services the university sector. Extending the benefits currently being enjoyed by higher education participants to a more universal entitlement could then follow. For the individual, further and higher education has traditionally been characterised by a notion of co-investment. This approach is also consistent with the OECD policy on funding lifelong learning opportunity, where the cost burden is shared between the individual, enterprise and the public purse (OECD Jobs Study 1994, p. 137). On this, Curtain (2001) similarly notes that since there are benefits to employers, society and the nation as a whole, the onus should not be entirely on the individual.

The source of funding to facilitate such proposals is raised as the fourth related issue. The OECD (1996) indicates that governments generally tend to adequately fund a basic level of education due to the high rate of social return to such an investment. Beyond this point, however, spending between countries varies considerably and if further education is to expand, new sources of funding will generally need to be found. Sources identified have included parafiscal (training guarantee) proposals, a redirection of funds from the social security account, or a more equitable allocation of the funding principles that are currently applied against higher education. While the recent 'West Report' on financing higher education raises as many questions as it answers, it proposes an 'entitlement' plan underpinned by a loans system, which includes a significant individual contribution. Here it is claimed that substantial savings could be achieved by combining the regulatory and financial frameworks for universities and the VET sector, which could then be diverted to students rather than institutions. Under such a scheme: 'no additional public funds would be required to ensure equitable access for all ... access to approximately 5 years of subsidised post secondary education appears to be within the bounds of fiscal possibility' (West 1997, pp. 30–31). It is important to note that the proposed 5 years (equivalent) post-secondary education stipend would still rely on a significant student contribution (60:40% or 50:50%) through universal access to HECS-style income contingent loans (Osmond 1997, p. 1). All students would be able to defer repayment until they achieved a certain income level.

The fifth issue concerns the future role of TAFE within a wider training environment where learning now has to occur across a lifespan. Here, enabled self-directed learners who have a repertoire of appropriate learning skills then make informed choices through a series of linked pathways to access ongoing learning opportunity. This leads to the understanding that it is becoming a necessity for individuals to have the essential learning skills and abilities (and key competencies), a minimum post-compulsory entitlement and the facility to access the ongoing learning opportunity. This concept has implications for initial education; the compulsory period; entry-level training or school-to-work transition, and then the continuing investment in education and training. Within this, TAFE is currently seen to have a significant role regarding the last two components, for those not attending university and as a viable post-compulsory option. TAFE is also one of the few organisations that consistently responds to particular skills requirements, the needs of individual/community groups or as a provider of the 'last resort' (TDA 2009b). As such it has an important role to play for a wide cross section in recurrent, permanent and continuing education opportunity. It could fulfil this role through diversity in delivery and supporting systems; a seamless opportunity which incorporates recognition and articulation; as well as targeted programmes against specific need. This includes working with industry, employers and individuals to facilitate transition or re-entry to the workforce and provide second chance or bridging opportunity, re-skilling or advanced technological 'updates'. TAFE also has a clear role in 'general' education, in meeting various community service obligations, as well as in equity and access provision to the disadvantaged groups in society. This is a large public investment, which has in the past been able to service a variety of



demands and due to its multi-faceted services the sector is now well placed to play a major role in lifelong learning.

The sixth and final theme arising from the analysis is consideration of the overarching framework necessary to support the essential components of a coordinated lifelong learning system. When considering how best to provide an integrated opportunity through the variety of providers, TAFE Directors (TDA 2009a) have previously noted the necessity to develop ‘a genuinely integrated post-secondary education structure’ (p. 6). Apart from those skills, characteristics and higher order abilities, which define the individual as an effective lifelong learner, the learning opportunity/pathway needs to be coherent, ongoing and accessible. A recent Australian contribution to an international review of vocational education (OECD 2009) reported that one of the major local challenges to effective coordination of the stakeholders related to the division in responsibilities between Commonwealth and state. Other matters referred to inconsistent funding principles, the implications associated with the use of skills forecasting as a principal planning tool, teacher training and restricted curriculum. If cross-sectoral collaboration in education remains at times problematic (Christie 2009, p. 9) and if various departments of state remain in conflict, then this makes the possibility of any synergy on the establishment of a lifelong educational framework difficult. Recommendations in the OECD (2009) report also confirm that a common administrative framework is necessary to effectively address uniform funding principles.

## Conclusion

The lack of a consistent administrative framework; balanced funding; an acceptance of a broader view of educational purpose which rests on a strong school system and a community culture that values learning (Cornford 2009) remain amongst the greatest barriers to the implementation of lifelong learning. To a certain extent the matter of the inconsistent administrative framework was addressed in part by a recent federal announcement (DEEWR 2009), where although the terms of reference were not given, under the heading of pathways improvement, a single ministerial council was to oversee the coordination of higher education, VET, adult community and international education. Quality issues are also to be monitored by a new national authority. Again this is consistent with the Bologna Declaration where to address student mobility: 29 countries are to create a convergence on issues such as comparable qualifications, study structures and recognition.

While TAFE has both the ethos and the structure to be a viable partner in a lifelong educational system there are particular challenges, since apart from targeted programmes and specific skills grants, Long (2010, p. 3) reports that recurrent funding has fallen in the recent 5-year period. Recent funding allocations for higher education have also omitted the TAFE sector; this, when the education targets set by The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) have set increased targets for those aged 20–64 without Certificate 3 level qualifications and a doubling

of the numbers at the higher level (Long 2010, p. 3). Further, Burke and Noonan (2008, p. 17) indicate that private and employer contributions to VET over the last decade have increased only marginally and that an increase here with access to loans may be necessary to meet future needs. The COAG targets and the government response to the Bradley (2008) review indicate that there is recognition of the need for an enhanced investment in education and training, including an effective coordinating framework. The incumbent government now indicates additional funds for training in the May 2010 federal budget, and while the priorities relate to skills formation programmes, language, literacy and numeracy are also addressed. This may, however, also provide the opportunity for review, to also consider coordinated learner pathways and facilitate a more collaborative approach between the stakeholders to achieve the effective framework required. TAFE and the 'lifelong learning' concept can provide a useful reference point for such a response and instead of delaying implementation on the basis of hidden or unknown costs, it may be more useful to consider the social and economic cost of not preparing a nation to embrace change and meet the challenges associated with participating effectively in the global community.

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# Chapter 35

## Libraries, Literacies and Lifelong Learning: The Practices Within Higher Education Institutions

Tatum McPherson-Crowie

### Introduction

Individuals working in academic institutions are now required to engage in increasingly complex learning processes and interact with a vast array of information and range of literacies to complete their academic and professional tasks. In order for academics to maintain participation within this evolving context, it has become essential for them to embrace an evolving concept of knowledge, a breadth of learning and an array of learning strategies and learning technologies.

In this context, acceptance of the imperatives of lifelong learning is vital for both individuals and academic institutions. As an individual's academic and professional objectives are impacted on by this evolving context, the ways in which individuals achieve their objectives and the sources of their support are required to adapt in order to ensure that they respond to their changing needs.

The acquisition, maintenance, development and accumulation of knowledge and a range of learning strategies and technologies are key features of the work of libraries. Libraries are purposeful in their role as giving the impetus and offering their resources to act as an individual's companion for the development of knowledge, understanding and a range of literacies to the ongoing benefits of an academic's lifelong learning.

This chapter will outline what may be regarded as key characteristics of the relationship between academic staff, libraries, literacies and lifelong learning within the new environment of higher education. The polymorphous character and interconnectedness of this relationship will be discussed in light of current international literature and emerging Australian research. The first section which follows aims to illustrate the roles that libraries might play in supporting academics as lifelong

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learners to meet the changes and challenges of the evolving information resources and modes of access intrinsic to their work.

## **Libraries: Challenges for Lifelong Learning**

The changing nature of the profession of librarianship, the role of corporate influence upon information management and knowledge management, and the evolution of information and communication technology (ICT) capacity, all significantly impact on workers in academic libraries. Compounding these challenges is the awareness that academic libraries are influenced by the governance of higher education institutions (HEIs), and thus confront the same challenges as those of their parent institution. HEIs are still responding to the many challenges that have arisen from the assemblage and integration of *New Public Management* (NPM) techniques, in their approaches to management and administration. We may note that there has been an increase in managerialism and micro-management, and a concomitant growth in the diversity of tasks that needs to be achieved, in this context, without commensurate access to more resources, by all staffing levels within HEIs (Becher and Trowler 2001; Jordan 1998).

At the same time, HEIs have been forced to endeavour to achieve more with less. In addition, there has been an emphasis on providing 'seamless access' in the provision of services, a requirement that has been criticised (Becher and Trowler 2001; Brophy 2005; Jordan 1998) as being both unattainable and unsustainable. The application of the 'seamless access' model has been argued to be unattainable and unsustainable, stemming from HEI's relationships with their many 'clients' and 'stakeholders'. These clients include students, academic and general staff, government regulators, and professional and academic bodies. The diverse clientele of HEIs, within this environment, has required their various elements to concentrate on sharpening their sense of the service focus to form a hybrid customer-service approach. This is also evident in academic libraries.

Academic libraries must also confront the challenges of responding to the changing nature of higher education, including moves towards an increasing 'massification' and widening access to higher education and the growing popularity of demand for vocational and coursework degrees. These changes strongly influence the development and revision of course design and teaching methods, such as those now to be found in distance and virtual ICT-based learning, as well as the research trends and targets of the institution. These challenges in turn shape the design and function of hybrid library services, such as the provision and availability of physical and digital collections, digital repositories, inter-library provisions and relationships and increasing demand for the library to serve as multipurpose *learning commons* (Becher and Trowler 2001; Brophy 2005; Jordan 1998; Williams 2009). In this context, academic libraries not only confront challenges that require significant changes to the practice of their day-to-day functions but also to the very nature of their role and objectives.

Information and communication technology has had the biggest impact on libraries (Brophy 2005). Information professionals and libraries are continually

responding to this impact on the processes and actions of information search, retrieval and provision. Library patrons and information seekers are exposed to an abundance of information, more than has previously ever been available or accessible (American Library Association (ALA) 2008a, b; Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) 2002, 2006; Hock 1999; Keen 2007; Longworth 2003; Margolis 2000).

Information abundance partly complicates the task of isolating specific and relevant information. Personal and occupational information needs have increased in systematic complexity, as an increased number of systems is required to be used, both asynchronously and synchronously, for and in access. Caution should also be exercised when individuals are navigating this proliferation in order to avoid *information overload* (ALA 2008a, b; ALIA 2002, 2006; Hobart and Schiffman 1998; Hock 1999; Keen 2007; Longworth 2003; Margolis 2000), which Margolis derides as an ‘embarrassment’ (2000, p. 64) of topical and atypical information. Another notable matter relevant to all who are exposed to the phenomenon of information abundance is that they must actively accommodate the amount and controversial quality of excess information, which includes wilful misinformation, the heterogeneous character and orientation of information and the inconsistency of ethical objectivity (Hobart and Schiffman 1998; Hock 1999; Holmes 2006; Keen 2007).

The role and function of academic libraries to effectively shape the provision of information for library patrons are consistently and increasingly exposed to accumulating challenges within this scenario of information abundance. The economic conditions that have contributed to diminished resourcing within HEIs further heighten these challenges. *The Digital Information Seeker: Findings from Selected OCLC, RIN and JISC User Behaviour Projects*<sup>1</sup> (Connaway et al. 2010) outlines the stipulations from library patrons, particularly related to academic libraries, to support a ‘greater variety of digital formats and content’ (p. 46). The findings, synthesised from 12 user-behaviour studies conducted in the US and the UK, stressed the increasing needs of academics for the provision of data that are further-reaching than e-journals, notably the curation of data sets, virtual research environments (VREs), non-text-based and multimedia objects, blogs and open source materials. Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> *The digital information seeker: Findings from selected OCLC, RIN and JISC user behaviour projects* (Connaway et al. 2010) comprises of data gathered from; *Perceptions of libraries and information resources* (2005) OCLC, *College students’ perceptions of libraries and information resources* (2006) OCLC, *Sense-Making the Information Confluence: The Whys and Hows of College and University User Satisficing of Information Needs* (2006) IMLS/Ohio State University/OCLC, *Researchers and Discovery Services: Behaviour, Perceptions and Needs* (2006) RIN, *Researchers’ Use of Academic Libraries and Their Services* (2007) RIN/CURL, *Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future* (2008) CIBER/UCL, commissioned by BL and JISC, *Seeking Synchronicity: Evaluating Virtual Reference Services from User, Non-user and Librarian Perspectives* (2008) OCLC/IMLS/Rutgers, *Online Catalogs: What Users and Librarians Want* (2009) OCLC, *E-journals: Their Use, Value and Impact* (2009) RIN, *JISC National E-books Observatory Project: Key Findings and Recommendations* (2009) JISC/UCL, *Students’ Use of Research Content in Teaching and Learning* (2009) JISC, and *User Behaviour in Resource Discovery* (2009) JISC.



participants in the study emphasised the role of high-quality metadata, data that describe other data for the identification and assessment of electronic resources. Within the present situation of information abundance, the methods and techniques of metadata are escalating and vary significantly in quality as metadata are increasingly collated from predominantly digitised processes (Jacso 2010). The demands and expectations of academic staff for more information and more high-quality metadata to enable them better to identify and judge the available information are highly justified, although it can be anticipated that these factors will not increase simultaneously. Library patrons will require a counterbalance to the magnification of the abundance of information. Individuals will be able to manage the imbalance between information and metadata, by addressing their capacity to acquire, maintain and develop the imperative skills to effectively use the available information.

Since 2003, the *Ithaka Faculty Survey* has gathered data concerning the roles played by academic libraries as perceived by academic staff in the process of responding to the changing nature of their academic work. This investigation of the importance and evolution of the traditional functions of academic libraries is analysed from the perspective of three core information-related practices. These three traditional practices are defined as the 'gateway function' (in which the library is the 'starting point' for accessing information), the 'buyer function' (emphasising the collection development and acquisitions of the library) and the 'archive function' (in which 'the library is a repository of resources') (Schonfeld and Housewright 2010, ch. 1, p. 6). The *Faculty Study 2009: Key Strategic Insights for Libraries, Publishers, and Societies* (Schonfeld and Housewright 2010, ch. 1, p. 7) reported the steady rise of the classification of the library's 'buyer function' as 'very important' by 90% of academic staff. The context of the global economic conditions during which data were collected in 2009 was analysed to have minimal impact on the unwavering decline of perceived importance of the library's archive and gateway function, with preference for the 'buyer function'.

The range of learning strategies and learning technologies adopted by HEIs was found to have disengaged the relationship between academic libraries and academics, most of the latter notably placing 'less value on the library's traditional intellectual value-added role' (Schonfeld and Housewright 2010, ch. 1, p. 13). The perceptions of academic staff of the decline of the library's role as forming the connecting link to information seems to be at variance with recognition of their reliance upon the *technical facilitation* 'behind the scenes' by the library (Schonfeld and Housewright 2010, ch. 1, p. 3). The technical facilitation provided by libraries, in many instances, enables academics to enjoy and profit from the opportunity for the 'seamless exploration' of electronic platforms, repositories, resources, services and domains. This seamless exploration is often anchored by the necessary validation of identity or location, such as an academic's office, by means of internet protocol (IP) recognition or login authentication. This technically facilitated experience quickly turns to technical frustration when any number of contributing, albeit 'behind the scenes', factors are altered. Contributing factors relevant here may include one's computer, location of computer, internet and

network connection, software currency and configuration. The contributing factors also have further relationships and consequences, in which a modification to one factor or aspect might conflict with another. The essential and increasing range of technical knowledge and skills required by academic staff shapes the ways in which academics engage with their work. Alternatively, an individual's response to the evolving characteristics and components of their work may condition the extent of technical knowledge and skills required. The evolving concepts, capacity and practices of academic libraries, as addenda to their functions existing hitherto, have the potential and capacity to complement the developing lifelong learning needs of academic staff.

## Literacies for Lifelong Learning

Twenty-first century citizens and library patrons require increasing amounts of a combination of generic and specific understanding and knowledge in order to tackle, work on and achieve their daily objectives. These *literacies* have the capacity to serve individuals so that they can continue to acquire, maintain and develop knowledge and understanding throughout their lifespan (ALA 2008a, b; ALIA 2002, 2006; Information for All Programme (IFAP) 2000; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) 2006). These literacies maybe employed to assist individuals to address the changing objectives and interests that society values and contribute to individuals' ability to cultivate, define and implement common and personal goals (ALA 2008a, b; ALIA 2002, 2006; IFAP 2000; IFLA 2006). There are spectrums of literacies, beginning with these requiring a foundation of generic skills (IFLA 2006; Skilbeck 2006), and progressing to highly specialised job-specific skills (Skilbeck 2006). The nature and requirements of these literacies are, for the most part, revealed throughout the continuum from cradle to grave. Twenty-first century citizens equipped with these literacies are able to adapt and interact with situations or circumstances as they arise. It is only with the individual powers and facility to employ and exploit these literacies that individuals have the capacity for independent lifelong learning.

ICT literacy, information literacy and digital literacy are increasingly emphasised as essential for functioning within the knowledge society (Dudfield 1999; IFLA 2006; Longworth 2003). These new and extending ranges of understanding and knowledge are assessed as being so integral to efficient functioning in daily life that literacies should be accounted for as constituting a basic human need and right for increasing the quality of life (Dudfield 1999; IFLA 2006; Longworth 2003). Of the three literacies identified (ICT literacy, information literacy and digital literacy), information literacy, and the acquiring of the understanding and knowledge of which it is comprised, is not technologically dependent on and is specifically a matter of learning (IFLA 2006). Information literacy presents the greatest versatility for offering opportunity, ownership and support to advocates and recipients.

In an analysis of the range of tools for information search and retrieval, *The digital information seeker: Findings from selected OCLC, RIN and JISC user behaviour projects* (Connaway et al. 2010) examined what they saw as the contradictory findings from the data gathered. Connaway et al. (2010) highlight the pronounced recurring theme that ‘information literacy has not necessarily improved with users’ digital literacy’ (p. 36). This notion is supported by data gathered from the *Researchers and Discovery Services: Behaviour, Perceptions and Needs* (RIN, November 2006), and *Information Behaviour of the Researcher of the Future* (CIBER/UCL, commissioned by BL and JISC, January 2008) – studies that uncovered the discontinuity between the confidence and self-estimates of researchers and their performance. This finding is supported by the study *User behaviour in resource discovery* (JISC, November 2009) that also found information literacy skills to be lacking and inconsistent with an individual’s digital literacy capacity. Moreover, the findings from the Connaway et al. (2010, p. 37) study confirm the view that ‘when the level of information literacy and domain knowledge increases, [commensurately there is an] increased use of quality resources’. Corresponding with these findings and the practice of knowledge transfer, *The researcher of the future* (Centre for Information Behaviour and the Evaluation of the Research 2008) ‘highlighted the self-taught nature of young people in search, as a contributing reason for their failures’ (Connaway et al. 2010, p. 42). A number of user behaviour studies have confirmed that there is an imbalance between self-reliance and the performance of library patrons with current levels of information access and provision. This underlines the need to give priority to matters of information literacy and complementary skills as factors that serve to counterbalance the changing nature and increasing volume of information.

As the number and complexity of information processes grow incrementally, there are to be found an individually unquantifiable and intangible breadth of literacies that varies from site, situation, occupation, geography, societal and cultural context, media and medium specifications. Learners are encouraged to take ownership of their learning to acquire and accrue literacies (IFLA 2006) and maintain their currency for application and extension as needed. Such is the inherent accumulative nature of literacies that IFLA emphasises that ‘information literacy and lifelong learning are of the same essence’ (2006, p. 5) and, what is more, that ‘information literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning’ (2006, p. 3). Learners equipped with these literacies can use them in isolation and in unison to filter, interpret and reveal deeper and more complex and sophisticated types and levels of meaning (IFAP 2000) when they are interacting with the abundance of available and accessible information.

## **Responding to the Changing Nature of Academic Work: Implications for Lifelong Learning**

The nature of academic work has changed dramatically in response to the varied and ongoing fluctuations of the ways and means academic work is undertaken in HEIs. Whilst all institutions have to face specific local challenges, the majority of

HEIs also simultaneously contend with a multitude of other factors common to them all. These overarching factors are shaped and informed by global knowledge economies, in which HEIs 'are more important than ever as mediums for a wide range of cross-border relationships and continuous global flows of people, information, knowledge, technologies, products and financial capital' (Marginson and van der Wende 2007, p. 5). The importance and range of the roles that HEIs occupy within global knowledge economies are indicative of the longitudinal impact upon the nature of academic work. Concurrently, HEI employees operate within a distinctive cultural context, emphasised by internal hierarchies and infrastructures, both official and unofficial, yet nonetheless significant. This context has a role in shaping and characterising the psycho-social responses by individuals to the changing nature of academic work (Haymes 2008).

HEI's have responded to the demands of their roles within global knowledge economies by assuming the techniques of styles and types of NPM. The competitive nature of NPM has given rise to and accentuated signs of tension and even discord between academic disciplines and faculties, and similarly between HEIs (Becher and Trowler 2001). It has been argued that the reforms occurring from their origin in NPM approaches and styles and in global knowledge economies, emergent from the effects of globalisation in the last two decades, 'have been the strongest single driver of change' (Marginson and van der Wende 2007, p. 8) upon HEIs.

The dynamic context of changes in the nature, activities and processes of HEIs within global knowledge economies has strongly impacted upon various aspects of academic work. In such a context the changing nature of academic work has been characterised and framed by a range of impacting factors, the most prominent of which relate to technology, management and leadership, human resources, and information and knowledge resources. A leading factor here is the impact of ICT on learning, teaching and research, which is multidimensional, with existing frameworks being enhanced or outmoded, and contemporary frameworks facilitated (Longworth 2003). ICT has had a profound impact on the nature of academic work and on the information and skills required by academics to function, particularly in the areas of research, knowledge transfer and teaching.

Compounding and complicating the challenging context of the evolution of technological capacity in academies and their resource bases is the acceptance of ICT facilitated opportunities by academics and their deference to an evolving concept of knowledge. Students' and educators' relationships to information are changing as the infrastructure of information develops in knowledge societies (Becher and Trowler 2001; Brophy 2005; Holmes 2006; Jordan 1998). Ubiquitous access and availability to information without the prior restrictions of time, space or geography have affected the interpersonal relationships necessary for mediating information, especially those between student and teacher; teacher and researcher; and student, teacher and researcher with the library.

The context in which HEIs operate is furthermore situated in an environment shaped by NPM styles. The NPM approach of compartmentalisation and specialisation of HEI functions and outcomes, which have encouraged a process of transition towards domain-based degrees, emphasised the micro-management of both staff

and students, and increased the volume and complexity of tasks while reducing resources and staffing levels (Becher and Trowler 2001; Brophy 2005; Longworth 2003; Marginson and van der Wende 2007).

Changes in student demographics, with increased numbers, mixed-mode delivery to on campus, online and distance students, thereby widening access to first-generation tertiary students, mature age, part- and full-time employed, continual education, rural and international students, has been accompanied by unfamiliar demands on all HEI staff. Additionally, the distinction of fee-paying and fee-supported students has impacted on the relationship dynamic between students and institutions, now often seen as 'paying customers' who are entitled to demand value and satisfaction (Becher and Trowler 2001; Brophy 2005; Jordan 1998). The evolving composition of the new student cohorts has an ongoing and variable impact on the response of HEIs and the changing nature of academic work.

The increased and varied demographics of students have likewise placed increased and varied demands on HEIs. Negotiations of staff and student ratios, the extent of flexible learning and semantic and ideological conflict between the concepts of e-learning and learning management systems are ongoing. In some circumstances, there have been imbalances between the demand for and delivery of student and staff support services, alongside the limited scope and 'dehumanisation' of these support services. These imbalances of demand and delivery have increased and rendered more complex the roles undertaken by staff that currently occupy interpersonal and interactive roles such as academic and library staff (Brabazon 2007; Brophy 2005; Candy 2000). The physical and electronic visibility of these staff have, in some instances, contributed to these staff members acting as surrogates for career guidance experts, counsellors, health advisors, legal advocates, parental and family figures and friendship.

The ageing work forces of which HEIs are now predominantly comprised now also have personal needs that sometimes conflict with the dynamism of the context of their employment (Haymes 2008). In the present and prospective academic context, academics need to have mastery of a combination of literacies in order to function effectively. Academics without these literacies will not only be less able to fulfil their responsibilities in research, knowledge transfer and teaching but, without these literacies, they will not be able to function in a modern academic library.

The roles of HEIs within global knowledge economies have impacted on the techniques of knowledge management applied to the academic work attributes of learning and teaching, research, administration and governance, and community engagement. Knowledge management often functions as a determinant on the conception, analysis and dissemination of knowledge, the effects of which are exerted upon academic and general staff, administrators, students, human expertise, information and technology (Cain et al. 2008; Marginson and van der Wende 2007).

There is now an assured expectation for academic staff to confidently, efficiently and practically incorporate new information technology within their teaching and learning environments, and this in turn gives point and prominence to the effects of the changing standards of information management. Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) describe this expectation as 'providing for flexible, "anytime-anywhere"

education ... of the effective university teacher' (p. 119). The changing expectations for the nature and production of academic work consequentially alter the processes of information retrieval and the instruction of literacies for academic staff. Instruction in and retention of literacies is at present impeded by the absence of a structure of complementary evolution to ICT.

For their students and colleagues university teachers and lecturers are role models for learning (Jordan 1998), and their reactions and attitudes inform students' experiences (Candy 2000; Hauxwell 2006) and the conclusions they draw from them. Their academic work requires discipline expertise refined over a lifetime of learning to be transposed across mediums (Brabazon 2007). The complex transpositions of an educator's expertise from conceptualisation to the varied formats anticipated for the purposes of learning and teaching might include verbal presentation (lecture, podcast), written presentation (report, journal article, book) and multimedia presentation (PowerPoint, website, blog, learning management system). Accordingly, to better integrate and benefit from evolving technologies, academic staff members are required to apply and promote an acceptance and appreciation for the available resources that support their learning and teaching roles (Beard et al. 2007).

The integration of learning strategies and learning technologies in HEIs by academic staff and the knowledge transfer to students has been reported as an area requiring improvement. The Connaway, Dickey and OCLC Research's analysis of the user behaviour study *Information behaviour of the researcher of the future* (2008) detailed the evidence and potential outcomes of 'teachers not passing literacy on to pupils' (Connaway et al. 2010, p. 37). Similarly, Moyle and Owen's (2009) Australian study of the role of learning technologies by HEI education students and graduates reported corresponding concerns for the knowledge transfer of learning technologies and learning strategies. This study collected data on the themes of access and use of technologies, online and computer games, social networking, learning styles and the educational value of technologies, support for learning with technologies, practicum and becoming a teacher, and the future expectations of participants. Findings from participants in this study included 'concerns about the ability of their university lecturers and their supervising teachers to assist them to learn how to include technologies into their teaching and learning while on their respective practica' (p. 34). Fifty percent of participants 'considered improvements in their lecturers' capabilities necessary' (Moyle and Owen 2009, p. 43).

Given the cultural shift of HEIs towards massification and the practices of managerialism and its forms of processing, provisions for lifelong learning are necessary and complementary for academics to stay relevant, up to date and employable within the evolving workplace environment (Longworth 2003). Lifelong learning can, at times, appear to be conceptually opposed to the HEI transition towards domain-based degrees and the compartmentalisation and rigid specialisation of HEI functions (Becher and Trowler 2001; Longworth 2003). This challenging environment of often competing and opposing demands is further compounded by the reshaping of HEI processes due to the implementation of technology. Technology has conveniently become the universal scapegoat for the causes and effects that in turn have

had adverse effects on learning, lifelong learning and teaching functions (Holmes 2006). Alongside these challenges, educators are increasingly aware of the new guiding roles they are required to occupy for twenty-first century learning. The actions and requirements of educational guides further emphasise educator's need to be informed and experienced of the provisions with which they are required to equip their students, in order to fulfil their personal, social and occupational aspirations (Chapman et al. 2006; Longworth 2003). Consideration by HEI employers and educators needs to be given to conceptions of them by students as learning role models and role models for lifelong learning when they are responding to the changing nature of academic work (Candy 2000). In this context, HEIs' and educators' values and views are relative to their students becoming lifelong learners themselves (Candy 2000). It is for this reason that writers such as Jordan (1998) support the rise and promotion of the values that become embedded when there is a sharing and demonstration of learning experiences in still regarded as delineating groups of academic staff, general staff and students.

## **Lifelong Learning and the Future of Libraries**

Lifelong learning has the ability to inspire personal, social and occupational aspirations. In practice, lifelong learning has the ability to realise these aspirations. Individual commitment to lifelong learning is essential for the cultivation of a learning society to complement the demands of the twenty-first century, characterised as a knowledge society. To achieve the aspirations of a highly skilled workforce, a democratic and inclusive society, and a more personally rewarding life, lifelong learning is also fundamental (Chapman and Aspin 1997). For individuals to achieve these aims of fulfilment, it is necessary to explore the interests and motivations, conceptions and expectations and ownership of learning opportunities that underpin successful and sustainable lifelong learning (Chapman et al. 2006; Longworth 2003; Skilbeck 2006). Comparatively, conditions that foster or inhibit learning require thoughtful examination and meaningful resolution (Skilbeck 2006).

A successful continuum of learning must be extensible, challenging the learner with demands ensuing from a breadth and depth of knowledge. The best design to achieve this requires the restructuring of access and personalised opportunities for lifelong learning (Bryce 2006; Longworth 2003; Skilbeck 2006). Increasingly evident is the importance of the set of changing relationships between work, study and the individual. These, in turn, have effects on work patterns and the issues of training, retraining, up-skilling and re-education (Longworth 2003; Rymarz 2006). It is imperative for learning providers and individuals to look beyond immediate and specific benefits when they start evaluating opportunities for continued learning because, predominantly, these opportunities contribute to both present and future successes (Aspin et al. 2001; Chapman et al. 2006; IFLA 2006; Longworth 2003; Skilbeck 2006). Lifelong learning also presents employers with shared benefits as

their employees become well positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities and attain their professional and personal goals (IFLA 2006).

Lifelong learning, libraries and librarians share an evolving and cyclical relationship in which the library has a role in offering learning opportunities to their employees and this, in turn, shapes the practice of libraries and their capacity to support the learning opportunities of library patrons. Mayfield and Mitchell (2009) emphasise the importance of the individual ownership of learning opportunities within library and information-based professions, citing the Australian Library and Information Association's (ALIA) statement to plan and implement 'lifelong learning that is unique to you' (ALIA 2008a, b cited in Mayfield and Mitchell 2009, p. 5). The importance of lifelong learning for library staff has strong significance and enhanced responsibility because the staff of public education libraries have evolving roles in the lifelong learning of library patrons for their personal and professional goals (Mayfield and Mitchell 2009). The capacity for libraries to be successful in this endeavour is heavily reliant upon the learning strategies of library staff. In the professional development statement of ALIA, this learning strategy is in part described as the individual's obligation to 'develop new skills, knowledge and confidence to ensure you have a successful and rewarding career' (ALIA 2008a).

## **Research into the Nexus of Libraries, Literacies and Lifelong Learning**

Research into the link between libraries, literacies and lifelong learning, explicitly addressing the requirements of academic staff within higher education, is currently limited. In order to address this area of need, research is currently underway (McPherson-Crowie 2008, 2010) to investigate the relationship between libraries, literacies and lifelong learning in higher education, particularly in the context of the changing nature of academic work. This research aims to examine and analyse the potential learning opportunities for literacies that might be supported by HEIs for the ongoing benefit of academic staff as they respond to the changing needs of their academic work. The research operates from the hypothesis that the response of libraries to the changing nature of academic work has sometimes been to modify, and in particular circumstances to cease to instruct, library patrons in the literacies necessary to their functioning effectively in the changing academic environment. In this respect academic libraries have sometimes limited their patrons' capacity for lifelong learning, instead of enabling and enhancing their acquisition of knowledge and increasing capacity. Moreover, it is suggested that the current notion of instruction in many academic libraries tends to rest on the notion of library literacy and, in doing so, is limited in its approach. In light of this it is proposed that library literacy and information literacy, whilst distinct, are complementary literacies and, in the higher education context, are better served when not operated in isolation.

The combination of the changing nature of academic work and the changing techniques of management within HEIs has transformed the library's provision of



information and services. In some instances of information literacy being adapted or abandoned, the replacement literacy has limited the library patron's competency to the specific library type, for example, to that of an academic library, or a specific library site or venue. The libraries that have adopted such limited responses appear to have replicated the compartmentalisation of the institution's infrastructure and to have applied this schema to their provision of learning opportunities that have accordingly shaped their outcomes.

Computer-based and disparate access to information has been highlighted in this research as dominant features of work in higher education at this time. To function effectively in this environment, the knowledge of a range of literacies is required. Among the breadth of literacies used to support the access, retrieval and use of information within HEIs, information literacy is a central ability. An information-literate person is both able to and has an understanding of the discrete, multifaceted and integrative qualities of information-based tasks. The increasingly fragmented nature of academic work has emphasised both a mode and means of completing tasks. This has the potential to re-arrange and re-orientate an academic's approach to interacting and exploiting with sources of information. The possible outcome of these changes in the emphasis of dominant modes and means of academic work might, I suggest, connote an underdeveloped complement of skills among academics. These underdeveloped complementary skills have the potential for extensive impact on the ways in which academics seek to adopt and enhance their skills. The ends to which the work requirements and present situation of academics and their opportunities and support for development within HEIs in turn shapes, directs and conditions the pathways and characteristics of their lifelong learning.

Across the lifespan of an academic, learning practices are adapted chiefly to match and fit in with the current practices, opportunities and support provided by the HEIs for their employment. Participants in this study elaborated upon the theme of fragmentation and the extent of its application and effects. Significantly, they argued that the rapid growth of HEIs has in some instances and to a varying scale dispersed the on-campus locations of academics, schools and faculties. The physical discontinuities between staff, schools and faculties have, in turn, obstructed or diminished the collegial atmosphere and the practices of learning exchange among staff and students. Successively, the processes of fragmentation have had repercussions on the comprehensive role of networks emphasised in the data as being integral to academics responding to the changing nature of their work. The evolving HEI work environment, under the aegis of current management approaches, is described as inconsistent with traditional and more formal modes of communication and reporting. Informing academics by the processes of newsletters, events and training, people have come to believe, is incompatible with the need and nature of the information required. In contrast, an academic's networks were highly regarded as conditions helpful to academics' issuing a timely response to the changing nature of academic work.

The networks of academics were described broadly in dual terms: one, that of 'campus networks', comprising of on-campus colleagues; and then, 'knowledge-based networks' that have been assembled over one's lifespan. An academic's

combined wider networks, which include campus and knowledge-based networks, were noted to be the greatest source and spring for lifelong learning opportunities. These opportunities were also emphasised in the way they were seen as extending beyond the parameters of institutional affiliation, scholarly discipline, geography and professional hierarchy. In addition, the networks of academics were regarded as being able to attend to the differing needs of diversified facets of academic work, including keeping up to date in order to maintain professional and scholarly relevance.

The role of networks was seen as demonstrating vital exchanges between successful modes, means and experiences, when academics are responding to the changing needs and nature of academic work. Collegiality is emphasised as mediating the pressures and managing the challenges of the reshaping of higher education by the practice of a managerial system of governance. These collegial peer relationships were extolled for saving time and affording academics the opportunity to better manage their limited time, as well as reducing the duration and effort required in keeping up to date with information. The preference for interviewees to redirect reclaimed time into *reflection*, *synthesis* and *fluency* of information was emphasised. This, in turn, influences the learning processes of academics, providing opportunities to move beyond the management of knowledge and make advances into its creation.

Data analysed in this research accentuated the factors of relationships, networks, interaction and proximity to peers as conducive to positive experiences and exchanges of information important to their lifelong learning in HEIs. In contrast, these factors were not expressed in the ways in which academics are reported to be engaging with academic libraries. Growing preference for electronic resources on the part of academics, chiefly accessed from outside of the physical confines of the library, is limiting the opportunities for libraries to pursue and elaborate its nature, activity and practice as a forum for lifelong learning, both tangibly and intangibly. The tangible and intangible practices of engaging and interacting within a library, in the company of sagacious peers, students and library staff, provide the opportunity for the unpredictable, the unexpected and for a range of learning exchanges. These experiences, interactions and observations have the capacity to activate underdeveloped traits and attributes and contribute to the fulfilment of individuals and groups over their lifespan.

## Conclusion

For academics seeking learning opportunities in several types of libraries across their lifespan, the need for different yet overarching types of understanding and skills will become prominent. The instantaneous character and accessibility of electronic library resources have made patrons much more aware of the unpredictability and decelerated pace of manual/human intervention in library services and systems. These experiences have shaped the ways that academics interact with libraries, in preference for accessing and utilising electronic systems and resources, many of which emphasise

the compartmentalisations they find in their parent institution. Library patrons with an overall understanding of the purpose and functions of the resources that encompass the information they aim for will come to have a better perspective with which they can respond to the breadth and range of possible outcomes across a series of academic and institutional demands. My research aims to identify the ways in which all academics might be better assisted in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to function in the new environment of higher education and learning and in particular to identify the role that libraries can play in supporting them in meeting this challenge. This chapter has sought to define and emphasise the links between academic staff, libraries, literacies and lifelong learning within forms and institutions of twenty-first century higher education. As outlined in the discussion, the significance of these linking relationships is the subject of interdisciplinary and international research. This chapter has demonstrated the need for, and the potential roles that libraries might adapt to, in supporting academics as lifelong learners for the mutual benefit of individuals and their employers.

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# Chapter 36

## Lifelong Learning: How Far Have We Come?

Ruth Dunkin

### Introduction

Lifelong learning has long been held as an ideal for self-development. The quest for wisdom, incorporating both formal and informal learning, runs through history from Socrates and Aristotle to modern theories in education and psychology. It is an ideal that has always been patchy in its take-up, however, and even scorned as the pastime of elites. Yet the advances of knowledge and technology together have driven the need and demand for continuous learning in ways we could not have foreseen. At the same time, the nature of what is meant by lifelong learning and the means by which it is undertaken have changed dramatically. Or have they?

In this chapter, I review the progress made in career-long learning, the ways in which it has changed in the decade since the first chapter was written and some of the forces underlying these changes. In particular, I argue that conceptions of education and training by different stakeholders shape the nature of both demand for and supply of career-long education. They also explain the continuing dissatisfaction with traditional offerings in career-related education and have given rise to new forms of provision and delivery. At the same time, those conceptions also limit further innovation.

### Some Definitions and Scope of This Chapter

The introduction to the first edition of this handbook identified three ways in which the term ‘lifelong learning’ has been used in recent decades (Aspin 2001). The first is in the traditional sense of personal development and growth; the second

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in terms of career-long development and the third in terms of ‘second chance’, or late, formal education as a means of improving the capacity of individuals to participate socially and economically. In these three is recognition of a mix of learned formal knowledge and developed ways of thinking and analysis, communication and calculation. Such skills are seen as a prerequisite for a person’s success in life, in all of their different roles. Depending on circumstances, all forms of lifelong learning can therefore contribute to an individual’s development over their lifetime.

Yet policy focus in recent decades has very much been centred on skills and attributes needed for work roles, whether those are acquired through formal schooling or in post-school experiences. Indeed, the current policy priority for early childhood development and preschool education is often justified in terms of enhancing the chances of later educational achievement *for the purposes of* improving employability. This focus has clearly strengthened the utilitarian bent of education, but also reflects our greater understanding of the interrelationship between education, health and employment and the importance of these three to an individual’s capacity to participate fully economically and socially. Without a job, people’s lives are diminished (Cummins 2007).

How does the policy emphasis on employability skills translate? There is still much debate about whether the distinctions between vocational and general education are meaningful. Those who dispute the distinction as artificial point to useful employment outcomes from education termed ‘general’ (Cumming 1996). In this they capture an essential point: that employability is as dependent on a variety of personal attributes – communication, flexibility, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving – that are valued by employers as much, if not more, than subject-specific knowledge (Bowden and Marton 1998).

Researchers have long been interested in the outcomes of education as it relates to work and work roles – the competencies that people acquire that are relevant to undertaking particular roles and work. However in their argument for ‘beyond competency’, Bowden and Marton argue for education and training that leads to the development of the competent professional, who with increasing knowledge and experience becomes more sophisticated in their capacity to achieve the outcomes, as opposed to the processes, of their particular role (Bowden and Marton 1998). In this they believe that learning is about changing the way a phenomenon is seen and understood and that greater knowledge and skills to deal with that phenomenon are gained through variation. As learners are better able to discern the different features of the phenomenon through being able to see the differences between situations in which they encounter it, they become more knowledgeable and experienced in their judgements about it.

In this chapter, I focus on that element of lifelong learning that is *career-long* learning but recognise that career-long education and training is as much about developing and refining personal attributes in the role of the professional as it is about specific knowledge and skills. It is the ideal of the competent professional that is of interest and the extent to which this has been achieved through the growth in post-initial development that has characterised this past decade.

## **Demand for Career-Long Education**

### *Demand from Whom? Who Is the Consumer?*

The demand for education that will support employment-related skills education in Australia has been strong and has affected all educational sectors. External groups, most notably employer organisations and governments, press schools, universities and TAFE colleges to be held accountable for the quantity and quality of their 'product'.

Implicit in such pressure are both the recognition that people's knowledge, skills and flexibility are vital to the success of developed economies *and* the conception of education as something that is done to people, through which they gain relevant information, skills and attributes. Implicit too is the assumption that employers are the customers of educational institutions rather than the students – the latter are merely the product.

The demands by employers are often conflicting. On the one hand, they want job-ready graduates who can begin productive work immediately. Their primary concern is filling entry-level jobs, and most effort goes into specifying needs at this level. On the other hand, employers experience difficulty in finding suitable people to fill roles at the middle level or people who can adapt to different circumstances or from those applying when they started some 5 years previously. At that point, they want different technical skills, as technology moves on, or different capacities, such as project management or leadership skills and most importantly, an underlying flexibility and resilience. Increasingly, they want a mix of short-term technical skills and longer-term attributes that foster flexibility and leadership. Some invest in these through on-the-job training; others do not. Ironically, the more pressure that those external to the university apply for vocationally relevant education, as measured by employment rates and vacancy rates, the more specific and the more short-term and less flexible is likely to be the response.

Governments too share a concern for employability and employment. However, their objectives do not mirror those of employers totally. They seek to maximise employment rates and minimise labour shortages. This includes ensuring that there are enough suitably trained people to fill jobs and at the same time ensuring that there are enough jobs for people seeking employment. Pressure points occur for young people, especially those with low educational achievement levels and for older people as a result of structural changes in the economy or a major technology shift. The lower the educational achievement level, the lower is the chance of employment. The longer the period of unemployment, the more likely is it that a person will remain unemployed and welfare dependent. This has long-term implications for entrenched cycles of disadvantage; education is therefore seen as key to breaking the cycle or preventing its emergence.

The government's policy focus in education and training, therefore, is strongly influenced by the need for an effective labour market and well-performing economy. But they see a limit to the public effort and resource to be made available to



individuals and employers. Education and training are seen to confer private benefits to individuals and to employers, as well as the public benefits flowing from an effective labour market. They therefore expect that individuals and employers will share the investment in education and training, particularly for ongoing education and training. Indeed, it is only in the past 5 years or so that there has been an acknowledgement of any public benefit flowing from the reskilling of older workers faced with retrenchment and/or redundancy. Thus, while lifelong learning might be in rhetorical terms an aim of government, it is not necessarily one to which they commit public resource. 'Vocationally relevant' therefore is not synonymous with life-long learning, or even career-long learning.

The conception of education that underlies the government focus is similar to that of employers, described above. Based in personal experiences and recollections of how they learned themselves, they do not have sophisticated understandings of how people learn or how attributes are developed. This leads to a common perception of knowledge and technique being poured into a student and skills developing through practice or work experience.

Unlike employers and governments, students see themselves very much as the consumers of education, whose preferences should guide the offerings. Arguing that they are key participants in the process, they point to the large fees they pay and to the significant time, effort and foregone income they devote to the process.

As consumers, however, their concern too is about a job after graduation. They need a guarantee of immediate return to justify their debt and at the same time accommodate other obligations, like housing. They therefore join the clamour for near-term vocationally relevant education. Based on their experience of the immediacy of just-in-time web-based products and services, they will return as and when they need any further skills and knowledge.

Unlike employers and governments whose experiences of education are often dated, students' conceptions of education are more varied. Some share the view above that education is something to which they are subjected – and some of their learning experiences might well have engendered this view – and that learning is primarily about reproducing (increasing one's stock of knowledge; memorising and reproducing, and applying). Others see learning as primarily seeking meaning. This is about learning as understanding; seeing something in a different way or changing as a person (Bowden and Marton 1998). Their motives and differences in view of what education is will then drive the way in which they seek further education and training.

## **The Nature of the Need: The Technology Imperative**

The years since 1945 have seen dramatic changes in the nature and form of work. This has been driven by major technological advances and enormous growth in the bodies of knowledge about humans and their environment; the changing patterns of economic activity globally and the rising expectations of people as their wealth, education, health and leisure time have risen.

Formal research effort – in all areas of endeavour – has expanded and grown dramatically in the years since 1945. Investment in all forms of research and development within the public, university and private sectors has exploded, leading to an exponential increase in new knowledge. In its wake have come new technologies and applications, often in quite different settings and ways than originally envisaged. A quick review of current research expenditures and the number of people engaged in research and development suggest this pace of discovery and development will continue unabated (Leadbetter 2000).

Demographic and economic changes have accompanied and partly been driven by the knowledge and technological explosion. Life expectancy has risen significantly in most developed countries in the past 30 years. Per capita income has risen. Educational levels have risen. The nature of economies and employment has changed, with growing globalisation and specialisation, and service industries replacing traditional forms of economic activity in developed economies.

No longer do we even try to project either the growth of new knowledge and technologies or what future jobs will be. Knowledge has been simultaneously privatised and democratised. Just as intellectual property laws have sought to protect for private use the development of privately funded knowledge, so too have we seen the expansion of the Internet and access to vast information and data banks and free software. This has meant that people's capacity and preferences for access to information have changed significantly, in turn modifying their relationships with traditional roles such as teachers, doctors and other advisors who historically were 'the keepers of the knowledge'.

People's lives are characterised by more distinct and longer periods – infancy and preschool; childhood and school; the teenage years and school; young adulthood, university and/or tertiary training, part-time work or national service; adulthood and work and retirement and old age. Not only do these periods reflect the longer periods of formal education most pursue in developed economies, but also the changes to work environments and the very nature of work. These have led to different patterns of work and leisure time and the convergence between the two, changes in discretionary income and the growing independence of large proportions of the population.

All these changes have implications for the need and nature of the information and tools people use to conduct their personal and work lives. In the next section, I consider the way in which individuals recognise and address these needs.

## How Do We Recognise the Need?

### *Personal Theories as the Basis of Action<sup>1</sup>*

The process of learning is one that changes the knowledge, skills, values and world-views of individuals. It affects the way we think and behave and it occurs in many

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<sup>1</sup> See sense-making literature (e.g. Senge 1992; Kelly 1991; Argyris 1990).

settings, including the home, school, work and the community and through both formal and informal learning experiences. Through this agglomerating process, people build up a suite of (interconnected) theories about how the world works, including the worlds of work and education. How people perceive a situation – what they notice about it, what is familiar about it, their relationship to it – will determine how they respond to it. People act and make judgements on the basis of these personal theories.

By adulthood, these theories guide how a person will undertake their work, relate to others and their environment and conduct themselves politically and socially (Kelly 1991). When these theories, or some part thereof, fail to explain or provide a satisfactory basis for work and life, a person will seek new information or ways of viewing the work.

### *The Gaps in Theories: Knowledge and Skills*

When considering the pace of advancement of knowledge and technological innovation, the need for continual learning is evident. This may take the form of learning how to operate new devices within the household – the latest media or Internet-based entertainment, stoves, washers and cars – or within the workplace. Whether people work in trades or in ‘knowledge-based’ professional services, technological and knowledge developments are dramatically changing the content or ways in which their work must be performed. To not engage with this new content or ways of working is to risk obsolescence, to risk having a ‘personal theory’ that no longer works.

A second prompt for people looking for new knowledge or skills can be a change, or potential change, of role. The focus on job-ready skills assumes a career-entry role. Yet within 5 years, people typically are moving into supervisory roles or starting their own businesses. Their personal theories of accumulated knowledge, skill and experience are unlikely to prepare them for this change as that experience and learning has tended to be situation and role-specific. Prompted then by a gap in the theory or by observation of what is required to achieve the next role, they will look to education and training to close the gaps.

A third prompt combines the two previous ones. As technology changes, it can be disruptive in the way work is both organised and performed. This can mean substantial changes to the ways in which roles are conceived and undertaken. In contemplating this kind of change, a person must master new technologies and understand how it relates both to the outcome sought and to their work. To illustrate, health professionals currently face significant change in the way their work is performed, their traditional working relationships (with both other professionals and their patients) as a result of changes in health needs, technologies that enable different patterns and places of treatment and governments’ desire for structural reforms. Such professionals need both to learn new techniques *and* to understand their significance and potential for new ways of working and achieving their goal, that is, improving the health of their patients.

## ***How These Gaps Should Be Filled: Conceptions of Education***

As people age, their capacity and interest in learning, or changing the way in which they view the world, or parts of it, reduces (Weick 1995). Yet, the need to constantly refresh personal theories for action is strong as they seek to survive, and thrive, in everyday life and in the job market. As noted above, however, people will have formed a ‘theory’ about what education is, how it should be pursued and what they need, in order to meet the gap in their failed theory (Marton and Booth 1997). As they confront the need to refresh and update continuously in the face of this tsunami of new knowledge and new technologies, they will have a strong view about what to learn and how to learn it.

These personal theories, or conceptions of education, will influence what they learn and their approaches to learning. This is exemplified in the distinction made between surface learning and deep learning (Bowden and Marton 1998). The first limits the learner to learning how to apply a new formula or technique to a problem, as originally conceived. The second assists the learner to see the problem in different ways and to focus on the outcome sought. This may involve the application of a new formula or technology or technique – or it might not.

When applying these concepts to the presenting need, both approaches might seem appropriate. If the challenge is to understand new technologies and how they replace existing techniques for undertaking a work task, then the first might be appropriate. If however the person is being asked to undertake new roles and to deepen their professional standing, then being able to broaden their understanding of the phenomenon and the potential ways to address it may be more appropriate.

## **Accommodating the Need**

### ***Competing Priorities***

At every life-stage, people have a variety of activities and pastimes they like or have to do. These activities compete for people’s time and attention. For example, during the school years, formal study competes with sport, hobbies and outdoor pursuits, family chores and even part-time work. At university and the early adult years study, social activities and starting a career jostle for time with education. And in the mid-adult years, the demands of career and work compete with family development and building a home. Financial pressures similarly wax and wane through the stages. As retirement begins, people may have the luxury of choosing between travel and grandchildren, volunteering or continuing part-time work. It is also in this latter time, however, a period that is currently more extended than in any other era, that pursuit of ‘long-put-off’ interests and learning also occurs. As an older friend remarked: *never have I been so well read and informed than now, when I am no longer required to make serious decisions.* The implication is that a broad reading

and time to reflect on new information, its significance and relationship to a specific situation engenders better decision-making.

Thus, the capacity for individuals to pursue the development of self in an orderly and reflective way, let alone keeping abreast of the rapidly expanding bodies of knowledge and technological developments can be highly constrained, depending on the urgency with which other priorities intrude. At its most pressing are those years when the initial formal education has been completed, a career launched, families started and effort must be given to the feeding, housing and education of that family.

Yet, it is also in these years that the need for individuals to continue their professional or technical development is strong. Once, other priorities could take precedence, with people confident in the 'shelf-life' of their acquired education. They could concentrate on reaping the financial and personal returns of that initial investment. Bodies of knowledge, technologies and technique changed relatively slowly.

No more. Individuals no longer have the luxury of sequentially pursuing education, career and family. The rapid changes in knowledge and technology mean they must pursue these simultaneously or risk losing the very employability skills upon which the support of family depends. But do they, in the absence of a compelling reason to do so?

## **Getting Attention: The Role of Accreditation**

As suggested above, one such compelling reason might be the failure of a personal theory for action, where existing knowledge or skills are inadequate to deal with work requirements or to meet career aspirations. Individuals who experience this gap will pursue education and/or training to fill the gap.

Most recently, another compelling reason has appeared. Recognising the pace of change in knowledge development and technologies, most professional bodies that accredit people for professional practice now require continuing professional development for ongoing accreditation. The model of upfront investment in formal education and training yielding career-long benefits is being supplemented by the need for continual update. The adoption of near-universal compulsory professional development for professional and para-professionals has changed the equation and created the compelling reason.

As noted above, both accreditation bodies and potential learners will approach the above task with a view about what they need and how it should or can be met.

## **The Supply of Career-Long Learning**

The requirement for continuing professional development has cemented the demand for career-long development. It would appear a great opportunity for tertiary institutions faced with greater competition, constrained funding and governments demanding more for less.

Yet as Alan Lindsay and I identified 10 years ago (Dunkin and Lindsay 2001), the institutional barriers to taking up this challenge have been considerable. They are predominantly cultural but sometimes philosophical. Even within a dual-sector university such as RMIT, which provides vocational education from within both university and TAFE settings, the debate about the purpose and form of education described in the introduction to this handbook prevails.

For academics in universities, pressures to view their students as consumers have largely been resisted. Partly a refusal to acknowledge new power relationships and change in the role of knowledge expert as the knowledge industry restructures and partly a refusal to view education as a product or service, many academics stick to their conceptions of education and their traditional role.

Notwithstanding this resistance, however, the need to become more vocationally relevant has been heeded. Some continue with the traditional perspective that ‘transfers’ knowledge and technical skills from teacher to student. Others, however, are left with the dilemma of trying to understand, in the context of the initial degree, whether they are expected to equip people for work by giving them specific skills for a job on graduation or a set of knowledge and competencies that will allow them to adapt to an uncertain future (Bowden and Marton 1998)? Although many are happy to teach the known, they also worry about the not-yet-known or the not-yet-developed technology or technique and how what remains the major investment in formal education will prepare for this. Is it about surface learning or deep learning?

Traditional providers have been slow or awkward in their responses to the increased demand for post-initial training. Whether the continuing tendency to present ongoing education offerings in formal award-based structures is driven by a philosophical view of education or just a view that ‘this is the way we do things’ is debatable. Those structures have continued to dominate institutional thinking, even as executive development and short courses have developed in parallel. Convergence has occurred as institutions have, voluntarily or through external pressure, assigned formal credit for the short programs within longer award programs, in the belief that portability and ready recognition would be important in gaining the maximum employability benefit from such training. There was also a strong desire by both individuals and funders to ensure that education and training was not duplicated.

The attempts to change both the nature of the offerings and the ways in which educational experiences are designed and implemented are persistent, but slow. Most progress has been made in designing more flexible forms of delivery and interaction; the use of Internet-based exchanges and provision of information together with ‘burst mode’ attendances recognise the need of most students for flexibility in both time and place of study. However, these have tended to be introduced within traditional teaching structures (Aceto 2010).

There is no doubt that the demand for formal postgraduate education and post-initial vocational training has been met by an increase in supply by traditional providers. However, the explosion of private providers who provide alternative programs suggests that there is a thirst for alternative forms of post-initial training and

ongoing professional development from individuals and employer organisations alike. The largest MBA program in Australia, for example, was offered by a professional association rather than a university. Not only did it cater for a dispersed workforce, but also provided a safe route from a familiar discipline base and linked to other professional updates.

The professional associations or their training arms are some of the most competitively aggressive of private providers. Having specified the need for continuing professional development (CPD), they outline how these obligations can be met and then offer programs that meet these specifications. Leaving aside whether there are potential conflicts of interest inherent in which regulator is also a provider, what is clear is that their mindsets are different from those of traditional providers.

Traditional providers often seek to mould the demand in the market to their preferred business and operating models, bound by a strong sense of educational philosophy, conceptions of what education is or just by a failure of imagination. In this, they either fail to listen to their potential learners or to dissuade the latter from their approach.

New providers on the other hand conceive the specifications differently and thus construct their business models and missions. Theirs is not the mission of personal development, but rather professional development, assuming still that professional and the personal can be separated, at least for the purposes of this important task of knowledge and skill update. This often translates into very different views about the time that the learner should be engaged in the process.

It is also the case that the new providers themselves are not homogeneous. For example, the professional associations in specifying their requirements for professional development do so in various categories – external, in-house and personal. They also often specify, as they do for initial training, the means to be used in ‘delivering’ education. Often conservative in their own ideas and views about what represents effective education, various associations have limited the amount of education to be provided online or through simulation techniques. In accrediting programs they will stipulate appropriate levels of inputs, based on their views of past mixes of inputs. In doing this, they limit the innovation possible and ignore emerging educational research findings.

In summary, in the decade since last considering the markets for career-long education and training, we have seen a significant reinforcement of the demand for such training through the near-universal adoption of compulsory professional development as a condition of continued accreditation and rights to practice. In terms of supply, although traditional providers have significantly expanded their offerings and varied their ‘delivery’ modes, the prevailing preoccupation remains with the initial education and training experience and the use of formal award structures. Although private providers have expanded in the area significantly, driven by preparedness to better match potential learners’ demands and expectations, they too are limited in their capacity to innovate by the conceptions of education and training/professional development embodied in the professional associations’ specifications.

## The Case Study: The Medical Profession<sup>2</sup>

The medical profession is but one of many professions in which ongoing professional development has become compulsory. The advances in medical science, development of new technologies and devices mean that, even with the advanced level of specialisation that characterises this profession, the task of keeping abreast of new developments both in knowledge and clinical practice is enormous. Yet the consequences of failing to do so as a profession mean higher costs, ineffective practices and even higher levels of injury and death than otherwise might occur. The stakes are high for both professionals and their patients.

Formal medical education begins with an initial degree. Entry into this degree typically requires some of the highest scores at university entrance and so caps a long and arduous school education. The degree takes 4–5 years and is followed by between 2 and 3 years ‘residency’. This residency is a further period of clinical training, where graduates are exposed to various clinical settings under supervision. During this period, they will gain their initial accreditation to practice from the Medical Registration Boards and then start the training process to specialise. This takes a further 2–3 years depending on the specialisation. Thus, by the stage that the graduate is fully accredited to practice in their chosen specialisation, they have completed between 7 and 10 years of training and are in their mid- to late 20s. Salaries that pertain to the residency period can be as little as \$50–60,000 p.a. and working weeks typically long. Their counterparts in other professions, such as accountancy, after a good 4-year degree, may earn more and work fewer hours.

Thus, by the time that medical graduates begin their non-training career, they have undergone a long and costly investment in formal education and training and have foregone many pursuits and asset building that others have begun. In terms of competing priorities, then it is clear that they are likely to be looking for other than more professional development, including the practice that will enable them to start to earn the returns on their educational investment. It is also unexpected therefore that they will be seeking time-efficient means of undergoing any compulsory development.

How does the professional development program work, and is it sufficient to cope with the enormous advance in new knowledge and its application? Typically, the requirement for ongoing development is imposed by the Australian Medical Colleges that accredits the practitioner. A total of 20 points worth of development is required annually if accreditation is not to lapse. These 20 points may be made up from a range of activities including externally offered short courses (or award programs); clinical practice; programs provided by the employing organisation and personal development activities, including teaching and research. A minimum number of points (usually half) must be earned through externally provided activities, which in turn must be accredited by the college as suitable.

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<sup>2</sup>This section draws on interviews with Assoc Prof. Simon Willcock and Prof. Peter Brooks. They bear no responsibility for any misunderstandings contained herein.



Conferences have long been a means by which medical professionals have sought to update their knowledge and maintain professional networks. These continue and are often formally recognised within the CPD point system. Similarly, many clinicians have sought to maintain their connection with public practice and teaching hospitals because they offer the opportunity to discuss and learn about from their own and other's experiences. These peer-learning experiences are difficult to capture and formalise for the purposes of 'assessment' but have been an important path to professional development in the past. Ironically, management and resourcing changes within public hospitals in the past decade have led to a decline in the popularity, and therefore effectiveness, of this pathway.

Although compulsory professional development has been in place for some time now, as the profession prepares for a move to national registration and accreditation, there is insufficient agreement to establish immediately the program requirements. Most of the debate centres on content and format, but also what are the core competencies necessary for ongoing accreditation? For example, is computer literacy one of these? Behind this last point lies recognition, or not, of the fundamental changes to the practice and organisation of medicine that might (or should) develop enabled by new technologies and changing treatment needs.

The postgraduate programs offered by universities are largely irrelevant to the process of professional development. Promoted by experts enthusiastic about their own area of expertise, they often appeal to small cohorts of learners, are highly specialised and expensive, both in terms of time and money. Usually they survive in the market for a few years and then interest is insufficient to warrant continuation. Modularised master's degrees comprising offerings from various specialisations might have a stronger chance of surviving, or degrees that allow learners to consider how their practice links to broader policy issues, such as found in public health programs. Those learners that do seek to undertake course-based postgraduate study tend to be people who have been in practice for 10 years and are seeking to pursue a particular interest aroused through practice or to reflect on their own practice and where it fits within a system of health. Thus, the typical career trajectory is 7–10 years of initial and specialist training, followed by 10 years of building a practice and deepening clinical expertise, during which period the compulsory requirement for professional development applies.

The drive to pursue professional development also arises from the arrangements for medical indemnity insurance. For those who are the subject of frequent claims or whose professional development record is inadequate, training is obligatory. However, by promoting the doctrine of open disclosure insurers and supportive colleges seek to encourage an ethos of continual learning and practice improvement. Since the number of frequent claims respondents represents a small proportion of the total number of registered medical professionals, most appear to heed the call.

Is the CPD program sufficient? The answer is that it is unlikely to be sufficient in light of the enormity of the task and recognising that most clinicians are in their own businesses and must keep abreast of new medical knowledge and clinical practices *and* acquire and refresh business-related skills and knowledge. The best practice clinical guidelines are continually being updated; government regulation changes frequently and new technologies and devices are constantly available.

For this reason, there is significant interest in providing greater support to clinicians through expert knowledge systems and guidance through clinical practice guides provided through the relevant colleges. It is also the case that in Australia, however, the move to restructure the knowledge management systems through e-health has been patchy and unsystematic. Expert systems that synthesise knowledge and best practice, together with electronic health records, accessible through small and mobile devices, even i-phones, could significantly reduce the estimated 25% of professionals' time now spent in searching for the relevant patient or disease-specific information. They will not, however, replace the judgements that professionals will make or the relationships integral to treating patients competently and holistically.

The other issue is the way in which training for professional development or refreshing existing skills can be undertaken. Increasingly, there are software packages available that can reliably and cost-effectively replace current training modes. One example is CPR, a skill currently needing to be refreshed for many health professionals and para-professionals annually. Free simulation software is available, downloadable on a mobile device, and thus available at any time and place, could replace the current expensive and time-consuming training programs. Such replacement faces many hurdles, but primarily (assuming it is effective) ones of vested interests and preconceptions of effectiveness.

Through this case study, I have attempted to demonstrate the themes that have been put earlier in the chapter, from the time-poor professional to the effect of continuing professional development in terms of establishing it as a priority for individuals, through to the way in which provision is offered. The next section draws these together.

## Discussion and Conclusion

There has been a significant increase in the amount of activity being offered and taken up in the name of career-long education and training in the past decade.

Many of the offerings are provided through new providers, including professional bodies. They have claimed market share from traditional providers on the basis that they provide educational experiences that most match the requirements in terms of content and flexible delivery of potential learners. The process by which points are awarded against the annual requirement means that formal awards are less important for recognition than previously expected, although credit transfer arrangements are in place for some programs. Most important, there is variety and choice in the way in which points can be earned, albeit within categories, both in the way in which engagement can occur and content. This means the capacity of individuals to blend to specific interests and work schedules is greater than those previously existing.

Yet professional bodies themselves are relatively conservative in changing their view about how development must be offered and often take an input-based approach to considering quality. Hence, there are limits to the amount of development that can be taken remotely or through e-learning channels.

Learners have reprioritised their need for ongoing professional development as a result of the explosion of knowledge and new technologies and, importantly, the compulsory requirement for such development as part of retaining their accreditation to practice. In the case of the medical profession, this is reinforced by access to indemnity insurance. Without evidence of appropriate professional development, and particularly where there is a history of successful claims, there is a strong obligation to improve practice through education and training.

The continued provision of specialist postgraduate programs reflects more the desire of academics to offer them rather than demand for them. Nonetheless, there are some that meet the desire of some individuals to reflect on their professional experience and to seek improvement in their practice as a result of experiencing new ways of seeing the phenomenon with which they are concerned.

Different ways of understanding the need for ongoing education and how education and learning occurs underlies both the nature of much of the demand for ongoing professional development and the offerings of providers. Most would not seek nor access programs that result in deep learning, or need to.

As professionals advance through their career and reflect on their experiences, they come to master their profession. The ideal of the reflective practitioner has been held up as the goal for decades and been the subject of research among educationalists about how that ideal might be engendered (Schon 1987). This need for reflection is particularly important for those professionals who confront radical change in the way in which their work outcomes can be achieved and the way in which their work will be structured and organised. If they want to remain competent professionals, they need access to learning experiences, whether formal or informal, in which they can rethink their role and its objectives and understand how new technologies, advances in knowledge or structural reforms will affect how they go about it.

E-learning promised much in terms of providing working adults with accessible and flexible means of professional development. While some progress has been made, the full potential has yet to be realised as most educators and their accrediting bodies continue to abide by traditional teaching structures. The rise of electronic social and professional networking for collaborative informal information sharing and discussion, however, is enabling learning and reflection often missing from programs designed as 'knowledge transfer'. Ultimately, we might expect the two streams of interaction to converge and provide the prompt to educational innovation (Aceto 2010). The release of powerful personal web-accessing devices can only accelerate such convergence and with generational change, all providers and their accrediting bodies will adapt.

The reflective practitioner remains the ideal and is necessary if professionals are to deal with and make sense of the barrage of change with which they are confronted. In that sense, as they participate in developmental programs that result in their making sense of the changes and their practice within it, they participate in the traditional conception of lifelong learning reflected in the following quotation:

The unexamined life is not worth living (Socrates, Plato, *Apology* 38a)

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# Chapter 37

## Acquiring Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Across a Lifetime by Transferring to One's Own Practice

Sandra R. Daffron, Iris Metzgen-Ohlswager, Shari Skinner,  
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### Introduction

The issue of lifelong learning for professionals is of interest from boardrooms to factories to the halls of higher learning. Billions of dollars are spent annually for continuing professional education. Add to the basic cost the additional funding for maintenance training and more training to stay competitive in the global market and organizations are looking at large investments for educating their employees. The American Society for Training & Development's (ASTD) Trend Report of 2006 estimates that organizations spend \$190 billion annually on workplace learning. When all costs, direct and indirect, are combined, the range goes even higher. Management expectations from training and education programs are high.

However, research in the field estimates transfer of learning – that is, the extent to which training participants actually use the newly learned knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) – when they return to the work environment to be only about 10% (Awoniyi et al. 2002, p. 25). Return on investment (ROI) becomes a huge problem for all stakeholders. The pressure on the four key stakeholders in the training process – those being the program designer, the trainer, the trainee, and management – to transfer knowledge, skills, and abilities to the workplace is enormous. Somehow, these stakeholders must create praxis; in other words, put newly gained skills, knowledge, and abilities into practice. The speed and agility to transfer KSA to change and build new ideas and products drives the success of the organization. Merriam and Leahy (2005), in their review of the literature on learning transfer, tell us that much attention is now focused on the factors that hinder or help transfer to practice.

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As organizations struggle to get the largest amount of ROI for their training dollar, they give the responsibility to program designers and trainers. Not surprisingly, designers and trainers concern themselves with how to make the learning situation optimal and to find ways to make the learning interactive and targeted to the learner. But is this enough? Questions arise: What does it take to make learning transfer successfully? How can transfer be built into training plans? What are the roles of all the stakeholders in the transfer process? How do we plan this for a lifetime of learning? This chapter presents a model for transfer of learning, the model, the “Successful Transfer of Learning Model,” provides a context that program developers, trainers, organizations, and the trainees themselves can establish to enable learning transfer. Some controllable positive variables that affect learning transfer outcome are presented within the context of several groups of professionals. The “Successful Transfer of Learning Model” is interactive and integrates these variables into successful transfer. (Daffron and North 2011).

Public safety organizations (firefighters and police officers) protect and keep communities safe. To be able to do this effectively, the firefighters and police officers need basic training and then continuing education throughout their careers. This means the chief of the station directs the training choices for all employees and has to keep the training as recent and updated as possible. This is not easy with shrinking budgets and expanding threats to safety. In a study of firefighters and police officers, we found the station chiefs have four main challenges (Daffron et al. 2008).

- To make sure information is learned and then used effectively
- To provide training to a group that has various levels of skills, knowledge, and experiences, and, in spite of the various levels, the training must be meaningful and useful
- To understand what changes should result from the training experiences of the various personnel and to adjust the status quo as a result
- To help the trainee find ways to use the new information on the job

In the case studies we conducted of these two groups, change rarely came about because of training and, more often than not, the chief did not have a plan for transfer of information. Personnel attending the training went back to the station with few changes to their work as a result of the training. This raises questions: How can the trainer present new concepts to the trainees so they will all learn, in spite of being at differing skill levels? What is the responsibility of the station chief to help with the transfer process? What role should management play in this process? Should the trainee be primed before the training to return to the station and implement the new skills and share with others at the station? Is immediate change or use of concepts from training expected?

Merriam and Leahy’s (2005) review of the literature on transfer of learning suggests a need for further study of the knowledge bases of professionals, a study of the context of learning for professionals, and a need to form a perspective of how the professional transfers information to practice. Caffarella (2002)

and Merriam and Leahy (2005) conclude that it is the interplay among the variables in the learning process that determines whether learning is transferred and that it is critical for program planners to understand their role in the process of bringing about transfer.

In one case study of credit union employees, those surveyed attended a Development Education program in Australia for developing educational programs about credit unions. Those in attendance had applied to participate in the program, and motivation was extremely high. Sessions provided a wide variety of techniques with the emphasis on how to educate fellow credit union employees, members, and the community on credit unions as an effective foundational tool in developing nations and at home. Attendees were encouraged to develop a network with others in the program. The collaborative learning process resulted in a high transfer of learning. This was due to efforts made by the program planners and management to develop a strong network of support: trainee inducement and interactive learning design. Each trainee developed a personal project plan that they would finish within 1 year after the completion of the training.

Respondents to the survey tell us they continued to stay in contact with the trainers and fellow trainees for a period of time after the program. All of the respondents said it had been a positive learning experience, and the skills and knowledge acquired were relevant to their jobs. Specifics coming from the program that were cited were confidence building, international knowledge, gaining a global view and an altruistic feeling.

By comparison, a recent survey of participants from an adult education research conference reported 5 months after the conference that it was well planned, they were highly motivated to attend the conference, and they all felt the conference was a positive learning experience. They reported finding value in the conference by gaining new information from the sessions and by increasing their network with new colleagues and new research. The difference in the two conferences, however, comes from the lack of expectation to use the information and share the information with peers. In addition, there was no follow-up after the conference to continue dialogues or learning. Around half of the respondents said they did not change their work as a result of the conference, although they received new ideas and used some of the papers from the conference for their own research. Almost all participants said they were encouraged to participate in the conference by their administrators, but there was no encouragement to incorporate new ideas into their work or to report ideas or research to their colleagues when they returned. There were no barriers to implementation reported. As the authors considered their own professional development and have attended these same adult education research conferences, the result would be the same, no encouragement to transfer the information to practice or follow up after the conference.

Some professional groups in our studies were able to measure transfer of learning and build upon knowledge presented in the setting of continuing professional education, while others failed to transfer. Through the study of these groups, a model was developed to pull together the research and create variables during three phases: the planning of continuing education programs, the presentation of the

training, and the professional's application of the training after returning to the work setting. The model was developed from the research on transfer of learning and from interviews with 498 professionals from 17 groups that included Palestinian law professors, software company professionals, state court judges, appellate staff attorneys, TESOL teachers, K-12 classroom teachers, dietitians, physicians, MBA students, community volunteers, two groups of adult education graduate students, police officers, government welfare employees, credit union development educators, and firefighters. A more recent study of adult educators attending a research conference adds further thought about how to bring home the research information and use it (Daffron and North 2011).

These variables affecting the learning process mirror the findings of Carver (1985) and Daley (2000, 2001) who posed the question of effectiveness of continuing professional education (CPE). This model has been examined and adapted within the transfer of training and learning literature and been tested.

## Literature Review

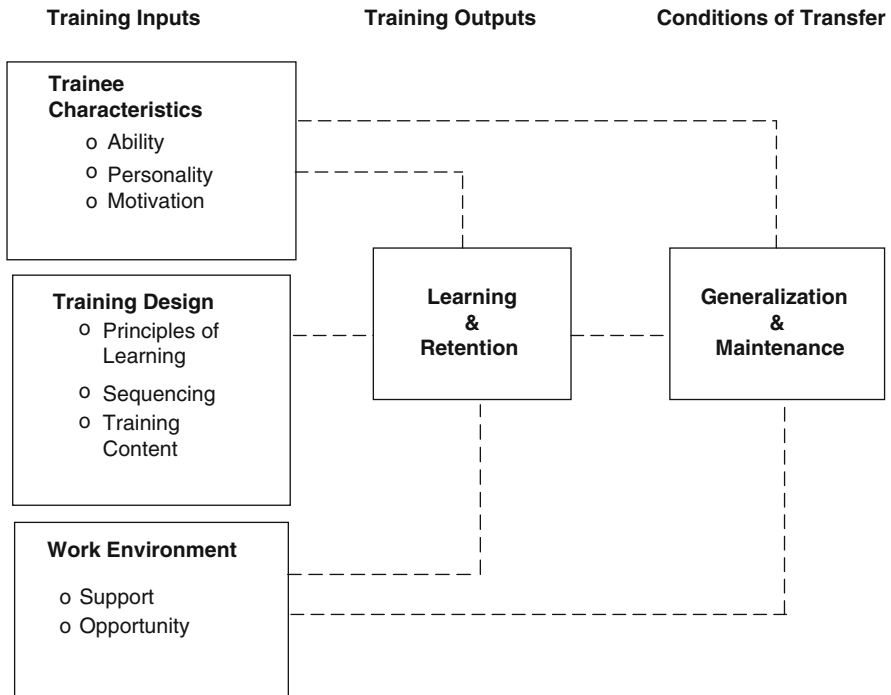
Researchers from the field of training began conveying unease about transfer of training in the early 1980s, as indicated by the occurrence of scattered research on the topic. One of the first to propose a model of transfer was Berger (1977), when he examined the training to learning process and determined there were seven stages in the process. He concluded that, if trainers were to follow the seven stages, they would reach the ultimate goal of transfer. In his study of 51 managers participating in managerial training, he introduced the concept of having management brief the trainee before the training and then discussing the training elements with the trainee when he or she returned to work.

Following this work, one of the earliest frameworks for transfer of learning was created by Baldwin and Ford (1988). This framework became a model for the transfer process and was widely accepted in the training arena as the answer to the transfer process. Baldwin and Ford's "Model of the Transfer Process" is shown below (p. 65) (Fig. 37.1).

In their model, Baldwin and Ford (1988) placed a strong emphasis on the planning stage with each stakeholder: the planner, the trainer, the training participant, and management. While program planners had to design an interesting and challenging program, trainees had to have the skills, motivation, and personality factors ready to learn the information. Trainers had to use known and accepted principles of learning, and then incorporate these into the presentation and materials. Management needed to show support for the training and then provide the trainee with the opportunity to demonstrate the new learning.

Researchers began to look for causes for the low incidence of learning transfer and found many variables which could enhance or deter learning transfer from occurring. One variable was focused on the specific roles of the players in the training process. For example, Brinkerhoff and Montesano (1995) concluded





**Fig. 37.1** Model of the transfer process

that the responsibility for the lack of transfer could be attributed to management. They studied the presentation of training courses for pharmaceutical employees and the support provided by management. They discovered that managers, who exhibited support for the training of the employees, said that their employees transferred learning to practice. They concluded: “The trainees whose supervisors explicitly supported training found fewer factors in their environment to inhibit transfer than their counterparts whose supervisors did not explicitly support training” (p. 270).

Another variable affecting the transfer of learning centered upon the climate for transfer. Several researchers sought validation. Holton et al. (1997) used the transfer climate instrument constructed by Ruler and Goldstein (1993). Holton et al. studied 189 operating technicians undergoing OSHA training. The training programs were mandated and completion was expected for the factory to meet OSHA requirements. Since the program was mandatory, the Holton et al. study sought to understand what the climate was for the training, since it was common knowledge by all involved, that is, the trainers, the trainees, and management, that transfer was required to take place. Their results identified five factors that are needed for transfer to transpire: supervisor support, peer/task support, transfer design, personal outcomes – positive and personal outcomes – negative (pg. 102). Holton et al. concluded that, unlike previous studies that

focused on psychological cues that needed to be in place, trainees perceived the influence of the organization to motivate them to learn and transfer. They found the climate for transfer needed to include a positive motivation by the trainee, a training program designed with good resources and tasks to help the trainee learn, and a support by the supervisor to reinforce and support use of the learning on the job.

Considerable research on transfer of training within the workplace continued through the 1990s and, despite changes that were made in knowledge about transfer and attitude changes about effective training based upon the results of the studies, researchers found that transfer was not making its way from the training classroom to the job site. The term ‘transfer of learning’ is used exclusively in this chapter, although the terms ‘transfer of training’ and ‘transfer to practice’ could apply as well. The definition of transfer of learning for our studies came from this period of the 1990s and is “the effective and continuing application by learners – to their performance of jobs or other individual, organizational, or community responsibilities – of knowledge and skills gained in learning activities” (Broad 1997, p. 2).

Clarke (2002) followed the various models developed since the Baldwin and Ford model in 1988, and found that transfer was not occurring. Clarke developed two questions in his study of UK social service care workers to attempt to ascertain the reasons:

- What are the factors that influenced transfer of training to the job?
- How did these factors compare or differ from the findings of the previous literature?

Clarke found that there was insufficient time within the program for the social service care workers to gain confidence in using the skills and then the workplace was not conducive to implementation. Clarke’s study supported studies by Rooney (1985) and Gregorian (1994) that found there must be sufficient resources, support, and time for learning to transfer. With almost three decades of research on transfer or training or learning completed, we wondered why there is still a problem of transfer of skills to the workplace.

Cheetham and Chivers (2000) studied 20 professions in the UK and concluded that both formal and informal learning are important to transfer and are sometimes interrelated. It is also important to the professionals, who have hands-on experiences, to create learning into practice. A second Cheetham and Chivers (2001) study found five factors considered important by professionals in becoming a “competent professional.” They are:

- The opportunity to experience a wide range of developmental experiences
- The motivation to acquire the necessary competencies and to improve these continuously
- Adequate practice in carrying out the various key tasks and functions to master the requisite competencies

- Persistence in overcoming difficulties and in persevering when things are not going well
- The influence and support (when needed) of others

Cheetham and Chivers would concur that having information put into practice immediately is a sixth factor.

Bates and Khasawneh (2005), in a study of 28 Jordanian organizations, conclude there is a link between organizational learning culture and innovation, and this innovative climate is the psychological climate needed for learning transfer. Using the results of their study, we determined that the organization, a stakeholder in the learning process, may be responsible for more than 25% of transfer, climate and forming a positive context for learning.

We recognize that many academics and practitioners are working together to try to find the answers that can help organizations realize return on investment for training and continuing professional education programs. Despite new knowledge about transfer and attitude, researchers continue to find that transfer is still not reaching the post-training job site. Giving our attention to historical and current studies, to research, and to the conclusions that have been drawn about training transfer, or the lack thereof, we shaped our work by generating a variety of questions:

- What are the factors that influence transfer of training on the job?
- How do these factors compare or differ from the findings of the previous research?
- Is there a good model for transfer of learning that will help:
  - Program planners design effective programs?
  - Trainers present more successfully?
  - Organizations figure out how to support and encourage transfer?
  - Trainees use more than 10% of the information gained through training?

In fact, our studies, which focus upon these questions and the historical research, have led us to devise a study to identify the components or variables needed for transfer to practice.

## Method

As part of several classes considering best practices pertaining to transfer of learning for professionals, the authors and other graduate students developed a research project to examine real-world situations in which transfer of learning was or was not taking place. Each graduate student, under guidance of the instructor, conducted interviews with professionals in their workplace. Fifteen interview questions were crafted to assess the variables present when learning was

transferred. (Daffron et al. 2008) The interviews identified the variables in place in the program-planning stages, during presentation of the program, and when the professionals returned to their jobs. A total of 17 professional groups participated in the study, including state court judges, appellate staff attorneys, ESL teachers, K-12 teachers, physicians, hospital workers, adult education graduate students, public law attorneys, law professors, software company professionals, firefighters, police officers, community college volunteers, research conference participants, credit union educational developers, dieticians, and government workers for social and human services (Daffron and North 2011).

The interview questions were grouped into four parts: the program-planning process, the delivery of the program, the post-program phase, and suggestions to help with transfer of learning to practice. The questions were taken from several studies that Merriam and Leahy (2005) include in their recent review of the literature on learning transfer. The questions were designed to measure:

- Variables within the preprogram process, including the planning process and the characteristics and mindset of the individual trainee before the training
- Variables within the delivery of the program, including program design, methods of delivery, and involvement of the trainee in the learning process
- Variables in the post-training experience, including informal learning methods with immediate application, the environment within the workplace, support from the institution, and peer support
- Variables to overcome barriers to successful transfer, and suggestions for increasing the likelihood of transfer of learning

## Study Results

The Palestinian law professors told us they changed their attitude about their teaching styles as a result of observing and modeling law professors from other countries. They demonstrated new knowledge by teaching new subjects and teaching research, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to their students. They exhibited a change in behavior by engaging their students in group activities, question and answer at the end of class, and through dialogue. Their classrooms have changed from a traditional Middle Eastern classroom of lecture only to classrooms that engage the students and encourage the students to begin to question what they read. Students are actively conducting legal research. All of this happened in spite of the almost insurmountable barriers set in place by the conflict surrounding the law schools. To make this change in teaching methods meant the professors had to create a new context for learning at a time when faculty and students together often could not get to their campuses due to the danger of the conflict going on around them (Daffron and Davis 2005).

The software professionals who responded to the interview questions said they had meaningful learning experiences in their programs, and the majority said the

newly learned skills and knowledge would transfer in some way to their practice. Those who responded positively about transfer said the following:

- They were motivated to attend the training programs.
- They had preconceived expectations to learn and apply the information to their jobs.
- They felt their needs were represented in the planning process.
- They learned best when delivery methods used in the program were varied and interactive with the participants.

They also responded that though they had been encouraged to attend the training sessions by their supervisors, there was no expectation of sharing the information when they returned to their jobs. Barriers to transfer were issues of time and applicability (Daffron and North 2006).

The state court judges said in the interviews that, in order for learning to transfer, they had to put the general knowledge provided from the conference into the context in which they worked. They had to discuss the concepts presented at the conference with other judges (their peers) at the conference site and to rationalize an approach to their practice before they made the changes at home in their work environment. Then, when they returned home to their courts, they had to believe in the change because it had to be introduced in a systemic approach with “the team” of social service representatives that make up the juvenile court context. They also said that they were motivated to attend the conference to learn new information and they had preconceived expectations to learn and apply the information. The judges felt their needs were represented in the planning process through an advisory board (Daffron et al. 2007).

The study of government welfare employees had a similar result to the study of social welfare workers by Daley (2001). Any type of training was seen as a reward by the employees. Motivation to attend and participate was high. Most training was delivered through lectures, and communication was one way. Even though the employees felt honored to attend and the training was seen as a reward, the reality of the training was that it was one-way and stopped with the lecture. Various government welfare employees reported a desire to try their new skills on the job, but were met with objections about not having cleared the new policy yet. One person reported waiting for 2 years to try to implement a new idea she got from a workshop. Morale among the employees is not very high to start with, and then to be chosen to attend a special training without any thought about implementation by those who plan the program served to be even more of a morale issue. These employees felt their training was a waste of time (Daffron and North 2011).

The study of volunteers in a community college project with Habitat for Humanity showed training to be very beneficial and helpful. Most of these volunteers praised the trainers and planners, but said for the training to be used in practice, when they actually constructed the house, it would be helpful to have follow-up by the trainer, to have a strong network where volunteers could contact each other for sharing tools and questions about procedures. The volunteers want access to web sites that demonstrate what they are to do with their projects. Follow-up by the trainer and construction foreman would make the training much stronger (Daffron and North 2011).

Firefighters and police officers told us their implementation of new ideas and skills was often thwarted by politics and lack of time. Barriers for implementing new skills into practice for this group were set up, sometimes even before the trainees went to their academy. Since everyone is required to go to continuing education classes, and because firefighters and police officers have the responsibility to keep the public safe, the results of the surveys was particularly troubling with a general consensus of the 140 officers polled that very little information is embraced or used at the station house. Station chiefs ought to develop individual educational plans for every one of their public servants and they ought to use interactive demonstrations that the officers could emulate and practice (Daffron et al. 2008).

## The Model for Successful Transfer of Learning

As a result of the research of others and the 17 case study results, it appeared certain variables would occur when transfer to practice happened. We used the variables to create a model for successful transfer of learning. The model indicates that several variables strongly influence successful transfer: involvement in the pre-program planning process and self-motivation to participate, use of a variety of delivery approaches and involvement of the trainee in the learning process, and immediate application of post-training experiences with organizational support for the transfer of learning. The data also suggest that the different professional groups have a context for learning unique to their profession. The results of case studies of these various professional groups suggest the context that program developers and trainers should establish and identify positive variables within the program developer's control that affect transfer of learning outcome.

In this study, the suggestions for planning, designing, and implementing programs for professionals result from variables identified when professionals indicated that they were able to transfer the skills and knowledge acquired in continuing education classes to their work practice. Transfer of learning is identified as a change in attitude, a demonstration of the acquisition of new knowledge, or a change in behavior (Fig. 37.2).

We found that, in case studies and the literature, transfer of learning variables fell into seven variables or steps, and each one is necessary for the process of transfer to occur. The graphic of the model, shown above, exemplifies the intertwining aspects of all the variables that contribute to learning transfer. We designed this graphic to illustrate the multifaceted, nonlinear, and interactive nature of the model. Transfer of learning is indeed a complex and perplexing process, often neglected by the stakeholders because of the difficulty of understanding how the process works. The ideas comprising each variable will facilitate taking theories developed about transfer of learning to actual practice (model graphic and descriptions found in *Successful Transfer of Learning* by Daffron and North 2011).

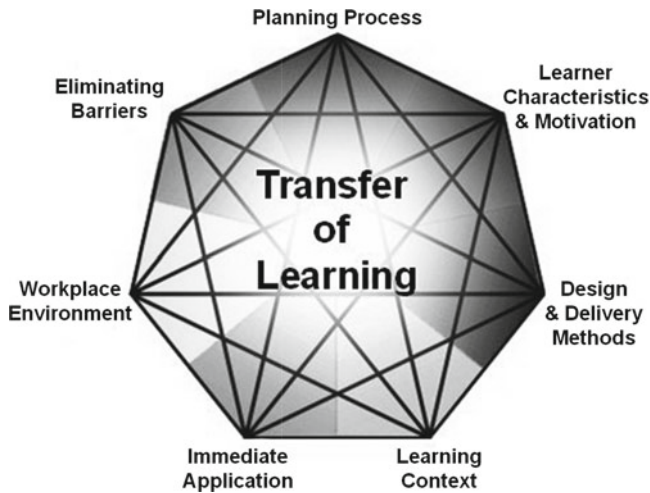


Fig. 37.2 Successful transfer of learning model – seven variables

### *One – The Planning Process*

The team of stakeholders is involved with the program-planning process, and this includes the organization setting up expectations for the learner returning to the job, the learner being aware of the expectations, the trainer incorporating the expectations, the planner orchestrating all of these plans and expectations.

### *Two – Learner Characteristics and Motivation*

The learner's motivation to participate in a program is very clear to all stakeholders, and the characteristics and mindset of individual learners to meet expectations for learning before the training programs are set. The results of a connection between the learner's expectations for gaining information from the training program and transfer to practice are guided by management, the trainer, and the planning efforts by the program planner.

### *Three – Design and Delivery Methods*

The training program is designed to involve the trainee in the learning process. Adult education principles of learning are applied using a variety of methods of delivery and involvement with the trainee. Specific methods of training are used

based on how trainee participants learn best, and methods used to increase the incidence of learning transfer.

### ***Four – Learning Context***

The need to understand the most effective context of learning for professionals is necessary to engage them in the learning process. The results of the 17 professional group case studies illustrate the need for planners, designers, and trainers to consider specific groups of learners and their context for learning. Planners and trainers can determine the preferred learning styles of the professionals and the context for learning that is particular to the profession.

### ***Five – Immediate Application***

Immediate application of new information is very important for the transfer of learning process. Several professional groups stipulate the need for immediate application of information, while others store the information until needed. The reality is that the end of the class is not the end of the learning. The transfer process involves a collaborative effort between the professional educator, the learner, and the organization itself. There are actions to be taken within the post-training phase of the program, including setting up informal learning methods with immediate application, and making the workplace environment welcoming to new ideas.

### ***Six – Workplace Environment***

Expectations to share learning come from management and are made during the planning process and carried out through the implementation stages. A positive workplace environment that is open to new ideas increases innovation and carries on to desirable outcomes. The challenge for the workplace is to set aside time to try out new ideas and sometimes to change the status quo in the workplace when the trainee returns to work after the training.

### ***Seven – Eliminating Barriers***

Barriers of time constraints, lack of applicability, personal challenges, and workplace issues are realities and stop transfer to practice. These barriers can originate from a variety of sources including lack of sufficient planning, presentation of ideas



without solutions for implementation, lack of follow-up, poorly designed training, poor attitude of the participant, and the lack of willingness or readiness to implement new ideas and new knowledge into the work environment. Barriers that have to be eliminated to make transfer to the job possible, ought to be anticipated and the planning for eliminating the barriers considered by all the stakeholders in the program planning process, followed by strategies for elimination after the program (Daffron and North 2011).

## Implications of This Study for Future Practice

From studying these 17 professional groups, we were able to identify four variables in place for those who reported transfer of learning to their jobs. First, they felt their interests were represented during the planning process so the topics for the program were the topics they wanted. They were self-motivated to participate in the training. They wanted the information, skills, and resources provided. Second, the instructors used a variety of delivery approaches, the learners reported that they were involved in the learning process, and the trainers conducted follow-up efforts after the training. Third, the skills offered in the training in most cases had immediate applicability to the job. There was organizational support for attending the training, although a significant number reported there was little expectation from their supervisors to share or report the information. They said transfer of learning would have been greater with more organizational support for reporting skills learned. Fourth, those who transferred into practice had been given support by the organization with time to implement the new skills and given resources for implementation. These professionals said that management embraced this concept of transfer and, if needed, arranged for policy changes.

For higher education classroom purposes, the use of the *Successful Transfer of Learning Model* practices would encourage:

- Using a follow-up check on assignments between class meetings
- Providing some take-home labs
- Using a follow-up exercise after some classes that are based on real work examples
- Sending an e-mail once a week for a few weeks that reviews a main point from the class
- Engaging the employers of adult students by sending them a note that says their employee took this class and encourage them to ask about what was learned (with the student's permission, of course)
- Working with students one on one at some point in each class
- Requiring some sort of activity or project that puts the skill into practice on the job
- Checking back with the students after the class is completed to see how integration is going; offer some support for them for at least a few weeks after the class

## Suggestions for Working with Employers of Students

Management needs to:

- Recognize the training, talk about it, and lead by example if it is actually important to put skills, knowledge, or abilities into practice; then it should be measured and incorporated into reviews, and the results should be evident in the public reports of the division; require application of the training
- Listen to questions of employees with a mind to incorporating their ideas into classes
- Offer refresher courses
- Provide time to reflect on how best to use the information on the job – both during and after the learning event
- Work together on research projects on transfer of learning with higher education researchers

Perhaps the most important implication of this study for future practice is to follow the seven variables stated in the model for successful transfer of learning, to engage all of the stakeholders in this effort, have each of them play out the roles as suggested here and to measure the amount of transfer to practice. The estimation of 10% of information that is transferred to practice currently can only be increased and that would mean a significant rise in return on investment of the training cost. Everyone wins!

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# Chapter 38

## The Contribution of the Adult Community Education Sector in Australia to Lifelong Learning

Veronica Volkoff

### Introduction

During the last two decades, completion of a high school certificate and post-school qualifications has become increasingly important for individuals wishing to maintain sustainable employment. Low level and inadequate education and training impact adversely, not only on an individual's labour force status and their social participation, but more broadly on a nation's economy and its communities. The relationship between adult education and the community has been widely discussed across the twentieth century (Field 2009) and more recently, the capacity of community-based delivery to address the learning needs of disadvantaged, non-participant groups has been harnessed by governments to help redress skills shortages and strengthen community cohesion. How effective is community-based delivery of adult education, however, in achieving such outcomes? Does it serve 'the individual in the community' as well as the 'needs of all adults in the community', using Clyne's (1972) notion of adult education as a 'community service'? What are the outcomes gained from community-based learning and are some individuals more likely to gain the benefits they seek than others? How does community-based delivery facilitate these outcomes? This chapter draws on data from a longitudinal study of participation in adult community education (ACE) in the State of Victoria and statewide student participation data to explore the contribution made by the ACE sector to lifelong learning within an Australian context. In particular, it analyses the effectiveness of the role played by ACE in providing second-chance opportunities for both young and mature aged people to reconnect with learning and gain skills, qualifications, employment and social benefits.

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## The Australian Context

A deep concern for social cohesion, demands of globalisation, labour market changes and the skill needs of a knowledge economy have been key drivers of life-long learning in Australia. An educated and skilled population is widely considered to be a necessary foundation for a healthy economy and an inclusive society, particularly within the context of an ageing and multicultural population and demands for high levels of technological literacy (DEST 2002; Commonwealth of Australia 2004; Bardon 2006; COAG 2006; State of Victoria 2006).

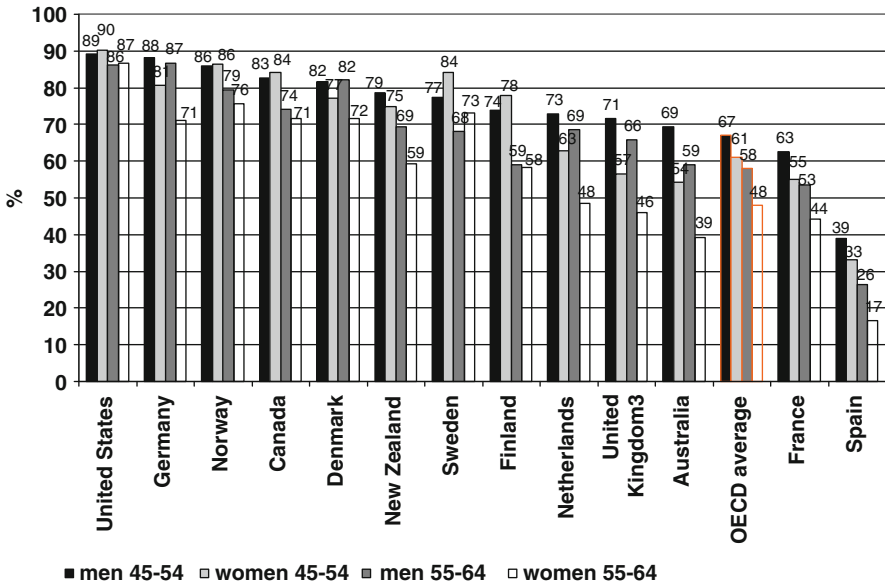
However, on a range of educational measures, Australia's population ranks poorly compared with OECD countries. Compared with an OECD average of 67%, only 64% of Australians aged 25–64 years had completed at least upper secondary education (OECD 2006a, Table A1.2a). However, analysis of educational attainment rates by age reveals that Australia's younger working population, aged 25–34 years had upper secondary education attainment rates equal to the OECD average (77%) for that age group. The rates of attainment for people in the 35–64 years age groups are the ones that fall below the OECD average (OECD 2006a, b): for 35–44 year olds, 65% had upper secondary education attainment compared with an OECD average of 71%; for 45–54 year olds, 62% had attainment compared with an OECD average of 64% and for 55–64 year olds, 49% had attainment compared with an OECD average of 53%.

There also are considerable differences in educational attainment evident by gender for older Australians, as Fig. 38.1 illustrates. While the proportions of men aged 45–54 and 55–64 years with at least upper secondary schooling were just higher than the OECD averages, the rates for women within these age groups were well below the relevant OECD average (OECD 2006a, Tables A1.2b and A1.2c).

In addition, only about 60% of Australia's working population had a formal post-school qualification in 2005 (Shah and Burke 2006). Thus, to meet the nation's skills needs, the upskilling and retention of mature age workers and education, training and recruitment of those who have not been in the labour force in recent years are imperative actions to be taken (Choy et al. 2006).

Beyond the intrinsic value of education which is 'lifelong, life-spanning and life-enriching' (SNCAE 2005, p. 5), the wider benefits of adult learning are well documented in the international literature (Volkoff and Walstab 2007). These include:

- Improved participation in further education and training (OECD 2006b; Balatti et al. 2006)
- Higher workforce participation rates (DSF 2005)
- Improved employability (Bynner et al. 2001; Murray 2003; Feinstein et al. 2004; Kearns 2004)
- Enhanced productivity (Coulombe et al. 2004)
- Improved earnings for individuals (McIntosh and Vignoles 2000) and increased tax revenues for the state (Bynner et al. 2001)
- Increased creativity and innovation both in enterprises and communities (Kearns 2004; Schuller et al. 2004)



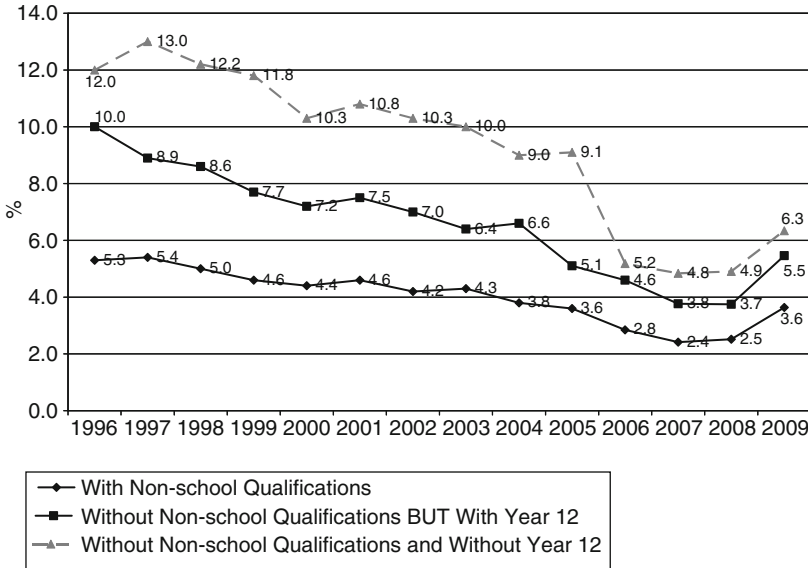
Source: OECD (2006), Table A1.2b and A1.2c.

Fig. 38.1 Proportion of population in selected OECD countries that has attained at least upper secondary education (2004), by gender, for age groups 45–54 and 55–64 (Source: OECD (2006a, b), Table A1.2b and A1.2c)

- Higher levels of literacy and numeracy as ‘critical skills for life’ (DfEE 2001)
- Improved health and well-being (Bynner et al. 2001; Parsons and Bynner 2005; Kearns 2004; Cross 2003, 2004; Clemans et al. 2003)
- Strengthening of democracy (SNCAE 2005)
- Building social networks (Falk et al. 2000; Clemans et al. 2003; Balatti et al. 2006)
- Promoting community building, including creating links for newly arrived migrants (SNCAE 2005)
- Higher rates of volunteering in the community (Birch et al. 2003; Walstab et al. 2005, 2006)

Clearly there are benefits of lifelong learning for both the broader community and individuals for whom education can ‘provide opportunities ... to change their life circumstances’ (McIntyre et al. 2004, p. 18). Conversely, there are risks and costs associated with an absence of lifelong learning such as:

- Vulnerability to unemployment (DfEE 2001; Murray 2003; Commonwealth of Australia 2004; Bardon 2006; COAG 2006; Parsons and Bynner 2005), including protracted unemployment (Bowman 2009)
- Lower skilled manual jobs and lower wages than more highly skilled people (DfEE 2001; Parsons and Bynner 2005)



Source: ABS Cat No. 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, 2006 and Cat 6227.0 Education and Work, Australia 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010.

**Fig. 38.2** Unemployment rates, Australians aged 15–64 years, by educational attainment, 1996–2009 (Source: ABS Cat No. 4102.0 Australian Social Trends, 2006 and Cat 6227.0 Education and Work, Australia 2007a, b, c, 2008, 2009, 2010)

- Poor self-esteem and confidence (DfEE 2001)
- Poor physical and psychological health (Bynner et al. 2001; Parsons and Bynner 2005; Kearns 2004; DfEE 2001)
- Higher crime levels (Parsons and Bynner 2005; Kearns 2004; Schuller et al. 2004)
- Poorer access to further education and training, including employment-based training (Commonwealth of Australia 2004; OECD 2006b)
- Economic disadvantage for both the nation and individuals (Feinstein et al. 2004; Murray 2003; Powdthavee and Vignoles 2006)

The 2008 Ministerial Declaration on ACE (MCVTE 2008) estimated that around 40% of Australia’s working population in 2005, around four million adult workers, did not have a formal post-school qualification, and thus had ‘a much higher chance of being unemployed than people with post-school qualifications’ (MCVTE 2008, p. 6). As Fig. 38.2 illustrates, the unemployment rate for Australians aged between 15 and 64 years with non-school qualifications was around half of the rate for people without non-school qualifications, for almost the entire period 1996–2009. Figure 38.2 also provides evidence of the importance of Year 12 completion, with consistently lower rates of unemployment evident for people without non-school qualifications but with Year 12 completion, than for those with neither non-school qualifications nor Year 12 completion.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG 2006) human capital agenda aims to increase skill levels of the existing working population and to expand workforce participation, particularly among targeted groups such as the long-term unemployed, mature aged people and women. To achieve these aims requires the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills, raising the rates of attainment of Year 12 and its equivalent, and increasing participation in continuous and lifelong learning to provide people with the capacities to participate in the workforce and to do so more effectively. The COAG human capital agenda acknowledges that ACE can, and already does, play a strong compensatory role in addressing the education and training needs of the targeted groups (McIntyre 2005; Bardon 2006; COAG 2006; Choy et al. 2006; Volkoff and Walstab 2007; Bowman 2009). ACE not only has a demonstrated track record in effectively providing vocational education and training but critically, the engagement functions required to reach the targeted groups (Bardon 2006).

## Adult Community Education in Australia and Victoria

ACE has 'operated largely as an informal education sector in Australia for over 100 years' (Choy et al. 2006). Indeed, ACE defined as 'organised learning in community settings' (Clemans et al. 2003, p. 7) can be found across most Australian jurisdictions.

ACE providers, defined as community owned and managed, not-for-profit organisations (Bowman 2006), range in size from small neighbourhood houses catering to local community needs to large providers that compete for vocational education and training (VET) students with public technical and further education (TAFE) institutes and private registered training organisations (RTOs). The national 2008 Ministerial Declaration on ACE emphasised the need to optimise the national capacity of ACE providers to engage people who are disadvantaged and/or disengaged from learning and the workforce, and to deliver vocationally focussed programmes which lead to further training and/or workforce participation (MCVTE 2008).

However, although Australian national and state/territory governments clearly are aware that ACE providers make 'significant contributions to Australia's development' (Bowman 2006) and have the potential to play an even larger role, these providers continue to not be well resourced by governments overall.

Despite this lack of significant resourcing across Australia, ACE plays an important role in the provision of VET. In the three Australian states where it does receive substantial funding (Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales), ACE engages between 12 and 17% of all VET students in those states (Volkoff and Walstab 2007; NCVET 2008). The largest and most active ACE sector in Australia is in Victoria (Government of Victoria 2008), where it provides education and training to more than 125,000 learners (ACFEB 2008) through around 350 providers spread across the state. Indeed, the geographic spread of these providers and localised nature of



their delivery are key to the accessibility of the sector (Volkoff and Walstab 2007). ACE learners participate in programmes of five broad types. Four of these are publicly funded through the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board: adult literacy and numeracy, employment skills, senior school certificates and vocational programmes. The fifth type, enrichment programmes are provided on a full cost recovery basis.

A series of key national and Victorian policy statements have highlighted the growing gaps between Australians in relation to skill levels and qualifications and the need to increase skills and workforce participation of disadvantaged groups (Council of Australian Governments 2006; State of Victoria 2004). They also have emphasised the importance of accessible lifelong and ‘second chance’ learning (State of Victoria 2006) and noted the need for the ACE sector to play a vital role in engaging people from disadvantaged groups, meeting entry-level training needs and providing a platform for higher-level VET study (MCVTE 2008; State of Victoria 2002, 2004, 2006, 2010). In recognition of this, the recent *Securing Jobs for Your Future – Skills for Victoria* statement (State of Victoria 2010) committed \$4 million to the Adult, Community and Further Education budget for pre-accredited training.

It is important to note that the Victorian ACE workforce profile is very different from that of other VET providers. Small- and medium-sized providers, defined as having financial turnovers of less than \$100,000 and between \$100,000 and \$500,000, respectively, have a strong reliance on volunteers. A 2006 survey (CWCC unpublished) revealed that nine out of ten (91%) ACE providers had volunteer staff and the ratio of volunteers to all full-time, part-time, sessional and casual staff in small and medium providers was greater than two to one. This reliance on volunteers contributes to making ACE provision very cost effective, in terms of the public funding provided.

The ACE sector has taken up the challenge of making a significant contribution to the state’s skill building agenda, carving out for itself ‘... an important place in the state’s policy framework’ (McIntyre 2007, p. 8). In 2007, Victorian ACE organisations provided VET for 79,000 learners, engaging around 17% of the state’s total VET students. This represents just below half of all the students who engaged in VET within the ACE sector nationally<sup>1</sup> (NCVER 2008).

Around 20% of all VET courses in Victoria are delivered through ACE providers. However, if we consider learners from educationally disadvantaged groups, then we can see that ACE becomes even more important as a provider for them. It is clear from an analysis of statewide data on participation in VET in Victoria (OTTE 2006) that ACE is effective in engaging a diverse range of adult learners including older workers, unemployed people, people not in the labour force, people with a disability, people with incomplete schooling, people resident in small rural communities and indigenous people.

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria’s population of approximately 5.5 million represents just 25% of Australia’s population.

For many rural people, ACE is the only adult learning provider that they can access. Indeed, more than half (51%) of all ACE delivery is in non-metropolitan regions while only 28% of the Victorian population is located in these regions (Volkoff and Walstab 2007). Almost half (47%) of all people over the age of 55 years engaged in VET were studying in ACE; 31% of people with a disability who were studying in VET and a quarter of people with low levels of prior schooling in VET (Year 9 or below) were in ACE.

But what are the experiences and outcomes of participation in ACE for people belonging to the groups targeted by the national human capital agenda? The next sections outline the longitudinal study that was conducted and summarise and discuss the findings of this study.

## **The Victorian Longitudinal ACE Study: Its Purpose, Methodology and Participants**

In 2004, the University of Melbourne was commissioned by the ACFE Board of Victoria to complete a 3-year longitudinal study of learners studying within the adult community education (ACE) sector. I completed the study with colleagues Anne Walstab and Richard Teese. The research was designed to measure the Victorian ACE sector's impact, effectiveness and community reach. Three broad questions were addressed:

- Does ACE make a difference? (and, if so, how do we know?)
- For whom does ACE make a difference?
- What is it about ACE that makes a difference? (Walstab et al. 2006).

More than 40 ACE providers across five ACFE administrative regions of Victoria participated in the first stage of the research which utilised a 'community studies' approach. This approach recognised the defining qualities of the ACE sector including its community base, accessibility and responsiveness. During this first stage, a classroom-based survey was completed by a cross section of 3,047 ACE participants providing demographic data as well as data on participants' educational background, employment status, their motivations for undertaking study in ACE, their aspirations for the future as well as a first glimpse of their learning experience in ACE. A total of 1,348 participants (44% of those surveyed in class) agreed to be contacted individually for survey again in the following year (2005) (Walstab et al. 2005).

The second stage of the research involved follow-up telephone interviews designed to gather data about participants' study during 2005 and during early 2006, in ACE or other education and training sectors, the work status of the cohort, the perceived contribution made by ACE, the study pathways followed and participants' experience of ACE. A total of 846 participants (63% of those who agreed to be recontacted) were surveyed. The remaining 37% were unable to be contacted for interview (Walstab et al. 2006).

**Table 38.1** Characteristics of the longitudinal study cohort

Characteristic	% of 2006 cohort
Female	79.3
Language background other than English (LBOTE)	16
Age group	
15–24 years	11.6
25–39 years	20.8
40–49 years	28.5
50–64 years	29.5
65 years and over	9.7
Highest level of schooling	
Primary school only	2.3
Some secondary school	34.3
Completed secondary school	23.1
VET qualification	24.0
University degree	16.0
Socio-economic status (SES) (SEIFA level)	
Lowest 1	22.6
2	25.3
3	13.8
4	12.9
Highest 5	25.4

Almost all (95%) of the participants surveyed in Stage 2 agreed to be recontacted again in the third stage and 646 (80% of these) were able to be contacted and surveyed through telephone interviews again during May 2006. This third survey sought to further identify patterns of participation in relation to a range of socio-economic and demographic variables. It also sought additional data on learner pathways, their experience of learning in ACE and their destinations following study. The data were sought in order to be able to identify outcomes and benefits of participation in ACE.

Data at all of the three stages were available for 646 participants. Of these, 79% were female and 21% were male, as Table 38.1 shows. Nearly half of those surveyed were from Victoria's lowest two socio-economic quintiles<sup>2</sup> (i.e. the poorest 40%), where these are assigned on the basis of the postcode of the respondent's home address. However, one quarter of respondents (25.4%) were from the wealthiest 20% of Victorians indicating that ACE provision attracts both wealthy and socio-economically disadvantaged learners. More than one-third (37%) had neither completed secondary education nor any post-school qualifications. However, about one-quarter had a diploma or higher-level tertiary qualification, including 16% with a university degree.

<sup>2</sup>The Socio-economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics was used to determine the socio-economic status of respondents.

## The Longitudinal Study Findings

### *Study Completion and Pathways*

Close to half (49%) of the cohort that was studying in ACE in 2004 continued to study in 2005, with two-thirds remaining within an ACE provider. Of these, 64% had completed their study by 2006, 26% were continuing with their course and 10% had discontinued their study before completion. Completion rates were higher for female participants (65%) than for males (60%) though males were more likely to be continuing in their course than females. The rate of completion was even higher (75%) for learners from a language background other than English (LBOTE) (Walstab et al. 2006).

Learners studying in non-metropolitan providers were less likely to complete their course than those studying in metropolitan ones. Non-completion rates were also higher for people who were unemployed (29%) than for workers (9%) and those not in the labour force (8%) (i.e. not working and not looking for work).

The four most common reasons given for non-completion were that the learner:

- Had 'got what they needed from the course' (30%)
- Had discontinued because their 'personal/family circumstances changed' (27%)
- Found that 'the course was not relevant to their career plans' (24%)
- Had 'found a job and were working' (18%) (Walstab et al. 2006)

One in five (21%) non-completers reported that they planned to return to study in their course in the future.

### *Motivations for Study*

Two common motivations for enrolling in the 2004 ACE course were evident among the longitudinal study cohort of 646: 'to gain particular skills or knowledge', and 'to explore a new interest or activity'. However, there were some differences in motivations for study between those who remained studying in ACE and those who moved to study in technical and further education (TAFE) or private registered training organisations (RTOs). Those who were studying in non-ACE providers in 2006 were more likely to have reported motivations such as gaining a qualification to improve job prospects, improving their job skills and preparing to go onto further study compared with those who remained studying in ACE who were more likely to be seeking to explore a new interest or activity. This suggests that learners perceived ACE as a platform for re-engagement with study and also a bridge or pathway to further formal study in ACE or other provider types.

## *Study Pathways*

For those who commenced study in a new course in 2006, there was evidence of strong positive links between the course they enrolled in during 2006 and the original study they had undertaken in ACE. Almost eight in ten respondents (78%) reported that their experience of study in ACE in 2004 or subsequent study in 2005 had encouraged them to apply for their new course. For three-quarters (75%), the 2006 course followed on from their 2004 and/or 2005 studies. For more than two-thirds (68%), completion of their previous 2004 or 2005 study helped them to gain a place in their new course.

Pathways to higher-level (Australian Qualifications Framework) study were evident among many in the cohort that commenced a new course in 2006. Almost three-quarters (74%) of those who had completed Certificate I study before commencing a new course moved on to Certificate II or higher-level study; almost six in ten (59%) of those who had completed Certificate II study before their new course were studying at Certificate III or above and more than half (53%) who had completed Certificate III study progressed to Certificate IV or above. The lowest rate of progression was from 'subject only' study with the majority (57%) who started a new course re-engaging in 'subject only' and only 43% in Certificate I or above study. The most common motivations reported, for commencing these new 2006 courses, were to 'improve well-being and confidence' (93% agreement), to 'meet new people and share a learning activity' (89% agreement) and 'to develop a new interest or activity (82% agreement).

## *Impact of Learning*

The final longitudinal study survey in 2006 asked respondents to reflect on the impact of their learning in ACE, and any other provider that they had studied with during the course of this research, in particular, the skills and capacities that they had acquired or developed.

As Fig. 38.3 shows, stronger confidence, better communication skills and improved social skills were the most commonly reported gains. Improved self-confidence was reported to be a key benefit of study for almost all respondents (86% agreement). Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported that they had better communication skills as a result of their study. In addition, more than seven in ten respondents (71%) agreed that they could 'get along better with people and make friends' as a result of their study experience, and half (50%) reported that they could 'better understand how Australians live and what they think'.

Around seven in ten reported gains relevant to work: that they had developed 'good job skills' (71%); could now 'work better with others' (70%); could 'better use computers' (64%) and were 'better able to do business' (62%). More than half (54%) valued gaining a qualification.

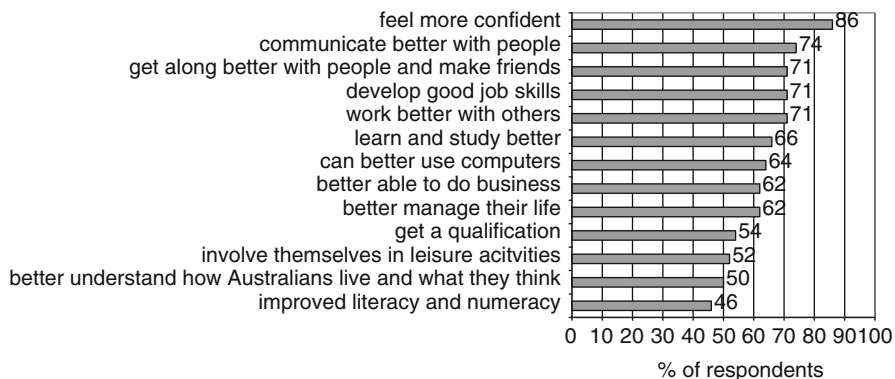


Fig. 38.3 Value of 2004 ACE study and any subsequent 2005 study

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents reported improved learning and study skills. In addition, more than six in ten respondents (62%) found that they had improved their capacities to manage their lives and more than half (52%) were more likely to involve themselves in leisure activities. But were these outcomes reported equally by learners from different groups or were some learner groups less likely to achieve these benefits?

An analysis by gender shows that there were generally only very small differences between male and female respondents. Women were slightly more likely to report gains in confidence (86% for women compared with 84% for men), qualifications (55% compared with 51% for men) and jobs (39% compared with 31% for men), while men were more likely to report improved learning skills (70% for men compared with 66% for women) and involvement in leisure activities (58% compared with 51% for women). However, men were much more likely to report improved literacy and numeracy skills (56%) than women (43%).

Larger differences were evident when responses were examined by respondents' language background. People from language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE) were more positive about their experiences on all items, but particularly in relation to their acquisition of skills. For example, 78% of LBOTE respondents said that they were better able to learn and study, as a result of their study during the research period, compared with 64% of English language background people. Further, almost seven in ten (69%) LBOTE people reported improved literacy and numeracy skills compared with 42% of English language background people. Gains in communications and social skills were also much higher for LBOTE people with 86% noting improved communication skills, compared with 71% of people from English-speaking backgrounds and 84% advising that they had improved their capacity to 'get along with people and make friends' compared with 69% of native English speakers. However, the largest difference between the two groups related to an improved understanding of 'the way Australians live and what they think', with 75% of LBOTE people agreeing, compared with 45% of English language background people.

An analysis by socio-economic status reveals that people from the middle socio-economic band reported the most positive gains from their learning, for almost all questions. When labour force status is considered, it is evident that unemployed people had the strongest gains in:

- Confidence (92% compared to 86% and 85% of those working and not in the labour force, respectively)
- Learning and study skills (77% compared to 65% and 68% of those working and not in the labour force, respectively)
- Communication skills (83% compared to 74% and 70% of those working and not in the labour force, respectively)
- Social skills (83% compared to 69% and 73% of those working and not in the labour force, respectively)
- Technological skills (79% compared to 60% and 69% of those working and not in the labour force respectively)
- Life management skills (70% compared to 60% and 65% of those working and not in the labour force, respectively)

However, employed people were most likely to report developing good job skills (78%), improving their capacity to do business (68%) and finding a (new) job (46%) as a result of their engagement in learning. People not in the labour force were most likely to report improved involvement in leisure activities as an outcome of their study in ACE (66% compared with 48% for employed people and 47% for unemployed people).

### *Experience of ACE*

The final study survey in 2006 asked respondents about their experiences of learning in ACE, in terms of its learning environment, quality of teaching, their general experiences in ACE providers and of ACE programmes. Figure 38.4 shows the responses for these questions, with 'strong agreement' and 'agreement' shown separately.

All respondents were generally very positive about their experiences of learning through ACE providers. All respondents strongly endorsed the ACE sector's learning environment, including the opportunities to learn at their own level and pace and to access individual help and guidance: three of the defining characteristics of the sector.

Despite the supportive and flexible environment, however, almost four in ten (39%) learners felt that the 'course was too short for the content that had to be covered'. That is, the pace was faster than was comfortable for them. In addition, for around one-quarter of respondents (27%), the course was more difficult than they had expected.

Additional questions revealed that while around eight in ten respondents reported that information about study pathways was available in terms of what level study

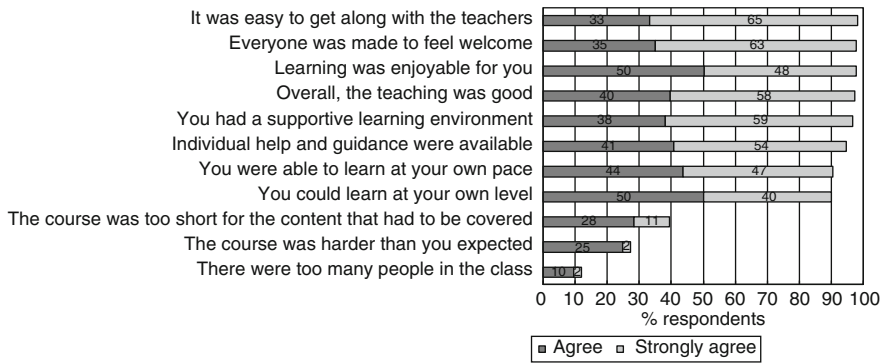


Fig. 38.4 Experience of learning in ACE context

came next and where they could undertake such study (79% and 77%, respectively), one in five (20%) reported that they were not able to gain this information from their ACE provider.

Most respondents generally thought there was a good range of courses available in ACE (88% agreement) and that they were very affordable (84%). However, almost one-quarter (23%) of respondents sought links between their ACE course and the workplace but found none and half (50%) commented that ACE courses should focus more on skills for job seeking.

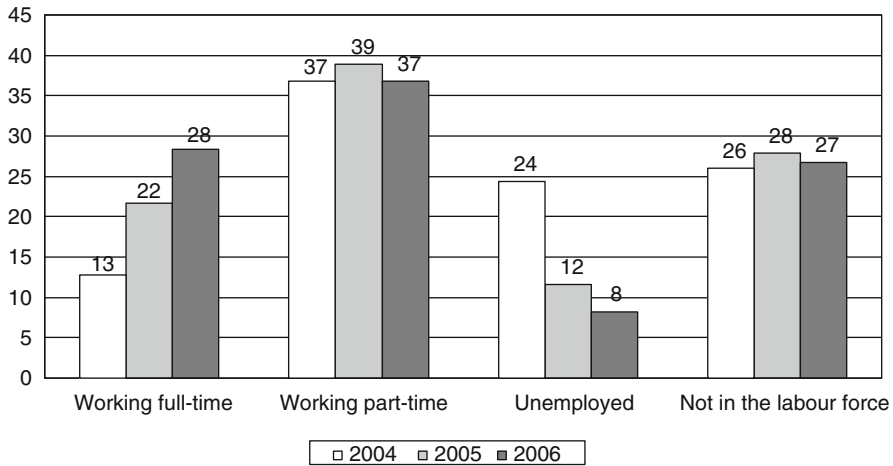
Analysis of responses by gender revealed that male learners were more positive than females on nearly all items – although these differences were small. There were few differences between English language background people and LBOTE people in relation to agreement with the positive statements on learning in ACE. However, LBOTE people were much more likely to find the course:

- Too short for the content (55% compared to 36% of English language background people)
- Harder than expected (33% compared to 26% English language background people)
- Had too many people in the class (20% compared to 10%)
- Lacking the links with the workplace that they would have liked (34% compared to 21% of English language background people)

When socio-economic status was considered, the least positive respondents were those from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) quintile (i.e. the poorest 20% of the population), and these respondents were most likely to report that they would have liked their ACE course to have had links with the workplace.

Among labour force groups, those who were unemployed in 2005 were least likely (compared to workers and those not in the labour force) to be positive about their learning experiences in ACE. They were more likely to report a lack of access to information about study pathways, would have liked greater links between their ACE course and the workplace, and emphasised that ACE courses should focus more on skills for job seeking.





**Fig. 38.5** Change in labour force status, 2004–2006, for 2006 survey cohort

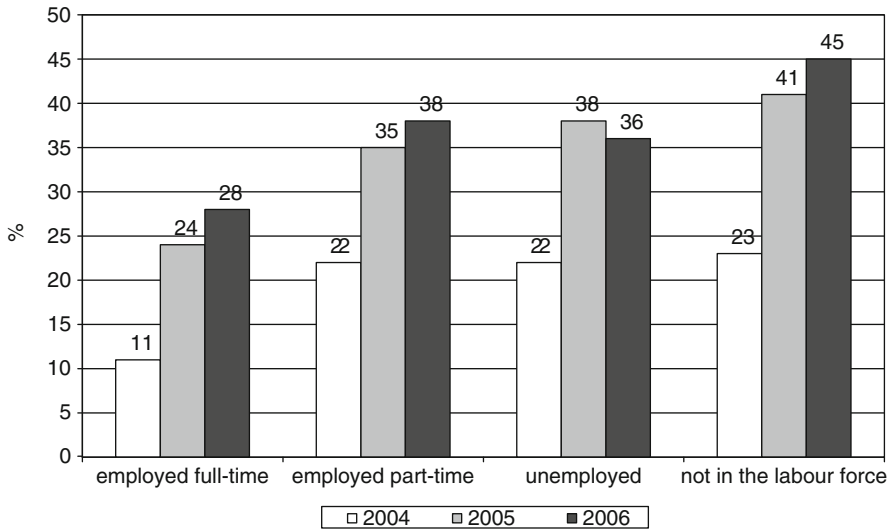
## *Work Outcomes*

At the time of the final interview in 2006, 63% of respondents were employed, 9% were looking for work and 28% were not in the labour force. Respondents who were working reported strong connections between their 2004 ACE or 2005 study and their work. In particular:

- Seventy-three percent said that their study helped with tasks they do at work
- Sixty-one percent said it taught them skills to help them get a better job
- Forty-seven percent said that it helped them to get a job
- Twenty-six percent said that their study had helped them to set up or run a business

Respondents working in 2006 who had been unemployed in 2005 reported even stronger links between their study and work outcomes: 68% said that their study had taught them skills to help them get a job, and 58% said that their study had helped them to get a job. LBOTE people reported stronger work related links between their study and work outcomes than people from English-speaking backgrounds. However, respondents from the lowest socioeconomic status (SES) quintile were the least likely to report connections between their study and work, and again, it was the middle SES bands that reported the greatest gains. If we consider the whole cohort and examine the changes in labour force status from 2004 to 2006, it is evident that significant gains in employment were made, as Fig. 38.5 illustrates.

Clearly, strong gains were made in full-time work with the proportion in full-time work more than doubling among the cohort during the research period, from 13% in 2004 to 28% in 2006. There also was a significant reduction in unemployment among the cohort, from 24% in 2004 to just 8% in 2006, while the proportions in part-time work and not in the labour force remained almost consistent.



**Fig. 38.6** Engagement in volunteer work by labour force status, 2004–2006

Of all those who were unemployed in 2004, 63% were working in 2006 and only 19% remained unemployed. A further 18% of those who had been unemployed when they commenced their involvement in this study in 2004 had left the labour force by the time they were interviewed in 2006.

### ***Community Engagement***

Community engagement by members of the cohort, evidenced by volunteer work in the community, increased throughout the duration of the study.

The proportion of the overall cohort engaged in volunteer work grew from 27% in 2004 to 37% in 2006. In addition, nearly half (46%) said that they planned to volunteer in the following year. If we consider the cohort by their labour force status, however, we can see that all groups increased their participation in volunteer work, particularly those not in the labour force, as Fig. 38.6 shows.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The longitudinal study of ACE learners sought to identify whether participation in ACE made a difference for learners and, in particular, whether it made a difference for all learners, including those most educationally disadvantaged. It also sought to establish what it was about ACE that contributed to the achievement of effective outcomes.

As the previous section has described, some key benefits of ACE participation were identified for the range of learner groups over the 3 years of the study. The study also identified some important challenges for the sector in meeting the needs of the most educationally disadvantaged learners.

Following her analysis of the evidence base related to ACE, Bowman (2006) concluded that ACE providers collectively play six key roles:

- ‘Platform builders – re-engaging adults with basic education and support services
- Bridge builders – providing pathways into formal tertiary education and paid work
- Work-skills developers – offering vocational training in their own right
- Facilitators of adult health - improving mental, physical and emotional well-being
- Promoters of citizenship – achieving adults active in community activities, and
- Community capacity builders – facilitating local networks and community-led development at various levels, of suburb, neighbourhood, small town and district.’ (Bowman 2006, p. 2).

How evident are these roles in the findings of this longitudinal study?

First, we have seen in our study that ACE is able to engage adults from a broad range of backgrounds in learning and that it provides an enjoyable and supportive learning environment that promotes course completion, that is, ACE effectively performs a ‘platform building’ role. Second, the study findings show that ACE provides an effective pathway for further study through encouraging, laying a foundation for and providing assistance with entry to new and higher-level courses in ACE and other providers. Third, we have seen that through providing accredited vocational education and training in addition to improving confidence, communication, teamwork and ICT skills, ACE connects learners to work. It both builds work-related skills for those already in employment and helps those seeking work to acquire a job. It clearly fulfils the ‘bridge-building’ and ‘work-skills development’ roles to which Bowman (2006) refers.

Fourth, the findings show that ACE builds social and life management skills, particularly for unemployed people, and promotes involvement in leisure activities, particularly for people not in the labour force. Clearly, ACE providers facilitate improvement in mental, physical and emotional well-being. Fifth, there is strong evidence that study through ACE providers promotes citizenship through strengthening understanding of Australian culture and values, particularly effectively for people from language backgrounds other than English, and encouraging volunteer work in the community among full-time and part-time workers, unemployed people and especially those not in the labour force. Finally, through fostering improvement in confidence, communication and social skills, ACE providers facilitate the development of local community networks in both metropolitan and regional communities.

An important question remains. If we examine the findings carefully, are learners from a full range of backgrounds equally likely to gain these valuable outcomes? ACE clearly has the capacity to engage learners from diverse backgrounds, including those who are educationally disadvantaged. Those who were unemployed or most socioeconomically disadvantaged, however, were less positive

about the experience of learning in ACE than employed people or those from higher socio-economic status households. While LBOTE people were extremely positive about the ACE learning environment generally, and reported the highest gains in literacy and numeracy, better communication skills and a greater understanding of the way Australians live and what they think, they were nonetheless more likely to find the course too short for the content, more difficult than they expected and with too many people in the class, than learners from English-speaking backgrounds.

The majority of respondents found information about study pathways readily available from their ACE provider; however, one-fifth of the cohort reported difficulties in gaining this information. Men, people from the poorest 25% of households, unemployed and LBOTE people were even more likely to report these difficulties.

There were strong gains in employment for unemployed learners and improved capacity to work was a common outcome. Indeed, the full-time rate of employment more than doubled during the study period and unemployment fell by two-thirds. Almost one-quarter of respondents, however, felt that there should have been links between their ACE course and the workplace, and that these links had not been evident to them. Half of all respondents believed that ACE courses should focus more on skills for job seeking. Again men, people from the poorest 25% of households, LBOTE and unemployed people were even more likely to report these gaps.

In summary, this study has provided evidence of the ACE sector's contribution to the economic and social sustainability of Victoria. ACE is clearly an accessible sector able to reach greater proportions of the most disadvantaged people in Victoria than other education and training providers. It particularly serves well those people resident in regional communities where few other providers exist. The work and study pathways of respondents that have been revealed through this study demonstrate the critical capacity of the ACE sector to engage learners and facilitate connections for them to further study, employment and stronger involvement in their local community. The study confirmed that ACE addresses diverse and priority learner needs and expectations and makes a difference for the most educationally disadvantaged people. In doing so, it facilitates not just individual but also community outcomes. While this longitudinal study has demonstrated some of the key benefits of studying in ACE, it also has identified some challenges that remain for the sector in adequately serving the needs of the most educationally disadvantaged groups in Victorian society.

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# Chapter 39

## Lifelong or Longlife? Learning in the Later Years

Alexandra Withnall

### Introduction

It is now recognised that population ageing and the increase in life expectancy in many countries of the world pose a number of challenges across a range of policy dimensions. These include health issues, changing family configurations and inter-generational relations, new patterns of work and meanings of retirement as well as the sustainability of social support systems at a time of global economic crisis. Indeed, population ageing has implications for all aspects of life. However, in many countries, increasing numbers of people will reach later life with very different experiences from those of their parents and grandparents. It is therefore likely that their expectations of growing older and their aspirations for old age will be significantly different from those of previous generations. What are the implications of this changing demography for lifelong learning, itself a contested concept? This chapter will explore the emergence of later life learning in recent years and will comment on some of the policies and programmes that have been developed in different countries. It will also be argued that demographic change has already rendered simplistic notions of lifelong learning obsolete and that, in view of the potential for the human lifespan, we need to think in terms of a new guiding principle for the twenty-first century.

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## Some Aspects of Global Ageing

In view of the above, it is instructive to look briefly at some statistical evidence about the global phenomenon that is population ageing. In their comprehensive report on global ageing for the U.S. Census Bureau, Kinsella and Wan He (2009) comment that between July 2007 and July 2008, the estimated change in the total size of the world's older population was more than 10.4 million people, an average of 870,000 each month. They calculate that in less than 10 years, older people will outnumber children for the first time in history. Currently, China has the world's largest older population numbering 106 million in 2008 although Japan has the highest percentage of older people with almost 22% of its population being over 65. However, with the exception of Japan and Georgia, the world's 25 'oldest' countries are all in Europe with Italy and Germany, both of which have 20% of their populations aged over 65, leading the way. In the USA, where older people still make up only 13% of the population, it is forecast that this will change markedly by 2030 as the so-called Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 pass 65. Within developing regions, the Caribbean has the highest percentage of people aged over 65, followed by Latin America (6.4%) and Asia (excluding Japan) at 6.2% although considerable increases are expected here due to rapid drops in fertility levels in recent years.

For our purposes, it is also useful to look at life expectancy. At present, life expectancy at birth is 82 years in both Japan and Singapore and indeed, exceeds 80 years in 11 countries although there are extreme variations across the globe. In Western Europe, France, Sweden and Italy, all have life expectancy rates greater than 80 years. In 2004, in France, Italy, Spain, Finland and Australia, women could expect in excess of 20 years of life expectancy after retirement with figures for men being slightly lower overall (OECD 2006). This differential is due to women's typical earlier retirement age and general longevity although it has to be noted that not all these years may be spent in optimum health. However, some countries are predicted to experience population ageing coupled with the problems of overall population decline; these include Russia, Japan and the Ukraine whilst South Africa has already experienced a fall in life expectancy due to high mortality rates related to HIV/AIDS. This fall is also predicted to be the case in Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland between 2008 and 2040 just when the proportions of those over 65 in the population are due to increase.

It is also important to note that one of the major changes in recent years has been the growth in the number of people who are already aged over 80 in many national populations; this age group is growing more rapidly than the older population as a whole. In 2008, 17.2% of the world's oldest people lived in China with high proportions in other Asian countries and in the USA. Projections suggest that the 80+ population across the globe will increase 233% between 2008 and 2040 compared with 160% for the population aged 65 and over and only 33% for the total population of all ages (Kinsella and Wan He 2009).

These statistics paint a truly astonishing picture. Indeed, the potential impact of the ageing of populations is now such a source of concern that organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organisation (WHO) operating on a



global scale have initiated large-scale programmes to begin to try to address some of the most pressing issues although the implications are not necessarily negative. However, in rethinking lifelong learning to include a more clearly defined focus on older people, it is important to consider which older people are under discussion. This is always a difficulty since different organisations and institutions across the globe and existing demographic and gerontological studies tend to make use of a whole range of definitions and age ranges when examining different aspects of older people's lives. For example, the report on which the above discussion mainly draws was produced for the U.S. Census Bureau and differentiates between the 'older population' aged 65 and over and the 'oldest old' who are those over 80. The Population Division of the United Nations which has a long tradition of studying the ageing of populations refers to older people as being over 60. Schuller and Watson (2009) in constructing their model of the educational life course preferred to think in terms of four main overlapping life stages broadly defined as up to age 25, 25–50, 50–75 and 75+. In her research, Withnall (2010) tried to eschew any mention of age by studying people who were 'post-work' but finally had to admit that such a designation is probably no longer sustainable in a world where meanings of work are subject to redefinition. Like Schuller and Watson, she also observes that age bands now appear to have become an accepted way to explore the experiences of different cohorts with age 50 frequently used as a base line for any discussion of later life.

Another view is that chronological age is a less useful concept than the development of an in-depth understanding of the impact of older people's gender, ethnicity, health status, socio-economic circumstances and cognitive abilities, a perception that is closely related to ideas of the Third Age as a time of active leisure and personal fulfilment and the Fourth Age of descent into dependence and death (Laslett 1989). However, it is important to stress that the Third Age was originally conceptualised not as an easily defined period of time but rather as a status to be achieved through personal choice, an idea that has itself been subject to some criticism over the years.

In view of these problems of definition and in order to be inclusive, this chapter will generally refer to older people as those aged 50 and over but will take other age groupings into account where these are specified. What is vitally important to recognise is that older people are highly diverse and that ideas about age and growing older vary between cultures and indeed, within some cultures. As Findsen (2005) has pointed out, ageing has physiological, social and cultural dimensions as well as physical aspects and accordingly, theories of ageing have been developed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives.

## **Developments in Later Life Learning: A Historical Perspective**

Interest in learning in later life has only emerged over the last 40 years or so and, as Manheimer (2007) has argued in respect of the USA, developments have been largely influenced by emerging frameworks for understanding ageing and life course

changes in respect of work and retirement. In order to understand these developments on a wider scale, it is worth exploring them in some detail. It should be noted, however, that these frameworks have not necessarily emerged in chronological order; they frequently overlap or re-emerge at a later date or terms are used interchangeably without always being clearly defined. It can also be argued that whilst some frameworks have been used to address various aspects of ageing and to formulate international policy developments, others have merely provided guiding principles in different ways in different countries. They have also been subject to considerable academic debate as to their meaning and the extent of their influence.

### *Active Ageing*

In 2002, as part of its contribution to the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing, the WHO advocated a life course approach to ‘active ageing’ encompassing health, participation and security, as a way of enhancing quality of life as people grow older, an idea that has been widely promoted across the globe in the intervening years. Yet this was not a new concept; Withnall and Percy (1994) noted that activity theory and sociological theories of role change that emerged in the 1960s and that viewed retirement as a positive, creative and busy time offering the potential for personal growth and social participation have provided the basis for the development of a whole range of programmes and activities designed to ensure that older people can stay active and vitally engaged. Activity theory provided a counterbalance to disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry 1961) that derived from social psychology and that implied the withdrawal of older people from more active roles in society and indeed, the withdrawal of society from the individual in order to maintain societal equilibrium. Both theories are based on structural functionalist assumptions about the importance of social integration as a way of ensuring this equilibrium and imply that ageing is problematic; as such, they have both been subject to considerable criticism. Accordingly, although it can be argued that activity theory is probably far too limited to encapsulate the complexity of older people’s engagement in social and educational activities, it undoubtedly legitimised the way for the development of some innovative learning programmes, especially in the USA as awareness of ‘a large subset of middle-income and more affluent adults now comprised a burgeoning “silver industry”’ (Manheimer 2007:1).

From the 1960s onwards, these included the Institute for Retired Professionals at the New School for Social Research in New York City, where large numbers of retirees (mainly ex-school teachers) assumed new roles as volunteer teachers, co-ordinators, reporters and students in a so-called ‘do-it-yourself university’ (Hirsch 1980). There are now over 400 such institutes across the USA and Canada mainly replicating the original concept but now called Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs). More recently, the Osher Foundation, founded by an American philanthropist, has provided a considerable amount of funding to assist the expansion of these institutes and to support the establishment of a whole range of new ones, known as Osher

Institutes of Lifelong Learning (OLLI). Although they vary, OLLIs provide around 120 not-for-credit learning programmes for people over 50 on university and college campuses around the USA with volunteer support and a National Resources Centre based at the University of Southern Maine (The Bernard Osher Foundation 2005).

1975 saw the founding of Elderhostel (now renamed Exploritas), a not-for-profit organisation offering educational travel and learning holidays for older people in the USA and Canada originally often based on university campuses. Other developments included the introduction of tuition fee waiver schemes in a range of university and college courses, the growth of senior centres offering a variety of activities and the expansion of Shepherd's Centers, interfaith community-based, volunteer-led organisations that try to provide a range of meaningful activities for older people including lifelong learning and cultural enhancement opportunities. 1988 also witnessed the opening of the North Carolina Center for Creative Retirement, originally a department of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, NC, which has become an internationally acclaimed learning community dedicated to promoting opportunities for later life learning as well as leadership, community service and research. There have been similar developments at McGill University in Montreal and through the Gerontology Research Centre at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver (Cusack 1999). In Scotland, the Senior Studies Institute at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow was established in 1991 to provide a range of educational opportunities for older people in the area and it has continued to flourish and expand over time.

Perhaps one of the most significant developments of this time, however, can be seen in the development of the University of the Third Age in Europe and its subsequent spread, in different forms, around the world. Founded at the University of Toulouse in France in 1973, its original defining characteristic was that of older people studying specially designed courses on a university campus taught by university faculty and with government funding (Withnall 2010). Overall, the guiding principle is that of learning in a social context with no barriers to entry (other than having left full-time employment), no awards on completion, self-directed and usually at low cost. Within the UK, the model has been that of a self-help organisation where use is made of members' knowledge, skills and experience to set up learning groups where participants may be both learners and teachers. This model has been used elsewhere, notably in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa although a recent innovation has been the introduction of U3A Online, a virtual University of the Third Age offering online courses anywhere in the world and especially suited to older people who may be geographically or physically isolated. The International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUTA) is now the parent organisation for U3As all over the world and holds an international congress every 2 years; it is managed by a governing board of up to 27 members who currently come from 13 different countries and an executive committee of president, two vice-presidents, secretary and treasurer who meet periodically in cyberspace.

Certainly, there is no doubt that the University of the Third Age has been one of the major educational success stories of the past 40 years, but it has often been accused of appealing only to the middle class who have already benefited from

educational opportunities earlier in life; its self-help philosophy might not appeal to everyone in those countries where this model prevails. There is also the danger that by offering educational and leisure opportunities at a reduced rate, it may have unwittingly provided governments with a rationale for cutting back on formally provided educational classes and courses for adults in general. Questions about the quality of teaching, learning and curriculum development may also need further investigation whether or not there is formal academic control of the organisation.

Overall, the enthusiastic promotion of active ageing as a guiding principle for later life has become an important feature of educational provision for older people across the world. Walker (2002) has discussed at length what he sees as the key principles of active ageing and how it might be operationalised across the life cycle as a preventative concept involving all age groups including the frail and dependent elderly with the overall goal of enhancing participation and autonomy. However, Withnall (2010) points out that any espousal of the rhetoric of active ageing runs the risk of ignoring the larger structural issues that may affect older people's ability to be active as well as individual situations that may change over time. She is concerned that 'keeping active' is in danger of becoming a moral imperative and agrees with Katz (2000) regarding the need to unpack further notions of activity in relation to later life.

### *Productive Ageing*

The concept of productive ageing was developed at a seminar held in Salzburg, Austria, in 1982 although the term had been in use since the 1970s. It was based around three inter-related developments – demographic trends, the ways in which information technology has enabled us to rethink ideas of productivity and the prediction that older people may be less inclined to retire into a life based entirely around leisure after they leave the workforce. How could older adults be encouraged to continue to make both economic and social contributions to society in mutually beneficial ways? (Butler and Gleason 1985). Although significant differences in definition prevail among scholars, Bass and Caro (2001) later built on earlier thinking to develop a conceptual framework within which to consider productive ageing and the implications for policy development. Against a dynamic and interactive background of environmental, situational, individual, social policy factors as well as levels of participation, they identify four forms of productive activity in relation to older people – employment, volunteering, assistance with caregiving usually within families and formal, career-related education or retraining that provides certification or credit. All of these offer opportunities to learn and for the development of educational programmes for older people although naturally, to varying extents in different countries. In many countries, there are organisations that offer comprehensive training programmes for caregivers of any age whether participants are involved in child care or in caring for relatives suffering dementia or a chronic illness. The fact that many older people are now remaining in the workforce for much longer than

previously also raises a number of issues regarding their access to further training and skills updating, how this can best be adapted to their needs and the consequences (Mayhew et al. 2008). The Australian government has already responded by funding a productive ageing package in order to harness the skills and experience of older Australians in the workforce and to provide training and support for them ([www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)).

However, in considering ideas about productive ageing writers such as Taylor and Bengtson (2001) echo the sentiments already expressed in respect of active ageing – lack of recognition of the larger social forces that may affect opportunities for productive activity amongst older people. They suggest that a greater awareness of macro forces and historical context is required. Similarly, Estes and Mahakian (2001) warn of the dangers of a concept of productive ageing that has its roots in capitalistic principles and that potentially further disadvantages those in society who are already marginalised within the older population. Meanwhile, Skirbekk (2008) has reviewed the evidence on how productivity may vary with age across the life cycle; whilst he found little or no decline among older workers in tasks that required experience or verbal abilities, this was not the case where tasks involved problem solving, learning and speed. More investigation into different older people's capacity for different kinds of productive work and their associated training needs is obviously required. However, a further issue is the lack of large-scale evidence of the impact of participation in so-called productive activities on individuals, families and communities and on societies in general.

Among other criticisms of notions of productive ageing, the question of what it might mean to be 'unproductive' also arises. In line with the criticisms above, what happens to those whose health status, social circumstances or personal preferences largely prevent them from being productive in the sense in which it seems to be commonly understood? In Israel, Yad Lakashish or 'Lifeline for the Old', a not-for-profit organisation in Jerusalem offers a centre where needy older people, often recent immigrants, can develop and share knowledge and skills and experience creative work opportunities in a highly supportive environment however disabled they may be ([www.lifeline.org.il](http://www.lifeline.org.il)). Accordingly, the answer may lie in extending definitions of productive ageing, for example, the concept might also incorporate what Birren calls 'the transfer of productive ideas, information, and results of experience across generations...' (2001:117). In this way, older people become the creators of knowledge and erudition rather than passive consumers, an idea that is gaining currency worldwide, but especially in some European countries. In the UK, the devolved administrations of both Wales and Scotland have recently set up new Centres of Intergenerational Practice in order to explore emerging ideas and develop practical activities to benefit all generations. In Australia, the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NPSAC) has been established by National Seniors Australia (NSA) with some government funding with the overall aim of improving the quality of life of people over 50 by advancing knowledge and understanding of productive ageing which it interprets in a very broad sense ([www.productiveageing.com.au](http://www.productiveageing.com.au)).

## *Successful/Positive Ageing*

Closely related to ideas about productive ageing is the notion of 'successful' ageing. As recognition of longer life expectancy and ideas concerning the potential of later life has grown interest in how best to promote a healthier old age and to ensure that people age 'successfully' and are able to maintain a positive outlook also began to emerge in the 1980s. Reviewing the considerable medical, social and psychological literature on the subject, Bowling and Dieppe (2005) found that whilst biomedical models emphasise the absence of disease and good physical and mental functioning, socio-psychological models stress life satisfaction, social functioning and participation. From their own investigation of lay views, they found that many older people in their study were enjoying life and were quite happy even in the presence of disease or disability. However, in spite of an apparent lack of agreement as to what successful ageing actually entails, it seems to have become almost a mantra for growing older; after all, how could one admit to ageing unsuccessfully? Sometimes used interchangeably with the term 'positive ageing' and very much related to notions of active ageing, ideas about successful ageing have legitimised some new ways of thinking about the possibilities of retirement and later life. The upbeat message to older people is very much that later life offers opportunities to explore new ways to grow old. Foremost among these is the responsibility for learning how to maintain physical health and well-being in the face of ageing not just through attention to diet and exercise but also through, for example, self-management of chronic health conditions. Accordingly, several thousand people in the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, most of who were over 50, have taken part in the Expert Patient Programme designed to help people learn to cope with long term health problems (Expert Patients Programme Community Interest Company 2007). In the UK, the government has funded a multidisciplinary research programme with the aim of investigating factors across the life course that influence healthy ageing and well-being in later life (See [www.esrc.ac.uk](http://www.esrc.ac.uk)).

In tandem with attention to physical health, successful ageing also implies the maintenance of cognitive abilities. Certainly, older people's desire to keep their brains active has emerged in a range of studies. Withnall (2010) found that older people who took part in her study of later life learning expressed ideas about the importance of learning for maintaining an active and enquiring mind, for broadening horizons as well as for social interaction and remaining connected to society. She believes this emphasis on the maintenance of mental function and social contact may disguise a fear of cognitive decline and reveals a belief held by many older people that 'exercising' the brain may help to guard against neurological illness later on. The recent promotion across the globe of 'brain training' exercises through both books and electronic games may have helped to fuel this belief although at present, there is no conclusive evidence as to their efficacy.

Apart from merely maintaining cognitive function, older people's ability to be creative in later life has been the subject of considerable debate and discussion. Although it has been pointed out that some models of successful ageing and creativity

fail to take the sociocultural context into account (Whitbourne 2001), writers such as Carlsen (1996) believe that ageing offers the chance to make sense of our lives; and Cohen (2005) presents a four-stage account of psychological development in the second half of life fuelled by what he calls 'the inner push'. He argues that retirement can represent the liberation phase, a time when people feel a desire to experiment, innovate and skirt round social conventions to explore new paths to creativity. Learning, in whatever form, is an important component of this, and he points out that the provision of low-cost educational opportunities is therefore a good in and of itself.

Other scholars have explored the possibilities of 'spiritual' ageing as a further aspect of positive ageing through which older people use their later years to reflect on their lives and repair relationships, seek to understand their role in the world, acknowledge their own impending death and perhaps become sages and mentors for succeeding generations. Tornstam (2005) refers to this aspect of later life as 'gerotranscendence', a natural progression towards maturation and what we usually think of as wisdom. The individual may become selective in activities chosen and may wish to undertake more solitary but personally meaningful pursuits. However, Tornstam is careful to point out that cultural or individual life experiences have the potential to either facilitate or impede the processes of gerotranscendence (and thus the kind of pursuits selected).

## The Link with Lifelong Learning

Although there are, of course, other frameworks through which the processes of ageing might be explored and the links with later life learning investigated, those discussed here largely reflect how changes in thinking about the processes of ageing and later life have been understood. However, it is within the context of other more recent changes that current debates about the nature of later life learning and what it means to be an older learner must be reassessed. In particular, the emergence in different countries of policies and strategies on lifelong learning can be seen as a major step forward especially as some educationalists had long advocated the need to move away from gerontological approaches in order to rethink the relationship between lifelong learning and learning in the later years (Withnall 2000).

In a penetrative analysis of the genealogy of lifelong learning in Europe, Slowey (2008) observes that within the European Union (EU), lifelong learning has developed in three main phases since the late 1980s when the EU was concerned with economic development within the member states. In the third phase which coincided with the new millennium, she notes a reaction to the emerging challenges of globalisation and technological development, changes in the labour market and in the nature of work and demographic trends exemplified in the publication of a *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (European Commission 2000) that nevertheless adopted a socio-economic approach derived from human capital theory. A subsequent EU resolution (EC 2002) set out six priority actions that did mention the

provision of access to lifelong learning opportunities for all individuals, regardless of age; as Slowey demonstrates, however, individual countries' policies on lifelong learning are very much influenced by different educational structures and traditions. Accordingly, a range of different models of lifelong learning can now be identified although none actually exists in a pure form. Perhaps the most idealistic is the social justice model where the chance to learn is available to everyone in the interests of equality of opportunity within a democratic society (Schuetze 2007). This is very much the cradle-to-grave ideal where everyone has access not just to vocational training but also to learning that promotes personal development and active citizenship over the life course even if these terms are not well defined.

Whilst the EU continues to focus mainly on ambitious targets for the employment of people aged 55–64 and a progressive increase in the average age of exit from the labour market, more recent communications have accepted that lifelong learning also has a role to play in developing citizenship and competence. For example, the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013 is designed to provide practical support for the implementation of adult learning policies but in its Grundtvig strand, it encompasses all types of learning and for the first time, seeks especially to fund activities that address the challenge of an ageing population across Europe (EC 2007). To date, the result has been an interesting range of transnational projects that focus specifically on various aspects of later life learning (EC 2010). However, it is vitally important that the outcomes of this work are adequately disseminated and embedded in practice if they are to have a lasting impact.

Withnall (2008) has examined a selection of recent policy statements relating both to lifelong learning and to ageing populations across the four countries within the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Although she comments on the complexities facing governments in striving to implement policies in different countries, she feels that much of the language used in the documents she examined amounts to little more than 'empty rhetoric' (Withnall 2010: 14). However, in almost all cases, she detects a new acknowledgement that older people can be a resource for society and that age discrimination in any form should not be tolerated. This is underpinned by an assumption, in some cases, that older people should have a responsibility to take advantage of education and training opportunities or to remain active in other ways – a view that is very much in accord with the prevailing mantra of active ageing.

Policy responses to demographic trends that stress the importance of lifelong learning can also be detected elsewhere. Japan has long recognised the importance of provision for adult education in general and in recent years, has come to acknowledge lifelong learning as a cradle-to-grave concept. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), established in 2001 has set up a Lifelong Learning Policy Bureau which coordinates lifelong learning policy and practice at all levels and works with a range of other agencies. There is now a Senior Citizens Continuing Education Program within community education centres offering a range of courses including Japanese society and culture, traditional arts and community activism. Older people may also attend college courses (Lakin 2010). With its ageing population and rising income levels, it is likely that demand for



learning activities will increase as subsequent generations who have not been so strongly focused on work move into later life (Wilson 2001). Similarly, China has already established several ‘Universities for the Aged’ although it is still difficult to access information regarding their structure and activities. In Europe, a number of universities have opened their doors to older learners, and the University of the Balearic Isles hosts a summer school for older learners from across Europe. Meanwhile, the Zentrum für Allgemeine Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung (ZAWiW) at the University of Ulm in Germany offers an enormous range of activities including virtual learning projects and intergenerational activities as well as more traditional course and classes ([www.zawiw.de](http://www.zawiw.de)). There are similar programmes in a number of South American countries. As Slowey (2008) observes, older people take part in learning for a whole variety of reasons, engage in a very wide range of learning activities and make use of an extensive assortment of methods of learning that increasingly include distance and Internet-based learning. However, not all older people have access to new technology or are comfortable with its use, and this may present a major challenge for the immediate future.

## Who Are the Older Learners Now?

Older learners have traditionally been assumed to be those people no longer active in the labour market and who had become eligible for entry into their country’s state pension scheme where available – in other words, they were retired. Certainly, many of the learning opportunities already developed in different countries have been aimed at retirees who supposedly had time on their hands. For many older people, this may indeed still be the case especially in those countries where the later years are promoted as a time of unlimited opportunity, activity and a new stage in life. However, perhaps the most significant change in recent years has been the move away from traditional notions of retirement as a cessation of working life and the general lack of definition of how it might now be defined and measured (Denton and Spencer 2008). It is certainly likely that many older people are choosing to remain in employment of some kind for social reasons, through economic necessity or as is increasingly the case, through changes to pension rules as governments in many countries seek to deal with economic crisis, skills shortages, escalating state benefit costs and an increasing number of pensioners in poverty by extending working life (Smeaton et al. 2009).

As the sheer diversity of older people’s lifestyles becomes more apparent, Kidahashi and Manheimer (2009) have attempted to develop a typology of what they term positive life models based along two axes. These represent the degree to which an older person is oriented towards engagement with formally acknowledged ‘work’ of some kind or the degree to which they prefer to explore new directions and seek a new meaning to life. Although the authors point out that many people will shift from one model to another as they grow older, they identify five lifestyles that individuals may pursue following the traditional retirement age. These are

(1) traditional golden years where relaxing leisure time remains the dominant preoccupation; (2) neo-golden years in which the emphasis is on pursuing self-development; it may involve being a member of an informal learning group; (3) portfolio life where the individual seeks a balance between some form of paid work, family and travel activities and volunteering; (4) second career in which an older person decides to embark on a new venture in retirement; setting up a new business perhaps based on a hobby or interest is an example of this and (5) extension of midlife career where an individual continues their existing career for as long as possible whatever their motivation.

The authors go on to provide an interesting analysis of the implications of their five models for educational institutions and the ways in which they might respond to the changing learning needs of more and diverse older people. For example, these might include expanding opportunities for cultural enrichment, for developing new skills whether to update existing abilities or to set up a new business or helping people to achieve a suitable work–life balance. However, questions about appropriate curriculum, delivery methods and associated costs inevitably arise. At a time when many countries are focusing available resources on the training of young people, it is not clear which institutions would have the wherewithal to be involved. One positive example comes from the USA where the development of university-based retirement communities is witnessing a substantial growth in popularity partly aided by private funding (Gordon & Shinagel 2004), a development that could be expanded across Europe (Harrison & Tsao 2006). In the UK, Phillipson & Ogg (2010) have pointed out how universities could be much more involved in responding to the emerging requirements of different older learners and in promoting active ageing although any new ventures would naturally need to be consistent with higher education's distinctive mission.

A better understanding of the changing nature of retirement and of the diversity of older people's lives is to be welcomed. It is also important that we begin to explore what influences their choices and fuels their learning aspirations and the kinds of learning practices in which they are involved (Withnall 2010). What is still missing from the debate about the nature of lifelong learning, however, is any real acknowledgement of whether and how frailty and dependency in later life might be addressed in educational terms. If lifelong learning is to be truly lifelong, it is important to consider in what sense an older person with multiple physical and/or cognitive impairments might be seen as a lifelong learner. There are some emerging accounts in different countries of what is claimed to be good practice in residential settings (e.g. Aldridge 2009) although some of these accounts might be criticised for the somewhat extravagant claims they appear to make in relation to the perceived benefits of introducing different activities into aged care settings. How can learning be understood in this context, what would be the goals and what teaching and learning strategies could be used? There are no easy answers, but Withnall (2010) advocates the philosophy of 'personhood' (Kitwood 1997) and the concept of 'wraparound care' (James 2008) as starting points for consideration of the many issues that arise in considering how matters of learning and dependency might be addressed. In the

USA, ventures such as Artists for Alzheimer's, an initiative of the Hearst Foundation Alzheimer's Foundation ([www.thehearth.org](http://www.thehearth.org)) are developing innovative approaches to working creatively with people at different stages of this illness. There are numerous other examples from different countries, but much more evidence of successful work is required.

On a global scale, there has been little consideration of how any concept of life-long learning can be considered in relation to the many older people in developing countries who have low levels of literacy. Based on available information for 105 developing nations, it has been estimated that 56% of people aged 60 and over were illiterate in 2000; in addition, some developed countries such as Portugal and Malta still have proportions of older people who lack basic literacy skills (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2002). This is not to imply that older people in these communities do not have an important role to play; in rural areas in countries such as China where younger people have already gone to seek better opportunities elsewhere, it is accepted that older people continue to work in farm lands and villages for as long as possible.

Although this situation may gradually change as better educated cohorts of people move into later life, the ways in which 'literacy' itself is interpreted are constantly changing. From a concentration on reading and writing, it has expanded to include health and financial literacy (and numeracy) across a range of both developed and developing countries in view of the current worldwide imperative to take personal responsibility for health, well-being and assets in later life and to subscribe to a philosophy of active ageing. There is always more to be learnt. In this changing context, current understandings of lifelong learning seem to be redundant.

## **From Lifelong Learning to Longlife Learning**

In view of these difficulties and the sheer diversity of older people's lives across the world, Withnall (2010) has argued that the concept of lifelong learning really has no viable future on account of the continual changes in society that make it nigh well impossible to develop any all-embracing framework within which different challenges could be addressed. She believes that it is more important to think in terms of 'longlife learning', a concept that would encompass a whole range of economic, democratic, personal and other concerns throughout the life course whilst highlighting the enormous impact of demographic trends both now and in the future. Learning would come to be recognised in all its different forms at all ages and would contribute not just to economic progress and social inclusiveness but to people's desires for personal development and creativity as they grow older. Such learning would not necessarily need to be linear or even cumulative in the sense of building up a clearly defined bank of knowledge and skills, but it would allow for a very personal exploration that makes sense at an individual level and would be enduring and connective from this perspective. It would also allow for a measure of connectivity to others

and offer a range of tangible benefits at personal, community and societal levels. However, Withnall points out that this change of outlook would need to take account of the complex array of forces – the changing external context, individual, situational and institutional influences – that impact on people’s propensity to learn across the life course. In her own research, she was able to explore these only briefly, commenting on the complexity of unravelling the impact of different influences on individual lives at different times.

Accordingly, what is now required is the development of a broader conceptual framework for longlife learning within which to explore different aspects of later life learning in different countries and the dynamics involved over time. Building on existing work, it might attempt to assess the impact of global forces on the local external context and the interplay with a broader range of individual and situational characteristics at any given time. Withnall (2010) also tried to examine how the outcomes of learning undertaken in later life might lead to longer-term outcomes for learners; further exploration of these factors in a new model would allow for the inclusion of older people currently excluded from discussion because of mental or physical frailty, underdeveloped literacy skills or other causes, and provide sound empirical evidence of the impact learning might have as well as the wider implications for a country or region.

In sum, such a model offers policy makers and practitioners who work with older people at all levels a comprehensive way of exploring the contribution different types of learning opportunities might make to the lives of a very diverse range of older people at any one time and the ways in which they might be offered taking all the relevant variables into account. However, a sophisticated methodology needs to be devised to investigate the interplay and impact of these variables in some depth; the rapidly expanding development of interdisciplinary social science methods and practices may offer a way forward.

## Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to global demographic trends and the implications of ageing populations for lifelong learning. It has discussed how different perspectives on ageing and the emergence of lifelong learning as a concept have impacted on ideas about learning in later life with some illustrative examples of different programmes for older people developed in different countries. However, it also argued that demographic trends require us to question whether lifelong learning is already a redundant concept; the idea of longlife learning would enable us to think in terms of a dynamic model of learning throughout life that would recognise people of all ages as learners whatever their situation. It is an issue that should concern us all as we age.

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# Chapter 40

## Lifelong Learning to Revitalize Community

### Case Studies of Citizens' Learning Initiatives in Japan

Yukiko Sawano

#### Introduction

The phrase 'muen shakai' (meaning 'a society without relationships') was invented in 2010 to describe the essence of Japanese society. The number of single-person households is increasing in Japan, as it quickly becomes a 'super-ageing society': the percentage of those over 65 years old is expected to reach 25% in 2013 and 30% in 2024. Solitary deaths of single people are therefore becoming a social issue in Japan. In this chapter, I would like to shed light on lifelong learning, a practice that may help revitalize local communities facing the consequences of a rapidly ageing population. Japanese lifelong learning programmes have gone through severe budget cuts during the recessionary period of the last 20 years, as they have been seen as a luxury unworthy of public subsidy. The Japanese government has been trying over the last few years to promote the continuous education of the unemployed; unfortunately, many Japanese do not consider employment-based learning as an aspect of lifelong learning. Most Japanese think that the purpose of education and lifelong learning is personal development and spiritual growth rather than anything directly connected to human resource development or economic development.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the development of lifelong learning policy in Japan since the end of the 1980s, and describing the recent trend of promoting a lifelong learning designed to nurture a 'New Public' of active citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard, it is unlikely that Japan's lifelong learning policy will change its aim to that of human capital building in order to enhance its competitiveness in the era of globalization, as Ogawa (2009) discusses.

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Secondly, I will sketch a brief historical outline of ‘citizen’s universities’ established by local communities and then examine three case studies from Shizuoka, Kanagawa, and Tokyo involving citizens who are teaching, learning, and disseminating their knowledge on their own initiative.

## Development of the ‘Lifelong Learning’ Policy in Japan

In Japan, concrete policies and measures to promote the creation of a ‘lifelong learning society’ has been launched since 1988, when the Lifelong Learning Bureau was established within the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (the ‘Monbushou’) as a result of a ministerial reorganization in response to the recommendations of a provisional council established under Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. This council on educational reform, known as ‘Rinkyoshin’, submitted a final report to the Prime Minister in 1987. The concepts of ‘Shougai-kyouiku’ (‘lifelong education’) and ‘Shougai-gakushu’ (‘lifelong learning’) were already current in Japan by the end of the 1960s and were elaborated and disseminated during the period of rapid economic growth. Rinkyoshin aimed to systematize various lifelong learning opportunities, and create a ‘Shougai-gakushu shakai’ (‘lifelong learning society’) in order to cope with social and economic changes in Japan and overcome the problems among youth caused by the excessive competition to enter prestigious universities, known as ‘examination hell’. The law promoting lifelong learning, ‘Development of Mechanisms and Measures for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning’, was implemented in 1990. This top-down process of disseminating lifelong learning occurred in the period of Japan’s bubble economy, after the oil shock. The concept of lifelong learning was welcomed not only by those in charge of education but from the industrial and business sectors as well (Sawano 2007).

The term ‘lifelong learning’ was defined broadly to include formal learning (at school), non-formal learning (in the community and workplace), and informal learning and self-learning (at home and elsewhere). Many people were already committed to various kinds of learning in accordance with their needs, stressing more on spiritual richness than on material riches. An opinion poll on lifelong learning conducted by the General Administrative Agency of the Cabinet in 1988 found that 40.1% of the adults over 20 had participated in a form of lifelong learning in the past year (Naikakufu 2002).

Ironically, however, Japan’s bubble economy ended precisely when concrete measures to promote lifelong learning were being planned and executed. The next two decades of severe recessionary struggles are now called ‘the two lost decades’. The Japanese government had to undertake a major structural reform of its administrative and financial systems in order to recover from the stagnation. The government’s reforms took a neoliberal approach that placed importance on competition, decentralization, and the deregulation and privatization of the public service. As a result, unemployment increased, and the existence of NEETs (young people who are not in employment, education, or training) multiplied. Many families with



school-age children were destroyed, and an increasing social disparity among families affected children's academic performance. In this context, Japan's lifelong learning policy, which had been introduced in a highly centralized, top-down fashion, had to change its direction when its budget was cut. The local promotion of lifelong learning had to change as well, to adapt to municipal mergers (the number of municipalities shrank from 3,232 in 1999 to 1,727 in March 2010).

The introduction of policy evaluation was another facet of structural reform that affected Japan's lifelong learning policy and practice at both the national and local levels. As of 2001, it had become obligatory for all administrative units to conduct policy evaluations designed to improve their management processes by implementing the plan-do-check-act cycle and to increase their public transparency and accountability. This obligation extended even to the fields of education and lifelong learning: workers there had to present quantitative data (intelligible to laymen at a glance) showing the outcome of their policy measures. Long-term results are more important than short-term ones in lifelong learning, but data on the former are difficult to gather. Thus, using a theory such as 'Social Capital' while studying the broader benefits and advantages of lifelong learning would be effective. Though it is difficult to prove its statistical validity, the social capital theory is a useful way to encourage citizens to participate in community building by making use of what they have achieved in the course of their lifelong learning. The Japanese New Public has valued and promoted that kind of voluntary community-building participation since the beginning of the twenty-first century with the aim of compensating for the downsizing of public administration and budget cuts.

In December 2006, Japan enacted the first revisions of the Fundamental Law on Education, promulgated in 1947, while Japan was under US occupation. Chapter 3 of the revised law contains a clear reference to the idea of lifelong learning. It stipulates that 'a society must be realized where every citizen shall brush up their own personality, live a rich life and make use of the outcome appropriately'. This short phrase summarizes the Japanese concept of lifelong learning as it has developed since the end of 1960s. The question became how to transform the idea of lifelong learning into concrete policy measures under the current socio-economic conditions. Moreover, new provisions in the 'Goals of Education' (Chap. 2), 'Education at Home' (Chap. 10), 'Social Education' (Chap. 12), and 'Partnership and Collaboration Among School, Home, Local Residents, etc.' (Chap. 13) as stipulated in the revised Fundamental Law on Education required an enrichment of the lifelong learning capabilities of local communities.

In August 2009, the Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's ruling party since its founding in 1955, lost its position in the House of Representatives (the Lower House of Parliament) during a general election, and the Democratic Party won a majority of seats, becoming the governing party. Although the Democratic Party could not get a majority of seats in the House of Councillors (the Upper House) in the election of July 2010, it remains Japan's governing party. It is trying to democratize the policy-making process by inviting ordinary people to participate in policy discussion, something the government calls 'deliberative democracy'. The government also conducted a thorough screening programme in order to reduce the national budget

and put more focus on employment policy and childcare, during which the budget for lifelong learning promotion was further reduced. The lifelong learning agenda was collapsed into that of vocational education and training.

In June 2010, the Cabinet approved the ‘New Strategy for Growth – A scenario to recover “vigorous Japan”’, which sets goals to be achieved by fiscal year 2020 in seven strategic fields. Goals for education and lifelong learning, such as increasing the number of adult students in university and professional college to 90,000 and 150,000, respectively, and increasing the number of workers engaging in learning for self-enlightenment (up to 70% of full-time employees and 50% of part-time employees) were included in the strategic field of ‘employment and human resource’. The New Public is included in the same strategic field; it aims at building a society that gives each individual a chance to excel and promotes a happiness generated by contributing to that of others. It intends to have 50% of Japanese participating in the New Public initiative by 2020 (only 26% were participating in 2009). The ultimate goal is to ‘nurture Japanese people who continue to challenge’ (Kakugi kettei, as of 18 June 2010).

## **Transformation of ‘Community’ and Nurturing the ‘New Public’**

The national effort to promote lifelong learning in Japan has faced twists and turns. However, the general movement in the direction of concretizing the idea of lifelong learning has not changed.

In order to implement the idea of lifelong learning as stipulated in the revised Fundamental Law on Education, the Lifelong Learning Section of the Central Council of Educational Reform submitted a report to the Minister of Education, Science, Sports, Culture and Technology (the ‘Monbukagakushou’) in February 2008 entitled ‘Measures to Promote Lifelong Learning to Open Up a New Era – Aiming at Creation of Knowledge-Recycling-Oriented Society’. The report modelled three social projections: the knowledge-oriented society, the independent community, and the sustainable society. It states that the ‘knowledge recycling-oriented society’ is one where the outcome of individual learning based on each learner’s needs is given back to society and contributes to the improvement of the sustainable educational potential of the whole society (Chukyoshin 2008).

According to Masafumi Tanaka, local Japanese communities had been transformed in three phases during the last century. Traditional local communities were initially closed societies that had respected homogeneity. Then, with the progress of modernization, these communities became more open, tolerant of difference, and individualistic. Finally, though many people believed that the community had disappeared, a new form of solidarity emerged, in which formerly isolated individuals established new types of bonds with others (Tanaka 2000).

These stages did not occur consecutively; their sequence flowed in accordance with the changes in socio-economic conditions. Many Japanese believe that social and economic changes driven by declining birth rates, urbanization, and the transition

to an information society weakened human relationships. Municipal mergers are seen as having accelerated the weakening of local communities and degraded the educational opportunities afforded to both children and adults. In order to recover this educational potential, it is thought necessary to promote a lifelong learning that will recycle the knowledge of individuals throughout their communities. Local community infrastructure is expected to be reconstructed and made stronger, and social cohesion is expected to ensue through this recovery of educational potential. The local community will then become the base from which the vitality of the nation as a whole may be increased.

In order to create a knowledge recycling-oriented society through the promotion of lifelong learning, it is important to balance the needs of individuals with those of society. It is also important to harmonize human, societal, and economical values. As knowledge is 'recycled' in a community, it stimulates further 'creation'. A sustainable system capable of developing its society as a whole needs to be constructed within the local community. Local Japanese communities contain many practices that are already recycling knowledge. The following section describes the citizen-driven programmes and practices for lifelong learning that unfold in so-called citizens' universities.

### **'Citizens' University': A Place to Learn and Recycle One's Knowledge for Social Contribution**

According to Senuma (2010), there are around 150 citizen's universities all over Japan. They are non-formal educational organizations regularly providing several genres of lecture-driven courses in which citizens of all ages can participate. Their names vary: there is the City (Town, Village) University, the Community College, the Citizens' Academy, the Citizens' Cram School, the University of Trivia, the Community University, and the Free University, for example. Some of them are organized by local government, but many are entirely citizen run. They first appeared in the early 1970s, when the concept of lifelong learning was introduced in Japan.

Long after the Second World War, most of the non-formal classes and lecture courses for adults in Japan had been organized in community centres by local government, which encouraged learning and community service among the residents. The binding force of the local community had weakened with the urbanization of the 1960s, but increasing incomes and the enhancement of the transportation system made it possible for people to participate in activities throughout a wider area. The development of learning opportunities other than those organized by local government emerged in this context.

Senuma (2010) makes three points while providing background for the development of citizen's universities. Firstly, Japanese views about life changed as other changes occurred in their society and as they became richer. Secondly, local and national control over the provision of learning has weakened recently due to cuts in the lifelong learning budget. Thirdly, local citizens have been empowered to run their learning organizations independently.

The history of the citizen's universities can be divided into three phases. The first occurs from the latter half of the 1970s to the 1980s. There were only a few citizens' universities during this period, among which were Kiyomigata University Cram School ('Kiyomigata Daigakujuku') in Shizuoka prefecture, Kichijoji University of Trivia ('Kichijoji Zatsugakujuku') in Tokyo, and Kamakura Citizen's Academia ('Kamakura Shimin Akademia') in Kanagawa prefecture. The schools' scale and number of participants were small at this time.

The second phase began in the first half of the 1990s, when Japan experienced the collapse of its bubble economy, leading to deflation and unemployment. Such citizens' universities as TAMA Citizen's Cram School ('TAMA Shiminjuku') and Sumida Learning Garden ('Sumida Laaningu Gaaden') in Tokyo, which put emphasis on the trivia, and the Great Voyage Seminar ('Daikoukai Seminaa') of Asunaro University ('Asunaro Daigaku') in Kanagawa, which put emphasis on individual research projects and their presentation to the public by the elderly, are examples of schools established in this period. As the number of citizens' universities grew, the number of participants also grew. Many of those who finished a regular lecture course became repeaters or organized study circles with their course mates to continue their learning.

The third phase started in 2000, when a number of citizens' universities were established independently of local government, including the Adachi Association of Enjoyable Learning ('Adachi Rakugakukai'), the Hachioji Academic Society ('Hachioji Gakkai'), and the Shibuya University Network ('Shibuya Daigaku') in Tokyo. Most of these are incorporated non-profit organizations (NPOs). The number of citizens' universities is increasing all over Japan, but the growth rate is not now as steep as it was during the second phase. While the scale of each organization is becoming bigger, some of the citizens' universities established in earlier phases have had to be closed down, because they could not groom any successors. Those that remain successful are the ones that involve citizen learners in the planning and management processes.

In the next section, I would like to present three cases of successful citizens' universities, each representing one of the above three phases: Kiyomigata University Cram School, the Great Navigation Seminar of Asunaro University, and the Shibuya University Network.

## **Case Study 1: Kiyomigata University Cram School (‘Kiyomigata Daigakujuku’)**

Kiyomigata University Cram School was founded in 1985 in the former city of Shimizu<sup>2</sup> in Shizuoka prefecture. In 1984, the Shimizu city government organized a conference to promote education for the elderly and explored the future of lifelong

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<sup>2</sup> On the 1 April 2003, the former Shimizu-shi (city) was merged with Shizuoka-shi and became Shimizu-ku (district) of the newly expanded Shizuoka-shi. In March 2003, the population of Shimizu-shi was 234,666, and the area was 227.66 km<sup>2</sup>.

education in view of Japan's ageing population. The conference found that existing education courses for the elderly were not truly attractive, as there were limits placed on the number of participants, their age, and access to and the duration of their learning; moreover, the quality of instructors was low. Conference participants realized the need to create a network that could match the learning system to the citizens who are eager to study. Takashi Yamanashi, later the first rector of the Kiyomigata University Cram School, proposed using the people's power, introducing market principles, and encouraging volunteerism. The original form of the Kiyomigata management system was soon established: municipal government provided a place for learning and handled public relations and administration while citizen professors and learners became responsible for management. They decided to choose professors from among the public in order to achieve self-realization through teaching. They also decided to forgo limits on learning, allowing students to learn as much as they liked at any time. Because they were modelling the real university system, they named their organization the 'Kiyomigata University Cram School'. 'Kiyomigata' is the old name of Shimizu Port, which was famous for its beautiful coast line and pine trees. The Board of Education of Shimizu-shi supported the establishment, and the Department of Social Education was in charge of Kiyomigata. In 1989, the office was established at a Citizen's Public Hall ('Kominkan'), and a part-time city employee took charge of the administrative work. The rest of the management was handled by the 'professors', most of them retirees from private industry. They made the university's rules and established its systems, gradually taking over the administrative work as well. The office moved to a local shopping area in April 2008. It is now managed by a part-time director and two full-time staff members (Kiyomigata daigakujuku 2010; Senuma 2003).

Kiyomigata University Cram School is volunteer run. The faculty general assembly is its supreme decision-making body, while its daily management is conducted by a 13-member board that includes the rector, vice-rector, general secretary, three deans, and two other board members. The rector and two board members are elected by the faculty general assembly, and the rector appoints the vice-rector and general secretary; their term of office is 2 years.

Kiyomigata's purpose is to fulfil a citizen's life through learning and to contribute to the development of healthy communities and human resources. No qualifications are required of its professors. The only requirement (to ensure quality control) is the support of at least 11 participants. Lecture courses begin every April, consist of one or two classes per month, and last until March of the next year. They use 16 public facilities in the city, such as Kominkan. The fee for classes held once a month is 6,500 yen/year; those held twice a month cost 12,000 yen/year. The fees are paid to the professor. The learners and professors share the running cost, as no subsidy is provided by the city government.

Initially, the school had 12 professors and about 100 learners. In 2008, there were 152 courses, 99 professors, and 3,360 learners. Male learners represented 20% of the students, and 80% were women. The youngest was 10 years old, and the oldest was 95. Although the number of male learners was steadily increasing, the majority were still women between the ages of 50 and 80. About 100 learners came from

other municipalities. Courses are classified into three departments. The first department offers courses on the craft arts, such as calligraphy, painting, sawing, and flower arrangement. The second department offers courses in the performing arts, such as piano, harmonica, flute, chorus, dance, and magic. The third department offers courses in the cultural and liberal arts, such as history, foreign languages, fortune telling, personal computing, and the tea ceremony. Those who attend at least two thirds of the classes in a course are given a certificate and one credit. Learners who attain 15 credits get a 'Doctor's Degree'.

Besides the courses mentioned above, the 'Kiyomigata Seminar' is conducted by real university professors. The Seminar started in 1992 in order to attract more retired male learners. It collaborates with universities in Shizuoka prefecture and invites professors of various disciplines to give a lecture every month at a public hall in Shimizu. Prior to the lecture, civil professors of the Kiyomigata University Cram School also give a 30-min presentation. The Seminar is co-sponsored by private companies, of which there were initially 50 but which number 30 now. Those who finished the Aoi Gakuen Lifelong Learning University organized by Shizuoka prefecture are now volunteering to run the seminar. In 2004, the Kiyomigata Seminar became an NPO.

As evidence of lifelong learning's impact in Shimizu, the organizers of the Kiyomigata University Cram School point out that 3% less of the former Shimizu city's population is covered by nursing-care insurance than the national average, a fact perhaps explained by the high number of elderly people who are continuing their learning.

Many visitors came to see how lifelong learning was being organized through citizens' initiatives after the practices of Kiyomigata University Cram School got significant media coverage. They tried to find out how a citizens' university with more than 3,000 learners can be sustained without any financial support from government. The school became a model of lifelong learning programming for local governments under financial pressure. That model is expanding to other places in Japan, as evidenced by the Self-Playing Cram School ('Jiyujuku'), the Lifelong Learning College in Toyama prefecture, and the Mishima Active Cram School ('Mishima Ikiikijuku') in Shizuoka prefecture.

## **Case Study 2: The Great Voyage Seminar of Asunaro University ('Asunaro Daigaku Daikoukai Zeminaaru')**

Asunaro University was established in 1988 in the city of Zama<sup>3</sup> in Kanagawa prefecture by the East District Cultural Centre of Zama-shi as a class for elderly people. The East District Cultural Centre is one of the three Kominkan in the city of Zama.

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<sup>3</sup>Zama-shi is located in the middle of Kanagawa prefecture. The population in October 2010 was about 129,000, and the area was 17.58 km<sup>2</sup>. It got the status of 'shi' ('city') in 1971. 3.5% of the city area is occupied by the U.S. military's "Camp Zama". The percentage of the population over 65 years old was 3.21% in 1970, increasing to 17.2% in 2008.

Its predecessor was a Class for Longevity established in 1982 at Kurihara Resting House for elderly people. A course was held every year for about 100 participants. In 1986, the class moved to East District Cultural Centre, and they set a participant age limit of 60 years. 'Asunaro' is the name of the *Thujaopsis* tree which is similar to the Japanese Hinoki cypress and is said to wish to become a Hinoki 'tomorrow' (hence 'Asu'). The name 'Asunaro' is thus often used in educational institutions to indicate the importance of having a higher aim (Asunaro daigaku 2010).

In June 1988, a solicitation for applications to Asunaro University was posted in the Zama Newsletter. The available course, consisting of 18 lectures, was limited to 40 people, but it ultimately attracted 48. In 2008–2009, the number of participants was 146, among whom 96 were men. The annual course now consists of 44 lectures, including opening and closing ceremonies. Lectures on current issues, studies on local issues, and the Great Voyage Seminar are the three pillars of learning at Asunaro University. Lectures are held every Friday from 13:30 to 15:30. It is noteworthy that Asunaro University attracts more men than women, a rarity in the Japanese local lifelong learning system.

Asunaro University's budget is covered by the municipal government of Zama. Learners pay a mere 500 yen per year in expenses for teaching materials. They can use free of charge the East District Cultural Centre. Asunaro University has been run by a 'social education leader', a part-time employee of Zama-shi. The system of assigning social education leaders in municipalities started in the early 1970s to explore the educational potential of the community and make use of their capacity to promote non-formal education with the full-time social education directors. Most of the social education leaders are retired teachers in their early 60s. Most of Asunaro University's leaders, though, have been women in their 30s, much younger as compared to the participants. The role of the social education leader in the planning and management of Asunaro University has been very important and quite successful, as the part-time social education leader could remain in charge of Asunaro University continuously for a number of years. Filling the position with a full-time civil servant could have required frequent staff changes. The leader can interact with the learners for longer periods and more effectively collaborate with the learners in the formulation of the programmes. Thus, the courses were structured and delivered consistently. To become more of a 'real university', they gradually introduced methods of learning that explored their own learning themes. By the end of the 1980s, the participants had become more aware of the fact that the school was not 'an elderly people's club, but it is an organization where learning is the main issue'. It led to the establishment of a graduate school in addition to the existing 4-year undergraduate programme, to allow those who finish the 4-year programme to continue to participate in Asunaro University (Asunaro daigaku 2010).

Most of the university's learners were of the first generation to live in Zama-shi. Until their retirement, they just made round trips to and from their workplaces every day and knew nothing about the Zama area. They did not even have contact with their neighbours. Only after their retirement did they consider learning about Zama and making friends with its people, motivating them to enter Asunaro University. In order to respond to these needs, the local history course began in 1991; in 1993,

it became the local studies course. In 1999, they introduced elements of research into their learning following the advice of someone teaching at a neighbouring high school, a man named Mr. Norio Kataoka, who wrote a book entitled *Skill of Great Voyage in the Sea of Information (Joho-daikoukaijutsu)*. Ms. Kawashima, then the university's social education leader, found Mr. Kataoka's book in the library of the East District Cultural Centre. Inspired by the learner-centred instruction method proposed by Mr. Kataoka, Ms. Kawashima made contact with Mr. Kataoka and invited him to the university to teach the local studies course. He taught the learning method to the participants, beginning with the need to find the theme of the research by seeking key words and mapping ideas. He advised that all learners should find their own theme and method of research and learn not only collectively, in groups, but also individually. After the first year, the course became the great voyage seminar ('Daikoukai Zeminaaru') (Senuma 2003).

The great voyage learning method resembles an exploration of the ocean in search of a treasure island. It is different from conventional linear navigation. Learners must set the theme of research and proceed according to their own style. They use Zama City Library in their research. They also use the Internet now, but fieldwork is more important to them. The learners present the results of their research every autumn at the great workshop. After the workshop, the learners write reports and publish them in a brochure titled the 'Asunaro Collection'. At the end of the academic year, they participate in the lifelong learning festival organized by Zama-shi and present the results of their research. Both presentations occur as poster sessions. By 2009, 67 research reports had been compiled. Among them, 21 (32%) were on history and 10 (15%) on natural science. The other topics were food (6), health (5), literature (5), art (4), the environment (4), politics and economy (3), and local issues (3). The learners have written more than 300 reports in 10 years, which are kept in the library of the East District Cultural Hall (Asunaro daigaku 2009).

In 2001, some of the learners of the great voyage seminar started to give lectures based on the results of their research. This programme, called the open independent lecture course, allows non-member citizens to participate with the learners of Asunaro University. In this way, the accumulated knowledge of learners is transmitted to others and shared with the Zama-shi community.

Like real Japanese universities, Asunaro University has clubs and circles, of which the leaders and instructors are university learners. In 2009, there were 12 clubs, namely, the Personal Computer, Digital Camera, Walking, Soba Noodle Making, 'Forest Forest', Wasabi Field, Ukulele, Golf, Fishing, Japanese History, Mah-jong, and Karaoke clubs. There are also circles devoted to wood printing, the preservation of the firefly, and soba noodles, among others. Circles organize parties, a summer camp, and an excursion every year to promote friendship.

Learners are also involved in the operation of the university as group leaders and chairs, through membership on the committees in charge of editing the annual reports, performing web design, composing the Asunaro Collection, and other tasks. However, the learners rely heavily on the social education leader while helping organize the courses. They will need to decide whether to make the school an



independent non-profit organization or keep it under the control of Zama-shi as they further develop the character of Asunaro University.

Many of the university's learners think that the programme is helping them set life goals that are different from the norm while improving their health and attracting friends with different sensibilities. Some of them have become more active in study circles and volunteer activities in the community. Most of them think that they strengthened their spirit of inquiry through the great voyage seminar and that it gave them their purpose in life. Below are some of the voices of the learners from the seminar<sup>4</sup>:

When the Great Voyage Seminar began, I was a little bit anxious. First, I set a goal, conducted research through relevant books, underwent experience with my eyes and body through field visit, and finally made it to the presentation. It was my first experience, but I expanded my circle of friend and enjoyed learning. (Female learner, enrolled for 18 years)

In the Great Voyage Seminar, I came to know the authentic joy of learning. The learning I experienced before was just for my living or for my work. However, in authentic learning, you search what you want to know. You can make a side trip and find out something unexpected. It is like playing rather than learning, and my knowledge became wider and deeper through the learning. I am really satisfied with this. Moreover, we can share our knowledge with many people by making a presentation about the individual results of our enjoyable learning at the Great Workshop and through the Open Lecture. This is really great. You get to know something that you would not have been able to research on your own. Most of the things that you think you would like to know are presented as the results of research by others. (Male learner, enrolled for 6 years)

Learners are also trying to network with other citizens' universities and study circles, such as the Hachiouji Thousand People's Cram School ('Hachiouji Senninjuku'), the Okazaki Learning Enjoyment Cram School ('Gakurakujuku'), the Sodegaura Excitement Juku ('Sodegaura Wakuwakujuku'), and the Ueda Library Club ('Ueda Toshokankurabu'), which offer research-based self-learning and presentations.

### **Case Study 3: The Shibuya University Network (‘Shibuya Daigaku’)**

Shibuya University was founded in 2006 as an incorporated NPO. The goal of Shibuya University is to realize a new system of community-based lifelong learning in the Shibuya ward<sup>5</sup> in order to vitalize the community and create a better future through the spirit of learning. The establishment of Shibuya University began in 2004

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<sup>4</sup>In March 2009, 19 learners from Asunaro University responded by free description to the question, 'How is your experience of learning at Asunaro University and other classes for the elderly made use of in your daily life?' for an exchange programme between Swedish professors and the author, organized by the current Social Education Leader, Ms. Sakie Ando.

<sup>5</sup>Shibuya-ku (ward) is one of 23 special wards of the Tokyo metropolis. In August 2010, the population was 203,330, and the area was 15.11 km<sup>2</sup>. It contains some prominent commercial areas, such as Shibuya and Ebisu and Omotesando, the most popular fashion spot in Japan.

at the direction of Ken Hasebe (born in 1972), a member of Shibuya ward assembly and the deputy of Green Bird, an incorporated NPO of volunteers who clean the Shibuya area. The concept of Shibuya University was to make the whole of Shibuya-ku the campus. It was a completely new type of citizens' university, as it strove to use the resources of a whole city. The project was based on the idea that 'the most enjoyable town for entertainment can become the most enjoyable town for learning'. In 2005, Hasebe met Yasuaki Sakyō (born in 1979), who was working for a major trading company. Sakyō found a congenial spirit in Hasebe's vision of utilizing the resources of both society and business, so he quit the company to become vice deputy of Green Bird and became involved in the Shibuya University Project, launched in November 2005. In April 2006, Sakyō became the rector of the university and submitted an application for the approval of Shibuya University as an incorporated NPO to the government of Tokyo, which was granted in August 2006. The opening ceremony of Shibuya University was held in September 2006 at the Meiji Shrine located in Shibuya-ku (Shibuya daigaku 2007).

The organizing body of Shibuya University includes divisions for administration, planning, public relations, brand management, fund raising, accounting, and class management and coordination of lessons (of which 26 people are in charge). Four of them are also board members of the NPO. The rector and an administrative staff work full time, but the rest of the staff are part-time, as most of them have full-time jobs. They run the classes with the help of a number of volunteers. The budget of Shibuya University consists of a subsidy from Shibuya-ku, membership fees from supporters, and contributions from individuals and juridical persons. In some cases, collaborating firms give a lesson and cover all the expenses.

The secretariat of the university is located in an annex building of the Shibuya ward office, but there is no room there for lectures. The learning venue is Shibuya-ku itself. The university cooperates with public facilities and private companies all over Shibuya-ku. Open lessons are held on the third Saturday of every month, and each class uses a different facility. There are various genres of course. Some are held in collaboration with business firms, NPOs, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). People involved in the civic life of Shibuya-ku, called 'Teachers of the Town', handle some classes. People who are motivated to learn gather at Shibuya University, become both students and teachers and thus make the university a place to teach and learn. There is no requirement to become a learner, and tuition is free.

About 15,000 people ranging from 8 to 90 years old are currently registered as students and 500 as teachers. About 70% of the students are in their 20s or 30s; 65% are female and 35% male; 65% are full-time workers, while 8% are part-time workers; 6% are regular university students and 3% are housewives. A total of 482 courses were given from September 2006 to February 2010, in which 14,060 students participated and 462 teachers of the town were involved. There were 124 courses in the 2008–2009 school year, 40 of them (or 32%) about Shibuya-ku; they include the 'Backyard tour at Omotesando – Way of living of a painter', 'Lustral in the morning at Meiji Shrine – To clean body and mind', 'Let's participate in Bon Dance Festival at Ebisu Station area!', 'From fashion to space design – Learning total coordination at GAP', and 'Homeless and town walk – A challenge from Harajuku'. The other

courses were on ecology, biology, science, food, agriculture, Japanese culture, communication, everyday life, child rearing, education, health, jobs, international relations and exchange, art, design, theatre, handicraft, photography, physical education, welfare, liberal arts, and of the establishment of Shibuya University. The theme, time, and place of classes are announced on Shibuya University's website 3 weeks in advance, and students must apply to each class on the Internet. As most of the classes are limited 20 or 30 participants, learners are selected by lucky draw. On average, the competition is between 2.6 applicants per seat.

Although many of the courses are held only once, some of the students continue learning on their own by organizing seminars and circles. Some of them design lessons for children and hold workshops for them in Shibuya-ku. As of October 2010, ten seminars and two circles were ongoing (Shibuya daigaku 2010).

In order to create new bonds with the community, Shibuya University asked surrounding shops and facilities to offer their learners student discounts or other special services. To make the university more community based, they divided the campus in two in February 2009: the Harajuku-Omotesando Campus focuses on learning about the Meiji Shrine, while the front yard and back yard of the Omotesando and Ebisu Campus focuses on learning about men, women, and birth. In 2009, they organized the neighbourhood festival in Harajuku and invited the residents of the community to enjoy games and lunch.

The fact that so many youngsters are involved in Shibuya University attracted media attention in and out of Japan. In November 2007, an interview with the rector Yasuaki Sakyo was broadcast on CNN (CNN 2007). Since then, visitors from abroad have come to the secretariat of Shibuya University to ask about its organization and contribution to community building. By October 2010, sister organizations had opened in Kyoto (the Kyoto Karasuma Daigaku), Nagoya (the Dainagoya Daigaku), Sapporo (the Sapporo Odori Daigaku), Hiroshima (the Hiroshimajin Daigaku), Fukuoka (the Fukuoka Tenjin Daigaku), and in western Tokyo (the Tokyo Nishigawa Daigaku). Six other areas are planning to establish a similar citizens' university in imitation of the Shibuya University model. The rector and staff of Shibuya University plan to expand their network overseas.

## Conclusion

The three citizens' universities discussed here are 'recycling knowledge' throughout their communities and are nurturing a 'New Public' striving to improve community life through mutual teaching and learning. The first case, of Kiyomigata University Cram School, is significant in the sustainability of its evolution, observable in the participation of citizens as civil professors and school managers. The second case, that of Asunaro University, represents an ordinary learning opportunity for elderly people provided by a municipality, but it succeeded in getting rid of passive learning by introducing the self-motivated research of the great voyage seminar. The third case, that of the Shibuya University Network, has elements of the

preceding cases, but the school was founded and is run by a new generation of active citizens. The Shibuya University Network was designed to emphasize both individual lifelong learning and the vitalization of the community.

In order to promote a lifelong learning that contains the positive elements of all three cases, the ideal tactic is for citizens' universities to incorporate as non-profit organizations and operate independently of government administration. The second and third cases illustrate that coordinators who can effectively connect teaching to learning are the cornerstone for the sustainable development of the citizens' university. Modelling Shibuya University Network's management and educational practices would significantly facilitate the recycling of knowledge throughout Japanese society.

Though many Japanese citizens' learning initiatives are making good use of e-learning, the case studies show the importance of face-to-face participatory learning to the process of learning to live together and of revitalizing the community. Importance of such learning is increasing even more in the process of restoration after the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011.

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# Chapter 41

## Learning Cities and Learning Regions: Helping to Make the World a Better Place

Norman Longworth

### Introduction

#### *The TELS Project: Early Soundings*

TELS (Towards a European Learning Society) was one of the first supported projects in the field of learning cities and regions in the European Commission Socrates programme. Between 1998 and 2000 it studied, albeit not in a very scientific or systematic way, the understanding of the concept of the Learning City by leaders in 80 European municipalities and regions and charted their preparedness for its implementation within their local authority (Longworth 2000). Not surprisingly, it discovered that most of the studied authorities were unaware of the existence of the term but could nevertheless demonstrate some movement towards developing activities that would today typify a learning city approach. More interestingly, many of them were eager to know more, simply as a result of their participation in a project that seemed to offer a glimpse of a vision they were themselves seeking to articulate. The recorded results of TELS are gathering dust on a Brussels basement shelf, but Fig. 41.1 shows some of the recommendations made to the European Commission in the European policy paper which resulted from it (Longworth 2001).

It is interesting to note how many of these comprise an outward-looking mission for cities and regions and how many have actually been implemented. Number 1, for example, resulted in the R3L (Regions of LifeLong Learning) programme which, although hardly named after a goddess, joined more than 100 European regions

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**TELS Recommendations to the European Commission (2000)**

1. Create a cross-sectoral Strand in the Socrates Programme to support the development of Learning Cities and Regions. Name it after a famous civic leader or the Goddess of Communities.
2. Establish a programme for Cities of Learning similar to that for Cities of Culture. If necessary run a competition to decide which city it will be in each country.
4. Develop indicators which measure and monitor aspects of the growth of Learning Cities and the Learning Society, and Initiate Surveys and Studies of these in and across member states.
5. Raise the awareness of Learning Community concepts in municipalities throughout Europe through high-visibility events such as the European Learning Cities week.
6. Develop a 'Charter for European Learning Cities' outlining the City's responsibilities vis-à-vis its citizens as learners, and its relationship to a wider European Learning Community, which cities sign up to.
7. Create a European network of one or more university departments in each country able to specialise in Learning City Research and Development.
9. Promote Europe-wide interactions and partnerships between Local Government, Industry and others for Wealth/Employment Creation and International Employability.
10. Establish Links with global organisations and countries to share good practice and foster joint cultural, economic and educational development in the area of Learning Regions.

**Fig. 41.1** TELS recommendations to the European commission (2000)

in 17 lifelong learning region projects to promote collaboration between them. An example of number 4 is the INDICATORS project led by Stirling University which developed and made available 'stakeholder audits', tools by which schools, universities, small businesses, adult education institutions and the local authorities themselves could measure their commitment to building a learning region (Longworth et al. 2005). These are now also available through PASCAL and the resultant network of expertise centres comprises the beginning of the implementation of number 7.

## **Towards Wider Horizons**

The focus of this chapter is on numbers 7, 9 and 10. It explores the rationale for some of the initiatives that link learning cities and regions, whether or not the European Commission has become involved. It argues that thinking globally and acting locally can bring real benefits, notwithstanding the protestations of minimalist pressure groups to restrict responsibilities to local issues. Playing a much larger part on the national and global stage can often produce medium- and long-term advantages. The unprecedented emotional and financial response to disasters such as the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami crisis and the 2010 Haiti earthquake by people of all ages, incomes and political persuasions is but one demonstration of the extent to which people have advanced in their perception of this planet as a global, more holistic, living space.

There is no shortage of exhortations to take this horizon-widening step. *Lifelong Learning* delivered the following warning back in 1996 identifying the so-called global demographic time bomb as an imperative for the development of lifelong learning attitudes:

If birth rates in the developed world are too low for comfort, those in the developing world are uncomfortably high. In the poorer parts of the world a massive population growth, helping to raise the present number of human beings on this very finite planet from 5 billion to 11 billion by the mid-twenty-first century, presents almost insoluble problems. These are environmental, nutritional, educational, moral and, in terms of stability, they are dangerous not just for the countries themselves but, through the overspill of instability, for the rest of the world. Many of these new inhabitants of our planet are perhaps destined to live at subsistence level and below unless massive ameliorative projects are initiated. To even begin to touch the problem, emphasis will need to be put on fundamental Lifelong Learning principles and the use of the new development and delivery technologies. (Longworth and Davies 1996, p. 26)

Sir Christopher Ball takes up the theme in the Action Agenda for Lifelong Learning:

Equity requires management. So there is a duty, alike for regional, national and local governments, organisations and individuals, to practise affirmative action to help developing countries, deprived communities and disadvantaged people, by ensuring that they receive a disproportionate share of available resources so that the gaps do not widen into gulfs. Those who most need it should receive most help. (Ball and Stewart 1995, p. 13)

Jim Botkin, in his search for a ‘wisdom’ society’, sees a potential saviour in the effective use of modern information and communications technology:

The human gap – the gap between global problems of our own making and our own ability or inability to find solutions to those problems – has widened since the time ‘No Limits to Learning’ was published. Nevertheless, the possibilities for corrective action are greater today than they ever have been. We have an internet and e-learning suddenly at our fingertips. In 1979, we didn’t know what computers were, much less worldwide networks like the world-wide web. (Botkin 2002, <http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/botkin.htm>)

At the same time, he offers a caution:

We need to be cautious that technologically-mediated global learning doesn’t become a new force for domination. If we can imagine a kind of global learning that respects human diversity without asserting a cultural dominance over others, then e-learning opens a flood of possibilities that we have only begun to explore. The philosophical question is: industrial technology helped create the human gap, can information technology help bridge it? (Botkin 2002, <http://www.newhorizons.org/trans/botkin.htm>)

## Schools to the Fore

There is also plenty of activity to address these issues in local authority schools around the world. The *iEARN* network, for example, has the following to say:

‘Imagine a world in which teachers and students all across the planet are able to work collaboratively on projects that make a difference in the world,’ says its publicity, ‘Among the tens of thousands of schools worldwide that participate in *iEARN*, there is no shortage of success stories to demonstrate the power of *iEARN*’s vision, not only to make a difference

in the world, but to deepen the learning that takes place in these connected classrooms. (iEARN 2005, <http://www.iearn.org/projects/index.html>)

All projects in iEARN are initiated and designed by teachers and students, providing powerful examples of how new and emerging technologies can make a difference in teaching and learning. Their projects involve a final 'product' or exhibition of the learning that has taken place as part of the collaboration. These have included magazines, creative writing anthologies, websites, letter-writing campaigns, reports to government officials, arts exhibits, workshops, performances, charity fundraising, and many more examples of youth taking action as part of what they are learning in the classroom. More than 150 interactive projects, including 'the Atlas of Diversity', 'Global teenager' and the 'One world project' enable children to develop research and critical thinking skills, experience with new technologies, cultural awareness and the habit of getting involved in community issues.

The *Global SchoolNet*, a similar international schools network funded mainly by large American corporations, has a more overt, but no less interesting, rationale. In its own words, 'Global SchoolNet engages youth in project-based, online learning activities, that stimulate individual creativity, teach communication skills, foster collaboration, and increase global understanding.' (<http://www.globalschoolnet.org/index.cfm?section=AboutUs>). Like *iEARN*, it provides learning tools and materials, and training courses for teachers. It concentrates on obtaining concrete outcomes, but the model is oriented towards giving schoolchildren the skills, confidence and insights that allow them to become future leaders in industry and public service. Both originated in the USA in the 1980s and both have extended their operations to more than 40 other countries. Together with Schoolnet Canada (<http://www.schoolnet.com>), they are the largest of the many service learning networks linking schools with each other around the world.

Such idealism is a response to the rapid pace of change both in technology and in world events. There can be little doubt in this digital age that the internet is compressing the planet and changing radically the way that people see the wider world. Many cities are already multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual and multifaceted. The tide of history is propelling them, sometimes reluctantly, towards greater understanding of, and cooperation with, other regions and other races, religions, creeds and customs. Austria's national goals for schools include these words:

Young people have to be able to develop independent judgement and understanding of and responsibility for social relations, sensitivity to the political and philosophical views of others, and the ability to contribute to the economic and cultural life of the country, Europe and the world. Humanity, tolerance, solidarity, peace, justice and ecological awareness are values that stimulate action in our society and interact with economic issues. (Euridyce 2002, p. 15)

These fine words are echoed in other charters throughout the world. The active vision that makes them a reality has yet to manifest itself on a sufficient scale. But a start has been made. For example, almost every South Australian school has links with schools in other countries in South-east Asia, North America and Europe. It is seen as an intellectually enabling part of the educational experience for their young people. (Longworth and Allwinkle 2005)



## Universities and Regional Engagement

Links between a city's or region's stakeholders extend far beyond schools. For example, 'Seniornets', linking pensioners in New Zealand, Canada, the USA and the UK, have been operating for many years. Most universities have been international organisations for many years, feeding into, and from, the worldwide academic and research networks that provide their sustenance. Those that work with their local authorities to help build learning cities and regions make the fruits of that research available to its leaders and professionals. The PASCAL observatory, a worldwide network of experts in the fields of social capital, place management and learning regions, embraces experts from universities, cities and regions and consultants, and is an excellent example of the transfer of international knowledge and know-how between town and gown. In particular, its PURE (PASCAL Universities Regional Engagement) project sends teams of international experts into client regions to investigate the extent to which higher education is interacting with regional government to improve economic, social and environmental growth (Doyle 2010). Readers will recognise the link to the Bologna Declaration which proposes service to community and region as the third mission of universities. The result of these visits is not only a detailed plan for regional action, which is assessed on subsequent visits, but also inter-regional cluster networks exchanging ideas, experiences and often joint initiatives to address common objectives and outcomes. The concept of the learning region is inherent in every part of PURE, at least where it affects relationships between regions and their higher education partners.

## LILARA: Measuring Learning Needs in Local Administrations

European projects also fund international cooperation links between universities and regional authorities. The LILARA (Learning in Local and Regional Authorities) project, for example, was a European university–local authority project developing consultation tools to identify the learning needs of managers and professionals vis-à-vis the growth of learning cities and regions. It takes the total quality management notion into new territory by suggesting that learning cities, regions, towns, communities, societies, however we describe them, would not be created unless there is a large cadre of administrators in local and regional authorities and their stakeholders with the knowledge and the energy to drive the learning city agenda:

As in the drive for Total Quality Management during the 1990s, quality will not pervade unless every person in the organization has been immersed into the concept. So it is in the administration departments of a budding learning city. Each person will need to know at least the basic principles of the learning region and each department will have its own particular orientation towards implementing them. (Doyle et al. 2007, p. 86)

It is important therefore to research, design and deliver the learning that administrators need so that they can play their part in developing the region as a learning region.

Moreover, such activities encourage the delivery of the joined-up, holistic local government needed to cope with twenty-first century challenges. Six European nodes in Italy, Hungary, Norway, Ireland, France and the UK collaborated in the project, and the State of Victoria in Australia also expressed strong interest in developing its own version of LILARA under the PASCAL umbrella. Participant regions asked their employees to complete an audit tool that gathered their ideas on the nature of learning regions and the learning that they would need to make it a reality in their own locale. Respondents were asked to articulate their own learning requirements in order to generate their own contribution to local knowledge and action (or not, as the case may be!). The domains of the learning city/region were divided into 12 learning topics and issues as shown below:

- Basic knowledge, understanding and awareness issues
- Organisational and planning issues
- Wealth-creation issues
- Social issues
- Educational issues
- Resource and financial issues
- Contribution and participation issues
- Political and democracy issues
- Technology issues
- Stakeholder issues
- Environmental issues
- Cultural issues

Each topic was more fully explained in the audit and each respondent was asked to mark them as high, medium or low interest for themselves as learners.

Preliminary data from just one city in the project are shown in Fig. 41.2 and reveal the underlying educational challenge:

- A perceived relatively low interest among local authority employees – In Stirling, only 210 out of 4,000 – less than 6% – replied to the audit, though this could have also been due to many other factors such as poor communication and/or unfamiliarity with the concept. In other places, the percentage was lower.
- Even among the 200 or so who did respond, a large educational burden was indicated by their responses, which indicates the need for more self-learning materials and new approaches to continuing professional development.
- A low knowledge of learning city/region concepts among management and a total absence of participation/interest among local politicians.
- A closed culture in cities and regions that does not lend itself to the acceptance of new ideas and concepts from external sources.

The LILARA tools are available on the internet at [www.lilaraproject.com](http://www.lilaraproject.com).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Priority	Basic Conc ept	Orga nisa tional	Wealth Creat ion	Soci al Issue s	Educ Issue s	Fina nce	Contr i butio n	Politi cal issue s	Tech nical Issue s	Stake holders	Envir onment al
High	61	63	37	79	88	44	53	51	45	48	66
Medium	82	80	74	72	63	79	94	77	85	74	71
Low	44	45	76	35	36	60	35	55	54	60	41

Fig. 41.2 Some results of LILARA learning needs audit

### The PALLACE Project: Linking Stakeholders

LILARA was another example of the advantages of mobilising international university groups to help contribute as stakeholders to the development of local and regional authorities. There are, of course, many more. In many ways, they are evidence of a shrinking world whose inhabitants must communicate in order to survive. Recommendation 10 in Fig. 41.1, to share good practice with other countries and regions, was partly satisfied by the PALLACE project, a low-budget initiative of the European Commission (Longworth and Allwinkle 2005). This established links between seven partner regions in four continents, in Australasia, Auckland, South Australia and the Brisbane regions; in Europe, Sannois, France, Espoo, Finland and Edinburgh; in North America, Edmonton, Canada; and in Asia, Beijing. Each of the seven partners supervised a stakeholder sub-project to explore what it could do to help create a learning city. The Finnish partner, for example, concentrated on cultural services and created a portable display giving information and inviting feedback about learning cities that could be erected in libraries, museums and galleries there and in its partner region in Queensland. The French partner created and trialled materials on learning cities for elected representatives and shared these with the city of Marion in South Australia. In the Auckland region, the Papakura Lifelong Learning Trust addressed the opportunity to link adult education institutions and, with France, tested materials to discover their role vis-à-vis the construction of the learning city. South Australia linked its schools with those in Finland to involve children, teachers and parents internationally in focussed debate about the learning city and what schools can do to help create it. Beijing learned from all partners how to establish a learning region in a neighbourhood of 800,000 people (Shi Long 2004).

There is an important add-on value to the concept of international linking in that it not only creates heightened awareness of what a learning city or region can be but also potentially mobilises hundreds of people to contribute to it, not least those future citizens who will eventually inherit its administration. Stan Salagaras, the Australian project leader, defined the following as positive outcomes:

- (a) It has reinforced that schools are in fact, as a result of the nature of their role, involved on an ongoing basis in the development of links with their surrounding

communities to enhance learning outcomes for all – it is a fundamental component of their educative role and function.

- (b) It has emphasised the important role of schools in the development of learning communities and enabled individual schools to benchmark themselves with learning communities elsewhere. The very nature of a learning community means that it should be open to review and analysis.
- (c) It has involved children, teachers and parents as well as tertiary education providers, business and community organisations in a debate about what schools can do to help create a learning community.
- (d) It has stimulated the documentation in the form of case studies of a diversity of learning community initiatives. Two schools, in particular, Mawson Lakes School and St Columba College, have compiled comprehensive reports on their role in the development of a learning community through the PALLACE project.
- (e) When combined, these case studies identify innovative and practical outcomes which can help other schools to develop curriculum and methodological practices for collaborative work in schools, another intended outcome of the PALLACE project.
- (f) It has created international links between schools in South Australia and Finland, which will continue to grow and develop in the future (Salagaras 2004).

Such outcomes could be realised on a local basis, but Salagaras is also convinced that the international dimension, and the fact of working with other countries, provided strong motivation and increased the quality of the final results.

## **Kent: Increasing Fruitful Links**

Why should a city or region, beset as it is by local problems and answerable to local residents and ratepayers organisations become involved in international activities of this sort? Where is the benefit for its citizens? How far should it go to play its part on the larger global stage? How relevant is it to the region's mission? How does it help to create a lifelong learning region? There are no easy answers to these questions, but where they do exist they lie in the scope of regions' vision, the extent to which they are planning for their future in a multilateral world, the depth of understanding of their leaders, and the quality of their humanity. Many regions are already multiracial, multiethnic, multilingual and multifaceted. The tide of history is propelling them, sometimes reluctantly, towards greater understanding of, and cooperation with, other regions and other races, religions, creeds and customs. As we shall see, there are also measurable advantages.

The County of Kent in the UK has long-standing links with the French region of Nord-Pas de Calais in France. 'Transmanche', as it is called, recognises that national boundaries no longer apply to commercial activity, and that there are considerable economic benefits to be obtained from such cross-border cooperation. Other parts

of Europe such as Oresund, linking South Sweden with the Copenhagen area of Denmark, and the Franco-German region around Strasbourg are additional examples. But Kent goes further than this. In 2004, it began to discuss mutual advantages in links with the Hungarian region of Bacs-Kiskun. More recently, it has been working with New Kent and the State of Virginia in the USA (Kent CC 2005a).

Not surprisingly, in a country where Euro-scepticism is high, Kent's European strategy takes a hard-headed approach to European cooperation. Its pivotal location within North-West Europe and its role within the UK as a gateway to the *Continent offer* obvious advantages, but the prime rationale is 'obtaining funding, influencing policy and cooperating on common interests with other regions' in order to 'help KCC (Kent County Council) achieve its core priorities and meet Kent's needs' (Kent CC 2005b).

Economic benefit is therefore the main rationale, but Kent believes that much can be realised economically through an increasing number of links with both traditional and new overseas partners, and not just by attracting European regional funding. The sectors identified for joint working with the French Nord-Pas de Calais region, for example, reflect the responsibilities of the two regions: that is transport infrastructure, economic development, training, scientific and technological research, tourism and the environment. The process starts at the political level by 'strengthening bilateral co-operation between the two Regional and General Councils, initiating regular contacts and meetings between the different political and administrative areas and establishing Joint Working Groups to maintain regular mutual exchange on key issues' (Kent CC 2005b).

The enlargement of the European Union in 2005 was seen by Kent as an opportunity. *'The County Council has recognised that the addition of more than 100 million people to the EU's market of 370 million people will result in increased business, project and other opportunities from which the people of Kent could benefit'* (Kent CC 2005b). Among the objectives of the Bacs-Kiskun link, for example, are:

- Developing projects which provide clear trade and business development opportunities for Kent firms, such as joint ventures and the provision of goods and services, including technical advice and know-how
- Participating in opportunities for institution-building and know-how transfer initiatives
- Identifying opportunities for projects on best practice exchange between KCC and the Central and East European countries in a range of different fields related to core business priorities, for example, social services or environmental management

The county intends to follow this up by exploring other opportunities in the Baltic countries, the Czech Republic and Poland. Kent's links with the State of Virginia are similarly influenced by economic advantage, but here there is a much more wide-ranging interpretation of what that constitutes, with a more transparent connection to the field of learning. The following activities demonstrate this:

- School-to-school links
- Professional development of teachers on a study visit to Virginia

- Virginia Indians hold a Virginia Indian Festival at Gravesend, Kent
- Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA) launched its US campaign, targeting the eastern seaboard of the USA
- Joint production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* between New Kent High School in Virginia and Astor College for the Arts, Dover
- Kent features at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington in 2007
- Centre for Innovation and Technology (CIT) in Virginia becomes a founding organisation in the Strategic Innovation Gateway Network (SIGN) covering Kent, Virginia and Hungary

## City-States and Region-States

Clearly, the long-term advantages of inter-regional cooperation are being addressed, much in the same way that PALLACE engaged the stakeholders of the future in debate about the city's and their own future. The link between the social, the environmental and the economic issues has always been there in local authorities. In cooperation projects such as this, the solutions are becoming more internationalised. Of course, Kent is not the only region to establish fruitful links with other parts of the world. The city of Southampton's cooperation project with Xideng in China is yet another example of the proliferation of global interaction between cities and regions. For all parts of local government there are opportunities and benefits.

It is perhaps a reflection of the increasing autonomy and influence of regional government. John Eger, the former adviser to two US Presidents, has gone so far as to suggest that there is a return to the concept of the powerful city and region-state that existed, for example, in the palatinates of Northern Germany before unification, and in Athens, Sparta and Venice in the more distant past (Eger 1996). He bases this opinion on the increased power and influence now trickling down to local and regional government in many countries of the world allied to the enormous potential power of the new information and communications technologies for intercity, inter-institutional and interpersonal multilogue. To a certain degree, he is right. The opportunities do exist, and are being exploited by creative and innovative cities and regions. And yet, the world of the early twenty-first century is hardly a safer or happier place to live. Perhaps a newer dimension is needed.

The PALLACE report anticipates this, as follows:

There is whole new dimension to the debate when we discuss the global role of cities and regions for the future. Whatever model is adopted – city-ring, city mentoring, city-twinning, city networking – an even greater challenge occurs when we can include into these networks cities and regions from the less-favoured countries of this planet. (Longworth and Allwinkle 2005, p. 45)

## **EFMD: Business and Global Responsibility**

The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) adopts a similar focus in its Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative, a report prepared by a group of senior representatives from organisations, business schools and centres for leadership learning from five continents:

The challenges facing humankind are large, undeniable and global. ‘Economic, social, environmental inequalities abound and are increasing,’ it says, ‘Businesses are among the most influential institutions worldwide and have a tremendous opportunity to shape a better world for existing and future generations. The obligation of the globally responsible business is to create economic and societal progress in a globally responsible and sustainable way. (EFMD 2005, p. 6)

It continues:

The new global business context requires a definition of business that encompasses corporate aspirations, responsibilities and activities in realistic and contemporary terms that go beyond purely financially focused explanations. The purpose of the globally responsible business is to create economic and societal progress in a globally responsible and sustainable way. (EMFD 2005, p. 7)

In its advocacy of ‘the global exercise of ethical, values-based leadership in the pursuit of economic and societal progress and sustainable development’, the report makes a powerful indictment of organisations that exist purely to satisfy their own narrow commercial objectives. It suggests that, in a world beset by extremes of wealth and poverty, conflict and aggressive fundamentalism, all organisations have a new responsibility to expand their remit towards the alleviation of this situation. If they do not, then the undesirable outcomes of inaction will eventually overwhelm them.

## **Learning Cities and Regions: Global Opportunities**

EFMD is of course echoing concerns that are well documented in papers, reports and recommendations from organisations of all types and all persuasions. So what is the responsibility of the city and region in this respect? What can it contribute?

The PALLACE report suggested one approach, as follows:

If we now imagine a city-ring comprising six or seven cities from the developed world, for argument’s, and alliteration’s, sake let us say Sydney, Seattle, Southampton, Sapporo, Stuttgart and Shanghai. And we now add one or two from South America or Africa or the poverty-stricken areas of Asia, each of them linking their schools, universities, adult colleges, companies, city administrations, museums, children, parents, seniors, teachers, researchers, under the guidance of an energetic, sympathetic, persuasive and knowledgeable set of leaders. (Longworth and Allwinkle 2005, p. 47)

This is one way to start the process of alleviating global conflict, poverty and ignorance. If sensitively organised and properly funded, it brings it much closer to the hearts, minds and capabilities of real people in real cities and regions, eventually bypassing the need for mass migrations of unfortunate refugees.

There are, perhaps surprisingly, real advantages. These are taken from *Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities*, a book which is also accompanied by learning materials adapted to each chapter (Longworth 2006 and [www.longlearn.org.uk/materials.html](http://www.longlearn.org.uk/materials.html)):

1. *It is a preventative measure*: the giant leap in mutual understanding and transformation of mindset that takes place when people and organisations in cities and regions worldwide communicate with each other and learn together. Through such understanding, social behaviour improves, racism and ethnic hatred diminishes and cities and regions no longer bear the costs of picking up the pieces.
2. *It makes economic sense*: the profitable economic, trade and technical development that can result through increased contact between small and large companies in different countries, leading to increased employment and greater prosperity. Here is an attractive economic justification for greater learning city/region cooperation.
3. *It is incremental*: the transformation of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours that occurs when thousands more people and organisations are contributing to the solution of social, cultural, environmental, political and economic problems throughout the world right across the age groups. Cities and regions, as learning organisms, can learn much from each other, and jointly help each other to cope with seemingly intractable problems.
4. *It is fulfilling for thousands of people*. This amounts to a huge increase in available resource through mobilising the goodwill, talents, skills, experience and creativity between cities and regions. It is a new resource, tapping into the knowledge of individuals, and turning human ingenuity and action into social and intellectual capital to the benefit of cities and regions.
5. *It solves previously intractable problems*. All of this would potentially mean that there would be fewer refugees. Many of the developing problems can be anticipated and addressed through cooperation between cities during a crisis.
6. *It is sustainable because it is so much more dispersed*. Governments and non-governmental organisations are no longer the only initiators of aid to the underdeveloped. Action is now shared with the cities and, through them, the people, who gain in understanding of the realities and problems of the modern world, and the extent to which they ameliorate the latter. Stakeholder organisations and institutions in the city/region have a real world-class focus and *raison d'être*, and a contribution to make to the construction of the learning city at home and abroad.

All of this suggests a new mission for cities and regions. No longer are they inward-looking entities with a responsibility only to provide services for their own citizens. They have a greater mission and a greater global responsibility, entirely consonant with the ideals behind the learning region concept: to open the eyes of their institutions and their citizens to the world outside, and to the contribution that they can make to improving it.

This is not a hopeless, impractical, 'blue skies' idealism. In so doing, they are helping to re-create themselves into entities richer in every way, more prosperous, more resourceful, more knowledgeable, more sensitive, more participative and more



creative, innovative and capable. With the application of such creativity, using the resources that are available in the community and from other organisms, this need not impinge heavily on local taxes. At the same time, it raises the city's and region's profile in a world that needs, more than ever, the application of tolerance and respect for others.

## **PENR3L A European Learning Region Expertise Network**

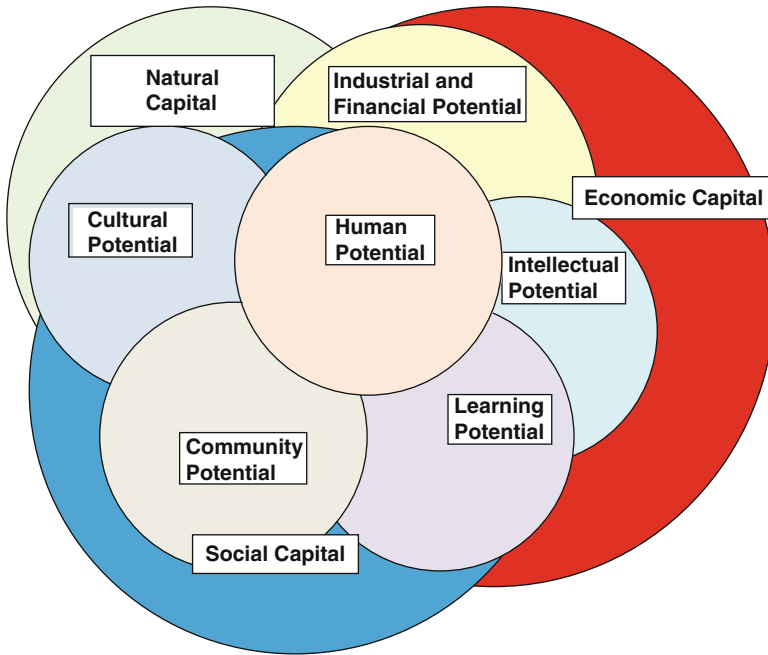
All of these ideas, plans and actions come to nothing, however, if there is not a sustained effort to implement them in a systematic way and to bring together the people with the knowledge to make a difference, as in recommendation 7 of Fig. 41.1. As in so many promising funded projects, the thin veneer of sustainability often disperses with the end of the funding. In late 2007, the European Commission, which recognises that the key to implementing its lifelong learning policy is the creation and stimulation of learning cities and regions, approved a project to establish a sustainable expertise network in this area in Europe. This was called PENR3L (PASCAL European Network of Lifelong learning Regions), linked to the PASCAL organisation mentioned above. (Longworth and Osborne 2008) The institution leading the project was the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Stirling, which had already established itself as a forward-looking organisation in this field by developing the LILARA tools, also described above. Another earlier contribution had been the development of 'stakeholder audits', the interactive tools to allow a local authority and its stakeholders in universities, schools, adult education and SMEs to become learning organisations working together to create a learning city or region. At that time, it was the European centre of the global PASCAL Observatory.

PENR3L organised two seminal workshops in Barcelona and Kaunas (Lithuania) to debate the issues surrounding the development of learning regions and the ways in which this could be initiated, propagated and sustained. The learning region development model described an interlocking set of the capitals that provide both resource and underlying potential for every region, and adopted the hypothesis that economic, social and natural (environmental) capital grow in a holistic way together, rather than separately as so many seekers after easy wealth creation assume (Longworth and Osborne 2010). Figure 41.3 shows that relationship, and because each region is different the influence of any one of the capitals will be different.

There are, of course, other capital resources besides those shown in Fig. 41.3 – they can be based on the effects of diversity, location, heritage, natural resources and several others.

The workshops covered an eclectic and substantial set of topics and sub-topics as shown in Fig. 41.4:

The complexity of the Learning Region concept can be seen in Figs. 41.3 and 41.4. The difficulties lie first in envisioning the interconnections that transform a set of discrete topics as shown in Fig. 41.4 into a holistic strategy, and second in



**Fig. 41.3** Resource, potential and capital in a learning region

establishing an international dimension in the face of the local and national mindset that pervades current thinking. Regions often see themselves in fierce competition with each other for scarce resources, and it is sometimes difficult for them to recognise that greater international cooperation can help them achieve their aims and objectives more easily, both in economic and social development.

## **EUROlocal: A European Knowledge-Gathering Project**

Although the initial PENR3L funding ended in 2008, the work of the network continues through cooperation in other European Commission projects, notably that of EUROlocal, which started in late 2009 and continues until 2011 (Longworth and Osborne 2010).

In EUROlocal, PENR3L will lead other networks from Germany, Italy and Eastern Europe in gathering together all European knowledge and practice in this area from all sources across all sectors and countries. It will liaise with all the organisations committed to improve these regions, and put together a database of the key players in each of them. It will cover all aspects and all stakeholders relevant to a

**Theme 1: Learning Regions, Learning Cities and Economic Development**

## Sub themes

- Characteristics of Learning Regions and Cities
  - What constitutes a learning region – how is it different?
  - Importance of research, knowledge, intelligence and information for economic development
  - Sustainability and economic development
- Learning Organisations in a Learning Region
  - Characteristics of Learning Organisations
  - Continuous learning development and support programmes - For whom? Why? What? How?
  - Learning Conditions for developing Innovation and creativity
  - Stakeholders as Learning Organisations - Stakeholder audits
  - The region as an adaptive Learning Organisation
  - Partnerships and purposes – local, national, European, Global
- Marketing and publicising Learning Cities and Regions
  - Communicating internally to organisations and people – stimulating internal investment
  - Marketing the learning region to the wider world – stimulating external investment
- Resources and Capital
  - Building new capital and resource
  - Mobilising Human, Intellectual, Community and Economic Capital
  - Relationship between Economic and Social Capital
- Employability, Employment, skills and learning etc
  - Discovering and satisfying learning needs in local authorities for economic development
  - Learning Needs – content, methods and sources of materials
  - Skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning cities and regions
  - Development Tools and techniques – personal learning plans, audits, mentors, guides etc

**Theme 2: Learning Regions, Learning Cities - Social and Community Development**

## Subthemes

- Creating a culture of learning – why? how? – breaking down barriers.
  - Stakeholders and their roles – especially voluntary and community organisations
  - Tools and techniques in a social setting, personal learning plans, personal audits, mentors and guides
  - Coping with Diversity, multi and inter-culturalism
  - Learning Needs, content, methods and providers
- Consultation, involvement and democracy
  - Consultation methods – from information to empowerment
  - Neighbourhood learning development strategies
  - Improving involvement and democracy
- Active Citizenship and volunteering
  - Mobilising people and communities
  - Volunteering strategies
  - Networking citizens of all ages internationally
- Environment, climate change and sustainable development
- Continuous learning/development and support programmes
- *Resources and Capital - as above concentrating on social capital*

**Theme 3 Learning Regions, Learning Cities – Networking, intelligence and knowledge**

## Sub themes

- Needs and requirements of cities and regions
- What sort of intelligence and how to communicate?
- What partnerships, why and between whom?
- What resources for the network
- Politics and structures
- Network Communication methods
- Network Sustainability

**Fig. 41.4** PENR3L learning region topics (Longworth and Osborne 2008)

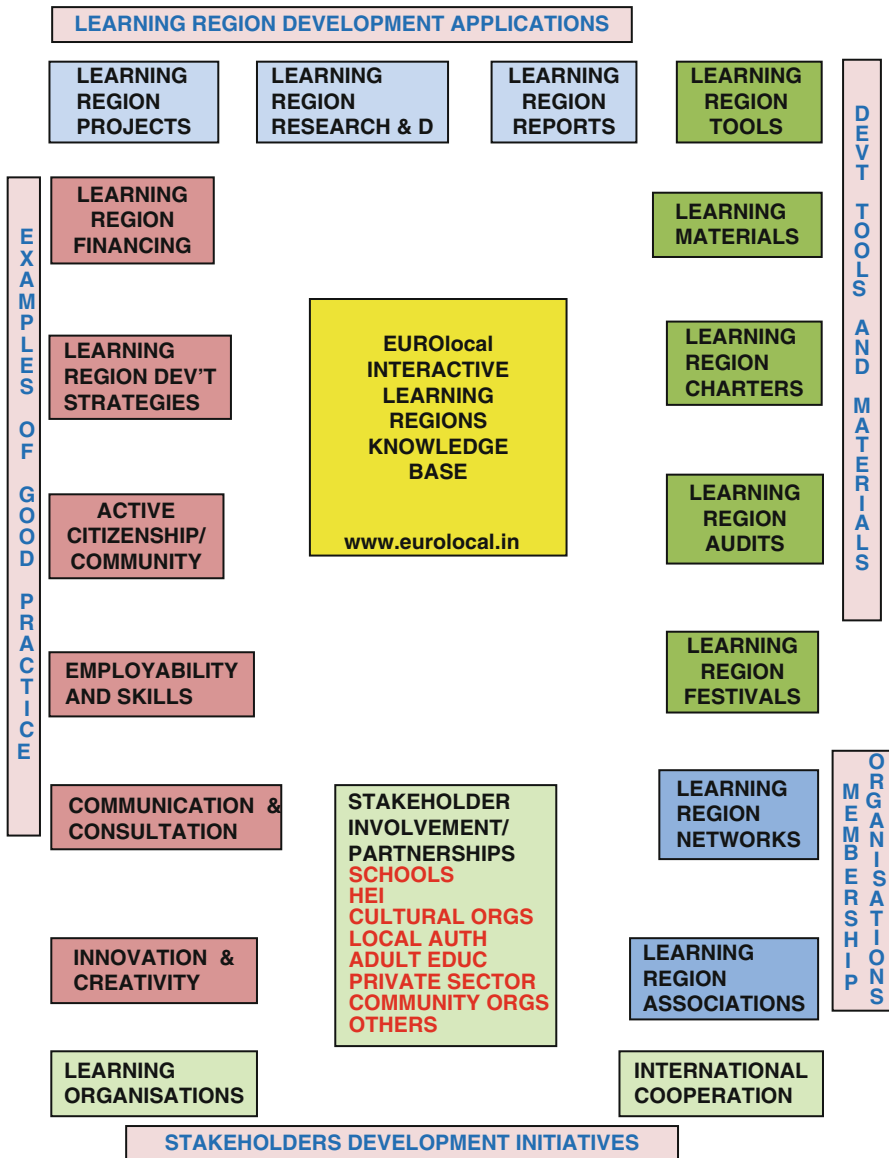


Fig. 41.5 EUROlocal dimensions (Longworth and Osborne 2010)

learning region – universities, adult education, business and industry, schools, local authorities, cultural institutions, voluntary and community organisations and others. A breakdown of the type of information that will be collected is shown in Fig. 41.5.

## **EUROlocal Dimensions**

It can be seen that all the dimensions of a learning region as they have developed over the past 20 years are brought together and displayed here. Once entered into a creative, multidimensional, interactive web facility that also encourages forums, blogs, tweets and all the other facilities of a sophisticated modern communications system, the task will be one of ensuring that European regions are brought up to date with modern learning region characteristics and advantages. This facility will also be open to other parts of the world and, hopefully, encourage Europe's regions to look outwards to form liaisons, to expand horizons and to propel themselves into a new learning region future. Then, the recommendations of the forward-looking TELS project, with which this chapter began, will really begin to break down the inertia and the shortsightedness, and produce something better from the much criticised globalisation process.

## **The PASCAL Observatory**

One organisation established to make this happen is PASCAL. Initiated from an OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) conference, and also comprising partners from RMIT Melbourne, Kent Region of Learning, Northern Illinois and Glasgow Universities among others, PASCAL ([www.obs-pascal.com](http://www.obs-pascal.com)) allows users in local and regional government, to access details of the latest global developments in social capital, place management and learning regions in the new economy. The PASCAL global observatory provides a strategic information tracking and sharing service offering, among other things:

- Reports on 'hot' topics, prepared by international experts on a commissioned basis
- Access to a clearinghouse providing details of relevant policy, research and programmes associated with successful interventions of various kinds
- Research and consultancy services focused on developing and managing partnerships that are designed to promote community well-being and strengthen economic, social and environmental development
- Benchmarking tools to encourage greater stakeholder cohesion and involvement in regional development
- Seminars and conferences on topics of interest to leaders and organisations in would-be learning cities and regions

The organisation has dynamism and an outward-looking mission to engender change at the international level. It has already initiated the PURE project, described above, to provide the know-how and the benchmarking tools by which universities and regional authorities can work together, and its PIE (PASCAL International

Exchanges) project is beginning to link regions and communities in joint projects to explore heritage, culture and social justice topics. The list of topics will expand in future years. The next few years will be at least as interesting as the past 20 years have been.

The EUROlocal storehouse of learning city and region knowledge (<http://eurolocal.info/>) is now complete, and provides an excellent facility of tools, learning materials, charters, publications and case studies for all regions wishing to become learning regions.

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**Part IV**  
**A Critical Stocktaking**



# Chapter 42

## Lifelong Learning as a Flag of Convenience

Roger Boshier

### Introduction

#### *Rustbucket Disintegration*

Owners of rustbucket ships register them in Liberia and Panama, where requirements are less onerous than in New York, London, Tokyo or Rotterdam. Flags of convenience conceal harsh working conditions, slipshod cargo-handling and careless piloting procedures. But getting a flag of convenience saves shipowners' money. If disgruntled crew do not like it, they can try their luck with the captain.

In lifelong education, flying a flag of convenience signals the fact educational planning has drifted far from utopian yearnings of the 1970s. Flags of convenience are a sign of a broken system. The learning society was originally envisaged as a system of integrated elements. Since the 1990s, lifelong education systems have collapsed and mostly been replaced by ad hoc and disconnected manifestations of lifelong learning.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how holistic notions of lifelong education disintegrated and sprouted lifelong learning flags of convenience. The author is not impressed with what today sails under the flag 'lifelong learning'. He preferred 1970s versions of lifelong education. This is a hazardous admission because hankering for the halcyon years of Edgar Faure arouses postmodern critics from their usual preoccupation with themselves. Praising Faure could also be dismissed as misguided nostalgia or the last harrumph of an old codger.

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Education is a provided service and someone has to make decisions about where resources are placed. Faure commissioners were not satisfied with formal settings monopolising education. Education was far too important to be dominated by educators. What was needed was a 'learning society' with high levels of interaction between informal, nonformal and formal settings. Education needed to be democratised and barriers to access demolished. Could education be a joyful, festive and collective process not dominated by teachers and schools?

Faure's utopia did not last long and, by the 1990s, OECD and the European Union had hijacked his terminology but ditched the soft-left politics. Festive tendencies had been shattered by the 1973 'oil shock', mean-spirited Thatcherism and alleged need to build workplace skills for the global economy. Today, not much is left of integrated (or systemic) approaches to lifelong education. What remains are mostly disintegrated remnants of utopia.

With this as backdrop, the first task here is to show how interactions between state, market and civil society changed the context for theory about lifelong education. It is then necessary to contrast 1970s UNESCO ideas about collectivised lifelong education with 1990s OECD notions of individualised lifelong learning.

In the 1970s, lifelong education challenged extant power relations and required integrated systems. By the 1990s, conceptual elements at the centre of lifelong education had disintegrated, and there was a preference for theory reinforcing extant power relations. But, despite fractures separating earlier from later versions of the learning society, certain fundamentals are still visible. But how have they played-out in the field of practice?

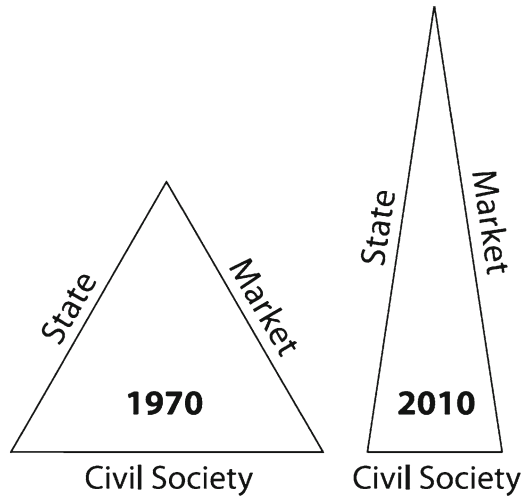
## State, Market and Civil Society

Since around 1920, lifelong education (as a master concept for educational reform) has been shaped by the competing interests of civil society, the state and market (Fig. 42.1). These days, civil-society imperatives have mostly been overwhelmed by marketisation and, in places, the state desire to maintain legitimacy. This is particularly the case in China, where the desire to build the biggest learning society in the world is driven by the party/state need for legitimacy (Jiang 2002; Boshier and Huang 2006).

In Fig. 42.1, the length of the line on each side of the triangle shows the extent to which each variable has shaped the character of lifelong education. In the 1970s, civil society, the state and the market had a more-or-less equal influence on lifelong education. This relationship dramatically changed in 1979, when Margaret Thatcher came to power and academics with a nose for consulting contracts and research grants jumped onto new bandwagons thundering through the academy. Recently, civil society elements withered, while state and market preoccupations have grown larger.

The relative absence of a civil society emphasis in twenty-first century lifelong learning was condemned as a 'militarized empire of state and market'. Why do so

**Fig. 42.1** Variables shaping lifelong learning and education



many people still follow its dictates – ‘to acquire skills, to get jobs, to have income, to consume and live as consumers/clients’? (Mojab 2006, p. 353). Citizens struggle to juggle state imperatives and market pressures and join fewer clubs and go to a smaller number of meetings than 30 or 40 years ago. Low voter turnout during elections, political apathy and pervasive cynicism point to the decline of civil society. Here is the voter turnout rate in Canadian federal elections: 1900, 77%; 1958, 79%; 1988, 75%; 2008, 59%; 2011, 62%. Similar declines are evident in other parts of the western world.

## A Cartography of Lifelong Education/Learning

Whatever consensus united architects of 1970s lifelong education has now collapsed. Attempts to build integrated systems to ease people in and out of learning settings in all stages of life have been abandoned and replaced by ad hocery. The conceptual elements of lifelong education have been separated and scattered. In places, lifelong education still embraces infants, young people and adults. In other places, lifelong learning is only for adults. Elsewhere, only nonformal settings are labelled ‘lifelong learning’. Most of this is evidence of disintegration and far from what Faure (1972) envisaged.

Figure 42.2 maps the location of three intergovernmental organisations promoting different versions of lifelong education/learning. The vertical axis concerns the extent to which lifelong education/learning reinforces or challenges extant power relations. Paulo Freire (1972) and proponents of the new sociology of education insisted education is a political process. There is no such thing as neutral education and, in a Physics, Oceanography, Social Work or any other class, some interests are always served better than others. Lifelong education/learning is also not neutral and, over the last 40 years, there have been struggles between humanists wanting to build



**Fig. 42.2** Location of three intergovernmental organisations in a topography of lifelong education/learning

civil societies (e.g., Faure) and others committed to oiling the cogs of capitalism (e.g., the OECD). Early humanists had apprehensions about capitalism. For many advocates of lifelong learning, it is their *raison d'être*.

Most of what Faure (1972) wrote about lifelong education challenged educational orthodoxy. Work produced under the flag of twenty-first century lifelong learning usually regards global capitalism as an unproblematised constant. Lifelong learning theory involves tinkering at the edges, not changing the fundamentals of educational orthodoxy.

The horizontal axis in Fig. 42.2 concerns the holistic integrity of conceptual elements (in lifelong education/learning). To what extent are concepts atomised? Do they hang together? How do they interact? Is there a gestalt – an overarching concept – or are these discrete elements? To what extent are elements integrated? Or disintegrated?

Over the last 40 years, there has been a pronounced migration from the left to the right end of the horizontal axis. Even in the 1970s, the OECD was never enamoured with UNESCO's grand theory and utopian master concept. With a nod to their funders, they mostly ignored the master concept and focussed on the workplace.

Analysts clustered at the integrated (left) end of the horizontal axis are sensitive to Gestalt psychology and principles of ecology. For advocates of integrated approaches to lifelong education, what matters are ways pieces hang together. During rehearsals, the orchestra conductor wants each note to sound right. But, on the big night, what matters is the melody or tune. The whole is bigger than the sum of the parts.

Analysts proposing disintegrated perspectives are suspicious of grand theory and reject master concept metanarratives. Many considered Faure's utopia romantic, unrealistic, even ridiculous. Their orientation tends to be practical and political. They will adopt prior learning assessment, credit-for-experience, credit transfer, recognition of foreign credentials and other individual elements of lifelong education – without engaging with the larger system.

Building a learning society would involve large-scale reform of school, university and other systems. Every government ministry, almost all NGOs and many educational and noneducational settings would be involved. But many bureaucrats, teachers, school administrators, Ministers of Education and academics were aghast at the magnitude of what Faure (1972) proposed.

Few educational leaders were willing to develop mechanisms to integrate with nonformal settings. But they welcomed the chance to take the master concept apart, pick out juicy parts and launch glamorous projects. Supplement classroom learning with distance education, start a learning exchange, use the word 'digital', invite Ivan Illich, Paul Freire, Majid Rahnema or Edgar Faure to deliver a conference keynote. Launching discrete high profile projects under the flag of lifelong education was enough to stave off having to engage with the master concept.

In many places, disintegration is the pragmatic or strategic approach to educational reform. But ideas stripped from metanarratives must also be politically attractive and have an immediate impact. Master concepts are not easily rendered as a 30 second clip on the 6 o'clock news. But, for example, recognising foreign credentials, opening a learning exchange or credit bank is politically worthwhile and newsworthy. Why engage with master concepts when all that is needed are discrete 'talking points'?

## UNESCO's Faure Report

Army education schemes in World War I demonstrated adults could learn. Hence, A.L. Smith, Chair of the famous Adult Education Committee (of the UK Ministry of Reconstruction) had no hesitation in suggesting education should be 'universal and lifelong' (Final Report 1919). In 1960, the Second UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education (Montreal) revived Smith's idea and laid down some foundations for lifelong education. Six years later, students fed up with French higher education pulled up flagstones and hurled them at police. In 1968, it looked as though the world was coming apart and UNESCO Director-General René Maheu felt education was the root of the problem. Edgar Faure was asked to strike a representative committee to see what could be done.

Faure (1972) was the 'turning point' (Ouane 2009) in the modern era of lifelong education. UNESCO's International Commission on the Development of Education consulted a broad array of informants. Members travelled to 23 countries and had meetings with or received written submissions from a bevy of educational notables. They also solicited the opinion of critics – such as Phillip Coombs, Jean Piaget, Gunnar Myrdal, Paul Lengrand, Torsten Husén, Bogdan Suchodolski, Paulo Freire, Paul Goodman, Everett Reimer and A.H. Halsey.

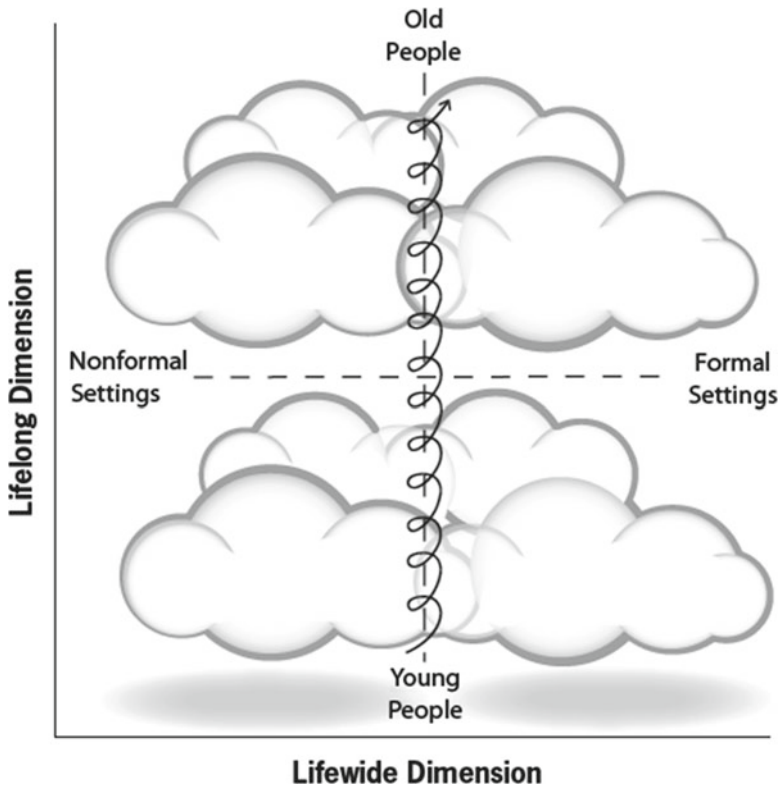


Fig. 42.3 Vertical and horizontal dimensions of the learning society

Of the seven commissioners, Arthur Petrovosky, the Russian, was most likely to represent his government. The rest spoke for themselves. Rahnema was a former Minister of Higher Education and Science from Iran but, by 1972, alienated by political tumult in his homeland. During Commission discussions, he often found himself on the same side of an argument as Felipe Herrera from the University of Chile. Herrera and Rahnema understood ecology and were committed to the master concept. Both were wary of overly mechanistic or techno-rational modes of organisation. Men of passion, they favoured only a loose coupling or unsystem (Rahnema 1987).

Rahnema and Herrera were also interested in indigenous knowledge and farm-gate intellectuals. For them, the learning society was an open system of interacting elements. Rahnema was available to travel with Faure and work with Secretariat members who did the writing. Like Faure, Rahnema was a renaissance man with many passions and interests. Hence, he probably had a greater influence than other members of the Commission.

Figure 42.3 is my portrayal of what Faure commissioners talked about. A proper application of lifelong education would result in creation of a learning society where participation in education would be taken-for-granted – an inalienable human

right like clean water or roof over one's head. The vertical axis is the *lifelong* and the horizontal axis the *lifewide* dimensions of the learning city, district or society. Ideally, citizens of all ages would get opportunities to learn in a broad array of settings. As indicated by the spiral, learners in different stages of the life cycle would effortlessly opt in and out of formal and nonformal settings as their circumstances change.

'Formal' are familiar school, college, tertiary and university settings – usually under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. 'Nonformal' are out-of-school settings – such as NGOs, the workplace, church, farm, community or prison. Educational authorities too often favour formal and put insufficient resources into nonformal settings. In a learning society, there would be a more-or-less equal distribution of resources among zones shown in Fig. 42.3. There should be high levels of interaction between nonformal and formal settings and less of a tendency to segment learners according to their age. Borders should be porous.

With respect to the horizontal – the lifewide – dimension, massive barriers impede interaction. Now, nearly 40 years after Faure, the situation has not significantly improved. Faure wanted vertical and horizontal integration and democratisation in the learning society. 'It should be possible to opt in and out of formal or nonformal settings throughout life .... but borders and boundaries should be open and porous ... we wanted interaction. Each zone should be talking to each other ... we were looking to open as many possibilities as possible' (Rahnema 1987).

## Reaction to Faure

Rubenson (2009) claimed Faure's ideas were 'vague' and Wain (1986) felt the UNESCO Report lacked 'practical' utility. New Zealanders never suffered these problems. On the contrary, Faure's emphasis fitted the historic respect for self-educated New Zealand farm-gate intellectuals – such as Ed Hillary or Peter Jackson – who excel on the world stage without the 'benefit' of formal education (Boshier 2002).

Many New Zealanders (including the author) hated school and found mountains, beaches and loitering in libraries a better option. In 1970, less than 3% of New Zealanders had a university degree, there was limited access to tertiary institutions and no community colleges. If a farmer needed to repair a tractor or find out about fertilisers, he typically spoke to friends or neighbours. Hence, the Faure report appealed to ordinary people and resonated with Maori comforted by the emphasis on learning in informal and nonformal settings. The Maori marae (community centre) was legitimised as a place of learning.

When the Faure Report reached New Zealand, it aroused considerable interest and informed the *Educational Development Conference* – a government-sponsored attempt to determine what citizens thought about learning and education. It also sparked creation of community colleges and learning exchanges. The National Commission for UNESCO analysed what Faure meant for New Zealand (Simmonds 1972) and Boshier (1980) produced *Towards a learning society; New Zealand adult education in transition*.

At a workshop held at an Otaki Scout camp, David James (of the National Council for Adult Education), Denny Garrett, from Massey University, and Allen Tough from Canada facilitated discussion and group exercises around Faure Report themes. At this and similar events held elsewhere, it was clear *Learning to Be* had implications for educational planning in New Zealand.

European receptivity to *Learning to Be* was stunted by the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher. For the British Prime Minister and disciples in the Chicago School of Economics (Friedman 1962), privatisation, marketisation and evisceration of trade unions were the only ‘realistic’ options in a globalising world. Thatcher wanted to de-governmentalise government. The privatisation and marketisation of government services would put the onus on individuals to find what they need.

The USA was growing increasingly hostile to UNESCO and, in 1984, Ronald Reagan withdrew funding and told ambassadors to come home. In 1985, Thatcher also walked away from UNESCO. President Reagan said he might return if UNESCO reformed itself. In this climate, UNESCO was hard-pressed to sell master concepts for educational reform.

By the mid-1980s, New Zealand enthusiasm for Faure had been squashed by a radical experiment with free market economics. ‘Rogernomics’ (named after the then Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas) involved unprecedented levels of privatisation and marketisation. Shady merchant bankers made obscene profits from disposal of state assets, and there was a sharp increase in indicators of social malfunction. In this climate, there would be no significant expansion of lifelong education – as a service provided by the state. By the late 1980s ‘being’ or learning to ‘be’ sounded more like a hippie-era hangover than a serious template for reform (Boshier and Benseman 2000).

## From Education to Learning

There has been considerable confusion concerning what distinguishes lifelong learning from lifelong education. Many people use these terms as synonyms. But there is a difference. Education is a systematic and provided service. Education is an external and deliberate process. It is deeply political, because choices have to be made. Who gets what? Lifelong education requires that someone – often government – devote resources to it. Choices must be made. Lifelong education is a noun – the name of a master concept for educational reform.

During the 1970s, OECD analysts worked to develop recurrent education as a strategy for lifelong learning. But workplaces were changing, paid educational leave mostly a political impossibility and recurrent education ran out of steam. In the 1980s, there were few new developments concerning lifelong education, and OECD analysts switched their attention to adult learning.

Shifting the focus to learning represented a confluence of two contradictory modes of thought. In the first, anarchist-utopians like Ivan Illich (1971), Majid Rahnema (2001) and, in North America, people like John Ohliger (Grace and Rocco 2009),



Alan Thomas (1991) and, to a lesser extent, Allen Tough (1971) considered schools part of an oppressive social apparatus bent on maintaining the status quo. Neoliberals also favour learning – but for different reasons. They have heard enough from teacher unions and worry about the quality and relevance of what is taught in formal settings. For them, education and learning would be more relevant to the global economy if handled by business and industry.

Left- and right-activists were now in an unsavoury coalition. For the left, embracing learning was a way to neutralise schools and smash structural oppression. For the right, it was a blow for individual initiative and freedom. Both perspectives relieved governments of the obligation to orchestrate lifelong education. Responsibility now lay with the individual learner who would choose from the free market. If citizens lacked the ability to choose appropriate learning settings, the state had no special duties. It is ‘natural’ to have winners and losers.

Lifelong learning became a signifier for adapting to the needs of the global economy. This was a source of concern because if the ‘concept of learning floats free from designated and concrete meanings ... [and] ... unless civil societarian adult educators claim “learning” for themselves, giving it a socially anchored, contextual meaning, neo-conservatives will run away with it’ (Welton 1997, p. 33). Lifelong learning denoted less emancipatory relationships than lifelong education, and it tends to render invisible obligations to address social conditions. Predatory capitalism is unproblematised. Lifelong learning is mostly nested in an ideology of vocationalism. Learning is for acquiring skills, enabling the learner to work harder, faster and smarter and to help their employer and nation compete in the global economy. Lifelong learning ‘is individually focussed, acontextual and adopted a little too readily by those who believe education entails adherence to, rather than challenge of, social orthodoxies’ (Nesbit 2006, p 16).

Here, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, lifelong learning is nested in a notion of the autonomous free-floating individual learner as consumer. It mostly abdicates responsibility for the public good and avoids hard choices by putting learning on the ‘free’ market. If learners – as consumers – do not take advantage of opportunities, it is their fault.

It is much easier to blame the victim than to do hard work needed to overcome structural or psychocultural barriers to participation. The savvy consumer surfs the Internet to select from a smorgasbord of offerings. Lifelong learning is favoured by advocates of an information economy, many of whom make vast generalisations about technology-mediated forms of learning (e.g., Daniels 1996).

Within neoliberal lifelong learning discourse:

- Education is a private good. Consumers who want it should pay.
- Competition is inherently good. It nurtures efficiency.
- Learning is primarily an individual endeavour.
- In the new technologically-mediated learning society, individuals will choose from the free market.
- In all societies, there are winners and losers. It is a ‘natural’ process, a matter of ‘choice’.

Neoliberalism magnified a problem in the Faure Report title. Translated from French, *Learning to Be* sounded like California psychobabble. What did ‘being’ or ‘learning to be’ have to do with learning about computers, getting a job, making money, preparing for the knowledge economy? ‘Learning to be’ was not ‘realistic’ in a globalising world.

Thatcherism, Reaganism and Rogernomics also depended on the TINA (‘there-is-no-alternative’) principle. An oft-repeated mantra, TINA ensured the docility of citizens and manufactured consent for right-wing reforms. According to TINA-principles, ‘there is no alternative’ to lifelong learning, as skills creation in the knowledge economy. Say it often enough and takes on the aura of conventional wisdom. Neoliberals condemned utopia and made frequent reference to ‘new realities’. They claim to inhabit the ‘real’ world. Utopia is ‘unrealistic’. But TINA was wrong because there were plenty of alternatives but, particularly in New Zealand, few had the depth to derail the neoliberal juggernaut (Kelsey 1995).

By the mid-1990s, the master concept was in pieces and the so-called knowledge economy had nudged aside the learning society. Although unrepentant Faure enthusiasts hammered away at old themes, former friends of UNESCO pulled suits from closets and inserted the language of business (excellence, best practices, benchmarking) into research and consulting proposals. In the olden days, the Minister of Education gave the keynote at the university conference. Now it was the Minister of Finance. Accompanied by captains of industry and bureaucrats convinced humans were ‘resources’ to be ‘developed’.

## UNESCO Fights Back

With economic rationalism eroding Faure’s focus on civil society and scientific humanism, the OECD and European Union dominating discussion about lifelong learning, and Senge’s (1990) work on learning organisations attracting a lot of attention (particularly in China), UNESCO commissioned the Jacques Delors (1996) Report. This was intended to broaden discourse, slow down the OECD and European Union juggernauts and remind governments making money is not the only thing that matters.

Delors highlighted four pillars of an optimal learning society:

- Learning to live together
- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to be

‘Learning to live with nature’ was a notable omission. ‘Learning to do’ was a concession to people who saw lifelong learning as a signifier for workplace learning in a globalising world. ‘Learning to live together’ put a focus on ethnocultural conflict, immigration and struggles to build inclusive multicultural societies. This is vastly important in China, where the largest rural–urban migration in human history

has triggered an urgent to learn how to live together. City residents dislike (even hate) newly arrived rural people. A failure to reconcile these groups has the potential to bring down the regime (Amnesty International 2007).

The four pillars were reasonably comprehensive and represented a spirited attempt to unravel confusion left from *Learning to Be*. Delors acknowledged the world of work, but maintained the historic UNESCO emphasis on civil society, scientific humanism, human rights, respect for difference and living in peace. Delors did not ignite the same level of excitement as Faure. But it was a worthwhile endeavour and repositioned UNESCO within lifelong learning discourse.

## Early and Later Versions of Lifelong Learning/Education

By the 1990s, utopian, festive and democratic notions of lifelong education had been replaced by individualised and technologically-mediated notions of learning. It is now common to applaud one and condemn the other version of lifelong learning. Field (2001) questioned the helpfulness of odious comparisons and wondered whether there might be more continuities than discontinuities between early and later notions of lifelong education/learning. It is a good question, but answers are not clear. In this regard, it is salutary to listen to ringside observers who did not see many continuities.

Adama Ouane (2009) was Director of the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, and observed the struggle with OECD and European Union. ‘UNESCO’s rights-based, humanistic, transformative approach to learning... contrasts with the approach of the OECD, the EU and World Bank, which tend to view lifelong learning as being primarily work and economy-related. Even if they recognise wider goals – such as creating active citizens – their main emphasis is on employability’ (2009, p. 307).

Tom Schuller of the OECD also had a close-up view of the contest to control discourse. ‘UNESCO’s vision was promoted across the world by the Faure Report and reflected their worldwide membership and general cultural remit’. In contrast, the OECD line reflected rich country interests and ‘was more geared to economic development’. By 2009, Schuller was despondent. ‘Learning remains something all OECD countries believe in ... but these aspirations are honoured more verbally than in reality’ (2009, p. 296).

## Switching Sides

During the 1980s and 1990s, the UNESCO Institute for Education was pressured to be ‘realistic’, and there was less talk of master concepts and more about individual responsibility, lifelong learning and the adult learner. The writing was on the wall. In 2006, the Institute for Education became the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong

Learning. UILL would now ‘promote knowledge partnerships’, strengthen the UILL as a ‘platform ... for advancing multidimensional best practice’, ‘showcase leading innovations’, create ‘dynamic forums where research will be combined with practice, interfacing and informing each other’ (Ouane 2009, p. 310).

With UNESCO sounding like the Chamber of Commerce, nimble academics also changed course. Some hailed the alleged arrival of a knowledge society (e.g., Rubenson and Schuetze 2000). Although it was not obvious what distinguished a knowledge from a learning society, one delivered better research and consulting grants than the other. Despite the occasional grimace, there was now talk of knowledge partnerships, bench-marking, best practices and, most hilarious, excellence.

There are still major disagreements concerning the aims of lifelong education/learning. On the one side are humanist apologists for Faure wedded to the master concept. On the other are people claiming not much can be gained from turning over old ground. Accept ‘new realities’ and engage with business, government and others convinced disintegrated forms of lifelong learning are the ‘new Jerusalem’ (Rubenson and Schuetze, 2000).

After 1990, the worldwide interest in building learning organisations, learning villages, towns and cities invigorated these debates. New energy also came from the massive Chinese learning initiative (Boshier and Huang 2006) and interesting experiments in Korea, Taiwan and Japan. As demonstrated at the 2010 UNESCO ‘Better City, Better Life’ conference held in Shanghai, despite ideological differences, there is broad agreement concerning the most fundamental elements of Faure’s learning society (Jin and Valdés-Cotera 2011).

Proponents of lifelong education and lifelong learning still agree that:

- It is not appropriate to pack all learning into schools or the ‘front-end’ of the life cycle. Learning should be a lifelong process – from cradle to grave. This is the vertical (or lifelong) dimension of the learning society.
- There must be determined efforts to foster learning in informal and nonformal (as well as) formal settings. This is the horizontal (or lifewide) dimension of the learning society.

## The Lifelong Dimension

As a master concept, lifelong education concerned learning throughout life. Hence, lifelong education embraced infants, children and adults in multiple settings in all stages of their life. Yet, in a large number of places, lifelong learning now applies only to the time of life *following* school and higher education.

During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, University of British Columbia adult educators were at the forefront of efforts to develop lifelong education. Hence, Roby Kidd chaired and UBC’s John Friesen had a leading role at the 1960 Second UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education – where the focus was on lifelong education. From the 1970s onwards, Adult Education faculty members worked on projects at

UNESCO and OECD, contributed to international literature and urged university leaders to consider what lifelong education might mean for higher education. In 2005, UBC hosted a Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference on the theme 'learning to live together' (a pillar of the Delors report).

After many years trying to convince senior administration, lifelong education is more comprehensive than extension or continuing education, the university launched a downtown facility intended to capture what they described as the 'lifelong learning market'. The university president had decided life consists of school, tertiary (or higher) education and then lifelong learning. Someone told her lifelong learning came after regular university education. The 'new market' consisted of part-time learners who study at night.

This idea may have come from the UK. Within months of taking office in 1997, the UK government decided lifelong learning referred to the post-school sector. They created an advisory council to boost post-school participation rates in further and higher education. Instead of learning across the lifespan, discussion focussed on the high drama of quality assurance and changes to the 'inspectorate'!

Leicester and Parker (2001) thought the UK tendency to detach lifelong learning from initial education might be a 'paradigm shift'. But what it most demonstrated was the collapse of the conceptual centre of lifelong education. It also pointed to inertia and failures of imagination at the top levels of the UK government.

Detaching lifelong learning from initial education nicely relieves schools, and tertiary and higher education, of the need to change. Reformers like Knapper and Cropley (2000) or Schuetze and Slowey (2000) wanted to infuse a lifelong learning ethos into higher education. But why should universities bother? If lifelong learning only concerns the post-school sector it is not our business.

Many matters pertaining to the lifelong dimension of the learning society have not played out as expected. In some places – particularly South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa – oppressive structural and psychocultural factors impede the ability of learners to opt in and out of learning settings throughout life. Forty years after Faure, millions of people are still denied access to schools. In some places, girls are locked out only because of their gender. As the Director-General of UNESCO noted 'being a girl still remains a powerful cause for exclusion despite universally enshrined human rights, constitutional guarantees and political declarations. Although progress toward gender parity has been particularly rapid over the last decade, girls are more likely to be out of primary school than boys – a blatant denial of their right to education. At the secondary level, when girls reach the vulnerable age of adolescence, their participation declines .... due to unsafe learning environments and social demands' (Bokova 2010, p. 3).

In China, family resources are concentrated on the son. Schooling is compulsory but, in rural areas, too many girls have been forced to stay at home, work the farm and to do domestic duties. Millions of youngsters live with traditionally-minded (and uneducated) grandparents in rural areas because parents are away working in far-off coastal factories. Although learning and education is a tested way out of the village, the life-chances of children living alone (or with grandparents) are profoundly constrained. If a girl from rural China gets into university, it is a miracle

(Boshier 2011). Despite traditional respect for the elderly in China, learning for them rarely involves serious intellectual pursuits. Older adults fill spare time with arts, crafts and other amusements.

In many parts of the world, too many adult heads contain self-limiting messages acquired from parents, teachers, peers or hostile officials. 'I am too old to learn anything new'. 'Our family works the land, we do not go to school'. 'I am a computer luddite'. 'In this place, girls stay home'. 'I did not like school, so why go back now?' In China, rural (and many urban) elderly say 'learning is for kids'. 'I am not good at exams'. 'I hate school!' 'If I learn new things people will think me weird'. Education is 'kids stuff'. 'Isn't that right?' says the noodle-eating Yan'an cave-dweller to the researcher (Boshier 2011).

## The Lifewide Dimension

Advocates of lifelong education and lifelong learning generally agree on the importance of engaging with a broad array of settings. But, because of entrenched interests, after Faure there was little chance those wedded to classroom instruction in formal settings would willingly embrace the nonformal. Instead, nonformal settings have been pushed to the margins or folded into the formal.

It should be possible for learners to swim back and forth between different kinds of learning settings (Fig. 42.3). They should not have to choose between the formal and nonformal. Instead, learners need easy access to whatever setting suits their needs. Unfortunately, few nations were willing to create agencies to evaluate and recognise what is being learned in informal and nonformal settings. Employers were not prepared to pay for this service and favour job applicants with 'real' diplomas, certificates and other credentials from formal settings.

Educators in formal settings create curriculum, build evaluation methodologies and decide who should be accredited. Educators in other settings may do a lot with scant resources, but lack political heft. Yet, when asked where they learned the most important things in life, respondents rarely say 'in school' or at 'university'. As distinguished New Zealand poet James K. Baxter was prone to say, really important things (such as how to approach girls) were learned on the way to school. Or, better still, on the way home, but not at school.

## China

The lifewide dimension of the learning society is a critical element in China. In 1999, the People's Republic of China launched a 'learning initiative' which, by stressing horizontal integration, rubbed against deep-rooted tendencies from the imperial era. All over the world – but particularly in Asia – citizens think nonformal settings are inferior to formal. Hence, parents will do almost anything to get sons

into the best schools and key universities. They will sell the farm, trade away the tractor, sacrifice their daughter's prospects, borrow money, pay bribes or do whatever is needed to get a son into a decent school or university.

Chinese people also have campaign fatigue. Hence, propaganda campaigns (e.g., on SARS, HIV/AIDS, smoking, birth control, pollution-abatement, supporting the Party) conducted in informal settings encounter weariness, resistance and comments such as 'no ... not again!' Nonformal settings in China are not much better. They smell like rural areas and evoke bitter memories of Mao's attempt to re-educate urbanites in the countryside. Moreover, credentials secured in formal settings open doors to jobs or the exit lounge at the airport. Hence, it is an uphill battle for Communist authorities to persuade citizens learning in informal and nonformal settings is as good as what occurs in formal settings.

In China, between 1966 and 1976, millions of disgruntled people in an embittered 'lost generation' were tossed out of school because of Mao's misguided Cultural Revolution. After Mao died, many engaged in self-directed learning and overcame the disadvantage of shovelling pig shit instead of going to school. But millions more have only minimal literacy levels and few prospects in an increasingly competitive society. For them, self-directed learning or adult education is their only hope. The lifewide dimension of China's learning initiative is the only way to recover lost ground and they are avid learners (Boshier et al. 2005).

## School

In the 1970s, schools were considered a key element of a learning society, but would have to change their modus operandi. Learning how to learn would become more important than curriculum (or course) content. There would be less of a focus on achievement and more stress on learning processes. Schools would make concerted efforts to link with nonformal (i.e., out-of-school) settings and teachers would manifest a passion for learning.

Some advocates of out-of-school education touted nonformal as an *alternative* to formal settings. Goodman (1964) wrote *Compulsory Mis-education* and Everett Reimer (1971) claimed 'school is dead'. Illich (1971) considered schools a lost cause. Close schools and build learning webs – drawing on community resources.

Restructuring, conservatism and tradition have inhibited the ability of schools to nurture lifelong learning. Also, in too many places, homes have been destroyed by war, and citizens (and their animals) live in schools. In many countries, for legal and other reasons, teachers are reluctant to take children to nonformal settings. Ideally, teachers would themselves be lifelong learners and role models for children. Instead, many teachers are deprived of fundamental human rights and have few learning resources.

The situation is not much better in post-secondary or higher education. Older commitments to collegiality in university life are under assault. These days, universities are significantly more enamoured with market-share, branding exercises and

manoeuvring up league tables than with opening to nonformal settings or engaging with learners across the lifespan (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 3).

Universities could be a key element in the learning society. But rectors, presidents and vice chancellors are reluctant to erode historic commitments to classroom learning. Only the brave or reckless would challenge the university obsession with lectures. Smart (wired) classrooms, Powerpoint shows and clickers (enabling students to participate) have reinforced the notion of university as a lecture house. Hence, the learning society is a handy slogan or flag of convenience, but not a serious template for university reform. Besides, people come to the university to learn. So we are already a learning society? Right?

## Conclusion

When naval architects design fast racing yachts, they start by sketching the broad outlines of hulls, rigs and appendages. If the owner likes the broad outlines, separate departments do ‘drawings’ of, say, winching systems, daggerboards, foils, systems for raising and lowering wings or sails. Like plans for an aircraft, ship, motor vehicle or university campus, detailed drawings are done when broad outlines are settled.

The Faure (1972) report primarily concerned broad outlines. Throughout the 1970s, books orchestrated by Ravindra Dave (e.g., Cropley 1977; Cropley and Dave 1978; Dave 1976) were an attempt to do ‘drawings’. By showing how discrete parts could dance together, Faure brought a holistic view into educational policy making. UNESCO must respect sociocultural variations, so it would have been wrong for Faure to tell member states how to ‘apply’ the broad outline or master concept.

The Berlin wall came down in 1989 and, by the 1990s, new political boundaries, globalisation and looming economic turmoil created a platform for the OECD to launch their lifelong learning brand. But they too ran into grief and were ‘severely criticised’ by ... scholars who ‘objected to the economic outlook and see it as an expression of the dominant neoliberal paradigm’ (Rubenson 2009, pp. 417–418). It was much the same with European Union perspectives. Although less mired in educational orthodoxy than the OECD, their version of lifelong learning mostly concerned the workplace.

On the 9th of September 2001, hijacked aircraft flew into the World Trade Centre in New York and other places. Within minutes of these events, it was clear learning about root causes of these events would be less important than retribution, or what Maori call *utu* (revenge). For the US President, the situation involved a stark and uncomplicated false binary opposition. ‘You are with us ... or with the terrorists’. There would now be a global war on terror and profound changes to the way life was lived. Torture was normalised and security certificates used to justify imprisonment without trial, racial profiling and secret rendition. In Canada, old notions of peacekeeping were set aside in favour of war fighting. Even New Zealand joined the worldwide use of flawed intelligence to justify imprisonment without trial. Fundamentalism is a reaction to undigested complexity and the antithesis of learning.



After the 9th of September 2001, there was a lot of it – in London, Washington, Ottawa and Arab capitals.

The events of ‘9–11’ dramatically changed the context for lifelong education/learning. New and urgent war-fighting priorities eroded any lingering interest in utopia and ‘learning to be’ increasingly looked like 1960s self indulgence. But, even before 9–11, the context had changed. In an apt but disturbing metaphor, Edwards (1997) characterised the topography of lifelong learning as a moorland – massive, grey, bleak, often obscured by fog.

Postmodern critique long ago blew Faure’s master concept off the map and all that remains are remnants. With grand theory and metanarrative out of the way, there are new pretenders to the throne. These days many of those claiming to promote lifelong learning are more like circus performers than educators. They usually have something to sell – lectures about making money, encounters with famous people, psychological rejuvenation, trips aboard kayaks and cruise ships.

In addition to the circus, good things happen under the flag of lifelong learning. Distance education and online programs have opened doors. In privileged schools, children are taken to nonformal learning settings. It is possible to get credit for experience and easier to transfer course credits from one institution to another. Learners can sometimes study at higher levels without enduring prerequisites. Many formal settings have embraced service learning (in a nonformal setting) as a key component of undergraduate study.

Because of the many and diverse meanings attached to lifelong learning, the atmosphere can sometimes be festive and colourful – much like a messy garage sale or crowded second-hand bookshop. In the meantime, authorities increasingly say lifelong learning is a post-school phenomenon. Just when it was time to stage a funeral for adult education, it looked like a reprieve was possible. But adult education done under the flag of twenty-first century lifelong learning did not have much to do with the progressivism or reform efforts of earlier eras. And nor did it resemble the good-natured banter of old Extension or Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) classes. Even so, maybe there was a basis to rumours coming from old codger networks. What is lifelong learning? ‘Adult education without the fire’ (St. Clair 2011).

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# Chapter 43

## Lifelong Learning, Contemporary Capitalism and Postmodernity: A Selected Reading

Robin Usher

### Introduction

A society of signs is a term that has been used to denote one of the most significant characteristics of the contemporary social order (Edwards and Usher 1999). Such a society is one where social relations and the materiality of the world become so intensely mediated through semiotic exchanges, through the production, circulation and reception of signifying practices, that signs are no longer simply representational but acquire value and meaning in their own right. This process has been hastened by the impact of electronic communication and information technologies (ICTs), where the world is increasingly signified as one of infinitely extended flows of information and images, a hyper-connected world of all inclusive interconnectivity.

All this has important implications for how learning and lifelong learning is signified in the ‘texts’<sup>1</sup> of the social order. I am arguing that learning, which is dominantly seen as a mentalistic or cognitive process, is better seen as a process embedded and distributed in everyday social practices. Thus, what learning ‘means’ will be shaped and signified by and through those practices. I am going to argue that learning is not invariant in its significations but since it is embedded in the space-time of social practices and the social order which co-emerges through these practices, it necessarily must have many and varied connotations.

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<sup>1</sup>Text in the sense that ‘lifelong learning’ has to be ‘read’ and interpreted and texts in the sense that these meanings are articulated in written texts of various kinds.

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## Contemporary Capitalism and Culture

In the coding of the social order that has emerged over the last 20 years or so, the myths<sup>2</sup> of the knowledge economy, globalization, the new work order and fast capitalism have been repeated constantly as the exigence for lifelong learning. What has emerged consequently is a powerful world view, both for those who support and those who oppose it.

In the early 1990s, writers of popular management texts coined the term ‘fast capitalism’ or ‘new capitalism’ to signify the ‘new work order’ consequent on the growth of a hyper-competitive, global market for goods and services. They argued that fast anticipatory action and quick responses were needed for ‘just in time’ or speedy ways of managing and doing things. There was a need to harness the information or ‘knowledge’ embedded in the work process itself (Lash and Urry 1994). These developments in this advanced form of capitalism shaped the emergence of a discourse focused on lifelong learning that had significant implications for policies and practice.

Knowledge and innovation are now everywhere seen as critical to business success. In re-signifying knowledge, this discourse of fast capitalism also re-signifies learning. Learning itself has therefore become re-fashioned as ‘lifelong’, reflecting the need for ‘knowledge workers’ to keep up with the pace and intensity of a change that is signified as never ending.

In *The Postmodern Condition of Knowledge*, Lyotard (1984) argued that the social order generally is becoming structured as a system of signs where social relations are extended, free-ranging, in constant process, and reflexive. One of the most significant characteristics of fast capitalism is its de-territorializing thrust that both mirrors and reinforces the system of signs. There is a clear movement from fixed structures – traditions, work practices, place and nation states – to more fluid ones. The re-ordering and re-coding of social life as a system of signs is, then, one effect of the discourses of the so-called fast capitalism. Signs, it is argued, flow freely and promiscuously with no clear connection to a subject or a concrete referent. As the society of signs takes hold, the lifeworld becomes semiotically textured, with social life becoming more *virtual*, and where the virtual and the real becoming increasingly convergent.

The outcome is a postmodern world without moorings, free-floating, weightless decontextualized signifiers proliferating in search of meaning. Signs are plundered from a variety of referent systems – nature, history, literature, exotic cultures and projections of the future. There are no longer coherent maps and no ultimate authority to anchor meaning, only a cultural world in a permanent state of flux. As Lash (2002) suggests, at one level, since their meaning cannot be grounded, signs have

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Myths’ in the semiotic sense of extended metaphors that enable sense to be made of experiences within a culture. They express and serve to organise shared ways of fashioning something within a culture. They naturalize the cultural.

become emptied out, but they still need to be situated as part of the signifying practices within which they occur. It is their very emptiness that enables a play of connotation.

The increased role and significance of electronic media underpins this contemporary society of signs. Baudrillard (1988a) sees the phenomenon of the spread of electronic communication networks both as a symbol and an aspect of the changes taking place in the social order. Electronic media compress space and time, enabling the exponential growth of globalizing processes and fast capitalism. Alongside this, there has occurred a culturalization and de-differentiation of public and private spheres, work and civil society, the growth in importance of culture and lifestyle practices in the aestheticization of life and the cultivation of identity. The culture industry spreading out from the realm of production to the realm of culture commodifies the latter. The boundaries between high culture, popular culture, the market and everyday life become blurred (Lash 1990; Featherstone 1991; Harvey 1989). With the proliferation and accelerated circulation of signs, which I will consider in more detail shortly, there is a hyper-commodification and ‘mediatization’ of culture. Thus, as fast capitalism grows ever more competitive, culture is turned into commodity signs. The production of signs and signifying practices comes to the fore, particularly of signs which have primarily an aesthetic content:

The development of the latter [aesthetic signs] can be seen in the proliferation of objects which possess a substantial aesthetic component... but also in the increasing component of sign-value or image embodied *in* material objects. (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 4, emphasis in original)

Thus culture too becomes ‘fast’.

These developments have been signified as a culturalization of the material world of goods and products that goes alongside a materialization of the world of culture where in effect, everything becomes ‘culture’. It is this that is often referred to as a postmodern condition. Images and information – signifiers as cultural artefacts – become pre-eminent hallmarks of economic growth and innovation. At the same time, within the social order, centres flourish where lifestyle concerns are manifested through consumption rather than production. The influence of fashion, image and taste pervade an increasingly all-embracing consumer culture that affects all social groups:

We thus live in increasingly individuated and symbol-saturated societies, in which the advanced-services middle class plays an increasing role in the accumulation process. This class assumes a critical mass in the present restructuration: as symbol-processing producers *and* as consumers of processed symbols... (Lash and Urry 1994, p. 222, emphasis in original).

Both reflecting and reinforcing these trends are developments in social theory:

from the analysis of social reality as such to the analysis of signs, languages, discourse, and talk – the media through which social reality comes into being and disperses itself across and through a body politic. (Lemert 1997, p. 74)

As a way of signifying social practices, it is not the materiality of the world that is denied, but rather there is a foregrounding of the articulation of *worlds* mediated through signifying practices, which are themselves material and whose workings – their

production, circulation reception – become the focus for analysis (Kellner 1995). Signifying practices, the production and re-production of meaning through communicative media, whether via the word/symbolic, the visual/iconic or via contiguity/indexicality, have now become central to fast capitalism and fast culture, critical to the process of generating and reproducing value in the global economic system.

Policy makers at national and supra-national levels are incorporating lifelong learning into the discourse and practices of economic rationalism where the needs and interests of the economy, of markets, and globalized capital are to the fore. Lifelong learning becomes dominantly signified within the codes and genres of policy as an instrument to address trends such as globalization and increased economic competition. These have become the dominant mythic codes of lifelong learning and are deployed in the fashioning of powerful signs of learning. In this context, then, lifelong learning is articulated as essential to the development of fast capitalism and the knowledge economy. Lifelong learning on the part of individuals, organizations and social orders is discoursed into being as a necessary adaptive strategy through which to respond to change, and through which a knowledge economy can be brought into being and maintained.

Of course, the significance of this essentially economic discourse of lifelong learning has to be recognized, but equally there is also a need to go further if the full complexity and multiple significations of lifelong learning are to be understood. As a counter to this economic discourse therefore, I want to argue that the foregrounding of semiosis provides a way of understanding lifelong learning as located in a variety of meaning-making contemporary practices – social, cultural and political – all of which are integral to, but not overdetermined by, fast capitalism. These practices are to do with positioning in relation to the market but also include other social practices such as those to do with lifestyle, which are also to do with positioning but in the wider sphere of the everyday life. They all require theorization in the context of a social order shaped by globalizing processes where the growth of the media of various kinds and, more generally, the mediation of meaning are becoming ever more critical. Distributed across these practices, lifelong learning therefore acquires multiple significations. Thus, my argument is that lifelong learning is now a significant way in which learning is signified in the contemporary situation of fast capitalism and fast culture. It is signified in a variety of contemporary discourses and in a variety of spaces and places.

In what follows, I first draw on the work of Baudrillard to ask, ‘what is the place of “lifelong learning”, both as conceptualization and practice, in the sign economy that now plays so significant a part in the operation of the social order?’. I suggest that lifelong learning is located in contemporary lifestyle practices that involve a consumption of signs energized by a communicative or signifying desire that is endless. Following that, and drawing upon the work of Deleuze and Guattari, I argue that lifelong learning has a dual aspect in that, on the one hand, it can function as part of the repressive order of capitalist assemblages and totalizing theory, whilst on the other, it can be framed as a rhizomatic practice, popping up all over the place and becoming entwined in other practices both lifelong and life-wide, critical, creative and often subversive.

## Baudrillard on Hyper-reality

It is in the work of Baudrillard that we witness the most provocative rendition of a society of signs. His work is undoubtedly extremely controversial in his, at times, apparent fatalism in the face of a revitalized consumer capitalism with all its associated pleasures and oppressions (Plant 1992; Poster 1996). For Baudrillard, denotation, reference with stable meaning, has become increasingly problematic, with electronic media playing a significant part in this development. The proliferation of signs has the paradoxical effect of accelerating the production of the real; but in the process, fixed and definitive meanings slip away amidst a ‘confusion of signs, images, simulations and appearances’ (Plant 1992, p. 194).

Representations have always signified as standing for the real, the true, the authentic and the meaningful, but their very proliferation and intensity as signs now result in a situation where ‘ubiquitous images, simulations, and reproductions no longer distort or conceal the real; reality has slipped away into the free-floating chaos of the hyper-real’ (Plant 1992, p. 155). In this situation, the real and that which purports to represent it become increasingly inseparable. Representations become media-ated to the point where they become more real than the real. This is what Baudrillard means by *simulacra*, copies or models that nonetheless no longer have referents, that are re-produced as hyper-real and where, although not without meaning, that meaning, given that it is not anchored to an external object or referent, becomes multiple and even undecidable – simulacra then are weightless, decontextualized signifiers<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, Baudrillard claims that we now live in a culture of the hyper-real:

Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyper-real. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory – a precession of simulacra – that engenders the territory... (Baudrillard 1995, p. 1).

As lives become shaped by signs that function without reference to objects, identities or needs, simulacra – the copies of a lost reality – combine and recombine in an apparent free play. This society of signs that is shaping a new social order, where the ground for the real has disappeared, is then itself a simulation of reality rather than the reality itself of that order, with the real that which is always already re-produced (Baudrillard 1996). In other words, the real comes to us as always already media-ated and therefore always already interpreted and re-interpreted. What lies ‘behind’ is not the authentic or true referent, but simply another mediation, even though it is signed as authentic or true.

In this hyper-real condition, binaries such as contextualized–decontextualized, authentic–inauthentic, etc. lose their grip. There is nothing outside of simulation in

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<sup>3</sup> A copy of a copy which has been so dissipated in its relation to the original that it can no longer be said to be a copy. The *simulacrum*, therefore, stands on its own as a copy without a model.



the sense that articulating the real can only be done through some kind of system that makes articulation, and therefore meaning, possible. The important point here is that the deployment of any system immediately opens the door to simulation.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, with the proliferation and accelerated circulation of images, hyper-reality is now no longer a limited experience but rather the major condition of contemporary life. Baudrillard (1988b) argues that we now only engage with the simulation that has supplanted the real.

All this undoubtedly sounds strange and in itself ‘unreal’, but another way of reading Baudrillard is that contrary to appearances, he is not actually trying to *abolish* reality. He himself has claimed that ‘I hold no position on reality... it remains an unshakeable postulate towards which you can only maintain a relation of adversity or of reconciliation’ (Baudrillard 1993, p. 122). Baudrillard’s world of simulation is not ‘unreal’ in some science fiction sense, nor is it the realm of the illusional or irrational. It is hyper-real, very real, in fact more real than the real, thus not unreal in the sense of not existing, or that the materiality of the world has disappeared so that all is illusion. Rather, for him what the hyper-real signifies is a cultural *code* that is a structural force in fast capitalism.

What he is pointing to is that the real that is fashioned by *any* cultural system or code is one where the real is fashioned by making the world over in its image. An example of this is the real as fashioned by the code of the natural sciences: ‘the realizing of the world through science and technology is precisely what simulation is’ (Gane 1993, p. 184). In other words, any system *codes* the world or the real in its own way and thereby fashions a simulation of the world, or the real that whilst it is a simulation is nonetheless real<sup>5</sup>. Simulation is thus both connotative and mythic.

Simulation, therefore, is the signification of the real through copies or models that have no originals and thus are not connected to the ‘reality’ of the originals. The world as it is can only be grasped on the basis of codes of simulation. The copies are nonetheless material because they shape the way reality is perceived, or to put it another way they generate meanings in all spheres of everyday life. Hence, everything becomes culturalized.

One of the things I find particularly convincing in Baudrillard’s position is the notion that the contemporary social order is characterized by a material *virtuality* and by this is signified not only images in cyberspace but also the intensity, autonomy and mobility of images in everyday life that simulate the real and themselves

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<sup>4</sup> The 1999 cult movie *The Matrix* explores the relationship between people and simulacra. The Matrix of the title is a simulation created by sentient machines to control the human population. In this world all is simulation. The lead character in the movie, Neo, in a self-referential move uses a hollowed out copy of Jean Baudrillard’s *Simulacra and Simulation* as a secret store – a simulacrum of *Simulacra and Simulation*!

<sup>5</sup> Everything articulable in language must be a simulation because language systematically creates the world and in doing so makes everything a simulation...that which is not a simulation is all that which cannot be articulated in the systematicity of language.

become the real. So we can ask, what does ‘society’ signify when we engage with the practices of consuming the signifying images of culture – the hyper-commodification of culture noted earlier.

## Baudrillard on Consumption

Consumption is a difficult and controversial topic in education and many other social science disciplines because, whilst there is a reluctant acceptance that consumption figures importantly in people’s lives, its significance is often accounted for in terms of the language of manipulation and false consciousness. I would argue, however, that, although not all can consume equally, it is also the case that all are in some way affected by consumer culture and consumerist discourse and images, and not necessarily always in a manipulative or mystifying way.

Consumerism is best seen as a common ‘language’ through which cultural significations can be read or interpreted. In fast culture, consuming is a principal mode of self-expression and the experience of social participation is often contingent on consumption. Furthermore, this is not to be accounted for simply by pointing to manipulation and the inducing of false consciousness since it neglects the dimension of desire that is manifested in consumption and to which even oppressed groups are not immune. In the practices of everyday life, people can transgress economic rationality and subvert the existing order by using consumer objects for purposes different to those intended for them by their producers – in effect, resisting through consuming – and this is itself a mode of self-expression (De Certeau 1984).

Writers who draw on postmodern theory (e.g., Featherstone 1991; Urry 1995; Usher et al. 1997; Usher 2010) have highlighted the significance of consumption in the social order and how identities are increasingly developed through consumption. They argue that, for many, experience is now more rooted in processes of consumption than production. Consumption shapes identities where what is consumed functions as a *sign* of identity to differentiate (signifying particular difference from others) and to show solidarity (signifying the same as particular others). In contrast to earlier ways of shaping identity, for example, through production or occupation, consumption is flexible and more dynamic. There exists greater fluidity in a cultural ‘supermarket’ where choice and variety are many.

I earlier mentioned the hyper-commodification of culture by signs and simulations, where lifestyle choices are themselves hyper-differentiating, that is, constantly and rapidly changing. In providing opportunities for self-expression, these choices stimulate a desire for further consumption. Thus, identities can be changed more often, can be experimented with, and therefore there is less commitment than before to any singular fixed identity. This is what is signified by the argument that there is an *aestheticization* of life, a whole range of practices that revolve around the aesthetic, where the emphasis is on lifestyle and its enhancement. Many sites have become centres of hyper-real aesthetic consumption. These sites *signify* providing spaces for new experiences and the (re)formation of identities. This is why many

argue that lifestyle has now replaced other forms of hierarchical social categorization and become more significant than, for example, work or occupation in shaping many people's subjectivity and through that their sense of identity.

Consumption is now no longer simply about consuming *goods*. Following Baudrillard, in a hyper-real situation, consumption is more about the signs and significations with which the consumption of goods is indelibly imbued. Consumption, in other words, is a *meaningful* activity where goods, objects or images become *signs* that communicate something to someone, where that which is consumed generates markers of similarity and differences that code behaviour and *bring forth* individuals as same or different. Consumer culture is, therefore, semiotic – an economy of signs, where individuals and groups, through what and how they consume, communicate messages about position and worth and where consumption is articulated within specific meaningful ways of life.

Consumption, then, always involves the taking and conveying of meaning, and is therefore cultural. If all consumption is culturally meaningful, this implies that nothing is consumed purely and simply on a functional basis. Looked at this way, objects are not taken up just for their use or function or because of need, but primarily to *communicate*, and through communication there is a structuring of actions and interactions. Consumption is thus a signifying mechanism and a process for the cultural production, reproduction and communication of social relations and social order. As such, it is a material and semiotic process carried out through the practices of everyday life.

Consumer objects, then, have an exchange or sign value, meaning that they signify something about the consumer in the context of a social system that is based on a sign economy. In the advanced economy of fast capitalism, it is meaning, then, that is positioned as prior, with meaning generated and distributed through consumer objects. In effect, individuals 'buy' their identity or 'being' with each act of consumption. Baudrillard, therefore, sees consumption, not as a passive 'using up' of produced items, but as a framework that enables active relationships within a cultural system (Baudrillard 1996). This semiotic 'system of objects', a structural and differential logic of signs, defines the social order, where consumption is a signifying substance. Everything exists within this logic, he argues, a logic that constitutes the *signifying fabric* of our everyday existence.

The difference between fast and classical capitalism is not only economic and political but cultural also because, whilst classical capitalism fostered an ethic of production, fast capitalism fosters and indeed requires an ethic and also an aesthetic of consumption. For Marxists, labour was the source of creativity and fulfilment, but now this is the role assumed by consumption. In the process, what Baudrillard (1988a, p. 11) refers to as 'images circulating as true value', images that signify the real, has become the most significant tendency in fast capitalism.

Earlier I referred to Baudrillard's 'code', the mythic code that structures the social order for the sustaining of fast capitalism. He articulates this as *consumativity* (an amalgam of consumption and hyper-reality signifying the impossibility of separating these). This code or structural force links together hyper-reality, consumer culture and fast capitalism. Consumerism, the motor of sign values, is the contributing

factor in creating hyper-reality, with hyper-reality in its turn reinforcing consumption as a sign economy. As we have seen, the hyper-real is a world of constantly proliferating images or simulacra. Extending the argument, we can now say that it is these that are *consumed* as a desirable reality, with the consumption of images, thoughts and feelings intertwining with the desire induced by images. For Baudrillard, the code of consumativity marks a ceaseless movement such that the consumption of images is never satisfied – there is always a *lack*, an endless desire to possess the *image* of the real (Baudrillard 1988a). Furthermore, as capitalism puts people in a competitive position with one another, it is not so much that each desires a *specific* object or image, but that each desires what the other desires. To put it another way, people desire the desires of the other<sup>6</sup>. When fulfilment can only be found through a world of simulation, there will always be more images to be consumed and more desires to be attended to, with fulfilment indefinitely postponed. Thus, the dispersion and fragmentation of meaning as processes of cultural commodification feed an accelerating circulation of signs in the sphere of culture.

The consumption of signs in a hyper-real condition must inevitably involve a constant yet unstable re-positioning of subjectivity and a consequent re-forming of identity. As a result, human subjectivity becomes a *task*, a performance, rather than a given – always in process. Becoming rather than being becomes the ontological priority. Experience becomes contingent and flow-like rather than coherent and determinate. New forms of experience proliferate. Experience generates further experience. Sensibilities are attuned to the pleasure of constant and new experiencing, where the flow of experiencing becomes its own end rather than a means to an end, part of a constant making and re-making of a lifestyle. The unified, coherent and sovereign self of modernity, the firm ground for the fixing of identity, becomes a multiple discontinuous self traversed by multiple meanings and whose identity is continually in a process of re-formation. The play of images experienced in the virtuality of the hyper-real shapes subjectivity, with virtuality itself becoming a significant mode of personal experience.

## Implications for Lifelong Learning

How do fast capitalism, hyper-reality and signifying consumption impact on lifelong learning? What Baudrillard is pointing to is the loss of finalities, or to put it another way, the loss of the foundations of knowledge. The consequence of this is a decentring of knowledge and a valorization of multiple forms of knowledge and ways of knowing. With this loss comes a re-signification of learning. With simulation, finalities lose their meaning because they assume the existence of an unmediated real. Baudrillard's argument is precisely that there is no unmediated real. There is a real,

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<sup>6</sup> Baudrillard has also argued that ultimately people desire and seek to consume the myth of consumption.

but it is a hyper-real and with the hyper-real, there can be no finalities. Thus, learning takes off in a variety of directions rather than being bound by the pre-defined goals of modernity's educational project.

In this condition, rather than the search for truth or deep meaning, the pursuit of *a* truth, learning becomes the response to desire in the pursuit and consumption of a *range* of truths and an involvement in truth-making practices. If representations become images with a meaning detached from what they purportedly represent, the question shifts from 'what is true?' and 'is this a faithful representation of reality?' to 'how is truth fashioned?' 'who is to be trusted' and 'what makes reality real?' In this situation, experience comes to be seen 'not as an unmediated guide to "truth" but as a practice of making sense, both symbolically and narratively, as a struggle over material conditions and meaning' (Brah 1996, p. 116). Given the proliferation of signs and meaning-making possibilities, it is little wonder that practices of signification, such as those to do with lifestyle, have enfolded and displaced traditional questions of representation, particularly now that the latter is itself seen as a signifying practice.

None of this need be understood as a *refusal* of knowledge, even though it may not signify 'learning' as conventionally understood. It is perhaps better seen as 'a reformulation of what the desire for knowledge might be about' (Game 1991, p. 18). These reformulations may include a desire for truth as revelation, truth as advocacy, truth as resonance as well as truth as correspondence and even for truth as the renewed search for foundations<sup>7</sup>. Increasingly, no one of these truths can claim to speak the *whole* truth, and it is recognized that they cannot, even though many would still wish them to do so. This possibility and recognition of many truths may be disturbing for some, whilst for others it may be a pleasure, as is the multiple possibilities for the re-formation of identity that underpins the desire to seek out multiple forms and sites of knowledge.

In his influential characterization of late modernity, Giddens (1990, 1991) argues that matters of identity, of who and what one is, become urgent questions in need of an answer rather than answers that can be drawn from meanings that are already available in a pre-given socio-cultural order. Given the range of decisions that people have to make, an existentially and semiotically troubling situation arises, where the very uncertainty and ambivalence which give rise to the need to make decisions, actually makes such decision making less secure and therefore troubled. Here, Giddens fashions contemporary times as entailing a troubling 'risk' and consequent stress of coping with this risk, but where the need to cope is the source of learning which, since risk is always present, is therefore lifelong. However, in my argument about lifestyle practices, risk is signified differently. Here, the proliferation and consumption of signs, far from being simply existentially troubling, can also be

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<sup>7</sup>It could be argued that fundamentalists of all religions are embarked on such a renewed search.

existentially pleasurable, as is the need to continually remake identity. There is risk, but it is one of not being able to signify oneself in desirable ways, of not being able to respond to lack and desire – the pursuit of which involves learning that never reaches an end. Lifelong learning here can be about pleasure and creativity, and whilst it is needed, it is not simply as a means of better making troubling decisions, or trying to maintain some stability of identity in troubled times.

What all this signifies is an openness rather than a closure, the desire to assert a definitive truth, even though many still seek such a truth. This bears significantly on a point made earlier about the aesthetics of the semiotic economy and culture. In this social order, lifelong learning is learning energized by desire which can follow many paths – rather than learning being governed solely by the pursuit of universal truth (science), unproblematic democracy (citizenship), self-realization (personal development), spirituality (religion) or even the more obvious learning demands of the market. It is not so much that these latter disappear, far from it; rather, it is that they no longer constitute quite the dominant and exclusive significations of learning that has hitherto been foregrounded as ‘worthwhile’ and valuable. They become just a part of the desire to learn, which can take many other forms.

Given this, it is perhaps not coincidental that the current scene is marked by the increasing ubiquity and multi-directionality of learning and a lessening of the centrality of institutional education. Everyday practices, the quotidian, are themselves foregrounded as learning activities. There is an increasing diversity, multiplicity and de-differentiation characterizing the landscape of learning, and a reconfiguring of learning opportunities away from what educators think is good for learners, to what learners themselves consider valuable and value-adding:

Educational practitioners rather than being the source/producers of knowledge/taste become facilitators helping to interpret everybody’s knowledge and helping to open up possibilities for further experience. They become part of the ‘culture’ industry, vendors in the educational hypermarket. In a reversal of modernist education, the consumer (the learner) rather than the producer (educator) is articulated as having greater significance and power. (Usher et al. 1997, pp. 107–108)

Thus, as people become increasingly positioned as consumers, they also become signified as consumers of learning. My argument, then, is that participation in learning activities, coupled with the increased significance of non-institutional learning, cannot be understood without reference to consumption. Following Baudrillard, learning is now coded by consumption – learning is consuming and consuming is learning. Linked to this is the widespread and continuing impact of electronic media which, at one and the same time, are becoming increasingly sophisticated and increasingly accessible. In practical terms, one consequence of this is the availability of a range of learning options, catering to all tastes and interests and previously unavailable, now waiting to be consumed. Learning activities have become consumer goods in themselves, purchased as the result of choice within a marketplace where learning products compete with those of leisure and entertainment and are often indistinguishable from these.

Unlike the mass consumption of modernity, consumption now signifies a choice for difference and difference as choice, the different and distinctive within a signifying

culture that stimulates dreams, desires and fantasies in developing the life project of the self. It is in this sense that learning comes to be signified in terms of lifestyle practices:

...knowledge becomes important: knowledge of new goods, their social and cultural value, and how to use them appropriately. This is particularly the case with aspiring groups who adopt a learning mode towards consumption and the cultivation of a lifestyle. It is for groups such as the new middle class, the new working class and the new rich or upper class, that the consumer culture of magazines, newspapers, books television and radio programmes which stress self-improvement, self-development, personal transformation, how to manage property, relationships and ambitions, how to construct a fulfilling lifestyle, are most relevant. (Featherstone 1991, p. 19)

Knowledge (what is learnt) has itself become a sign, a commodity, a product in its own right, that can be purchased and consumed for its economic and cultural value – capital which can confer competitive advantage and/or status or at least alleviate the fear of falling behind, either economically or culturally. The implication of this is that knowledge must be made consumable by, for example, pricing, marketing and packaging it attractively. To put this another way, knowledge must have the appropriate signifiers for learners, and what constitutes ‘appropriate’ will vary with the practices concerned.

Learning, then, is integral to lifestyle practices, and within these practices works connotatively through an expressive mode. It is individuated with an emphasis on self-expression and marked by a stylistic self-consciousness. Aestheticization, the self-referential concern with image and the constant and pleasurable remaking of identity, necessitates a learning stance towards life as a means of self-expression. In the process, individuals are themselves positioned as meaning-makers, as ‘designers’ (Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Kress 2003). From this perspective, the semiotic view of people as makers of meaning recodes the cognitive view of people as mentalistic learners.

With lifestyle practices, every aspect of life, like every commodity, is imbued with self-referential meaning; every choice an emblem of identity, each one a message to ourselves and to others of the sort of person we are. A good case in point is the contemporary emphasis on the body as a focus for identity. The body is itself now a commodity to be consumed, the youthful, fit body an image that signifies (Watson 1998). Here, consumption is a signifier of the need to make oneself different and to identify with those aspired to, where everything consumed signifies an aspect of an aspiration. Related to this, we witness also the growth of activities related to the fashioning of a new identity – assertiveness training, slimming, bodily well-being, creative writing, interpersonal skills, counselling, re-birthing, makeovers and spirituality. All of these can now be seen to be embedded in practices that are signified as ‘learning’. These lifestyle practices, then, are practices of signifying consumption and moreover, of a consumption that is potentially unending, since, although deniable, desire based on lack is never satisfied. There is always the need for new experiences and hence more learning. It is the very openness or multiple significations of experience rather than its potential for classification and hence closure, or of a fixed signification into pre-defined learning, which provides the vehicle for the fuelling of desire. There is an endlessness to learning; therefore, it is lifelong and life-wide.

Lifestyle practices are neither confined to any one particular social or age group, nor are they purely a matter of economic determination. Economic capital certainly plays a part in influencing the capacity of individuals to be more or less active in their lifestyle practices, but cultural capital is just as significant. Furthermore, these practices are themselves a way of acquiring and enhancing cultural capital. The significant characteristic of lifestyle practices is a self-conscious and reflexive adoption of what can be termed a learning mode, a disposition or *stance* towards life, a lifelong learning integral to the sensibilities, values and assumptions embedded in these practices that provide the means of expressing identity. Thus, while the focus is often on the economic imperative for lifelong learning, I am arguing that there are other equally significant aspects of its emergence as a discourse for the governing of life, where the ‘conduct of conduct’ entails the adoption of a design sensibility to one’s life.

Relating learning to consumption means locating learning in a cultural economy of signs, where consumer choices are communicative practices and where learning becomes a marker, an expressive means of self-development. In this sense, learning does not necessarily signify education. With the play of desire and learning as the fulfilment of desire, learning becomes oriented to specific learner-defined ends, rather than being tied to the educational project’s search for enlightenment, truth, deep meanings or some end pre-defined by the educational system. Equally, education need not necessarily signify learning, unless being signified an ‘educated person’, usually through credentials, is considered desirable – an important aspect of identity formation – or if it acts as a means of distinguishing self from others and a means of desirably identifying with other educated/credentialed persons.

So, lifelong learning does not simply signify skills for operating new technologies or for knowledge economy types of work, as is often articulated in the texts of fast capitalism and the critiques arising thereof. Lifestyle practices involve different semiotic or meaning-making possibilities which themselves are embedded in the culture of fast capitalism. Making sense, giving meaning and interpreting that which is available, both multiple and changing, become ever more necessary even whilst becoming more complex. Furthermore, the globalized engagement with the Other, exotic or otherwise, made possible by global forms of communication and flows of information itself signifies a transformation in any fixed and bounded sense of self, space and place.

## The Rhizome

Unlike other post-structuralists, such as Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari have had until recently relatively little impact on educational theory and practice, even though there are signs that this is changing. To a large extent, this is because their work is not an easy read, being itself written as a complex rhizome. Yet, like other post-structuralist writers, they attempt to refashion our understanding of, and therefore, our practices, in relation to the dominant history of Western modernity. In other words, they do not simply write *about* a subject, but also *perform* the different forms



of writing that make critique possible. Although they do not explicitly identify themselves as post-structuralists, their deep critique of modernity's beliefs in unity, hierarchy, identity, foundations, subjectivity and representation, while celebrating difference and multiplicity, puts them firmly in this camp.

Central to their work, therefore, is an undermining or subverting of foundational and fixed views of language and meaning, theory and practice, associated with such pervasive arboreal metaphors as the 'tree of knowledge', a foundationalism where knowledge becomes something that can grow, be secure and located, and where language truly represents that which is. The arboreal metaphor signifies a logical hierarchy where all is ordered and in its place. In contrast, their concept of the rhizome signifies opposition to the tree of hierarchical structures, stratification and linear thinking.

The abiding concern in the work of Deleuze and Guattari is with modernity, the historical stage founded on normalizing and repressive discourses and institutions that pervade all aspects of social existence and everyday life. In this, they share similar concerns with Foucault. Unlike Foucault, however, their concern is not with disciplinary technologies and power/knowledge regimes but on the ways in which the discourses and institutions of modernity have worked to colonize desire. Here, desire, but without its dominant psychoanalytic connotation of 'lack', for them is a more fruitful concept than power.

They are critical of those views of the world that privilege foundational thought and essences and of discourses infiltrated by the grand narratives of the Western Enlightenment. Their target is the powerful myth of the inevitability of hierarchy and authority. For them, it is all about multiplicities or assemblages, both of individual subjects and of institutions. Both at the micro-level of individuals and the macro-level of the social, all are assemblages.

In order to distinguish their work from modernity's dominant logocentric tradition, Deleuze and Guattari develop a 'philosophy of immanence'. They argue that knowledge, for example, is always 'in' rather than 'of' the world. As Deleuze said in his interview with Foucault (1977, pp. 206–207), 'representation no longer exists; there's only action – theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and form networks'. Thus, representation, the dualist conjoining of world and word, is taken apart to be displaced by actions that result in the circulation or flow of meaning. With the rhizome, *roots* are displaced by *routes*, with unexpected eruptions where desire plays a role and logic is not privileged.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that people, who are themselves assemblages, are connected in a multiplicity of assemblages or rhizomatic networks that are in a constant state of movement, flux and flow, setting up fluid spaces that continuously avoid being bound or enclosed – things are metaphorically and literally 'up-rooted'. Movements and flow are multi-directional, enabling a multiplicity of entwinements – unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 21).

In challenging the arboreal metaphor, Deleuze and Guattari are challenging the centrality of 'to be' as the fashioning through which the world is represented and

the associated view that everything has to be structured in terms of either–or. All arborescent models of thinking, acting and being amount to restrictive and repressive economies of dominance and oppression. Deleuze and Guattari argue for possible new and different modes of existence where people can overcome repressive forms of identity and stasis for a constant process of becoming, to become what they term ‘desiring nomads’. Here, we find an emphasis on *becoming* as against a modernist emphasis on *being*, a position consonant with their philosophy of immanence.

Deleuze and Guattari, unlike Foucault, present a direct critique of capitalist society even though, like Foucault, they do not identify themselves as Marxists. Their post-structural logic is rather that of difference, perspectives and fragments. They articulate capitalism as combining anything with anything into assemblages that homogenize everything to the values and demands of the market. As a consequence, it must subvert all territorial groupings such as the church, the family, the group, indeed any social arrangement. Capitalism de-territorializes, something which they welcome in relation to its destruction of traditional social hierarchies. At the same time, however, capitalism needs social groupings in order to function effectively and therefore it must enable re-territorializations, or new social groupings such as new forms of the state, the family or the group which, in turn, become stratified. Strata then are always with us but they are subject to the continual movement of de- and re-territorialization. Furthermore, these are not sequential but simultaneous movements. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari characterize the life of any capitalist society as always in the process of both collapsing and being restructured, of de-territorializing and re-territorializing.

Earlier, the significance of the concept of the rhizome was noted. The ‘tree’ is replaced by the ‘rhizome’, the multiply connected, inter-penetrating underground network of growth without any centre. Rhizomes are networks that cut across borders, linking pre-existing gaps. They are characterized by decalcomania, forming through continuous negotiation with their context, constantly adapting by experimentation, performing an active resistance against rigid organization and restriction.

Perhaps, Deleuze and Guattari’s most radical concept is what they refer to as ‘lines of flight’. Minimally, these can be understood as a metaphor for everyday resistance, but there is perhaps more to it than that. Lines of flight, big or small, are present at any time and can lead in any direction. Rhizomes are always constructed in the struggle between stabilizing and destabilizing forces, produced in the constant struggle between lines of consistency and lines of flight. Deleuze and Guattari suggest thinking about rhizomes as *vectors*, where both the kinds of vector – lines of consistency and lines of flight –work across rhizomatic formations. Lines of consistency connect and unify different practices and effects and by doing so establish hierarchies and define relations between centre and periphery. They create rules of organization, which lead to stasis and solidified strata. Lines of flight, in contrast, disarticulate relations between and among practices and effects, opening up contexts to their outsides and the possibilities therein. They break-down unity and coherence. They decentre centres, disrupting hierarchies and disarticulating strata.

Deleuze and Guattari are concerned to seek out the points of weakness, the lines of flight in prevailing structures or strata, because it is there that possibilities for

change and movement are offered. For them, they are the means of escape from the repressive strata that are everywhere. It is the rhizomatic that engenders lines of flight, re-opening flows that the tree-like structures of lines of consistency have shut down. The rhizome with its capacity for endless multiplication and connectivity has the potential to generate virtually boundless lines of flight. In this sense, therefore, a line of flight is a *bridge* to a new formation. Whereas the tree builds no bridges, the rhizome is constituted by an endless series of inter-connecting bridges<sup>8</sup>. There is, thus, a beginninglessness, an endlessness and a multiplicity in rhizomatic meanings and practices.

So, whilst a line of flight is ‘liberating’, it is liberating without the benefit of the grand narratives, because these are yet another instance of the normalizations of a repressive or homogenizing order and, as we have seen, a line of flight is precisely a move away from such totalities. Any territoriality or stratum has *immanently* within it a movement toward the de-territorialization of lines of flight. Strata are shot through with lines of flight and this is why Deleuze and Guattari claim that, like strata, lines of flight are everywhere.

At first glance, Deleuze and Guattari sound like revolutionaries, but if they are, they are not the ones in the traditional Left sense. Instead, they speak of nomadism, lines of flight and de-territorialization, and their politics is a micro-politics. Their emphasis on the rhizomatic foregrounds the possibility of a ‘thousand lines of flight’, a multiplicity of exits resisting the totalities of monolithic/homogenized social orders.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s account of the subject, there is no mind–body dualism or the subject as an inner core. Instead, the subject is defined in terms of its *relationships* to other subjects and things. For them, the body is material and affective where affectivity is characterized as ‘fields of intensity’.<sup>9</sup> This is not simply the human experience of mind and body, but it also includes a domain of worldly experience extending beyond the bounds of individuals. Thus, affect exists everywhere, in everyone and in everything. Their subject is a desiring machine, one kind of assemblage among many, but where desire is a force or energy – potentially creative energy or ‘desiring-production’. Parts of the body are linked to other objects, signs and energy flows in endless patterns of productive activity. The connections that can be made, the channels that can be formed are, in theory, infinite. Subjects are potentially capable of infinite creativity and change.

They refer to the ‘body without organs’ (BwO) as a space of de-territorialization where desire is liberated from the constraints of all over-determined and over-determining systems, for example, both Marxism and capitalism. This contrasts with the re-territorialization dynamic of strata – the restructuring of a place that has experienced de-territorialization, the attempt to re-totalize, to structure hierarchically,

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<sup>8</sup> Or as Deleuze and Guattari playfully put it: *pas les points, mais les ponts*.

<sup>9</sup> These fields of intensity are produced and experienced not only by humans but by different forms of ‘agency’ such as animals and computers, or even movement, thought and space.

to contain through institutions such as religion, the family and the school. For Deleuze and Guattari, the BwO connotes opposition to *organ-ization* and the *organ-ism* where the body is not an organization of parts, but de-organ-ized, a body of affective energies, a productive force, a desiring-machine.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the subject has a nomadic potential that operates outside strata. Here, there is no fixed identity but rather an endless migration across the networks of assemblages of other desiring machines. But the subject can also be frozen by immersion in the strata of capitalism's abstract machine. The subject therefore, and indeed the social order generally, is fashioned by the limiting of connectivity and nomadism, the closing down of the infinitely possible avenues of desiring-production through lines of consistency, the re-territorialization and re-forming of strata. Nomadism is de-territorialization, the taking off on creative lines of flight that work outside the conceptual structures and rationalities of the established order.

As nomads, subjects randomly connect signs, energy flows, data, knowledge, fantasy, objects and other bodies in new flows of desiring production. Lack, on the other hand, is something that is artificially created by capitalism, and desire is not to be identified with lack. It is not an imaginary but a real productive force, desiring production in the social field. Reality itself is constituted as configurations of the two kinds of vector we mentioned earlier— lines of consistency and lines of flight – but, ultimately, desire constitutes social reality for these are both powered by desire, where lines of consistency manifest the desire for stasis, lines of flight for the nomadic. As we have seen earlier, both are always present.

The central problem for Deleuze and Guattari then, the danger that is continually signified in their work, is *totalizing processes*: any theory, philosophy, discourse or practice that becomes monolithic and whose effects can be ubiquitous and destructive (Taylor 1998). The totalizing processes require strata that territorialize and control. Everything is seen through a particular lens that then, in turn, fashions the world according to that lens – that of hierarchy and authority. The rhizomatic of Deleuze and Guattari is thus a critique of all totalizing logics, of all systems that attempt to explain everything within one interpretive framework or hierarchical master code.

## **Lifelong Learning Through the Lens of Deleuze and Guattari**

I noted earlier the increased significance of the term 'learner'. It signifies that, rather than there being no choice because there is only a pre-defined curriculum based on a search for enlightenment and the mastery of a canon of knowledge, choice exists: a choice made on the basis of desire. That desire should signify in learning no longer, therefore, evokes something perverse and un-educational. Those who claim that this is not what learning is 'really' about are still enfolded in a myth where learning is pre-defined and delivered by the pedagogue. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence subverts this transcendental position. The need to understand learning in

terms of its enfolding within different social practices means that lifelong learning cannot simply refer to a structure of provision or a set of principles about education. Learning is to now be more readily understood as carrying many different significations about a diversity of learners and a diversity of learning in a variety of settings and practices, all enfolded within a variety of contemporary social practices, each with different effects of positioning and identity formation.

Whilst there is no mention of lifelong learning in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, that does not mean their work cannot be deployed to better understand it. On the contrary, they provide valuable conceptual resources through which it is possible to understand lifelong learning differently. This is particularly the case with their concepts of the ‘rhizome’ and ‘lines of flight’. As we have noted earlier, even the most solidified strata, such as capitalist society, carry nomadic lines of flight within themselves. Equally, the work of the rhizome de-territorializes strata, subverts hierarchies and restores desiring-production. It follows the flight of heterogeneity; there is a multiplicity of learning, other ways of knowing, as connections are made and unmade.

To explore this further, we need to note the significance for Deleuze and Guattari of the conjunction ‘and’ in relation to the rhizome:

The tree imposes the verb “to be”, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, “and... and... and”. This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb “to be”. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 25)

The conjunctive ‘and’ here becomes integral to rhizomatic approaches that shake the tree of knowledge and disrupt the arboreal. In this disruption, meaning is mobilized rather than grounded. An essentialist ontology of being and the binary logic of either–or are displaced with one of becoming, of flux, movement and flow – and the ‘and’ of connections and alliances. Deleuze and Guattari’s aim is to ‘establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 25).

The possible lines of flight in relation to lifelong learning point to the play of difference that contrasts with, and contests, the abstract machine of the governmental, including formal and institutionalized, education. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the ‘and... and... and’ of rhizomatic lines of flight result in a certain tentativeness, a stammering:

It’s easy to stammer, but making language itself stammer is a different affair, it involves placing all linguistic and even nonlinguistic, elements in variation, both variables of expression and variables of content. A new form of redundancy. AND... AND... AND... (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 98)

‘And’, thus, points to the multiple conjoinings and connections made possible by desiring production.

While governments and related institutions want to root the meaning of lifelong learning, on this understanding of the ‘and’, it is nonetheless ceaselessly de-territorialized, given that rhizomatic variation is always in play:

“And” is not simply a connective, joint, hinge between two things, it also implies progression (better and better), causation (and then), great duration (on and on), great numbers

(more and more), addition (this and that equals those), differentiation (there are writers and there are writers), variety (X and Y), and succession (walking two and two). (Doel 1996, p. 422)

Thus, 'and' does all sorts of supplementing work, both completing and *adding to*. Lifelong learning cannot, therefore, be simply located within any one stratum, whether it be the educated society, the learning market or globalization. Instead, 'and' mediates, mobilizes, completes and radicalizes. It refers to the ceaseless play of de-territorializing and re-territorializing. It can take multiple forms.

The 'and' becomes within lifelong learning, the endlessness, the ever-more immanent within it, even with the attempt to root in specific and definitive meanings. Inferences may be drawn from particular contexts, but manifestations elsewhere, as lines of flight, are inherently unpredictable. Indeed, if we follow Deleuze and Guattari, there is always learning as the energy of the desiring body and it is always lifelong because this desire is never final.

What then are the implications of articulating lifelong learning rhizomatically? It could be argued that learning has itself escaped on a line of flight from the stratum of institutionalized education into the rhizome of lifelong learning only to find that it is in danger of becoming re-territorialized into yet another stratum. The abstract machine of the contemporary order always attempts to stratify learning, to institutionalize it in some form and to make it the instrument of economic policy. One manifestation of this, for example, is the foregrounding of the rational at the expense of desire in policy, practice and research. Yet this stratified learning is always in tension with the learning involved in desiring production – affective and always potentially able to take off on a line of flight away from all the stratified signifiers of lifelong learning – including effective technique, flexible skilling, good citizenship and happy, self-fulfilled people. Thus, lifelong learning is not any one thing – it is not 'the mere acquisition of any new skill or bit of information, but instead the accession to a new way of perceiving and understanding the world' (Bogue 2004, p. 328)

Learning can be seen as rhizomatic, stretching, bending and conjoining, making all sorts of intended and unintended senses, stretched across time and space in unexpected multiple ways. Our learning is through the connections we make rhizomatically, as well as those that are allowed and valued by the abstract machine of a stratified society. 'And' therefore inscribes a certain grasping for more, but not necessarily just in terms of climbing trees, perhaps more through following different lines of experimenting, of taking off on lines of flight. Thus, lifelong learning can both give expression and be subject to the logic of 'and'. There is always more and the more can be, and often is, very different.

My argument, then, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts is that lifelong learning can be considered both as strata and as rhizomatic. As the former, it is a vital component in contemporary governmentality. As the latter, as lines of flight, it cannot be totally fixed and regulated by the totalizing significations of strata where it assumes one dominant and definitive meaning. As strata, lifelong learning is located in an economy of the same. But lifelong learning is also located in an economy of difference, different to the dominant discourses of lifelong learning as strata. Lifelong learning, therefore, is opened up to difference.

Lifelong learning is without beginning and without end across the span of one's life, and this both contributes to, and arises from, the logic of the rhizome, a line of flight, linking and conjoining in all sorts of unexpected ways. Embodying difference, it cannot be fully regulated by totalizing and technicist practices. Whilst lifelong learning can, and indeed has, become stratified, it is always actually and potentially taking off on lines of flight.

What there is then are multifarious connections, the lines of flight that are possible, which in relation to discourses of lifelong learning, point to the play of difference that contrasts with, and contests, the abstract machine of the governmental education. Paradoxically, what emerges now is a more tentative form of discourse, generally and also in particular about lifelong learning. Rather than simply being able to say what is the case, the assertion of an authoritative stance on the nature of the world and the meaning of things, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the 'and... and... and' of rhizomatic lines of flight result in a certain tentativeness or stammering.

## Conclusion

The writers whose work I have chosen are not meant to be representative of the postmodern, nor is my conjoining of Baudrillard with Deleuze and Guattari meant to imply that they are saying the same things in their respective work. Equally, the conjoining was not motivated by a desire to present a comparative study of their concepts and arguments. I chose rather to very selectively explicate aspects of their work in order to illuminate and exemplify what different ways of looking at lifelong learning might be. They have interesting things to say in an interesting way, but perhaps more important, what they have to say appears to have nothing to do with learning, let alone education. My assumption here is clear – if the aim is to understand learning, then the last place one should go to is to those who write *explicitly* about learning. All that would be gained in this way would be yet more finalities... more 'this is what the world (of lifelong learning) *really* is'.

Going to those, such as Baudrillard and Deleuze and Guattari, in order to develop a different understanding of learning inevitably involves an off-centre reading, considerable interpretive work and no definitive understandings at the end of this process. But this is as it should be, because both Baudrillard and Deleuze, as well as Guattari, argue that, although there is an impulsion to do so, we should not strive for such understandings. They show what it means to have an 'aversion to the universal' and this is probably one of the most distinguishing features of seeing differently, which they all share.

An aversion to the universal inevitably leads to a position where a loss of finalities is something to be celebrated rather than mourned. Along with this comes a tolerance of the apparently contradictory and paradoxical. For Baudrillard, the hyper-real is simulation but it is also more real than the real. The heightening of reality leads to the loss of reality. An individualistic consumer culture can live with learning as a social activity. For Deleuze and Guattari, things can be located in strata

and still take off on lines of flight. It is lines of flight that engender strata and vice versa. The seeming opposites, rhizomes and trees, can still nonetheless co-exist.

So, if there is a message, it is this – let's not try to universalize lifelong learning. Let's not strive to give it a single definitive meaning and let's resist the temptation to think and act that way. Let's just accept that lifelong learning has many significations, many of which are contradictory but all of which are mappable – and that is what this chapter has tried to show.

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# Chapter 44

## The Economic Context of Lifelong Learning

John Halliday

### Introduction

The chapter is critical of the arguments that there is an increasingly homogenous global economy and that policies towards lifelong learning should primarily be responses to such an economy. Certain opportunities to learn are more expensive to provide than others, however, and the ability to take up any opportunity requires some degree of economic success. Hence, the economic context of lifelong learning is important but not determinate. The chapter updates the author's chapter in the first edition of the *International Handbook* to take account of the so-called global economic crisis of 2008/2009. It attempts to offer a stronger argument against a dominant economic instrumentalism within lifelong learning and against the idea that the particularities of life, work and learning can be considered in isolation from one another.

Despite the undoubted changes brought about by information and communications technologies, much about the labour market and life in general remains stable. It is argued that it is a mistake for governments to place too much faith in the policy idea that centrally prescribed formal learning is the best way to bring about or cope with changes in life or work. While it may appear to be something of a gamble to provide opportunities for informal learning that is not necessarily structured or accredited, it is argued that such provision may be the best way of supporting lifelong learning. The precise opportunities to be provided and supported are best determined at a local level. A move away from the formal lifelong learning has economic in addition to other benefits.

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Programmes of lifelong learning seem to offer the possibility that social exclusion can be countered when multiple chances to become educated are available (Aspin and Chapman 1997, p. 24). The possibility depends, however, on lifelong learning being seen, not as a compensatory device to deal with failure at school, but as the norm for everyone. The idea that globalisation produces such rapid changes in the world of work that learning must be ongoing to cope with it offers a way of normalising programmes of lifelong learning.

I challenge such an instrumentalist conception of lifelong learning that seems to form the basis of many national and international programmes (Commission of the European Communities 2009; World Bank 2003). People can learn many worthwhile things at work, at home and elsewhere in informal associations. Moreover, there are some things that can only be learnt informally, precisely because the learning outcomes include acceptance of uncertainty and contingency. Economic productivity may well be encouraged by such learning that may also be intrinsically worthwhile. It is a mistake to design policies for lifelong learning as if uncertainty and contingency could be removed from learning. However attractive it might be to imagine that learning could guarantee certain desirable and measurable economic outcomes, it is argued that the attraction should be resisted.

An analysis of the limits of globalisation forms a central part in this chapter. The analysis serves as a warning against overstating the effects of globalisation and the accompanying idea that lifelong learning should be conceived primarily as a response to it. It is also a warning against the idea that nation states or international bodies such as the European Union can somehow, through planned programmes of lifelong learning, ensure full employment or re-engage a sense of collective identity in an increasingly fractured and networked society. That does not mean that nation states or international bodies can do nothing, however, and in the final section I outline what might be done. I conclude that businesses, formal educational, voluntary and other organisations should collaborate with the support of governments to encourage informal learning that would not be possible without such support.

Some time ago, I analysed the origins of vocationalism in the curriculum that was so fashionable within neo-liberalism in Britain, the United States and elsewhere. It is possible to show that the type of liberal education propounded by Hirst, Peters and others working in the analytic tradition of philosophy of education paved the way for the vocationalism of the 1970s and beyond (Halliday 1990). From there, it is easy to show how the 'skills talk' (Johnson 1998) of the 1990s tended to suggest that education was a kind of investment that is subject to immediate cost benefit analysis in a similar way to any other kind of short-term investment. This suggestion coheres with the discourse of globalisation because that discourse depends upon the rapid transmission of digitised capital and information producing instant market responses. So, there is a mutually reinforcing set of discourses trading on the idea that programmes of learning enable the development of skills which form investments for a prosperous but ever-changing future.

Some argue that the unpredictability of postmodernity has increasingly rendered conventional programmes of compulsory schooling less important, founded as such schooling often is on the so-called Enlightenment meta-narrative (Usher and

Edwards 1994, p. 159). Postmodernism suggests that the world of work is changing so rapidly that individual prosperity and enhanced national economic performance can only be secured if the rate and frequency at which people learn changes rapidly too. The rewards of such performance might be supposed to enable further and more widespread learning. This in turn encourages further improvements in economic performance and so on into a virtuous circle of investment in learning (Giddens 1998, p. 108) leading to increases in real, human and social capital (Bourdieu 1986).

Typical accounts of the argument can be found in many places (Commission of the European Communities 1994, 1997; OECD 1973; Delors 1996; Department for Education and Employment 1998; World Bank 1996; International Monetary Fund 2009). One such is given in the Green Paper *Opportunity Scotland* (Scottish Office 1998) and this paper is quoted as an exemplar of the genre:

Lifelong Learning is a feature of modern life and will continue to be so. Change is everywhere and we need to learn to cope with it in different aspects of our lives. Jobs are changing with continually developing technology and pressures to keep up with foreign competitors. Daily life is changing with faster communications and more technology in our homes. ... (Scottish Office 1998, p. 4)

Here, interest in lifelong learning is coupled with the belief that, in the midst of change, there is a need to:

update continually the skills of the workforce and better equip people to manage their own future. ... people at all levels need to use learning opportunities to keep pace in the jobs market and to ensure that Scotland is equipped to compete in the global economy. (ibid.)

But how do people at all levels use learning opportunities to keep pace in the jobs market? Only, it seems, by investing in their own skill development. The paper goes on:

People who update their skills and learn new ones will get better paid jobs and achieve more success in their chosen fields of work. (op. cit., p. 28)

But of course they do not choose their fields of work in this presumed rapidly changing jobs market, their fields of work are chosen for them by economic considerations beyond their control. The discourse of investment in skills is retained, however, through the idea that there are core and transferable skills:

It is clear that Scotland needs a workforce which is highly proficient in both core transferable skills and specialised sector based skills. (op. cit., p. 28)

This is not the place to rehearse the by-now familiar arguments against the idea that there are core transferable skills and that industrial sector-based skills are any less transferable than any other sort (Jonathan 1987; Johnson 1998). Suffice to say that 'skills talk' supports the idea that individuals should invest in their own development to realise a prosperous future in a globalised economy. It seems, however, that some Scots are not convinced by this idea:

Involving adults in lifelong learning is our greatest challenge. ... Some people perceive difficulties and barriers relating to their personal circumstances or previous low attainment at school. Others simply never think about learning at all. (op. cit., p. 8)

Are these people ignorant and/or misguided or is there something wrong with the conception of lifelong learning presented in the Green Paper? In Britain, at any rate, there is a degree of uncritical acceptance of this conception. Although as Coffield notes:

Behind the high flown rhetoric, lifelong learning the learning society and the learning organisation are all being propounded to induce individuals to become more or less willing participants in learning for life and to bear an increasing proportion of the costs of such learning. (Coffield 1998, p. 11)

He goes on to argue that lifelong learning can be seen as the latest form of social control. If he is right, then it is hardly surprising that Scots resist such control even though they might be induced to learn in approved ways through schemes such as Inn tuition, cybercentres and electronic villages (Further Education Funding Council 1997; Chisholm 1997, p. 45).

Braverman (1976) argues that one of the main purposes of formal education is to provide many thousands of jobs for generally middle class people supposedly training the working-class people for jobs for which training, as an activity distinct from the job itself, is not really required. It is not necessary to concur entirely with Braverman to question whether money is well spent on schemes such as the above. It is, however, necessary to question whether much current rhetoric of lifelong learning serves to reinforce an instrumentalist conception of education in which learning is seen as the acquisition of qualities of dubious value, which are then supposed to serve as the means to fulfil some notion of a globalised prosperous future.

## Globalisation

One way of challenging such an instrumentalist conception is to question the economic argument based on globalisation that is often put in support of it. It seems obvious that transnational corporations will seek to increase their profitability by relocating to those parts of the world where the rate of return on their investment is maximum. The production and consumption of goods and services is becoming increasingly globalised. Capital now flows around the world almost instantaneously, in digital form without regard for national boundaries. Information too flows around the world via the Internet. Even though there is a reaction against it, there is an increasing homogeneity in global culture towards such institutions as fast food outlets, supermarkets and shopping malls. As a result of these trends, there is a tendency to discuss globalisation as if it were something new and all embracing. Yet, all of these trends, except for the digitalisation of information and capital, were features of colonial expansion in the late nineteenth century too.

Certainly, it is now easier and cheaper to move materials, people and information around the globe than ever it was. This means that there is no longer such a competitive advantage to being near human, physical or economic resources of any kind. Therefore, it is easy to appreciate the argument that the key to economic advantage must be the value that can be added to these resources and the assumption that more

skilled people are best able to add value. Hence, increasing investment in education and training are seen as the only hope for economically advantaged nations to maintain that advantage and for less advantaged nations to improve (Field 1998, p. 10).

One problem with such a strategy is obvious. If every nation, group of nations or individuals adopt it, then there will be no competitive advantage, merely better-educated or trained people engaged in an ever-increasing spiral of ingenious schemes to manufacture demand and then satisfy it. A further problem is that it neglects the importance of traditional though perhaps unglamorous forms of work to many areas of economic life. Yet another problem with this strategy is that it assumes that those possessing most knowledge or skills should be paid to educate those having less knowledge and skills (Macrae et al. 1997, p. 500). Within the discourse of rapid change through globalisation, however, such skills and knowledge must be obsolescent.

What is going wrong with this strategy is something to which Hartley (1998), among others, has drawn attention. There is a constant tension between government attempts to control learning and cultural forces that make such control counterproductive. For example, at a time in which post-fordist modes of organising industrial and commercial activity suggest that there is a need for flexible working practice, some governments prescribe through national curricula what individuals should be able to do long before those individuals ever have to perform in the way specified.

There is an increasing body of literature often based on Foucault's (1977) work that suggests that formal education easily becomes a normalising induction into procedures of surveillance and control (Falk 1998; Hager and Halliday 2006). Students are compelled to go through this induction in order to have a chance of earning a living and securing an identity in an increasingly fragmented society. If they fail at school, then the increasing formalisation of what was previously informal through schemes such as the accreditation of prior learning and those listed above maintains the normalising process into a form of lifelong social control (Edwards 1997; Hargreaves 1997; Usher and Edwards 1994).

The mistake that I think is often made in talk of globalisation is one to which Wittgenstein drew our attention and which he called a 'craving for generality' or 'the contemptuous attitude towards the particular case' (Wittgenstein 1958, p. 18). As one of the sources of this mistake, Wittgenstein points to 'our preoccupation with the method of science... the method of reducing the explanation of natural phenomena to the smallest possible number of primitive natural laws' (ibid.) There are two features of Wittgenstein's remarks that are relevant to my argument. First, the preoccupation with science arises in part out of the powerful utility of its applications, such as in the computer (Hesse 1980). Second, the success of reducing some natural phenomena to binary code that can then be manipulated and transmitted with supreme efficiency gives rise in an age of performativity (Lyotard 1984) to the illusion that all phenomena can and should be usefully reduced in this way. Arguably the most easily globalised commodities are information and finance. But just because these commodities can be rapidly transmitted across the globe, it does not mean that everything can or should be replicated or transmitted across the globe.

It might appear, for example, as if the flows of information, power and centres of influence are increasingly homogeneous but, as Castells (1996, 1997, 1998) argues, this appearance is mistaken.

While it may have suited certain politicians in countries that suffered the worst of the economic crisis of 2008/2009 to claim that the crisis was global and homogeneous, this claim is misleading (World Bank 2010; OECD 2010). It is commonly accepted that Iceland and Greece suffered rather more than Canada and Brazil, for example, and the International Monetary Fund (2010) has provided robust data to support the view that the public finances of some countries are in better shape than others. Some countries managed to conserve public resources to enable the possibility of investing more in programmes to further the public good, including those to encourage lifelong learning.

Yet such investment could be misplaced. Ironically, one of the consequences of this crisis in some countries is to move policy away from even greater provision of formal education, supposedly guaranteeing certain outcomes. Such policy direction is no longer an economic possibility. One area of public spending that is most suitable for expenditure cuts is lifelong learning, conceived as an addition to but less important than schooling. In the UK, for example, the coalition government of 2010 seemed to be prepared to handover some control of lifelong learning away from government to the voluntary sector (Cabinet Office 2010). Under the banner 'big society', the idea was to roll back the influence of the state as much as possible, so that people would take control of things that matter to them, including what they learn:

We want to give citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want. ... Only when people and communities are given more power and take more responsibility can we achieve fairness and opportunity for all. ... We need to draw on the skills and expertise of people across the country as we respond to the social, political and economic challenges Britain faces. (Cabinet Office 2010)

It has been suggested (Hasan and MacIntyre 2010) that this new policy direction is nothing more than an unavoidable response to the fact that policy control is no longer economically possible. The necessary public resource is not available. Less cynically, and in the case of lifelong learning, it is possible to argue that such a reversal of policy control is overdue. To move from a position where no learning outcomes were valued unless they were centrally set and measurable to an acceptance of the opposite does not mean chaotic acceptance of a series of unevaluated programmes. It does, however, mean trusting the judgement of those who are enabled to learn informally that they know best what their learning interests are and that, given modest support, they can follow those interests through.

The economic changes the crisis brought about were not predictable or uniform. Few predicted, for example, the exposure to which Greek public finances became involved and the subsequent pressure on the very idea of a European single currency and even the European Union itself (Traynor 2010). Few predicted that resulting political instability would lead to a collapse of a tourist industry in one country and a boom in its neighbour, as tourists fled to what they perceived to be less troublesome

interactions with native inhabitants. The use of information and communications technologies meant that reactions to events were felt more quickly, but it did not lead to globalised uniformity.

A ‘craving for generality’ also leads to the conflation of formal learning with most worthwhile learning. Just because some skills and knowledge can usefully be learnt in formal educational institutions, such as schools, does not mean that all skills and knowledge can or should be learnt there. It is clear, for example, that contextually specific practical knowledge cannot be conflated with theoretical knowledge in the form of a series of propositions, however detailed those propositions are. Similarly, just because the nature and availability of some jobs are changing rapidly as a result of the impact of information technology does not mean that all jobs are also changing.

Indeed, as I showed through a variety of jobs studies (Halliday 2001) in my chapter in the first edition, the nature and availability of jobs is much more stable than the discourse of rapid change through globalisation might lead us to believe. I also argued there that it is only those concepts that can be economically digitised that potentially take on a global appearance and it is only places where there is a communications infrastructure in place that could realise this potential. Even so, there is a gap between digitised information and the reality of the lives of those who access it, as the above example from Europe was intended to illustrate. Hence, many values, places and economic and political systems are excluded from the direct influence of globalisation. I summarise my earlier discussion below, before drawing some implications for policy.

## Values

As MacIntyre (1981) argues, there are values internal to all practices – values that are embedded within the practical knowledge that gives some people their prime sense of identity, as a joiner or nurse for example. But practical knowledge is not digitisable. However, many propositions or pictures are composed to try to illustrate the values that are internal to a practice; those pictures and propositions can never be equivalent to the practical knowledge that is acquired through working with others in contextually specific ways. There is always a gap between prescriptions for and illustrations of action and the action itself. There is always room for asking the question ‘show me how to do it’ of someone with superior insight and ability who can be trusted to care about my learning. The very notion of teaching depends upon there being a shared sense of trust and caring that cannot be exchanged as external values.

It should be acknowledged that huge efforts have been and are being directed into the production of machines that can perform types of manual work in ways that attempt to take account of the values embedded within practical knowledge. While the success of those machines that are currently available is not impressive, it is not argued that such production is pointless or unlikely to continue to make a difference



to the way that certain practical tasks are performed. The arguments are that such differences should not be overstated and that the human capacity to choose to do things in certain ways should not be undermined (Weizenbaum 1976).

Lave and Wenger (1991) and others working in the area known as situated cognition have supported the view that there are parts of all practices that are contextually specific and not amenable to the homogenisation of information flows that characterise the discourse of globalisation. The characteristic gesture, piece of advice, command and so on that form part of particular jobs can only be understood in context by those already in some way attuned to the job in question. Moreover, the same job performed in different places needs to be learnt afresh in a kind of way. In short, there remains an essential indeterminacy within human interactions at work and elsewhere that is not captured in the flows of digitised information. Moreover, there remains a solid core of manual work within all occupations that cannot be replaced by mental work.

Commodities too are not as amenable to a complete description of their properties as some imagine. While it might be thought that the exchange of commodities can be governed by the exchange of digitised information about their properties, there is always a gap between such description and the value of the commodity itself, which goes beyond the numerical value achieved in a market. There are environmental and human considerations that affect the ways commodities are described at particular times, and these are inevitably value laden according to culture, religion and habit. Religious values are necessarily resistant to globalising influences and it is hard to envisage a time in which cultural values and habits will not be central in determining the things people want to learn throughout their lives.

## Places

Globalisation may well be tending to suggest that the nation in which people live is irrelevant to their economic well-being. Yet, according to Ashton and Green (1996, p. 71), in most countries, the largest part of economic life is still served by national companies. Moreover, there is no uniform pattern of economic growth across the globe. Even though the gap in growth between the 'North' and 'South' remains large, there are parts of both that have narrowed the gap. For example, many Asian economies have grown rapidly, while the opposite is true of some Eastern European countries. Moreover, it would be misleading to suggest that there are uniform patterns of growth within countries or even within towns. And the same is true for wages, prices, rates of unemployment and so on.

Castells (1996) explains this lack of homogeneity through the idea of a network society in a way that is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's notion of a family resemblance. The picture that emerges from this explanation is of society in its widest international sense comprising an overlapping series of networks, sharing some things in common but not all things in common. Castells gives a number of examples to illustrate this idea. Why, he asks, 'were discoveries of new information technologies

clustered in the 1970s and mostly in California?’ (Castells 1996, p. 50). At this time, he argues, a number of important technological advances such as communications switching, processing and genetic technology began mutually to enhance one another to become a source of powerful new ideas and metaphors. For example, the idea of neural networks seemed to parallel the idea of networked microcomputers, made possible through the laying of optical fibre cables, digital switching and the project to map the human genome. The reason was not because of any emphasis on applied research by government. Nor was it a response of capitalism to new internal contradictions. Rather, Castells notes a number of fortuitous events: the hiring of particularly talented and visionary individuals to key posts; and the flexibility engendered by a number of emerging structures within international companies, rather than rigid and moribund thinking in parts of the USA. There was:

a milieu of innovation when discoveries and applications would interact and be tested in a recurrent process of trial and error of learning by doing; these milieu required and still do in the 1990s, (in spite of on-line networking) spatial concentration of research centres, higher education institutions, advanced technology companies, a network of ancillary suppliers of goods and services and business networks of venture capital. (Castells 1996, p. 56)

From this example it is clear that networks do not exist apart from the large markets developed by the state, but that such markets do not create them either. The location of basic services and products such as transport, food and restaurants is important to the existence of networks, but it is also clear that there can be no blueprint for the generation of innovative networks in the future. That is because networks exclude as well as include. They also exclude by default. Markets in many commodities are far from being fully integrated or open. Capital flows are not totally fluid. Labour is far from being mobile because people have attachments to each other and to places at particular times that will transcend a perceived economic advantage. Multinational corporations keep most of their assets and strategic command centres in home countries. The nation state persists and forms the legislative centres and controls spending, taxes and natural resources that influence the structure and dynamics of a network society. As a result of all these considerations, it will remain the case that:

Space and time are the fundamental variables of human life. The standards of their coordinates allow events to be quantified, rules to be made and case law established. All of these facilitate the regulation and control of societies around spatially determined groupings. They facilitate the formation of national laws and policies. (Castells 1996, p. 376)

To be sure, standardised methods of coding and decoding languages, and of translating languages, provide the means globally of publicising what was previously national or local without delay. Advanced services, including finance, legal, insurance, marketing and others, can plausibly be reduced to information generation and flows. Were flow to be in one direction, then it might be expected that there would be an increasing homogeneity in work and culture through communications in virtual space. Yet, heterogeneity is the norm, partly because many people now have the means not only to listen to others but also, most importantly, to publish themselves.

While it might be expected that information processing power will continue to increase, it is not likely that it will ever increase to such an extent that the particularities of places and events will be irrelevant considerations in the phenomenology of politics, work or learning. Indeed, the recent economic crisis led rapidly to the potential for distinct political interventions that were very much dependent upon particular circumstances in particular places, as argued above. Even when use of social networking web sites has played a major part in helping to organise political protest and action, it is the particularities of the action itself that have been crucial, not their traces on the Internet. Social networking sites enable people to mobilise themselves in informal voluntary associations that are highly transitory and context specific (Weston 1997).

## Economic Systems

It is widely believed that the paradigm shifts in economic systems that took place during the post-agricultural and post-industrial periods are similar to economic changes that are now taking place as a result of the impact of information technology. Yet, as Singleman (1978) shows, the overall effect of these shifts has been a decline in agricultural jobs and a rise in service-sector jobs, although there are big differences between the rates of decline and increase in different parts of the world. The idea that the so-called information revolution has resulted in a further paradigm shift in economic systems is not supported by empirical studies. Castells concludes that there is no systematic structural relationship between the diffusion of information technologies and the evolution of employment levels in the economy as a whole:

The March toward information employment is proceeding at a significantly slower pace and reaching much lower levels than the trend toward service employment. (Castells 1996, p. 211)

According to my (Halliday 2001) earlier analysis of the OECD's (1994) jobs study, there is considerable stability in the percentages of people employed in the various occupational sectors. The OECD's recent reflections on the jobs study (OECD 2006) indicate that the analysis remains up to date. Of course, the very framing of these employment categories decontextualises the work that is actually done and may conceal similarities between the types of work and learning to work that cuts across categories. A more detailed look at types of work reveals why it is unlikely that percentages employed in each employment sector will change dramatically. Under personal services, for example, it is likely that there will be a continuing need to employ a similar percentage of the population as hairdressers, domestic workers, cooks, entertainers and cleaners. In the case of the social services, there will continue to be a need professionally to care for the elderly and the very young, for example. It is not plausible to imagine robots doing such work. While it is possible to envisage a large growth in the use of information technology for commerce, there will still be a need for distributors to lift goods from one place to the other.

The transformative industries may be regarded as a kind of movement of goods and are unlikely to change rapidly. People still need houses, for example.

The building industry provides a good example of an industry that has resisted the impact of new technology for good reason. People like familiar things such as traditional handles on doors. There is an air of reliability and familiarity about them. There will be a continuing need for people to make and install such objects. The need for shelter and food is universal, and this demands a physical and not a virtual response. The sheer number of people having such needs suggests that many people will continue to be employed to move materials from one place to another, to build houses, set tables, cook food, cut hair, produce materials and so on. Moreover, there remains a great deal of similarity between all forms of work, in that most people still travel to work. Work involves a mixture of talking and doing. It is regulated by time and space. It is managed in some way and remains distinct from their main interests for many.

The argument that people need to become skilled in high technology in order to secure jobs in the global market place is easily countered by the fact that high technology manufacturing is not likely ever to employ more than a very small proportion of the labour force. Indeed, there has been recent acceptance that new business growth comes not so much from new ideas to satisfy the need for new goods and services made possible by new technology. Rather, in the UK, for example, growth comes more from the creation of small businesses, often replacing work that was once the preserve of the public sector (Webb 2010). I argued that there are many adults who are not fully literate but perform a variety of jobs perfectly adequately and that many people can be trained on the job as it were (Halliday 2001). Moreover, in many places, people are overqualified for the jobs they are expected to do (Blandon et al. 2010).

These arguments, concerned as they are with values, commodities, places, jobs and economic systems, serve to undermine the claim that there is a universal link between economic performance and lifelong learning conceived as an ongoing form of skill acquisition in preparation for a global economy. Globalisation and the associated networking within it will proceed in ways that no government can predict. That is despite attempts by governments acting together to regulate global capitalism and, in particular, financial markets. While it will never be clear precisely what set of policies will best encourage lifelong learning, the direction that they should take is clear, as is the kind of considerations that are not relevant or unhelpful. Knowing some ways not to proceed does narrow the options for knowing ways that are worth pursuing.

## Implications for Policy

Wain (1993) drew attention some time ago to what he called the minimalist and maximalist positions on lifelong learning. Within the minimalist position, lifelong learning is seen as an adult 'add on' to schooling which aims for qualities associated

with ‘educatedness’ through investment in learning detached from work and life. Theorists of a Deweyan persuasion such as Wain and the author reject this position in favour of the maximalist position that education is a lifelong process in which familiar dualisms between life and work, liberal and vocational are dissolved. That is not to reject the idea that a period of compulsory schooling might be the best means of ensuring that people do grow in desirable ways. Rather, schooling is re-conceived as a stage in a process of lifelong learning.

It is worth recalling that people learn to do all kinds of things by working under the decreasing supervision of an expert and that, as Dewey (1916, p. 310) remarks, ‘the only adequate training for occupations is training through occupations’. This is an example of apprenticeship, formal or otherwise, and is not confined to businesses. Yet, when a business closes, the loss is not just in jobs, products and services, but in the potential for others to learn to do in ways that respect the contribution of generations in developing the occupations that formed the business. There is a case, therefore, for governments supporting businesses on the basis of their educational contribution both to their own workforce and others with an interest in those occupations. In this way, the business respects its responsibilities to those it employs and those it serves. It makes little sense to simulate such businesses within educational institutions as if participation in such a simulation were economically worthwhile or a realistic means of learning. Moreover, it is incorrect to argue that businesses are necessarily anti-democratic (Semler 1994). It is worth noting, with Tiles, that there is no incompatibility between democracy and the recognition of authority:

It is both rational and in no way undemocratic for a community to give greater credence to some of the voices that speak within it when it considers decisions to be taken. (Tiles 1995, p. 266)

For Dewey, the educational imperative provides the workers the motivation that respects their humanity:

The realisation of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress or readjustment is an important consideration makes a democratic community more interested than other communities. ... Since a democratic society repudiates the principle of external authority, it must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest: these can be created only by education. (Dewey 1916, p. 87)

All this is not to suggest that a maximalist conception of lifelong learning could be satisfied through democratising business alone and supporting apprenticeships. Other arguments can be advanced to support the view that governments ought to provide opportunities to learn practices that cannot be learnt through business. Pring (1995) is correct to argue that a community of educated persons would be diminished if it included only those practices that are most obviously amenable to economic considerations. There are good reasons to provide opportunities for people to learn those practices that enable the transmission of a cultural inheritance that has withstood the test of time, including those periods when it appears as if a paradigm shift in the rate of change is taking place (Pring 1995, p. 180). Such a transmission enables people to maintain a critical perspective on their lives and to consider those fundamental questions of value that characterise an educational ideal. The apprenticeship model is relevant to this transmission too.

Given that programmes to encourage lifelong learning require some resources, it is worth remembering that some learning resources are much cheaper to provide than others. Books, for example, are cheaper than professional teachers. Sometimes it is cheaper to provide the resources for people to learn informally, rather than to learn from professional teachers within formally supported institutions such as colleges. Many things may be learnt through a kind of informal apprenticeship and by simply having access to appropriate resources. It is widely accepted that to teach an interested newcomer to a practice in which the teacher has expertise and interest is one of the most enjoyable and fulfilling things to do. Moreover, to learn together as, for example, on an allotment about how to grow things, or to fish or sail or act or sing or debate or play games seems a natural part of living for many people. There are many examples where people learn to do things that interest them in voluntary association with others. Such examples have economic as well as other benefits. What they share in common is the need for certain basic facilities such as serviced plots of land and buildings. Not all learning takes place on the Internet. There are still many worthwhile things that require tools, equipment, books, team efforts, space and shelter from the wind, sun and rain. These may well be less expensive to provide than professional teachers and classrooms, but provision requires radical changes in the way learning is conceived in relation to economics.

It seems plausible to suggest that different forms of lifelong learning may emerge as a result of the so-called global crises. Instead of attempts to make globally applicable solutions to problems, national and international bodies may form policies supporting informal interests in all their diversity and contingency. Instead of accompanying bureaucracies, targets, learning outcomes, certificates and institutions of formal learning, support may be given for the informal using fewer resources. Support could vary from place to place, depending on what facilities already existed, what cultural interests there were, what the climate allowed, what transport links were available and so on. I accept that it is not clear how resources can be fairly apportioned and that costly bureaucracies can grow as a response to the fear that, when resource allocation is loosened in this way, then the most articulate and able people are liable to benefit most. Moreover, this liability could put still more emphasis on a minimalist conception of lifelong learning, since it is at school where the ability to articulate may best be learnt.

Perhaps, policies to encourage a maximalist concept of lifelong learning do depend primarily upon changes to the school system, so that people get a taste as it were of what might be possible and how best to argue to achieve it. Achievement would need to be informed by economic possibilities and political realities. The curriculum would look quite different, as emphasis would be placed on the opening up of possibilities and thorough exposure to the political realities of competing interests and power bases within a liberal democracy. It is possible to imagine a curriculum of tasters, where some tasters are, however, pursued with sufficient depth so that learners come to see what is involved in mastery and control.

Policies to encourage lifelong learning can be ambivalent in their effects and may serve to undermine some of the economic and political norms that are currently dominant. A move away from the influence of national and international bodies in

determining what is learnt locally may enable greater participatory democracy and widespread demand for unrestricted access to government information, statute and case law, scientific data and so on. People may learn to make a difference to those things that matter to them, and that may mean challenging existing power structures and property rights. I am not thinking here of resources manufactured in formal learning organisations for which there is now a considerable market but learning materials to inform the lives that people are leading and work that they are doing now. I am thinking of such basic things as land, water, tools and unlimited access to decision-making arenas.

Along with several other countries, the UK devotes about five per cent of GDP to school education, which amounted to some £50 billion in 2010. A further 18 billion is allocated to innovation, universities and skills (HM Treasury 2009), which would include lifelong learning as currently conceived in the minimalist sense. According to this chapter, some of these resources should be redirected. A radical shift is now needed away from a personal banking concept of lifelong learning towards a societal improvement concept in which businesses, formal educational, voluntary and other institutions complement each other in providing learning opportunities across a range of practices. Such learning enables people to communicate better with each other in deciding democratically what ought to be done and how best to do it.

In summary, if it is assumed that improvement is best brought about through piecemeal pragmatic change (Popper 1945) and that such change will always be constrained by what is available from public taxation, then some resources should be redirected towards:

- Informal and formal apprenticeships of all kinds
- The support of private business and public organisation to provide worthwhile learning opportunities for their own workers and others
- The provision of books, Internet access, land, buildings and other resources such as communal workshops to enable people to learn through reading about and doing things that matter to them and their communities

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# Chapter 45

## Lifelong Learning as a Policy Process: A Case Study from Australia

John McIntyre

### Introduction

Few nations have implemented a lifelong learning policy framework in the comprehensive form expressed by the OECD in 1996, though many OECD member countries have pursued education and training reforms, at times driven by agendas quite at odds with its policy values. Nevertheless, the lifelong learning ideal retains significant symbolic power, even when it is subject to the policy realities played out in contemporary education and training.

This chapter illustrates how a commitment to lifelong learning policy may be achieved through an evolutionary process, making particular reference to the Australian context, where it has been argued that lifelong learning has been a ‘policy failure’ because complex administrative arrangements in the federal system and entrenched interests in the formal education sectors have hindered structural reform (Watson 2004).

The chapter challenges the ‘policy failure’ thesis, taking technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Australia as a case for analysis, since this sector has been subject to continuous policy intervention for three decades and has relatively open boundaries to compulsory schooling and higher education, to the labour market and industry training, and to organised adult learning at large. TVET has been a leading site of policy reform and institutional transformation to promote greater adult participation. It must, therefore, be regarded as a key site for implementing lifelong learning policy ideas.

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Tracing the course of institutional change, I employ a perspective of policy sociology (Ball 1994; Burawoy 2005) that gives due regard to *policy process* in the contest of ideas and values and the interplay of political, institutional and professional interests. The aim is to identify those ‘turns’ or moments in public policy where lifelong learning ideas are either resisted or accommodated. This approach analyses how particular policy agendas discursively construct the meanings of reform and govern the direction of educational change.

Australia, in common with other Western economies, has foreshadowed the looming crisis posed by an ageing and under-skilled workforce and has attempted to address this through a ‘participation and productivity’ policy agenda. Economic imperatives have driven an accommodation to lifelong learning values, as the limitations of institutional training have become increasingly apparent. There has been a turn to more ‘ecological’ and enterprise-based approaches to skill formation, and ‘workforce development’ has emerged as a touchstone of policy that draws discourses of ‘adult learning’ to the centre. This has created conditions favouring greater recognition of the integration of formal and non-formal learning, consistent with OECD principles: a change reflected in the adoption of OECD categories of adult learning in national data collection. These changes represent an accommodation to a policy ethic of lifelong learning.

The chapter then examines adult and community education, situated at the margins of TVET reform and defined by those discourses of adult learning that have been of little account in institutional training culture. Policy advocates have skilfully contested the threats of ‘training reform’ and exploited the resources of the lifelong learning ideal to legitimate community-based adult education within the post-compulsory context. It is argued that, in doing so, community education has effectively performed a symbolic role in representing lifelong learning values through its valorisation of non-formal learning. The sector has been a forum for advocating lifelong learning strategies such as ‘learning communities’ and promoted the wider benefits of learning expressed in terms of a communitarian discourse of social capital. In doing so, it has helped to amplify the discursive possibilities for a more ‘ecological’ paradigm of skills formation.

## Challenges

The approach of the chapter reflects a number of challenges. The first of these is the OECD injunction to recognise ‘adult learning in all its forms’. The tripartite OECD definition of adult learning – as formal, non-formal and informal – provides a key interpretive schema for examining tensions at the boundaries of education systems and community and workplace contexts. Debate often conflates lifelong learning *with* adult learning, so the latter becomes a key term of reference in policy advocacy. Adult learning is emblematic of the breadth of vision, and its relative position in policy is a measure of the adoption of lifelong learning. Papadopolous (2002) describes adult education as ‘the most crucial and problematic area for attaining lifelong learning ... where the gaps between current and desirable levels of provision

are greatest and where inequalities are most marked' (2002, p. 56). For this reason, the chapter gives particular attention to adult and community education in the context of national training reform.

A second challenge is to acknowledge the ideological richness of lifelong learning. Some theorise it as a wide field of semiotic play: 'Lifelong learning needs to be understood as a socio-cultural process with multiple significations rather than just as a policy, a mode of provision or some mystical form of meta-learning' say Usher and Edwards (Usher and Edwards 2007, p. 7). Yet, in lifelong learning 'just as a policy', there is more than enough semiotic play to be understood. Other socio-cultural theorisations might point to the way in which lifelong learning has generated forms of policy advocacy (e.g., Longworth 2003; Kearns et al. 1999; Kearns 2005) and a degree of evangelism. This tendency can be explained by the ethical scope of lifelong learning understood as a policy ideal whose constitutive assumptions draw together many threads of contemporary educational thought (Bagnall 2006, 2007). Policy idealism can take the character of an educational cause, one that seeks to mobilise constituencies such as those adult education agencies that have a stake in raising the perceived worth of their educational contribution. Lifelong learning is a social movement whose aim is the transformation of educational culture and the adoption of new models of participation such as the 'learning community'. An account of policy development should acknowledge this aspect of socially organised policy agency.

A third challenge is how to give full play to policy process and agency. A critical policy sociology began by theorising 'policy intervention' as an instrument of education reform (Ball 1994), though current debate is concerned with the broader claims of 'public sociology' (Burawoy 2005). Ball's (1994) key distinction between 'policy as discourse' and 'policy as text' has been influential. The latter refers to the conventional view of documents representing educational realities that are capable of various readings by educational practitioners. 'Policy as discourse' understands policy as producing these realities, since 'discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority' (Ball 1994, p. 21). Policy discursively constructs the 'realities' that it seeks to create. A policy sociology traces those turns or moments that displace one policy discourse by another, governing how professionals can speak to change and whose change agendas matter – a policy genealogy (Gale 2007). In this way, 'policy intervention' can be analysed in terms of policy agency and the interpretive work of policy actors within national, state jurisdictional, sectoral and institutional contexts (Considine 2005). This analysis will, therefore, focus on the discursive shifts that mark the changing status of the lifelong learning ideal as it is reflected in the course of TVET reform.

## **Training Reform and Lifelong Learning Policy**

The Australian TVET context is important for understanding the course of lifelong learning policies, because it was here that the European and UNESCO developments first had a major impact through the 1972 Faure Report, *Learning to Be*.

A national review of technical education (Kangan 1974) adopted 'recurrent education' as the banner for a national renewal of the neglected and inward-looking State systems and gave Technical and Further Education (TAFE) a mission to increase access for disadvantaged groups to adult and vocational learning. Key to this reforming vision was the promotion of adult learning for a variety of purposes – occupational, remedial, social and recreational. Adult literacy and career advisory services featured in this new remit (Brown et al. 2004).

One challenge for the State TAFE systems was how to achieve this broader mission, and policy was soon speaking in terms of 'responsiveness to community need'. The North American 'community college' became an influential model for planning (McIntyre 1995). The vocabulary of 'second-chance learning' for disadvantaged groups melded with an emerging communitarian discourse of local responsiveness, but this was soon subordinated to national economic imperatives that would reassert the traditional focus of TVET on industry training. In the late 1980s, a looming economic crisis led to a decisive policy intervention known as the 'national training reform agenda' driven by economic reform at large and subjecting the TAFE systems to unprecedented restructuring. The needs of industry were made paramount. Yet, in this policy change, the recurrent education theme endured in terms of an emphasis on the 'continuous upgrading of skills throughout working life' and the goal of a broader access to skills formation.

Buchanan (2009) discerns two phases of Australian 'training reform'. The first involved structural reforms including the imposition of industry-based competency standards and curriculum, the standardisation of qualifications within a national regulatory framework and agreement to a skills recognition framework. This amounted to new systematisation of vocational knowledge and skills to deliberately challenge the 'front-end' apprenticeship model. The aim was to expand access to training across the board (but within highly standardised frames) and, in so doing, press the TAFE institutions into more responsive relationships with industry advisory bodies and enterprises. The second phase applied market principles to the deregulation of the training system to end TAFE's monopoly of public funding and establish 'user-choice' for its industry clients and for individual learners. The high point of these reforms was reached with the establishment of a national authority to oversee policy and funding of VET in the State jurisdictions.

By the time the OECD articulated its broader concept of lifelong learning (OECD 1996), Australian training reform was running fast in a narrow instrumentalist channel where neo-liberalism was increasingly contested by the education professionals it had disenfranchised. The OECD report opened up an alternative discursive space and increased criticism of the 'training culture' mentality and the privileging of formal qualifications. It amplified the felt conflict between industrial and educational values and economic and social goals of vocational education (Anderson and Ferrier 1998). The tensions in accommodating an emerging professional field like adult literacy were worked out through a vigorous policy activism (Lo Bianco and Wickert 2001). The 'training culture' was seen to have subordinated the goal of wider participation and there had been a failure to envisage 'a learning culture at large' (Robinson and Arthy 1999). Those who advocated a sweeping adoption of

lifelong learning policy called for a transformation of VET institutions so that they could ‘exercise a creative leadership role in the transition to a learning society’, function as learning organisations and ‘become powerhouses of learning in their communities’ (Kearns et al. 1999, Chap. 14).

From the perspective of the ‘master concept’ of lifelong learning (Kearns), the achievements of structural reform had fallen well short of making the learner central and had neglected the diversity of learners, their individual circumstances and their disposition to adult learning. Yet, in an inspired moment, seeking ‘a bridge to the future’ for Australia’s TVET sector, the national training authority embarked on ambitious research to bring the learner to the centre stage and scope the problem of promoting lifelong learning across the population. This recast the problem in social marketing and demographic terms and generated a new vocabulary of learner archetypes, from the ‘passionate learner’ to the disengaged who are ‘done with it’ and want to ‘forget it’, flanking those middling groups whose participation in learning involves an equivocal cost-benefit equation (ANTA 2001).

Nevertheless, it appeared that training reform was about to be discursively challenged, in a shift of emphasis from institutional structures and regulation to the needs and circumstances of the adult clients of the system. This change coincided with other developments, such as a national framework for career development across the lifespan (McMahon et al. 2003), though, at the time, the OECD found career advisory services poorly developed in Australia.

Several significant reports to government echoed international concerns about the ‘demographic challenge’ of the ageing population on productivity (Treasury 2004) and a new imperative emerged of ‘participation and productivity’ that had the effect of revaluing learning by adults (Productivity Commission 2005). Although the situation of low-skilled mature-age workers had been apparent for some time, the participation challenge had the potential to give new currency to adult learning as a concept (e.g. DEST 2003). Yet, the OECD study of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in member countries found Australia framing its responses in terms of TVET institutional practices (DEST 2007), not the wider reference of ‘possibilities’ ranging from education institutions to enterprises, private providers, NGOs and other community organisations cited by the *Beyond Rhetoric* report on adult learning (OECD 2003).

The first half of the decade was characterised by a period of policy drift, where political struggle over industrial relations overshadowed the question of further reforms. But shortages in emerging skills sparked renewed debate about further de-regulation of the training system. In 2005, the federal government abolished the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) after some 13 years. It was now alleged that the reformed and supposedly demand-driven TVET system was not delivering skills to meet the evident shortages, nor facilitating better work careers for youth, promoting greater investment in training by employers, nor simplifying access to training for industry (Buchanan 2009). Industry became impatient with the inability of the TVET system to respond flexibly to employers’ needs, even though the whole policy approach had been an intensive focus on industry skills.

Business and industry peak bodies began to look beyond the horizon of institutional provision to broader perspectives on skills formation. This created an opening in policy debate for lifelong learning concepts.

## Emerging Discourses of Holism and Integration

The new phase of policy thinking sought a more sophisticated understanding of skill formation in complex environments. The turn towards a more holistic and ecological discourse of skills formation appears in the promotion of a ‘skills ecosystem’ perspective originating in the USA (Hall and Lansbury 2006) and taken up by Buchanan and others examining the Australian case in the context of the international literature on the changing nature of skills (Buchanan et al. 2001). Skill eco-systems are:

... concentrations of workforce skills and knowledge in an industry or a region. They are shaped by: the business environment (competitive pressures, inter-firm relationships, access to finance and product markets); the technology in use; the role of government and industry regulators; modes of engaging labour and the operation of labour markets; production processes and the way work is organised; and the quality of education and training and its ability to meet industry’s and workers’ developmental needs. (DEST 2006)<sup>1</sup>

Applied to low-skill as well as high-skill industries, skill eco-systems integrate training and employment and arguably offer better opportunities for lifelong learning for those progressively excluded by changing labour markets. This approach reinstated an earlier discourse around the regional responsiveness of TVET institutions, responsiveness not only to industry and employer needs, but also to the community context in which skills are formed and utilised.

Several developments helped to strengthen this move towards holism and integration in TVET policy. Concerns about the efficiency of skills supply and TVET institutions not doing enough were amplified by the ‘participation and productivity’ debate. There was also an impetus for renewed policy reform through greater intergovernmental co-operation within the Australian federal system. Education and training was placed at the heart of a broad programme of ‘human capital reforms’ that would address workforce participation and low literacy and skill levels – reforms that are framed within a ‘whole-of-life’ perspective across the four ‘key transitions’ of early childhood development, basic school numeracy and literacy, the transition from school to work or further study and the skills and qualifications of the adult population. Adult learning was announced as an economic imperative – ‘lifelong learning must become the reality’ (Council of Australian Governments and Human Capital Reform Report 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> This definition was accessed at [skillsecosystems.net](http://skillsecosystems.net) in October 2005, a site since discontinued. The concept is subsequently advanced in the National Industry Skills report (DEST 2006).

In this new ‘human capital reform agenda’, Australian governments have given voice to a rudimentary lifelong learning policy, albeit one that is sketchy and programmatic. Other developments signify an orientation to lifelong learning, including the adoption of OECD categories of adult learning in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Classification of Learning Activities. Until 2007, Australia had no OECD comparable data on adult learning. Although one singular achievement of ‘training reform’ was much improved national TVET statistics and detailed information about participation in formal education and training collected by ABS surveys, these ignored the broad spectrum of adult learning. Only in 2007 did Australia have authoritative national data from the first Adult Learning Survey (ABS 2007). This was especially revealing of the wide distribution of non-formal learning, three-quarters of which was reported to be employment related or occurring in the workplace (ABS 2007). At the same time, Australia again participated in the international benchmarking of adult literacy through the Adult Literacy and Life-Skills Survey (ALLS 2006). These developments all signalled that national policy was finally more accommodating of the adult and lifelong learning concepts articulated by the OECD a decade earlier.

## Workforce Development as a Discourse of Adult Learning

A further significant shift towards lifelong learning policy became evident when, in 2008, the incoming federal government established a new advisory body, Skills Australia, and announced a new approach to TVET policy couched in terms of ‘workforce skills development’. This approach, it stated in its ‘Workforce Futures’ report:

... is characterised by policies and practices which support people to participate effectively in the workforce and to develop and apply skills in a workplace context, where learning translates into positive outcomes for enterprises, the wider community and for individuals throughout their working lives. (Skills Australia 2010, p. 3)

Rejecting skills supply solutions as simplistic, the new body called for a ‘more complex and devolved approach’ that ‘would acknowledge the interdependence of social, economic and ecological factors, as well as global market influences affecting regions and industries’. It spoke of the need to look beyond skills viewed in isolation, and to ‘integrate’ education and training policies with economic development, social policy and sustainability measures (Skills Australia 2010, p. 11).

This discursive shift can be traced to industry leadership. The Australian Industry Group (AIG) took a leading role in commissioning background work by Noonan (2007), which assembled arguments for a policy change referring to the changing nature of vocational competence and its formation through workplace learning, and to the limitation of formal training in creating new skill profiles and broader competencies demanded by knowledge-work. The work did not deny the achievements of training reform in expanding access to structured training, but it acknowledged the exclusionary effects of this new paradigm of work competence – workplace learning



opportunities are unequally distributed and favour those who have already benefited from education and training. Low literacy and skill levels exclude people from such opportunities and are not straightforwardly addressed by formal training, without a connection to employment and social policy measures (Noonan 2007).

A key change in the discourse is the equal valuation of non-formal and informal learning – work provides opportunities not available in formal programmes ‘to apply skills and knowledge, build tacit knowledge and experience, develop networks and understanding of work practice and workplace culture’ that are integral to competence (Noonan 2007, p. 27). This has implications not only for the adaptation of institutional processes to enterprise needs and priorities but also for conceptualising workplace pedagogies and the ‘technologies’ that construct an employee’s identity as a learner. Consequently, worker subjectivity has become a rich vein for scholarly theorists of work-based learning (Chappell et al. 2003; Billett et al. 2006).

But the heart of the policy argument of ‘lifelong learning for all’ concerns not the professional knowledge workers but the less skilled who are excluded from the benefits of the knowledge economy and the access it gives to continuous learning at work. While the highly skilled can be reasonably expected to co-finance their own learning, the challenge for government is to address the exclusionary effects by ‘breaking the nexus between low skills and non-participation’ (Watson 2003).

The AIG project illustrates how the discursive riches of ‘adult learning’ can be harnessed to underwrite a turn in policy. Adult learning is capable of representation in many frames: from knowledge acquisition to situated learning; as a reflective or transformative process; as a practice-based community process and as an ecological and enactive activity (Fenwick and Tennant 2004). Yet it is decidedly not the case that ‘adult learning’ has become the dominant discourse in this reworking of the scope of TVET. Just as it was once antithetical to the training culture, the idea is now useful in breaking down the institutional boundaries of training systems and the sites of workplace learning. It has heuristic value as an intermediate policy construction capable of giving effect to the concept of workforce skills development – not to lifelong learning values in their own right, but to enterprise-based learning.

If a revaluation of adult learning is one condition for accommodating TVET policy to lifelong learning values, then a second is to overcome the relative isolation of TVET from other domains of policy. The interface with higher education is one such area where policy and funding pressures are seeking the dismantling of sectoral barriers to participants moving from TVET to higher education and the creation of clear articulation pathways to create a ‘seamless tertiary education sector’ (Bradley Review 2008). Another is the integration of policies on skills formation, the labour market and social services. It has been suggested that skills formation policy is best developed through a whole-of-government approach (Buchanan et al. 2001).

Recent interest in ‘transition and social risk’ (Ziguras et al. 2005) has sharpened this focus. Education and social policy alike have been slow to take into account new patterns of transitions over the life-course and the complexity of social roles (caring, working, learning and leisure) for both men and women in contemporary life.

It is suggested that Australia can learn from European social policy perspectives that employ the concept of the ‘management of social risk’ in order to understand how people behave in the ‘transitional labour markets’ (Schmid 2006). Transitional factors are clearly the driving demand for formal and non-formal learning by client groups that have successfully employed education and training to manage their changing labour market participation. However, social groups are not equally advantaged in this way and those with the lowest educational levels are most exposed to labour market uncertainties and are least prepared to risk investment in lifelong learning. Policy integration is promised by current social inclusion policies (adopted from the UK), which represent one further area for movement towards lifelong learning values, albeit still somewhat distanced from education and training policy.

## **Adult and Community Education and Lifelong Learning**

In making the case that there has been a gradual accommodation of Australian TVET policy to lifelong learning, it is necessary to say something about ‘adult education’ as a field of provision – how those institutions historically identified with adult learning negotiated the shoals of training reform and addressed its potential to undermine their legitimacy, diversifying well beyond their traditional boundaries. By the 1980s, the venerable forms of liberal adult education (exemplified by the WEA movement and evening colleges) were in decline and under challenge from both the burgeoning community education movement and the revitalised TAFE and higher education systems offering ‘recurrent education’ across the board.

In its early phase, the training reform agenda threatened to marginalise these organisations, as it withdrew the endorsement of ‘adult learning’ inherent in the recurrent education policy. The objective of gearing the TAFE systems to industry standards through competency-based training and qualifications tended to de-value non-formal learning as lacking a demonstrable vocational outcome and, indeed, stigmatised it as merely recreational.

Sensible of this threat, adult education advocates moved to secure recognition of the field and its social and economic contribution, seizing upon the key rhetoric of ‘second-chance education’ and learner ‘pathways’ that still resonated with the participatory goals of TVET policy and the TAFE systems. These efforts resulted in a landmark Senate inquiry and two reports (Aulich 1991; Crowley 1997). The first Senate report announced the ‘emergence of a fourth sector of adult and community education’ (ACE) encompassing a broad church of those engaged in adult and continuing education. This development occurred as State governments began to scale back their funding commitments to established adult education providers. At the same time, private providers of lifestyle courses expanded significantly.

Yet, ‘the ACE sector’ was little more than a skilful policy construction. The broad church of non-formal provision both ‘within’ and ‘beyond’ formal education was a contradiction in terms. The sector was increasingly identified with those community organisations that the States and Territories were prepared to ‘recognise’ as

ACE in their jurisdictions. Despite this limitation, the Senate Inquiry resulted in a national Ministerial Declaration on ACE, now in its third incarnation (MCVTE 2008), which enshrines the sector's special claims to offer pathways into the mainstream TVET system. In difficult times, this Declaration served as a national policy on adult learning that helped to maintain its legitimacy within the evolving training system. When the OECD vision of lifelong learning appeared, the ACE sector was able to claim it as its own and use it to secure its position.

The changing character of adult education in Australia has been well documented (Tennant and Morris 2009). Less attention has been given to the advocacy that skilfully negotiated the discursive construction of ACE in national policy (McIntyre 1998, 2001). In this, adult education was reconfigured in what might be called a 'politics of community' characterised by a discourse of communitarianism. This occurred both at the grassroots, as in the feminist and collectivist practices of Victoria's neighbourhood houses, and as a State-led process of 'communalisation' that compelled existing institutions to become community agencies operating at arm's length from government and reliant more on their own resources. The role of government was not to promote an expansion of State-sponsored adult learning but to limit its claims on the public purse by deeming non-vocational adult education as essentially private and discretionary activity. Increasingly, the State would fund only vocationally relevant provision by the ACE sector.

As the introduction of market reforms sharpened the policy debate about the neglect of social values in TVET policy (Anderson and Ferrier 1998), community providers reasserted their philosophical commitment to individual and social development, even as they struggled to demonstrate their vocational relevance, assisted by a raft of State-commissioned research (Golding et al. 2000). The tensions around the transformation of adult education in the context of training reform have usually been portrayed in terms of the binary of 'the liberal and the vocational' and training reform could be presented as an attack on the values of liberal adult education. Yet, this ignores how communitarian discourses opposed the economic individualism of market reforms and, at the same time, displaced liberal adult education.

Communitarianism is defined by Frazer and Lacey (1993) as 'the thesis that the community, rather than the individual, the state, the nation or any other entity is and should be at the centre of our analysis and our value system'. Communitarians 'emphasise the value of specifically communal and public goods, and conceive of values rooted in communal practices' in contrast to the emphasis of liberalism on the individual' (1993, p. 2). Yet this ascendancy of communitarian discourses in reconstructing adult education agency within a reformist state is not unique to Australian conditions. A case in point is the universal adoption of 'social capital' – the communitarian discourse par excellence – as an explanatory rationale for adult learning policy research (Schuller et al. 2000; Field 2005). It is said to be the means by which adult learning assists in 'building communities' (Balatti and Falk 2002). Understood as policy discourse, social capital constitutes a defence of the social utility of adult learning that gives it policy traction. Social capital is also invoked in educational alternatives such as the 'learning city' or 'learning community' (Longworth 2006) that may be viewed as communitarian constructions. Yet social

capital is arguably little more than a weak form of consensus social theory whose deployment as discursive resource has received less critical appraisal than it deserves.

The most significant policy contribution of the adult and community education sector has been the symbolic role it has played as a standard-bearer for lifelong learning. In the absence of a wholesale commitment to lifelong learning by government, the sector has voiced the moral imperatives at the heart of its policy ethic. ACE skilfully exploited the older discourses of disadvantage, access and participation by identifying its role as one of providing 'second-chance' learning opportunities and creating pathways to formal education. Similarly, the sector has long claimed non-formal learning as its domain, though it provides no more than a fraction (around 5%) of all non-formal learning reported by Australian adults (ABS 2007). Yet, ACE could also claim it was in tune with 'market reforms' increasing flexibility and 'user choice', since it was at least in part market-driven and funded through a 'user pays' principle, with meagre government support. Lifelong learning as a policy ideal has generated a 'politics of discourse' which the adult education agencies were able to exploit in negotiating policy reform, even if it meant that they were incorporated into the national training system.

## Conclusion

The view that Australia lacks a lifelong learning policy is widely accepted in education and training circles. The policy perspective of this chapter suggests a need to temper the verdict of a 'policy failure' and acknowledge a more complex picture of pragmatic policy evolution through the opportunities that education and training reform have presented for developing lifelong learning strategies.

The changing status of adult learning in TVET policy is evidence that there has been an accommodation to lifelong learning values, and it suggests the potential for further reforms to remove structural impediments to their fuller realisation. The chapter has tried to show that, in this accommodation of TVET policy, adult learning as discourse has performed an intermediary function in supporting a discursive shift to a workforce development perspective that goes beyond the rhetorical. In this way, TVET policy has moved from an institutional hostility to adult learning to acceptance that it must be integral to new policy strategies.

The chapter has drawn attention to the significance of advocacy and the social organisation of lifelong learning as an educational cause or movement, and has suggested that this supports an understanding of lifelong learning as a comprehensive policy ethic capable of mobilising constituencies that share its ideals to engage in reform. The chapter has noted the active way in which the adult education agencies have deployed the discourses of lifelong learning to represent and position their organisations in a challenging environment of education and training reform and, in doing so, have performed an important symbolic role in promoting lifelong learning policy. At the same time, it is suggested that there has been a reconfiguring of adult

education in terms of a ‘politics of community’ that has enabled the ACE sector to create a policy identity within the broader training system.

The analysis has also employed an understanding of ‘policy as discourse’ to interpret policy process as it has been worked out through discursive shifts that mark the course of TVET reform. The chapter has alluded both to ‘adult learning’ as a rich discursive resource, and to the distinctive communitarian discourses that adult education agencies, so closely identified with adult learning, have employed to defend and justify their mode of provision. The deployment of ‘social capital’ as a rationale for community-based provision has been understood in this way as more discursive resort than social theory.

Finally, if the analysis has generated insights into lifelong learning policy development as an evolutionary process and suggested some implications for policy advocacy, then this recommends further exploration of the complexities of policy reform within a policy sociology perspective.

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# Chapter 46

## Informal Learning: A Vital Component of Lifelong Learning

Paul Hager

### Introduction

The burgeoning interest in *lifelong learning* since the 1990s has been influenced strongly by the scope and significance of the 1970s debates about *lifelong education* and other related but different concepts, such as ‘recurrent education’ and ‘education permanente’. This diversity of concepts ensured that the 1970s debates were marked by significant ambiguities and conflicting interpretations (Hager and Halliday 2006, pp. 16–19). Nevertheless, these debates identified and clarified a continuum of understandings of the lifelong education concept. At one end of the continuum, a minimalist view of lifelong education envisaged a society in which there would be reasonably adequate provision of adult education for all of those who chose to patronise it. Arguably, there is already consensus about the desirability of a minimalist view of lifelong education, and, perhaps, many present countries are close to exemplifying it. However, major proponents of lifelong education were seeking much more than this. The other end of the continuum, a maximalist view of lifelong education, sought nothing less than a learning society. While learning societies can take various forms, proponents of lifelong education typically favoured one that was democratic, where the learning society was ‘a shared, pluralistic and participatory “form of life” in Dewey’s sense ... rather than a simple set of institutions and constitutional guarantees’ (Wain 1987, p. 202; see also Wain 1993, p. 68).

Certainly, a learning society of this kind is yet to be realised. Nor is there any sign of an emerging consensus about the desirability of creating such a learning society. However, Field (2006) suggests that we may be closer to attaining a learning society than many commentators think. He argues that the advent of a learning society

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does not require the prior realisation of egalitarian and communitarian ideals that are implied in the above characterisation. According to Field, the ‘core idea’ of the learning society is:

... the plasticity of the human adult: however much has been invested in initial schooling, the belief is central that untapped potential is the norm rather than the exception. (Field 2006, p. 47)

He maintains that a learning society is realised if this core idea applies to a majority of citizens. For Field, the actualisation of a learning society merely requires that most people have become ‘permanently learning subjects’ and that ‘their performance as adult learners is at least in part responsible for determining their life chances’ (Field 2006, p. 48). Thus, on Field’s account, a learning society can function even if a minority of its population is functionally illiterate. Of course, an immediate challenge for such a learning society would be to adapt itself so as to remedy such deficiencies.

The surge of interest in *lifelong learning* since the 1990s has some distinctive features that mark it off from these 1970s debates. For one thing, it is characterised by significantly negative motivations. Lifelong learning is offered as the antidote to a raft of fears and anxieties – of the national economy becoming uncompetitive, of one’s nation being less creative than its competitors, of the nation’s citizenry not being sufficiently clever to adapt to changing circumstances, and so on. This negativity contrasts starkly with the utopian scientific humanism that underpinned the 1970s debates. However, the most important feature of the rise of lifelong learning since the 1990s is its sharp focus on *learning*. The shift of attention from lifelong education to lifelong learning is much more than a mere change in terminology. For teachers and educators, in particular, the term ‘lifelong *education*’ immediately conjures up ideas centred on curriculum, teachers and teaching modes, and types of educational providers. But because ‘learning’ is a term of much wider scope than ‘education’, the term ‘lifelong *learning*’ puts the learner at the centre of attention, rather than teachers, curriculum writers and course providers. Indeed, Field maintains that the ‘.... idea of learning is .... so broad as to pose serious challenges of definition and measurement for policy makers’ (Field 2004, p. 1).

Since learning is a much wider notion than education, it might be expected that, unlike the case of lifelong education, typical understandings of lifelong learning would tend towards a maximalist view. That is, it might be expected that the favoured notion of lifelong learning would embrace learning in any type of setting ranging from formal educational systems of all kinds, through diverse sorts of non-formal educational provision, to the limitless situations and contexts in which informal learning can occur. Certainly, a maximalist view of this sort is implied in much of the policy literature on lifelong learning. However, this chapter cautions that a major obstacle to the valuation of learning in all types of settings comes from the hegemony exerted by the formal education system in deciding what learning is to be valued and how it is to be assessed and accredited. This poses a problem for proponents of lifelong learning in most of its forms.

The hegemonic influence of formal education system assumptions on the relative valuation of different forms of learning is illustrated by the usual way in which the

non-formal and informal educational sectors are defined. They are defined by what they are perceived to lack in relation to the formal sector: formal assessment of learning and/or the awarding of formal credentials. Informal learning of most types is especially lacking in these kinds of characteristics, which are valued in the formal education system.

Because informal learning covers such a huge diversity of settings, the main arguments of this chapter will be given focus by concentrating on *informal learning at work*. This is an easy choice in that there is no doubt that informal learning at work accounts for the major share of research and writing on informal learning. However, while focusing the rest of this chapter on informal learning at work, equivalent arguments can be developed for other types of informal learning (see Hager and Halliday 2006 for diverse examples of other kinds of informal learning). Indeed, there is no sharp boundary between informal learning at work and informal learning from life experiences, as many of the examples in Hager and Halliday (2006) demonstrate.

Thus, the body of this chapter will, firstly, examine critically major assumptions about learning that appear to weaken the claim of informal learning at work to be a main part of lifelong learning. Secondly, it will discuss a range of research and literature that expounds a growing understanding of informal learning at work. This will challenge traditional understandings of learning. Finally, the chapter will draw together some themes that the discussion of informal learning at work suggests might be central to any plausible understanding of lifelong learning that approaches a maximal one.

It should be noted that the term ‘informal learning at work’ is used in the following discussion because the commonly employed alternative ‘workplace learning’ is ambiguous. The latter can refer to formal on-the-job training as well as the informal learning that occurs as people perform their work. In some cases, the term ‘workplace learning’ is used even to refer to formal training situations in vocational education institutions that involve simulated workplaces.

## **Inhibiting Influence of Traditional Assumptions About Learning on the Recognition of Informal Learning**

A major obstacle to informal learning at work being taken seriously as a component of a person’s overall education is the way that it differs on very many criteria from activities that have traditionally been thought of as ‘real education’. This is most obvious in the vast differences between informal learning at work and the learning that typically takes place in formal educational institutions. But it is also the case that informal learning at work is very different from formal on-the-job training. These differences can be appreciated as follows:

- *Planned learning vs. contingent and opportunistic learning.* Teachers/trainers are in control in both formal learning in educational institutions and in formal on-the-job training, whereas it is the learner who is in control (if anyone is) in

informal learning at work. That is, formal learning is *planned*, but informal learning at work is typically *unplanned*. It arises *contingently* and *opportunistically* as events unfold in the workplace.

- *Pre-specification vs. emergence.* The learning that takes place in educational institutions and in on-the-job training is largely *predictable* as it is prescribed by formal curricula, competency standards, learning outcomes and so on. Informal learning at work is much less predictable as it *emerges* from the often unexpected kinds of events that unfold in the typical workplace. The emergent character of informal learning at work precludes a prior curriculum or prescribed outcomes.
- *Explicit vs. tacit.* In both educational institutions and formal on-the-job training, learning is largely *explicit* (the learner is expected to be able to articulate what has been learnt, for example, in a written examination, in oral answers to instructor questioning, or in being required to perform appropriate activities as a result of the training). However, for informal learning at work, the learning is often implicit or *tacit*, that is, the learner is commonly unaware of the extent of their learning. This is so even when the learner is well aware of the outcomes of such learning, for example, that they are able to perform their job much better. Hence the well-known phenomenon of practitioners being able to identify easily the superior performers amongst them, but being unable to give a satisfactory account of what it is that underpins superior performance.
- *Focus on teaching/training and content vs. focus on learning and the learner.* In both formal classrooms and on-the-job training, the emphasis is on teaching/training and on the content and structure of what is taught/trained (largely as a consequence of the three previous points). Whereas, in informal learning at work, the emphasis is on learning and on the learner.
- *Focus on individuals vs. focus on both groups and individuals.* In both formal classrooms and on-the-job training, the focus is usually on learners as individuals and on individual learning. In informal learning at work, the learning is often collaborative and/or collegial. Whilst learning by individuals is still important, learning by groups or teams, which is not reducible to individual learning, constitutes an important dimension of much informal learning at work.
- *Context-free learning vs. contextualised learning.* Learning in formal classrooms is uncontextualised, that is, there is an emphasis on general principles, rather than on their specific applications. While formal on-the-job training is typically somewhat contextualised, even here there is some emphasis on the general principles, for example, the training might be aimed at general industry standards. However, informal learning at work is by its nature highly contextualised. This, of course, contributes to features of unpredictability and emergence noted above.
- *Knowledge and its application vs. seamless know how.* The learning that takes place in educational institutions and in on-the-job training is conceptualised typically in terms of theory (or knowledge) and practice (application of theory and knowledge). The learning that comes from informal learning at work, on the other hand, is more holistic. It seems to be most appropriately thought of as seamless know how.

Considering these trends as a whole, it is hardly surprising that formal learning/education has been seen as being much more valuable than informal learning. Informal learning at work is a paradigm case of informal education and, hence, tends to be undervalued, particularly by those with a stake in the formal education system at whatever level. Historically, training has been viewed as the antithesis of education. It is only a slight caricature to say that training has been thought of as aimed at mindless, mechanical, routine activity. By contrast, education is understood to aim for development of the mind via completion of intellectually challenging tasks. Despite this ‘chalk and cheese’ conception of education and training, the trends just noted above show that in many key respects the two have more in common with one another than either one does with informal learning at work.

One reaction to this situation would be to start from a minimalist lifelong learning option and use the characteristics of learning that are valued in formal education to seek to identify the best of informal learning, so that it could then be brought within the fold of learning that is formally recognised. This chapter rejects this approach, arguing not only for a more maximalist lifelong learning option, but proposing that a closer examination of informal learning has strong potential to enrich our understanding of learning in all settings. The lifelong learning concept provides an opportunity to move beyond narrow understandings of learning that have flourished in formal educational systems and to question some little scrutinised assumptions about what learning should be valued. It should be stressed, however, that, in adopting this strategy, this chapter is not arguing that all learning is equally valuable. Rather, the position is the more modest one that there are compelling reasons for looking to extend the range of learning that is valued.

## **Perspectives on Informal Learning at Work that Can Enrich Our View of Lifelong Learning**

### ***Early Theories of Informal Learning at Work***

Early notable theorists of informal learning at work included Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1974, 1978). Strongly influenced by organisational psychology and management theory, they introduced significantly influential distinctions and concepts, for example, single loop learning (in which the learner exhibits reactive behaviour in order to adapt to changing circumstances) versus double loop learning (in which the learner reflectively amends or adds to previous learning in selecting a suitable course of action to deal with a challenging situation). They also pointed out that a practitioner’s theory-in-use (inferred from what is actually done in a particular situation) frequently diverges dramatically from the practitioner’s espoused theory (the one that they claim is exemplified by their actions). Schön (1983, 1987), then, put the notion of ‘reflective practice’ at the heart of alternative understandings of professional preparation. In effect, Schön was offering a novel account of informal

learning at work, one focused firmly on the rational, cognitive aspects of performance. Marsick and Watkins (1990) provide another notable contribution to understanding informal learning at work. This book provided a searching analysis of the many and varied forms of informal and incidental learning, and the diverse and complex range of conditions that either delimit or enhance such learning.

These early influential informal learning at work theories share a number of themes that have been modified significantly or rejected in later theorising. These themes are also prominent in understandings of formal learning. The themes are as follows:

- An exclusive focus on learners as individuals.
- An emphasis on the rational, cognitive aspects of workplace performance.
- Performance of work being viewed as thinking (or reflecting) followed by the application of this thinking or reflecting. (This theme is especially evident in Schön's work).
- Learning being assumed to be a 'thing' to be acquired and transferred.
- Social, cultural and organisational factors being viewed as a backdrop against which informal learning at work occurs.

By modifying or rejecting each of these themes, later theories of informal learning at work have started to shed taken-for-granted assumptions derived from understandings of formal learning. In the process, these later theories not only bring features of informal learning into more prominence, but also in effect challenge received assumptions about learning in general.

### *Sociocultural Theories*

Sociocultural theories are an important set of more recent workplace learning theories. They have strong roots in sociology and social anthropology. By rejecting many of the main assumptions of the first broad grouping, they provide alternative perspectives that have received increasing attention in theorising of work-related learning in its various forms. The magnitude of the shift in understanding becomes apparent if we consider the five themes listed above that were prominent in early understandings of informal learning at work. These themes are transformed in sociocultural theories as follows:

*A focus on the social replaces the former focus on the individual learner.* These sociocultural theories elevate the various social aspects of learning to a new prominence. This emphasis on the social shifts the focus of analysis away from the individual learner. In some cases, the focus is solely on the social to the exclusion of the individual. However, learning can be thought of as being social in a variety of different senses. Indeed Salomon and Perkins (1998) identified six distinct senses in which learning can be said to be social. Crucially though, even if all learning is social in significant ways, it does not follow that individuals do not learn. What does follow is simply that the *explanation* of this individual learning is significantly social.

Thus, it is important to realise that while some sociocultural learning theories concentrate fully on the social, others challenge the idea that learning has to be exclusively either individual or social. What this means for understanding informal learning at work is that both individual and group learning appear to be important dimensions of it (see, e.g., Hodkinson et al. 2008).

*A focus on embodied, whole person performance replaces the focus on the rational, cognitive aspects of workplace performance.* Sociocultural theories of learning stress that learning at work and workplace performance are embodied phenomena. They reject mind–body dualism and related dichotomies. They recognise that learning from work and workplace performance seamlessly integrates a range of human attributes that is much wider than just rationality. This focus on embodied, whole person performance also serves to displace the tendency to view work performance in terms of *episodes of thinking followed by episodes of action that apply the thinking* (the third theme in the above list). For these sociocultural theories, workplace learning and performance seamlessly integrate a range of human attributes that is much wider than just rationality.

*A focus on learning as a process replaces the focus on learning as the acquisition and transfer of discrete products.* Sociocultural learning theories emphasise learning as an ongoing process of participation in suitable activities, thereby rejecting images of learning as a ‘thing’ or a product to be acquired and transferred. Here the focus is more on learners developing through active engagement in the ongoing workplace processes, rather than by acquiring a series of pre-specified items of learning. For sociocultural learning theories, ‘participation’ becomes the favoured metaphor for thinking about learning, thereby displacing the acquisition and transfer metaphors.

*A stronger sense of the contextuality of learning replaces the weaker notion that social, cultural and organisational factors are just a backdrop against which learning occurs.* Sociocultural learning theories support strong contextuality in their insistence that workplace learning and performance are significantly shaped by social, organisational, cultural and other contextual factors. Thus, they reject the supposed independence of learning from context. For them, context becomes the causal background of the learning.

Of course, everybody accepts that context has *some* influence on learning. For instance, quality teachers and resources obviously can greatly enhance learning *processes*. However, strong contextuality asserts that the nature of what is learnt is significantly affected by details of the context in which the learning takes place. Strong contextualists argue that learning in the workplace typifies this. They maintain that the same occupation performed at different work locations will involve significant differences in the learning required to become a proficient practitioner at each specific location.

The above themes have been distilled from a large and diverse literature. They reflect areas of significant agreement amongst writers whose views diverge on matters of finer detail. This is not the occasion to provide a detailed survey of sociocultural learning theories. However, a brief outline of major contributions and ongoing points of debate follows.

In several respects, Lave and Wenger (1991) provided a seminal contribution to sociocultural learning theories. It clearly rejected the notion of learning as a ‘thing’ located in individual minds and introduced concepts that subsequently proved to be very influential. These concepts included learning as participation in communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation as the social learning process that novices undergo as they move towards full membership of the community of practice. There is a specifically relational account of learning; one that centres on the novice learning how to function appropriately in a particular complex social, cultural and physical environment. For them, the learning (‘situated learning’) is something that is outside the learner’s head, or even their body. It involves the learner becoming enmeshed suitably in an evolving network of relations that constitutes the framework of participation. It is clear, then, that Lave and Wenger offer a distinctive socio-cultural alternative to the traditional view of learning as acquisition and transfer of discrete propositions or skills.

Though the Lave and Wenger work has proved to be enormously influential, later contributions have identified significant limitations. A major one is that, though Lave and Wenger intended the concept of community of practice to have wide applicability as an account of learning, they nevertheless left it unacceptably vague. Consider, for instance, their famous example of Liberian tailors, sometimes the community of practice is presented as the tailors working in a particular shop, at other times it appears to be all the tailors in Liberia, or even all the tailors in the world (see, e.g., Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2004). Wenger (1998) responded to this difficulty by developing a more restricted account of what constitutes a community of practice. But the price of this move was that communities of practice were no longer the widespread phenomenon that Lave and Wenger (1991) had claimed them to be. This only served to undermine the original Lave and Wenger claim to having developed a general sociocultural account of learning. A further problem is that the exclusive reliance by Lave and Wenger on the participation metaphor means that their work offers no account of the change process (i.e., learning) that the individual experiences as their personal identity moves from that of novice to that of full participant in the occupation (see, e.g., Elkjaer 2003; Guile and Young 1999).

A further very important strand of sociocultural theorising of learning from work is cultural-historical activity theory. Its best-known exponent, Engeström (1999, 2001, 2008), analyses workplaces as activity systems consisting of diverse sets of components. These components encompass such disparate items as workplace rules, the division of labour and mediating artefacts. Broad contextual categories such as social, organisational and cultural factors are thereby central in Engeström’s theory of activity systems. According to Engeström, activity systems continually present participants with contradictions and tensions that require resolution. It is the resolving of these contradictions and tensions that constitutes informal learning from work. Thus, the continuous appearance of, then dissolution of, contradictions or tensions (either internal or external) in the activity system as a whole fuels ongoing changes in the system. Thus, the context in which individuals and groups work changes continuously.

Simultaneously, the evolving context changes the individuals and groups, that is, they are in a state of ongoing learning. More recently, Engeström has championed the notion of ‘boundary crossing’ as a viable way of understanding learning transfer (Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström 2003). However, others have argued the need to replace the notion of transfer by alternative metaphors such as ‘becoming’ (see, e.g. Hager and Hodkinson 2009). Another debate about Engeström’s work has questioned the plausibility of the claim that all learning at work stems from contradictions and tensions within the activity system. As well, there are unresolved issues as to whether the learner is the main locus of learning, or whether the system itself is the main locus.

Both the Lave and Wenger theory of situated learning and Engeström’s activity systems approach have inspired further research and conceptual innovation on learning at work (e.g., see Rainbird et al. 2004). Some of this later research can be viewed as developing the work of Lave and Wenger (see, e.g., Fuller and Unwin 2003; Fuller and Unwin 2004). Other work seeks to extend cultural-historical activity theory (see, e.g., Guile and Young 2003; Guile and Okumoto 2007). Still other work takes the theorisation of learning at work in novel directions (for a critical overview see Hager (2011)).

### *Postmodern Theories*

The sociocultural and earlier theories outlined above can both be described as ‘modernist’ in the sense that they all aim to account for learning at work in ways that will enable its success or otherwise to be determinable and predictable. Part of the point of these theories is to be able to design workplaces as sites of productive learning. Recently, a further category of theories of learning at work has emerged. These postmodern theories question the extent to which such learning is decidable and predictable. The theories in this third category accept that learning should be viewed as an ongoing process, that is, it is characterised by temporal change. But as well, they view this change as not fully decidable in advance. This means that learning is emergent from its context in unanticipated and unpredictable ways. Thus context transforms learning in an ongoing creative process.

Until fairly recently, the notion of emergence was not prominent in humanities and social science theorising. That has now changed. For instance, in Bhaskar’s influential ‘critical realism’, it is accepted that social reality is dependent on human activity. However, for Bhaskar, some social structures have emergent properties. These emergent properties cannot be known in advance, yet they have causal powers and persist, even beyond the lifetimes of the people originally responsible for their emergence. These social structures, with their emergent properties, have an ongoing temporal dimension, as human interactions with them continually reproduce and transform them. (For a very clear account of Bhaskar’s ‘critical realism’, see Archer 1998.) For Bhaskar, ‘society may ... be conceived as an articulated ensemble



of such relatively independent and enduring structures' (Archer 1998, p. 368). If social structures, such as human practices, can have emergent properties, it seems to be plausible to maintain that the learning by practitioners that accompanies their transformation would also be significantly emergent. The two categories of theories of informal learning at work discussed above focused respectively on the individual learner and on the sociocultural context in which the learner is located. As Fenwick (2009) observes, what gives this third category of learning at work theories its distinctive flavour is the significant role in learning that it assigns to the 'sociomaterial'.

One group of theories of learning at work that firmly belongs to this third category is those influenced by complexity theory. These theories regard learning as a growing capacity to act in flexible, constructive and innovative ways suited to the demands of ever-changing circumstances. However, the crucial point is that this learning is emergent in the strong sense that it grows out of continuous and non-linear interactions, with properties not predictable from a knowledge of preceding structures. So learning emerges in complex adaptive systems in which practitioners interact with their environment in ongoing dynamic processes that mutually reconstruct both the environment and the practitioners (see, e.g., Davis and Sumara 2006; Osberg and Biesta 2007). The application of complexity theory to understanding learning at work has been particularly prominent in the field of organisational studies (e.g., Stacey 2005; Stacey and Griffin 2005; Tsoukas 2005; Tsoukas and Chia 2002).

A further set of theories of learning at work that fit into this third category draws on actor network theory (ANT). Fenwick (2009, p. 5) characterises its key idea as follows:

ANT takes knowledge generation to be a joint exercise of relational strategies within networks that are spread across space and time and performed through inanimate – e.g. books, mobile phones, measuring instruments, projection screens, boxes, locks – as well as animate beings in precarious arrangements. Learning and knowing are performed in the processes of assembling and maintaining these networks, as well as in the negotiations that occur at various nodes comprising a network.

Thus far, relatively few theorists of learning at work have drawn on actor network theory. Those who have done so include Edwards and Nicoll (2004), Mulcahy (2007) and Gherardi and Nicolini (2000).

The work of various other theorists can be slotted into this category of post-modern theories of learning at work. They include Gherardi (2006), Shotter (2008), Nicolini et al. (2003) and Usher and Edwards (2007). Likewise, it will not be surprising if some recent developments of cultural-historical activity theory also belong here. Cultural-historical activity theory is strongly influenced by Marx's historical materialism. In the same way that there are more and less deterministic interpretations of Marx, cultural-historical activity theory can come in more and less deterministic interpretations. It is noticeable that complexity theory has started to appear in Engeström's recent work (see, e.g., Engeström 2008).

At present, it is still too early to judge what will be the overall impact of this category of theories on our understandings of informal learning at work. However, it would appear that, to the extent that such learning is genuinely

emergent, the kind of predictability and pre-specification beloved of policymakers will not be feasible.

## **Conclusion: Implications for Advancing a Maximalist View of Lifelong Learning**

Much educational writing has encouraged a restricted and narrow view of learning, holding that, for learning to be valued, it needs to exemplify features that are characteristic of formal learning activities. We saw that such a view of learning supports a minimalist understanding of lifelong learning, one that largely limits it to formal and non-formal educational offerings. But most lifelong learning literature and policy implies something more approaching a maximalist understanding, one that, in addition, recognises the value of various kinds of informal learning. A more maximalist understanding of lifelong learning requires a more pluralist outlook on learning itself: a recognition that valuable learning comes in many kinds, some of them formal, others informal. Such pluralism involves acceptance that, though distinguishing features of formal learning are not the same as central features of informal learning, the latter is not less valuable for that reason. Thus, maximalist understandings of lifelong learning presuppose an appropriate mix of formal and informal learning across a person's lifespan.

Features of informal learning that distinguish it sharply from formal learning were outlined earlier in this chapter. Typical features of informal learning include it being emergent, contingent, opportunistic, tacit, contextualised and holistic. The survey of sociocultural and postmodern theories of learning at work shows that, broadly speaking, these theories readily accommodate these features of informal learning. But it is noteworthy that, in general, these theories typically aspire to theorise learning of all kinds. Hence, whilst informal learning looks to be the black sheep when judged against criteria based on traditional understandings of formal learning, it is formal learning itself that looks to be atypical when aligned with the understandings of learning that characterise these more recent theories. This in itself suggests that a more pluralist outlook on learning is appropriate. It is also noteworthy that a main theme of these more recent theories is to view learning as an ongoing process, as a continuing journey, rather than as arrival at a destination. This, of course, provides a more nuanced understanding of lifelong learning than the one that views it as the extended accumulation of formal course awards. This more nuanced, ongoing process, understanding of lifelong learning also gains in plausibility when we factor in the importance of contributions from both formal and informal learning.

If process and/or emergence become accepted features of lifelong learning, then our thought and talk about learning will need to employ novel metaphors. Acquisition and participation, hitherto the two most influential metaphors of learning (Sfard 1998), are somewhat limited once the crucial ongoing temporal dimension of learning is recognised. Alternative metaphors such as engagement, (re)construction, emergence or becoming all look to be more in accord with a maximalist understanding of lifelong learning.

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# Chapter 47

## A Critical Approach to Work: The Contribution of Work-Based Learning to Lifelong Learning

Lorna Unwin

### Introduction

Work, in all its variety, paid and unpaid, plays a central role in people's lives and, therefore, in their learning. The 'workplace' (variously defined) is increasingly being recognised as a site for learning by researchers and policymakers, and there has been a considerable growth in the number of 'work-based learning' programs offered by educational institutions, from schools through to universities. The classic and age-old form of work-based learning, apprenticeship, remains an important element of the vocational education and training (VET) systems of many countries and, as a model of learning, it is and always has been central to many forms of professional education. A growing number of countries now have procedures in place to accredit work-based learning, thus enabling young people and adults to gain qualifications as they work.

If, as this chapter argues, work and learning have always been inseparable, it should follow that work-based learning does not just make a contribution to lifelong learning; it should be seen as a major component of lifelong learning. Whilst the evaluation of any form of learning is a problematic exercise, consideration of the work-learning relationship is particularly challenging. This is partly a result of the complex ways in which individuals relate to the work element of their lives and, hence, the value and meaning they place on learning that is work-related. There is also the question of how we might estimate the extent to which any one individual can be said to benefit from work-based learning and whether this can be separated from benefits accrued to employers and to society more generally. Finally, there is

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the question of what we mean when we refer to learning that is work-based. Is our focus on learning that is necessary to produce goods and services efficiently? Is it on learning that develops an individual's occupational expertise? Is it on learning that extends beyond the boundaries of the work setting to encompass knowledge and skills related to being an active and responsible citizen? Is it on learning that leads to innovation in and transformation of the work process and organisational performance? Is it on learning that enables employees to work in ways that suit them rather than their employers? Is it on learning that helps employees survive from day to day? Is it on learning that fosters and supports lifelong learning?

Before we proceed, it is also necessary to ask what is meant by the term 'lifelong learning' in the contemporary context. For some British critics, the concept of lifelong learning became corrupted under the New Labour government (1997–2010), through its appropriation by policymakers to serve a human capital agenda. In this vein, Hyland (2003, p 119) has argued that, 'the "economistic" purposes of learning are given pride of place to the detriment of the broader social and cultural functions of state systems' (see also, Coffield 1999; Tight 1998). Field (2006, p. 4) acknowledges these concerns, but stresses that the concept of lifelong learning should not be dismissed because of its appropriation by some policymakers. He argues that, 'Given the constancy of change and readjustment in our life span, and even more the constant talk of change and flexibility, an ability to acquire new skills, ideas and aptitudes is not going to emancipate and empower on its own – but it is an absolute precondition'.

At the heart of some of the critiques of the way in which the concept of lifelong learning has been harnessed to an economic agenda are concerns about the dehumanising effects of some waged labour. There is a rich literature on the negative aspects of what Brown and Scase (1994) call 'poor work', on the deep-rooted inequalities in the labour market (see, *inter alia*, Rainbird and Munro 2003), and on what Green (2006) has called the 'paradox of job quality in the affluent economy'. Sennett (2008) has also drawn attention to the way in which contemporary work (of all kinds, including politics) does not require commitment and, hence, has stripped out the opportunity that people desire to take pride in their achievements. In addressing the concept of work-based learning, therefore, we need to root our discussion and analysis in the contemporary work process and the specificities of different work roles and sectoral conditions and cultures.

In addressing the work-learning relationship, researchers have become much more conscious of the need to cross disciplinary boundaries. As Hager (1999, p. 73) has pointed out, education is a field rather than a discipline and, hence, 'educational theorizing is an interdisciplinary endeavour'. Advocating what he terms a 'pluralist' approach to the study of social phenomena, Hager (1999, p. 74) states that monotheories or 'grand theories' will not suffice. Rather, he argues that, by accepting the fact that, 'none of the current or future theories is likely, by itself, to provide a complete understanding of workplace learning is itself a stimulant to further creativity in theory development' (*ibid.*). In association with this need to take an interdisciplinary approach, researchers have also found that they need to deploy a range of methods when studying learning in work settings. Unwin et al. (2007) have referred to workplaces as 'worlds within worlds' whose secrets have to be carefully exposed

and analysed in the same way as archaeologists uncover the treasures lying under layers of soil and rubble. This is not to suggest, however, that ‘learning’ in the workplace can necessarily be ‘seen’ or will manifest itself as a concrete object. As Fenwick (2010, p. 2) argues: ‘The critical problem lies in mistaking learning as a single object when in fact it is enacted as multiple objects, as very different things in different logics of study and practice’.

By proceeding cautiously and by seeking to probe the multiple layers of the work-learning relationship, this chapter argues that it is possible to show the ways in which work-based learning contributes to lifelong learning. At the same time, it also argues that work is surprisingly underused as a context for learning and that this is to the detriment of workplaces, as well as to the well-being of lifelong learning.

## Varieties of Work-Based Learning

The concept of work-based learning covers a spectrum from initial skill formation through to continuous professional development, and it includes learning that is part of everyday work activity. Thus, work-based learning embraces the concept of ‘workplace learning’, but is broader in that it includes associated learning that happens away from the everyday work setting. In this definition, work-based learning transcends boundaries of age, level of expertise and occupational type. As a pedagogical concept, work-based learning is central to VET and professional education programs in which the development of skills and knowledge alternates (to varying degrees) between the workplace and the classroom/workshop.<sup>1</sup> Behind this separation within work-based learning lies the problematic and much contested assumption that individuals will straightforwardly transfer situated and tacit knowledge from the workplace and the codified knowledge of the classroom across and between the different settings in which they are learning (see, *inter alia*, Guile and Young 2003; Eraut 2004).

This simplistic approach to transfer, which is rooted in the belief that learning is a matter of acquisition (of facts, concepts etc.), has been surprisingly resilient despite considerable advances in our understanding of learning as a social process and of the relationship between theory and practice (Sfard 1998). The age-old debate about how best to integrate off-the-job learning with on-the-job experience continues to haunt developments in apprenticeship and other forms of dual-mode VET provision. There is, however, growing awareness in the fields of vocational and professional learning that it is through situated practice in the workplace that theories and concepts are not only utilised, but can also be transformed and new knowledge created (see, *inter alia*, Guile 2010; Beckett and Hager 2002). In other words, as Billett et al. (2008, p. 99) argue, ‘workplaces can be highly generative of much of the knowledge required for work performance’.

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<sup>1</sup> It also occurs in schools – see Bailey et al. (2004).

At this point in the chapter, it is important to draw attention to the shift in language in recent years, away from terms that historically have been associated with skill formation, such as ‘training’, ‘instruction’, ‘vocational education’ and ‘professional development’, to the ubiquitous use of the term ‘learning’. This shift acknowledges the need to value and better understand learning in all its forms for, as expressed by the anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991, p. 35), ‘learning is an integral part of generative social practice in the lived-in world’. They and other researchers, working within and across a range of disciplines, have contributed to the development of social theories of learning, which emphasise how learning is shaped by the context in which it occurs (in Lave and Wenger’s concept of ‘situated learning’) and the interactions between individuals in relation to context. These ideas have their origins in earlier work, including that of the American philosopher, John Dewey (1938), but it is in the last 40 or so years that they have begun to be particularly influential. In relation to the focus of this chapter, the shift to ‘learning’ has brought undoubted benefits, but it has also generated less positive developments which must be considered if we are to maintain a rigorous and critical eye on the contribution of work-based learning to lifelong learning. At the heart of the concern about the use of ‘learning’ as a catch-all term is the downgrading of the role and value of formalised approaches to skill and knowledge formation, upskilling and reskilling.

In his study of human learning, Winch (1998, p. 7) highlights the work of the Austrian philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein who, in the first part of the twentieth century, stressed the importance of training for learning, because: ‘It is through training that we first learn to follow rules, and it is through being able to follow rules that we can go on to learn more through instruction, explanation and discovery’. As Winch explains, Wittgenstein also perceives learning as a social rather than an individualistic activity, but he regarded rule-following as a central institution within the learning process. It is through this training that children and adults can build the confidence to develop and exploit their capacity for learning. Training is, of course, alive and well in many areas of work and life in general, but it is threatened by a lobby comprising different interest groups, including employers and their representatives, trade unions, governments and adult educators, who would not, necessarily, be seen as natural bedfellows. The arguments against the need for formal, structured training are illustrated by a report from the former Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) in the UK entitled ‘Learning without lessons – supporting learning in small businesses’ (Doyle and Hughes 2004). The report argues that, because workers learn best on-the-job, organisations (including those supplying training) should concentrate on developing coaching and mentoring skills rather than providing formal learning opportunities (defined as ‘lessons’). The report presents all forms of learning at work as an undoubted ‘good’, bringing equal benefits to both employees and employers. Research in the sociology of work, however, has long taught us that employees will sometimes actively acquire a very different set of knowledge and skills to those desired by the employer in order to subvert the labour process (see, *inter alia*, Thompson and Smith 2010). Such learning arises out of employee antipathy to the ways in which work is organised, perhaps also to the



organisation's view of what counts as acceptable performance and also to the workplace conditions (from the physical through to pay, holidays and so on).

In fully embracing social theories of learning, the advocates of concentrating all learning in the workplace seem to have thrown the baby out with the bath water. Access to formalised training, and particularly that which leads to forms of accreditation which have value in the labour market and provide access to higher levels of training and/or general education, remains a prize that many employees are denied. As this chapter will argue in the next section, learning at work has to be considered within 'the context of the power relations which characterise the employment relationship' (Rainbird et al. 2004, p. 39) and must take serious account of the political economy, of the productive system within which all workplaces are located.

Taken to its extremes, training can equate to conditioning, and there are plenty of contemporary workplaces in which employees are expected to perform routine tasks without deviation from a set pattern. The introduction of 'scientific management' practices (Taylorism) by the American engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries still influences the way work is organised in some organisations. Indeed, Brown et al. (2008, p. 139) have argued that Taylor's ideas have resurfaced in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries recast as 'Digital Taylorism':

This involves translating *knowledge work* into *working knowledge* through the extraction, codification and digitalisation of knowledge into software prescripts that can be transmitted and manipulated by others regardless of location.

The original form of Taylorism was most famously illustrated in the production lines of Henry Ford's car plants in the USA. Car workers were not required to think, but to follow set routines. In Brown et al.'s (ibid.) updated version, it is so-called knowledge workers, in areas such as financial services, who are now required to do the same. A decreasing pool of specialists, who are given the 'permission to think', create the routines and scripts for the rest of the employees. New communication technologies mean that global companies can control their highly segmented workforces at a distance. The leading global companies are engaged in a 'talent war' to recruit the best graduates from the world's leading universities to create this small pool of super knowledge workers. Brown et al.'s (ibid.) arguments are rooted, to some extent, in the de-skilling thesis espoused in Braverman's (1974) seminal Marxist critique of the labour process, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. Braverman argued that, in order to make profit and for capitalism to operate effectively, employers had to organise work in ways that tightly controlled employee behaviour. Although his ideas were subsequently criticised for being overly deterministic and ignoring the way employees can and do exert agency (see Spencer 2000, for a detailed review), Braverman's insights continue to have relevance and should be heeded by the organisers and providers of work-based learning.

The use of the term, 'work-based learning', has gained considerable momentum over the past 30 or so years in relation to programs designed by tertiary education institutions (and, in particular, universities), often in partnership with employers, enabling students to acquire their qualifications through study in an educational and

work environment (see, *inter alia*, Boud and Solomon 2001). In the UK, universities have come to regard work-based learning as a major vehicle to help them respond to social and economic targets set by national government, including: broadening the profiles of their student intake (through enabling employed adults to become part-time students); increasing their engagement with employers; increasing their non-government sources of revenue by providing course for which employers and individuals are willing to pay; improving the ‘employability’ potential of their students; and strengthening their contribution to their local and regional economies (see Nixon et al. 2006).

Evans et al. (2011, p. 128) argue that this appropriation of work-based learning by higher education has been particularly strong in the market-driven economies of the USA, Australia and the UK, which have embraced ‘economic instrumentalism’ as ‘the dominant globalised discourse of “lifelong learning”’. In this respect, work-based learning is a means by which higher education can be seen to be more employer-led and its students can become more job-ready. In contrast, Evans et al. (*ibid.*, p. 137) conceptualise work-based learning as a process in which the ‘purposes derive from the work context and employment, including self-employment and unpaid work’, but one which also encapsulates, ‘Gramscian celebrations of the aesthetics, dignity and morality of learning in work’, aspects which they argue have been eclipsed by economic instrumentalism, though not eradicated by it (see also Sennett 2008; Unwin 2009). This conceptualisation necessarily demands that we ask questions about the nature of the work process, the nature of the social relations involved and the circumstances in which it is being carried out.

## Organising Work for Learning

Workplaces exist to produce goods and services, and they have to function within the boundaries of a broader productive system and political economy (Felstead et al. 2009; Rainbird et al. 2004). For example, a workplace may be part of an organisation whose owners are based in another country and so may be very detached from the place where decisions are made about how the workplace should be managed. Equally, a workplace in the public sector might be subject to targets set by central government and, hence, may have little room for exercising discretion about how its performance should be judged. The types of layers of control sitting above the workplace affect employer behaviour with regard to the timescales in which they plan, the risks they are prepared to take and the levels of discretion they are prepared to give to employees. The conditions for many employees have been gravely affected by the pressure on organisations to cut costs and meet targets, leading to greater work intensification, reduced job security, and the outsourcing and subcontracting of central services. As Rainbird et al. (2004, p. 41) remind us, ‘the employment relationship creates structural constraints on workplace learning as well as affordances for learning’. In all workplaces, there are ‘patterns of inclusion and exclusion’

(*ibid.*, p. 40) with regard to who has access to formal training as well as the formal and informal learning resources within what Lave and Wenger (1991) called, a 'community of practice'.

Fuller and Unwin (2004) have characterised this diversity of environments in the form of an 'expansive–restrictive continuum', which combines consideration of the way work is organised with workplace pedagogical practices. An expansive feature would be illustrated by positioning workforce development as a vehicle for aligning the twin goals of developing individual and organisational capability. In such environments, learning is regarded as part of work, to be supported by supervisory and managerial processes such as mentoring and coaching, and embedded within appraisal and other review procedures. In addition, expansive environments recognise that older workers will require support to adjust to new forms of work organisation and the use of new technologies, and that younger workers too have valuable expertise that can help in this adjustment.

Once we take the workplace as a context seriously when discussing work-based learning, we have to address the questions posed in the introductory section of this chapter. Those questions focused on the purposes and potential ambition of work-based learning. The answers will depend on many factors, some of which will be related to the cultural expectations of different societies about the role of work in the life course and the relationship between work and society. These differences can be seen, for example, in the way apprenticeship is organised and delivered in different countries and within different organisations and sectors. Done well, apprenticeship creates a space within which the development of broad-based occupational expertise and induction into an occupational community will also involve wider conversations about the aesthetic and moral dimensions of working life and about learning to become an active and responsible citizen, and will build a platform for further progression. At its most restrictive, apprenticeship will concentrate entirely on instructing an individual to carry out a range of routine tasks so he or she can function as a productive worker. Of course, this latter description could be said to be perfectly legitimate in that it defines an apprenticeship that is 'fit for purpose' in meeting the needs of an employer, but also of an apprentice who needs to get and keep a job. The advocates of the much more expansive version of apprenticeship would argue, however, that both employers and individuals can benefit much more from a model of work-based learning that aims to bring out the full potential of the apprentice. To put such a model into practice requires a responsive workplace environment, one that is capable of re-organising itself to foster, nurture and make use of the growing capacity of its employees.

There has been a tradition in work-based learning to see the workplace merely in terms of providing a different setting to a classroom or workshop. Gaining experience within a work context, regardless of the quality of that context as a learning environment, would be regarded as useful for the individual learner. In the UK, for example, teenagers in their penultimate year of compulsory schooling are required to participate in two weeks of 'work experience', and an increasing number of courses in further and higher education involve periods away from the classroom in

work placements. Yet, as Fuller and Unwin (2004, 2008) have shown, this acceptance that any work sites can be appropriate is problematic for two key reasons. First, students (or apprentices/trainees) on the same programs will have very different experiences ranging across the expansive–restrictive continuum. Second, the workplace is rendered as a passive partner in the process and, hence, many opportunities are missed to exploit and develop the learning potential of the workplace for both learners and the employers. In the case of work-based learning based on partnerships between universities and workplaces, the active role of the latter is crucial; as Boud and Solomon (2001, p. 218) argue, ‘If work is the curriculum, the work in which learners are engaged must be of a nature that offers the potentiality of providing a vehicle for a university education’. For work-based learning to make a contribution to lifelong learning, we have to find ways to extend Boud and Solomon’s insight to all forms of work and for all grades of workers.

This brings us sharply back, however, to the realities of contemporary workplaces, but also requires examination of the role of governments in relation to the extent to which they are willing to pursue active labour market policies and other strategies to encourage greater demand for skills from employers and, hence, improve the learning environments within workplaces. How governments deal with this issue will be rooted in their political, economic and cultural histories and traditions, and can be mapped against what Hall and Soskice (2001) have termed the ‘varieties of capitalism’. Hence, some countries (e.g. the USA, Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand) are classified as ‘liberal market economies’ in contrast to those classified as ‘coordinated economies’ (e.g. Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Belgium, the Nordic countries, The Netherlands, Finland and Austria), whilst some other countries (e.g. France, Italy and Spain) have characteristics of both these types. Hall and Soskice (*ibid.*) stress that they do not see one type of capitalism as superior to another, rather they offer their classification as an analytical tool for examining variations in the distribution of income, employment and skills, and for showing how these countries approach innovation (see also Lundvall 1996).

A central feature of the so-called coordinated economies is a social partnership between the state, trade unions and employers. This tripartite approach includes a strong role for education and training institutions as these economies tend to take a long-term view in relation to skill building and encourage employers to seek competitive advantage by using skilled workers to produce high quality goods and services (see Grugulis and Lloyd 2010). It is not surprising, therefore, that many of these economies have very effective VET systems. In Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, apprenticeship remains a core work-based learning vehicle for initial skill formation and one that has, so far, been remarkably resilient, despite the challenges of globalisation and waves of economic turbulence. In liberal market economies such as the UK and the USA, however, the demand that the labour market should be as flexible as possible to allow employers to get on with running their businesses means that employers have, ‘considerable discretion in how they organize their production systems, their workforce and their skill levels’ (*ibid.*, p. 105).

## Work-Based Learning and the Politics of Accreditation

The political economy of skill formation has profound implications for the development of work-based learning strategies and programs, and for the relationship between work-based learning and lifelong learning. An important illustration of this is the approach countries take to the design and organisation of their qualification systems and the increasing trend to introduce an ‘outcomes-based’ (and associated ‘competence-based’) model. As Young (2008) argues, many nation states and supra-national organisations such as the OECD and the European Union (EU) now regard qualifications’ policy as central to their mission of making education and training systems more flexible, so that they enable individuals to move (horizontally as well as vertically) within and between academic and vocational pathways, and enable the accreditation of ‘informal’ learning including in the workplace. Included in this is the development of both national and supra-nation outcomes-led qualification frameworks to enable equivalences to be made across national systems to assist greater mobility in a global labour market. This mission appears, at first sight, to be laudable, but, as Young (*ibid.*, p. 130) spells out, the outcomes-led approach separates qualifications from the learning process and leads, invariably, to ‘the jargon of over-specification, bureaucratic assessment procedures and the trivialising of learning’.

There is a substantial international literature critiquing the outcomes and competence-based approaches (see, *inter alia*, Wolf 1995; Hager 2004; Mulder et al. 2007; Wheelahan 2007). In relation to the introduction of competence-based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the UK, Grugulis (2002, pp. 8–12) argues that they are problematic both with regard to the needs of workplaces and individuals:

[t]he specification of NVQ ‘standards’ effectively achieves a Taylorist separation of conception and execution with the NVQs’ designers deciding which actions constitute competent performance and candidates simply demonstrating that they can perform actions... this form of rationality... distorts work processes and the workplace more than it illuminates. ... Qualifications based on these assumptions can provide little room for individual growth and few links with the meaning of work. (*ibid.*, pp. 8–12)

These concerns are echoed by Wheelahan (2007) in her critique of competence-based training and accreditation in Australia, but she goes further by arguing that it is through this approach that the working class is denied access to the ‘powerful knowledge’ represented by the academic disciplines (see also Young 2008).

In the UK, NVQs (SVQs in Scotland) have been used by governments to drive up the stocks and levels of qualifications in the workforce and adult population more generally. Achievement of NVQs is mandatory for all government-funded training programs (including apprenticeships). By virtue, however, of being assessment-driven, NVQs can and are being used to accredit workers for their existing skills. This has encouraged a dilution of work-based learning in government-funded training programs with the result that some so-called apprenticeships can be completed in a matter of weeks (see Fuller and Unwin 2008), and both apprentices and older adults can find that although they have a qualification, they have not necessarily acquired additional skills and knowledge that may be necessary for progression.

A very persuasive argument for seeing competence-based qualifications in a more positive light, and one that was behind the trade unions supporting the reforms in the 1980s in the UK, is that they enable adults who did not have the chance to acquire qualifications earlier in life and who may be in occupations where there had previously been no tradition of accrediting skills below certain grades of worker, to gain formal recognition for their expertise. A further argument is that employers can use the competence-based specifications to carry out skills audits and identify areas for improvement. In her study of the use of NVQs in the National Health Service in England, Cox (2007) found that, where they were being used to help individuals progress beyond their existing levels of competence at the same time as a vehicle for improving the learning environments within health-related workplaces, NVQs were beneficial.

It is clear, then, that both the outcomes and competence-based approaches to the assessment and accreditation of work-based learning are highly contested topics. They can be seen as vehicles for empowerment, enabling individuals to gain a foothold on the lifelong learning ladder and creating more affordances for learning in the workplace, or as the restrictive tools of governments and employers. Young (2008, p. 129) contrasts the outcomes and competence-based approaches with what he terms the 'institution-based' approach, which, it is important to note, still dominates the education and training systems in most countries. This approach varies across countries, but the important point for this chapter is that qualifications 'are not treated as separate instruments of reform but as embedded and accepted features of the wider education and training system' (ibid., p. 131). Governments and supra-national agencies are attracted to the outcomes and competence-based approach, however, because, as Young (ibid.) explains, in the context of global economic change, they see weaknesses in the institution-based approach. These include, for example, inertia and resistance to change, slowness in adapting to the learning needs of new occupations, and problems regarding progression between sectors and between academic and vocational pathways.

The way in which the assessment and accreditation of all forms of work-based learning is addressed is, therefore, of great importance in relation to how far work-based learning can make a contribution to lifelong learning. In the context of higher education, Boud and Solomon (2001, p. 225) argue that 'Work-based learning as a pedagogical site challenges most of our conventional assumptions about teaching, learning, knowledge, and curriculum ... [and] ... one that disturbs our understandings about our academic identity and its location'. For the European Commission, however, work-based learning in the context of VET is a far less problematic concept. Work-based learning has a clear role to play in ensuring that VET systems and programs meet both employer and policymaker needs and increase the employability potential of young people as the following statement indicates:

In order to maximise the relevance of VET provision to labour market needs, use of different forms of work-based learning should be strengthened. Research indicates that work-based learning tends to increase employment opportunities in early working life. Work-based learning also facilitates the development of the learning outcomes approach in VET with the

shift towards competence-based learning, competence-based qualifications and assessments (skills demonstrations). (EC 2010, p. 8)

In this unequivocal statement, we see work-based learning being positioned as a key pedagogical device for strengthening a competence and outcomes-based approach to VET and in the context of a short-term, employability agenda. There is no reference to lifelong learning here (see also Rainbird 2000).

## Conclusion

Work-based learning has to address the needs and aspirations of both individuals and workplaces, and, increasingly, of other stakeholders, notably governments, who see it as a vehicle for achieving wider change. Whilst balancing these often competing demands is clearly always going to be difficult, it is important that all stakeholders recognise that the more the balance can be achieved, the greater the potential rewards for all concerned.

The individual's relationship with work will differ according to their employment status, the power relations within the workplace, the level of discretion they have over their work, and the extent to which they feel trusted and valued (see, *inter alia*, Collinson 2003; Felstead et al. 2009). It will also differ according to the individual's sense of how work fits into their life. As a consequence, the extent to which an individual will regard what they are doing as involving learning and the level of meaning they apply to it will also vary. Researchers in work-based learning have become increasingly attuned to the complex role that identity plays in the work-learning relationship (see, *inter alia*, Billett and Somerville 2004; Hodkinson et al. 2004). Individual agency is also being enhanced for some people through advances in information and communication technologies, which enable them to choose when and where they carry out their work, whilst others remain locked into regular, time-bound attendance at a workplace (see Felstead et al. 2005). These differences shape and influence the nature of learning undertaken as part of the work process.

For some individuals, preparing for and engaging in work may start very early in life through learning skills (social as well as technical and inter-personal) and occupationally-related knowledge as part of an inter-generational sharing of expertise within, for example, a family business or community. For some, work is a means to an end, to earn the money they need to pursue their real interests, whilst, for others, their work is their interest in life. Terms such as 'voluntary work' and 'domestic labour' remind us that work can be a matter of choice or a matter of position in society, whilst the term, 'underemployment', captures the problem of many people whose abilities and expertise are ignored in workplaces that only require them to perform routine tasks (Livingstone 2002).

Despite the growing recognition in both research and policy circles that workplaces are learning environments, work-based learning is often absent from debates about lifelong learning. The separation has also been fuelled by the way work-based

learning and lifelong learning are positioned within and treated by the research community. Lifelong learning is often used as an umbrella term for the learning that adults do in their spare time away from work and, in that sense, has replaced the term ‘adult education’. This separation runs counter to the realities of the dynamic nature of the contemporary production of goods and provision of services, which itself constantly challenges the characteristics and shelf-life of skills and vocational knowledge (see Guile 2010). The increasing tendency for some people to fuse the work and non-work parts and spaces of their lives raises questions about the extent to which learning at, through and for work becomes embedded within lifelong learning, rather than separated from it.

Finally, a further way in which the connections between work-based learning and lifelong learning need to be strengthened concerns the current failure to treat publicly funded education and training institutions as workplaces. Whilst there is some research on the type and effect of staff development programs within these institutions and there is a tradition of the teacher as a reflective practitioner dating back to the 1970s, the concept of the school, college or university as a workplace has, ironically, been relatively ignored.<sup>2</sup> Much needs to be done to rectify this situation including, for example, the re-configuration of the way work is organised and the design of work spaces to enable much greater team working, collective learning, and sharing of expertise.

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<sup>2</sup> See Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) for a notable exception.



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# Chapter 48

## ‘Really Useful Knowledge’ or ‘Merely Useful’ Lifelong Learning?

Jim Crowther

### Introduction

There are few educators who would disagree with the principle that lifelong learning is a good thing, but the important questions are about the types of learning that the concept promotes, the life that it encourages us to lead, who benefits from this and the nature of the society that it upholds. Illich’s insight that lifelong learning could be a sign of our ‘permanent inadequacy’ seems an accurate characterisation of the dominant discourse of lifelong learning, which traps adults on a treadmill for employability in the labour market, where they must learn to be infinitely flexible, in a market system of education where the customer (the ‘learner’) buys their goods and of course, if they buy the wrong goods they have only themselves to blame (Crowther 2004). The dominant discourse creates a ‘regime of truth’ which shapes what is talked about as thinkable and plausible, and equally important, limits what is discussed and questioned (Foucault 1985).

The main argument of this chapter is that social purpose adult education, characterised by a concern for ‘really useful knowledge’ (Johnson 1993), is becoming unthinkable in terms of the questions it poses about the purposes of educational intervention, the role of the educator and the language in which learning is discussed. However, as Williams (1977) emphasises, all hegemonic projects are vulnerable, in that they involve an ongoing process that can be challenged and contested. What lifelong learning means, what it stands for, or against, needs to be debated and justified. I will address this in terms of social purpose adult education in, against and for the state.

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In relation to what counts as the dominant policy discourse, there are different emphases between the rich north, with its focus on economic competitiveness and social cohesion, and the poor south, with its development agenda (Preece 2006). Of course, there are varying positions between the poles of this dichotomy, and a relationship between competitiveness and cohesion, that can complicate national trends. However, it is primarily the economic agenda I am referring to, because of its overriding prominence in the UK context. How far the experience in other countries reflects similar patterns or not is a useful point of comparison and debate – but one for the reader to undertake.

## Social Purpose Adult Education

By social purpose I mean an approach to adult education that connects lived experience, democracy, social justice and inequality to learning and action for progressive change (which itself needs to be debated). The social purpose tradition of adult education has the following characteristics:

Participants are treated as citizens and social actors.

Curriculum reflects shared social and political interests.

Knowledge is actively and purposefully constructed to advance collective interests.

Pedagogy is based on dialogue rather than on transmission.

Critical understanding is linked to social action and political engagement.

Education is always a key resource in the broader struggle for social change (Martin 2008a, p. 10).

This view of adult education is diametrically opposed to the dominant version of lifelong learning in policy and it offers a way of transforming what it might mean and who might benefit from it. As Martin (2003, 2008b) points out, we keep making the mistake of talking about lifelong learning in educational rather than political terms. ‘It is in terms of what lifelong learners are expected to learn that the *deconstruction* of welfare, as an ideological and policy objective, is predicated upon the *reconstruction* of citizenship’ (Martin 2003, p. 566, emphasis in the original). In this view, lifelong learning and active citizenship are part of the alchemy whereby the welfare state is transformed from a ‘beast of burden’ into a ‘beast of prey’.

It is by acting as a substitute for social policy that lifelong learning becomes an ideological instrument of policy. Its purpose is to foster the attitudes and abilities of individuals to become self-sufficient and self-interested – and where possible to self-fund this too – in order to survive in the ‘post-welfare’ state. Where there is ‘no such thing as society’ – as the former neo-liberal Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, stated – then there is no collective responsibility. The error therefore is to think of lifelong learning as educational policy whilst neglecting its politics, and in overlooking this we become trapped by our own ideological innocence. To avoid this, we need to situate lifelong learning in terms of an analysis of the politics of our

times, to develop the arguments that help foster different political options and competing alternatives in practice.

It is politically axiomatic in neo-liberal thinking that we can no longer afford the welfare state – or that what welfare there is should be dependent on 'workfare'. The emergence of neoliberalism in the UK is associated with the election of the Thatcher government in 1979, which started a process of dismantling state provision, privatising state assets, undermining trade unionism and cutting back on welfare benefits. It is not quite the case that Blair's New Labour project from 1997 was simply an extension of Thatcherism, because the concern for social inclusion and social cohesion rubbed against the grain of previous Conservative government policies. The focus on partnerships and devolved political administrations in the 'third way' also signalled a more consensual process of managing change. Then again, in relation to the primacy of markets over publicly funded provision, the entrenchment of the 'new managerialism' in the public sector, and the need to reduce the welfare state, the continuities between successive post-1979 governments in the UK runs deep.

The period of neoliberalism has entered a new phase from the initial period of reorientation, which involved promoting new principles and values to underpin the economy and new priorities in the organisation of welfare. We have now moved to a period of consolidation, where these principles and values are 'rolled out' across a more extensive range of public sector activity and economic and social priorities are closely aligned (Davidson 2010). Moreover, neo-liberal values are asserted with little public discussion of alternatives, so that in official discourse the range of policy options is narrowed down. For example, in the 2010 UK elections all mainstream political parties were committed to cuts in public spending, with the main difference between them being over the size of the cuts and the pace of their implementation. The need for a diminished welfare state, the priority of global competition, the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their own future are ingrained in mainstream policy and politics.

## Social and Cultural Change

The politics of lifelong learning policy are, however, out of step with wider patterns of social and cultural change. According to Field (2002), these changes have resulted in a 'silent explosion' of lifelong learning; his juxtaposition of contradictory terms captures the sense of a mushrooming educative culture and a vast array of learning opportunities which have become a routine part of everyday life that we take learning for granted. Lifelong learning in these terms is often invisible, because it is scattered across a vast mosaic of 'self-directed' learning activity that individuals and groups pursue, often without any official support (CONFINTEA VI Report 2009). The market for self-study materials purchased in the private sector, 'learning by doing' in the voluntary sector, learning through old media (e.g., public broadcasting) and new media (e.g. digital technologies) are indicative of a rich vein of invisible learning.

The 'silent explosion' replaces the caricature of the traditional white, male, blue-collar autodidact of the nineteenth century engaged in serious study after a gruelling day at work by the do-it-yourself manual, the personal trainer, the fitness club, the management guru and so on. This vision of lifelong learning involves a 'reflexive project of the self' that is concerned with the body, identity and relationships, rather than seeking to advance the common interests of oppressed and exploited groups that characterised education with a social purpose.

Field suggests that the above trends are not simply superficial changes, in the sense of temporary fads or fashions for 'lightweight' learning. Drawing on the work of Giddens and Beck, he argues that they reflect a deeper process of individualisation and 'reflexive modernisation'. In this analysis, individual biography is less dependent on tradition and opportunities deriving from social structure and more an outcome of the knowledge and the choices people make as they attempt to negotiate an uncertain and risky world. Despite the fact that this social theory seems to capture important changes in how we live now, the key issue is what it leaves out.

We still live in a capitalist society that generates class inequality. Whilst many people in the rich West live materially better lives than previous generations, poverty and inequality are fundamental and determine life experiences on a range of significant variables (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). The demise of traditional political parties of the left, and the failing appeal of socialism as an ideologically coherent project, is perhaps what is characteristically different today in relation to the social purpose tradition. This demise has been accompanied by a rise in 'cultural politics' through 'single issue' movements that are pursuing radical agendas for change on a specific range of issues: poverty, gender equality, environmental justice, peace, disability, sexuality and so on. They provide the motivation and context for social and individual learning as well as sustaining broad cultural changes through the diffusion of information, ideas and values linked to social action. The alter-globalisation movement – or a 'movement of movements' – is addressing the wider tendencies and dynamics of capitalism on a world scale. These developments may not present a viable political challenge to the hegemony of capitalism, but they keep alive the possibility of alternatives to it by creating opportunities and spaces for social movements to develop and disseminate their 'cognitive praxis' (Eyerman and Jamison 1991).

The cognitive praxis of social movements refers to the social spaces for new ideas and values to emerge that generate new world views, principles of organisation and technologies to go with them. A movement's cognitive praxis provides the context for an alternative version of lifelong learning that addresses how we live now, and how to change it, with a vision of education and learning as a means for realising that 'another world is possible'. The World Social Forum, for example, is not only perhaps the largest 'school' in the world but it also constitutes the making of an alternative global civil society (see Hall 2009). Scandrett et al. (2010), drawing on the theoretical analysis of Gelpi and experiences of environmental justice movements in Scotland and India, argue that the contradictions of the 'relations of production' in capitalist societies create rich educational opportunities and critical social learning sites. However, it is easy to overlook or misrecognise the educative importance of these social and political developments.

In Bourdieu and Waquant's (1992) terms, misrecognition is a process which hides how cultural arbitrariness operate to legitimate dominant social values and positions. The dominant discourse of lifelong learning, on the one hand, and the formal institutions of education, on the other, are particularly important in terms of influencing our expectations and, indeed, predispositions regarding what is valuable about education and learning – the emphasis on the economy, the individual, training, structure, coherence, etc. – which is far removed from the experience and context of social purpose adult learning.

## The Politics of 'Naming'

The politics of 'naming' draws attention to the power relationship involved in the positioning of adults, as learners, in the dominant discourse of lifelong learning. At its best, the focus on the 'learner' is a corrective to the power of educational institutions to define worthwhile learning and in this sense lifelong learning has added to the rhetorical value of engaging with the interests and concerns of adults. But in its labelling of adults merely as 'learners' – which conceals their identity as people whose experiences are structured by place, time, gender, class, geography, inequality, oppression, etc. – they become instead a commodity with particular educational needs which can be met as consumers or customers. The policy discourse transforms the citizen and social actor into a shopper in the educational market place.

This separation of the individual learner from their wider social context and affiliations reflects a particular way of thinking about learning as an individual activity, which is hegemonic. Williams, in his book *Keywords*, analyses the changing meaning of words as signifiers of broader social, cultural and political trends. The word individual in the fourteenth century originally meant indivisible in the sense of not being divided because of its unity or hardness and, as he comments, 'the development of the modern meaning from the original meaning is a record in language of an extraordinary social and political history' (Williams 1983, p. 161). Indivisible stressed the connection to others, whereas the modern meaning of individual emphasises singularity in the sense of the distinction from others. This peculiar change in meaning reflected the freeing up of people from a rigid social structure and expectations, which was captured and became 'common sense' in the ideology of liberalism. But this freeing up also came at a price. The original sense of individuals as indivisible from their social context has largely disappeared and in the dominant policy discourse 'lifelong learners' are on their own. Social purpose adult education, in contrast, connects education to social interests and locates the individual as an 'indivisible' part of a wider social group participating in a collective process of learning. In this perspective, what individuals learn separately is subordinate to what they learn collectively. The purposes and motivation for learning that derive from collective interests are both individual, in terms of a personal experience, and indivisible in the sense of being part of a wider concern.

Another dimension to the politics of naming is what Biesta (2010) refers to as the ‘learnification’ of social and economic problems. How problems are ‘named’ and solutions identified are ideological, not neutral and innocent, constructions. For example, the naming of economic competitiveness, in terms of a problem relating to the distribution of skills in the labour market, works ideologically because it marginalises other ways of constructing the problem and defining the solution. Thus, wider questions about the structure of the economy, the level of investment required for competitiveness, the role of the government in steering the economy, and so on, are ignored or treated less seriously. As Coffield (2002) explains, lifelong learning is popular because it gives the pretence of doing something while avoiding the need to address more difficult issues. Similarly, problems of social cohesion and citizenship can be reduced to demands that migrants learn the native language or remember facts about British history and society, whereas the historical role of migration in the UK, the social and cultural difficulties of living with difference and economic hardship within migrant as well as host communities are shelved. Halsey noted a similar tendency in government action on poverty in the 1960s and 1970s, in his warning to avoid treating ‘education as the waste paper basket of social policy – a repository for dealing with social problems where solutions are uncertain or where there is a disinclination to wrestle with them seriously’ (Halsey 1972, p. 8).

## Undermining the Agency of the Educator

Part of the rhetorical appeal of lifelong learning is the claim that it ‘empowers’ the learner by reducing the power of educational institutions – through creating a market system responsive to customers – and by implication transforming these institutions and the role and significance of the educator. This ‘consumer’ rather than ‘producer’ focus is justified as a market counterweight to bureaucracy in educational institutions, but what it also achieves, which is less visible, is to undermine the legitimate authority and significance of the educator’s role.

Biesta (2006) identifies four key influences on the flourishing of the new language of learning: first, the rise of new constructivist theories of learning that foreground the learner rather than the teacher; second, the impact of postmodernism on educational theory and practice, with its critique of the certainties associated with rationality and Enlightenment thinking; third, the social and cultural changes Field describes as the silent explosion of learning – which we have discussed earlier; and fourth, the erosion of the welfare state and the transformation of the political relationship between governments and citizens to an economic relationship between the state as a provider of services and the taxpayer as a consumer of state provision. Arguably, it is this commodification of learning that is central to the impact of lifelong learning on adult education. It assumes, of course, that learners know exactly what they need and the educator is in the business of merely meeting the need that is identified.



The language of social purpose, however, involves a key role for the educator in the process and telos of learning.<sup>1</sup> Educators help 'learners' to explore and define their needs and to understand their experience in its wider context. In this process, dialogue is fundamental. It is important to be clear about what this means because dialogue is distinctly different from the fabrication of learner sovereignty in lifelong learning with the role of the educator reduced to that of a facilitator. In Freire's (1972) analysis, dialogue involves an epistemological claim and a pedagogical principle because it is through authentic dialogue that teacher and learner are involved in 'acts of knowing' as well as a collaborative process of learning. 'Knowledge from below' is important in the sense that it widens the base for creating new knowledge, but its relationship with the formalised and codified knowledge of the academy is explored openly and rigorously rather than being privileged. Adults and educators may bring very different resources to the process but both learn from it. Marx's aphorism that 'the educator must be educated' points to the dialectic between knowledge from experience, and that generated through disciplinary knowledge, which the process of dialogue catalyses.

Social purpose education may be uplifting, but its purpose is, where possible, linked to action for change. This is sometimes expressed as praxis in a formula of action, reflection and action that should be interpreted politically rather than technically as a discrete set of stages. Gramsci (1971) provides a good insight into praxis when he refers to Marxism as the 'philosophy of praxis'. While he uses this expression as a code for deceiving prison censors about the object of his inquiry, it also indicates that praxis involves a principled and coherent set of values, ideas and analytical understanding which shape action (i.e., a philosophy). In this view, praxis involves a political position, a theoretical analysis and an ethical commitment. Similarly, the adult educator's praxis has to derive from the vocational role of the educator and the attitudes and obligations appropriate for that role.

Collins refers to the 'vocation of adult education as a calling which entails firm commitment to the performance of worthwhile activities...it incorporates a strong ethical dimension, emphasizing an unavoidable necessity to make judgements about what should be done and a readiness to take sides on significant issues' (1991, p. 42). Vocation is a way of living rather than a means of earning a living. Drawing on the sense of vocation as principled, political and ethical commitment, Collins argues that educators do not put theory into practice but rather that they put themselves into practice. Vocational commitment informed by a social purpose should not be confused with missionary zeal, unwarranted interference in people's lives or a refusal to listen to how people articulate and frame their experience and interests. Adult educators need to learn and teach. As Johnston (1999) argues, 'ambition and vision' have to be tempered by a degree of modesty. Social purpose educators have to develop a reflexive analysis of the assumptions, ideas and values which signify their ambition and aspiration; if these are beyond doubt, and beyond justification, there can be no authentic dialogue or democratic educational process.

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<sup>1</sup> The rest of what follows in the text differs from the position advocated by Biesta above.

## In, Against and For the State

In the social purpose tradition of British adult education, the distinction is made between ‘really useful knowledge’, which is critical and aligned to social action for change, and ‘merely useful knowledge’, which is technical and linked to individual interests and concerns. This distinction is not only about purpose but also an epistemological challenge about who has the right to define knowledge and the interests it serves (Johnson 1993).

If lifelong learning is primarily concerned with merely useful knowledge, what are the prospects for adult educators developing really useful knowledge in a hostile policy context? One important argument is that educators should understand their position as being ‘in and against’ the state (LEWRG 1979). This argument was first articulated by a number of public sector workers with socialist and feminist aspirations with an ambition and vision to extend their ideological interests and politics into their professional lives. The professional role confers a degree of relative autonomy about the nature and purpose of work. In this argument, employees of the state have opportunities to challenge how problems and solutions are constructed, the naming of those they work with and the alliances and organisation that can help exploited or oppressed groups resist the way in which the state as a ‘social relation’ typically manages and administers people. Instead of individualising social problems, for example, the task is to locate people’s experiences and concerns within a collective context of wider social inequalities that can become a resource for struggle. Of course, this strategy is particularly relevant to a liberal democratic state and, while it was first promoted some 30 years ago, the argument is still valid today. But much has changed over this period. The spaces for resistance change as policy changes and new problems and opportunities emerge.

Perhaps the above argument is most applicable for those educators who have a role working in and with communities – particularly as civil society provides a contested space. Walzer (1992, p. 7) identifies civil society as the ‘sphere of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks ... that fill this space’. As such, civil society, in its most widely accepted current usage, is distinct from the state (formal/representative politics) and the market (economic production, consumption and exchange). It is generally understood to refer to those aspects of informal social and political life in which citizens come together in voluntary groups, associations and movements to pursue their own collective interests and projects in freely chosen and relatively autonomous ways. Modern civil society organisations would therefore include, for example, trade unions and employer associations, churches and voluntary agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and not-for-profit social enterprises, cultural and ethnic groups, and a whole range of popular campaigns, struggles and movements. It is widely recognised that the vitality and relative autonomy of such informal and non-institutionalised political activity outside the state is an important precondition for the health of democratic politics within the state.

In reality, civil society is frequently in danger of invasion, colonisation and control by the state or the market. For instance, policies often seek to incorporate citizens and civic associations into particular kinds of 'partnership' with state and market interests. Similarly, neo-liberal programmes of privatisation and structural adjustment may turn civil society into little more than an extension of the market or a 'manufactured' instrument of state policy (Hodgson 2004).

Gramsci's analysis of the role of civil society as a site of struggle and its relationship with the state is distinctive and captures the ambivalence and contradictions between state and civil society. He makes the distinction between two aspects of the superstructure of society (in contrast to the economic base) in terms of civil society and the state/political society. These correspond to the exercise of two forms of power, which reinforce class domination: hegemonic power (the leading and directive ideas and values in society) and the state's monopoly on legitimate coercive power (political power). Gramsci was aware, of course, that the state was not merely coercive. More importantly, the boundaries between civil society and state are permeable, and organisations and practices can embody social relations belonging to both the spheres. The connections between state and civil society in reproducing class rule are reflected in Gramsci's expanded view of the state as 'political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (Gramsci 1971, p. 263).

The apparent distance of civil society from the state means that it can be a powerful medium for the diffusion of the dominant hegemony. The 'arms length' link between the state and educational institutions can disguise the powerful role, for example, of education as a means of social reproduction through the dissemination of merely useful knowledge. However, the space of civil society involves opportunities because its regulation is not straightforward; adult educators can use this freedom to develop really useful knowledge, skills, attitudes and organisations that present challenges to conventional wisdom and received expectations. Civil society is therefore an important site for transforming hegemony because education is potentially the Achilles heel of social control.

Shaw and Martin (2000) argue that educational engagement in communities may also involve working 'for' the state in the sense that the state is a potential resource for improving people's lives because it has the means and power to make significant interventions for the better. In this view, the market is much more damaging than the state, but the state needs transforming in the direction of meeting people's interests and needs. Making the state more democratic, moving it in the direction of greater social justice, involves challenging the politics of the state by mobilising the aspirations and cultural politics of communities to reduce the democratic deficit inherent in representative institutions founded on fundamentally unequal societies. The welfare state may have alienated people because of how it treated them, but it also provided resources that people needed. The 'beast of prey' maybe how we often experience the state, but it can also be a 'beast of burden' for those at the sharp edge of capitalism.

## Conclusion

Neoliberalism is a hegemonic project as much as it is an economic one and lifelong learning is implicated in how this impacts on how we think about learning, the learner, the individual and the purpose of education. Social purpose adult educators have to understand how the language of lifelong learning transforms educators and those they work with. The opposing challenge is to transform lifelong learning from being merely useful into opportunities for learning really useful knowledge. Without an alternative vision of society, some notion of what a morally just and good society looks like, where people can live equitably and with difference, then we do not have the language to begin discussing how education can improve people's lives other than skilling them for the market. If the latter is the principal task, Marx points to the likely outcome:

He, who before was the money owner, now strides in front as the capitalist; the possessor of labour power follows as his labourer. The one with the air of importance, smirking, intent on business; the other timid and holding back, like one who is bringing his own hide to market and has nothing to expect but – a hiding (Marx 1983, p. 172).

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# Chapter 49

## The Interplay Between Lifelong Learning and Vocational Education and Training

Gavin Moodie

### Introduction

Vocational education presents a quandary for many governments. Its core purposes are to develop new and extend existing occupational skills – skills that may be applied directly in work. So the close involvement of employers and employees is central to the successful operation of vocational education. Indeed, there is no apparent reason in principle for governments to be involved in vocational education any more than in other aspects of the employment relationship. Yet the state has long regulated vocational education. England adopted the Statute of Artificers in 1563 as part of a general regulation of wages and the labour market generally (Woodward 1980) and extended its regulation of apprenticeships and other occupations in a subsequent legislation.

Modern governments' involvement in vocational education extends way beyond its involvement in other aspects of the employment relationship, which later in liberal market economies (Hall and Soskice 2001, p. 30) tends to be restricted to mandating minimum standards and mediating relations between employers and employees. Governments are now involved to varying extents in funding, reforming and often in providing vocational education. They do so for various reasons, but many seek to prevent training systems becoming rigid or atrophying, or seek to promote innovation and increase the skills used in workplaces, which is understood to increase productivity and wealth. In a review of vocation education systems in nine countries in three regions (Europe – France, Germany, the UK; East Asia – China,

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Japan, Singapore and the Americas – Chile, Mexico and the USA) Keating and colleagues observe:

Nevertheless, demand-side objectives remain the most pressing in... [technical and vocational education and training]. Virtually all countries have a problem with limited demand and most have introduced strategies to increase demand. Strategies include the use of industry associations and leadership, regulatory and fiscal measures, curriculum changes including competency-based training, and elements of a training market. In most countries the response of the private sector has been limited. It tends to be highly sectoralised, and concentrates upon low capital-based industry areas. (Keating et al. 2002, p. 167)

Yet inasmuch as they are involved in vocational education, governments interpose themselves in the employee–employer relationship, risking reducing vocational education’s direct relations with employers and employees and therefore its relevance to the workplace. Governments have sought to resolve this quandary by changing vocational education’s policy, governance, curriculum, pedagogy, quality assurance and financing. Some governments such as the British and French (Keating et al. 2002, p. 170) and the European Union (EU) have explicitly shaped their vocational education policies with the principles or the philosophy of lifelong learning and others such as the German Federal and *Länder* (State) governments have sought to extend lifelong learning to vocational education more recently (Hippach-Schneider and Toth 2009, p. 38). Other governments have followed other principles or adapted their policies pragmatically to meet the exigencies of the time. Yet many of these have also implemented some of the principles of lifelong learning, albeit incidentally to their main purpose. This chapter considers the effect of recent developments in vocational education’s policy, governance, curriculum, pedagogy and financing on vocational education’s role in lifelong learning.

## Policy

Governments’ policies on vocational education have generally been directed to at least one and usually a combination of two or more broad purposes: social protection, economic development and lifelong learning. Many governments have relied on vocational education to provide an early route to employment for young people who are not progressing well in academic studies at school. Typically, students undertaking vocational education designed for this social purpose do not have as strong outcomes as students undertaking academic or more conventional vocational programs, but they are gainfully occupied for at least the duration of their studies and presumably their outcomes are better than they would have been had they not undertaken vocational education.

Many governments promote vocational education to contribute to economic development. The European Union has been engaged in vocational education since the Treaty of Rome established the European Community in 1957. It has integrated its various educational and training activities under the lifelong learning program that seeks to enhance students and workers’ mobility. Towards this end, the European

Union has developed common European frameworks and tools to enhance the transparency, recognition and quality of competences and qualifications. In a statement typical of many governments, the European Commission on Education and Training (2010) writes that:

Faced with challenges such as intensified global competition, high numbers of low-skilled workers and an ageing population, vocational education and training (VET) is vital to prepare individuals for today's society and ensure Europe's future competitiveness and innovation.

So governments promote vocational education not only for young people to enter the workforce with higher skills, but also for older people to become skilled, to acquire new skills more relevant to a changed economy, and to deepen their existing skills. Thus UNESCO's Deputy Director-General for Education Colin N. Power (2009, p. 29) wrote in the final report of UNESCO's second international congress on technical and vocational education that:

In an era characterised by the challenge of globalisation, rapid technological changes and economic uncertainty, it is imperative that all stakeholders work together to develop legislation and policies, establish institutional structures and redesign curricula to ensure that... [technical and vocational education and training] caters adequately to the varied needs of all members of society to enter and re-enter the world of work.

Grubb (2003) elaborates:

Because [of] technological change and sectoral shifts, individuals are more likely to find their skills becoming obsolete, and therefore lifelong learning is necessary to keep up with these changes. International competition has increased; and because no developed country wants to fall into the ranks of undeveloped countries relying on raw materials and unskilled labor, the need for greater levels of education and training over the lifespan is even more compelling to assure competitiveness and growth. But the good news of the Education Gospel is that an expanded and reformed education system can meet all these challenges.

Grubb argues that this fosters narrow forms of vocationalism that Grubb and Lazerson (2004, Chap. 9) have called 'HyperVoc'.

Many governments have also promoted vocational education to contribute to lifelong learning. The Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) – Cedefop (2009) – promotes vocational education's contribution to lifelong learning in several areas: adult learning, ageing workers, lifelong guidance, validation of nonformal and informal learning and monitoring the roles, competence and training of vocational teachers and trainers.

Some argue that vocational education's contribution to lifelong learning may be increased by improving its links and interaction with other education sectors. For example, Power (2009, p. 29) argues that vocational education should be strengthened as an integral component of lifelong learning by including vocational subjects in general education curricula to facilitate: the young generation obtaining generic technological knowledge and key pre-vocational skills; developing articulation between technical and vocational education on the one hand, and other sectors of education on the other, emphasising the recognition of prior learning and work



experience, and raising the status of vocational education in education systems; promoting coordination between formal education and informal training systems and ministries responsible for education, training, labour and social welfare; and fostering the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly private sectors, in the provision of vocational education and improving the link and cooperation with the world of work. This is discussed in a later section.

Governments and some analysts are comfortable with vocational education having multiple roles, or at least with it serving multiple community goals including lifelong learning. As Bagnall (2009, p. 277) observes, ‘That “lifelong learning” is used as a label and a banner for a diversity of different concepts is an important feature of its contemporary utility and appeal’. However, other analysts argue that US community colleges’ dual roles of preparing students for work and preparing students to transfer to more advanced study result in their fulfilling neither role satisfactorily, and Oleynikova and Muravyeva (2009, p. 469) argue that tensions between the qualifying role and the social protection role of vocational education and training institutions in the Russian Federation remain one of the big challenges yet to be overcome.

## Governance

Many governments have funded vocational education which has meant that they also provided it. Some governments have provided vocational education in secondary schools similar in most other respects to academic secondary schools and, more recently, governments have established special vocational institutes. Vocational institutes may be further specialise by level or may span one or more of the levels called in the international standard classification of education (UNESCO 1997): level 3, (upper) secondary education; level 4, post-secondary non-tertiary education; and level 5, first stage of tertiary education type 5B (occupationally specific) and some vocational institutes also provide programs classified as 5A (theoretical).

But government provision of vocational education has been criticised, especially in the liberal market economies, for not being sufficiently relevant to employment. Some have argued further that providers of vocational education and particularly teachers have ‘captured’ (Lauder 1991) vocational education against the interests of employers. Thus, Farris (1994) observed that the governments in the liberal market economies of Australia, Canada, England and Wales, New Zealand, Scotland and the USA have sought to ‘increase industry involvement in vocational education’ by, for example, including what they call ‘stakeholders’ (Freeman 1984) in making decisions about vocational education. Just who counts as a ‘stakeholder’, how they may be involved in decision making and the extent of their influence have all been highly contested.

These problems, at least, are avoided where major participants in vocational education have their involvement in decision making legitimated by tradition or some political process. This is the case in several northern European countries,

especially German-speaking countries, which incorporate employer organisations, employee organisations and vocational educators as ‘social partners’ in the management of vocational education. Vocational education is rarely criticised in these countries for being remote from employment. But corporatism encounters other difficulties, mainly of inflexibility and the considerable time needed to get all social partners and the relevant parts of government to agree on a change (Lauterbach and Grollman 1998).

A third approach to making vocational education more relevant to employment is to make it more ‘client focussed’, but again, identifying who are properly vocational education’s clients is problematic. Some governments claim that ‘industry’ is vocational education’s primary client, but on analysis this turns out to be mainly employers with only token, if any, acknowledgement of employees’ interest in vocational education. This also ignores the effort that students invest in vocational education, in learning, forgoing earnings and in many countries in paying tuition fees. Billett argues that:

The need for vocational education to respond to demand-side factors has become a key policy goal for vocational education in Australia. However, what comprises the demand side has not been critically appraised. Assumptions that only industry and enterprises comprise the demand side are questioned by the legitimate claims for inclusion by regions and individuals. (Billett 2000, p. 5)

So, when ‘clients’ are mentioned in higher education, they are most often understood to be students. Green et al. (2000) classifies governments’ different approaches to continuing vocational education and training (CVT) thus:

The CVT regulatory regimes could be seen along a continuum from state-led regulation through social partnership regulation towards demand-led regulation. By state-regulated we mean those countries which emphasise the use of national legislation to regulate the provision and funding of CVT. By social-partnership regulated we mean those countries, which rely largely on social partner sector agreements and arrangements to regulate the provision and funding of CVT. And by demand-led we mean those countries which stress the importance of individual employees and employers regulating the provision and funding of CVT within a voluntary framework and with minimal national legislation. (Green et al. 2000; cited in Elson-Rogers and Westphalen 2000, p. 688)

## Relations with Other Educational Sectors

This chapter has assumed that vocational education’s primary orientation is to occupational practice, while preferably also introducing students to disciplinary knowledge. Preparation for the high-status occupations – the professions – is distinctive in being oriented roughly equally to both practice and the disciplines. Academic education in the liberal arts and sciences is mainly oriented to the disciplines, although this may be done in a way that is broadly useful in practice. These different orientations of vocational, ‘professional’ and academic education argue for their organisational separation. For, while it is possible to combine the occupational and academic within one organisational form, the different dynamics of occupational practice and

the disciplines' development keep unified vocational and academic institutions in constant tension, having to reconcile the different dynamics of their main fields.

There are other justifications of the distinction between vocational and academic education. A view that has been influential since the appearance of Plato's (1974) *The Republic* is that each person has specific aptitudes that should be developed for the role to which they are best suited. Such a view is often adapted to justify placing students in separate vocational and academic tracks in post-compulsory education: students, teachers and institutions perform better if they concentrate on the type of education to which they are best suited. This led to the establishment of vocational secondary schools, separate from academic secondary schools. More recently, analysts have argued that pupils who are not interested or accomplished in academic education may extend their post compulsory secondary education in vocational secondary education, and this is often done by providing a vocational track within comprehensive academic and vocational secondary schools.

Some countries, such as Germany and its northern European neighbours, have strongly tracked post compulsory education systems, which make it difficult for students to transfer between tracks, particularly from the vocational to the academic track. Other countries have less strongly demarcated tracks and, at the other end of the continuum, is the USA, where a 'vocational' student may be identified in high schools and community colleges only by examining the preponderance of subjects they study. The OECD (2000, p. 84) reports that Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the UK have sought to improve links between and even integrate vocational and academic education. Keating and colleagues (2002, p. 171) report that the trend towards integrating vocational and academic programs can also be seen in Japan and Mexico, and that the differences between vocational and academic programs is becoming less clear in France, the UK and the USA.

Keating and colleagues (2002, p. 167) conclude from their study of Vocation Education and Training (VET) in nine countries that:

The relationship between VET and general education is mostly one of convergence. Formal barriers to transfer between courses are being reduced, and there is a reluctance to separate students into rigid VET streams at an earlier age. This trend is consistent with the growing emphasis upon lifelong learning, and the recognition by nations and international organisations of the importance of educational foundations for the subsequent building of industrial skills. (Keating et al. 2002, p. 167)

Governments have sought to integrate vocational education more with other education sectors to give students more flexibility in transferring between tracks. This not only opens more opportunities for individual students, but is an important equity measure since, in many countries, vocational education is dominated by students from a low socio-economic status background, while academic education is dominated by students from high and upper middle socio-economic status backgrounds. Providing opportunities for students to transfer from vocational to academic education is therefore sought to increase social as well as academic mobility. Chinien and colleagues (2009, p. 754) argue that some countries are developing pathways and articulation between vocational and higher education to promote lifelong learning and Kintzer (1999, p. 148) argues that strong systems and mechanisms for

articulation and transfer are vital to the full and complete development of lifelong learning. Integrating vocational and academic education is also advanced as a way of increasing the status of vocational education (Hyland 1999), which many complain is unfortunately low (Keating et al. 2002, p. 17).

But, inasmuch as governments succeed in integrating vocational with academic education, or at least in strengthening links between the sectors, they divert attention away from vocational education's associations with employment, making it better integrated with other education sectors while risking its integration with work. But if some analysts are correct, this risk has fallen since they argue that academic education is becoming more vocationalised. Symes (1999) complains that universities have become vocationalised, Hyland (Hyland 2001b, p. 677) argues that 'The vocationalisation of education and training at all levels has been the *leitmotif* of developments from school to university over the last two decades or so' and Grubb and Lazerson (2004, p. 68) claim that 'Even [US] private liberal arts colleges have turned into vocational institutions, a phenomenon that was already apparent in the 1950s (McGrath and Russell 1958)'. If this is true, much of the point of separating vocational and academic education is lost.

## Curriculum

Another way governments have sought to make vocational education more relevant to employment is by redesigning the curriculum. The ideal is often said to be apprenticeships, which closely integrate work experience, learning on the job and practical education on campus. Many countries have studied Germany's 'dual system' of vocational or apprenticeship education, which some seek to emulate without observing the institutional, social and economic supports for the dual system (Schaack 2009, p. 1747). Others have sought to encourage vocational education that adopts some of the characteristics of apprenticeships, such as the French alternance – alternating periods of work and study, previously known in England as sandwich programs.

However, apprenticeships have at least four limitations. Because they are embedded deeply in work, apprenticeships replicate existing practices and find it hard to incorporate new work practices, techniques and technologies. Much of apprentices' learning is experiential, which makes it more realistic, but at the same time more time-consuming than campus-based education, which is normally codified. Apprenticeships depend crucially on employers having the capacity and inclination to employ apprentices. Employers in many countries, including Germany, do not provide enough apprenticeships to meet the demand from prospective apprentices. Many governments have sought to compensate by subsidising apprentices' wages, but not entirely successfully.

Campus-based education is countercyclical with the economy. As the economy worsens and unemployment rises, enrolment in campus-based education also rises (Becker 1992; Steinberg et al. 2009). This is helpful in two ways: by enrolling in

campus-based education students reduce the unemployment rolls while at the same time preparing themselves for higher-level work when the economy recovers. In contrast, apprenticeships coincide with and reinforce the economic cycle. When the economy worsens, employers stop recruiting apprentices and some even dismiss apprentices, thereby breaking the indenture and increasing unemployment. When the economy recovers, employers start recruiting apprentices again, but since far fewer apprentices were trained during the economic downturn, there is a shortage of tradespeople, which slows economic recovery.

Several countries have sought to make vocational education more relevant to employment by basing its curriculum on competences (Farris 1994, p. 7; Pan 1997, p. 39). The argument is that skilled work can be analysed into several competencies and if vocational education teaches and assesses those it will relate closely to employment. If it can be introduced successfully, competency-based training has several advantages for lifelong learning and vocational education generally. Students are trained only in the skills needed for the work they are being prepared for, thus reducing the amount of ‘useless’ learning they undertake. By better targeting continuing education, competency-based education would encourage people to continually learn throughout their lives. Students may study and be assessed at their own pace, attempting assessment when they feel ready. Some governments and employers have hoped that this would shorten apprenticeships, since the more able and advanced apprentices could become qualified earlier than the normal duration. Because competences are constructed as learning outcomes, it should be possible to recognise students’ learning undertaken in different institutions, in different sectors, in different contexts and in different countries (Mulder et al. 2007, p. 71). It should also be possible to recognise people for the skills they already have, without having to complete a program of study.

Some countries, such as Australia and England in its first versions of its national vocational qualifications, took this to excess, reducing vocational education to training and assessing only observable behaviours. However, leaving aside those mistakes, competency-based education still encounters several difficulties. ‘Competence’ and its cognates are understood very differently by different analysts, particularly in different cultures (Hager 2004; Mulder et al. 2007, p. 69; Weigel et al. 2007). There is a tension between defining or describing competences that are specific to a particular workplace and the desirability of training students to be able to work in several workplaces in an industry. It is also hard to see how training students just in the competences that are currently used prepares them for emerging and future challenges. As it might be put epigrammatically: competency-based education trains today in yesterday’s competences for tomorrow’s challenges.

A common attempted resolution of the tensions between training for one and a range of workplaces and training for immediate and future relevance is to include in vocational education general competences, which are usually called generic competencies or skills. These are competences such as communication, problem solving and teamwork. But this resolution is illusory. Communication depends heavily on subject, since all skilled occupations have highly specialised language – jargon – which is also highly sensitive to context. Solving an electrician’s problem such as calculating how

many power points may be run off a cable is quite different from solving a nurse's problem such as ensuring a patient takes their medication. Volmari et al. (2009, p. 18) claim that 'Competence is context-dependent (triological learning). Thus its assessment is linked to the prevailing valuations and the operating environment'. The common terms in which general competences are expressed, mask the differences they are trying to surmount. Consequentially, general competences either become so rooted in their immediate context that they are not transferable to other contexts or become so general that they lose their direct relevance to the workplace.

It therefore seems that competence-based training is at least not yet sufficiently developed to fulfil the potential it may have for lifelong learning. And whatever its theoretical attractions, competence-based education has failed in many of its applications. As (Hyland 2001a, p. 489) observes:

It is definitely *not* 'too early to determine the effectiveness of CBET and the extent to which it has produced the skilled, flexible and critical workforce that studies have suggested are increasingly needed in the contemporary economy' (p 36). CBET has patently failed to achieve any of these objectives in any of the countries in which it has been implemented and it should now be abandoned as a model for the reform of VET systems. (Hyland 2001a, p. 489, original emphasis)

## Pedagogy

Governments have also sought to make vocational education more relevant to employment and conducive to lifelong learning by changing its pedagogy. They have sought to make vocational education more flexible. Many governments have hoped that vocational education as well as other types of education may be made more modern, flexible and efficient by incorporating information and communication technologies. Notwithstanding what seems to be the evident potential of new technologies in improving teaching-learning, it has not been realised yet. This is not so surprising. Scholars took two centuries to develop the textbook, the technology that used Gutenberg's printing press to transform teaching-learning from a mainly oral practice to one that relies much more heavily on reading and writing, particularly at more advanced levels.

The pedagogy that is highly distinctive of although not unique to vocational education is workplace learning. Researchers such as Billett (2001) have developed extensive understandings of the techniques and circumstances that facilitate learning in the workplace. Workplace learning is very attractive to employers because their employees may learn during less busy times and without spending time commuting to education campuses. Workplace learning is also said to facilitate lifelong learning because it is more accessible to workers throughout their careers (Jager et al. 2004, p. 61). However, workplace learning depends heavily on the capacity and willingness of each workplace and particularly the employer to support learning. It is therefore restricted to the instrumental understanding of lifelong learning for workforce capital development rather than the broader, developmental and progressive lifelong education described by Bagnall (2009, p. 278).

## Financing

Perhaps the crux of governments' dilemma with vocational education is that they value it more than do its direct beneficiaries, employers and employees. They therefore seek to increase expenditure on vocational education to what they believe to be economically and socially desirable levels. Three common methods are discussed here: direct provision, employment levy and vouchers. Many governments support vocational education just as they support school and higher education. This may be in establishing vocational streams or tracks within existing public educational institutions or by establishing special purpose vocational education institutes. Governments' direct provision of vocational education often suffers the limitation discussed throughout this chapter of not being sufficiently relevant to employment. Governments have therefore tried, in vocational more than other forms of education, alternative forms of government support.

One alternative is for governments to support vocational institutes established and managed by industry – employers and employees separately or jointly. Examples in the UK are the University for Industry and the National Health Service University. But these have not met their expectations (Watson 2003) and are not common in other countries. More common and apparently successful are vocational education institutes established within enterprises, often called 'corporate universities'. In 2001, Morrison and Meister (2001) estimated that there were more than 2,000 corporate universities. However, government support for vocational education institutes within enterprises is less easy to justify than government support for vocational education institutes that serve whole industries or sectors.

The governments of France and many Latin American countries have funded vocational education by imposing a payroll tax or other levy on employers (Wilson 1996). Some allow employers to discharge their levy partly or fully by providing education to their employees. Economists dislike employment levies and payroll taxes because they tax inputs to the production process; they far prefer taxes on outputs and consumption. In addition to economists' theoretical objections to employment levies, the arrangements in France and Latin America have been criticised for being excessively bureaucratic, unwieldy and hence unresponsive to employment. Some Latin American countries such as Chile have therefore replaced their employment levies with a form of vouchers (Keating et al. 2002, pp. 12, 17).

Vouchers and voucher-like mechanisms for allocating government support for vocational education have been tried in Chile, the UK and recently in Australia. The Australian government first considered the question raised at the opening of this chapter: who are vocational education's clients – its students or their employers? The Australian government initially tried to construct training credits allocated at the discretion of employers on the grounds that the government should invest in producing graduates needed by employers rather than in the fields wanted by students. It argued that funding students to undertake the vocational programs they sought would not meet employment needs as well, because students do not know employment needs as well as employers. However, the scheme did not succeed and was replaced

by vouchers allocated to students. While it is too early to judge the success of Australia's experience with vocational education vouchers, Carnoy (1998, p. 335) concludes that Chile's vouchers have not succeeded in meeting their proponents' aims and disproportionately advantage people with high incomes. It seems most unlikely that vouchers would meet any of the broader goals of lifelong learning.

None of the options for financing vocational education reviewed here seems likely to support lifelong learning, even if they do meet governments' human capital goals. Keating and colleagues (2002, p. 167) conclude that:

VET has been the testing ground for the concept of an education and training market. Its returns are seen as being more direct for individuals and industry, and the pressures for funding diversity have made it conducive to market-based approaches. It cannot be concluded, however, that any country has 'solved' the training market issue. Those countries that previously have been the benchmarks for the strength of their demand for VET (Germany, Singapore and Japan) have all faced limitations in the 1990s. These limitations have been at least in part related to the obsolescence of cultural characteristics that previously have been regarded as conducive to a training culture or a strongly and distributed demand for training. This obsolescence is in part related to structural factors, such as firm size, but also to the demand for new skills of innovation and adaptation. These changes may have an impact upon the educational foundations upon which industrial skilling is built in these countries. Efforts to develop a training market in countries such as the UK and Chile appear to have been at least partially successful. But the outcomes are typically skewed towards the more high skilled areas of the market. (Keating et al. 2002, p. 167)

In a review of options for increasing enterprises' expenditure on vocational education, Billett and Smith (2005, p. 5) conclude that, ultimately, governments' goals for increasing their expenditure on their employees' vocational education may be met only by increasing enterprises' beliefs about and valuing of developing their employees' skills.

## Discussion

This chapter has considered governments' attempts to resolve what has been posited as a dilemma: how to make vocational education relevant to employment despite governments' involvement in funding, reforming and often in providing vocational education. The chapter has considered the effect of governments' recent changes to vocational education's policy, governance, curriculum, pedagogy and financing on its role in lifelong learning. The chapter also noted that not all the changes to vocational education and training over the last decade have been driven by general educational principles such as those of lifelong learning. Grubb observes that what he calls the 'education gospel' in the USA and many other countries posits that education is the solution to many individual and community problems such as access to rewarding employment, equity, transition to the knowledge economy and competitiveness in a globalised world. Hyland observes the 'vocalationalisation' of all education from school to university in the UK, which has resonances in many other countries. In contrast, the European Union, which has been engaged in vocational



education almost from its foundation, has integrated its various educational and training activities under the lifelong learning program, which seeks to enhance students' and workers' mobility.

Yet, even in the apparently more instrumental and materialist Anglo countries, vocational education has implemented some lifelong learning principles, increasing its flexibility in places and modes of delivery, broadening its demographic reach and developing stronger and more sophisticated interactions with school and higher education. While these may be 'a pragmatic response to immediately understandable learning needs' which are 'at best an impoverished and mutant form of lifelong education' in Bagnall's (2009, p. 278) words, they do not prevent progression to the holistic, progressive and social democratic form of lifelong education described by Bagnall (2009, p. 277) as furthering 'the development, well-being, life-chances, or happiness of the individual learners, particularly in response to changing circumstances or contexts'. And not far behind the European Union's more progressive principles of lifelong learning for vocational education are pragmatic economic and social concerns, exemplified by its Lisbon strategy 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion' (Lisbon European Council 2000, paragraph 5).

This suggests that, over the last decade, lifelong learning has been more than just statements of principle for vocational education – lifelong learning practices have been incorporated even within policies developed to serve instrumental goals. On the other hand, countries find that even the strongest and most comprehensive commitment to lifelong principles in vocational education must also support and be supported by pragmatic interests. In both approaches, vocational education is a mixture of principle and pragmatism, perhaps more so than other types of education. But in both approaches, vocational education has been influenced strongly by lifelong learning.

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# Chapter 50

## Networking and Partnerships: Another Road to Lifelong Learning

Chris Duke

### Introduction

#### *Reinvigorating Lifelong Learning Discourse*

At the time of writing, the UK-based *International Journal of Lifelong Education (IJLE)* was in its 30th year. Its title reflects a philosophical problem at the heart of the concept of lifelong learning, one revisited in its editorials from time to time. It also points up the difficulty of finding an effective language for discourse in this arena. A few years before the *IJLE* was founded, the OECD's Centre for Education Research and Innovation (CERI) published a report called *Recurrent Education; A Strategy for Lifelong Learning* (OECD 1973). This proposed an approach to reforming the education system that would induce learning throughout life. The idea and term *learning society* was gaining ground; more recently, *knowledge society* and *knowledge economy* have found favour. The French term *education permanente* was used by the Council of Europe before that. It has been too literally translated as permanent education. For a while it was pilloried as a form of educational imperialism in which people were to be prisoners of school all their lives. This was at a time when the individualistic spirit of liberation of the 1960s was

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translated into hostility towards institutions that were seen as disempowering and self-serving, including schools and hospitals (Illich and Verne 1976).

The *IJLE* has retained its title, while recording changing meaning and practice in terminology. In Britain, the changes are exemplified by university departments of adult education, extension and extramural studies that have moved through (adult and) continuing education to lifelong learning. Their professional association followed a similar trajectory, eventually becoming the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL).

Yet, 'lifelong education' carries the same seeds of contradiction that the journal examines, for example, in the Editorial to its first number for 2010, 'Adult education or adult learning: a conceptual problem' (*IJLE* 2010). The previous Editorial on informal learning (in *IJLE* 2009) recalls Coombs' 'classic distinction' between formal, non-formal and informal education, and its limitations, with informal education now less favoured than incidental and/or informal *learning*. However, as the Editors observe, 'the change in perspective reflected in the 1990s adoption of lifelong learning as an organising principle constituted something of a paradigm shift: policy-makers of all kinds woke up the fact that learning happens outside a society's educational institutions, as well as inside' (loc. cit., p. 419).

This paradigm shift has not been translated into effective policy. The difficulty involved is the focus of this article. The article takes an example from the education system's higher education sector in relation to the region, and the level of governance between the national, state and local government. Evidently, 'lifelong learning' must be relocated away from policy-making and administration exclusively within the education system in such a way that it can permeate the culture, instinct and practice of governance and of civil society generally. Unless and until this is achieved, the old paradigm will prevail. How this might be achieved remains unsolved in any system. National councils and committees have been tried, and tsar-type appointments made from time to time in such different countries as the United States and the Republic of Korea. Maybe a way can be found that culturally permeates all areas of administration, using lifelong learning impact monitoring and statements analogous to an environmental impact approach. It is also possible that such a change is beyond what any government is able to plan and carry out. In that event, since strong if not inexorable forces push in this direction, it may evolve not by design but serendipitously, through the aggregation of multiple small unguided changes.

The failure to translate the conceptual shift into policy means that, instead of the formal education system being reinvigorated within the wider understanding sought by CERI in 1973, the concept and scope are being emasculated within schooling. A narrower curriculum and the impoverished scope of what is commonly called the skills agenda results. The global financial crisis (GFC) occurred in 2008. Its aftermath dominated the policy agenda of many countries. It might catalyse more radical ideas about the long-term direction and management of public affairs, on the ground that a good crisis cannot be let go to waste. On the other hand, discourse in the countries most affected was characterised more by an urge to return to the normality of recent times. If 'old paradigm' thinking prevails, the lifelong learning paradigm shift proposed in the *IJLE* is unlikely to occur.

## Beyond Informal Learning: Society As a Learning Environment

In addressing general and universal issues, this chapter mainly uses the United Kingdom as a setting in which to explore them. The diversity of cultures and contexts, internationally and within nations, requires the reader to translate general propositions into unique settings.

It became desirable and politically correct to speak about learning rather than education in the closing years of the twentieth century. This harmonised with the new mood of individual responsibility characterising the political philosophy that came to be called neoliberalism (compare Judt 2010). In economic terms, which prevail in the discourse, it is 'Reaganomics'; in Britain it is loosely referred to as 'Thatcherism'. The 1980s are characterised as the 'Selfish Eighties' or simply as the 'Thatcher Years'. Prime Minister Thatcher was commonly (mis)quoted as saying that there is no such thing as society. Two decades later, the Conservative Party leader David Cameron adopted the slogan 'the big society' for the 2010 General Election campaign. This marked a rhetorical volte-face from that legacy, but the change is superficial. Thatcherism echoed the sturdy mid-nineteenth century self-help of Samuel Smiles (Smiles 1851). But the individualism of the 1980s also carried the legacy of the more libertarian individualism of the 1960s, to which may be added the loss of central authority represented intellectually by postmodernism. Whatever the explanation, individualism has been a central pillar of politics and popular wisdom over recent decades.

In the early twenty-first century, this finds expression in hostility to the extended powers of the State, especially in 'the war on terrorism'. It underpins the rhetoric of 'big society small government' that favours privatisation, including within the education system. This does not of itself undermine the idea of a learning society based on lifelong learning. The 'big society' slogan used in the 2010 Election appears to suggest a popular and collective solution alternative to bureaucratic 'big government', not at all inimical to lifelong learning (see the widespread discussion of the role of the voluntary or third sector, as illustrated in *The Guardian* through 2010). There is no sign, however, that the new emphasis on civil society by the (individualistic small State) political right is being connected with lifelong learning to herald a learning society. Instead, the term is used while tightening and further narrowing the scope of state-supported education to deliver economic results in a difficult and competitive global setting. This ties the curriculum closer to what are taken to be the requirements of a knowledge economy.

The question posed here is whether an underpinning cultural shift, as well as a shift in understanding (or paradigm change), will prove possible. Will this embed lifelong learning in a wider 'societal' context of which formal schooling is one segment? This in turn poses another question: about the different cultural inheritance or legacy of each society and its government. Distrust in government, institutions and formal organisations more generally can make for suspicion of the collective and hostility to 'social engineering'. *Community* can be heard, in an assertively

individualistic society, as meaning *communist*. Deeper down, there may be an instinct for the *communal*: the social capital required if lifelong learning is to move beyond the classroom into the wider society permeating the social structure. In the United States, local communitarianism is rich; anything with resonances of communism attracts widely shared hostility.

Many continental European countries display, at least in their non-metropolitan cultures, an instinctual mutuality. In the case of France, this finds expression in the commune, and historically in the 'fraternite' of the Revolution. In Australia, community and neighbourhood initiatives seemingly enjoy a supportive environment in cities as well as non-metropolitan areas. Which of these deeper national characteristics facilitate or inhibit a larger and deeper sense of 'lifelong learning'? Can the larger meaning found in the visionary literature of the Faure years (UNESCO 1972) be rediscovered? Some see a new political economy emerging in response to the environmental crisis of global warming. Might this and the global financial crisis be brought together in a new approach to governance at all levels? (compare Camilleri and Falk 2009).

All this lies beyond informal education in the sense of what people pick up by exposure to information from the media that is intentionally educative. It is not well conveyed by the term incidental learning, which has a sense of the accidental. It is indirect, yet essential to full expression of a learning society. It means creating and sustaining an environment that enables learning to take place continuously and naturally throughout society. Attention shifts from the classroom to all the places and circumstances in which individuals live, work, express and develop. This explains the proliferating language of learning societies, communities, organisations, cities, regions and other settings and structures. This kind of learning has become essential because of rapid change, complexity and diversity. In working life, Ford-like production lines have given way to a swirling profusion of jobs and work-roles, many of them short-lived in micro and small enterprises. It means cultural pluralism in ethnic, religious and other senses, and demands new moral understandings that are robust in a more complex reality.

The survival of very complex social systems and ultimately even the human species requires the capacity to manage and adapt; to combine constructive collaboration with 'applied critical reflection'. This cannot be confined to the one life-phase of the extended formative years, or to one kind of setting: special-purpose educational institutions somewhat separated from the rest of life. There are many attempts to engage schooling more with family, community and workplace; and to adapt the curriculum (in a comprehensive sense) accordingly. By the mid-twentieth century, it was understood that the capacity to learn alters rather than being diminished with maturity. Demographic change is now forcing those of the 'third age' into many areas of policy discourse and social effort. These trends will continue. They widen the scope as well as clientele of formal education. This will in part reflect and in part be informed by the idea of learning through life, for adults as well as the young.

We now turn to the larger concept, which recognises that most learning takes place outside the school; and to the perhaps unanswerable question of what this may mean for public policy and governance.



## **Context and Complexity: Cross-Cultural Networking and Partnership**

When we think about what trying to govern well in modern complex circumstances means, it is not surprising that the grand 40-year-old vision for lifelong learning has shrunk to more tangible vocational updating and skills. This was maybe still more likely in a time of narrowing conceptions of the role of the State, and preoccupation with economic growth. And yet, translating the paradigm shift into public policy and practice may become essential to the survival of social structures and societies. The very idea threatens conventional management based on the evermore sophisticated collection, control and use of powerful knowledge-managing information technology. This ranges from massive systems designed to store, protect and use data, for example in national health and security systems, through to the infinite flexibility, reach and interactivity of Web 2.0 technologies like Facebook, blogs, twitters and wiki. All this greatly enhances access to data, and allows the manipulation of complex systems for wider popular participation in public affairs. The world of social networking, confused, unsupervised, hugely diverse, is logically at variance with the instinct to govern to standard rules and requirements, measures and means, even though politicians are becoming adept at using media like Facebook to communicate and win support. Taleb puts his finger on the instinct to manage complexity tidily (and so destructively) in his book of aphorisms (Taleb 2010).

In obvious ways, these show the need for continuing learning and enhanced technical capability throughout life; so that big systems can be used well, and to enable all who so wish to be economically, politically and socially active. Lifelong learning should mean that people have the interest, confidence and knowledge to participate fully. These developments in individuals' capabilities are the business of what we call education, certainly formal and nonformal, perhaps, depending on terminology and meaning, also and especially 'informal'. The rate of innovation and obsolescence in information and communication technology (ICT) makes obvious why learning cannot end at school and with young people of college age; and why 'learning to learn' is considered important. The way that young people learn, adopt and use new ICT, however, also reminds us how vital applied and social learning are, at the very least to complement formal study. Translating this into 'system-level learning' is as important, but hard to comprehend, let alone to implement or cause to happen. Learning cities and regions may come to be recognised more by their adaptive behaviour and their capacity to take a long view than by any strategic planning of their administration.

Such is the complexity of modern (global) life that knowledge is divided and subdivided into ever more specialised disciplinary areas and roles. Government is conducted through specialised departments, divisions and units working to different agendas and targets. Often these are pulled in incompatible directions, competing for limited resources. Universities are forever reorganising. This may be to perform and compete in traditional ways. It also responds to society's need to understand, communicate and apply knowledge, and to develop new knowledge at different

frontiers. The frontiers favoured by scientists may not correspond to those applicable to problem solving and enhancing quality of life in the non-academic world. Disruptive restructuring has become a way of academic life. Institutions combine disciplinary expertise in new ways that might better meet new teaching and research needs and opportunities. The university as an organisational type has seldom proved to be good at adapting effectively and economically to a changing world: to being a good *learning organisation*, as distinct from practising high-quality teaching and producing excellent research. The ‘entrepreneurial university’ is by no means applauded throughout the university sector (Clark 1998; Wissema 2009). In the view of Dee Hock ‘although their size has greatly increased, there has been virtually no new idea of organization since the concepts of corporation, nation-state and university emerged a few centuries ago’ (Hock 1994).

For governments, the analogous consequence of rising complexity is that responsibilities, tasks and accountabilities are divided in an ever more complicated system: vertically by levels of government, horizontally into portfolios. In the contemporary world, this extends to international instruments and regulation: the UN family of agencies, and many other systems at other international levels. For the UK, these include the European Union, NATO still, and in terms of policy influence the OECD. The key level remains the (unitary or federal) nation state. Beneath that are different levels of regional and local administration with different, often changing, powers and jurisdictions. Much of mundane political life concerns the sharing and balance of power: above the level of the nation state, as with subsidiarity within Europe; and below, where devolution wrestles with an instinct for central control. In the UK, local government is little favoured. Regional level of government is yet more frail. However, service delivery, civic participation and the involvement of voluntary (or third sector) energies all tend to be better at more local levels. A further difficulty is that, from the 1980s, the state, ‘big government’, has lost favour to ‘small government’ and the market (Judt 2010). At least in the UK, it seems at the time of writing that the impact of the global financial crisis (GFC) will be to accentuate rather than to alter this. The mantra of the ‘big society’ may seem hollow; but it signals abiding doubt about what national government can and should do.

These changes in the vertical structure of government and to some modes of managing complex society are relevant to how lifelong learning may be seen and enabled. So too is the horizontal dimension. Government is divided by commissions and quangos as well as by ministries and departments into many dimensions and divisions. Ministries, departments, sections and ‘portfolios’ are in constant flux. Groups and units pursue specific assigned duties and targets in the prevailing dynamic state of affairs. Silo administration persists. Matrix arrangements, quangos, hired-in consultancy, contracted-out work and public–private sector ventures appear not to have overcome the problem. There is little to suggest that public authorities, any more than universities, have excelled as learning organisations.

Consequently perhaps, networks and partnerships feature strongly among contemporary efforts to work better across disciplinary and administrative boundaries. In principle, they enable shared planning and problem solving. They offer means of using the talent widespread in societies for their better governance and management.

They draw together energy and talent not just in the public sector but also across the private sector and the third, voluntary or non-governmental sector. They may even succeed in mobilising the unorganised and informal social capital of communities at very local levels, and in deeper and subtle ways.

This large, if inchoate, concept and vision of lifelong learning is implied by the more philosophical literature. It is about *governance*: at all levels and in all ways; and about different ways of *learning by doing* throughout the ‘political economy’ of all social and political structures. It means relationships which evolve over time, through which collaboration can occur. It means developing over time a culture of trust. It should facilitate working across memberships and ‘tribal’ affiliations. These include local and national; public, private and the third sector; academic and ‘real world’ policy-in-action; and across other divides. It is, however, clearly and even overwhelmingly difficult to promote and to put into effect – especially in societies where social trust, and confidence in self, others and the future, is low. This applies to the UK and other advanced industrial societies and democracies. It applies less to those with a less fractured legacy of community in the emerging world regions where optimism and growth are often stronger. It also runs counter to an instinct in hard times (economic difficulty, culture wars on ‘terrorism’) to tighten up, using the power of ICT to regulate, monitor, direct and control. Paradoxically, this co-exists with individualistic and fragmented economic and political libertarianism. The instincts behind lifelong learning in its full meaning are, by contrast, more holistic and organic.

## Universities and Their Regions

To summarise the ground covered so far: there was an initial flurry of literature and ambitious ideas about lifelong learning in the early 1970s. The concept became almost submerged for two decades, although the term gradually gained purchase and was adopted from place to place. Quite suddenly, the concept was widely adopted in the mid-1990s. The European Year of Lifelong Learning was in 1996. Its adoption beyond educational and academic circles was assisted by think-tank bodies like CERI in the OECD (see, e.g., OECD 1996; Tuijnman and Schuller 1999; Field 2000; Chakrabarti 2004; Schuller and Watson 2009).

At the same time, the operating interpretation narrowed. In principle, the concept covers all arenas of social and educational life. In practice, it became largely confined to the area of vocational education and training (VET), alias ‘the skills agenda’. This deepened an existing educational and broader cultural division between firmly economic priorities and broader social, well-being and equity-oriented values. Adult educators inheriting a tradition of adult education for social change (Thompson 1980) disliked policy-makers’ narrowed use of lifelong learning. Some objected to the very use of the term, reasserting ‘radical adult education’ even as ‘education’ was being disfavoured for ideological-democratic reasons by (adult) ‘learning’. The parting of ways between neo-liberal economy-focused policies and an older social

democratic tradition has continued, and public funding for the latter work has shrunk. Neither party, however, applied lifelong learning at the level of social and political arrangements to ask how in any practical sense a learning society and its components might be created. Lifelong learning remains a proposition more about individuals than about societies. Given that universities and public authorities struggle to adapt as learning organisations, with rising complexity and accelerating change, the prognosis for rapid systemic implementation of anything like lifelong learning is poor.

This chapter now deals with understanding and application going beyond individuals' education and learning. It takes as an example the capacity for partnership and co-learning between the different worlds of the university and its scholarship, and the world of public affairs. There, policies are made and in principle implemented, evaluated and learned from to enhance future performance. Such a partnership is anchored, held to be necessary, because of the requirements of the 'knowledge economy', and more broadly the 'knowledge society'. Universities are prime creators of new knowledge; governments of all kinds need to be prime users and, it is now argued, also co-producers.

Universities are repositories and transmitters of large stores of knowledge. They have also become increasingly powerful engines for creating new knowledge, and even for solving problems. This makes them necessary, if not natural, partners to administrations charged with governing. In a practical sense, many (though not all) such partnerships are likely to be local-regional to where the university is located. Sharing the social environment and daily experience of a regional community, the university cannot avoid co-existence with, and often dependence on, its region. One way of managing this reality is through deliberately seeking mutuality of benefit and purposeful interdependency.

Relations and the capacity to work together between universities and governments, especially at regional level, have come to be of keen interest, as governance has become more problematic and universities have grown in size, cost and potential. Bearing in mind the often competitive tribal specialisation on both sides, it is not surprising that collaborating proves problematic. Literature on the engagement of universities with their regions has been growing at an accelerating rate since the end of the twentieth century. The term *third mission*, meaning engagement or community service work, has also acquired wide currency. It is not without critics: *third* may imply separation from the more established and agreed older 'missions' of teaching and research, and as being of lesser importance, in third place. Behind these reservations, there are questions about how engagement is best managed by a university; how important it is to be explicit in public statements and planning; and how it can be integrated into the culture and practice of everyday academic life. This includes curriculum and teaching strategies, and the agenda and processes of research, as well as management arrangements.

This chapter does not review the literature, or argue the case for engagement in institutional or public interest. Instead, it refers to projects that examined the processes of engagement through regional case studies, and tried to work out how to overcome the barriers and obstacles. Taking a few examples from this work, it

attempts to explore whether the concept of lifelong learning can be translated from the level of the individual person to the level of organisations. Collaboration requires changed assumptions and behaviour on the part of all parties. It requires new ways of managing scholarship and administration to connect better with each other and with the needs of the societies they seek to serve. Issues to do with organisational behaviour and lifelong learning in a highly complex global world may be general. Drawing conclusions for practice is another matter. The context differs from one history and geography, economy and politics, culture and tradition to another. Here the context is mainly the UK, and more specifically England, with passing reference to other examples.

## Universities, Regional Development and Lifelong Learning

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) plays a leading role in educational research and innovation (R&I) among the advanced industrialised nations. It has periodically examined lifelong learning, including the recognition and accreditation of informal learning, since the early 1970s; and for almost as long the role of higher education in regional development (OECD 1973, 1982, 1996, 2001, 2007, 2008a, 2010). In the main, these two concerns have developed as parallel, only loosely linked, streams of inquiry. Other lines of inquiry have to do with higher education, and with adult education and learning. As befits the remit of the OECD, the tendency is towards economic aspects. The Organisation has also pioneered and encouraged the conceptualisation and adoption of the wider term, ‘tertiary education’, for thinking about higher education, although most of the work referred to here is about universities (see, e.g., OECD 2008b).

Our interest here has to do with universities’ role in regional development. Following a series of studies in the later years of the twentieth century, the Organisation launched a *Project on the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Development*. Beginning in 2004, it culminated in a conference 3 years later (OECD 2007). The project attracted the involvement of 14 regions. Its success led to a new project starting in 2009. Through IMHE, OECD currently offers a rolling cycle of studies of engagement for regional development to additional regions.

An international non-governmental network, the Pascal International Observatory, was created in 2002 on the occasion of an OECD conference concerning regional development and universities. In 2009, Pascal launched a project to work with a number of regions and their universities, under the acronym PURE – Pascal Universities and Regional Engagement. By 2010, 17 regions were participating for an initial 2 years, nominating peer reviewers to join consultative development groups (CDGs). Each region received two visits from their CDG, a year apart. Regions take stock of the current situation with the help of the groups, drawing up and following action plans. They share in trialling and developing benchmarking tools for the use of regions and universities, as aids to learning about and enhancing the quality of engagement. Subclusters of regions focus on different theme areas

important to particular regional development aspirations. These span social, economic and cultural issues and sustainability. Other means of fostering organisational learning include mutual visits, exchanges through the PURE Website and other media, and face-to-face review and planning meetings that punctuate and guide the evolving work of the project. In all, 31 regions were involved in these studies within PURE and the first OECD cycle, of which 21 were in different parts of Europe, including 6 in the UK. They inform the discussion which follows. The PURE project explicitly set out to nurture learning regions within an international network, that is to say, learning at organisational and system levels.

The ‘third mission’ involvement of universities in development has become an important policy issue, if not an imperative, for a number of governments, for the EU and OECD, and for at least some individual higher education institutions. For governments and intergovernmental organisations like the EU and OECD, the main thrust tends to be economic development, especially regional competitiveness and prosperity. OECD and EU purposes include wider social issues, but these tend to be marginalised by economic concerns, in this case centring on human resource development on the teaching side, and research and innovation systems on the research side. Pascal has given more weight to wider senses of development, spanning social civic, cultural and environmental issues, in an attempt to ‘rebalance’ development approaches. This rebalancing is founded in the perception that neoliberalism has displaced or underplayed purposes other than economic growth. Pascal sees quality of life and sustainability as similarly important, a view evidently shared by most regions taking part in this project, to judge by their choice of themes for the clusters referred to above.

A cluster proposed by the prospective participants at the initial PURE planning workshop, on the theme of lifelong learning and the learning region, did not, however, attract members. It remained a metatheme for the whole project, which favoured other themes: innovation and renewal, social inclusion, remote rural regions, cultural and creative industries, and green jobs and skills. Rather than taking lifelong learning as an abstraction, the preference was to address it through different areas of policy practice. The concept of the learning region hovered on the edge of many discussions, but ‘lifelong learning’ did not resonate as strongly. The whole PURE project has evolved as an attempt to create a network of regions learning through sharing and comparing experience. Achieving this proves not to be easy.

## **Barriers to Engagement: Cultural Difficulty and Dissonance**

Studies of barriers to third mission and engagement tend to concentrate on inadequacy of resources, and on the national policy environment within which regions and universities alike operate. The recent OECD study examined ‘barriers to regional engagement of higher education’ in terms of the conflicting effects of different national policies; the funding of regional engagement; structures for the governance of regions and institutional leadership and governance (OECD 2007, chap. 3).

The study concluded with recommendations addressed in turn to central governments, to regional and local authorities and to higher education institutions (op. cit., chap. 9).

For national governments, these recommendations include: joining up different policy areas; giving explicit support to a broad meaning of regional development (which also implies 'joining up'); and mobilising 'the joint resources of higher education institutions' as 'genuine partners' in regional strategic planning (OECD 2007, p. 202). Each of these implies a significant change away from the competitive and compartmentalising habits that have worked in the past. For regional authorities, the advice is first to create a 'partnership structure of key stakeholders' to reduce mutual incomprehension; then to undertake joint planning and joint investment; and, a superficially simpler task, to 'ensure a fully functional human capital system with pathways between different levels of education'. This also calls for levels of cross-sector collaboration and shared responsibility, of an order that has long eluded educational planners (OECD 2007, pp. 203–204).

The set of recommendations to higher education institutions includes similarly tangible and practical actions. These too require an act of will, and commonly a change of attitude, such that engagement with the region is seen, felt and lived as an intrinsic part of what a university does and should do. Drilling down beneath the generalities across all regions, fundamental attitudes and assumptions may be intolerant of working across portfolios, outside institutionalised sectors, and beyond the 'tribal ways' of familiar groups. Instincts and motives, influenced by reward systems that mean promotion and esteem for individuals, and high-status rewards for institutions, obstruct learning new roles and collaborating with new partners. Such changes, reinforced by more tangible 'sticks and carrots' changes to contract and reward systems, would enable the university itself to practise 'lifelong learning' as a learning and adaptive organisation. The term culture is freely and often loosely used; nevertheless, culture change is essential.

The OECD and PURE studies from many different traditions and parts of the world show how powerful the national cultural as well as the political-administrative context can be: Finland is very different from Italy and Spain; things occur with the active consent and energy of faculty in South American universities that would seem unthinkable in much of Europe; changes can be driven from the centre in the Republic of Korea in ways that elude the federal administrations of the United States and Australia. British traditions of centralised government and academic autonomy militate against strong regional planning and university engagement (see, e.g., the debate about impact that ran in the pages of the *THE* throughout 2009 and into 2010). It appears that lifelong learning, in the sense of learning to understand and to behave differently at organisational and system levels, is only likely to occur where it is attuned to the particular character and culture of each society. Paradoxically, it must therefore tap into culturally familiar ways of doing and being, in order to bring about the cultural change required to facilitate learning and development.

At another extreme from these generalisations, each particular regional study has a different tale to tell from which the generalisations are drawn. As for individuals, so for regions and universities: incident and accident matter. In a UK example, the

change of chief executives of the two most influential universities in a region at once altered the dynamics: one new incumbent had an inclusive and open approach to his and his institution's role and mission; the other was of a more conventionally competitive disposition. This changed the capacity for engagement; not just of one institution, but for the whole regional system of collaboration which had been collectively built, culturally and experientially as well as structurally, over two decades.

In England, the instinct for tight central control exercised by different Departments of State in the national capital hampered efforts to plan and integrate regional development across portfolios locally, as was recommended in the 2007 OECD study. The national higher education policy environment, however, is unusual in favouring engagement, compared with many other countries in these studies. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had created a higher education innovation fund (HEIF) dedicated to third mission work and partnership. It commissioned work to assist its benchmarking, gently nudging universities in this direction. On the other hand, national methodologies for funding university research competitively created an environment in which published work of international stature was rewarded, whereas locally focused developmental research and innovation was not. This came together with competitive preoccupation globally, and tables ranking universities across different criteria into a unitary scale, first nationally then on a global scale. The resulting concept of 'world class', and world ranking, together with the Funding Council's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) that had held sway for 25 years, undermined the will to contribute to development locally. Individual and institutional status and reward systems served as a barrier along the learning pathway that partnership opened up. For research-led universities, this represents a significant obstacle to work in the local region. Against it, the potential of 'mode 2' knowledge creation (Gibbons et al. 1994) carries little weight.

The year 2009 witnessed a clear manifestation of the difficulty for universities of attempting to expand third mission work and make a stronger contribution to regional economies and society through engagement. Government policy, mediated through HEFCE and the UK Research Councils and strongly reinforced by the ministers responsible for higher education, sought to shift the balance of university research towards work that contributed outside the academy. This was to be by means of some measure of the impact of research. On the face of it, this would favour third mission work. Initially, a quarter of competitive research funds were to be allocated on the basis of this new measure (see the *THE* throughout 2009). The proposal created a storm of protest, with stiff resistance from university leaders and from unionised and individual academic alike. The gradual, barely perceptible, learning journey on which many universities and the whole system had embarked over recent years towards deeper partnerships, more sustained engagement, and more 'co-production' and shared use of the knowledge, risked being derailed. Hostility to an impact indicator as a basis for funding threatened to turn universities back towards more inward-looking behaviour (Duke 2011).

Entering into partnerships is a way to learn new behaviours and roles, as well as to gain information and widen research and teaching agendas in the no longer new 'network society' (Castells 1996). Retreating into a fortress or ivory tower mentality



would prevent this, as well as depriving regions of the expertise that universities can offer. There are criticisms of unitary ranking tables, and challenges to their homogenising and narrowing influence. There are efforts by OECD and within the European region to develop systems that give more weight to teaching and student support, incidentally reducing the handicap carried by systems where English is a second language apropos the recognition internationally of published research. The more that ranking is diversified, the better the prospect that the third mission work will be recognised among the criteria. This may also encourage constructive diversity within and between institutions in national systems less blighted by the overwhelming status considerations that unitary ranking drives. Organisational and system learning would then be more about learning how to be different (in market terms, to identify unique selling points or USPs and find different market niches) in order to survive and succeed in different ways.

Impact measures favouring research used outside academic circles might reduce the influence of research-driven ‘world class’ ranking on some of the more eminent universities. Others might concentrate more exclusively on their global stature. For society as a whole, this diversification could be beneficial, although it would not necessarily assist local regions to benefit in any direct sense from the work of their most eminent resident universities.

## **Knowledge-Based Learning Regions As a Way Forward?**

After a general discussion of lifelong learning, this chapter has dipped into one setting for social and system learning by communities and organisations. It may seem tempting to conclude in the face of all the difficulties alluded to in this chapter that lifelong learning at the institutional levels by different kinds of organisations is simply too hard deliberately to plan and attempt. Perhaps it is something that just happens, evolving over time as the environment changes and it becomes easier to do some things, and harder to continue doing others. In this case, *a fortiori*, may be lifelong learning must remain *an abstraction, a pipe-dream that may perforce eventuate though processes of social evolution and necessity, but not be in any sense comprehended, planned for and purposefully thus facilitated*. More certainly *cultural dissonance*, as much as more obvious barriers such as scarcity of time and money, makes system-level learning slow and hazardous. We are far from understanding how to make a learning region work. Nor does it seem that we have drawn successfully on the many studies of organisation behaviour now accumulated to be able to enable universities to adapt and learn more productively from their own experience.

Nonetheless, as much of the literature on engagement argues, it appears unavoidable that more if not all universities will become more involved at many levels and in different ways with the affairs and destinies of their regions and communities. Contemporary life and governance is highly complex, proliferating with ‘wicked problems’ that will not simply go away. Universities, as repositories and engines of

expertise, have a vital part to play. Beyond preparing new generations for civic life and work, they are potentially powerhouses for learning how to manage in all fields. In a more conventional sense, they are also important resources for the ongoing lifelong learning of the mature and third aged as well as the young. Those that close off from the influences of the environment may prove to be maladapted for survival. On the other hand, acknowledging the vitality of diversity, whether of species generally or of universities and higher education institutions more specifically, might they as species and families of species learn to adapt and diversify to meet different needs? In reshaping themselves to occupy different complementary niches and to adapt reciprocally with their environments in the light of experience, they would demonstrate that they are indeed practitioners of lifelong learning.

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# Chapter 51

## Universities, New Technologies and Lifelong Learning

Patrick Keeney and Robin Barrow

### Introduction

In this chapter we examine some of the theoretical and practical consequences for lifelong learning which have been brought about by two contemporary phenomena: radical alterations in the traditional aims and mission of the university; and the revolution in communications technology.

Recent years have borne witness to a large-scale retreat from the humanities and liberal learning in favour of applied and professional courses, teachings which seek to impart to students vocational, professional and marketable ‘skills’, largely driven by economic considerations. Whereas a liberal education was once the cornerstone of the university, an undertaking which sought to introduce students to various forms of human excellence, our universities now concentrate on imparting to students instrumentalist, pragmatic and technicist ways of understanding the world, knowledge which is claimed to be ‘practical’, ‘relevant’ or ‘applied’ – terms which are linked to their exchange value in the marketplace.

Universities have, of course, always been contested ground, beset by various perennial problems and contradictions. Yet the current development is unparalleled. To an unprecedented degree, universities have abandoned the humanities and liberal learning as their foundation, concentrating instead on providing students with narrowly focused skills relevant to the economy. In concert with a host of other commentators, we see this as something of a cultural disaster, a pedagogic and social failure of the first order with dire implications for the well-being

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of both the individual and the society. The evidence for this transformation is overwhelming.<sup>1</sup> Those who fly the flag of liberal learning in universities are fighting a rearguard battle.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, by abandoning liberal education, universities have embarked on what is a myopic path and one which will ultimately be ruinous not only to liberal learning, but to the larger society which universities serve. But, however parlous the state of our universities, we believe that the fight for liberal education is nevertheless a battle worth fighting; it is not unthinkable that universities can change the direction in which they are headed, whatever the current situation, and small victories can be had. And there will doubtless continue to be certain enclaves within these institutions that keep the light alive.

But we need to be realistic in assessing the situation, and to consider the possibility that we should accept that the university is no longer the place to provide education in this sense; perhaps there may be other ways of providing a liberal education. After all, for anyone who is deeply committed to liberal learning, one's loyalty is ultimately to a certain way of understanding the world and to the cultivation of certain intellectual virtues, rather than to any particular institution, no matter how garlanded its history. We therefore want to give consideration not only to the changing nature of the university but also to some of the arguments surrounding alternative methods and means of providing a liberal education.

We recognize that the on-going revolution in communications technology, and the unprecedented and inexpensive access to information and knowledge provided by the Internet, computers and allied digital technology, in principle holds great potential for delivering to students the promise of a liberal education. The advent of the digital age might thus provide cautious optimism for the idea of moving the humanities off-campus, and providing an alternative and easily accessible means of delivering a liberal education along with its concomitant, lifelong learning. On the other hand, we feel that there are some obvious weaknesses and dangers in the idea of accepting the current concept of a university and in relying too heavily on technology as a means of education in itself.

In brief, universities must either re-commit themselves to educational aims or educators need to begin looking outside the academy to the new technologies for alternative models and modes of providing a liberal education. It is the choice between these two options that we now wish to examine.

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<sup>1</sup> The last two decades or so have witnessed an avalanche of articles and books warning of the growing commercialization of higher education and the corresponding erosion of the liberal arts. The common lament is that the profit motive has led to the decay of the humanities, sidelining those courses and disciplines which do not have an immediate and direct economic utility. Among the prominent commentators are Bok (2004), Graham (2002), Kronman (2007), Nussbaum (2010), Postman (1995), Readings (1996), Solway (1989), Tuchman (2009), Washburn (2006) and Woodhouse (2009).

## Education and Lifelong Learning

We begin with the premise that ‘lifelong learning’ is a phrase that conveys a commitment to education, and educational achievements, rather than to, say, technical or vocational knowledge, or the mere acquisition of skills. Readers who are interested in a fuller account of what we mean by education, as opposed to training, indoctrination or various other forms of instruction, are referred to our other contribution to this volume, ‘Lifelong Learning and Personal Fulfillment’ (Barrow and Keeney 2011). We do not want to repeat ourselves here. But for present purposes, it is helpful to point out that ‘education’ is fundamentally about the growth and cultivation of mind, and implies a commitment to furthering the understanding, as opposed to merely supplying knowledge and information. Furthermore, education implies an understanding of important (as opposed to trivial or inconsequential) subject matter (obviously, this is merely a formal criterion, and there are substantive disagreements as to what constitutes important subject matter). Because education involves important subject matter, it leads to investigations that are on-going, open-ended and unlimited. It is for this reason that education continues throughout one’s life, whereas formal schooling comes to an end. (Which is why, incidentally, we favour the phrase ‘lifelong education’, which implies a commitment to on-going and open-ended investigations, as opposed to ‘lifelong learning’, which perhaps does not.) In addition, education implies a commitment to the personal development and well-being of the whole individual, as opposed to merely equipping students with narrow skills and preparing them for their role in the workforce or in the professions. In this sense, education implies a moral commitment to the well-being of the student, in a way that is not true of other forms of teaching or instruction.

Clearly, much rides on how we choose to conceptualize education. We readily concede that education is a contested concept, and insofar as others are unconvinced by our views, or hold different conceptions of education, or are content to make education synonymous with vocational or professional training (as increasingly seems to be the case in the upper reaches of university administration), then much of what follows will not be particularly convincing. But it is this full-bodied and rigorous conception of education just outlined which is of interest to us – a conception of education which speaks to human desires, aspirations and achievements, and which suggests that education is fundamentally about the cultivation of the mind and the promotion of human welfare, rather than merely those pragmatic, economic considerations necessary to the well-being of the corporate state.

## Universities and Educational Goods

As stated, universities are in the midst of an existential crisis, at the heart of which lies a straightforward conflict between a view of the university as a peculiarly human institution designed for the preservation and dissemination of scholarship, erudition

and education – goods which have historically been viewed and defended as ends-in-themselves – and a view which maintains that the university properly focuses on job-related skills and information relevant to employment and the economy. Increasingly, it appears that the battle is being decided in favour of the latter view. In the jargon of the age, the university has undergone a ‘paradigm shift’, so that its main function is now to act as a handmaiden to the economy.

What seems to us both remarkable and unprecedented is the rapidity of this transformation. Within the space of a generation, the historic ideal of the university as a disinterested bastion of free enquiry which existed to serve the larger aims of democratic society and the development of individual minds and character, and to secure the political freedom necessary for human flourishing, has been overthrown by appeals to a crude sort of economic pragmatism, so that the university is now viewed as an extension of the corporate world. Whereas as recently as 1980 Edward Shils could confidently and uncontroversially assert that the task of the university is ‘the methodical discovery and the teaching of truths about serious and important things,’<sup>2</sup> such a description now has an indubitable antiquarian ring to it, a quaint echo from some far-away time.

Even if we leave aside the corporatization of higher education, the university is beset by a host of other issues, including political correctness, grade inflation, an enervating relativism, a general loss of cultural confidence, the growing authority of the modern research ideal (itself conceived largely in terms of economic productivity), and the consequent diminution of teaching, the fragmentation of the curriculum into incoherent parts and so forth. One can easily expand this list. And, as already noted, it needs to be conceded as well that the broader mission and aim of the university has always been contested ground. But starting with the publication of Alan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind* in 1987, there has been an outpouring of books and articles documenting the corruption of higher education throughout the Western world, and critical of the general direction in which the university is headed. Such criticisms are broad and varied, but their essence is perhaps best captured by the title of Anthony Kronmann’s impassioned polemic, *The End of Education: Why Our Colleges and Universities Have Given Up on the Meaning of Life*. Kronman bemoans the fact that universities no longer help students reflect on the perennial questions, those queries which compel students to reflect on what makes life worth living, and which have historically been a staple of undergraduate teaching: ‘Why did the question of what living is for disappear from the roster of questions our colleges and universities address in a deliberate and disciplined way?’ (Kronman 2007).

There is no shortage of legitimate grounds for critiquing higher education. Yet as germane and insightful as such critiques have been, they have in our estimation been overtaken and overshadowed by the new commercial ethos which permeates higher education. As a host of recent commentators attest, it is the transformative power of this new business mindset, and the accompanying notion that higher education can

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<sup>2</sup> Edwards Shils, *The Academic Ethic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1984).

only be justified by reference to the profit motive and the so-called bottom-line, that has taken hold of the imaginations of our political class as well as senior administration. As Howard Woodhouse bluntly states: 'the goal of the university is no longer the critical pursuit of knowledge, but the maximization of stockholder value' (Woodhouse 2009). Likewise, in her scathing treatise, *University Inc.*, Jennifer Washburn writes: 'In higher education today, a wholesale culture shift is transforming everything from the way universities educate their students to the language they use to define what they do' (Washburn 2006). In a similar vein, Martha Nussbaum writes:

Radical changes are occurring in what democratic societies teach the young, and these changes have not been well thought through. Thirsty for national profit, nations, and their systems of education, are ....producing generations of useful, docile, technically trained machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's suffering and achievements. (Nussbaum 2010)

In a word, institutions of higher learning are rapidly becoming what in previous ages would have been more accurately and honestly described as professional, technical and vocational schools. It is no longer the case that vocational schools seek to broaden their appeal by mimicking the liberal arts curriculum of universities; it would be more truthful to remark that universities now try to sell themselves as technical schools, places where students obtain the requisite 'skill-set' and expertise necessary for finding a job. Or to phrase it slightly differently, if more starkly: vocationalism, credentialism and job preparation have trumped education and liberal learning as the goals of higher education.

The corporatization of higher education is insidious, and we suspect that many readers will have first-hand experience of how market values have been allowed to flourish in their own institutions. But what is noteworthy is how pervasive this realignment in the university's mission has been. It is not too much to say that the conflation of the educational mission with a vocational imperative has recast the whole of university education. Individual professors, departments and entire disciplines are now subjected to a cost-benefit analysis, and are expected to justify their existence by reference to the contribution they can make to the economy. Senior administration no longer even pretends to be guided by the ideal that a university education should expose its students to Matthew Arnold's 'The best that has been thought and said'; instead, their appeal is now to a base economic instrumentalism, justifying courses by their utility to the business world or the market demand for them. (Thus, for example, a program that will attract more students paying a higher price, such as a Doctorate in Education, is for that reason to be preferred to a Doctorate in History or Philosophy.) From the undergraduate years through to post-graduate studies, universities as institutions (and notwithstanding individual professors who still honourably kick against the pricks) are no longer concerned with inculcating in students the intellectual virtues and habits of mind intended to serve them throughout their lives, but with providing students with job-related credentials upon the completion of studies. Whereas the humanities seek to cultivate in students critical and imaginative thought, a broad, empathic understanding of other peoples and the richness and complexity of human experience, such curricular objectives have little resonance in an age given over to profit making.



So, while a liberal education was intended to form in students certain intellectual virtues and habits of the mind which would serve individuals throughout their life, helping them lead richer and more rewarding lives than otherwise would be the case, the focus is now on those skills 'relevant' to the workplace in the corporate-industrial state. The upshot of this new sensibility is that the humanities and liberal learning are now viewed as ancillary to the university's real mission, which is to grow the economy via the creation of a 'skilled workforce'. So prevalent has this idea become that any attempt to articulate the ancient ideal of cultivating the intellect for its own sake, of habituating in students habits of reflection and analysis informed by a broad and sympathetic understanding of the world, is now seen as a frivolous sort of undertaking – frivolous here understood as any activity which has nugatory market value.

Measured against any historical standard, something has gone profoundly wrong in our conception of what a university education is, and what it is for.

## Some Hesitations About the Digital Age

Despite what has been said, universities will doubtless continue to retain some remnants of liberal learning, perhaps as a sort of 'boutique' offering, or even as a quaint, antiquarian vestige, not unlike, say, the donning of academic robes on ceremonial occasions, an opportunity which provides a glimpse of what the university once was. Also, there is an undeniable prestige that attaches to the offering of the liberal arts, paradoxical in an age that overall devalues them, so that most institutions are wary of abandoning the humanities *tout court*. But what cannot be denied is that whatever the rhetoric, universities no longer see the humanities as either foundational to their mission or fashionable enough to sell to students, politicians or the business world.

The question we want to consider is whether, in an age in which universities are largely given over to commercialism and consumerism, in order to keep the humanities alive and vital, we need to move them off-campus. In particular, do the new technologies provide us with the potential means to do so? In an attempt to answer this question, we will examine two of the more salient criticisms which have been made about the new technologies, and the sort of cultural anxieties they induce. The introduction of new media has always tended to meet with two very different responses. The first is an uncritical enthusiasm and excitement, with cheerleaders heralding the new technology as nothing short of a 'revolution' in teaching and learning, and the dawning of a new age of educative enlightenment. The second response is its mirrored opposite, a hyper-critical moral panic, with critics bemoaning the forces unleashed by the new technology as a harbinger not only of educational descent but of cultural mayhem as well. We want to steer a middle course between technophilia and technophobia, asserting what we believe is a reasonable optimism concerning the educative benefits of technology, while at the same time being mindful of some of what are undoubtedly its deleterious effects.

Employing any educational technology involves certain tradeoffs, and the digital age offers no panaceas. Yet it is sometimes too simple to engage in the wholesale

condemnation of what the digital age portends. For example, the novelist Mark Helperin argues that the new technology has ushered in a qualitatively different culture, so that we are headed for an age of what he calls *Digital Barbarism*.<sup>3</sup> Helperin advances an interesting thesis: in defending traditional notions of copyright law and intellectual property against the free-for-all unleashed by digital technology, he notes that ‘Arguments about copyright quickly lead to larger arguments about culture, the habits and degeneration of the mind, property, individuality, rights and responsibilities, and the illusion embraced by modern man that he controls both the world and his fate.’<sup>4</sup> For Helperin, the erosion of private property and individual rights engendered by digital technology is about to usher us headlong into a new dark age:

The changes that have come in train with the digital revolution have not been modulated, buffered and adapted as once they would have been. Instead, their partisans have entered the citadel of culture disruptively. They would change the language, purposefully degrading and mocking its forms. They would evince enormous hostility to books – to paper and ink, really, including even mail – setting them back further than did the burning of the library at Alexandria....<sup>5</sup>

He goes on to bemoan how the digital revolution has affected schools:

Anyone who in the last 20 years or so has had children in school must be aware of the incontrovertible desire to replace books with ‘media’, has heard or read of some of the children’s hostility to books and preference for things that jump around and make noise on the computer screen, and has seen the libraries empty of readers, most of whom now congregate around banks of computers and nearby espresso machines.<sup>6</sup>

Helperin’s polemic voices issues and concerns that are pervasive, and it is difficult not to share his anxieties, at least to some degree. Yet this line of objection can easily be overdone. While it is true that we are living through an age of great technological displacement, and large parts of our libraries (in schools and elsewhere) are being given over to computers, does the advent of digital culture really portend the end of paper and books, a development which amounts to a cultural catastrophe on par with the destruction of the Alexandrian library? Is this comparison not overwrought? After all, the empirical data point to the fact that more people are buying more books than ever.<sup>7</sup> And despite this being the media age, the most desirable

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Helperin, *Digital Barbarism. A Writer’s Manifesto*. New York: Harper (2009).

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit., p xvi.

<sup>5</sup> Op. Cit., p 16.

<sup>6</sup> Op. Cit., p 17.

<sup>7</sup> Book sales are notoriously difficult to track, in part because of the difficulty in determining what should count as a ‘book’ (Should graphic novels count as books? What about ‘books’ on tape or cd?) and in part because of the increasingly complex market. We are (sadly in our view) witnessing the demise of the independent book-seller and the rise of big box retailers such as Costco and Wal-Mart; an increasing market share given over on-line retailers such as Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Chapters, and the rise of the electronic book – all of which complicate data gathering. Nevertheless, the best data suggests that books sales are on a modestly upward trend. See, e.g., ‘Book Sales Rising as Recessing Deepens, at least in Europe.’ By Aaron Crowe. <http://www.walleepop.com/blog/2009/03/17/book-sales-rising-as-recession-deepens-at-least-in-europe/>

home renovation (at least in the UK) is a home library, a place to house traditional paper and ink books.<sup>8</sup> And as the *Harry Potter*, *Golden Compass* and *Twilight* phenomena all confirm, the sale of novels to adolescents and young readers in general has never been greater. Even in the age of video gaming, DVD's, television and Wii, teenagers are devouring literature and books as never before. The digital age and its distractions can doubtless lead some young learners astray, as it can doubtless lead some adults astray. But it is too strong by far to attribute to computers the sort of cultural malfeasance that Helperin would have us believe.

Perhaps one of the more insightful and measured critics of the Internet age is Andrew Keen, a former Silicon Valley entrepreneur, who, like Helperin, sees the digital age as a harbinger of cultural darkness. Despite his early enthusiasm, Keen now argues that the Internet leads to a dumbing down of content and an inevitable cultural decline. In *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing our Culture*,<sup>9</sup> Keen makes the case that the ease with which the Internet makes information available to everyone, expert and amateur alike, will ultimately be our undoing. While there is doubtless an inherent democratic appeal to giving everyone their own electronic platform on which they can blog, Twitter and Tweet to the world, such an arrangement is in reality little more than an electronic vanity press, leading to a cacophony of voices and the general impoverishment of public discourse. In his view, the ideal of the 'noble amateur' is merely a 'digitalized version of Rousseau's noble savage, representing the triumph of innocence over experience, of romanticism over the commonsense wisdom of the Enlightenment'.<sup>10</sup> The egalitarianism inherent in the net is destructive of certain crucial and vital hierarchies and elites – whether in the news media, in academe or in publishing – elites which are vital to the life of a democracy, in that they act as cultural and political gate-keepers, a vital sub-group which are essential in helping the non-expert citizen sort the good from the bad, the true from the false and the authentic from the insincere. Whatever the democratizing appeal that the flattening of hierarchy and elites possesses (particularly to the young), it invariably trivializes and corrupts serious debate: 'What the Web 2.0 revolution is really delivering is superficial analysis of the world around us rather than deep analysis, and shrill opinion rather than considered judgement.'<sup>11</sup> Thus the democratization of the Internet leads to what the author calls the law of digital Darwinism: 'the survival of the loudest and most opinionated.'<sup>12</sup>

For Keen, the rise of the amateur in both the print and the electronic media amounts to little more than the 'greatest outburst of mass exhibitionism in human history'.<sup>13</sup> Such manipulation – the flattening of the distinction between the opinion

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/interiorsandshopping/3360991/Interiors-Rooms-that-lose-none-of-their-shelf-life.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing our Culture*. New York: Doubleday, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Op. Cit. p 36.

<sup>11</sup> Op. Cit., p 16.,

<sup>12</sup> Op. Cit., p 15.

<sup>13</sup> Op. Cit., p 54.

of the expert and the amateur – distorts and corrupts the national conversation, leading to the manipulation of public opinion, and the degeneration of democracy into the ‘rule of the mob and the rumour mill.’<sup>14</sup>

As happens in the political arena, so too with the life of the mind: amateur and uninformed voices threaten to drown those of true worth and value. Keen approvingly cites Jurgen Habbermas. ‘The price we pay for the growth of egalitarianism by the Internet is the decentralized access to unedited stories. In this medium, contributions by intellectuals lose their power to create focus.’<sup>15</sup>

In brief, Keen bemoans the conflation of qualified, expert opinion and analysis with that of the unqualified, amateur enthusiast. As Keen sees it, the ubiquitous voice of ‘everyman’, far from being liberating and empowering, has devastating effects throughout our culture, leading to what Lewis Mumford called ‘a state of intellectual enervation and depletion hardly to be distinguished from massive ignorance’.<sup>16</sup>

Again, while it is difficult to disagree with much of his argument (particularly as we, along with the other contributors to this volume and no doubt many of our readers, represent the ‘expert opinion’ which Keen is eager to defend!), one detects in his polemic more than a little special pleading. Keen expresses a touching, almost naïve faith in the putative worth of the expert and the professional intellectual. Yet experts are not quite the deeply insightful paragons of intellectual virtue Keen would have us believe.<sup>17</sup> Nor is it true that amateur opinion is necessarily grossly inferior to that of the putative expert.<sup>18</sup> And while it is doubtless true that there are a great many amateurs on the net whose opinions are sub-literate, badly informed, unqualified and untrustworthy, cannot the same be said of many of the so-called ‘experts’ or ‘professionals’ in whatever field? History abounds with examples of the expert getting it wrong. Who now speaks of ‘global cooling’, ‘acid rain’, the ‘population bomb’ or the ‘Y2K bug’, all concerns that in recent memory greatly exercised the minds of expert opinion? And one need only spend an hour or so trolling the Internet to find ‘amateurs’ who are well worth reading.<sup>19</sup> Amateurs they may be, uninformed they are not.

Keen is certainly right: some opinion on the net is untrustworthy. But unlike Keen, we take the view that what is most needed by consumers of on-line information is

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<sup>14</sup>Op. Cit. p 54.

<sup>15</sup>Cited in Keen, Op. Cit., p 55.

<sup>16</sup>Op. Cit., p.45.

<sup>17</sup>There is no shortage of writers and thinkers who have pointed this out, from Julian Benda’s classic *La Trahison des Clercs* (1955), to contemporary writers such as Thomas Sowell’s *Intellectuals and Society* (2010) and Paul Berman’s *The Flight of the Intellectuals* (2010).

<sup>18</sup>The celebrated science writer, Matt Ridley, notes that the climate ‘consensus’ was not broken by the mainstream press – the putative experts who, by and large, kowtowed to the green lobby – but by bloggers and amateurs on the Internet. Ridley notes: ‘It was amateur bloggers who scented the exaggerations, distortions and corruptions in the climate establishment; whereas newspaper reporters, even after the scandal broke, played poodle to their sources’. <http://www.spectator.co.uk/essays/all/5749853/the-global-warming-guerrillas.shtml>

<sup>19</sup>See for example Patrick Kurp’s blog, ‘Anecdotal Evidence: A blog about the intersection of books and life’. <http://evidenceanecdotal.blogspot.com/>

not a quick template by which we divide the world into ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ opinion; rather, what is required is the intellectual discernment, judgement and sensibility to sort the wheat from the chaff, to have the wherewithal to know, as Harold MacMillan once put it, ‘when a man is talking rot’. In other words, what is crucial are precisely those understandings and intellectual habits of mind which are the hallmarks of a liberal education.

## Moving the Humanities Off-Campus?

The challenge which educators face is this: how best to deploy the resources technology puts at our disposal?

In light of the many trenchant critics who have written about the soul-destroying quality of the technological society, it will doubtless strike many as counter-intuitive to argue for technology as enabling the goals of liberal learning. From the critiques of Ruskin and the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century, through to such critics as George Orwell, Jacques Ellul, Lewis Mumford, Theodore Roszak and Neil Postman, there has been a well-rehearsed series of objections to the social and educational tensions introduced by a world dominated by machines. While it would be unfair to lump all critics together, we can nevertheless detect a constant argument, one which in broadest outline goes something like this: technological progress represents a Faustian bargain for the human race, one which involves perilous tradeoffs and compromises, which potentially far outstrip the benefits afforded. Technology, it is argued, is both dehumanizing and dangerous, a false god, which unleashes inexorable, anti-social forces which threaten to destroy humane values. Ultimately, technology creates a society of soulless technicians who will eventually destroy the very civilization which technology ostensibly serves.

Here is not the place to enter into an extended discussion of the merits of such critics. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that arguments about techno-dystopias tend to rely on the idea that there is a basic incompatibility between a technological civilization such as our own and the promotion of humane and civilized values. Perhaps it is true to say that some such arguments proceed by denying (or minimizing) the many obvious benefits of technology while simultaneously sounding a deterministic note, one which diminishes or denies altogether human agency, leaving little space for human ingenuity and adaptability.<sup>20</sup> There is surely something here that we need to be wary of. On the other hand, there are equally surely certain potential benefits in making more use of the new technology to provide for a liberal education.

Liberal learning, unlike say, training in technical fields, requires very little by way of apparatus or paraphernalia. Dr. Johnson, when asked by a star struck admirer

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<sup>20</sup> Here, for example, is Jacques Ellul, from his best-known book *The Technological Society*: ‘The human being is no longer in any sense the agent of choice. Let no one say that man is the agent of technical progress ... and that it is he who chooses amongst possible techniques. In reality, he neither is nor does anything of the sort. He is a device for recording effects and results obtained by various techniques’. New York, Vintage Books (1964, p 80).

where he received such a splendid education, replied, 'From books, Madam, like everyone else.' Beyond access to important books and writing, very little else is required by way of equipment. It is difficult here to improve upon Leo Strauss's pithy definition: 'A liberal education is an intercourse with the greatest minds. ... It requires reading with sufficient care and attention what the best minds have had to say about the most important questions.'<sup>21</sup>

Reading important thinkers then lies at the heart of a liberal education. Or to state it more accurately, the reading of important writers under the guidance of a competent teacher is the essence of liberal learning. What is required by the student (apart from basic literacy), then, is access to the writings of the great minds, and a teacher. The question becomes whether or not these two elements can be supplied on-line.

It is surely the case that there has never been a time when the resources necessary for a liberal education have been so abundantly and cheaply available. Perhaps the greatest educational development in history is the Internet and the World Wide Web, in that it provides to anyone with a computer an unparalleled access to the thoughts, ideas, data and information of our civilization. In essence, it potentially provides access to all of human knowledge. If liberal education is primarily about engaging with the great writers, as Strauss claims, then the Internet has placed at our disposal the entire pantheon of the written record of the race. And this is not overstated. Entire university libraries are being digitalized and put on-line, even as Google has plans to digitalize every book, and put all the world's books on-line.<sup>22</sup> Obscure books and journals that were once ensconced in universities libraries and available exclusively to the university community of scholars and students are now readily available across the planet at the click of a mouse. Researchers, rather than spending endless hours in the library searching through abstracts, can now access the latest findings in their field virtually instantaneously. Scholars, no longer bound by the restrictive, expensive prerogatives of paper and ink publishing, can publish instantly on-line for free. In brief, the World Wide Web is a source that continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. It also updates itself constantly. In both respects, the traditional university library is at a huge disadvantage.

There is also a huge and growing library of free university lectures available as podcasts, all of which can be downloaded and listened to at the student's leisure.<sup>23</sup> Anyone with an MP3 player or iPod now has the capability of listening to an almost limitless variety of lectures from some of the world's foremost authorities. Websites such as 'Open Culture' offer a sampling of the best 'free educational and cultural content on the web'. For example, one can listen to a course offered by

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<sup>21</sup> Leo Straus, 'What is a Liberal Education?' (2004), *Academic Questions*, Vol. 17, Number 1, 31–36.

<sup>22</sup> 'Google plans to put all the world's books on-line', <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/science-technology/Google-Plans-to-Put-All-the-Worlds-Books-Online-80427622.html>

<sup>23</sup> A recent study found that students retained more after listening to a podcast lecture than they did from traditional lectures, leading researchers to speculate that it was because students could stop the lecture, rewind and listen over to those parts which they had trouble understanding. See 'iTunes university better than the real thing'. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn16624-itunes-university-better-than-the-real-thing.html>

Michael Sandel of Harvard, 'Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?', or to Yale's Donald Kagan's 'Introduction to Greek History' or to any number of acknowledged experts, speaking to practically any subject in the contemporary university calendar.

In addition to audio podcasts, YouTube offers a wide array of short, topical videos, including lectures, interviews and debates, all of which are available on-line for free. For example, we can watch the Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre delivering the 2009 Newman Lecture, or listen to Mary Beard debate Felipe Hernandez-Armesto on whether 'Public schools are a blight on British Society', or listen to Martha Nussbaum discourse on the philosophy of Aristotle. We can also watch intellectually compelling television shows from the past, such as Bryan Magee's 'Men of Ideas', James Burke's 'Connections' or Kenneth Clarke's 'Civilization'.

And commercial, for-profit enterprises are producing an abundance of quality offerings in responding to the public's demand for traditional liberal arts. Probably the best known of these is The Teaching Company, which offers pre-recorded lectures (in both audio and visual formats) given by proven classroom stars, and covering subjects from physics to poetry. Rosetta Stone offers instruction in dozens of foreign languages, while Word2Word offers on-line language classes at a nominal price. A company called Knowledge Products offers courses narrated by actors and other public figures; for example, Charlton Heston narrates excerpts from the great philosophers, while Ben Kingsley narrates a course on Religion and Spirituality.

In short, the resources are obviously there, thanks to the new technology, in a way and to a degree that they have never been before. It is surely the teaching element that the technology cannot be relied upon to provide. No technology can take the place of a real classroom with a capable and dedicated teacher and willing students, a situation which a colleague once referred to as 'full-frontal learning'. There is simply no technological substitute for the passion that a good teacher can bring to his subject, just as there is no substitute for the give and take of unmediated discussion by real flesh and blood bodies in real time. In short, the ideal of Socratic engagement remains the pedagogical ideal best suited for teaching the humanities, meaning all that is required for education to take place is a teacher with something to impart and students who are eager and ready to learn. Everything else, including the latest 'gee-whiz' gadgetry, is negotiable. The question then is this: can the new technology compensate for the lack of a real, flesh-and-blood teacher?

We think the answer to this question is an unqualified 'no'. The reason we assert this answer so confidently is that we have, it seems to us, a ready historical parallel that provides abundant empirical evidence.

In the 1960s a number of educationalists were loosely bracketed together under the name 'Deschoolers'.<sup>24</sup> In essence they argued that the very institution of schooling was anti-educational. For example, instead of getting people to think for themselves in a serious, analytic and effective way, schools taught students to be docile. Instead of engaging the student's imagination and passion, schools created students who were

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<sup>24</sup> In its anti-institutional stance, the deschooling movement was largely indebted to Rousseau. Eminent among the names associated with it were Ivan Illich (1971), Postman and Weingartner (1971) and Reimer (1971).

passive – empty receptacles, into whom information was pumped. Most people, it was asserted, learnt better and more naturally outside of the conformity enforced by institutions. The deschoolers proposed to replace formal schooling with an informal reliance on homeschooling, libraries, volunteer teachers, philosophical cafes and of course the emerging technology.

The dangers the deschoolers warned of in formal schooling were real enough, but the view that in general everyone could and would thrive educationally through self or community help was unrealistic. The truth is that in addition to access to resources and good will, there needs to be motivation, the cultivation of interest and enthusiasm, explanation, the development of understanding and above all selection of curriculum material (or to put it bluntly, ‘quality control’). In brief, what the deschoolers failed to adequately account for in the educational engagement were the sorts of things that a good teacher provides. Of course society has educational resources generally available without recourse to schools; and of course some people can teach themselves either individually or in groups. But such people are the exceptions. It seems clear that the majority would not, for one reason or another, be able to make effective use of such resources. Nor would they educate themselves in any meaningful way. So despite the democratic and egalitarian rhetoric which accompanied the claims of the deschoolers, it soon became obvious that those who might benefit most from ‘deschooling’ were those children from advantaged circumstances, just as those who suffered the most were those who were already educationally disadvantaged in one way or another.

It is interesting to speculate why schools, rather than universities, were the prime target of the deschoolers. It is probably because universities then still had some pretensions to providing the kind of educational society that deschoolers were arguing for. But the changes we have referred to in current university principle and practice make the critical part of the deschooling thesis once more very telling. Yet the problem with the deschooling thesis remains constant: despite the proliferation of resources made available through technology, we still have no real reason to believe that if we leave it to the general public, they will find their way to the resources. And when they do, it is often the case that without the guidance of a teacher, the resultant ‘education’ can be haphazard and eccentric at best, or else positively pernicious and anti-educational. For example, one may study Shakespeare not for his insights into the human condition, but to decode the numerological secrets contained in his plays. Teachers and the institutions that support learning are still the best way for most individuals to acquire a liberal education and ultimately to create a society of well-educated people.

## **Conclusion**

Our conclusion is therefore that we need institutional backing to forward liberal and lifelong education. We continue to need teachers to exercise some kind of judgement and guide learning.



Fundamentally even today's technology provides only a bank of information and means of rapid calculation, however complex and sophisticated they may be. Knowing how to access information is not the same as understanding ideas; knowing how to carry out formal steps in a process of calculation is not the same as critical thinking; being well informed is not the same as being sensible or wise; being able to perform various operations is not the same as having a certain character.

Current technology is of enormous help in providing lifelong education in the liberal tradition, but it needs institutionalizing in terms of developing curriculum and above all teaching. It is time the universities returned to making this their central mission.

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# Chapter 52

## The Impact of Lifelong Learning on Organizations

Karen E. Watkins, Victoria Marsick, and Young Saing Kim

### Introduction

Lifelong learning is more essential than ever before in today's global, high technology knowledge economy. Organizations increasingly see the need for ongoing learning and development to achieve both current and future business results. Yet the current economy has created significant pressure to clearly tie learning to the strategic objectives of the business. Organizations, as well, have responded differently to the learning imperative for many reasons, for example, size, profitability, technology, industry, market share, and the influence of national or local government policy. Many organizations *expect* employees to develop, but in many Western countries and global companies, support for employees varies greatly with level and perceived value. Employees are often stratified, with the greatest resources – time, money, opportunities, and educational/coaching support – funneled to high potential/impact managers and knowledge workers. Organizations may provide some access to resources and rewards for other

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employees, but they are expected to be self-directed, often in pursuit of annual development and performance goals.

Because people are working longer, at the same time that work itself is changing rapidly, learning must occur at an equal rate or people will not retain their jobs in a global demand labor market. In addition to higher expectations within individual jobs, the 2008 annual survey of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) found that, even compared with 2 years ago, ‘organizations are now requiring a broader range of skills (61%) and a higher level of skills (40%)’.

Human Resource Development (HRD) must be strategic and aligned with business results. Facilitators deploy learning in multiple ways in multiple contexts. As jobs are eliminated, individuals are pressed to find time for learning while managing more work and longer hours for fewer benefits. In some Asian countries, employees work an 11- or 12-h day. What is the context of lifelong learning in the workplace under these conditions?

## The Current Context of Learning in the Workplace

Despite cut backs, in many Western and global organizations, support for HRD remains high. The CIPD (2009) found that ‘76% agree that “learning and development in my organization is seen as an important part of business improvement”’ (p 3). The Institute of Management and Administration (2004) argues that there is a renewed emphasis on training in today’s organizations because learning is central to innovation, which in turn drives the growth that many organizations pursue. Coetzer (2007) found that employees who have opportunities for continuous learning on the job are more engaged and invested in their work, and ‘the organization becomes better poised to respond to global and local changes’ (p. 417).

The overall level of effort, as indicated by training expenditures, was less than the previous year: ‘Average training expenditures (which include training budgets and payroll) fell 11% over the past year – from \$1,202 per learner in 2007 to \$1,075 in 2008’ (O’Leonard 2009, p. 2). Overall, total training spending in the US has suffered a drop after many years of increases (ASTD State of the Industry Reports 2007, 2008, 2009). However, as Table 52.1 shows, the total expenditures have remained fairly strong.

In the UK, between 2008 and 2010, corporations saying that their economic circumstances had worsened went from 44% to 57% to 65% (CIPD 2008, 2009, 2010). Funding cuts in both the US and the UK have reduced reliance on external vendors and, more recently, on on-line learning programs. A recent survey of US

**Table 52.1** Training expenditures over time in the US in billions

Year	2007	2008	2009
Expenditures	\$129.6	\$134.39	\$134.1

organizations (O'Leonard, 2009) shows that companies cut their training spending and staffing, and made changes to their program priorities. As a result:

Less training was delivered in 2008 – and by different methods. The rise of online training came to a halt, as organizations switched to coaching, collaborative activities and less-costly methods. Program spending allocations also changed, with new priorities on mandatory, compliance and job-specific training. (Ibid., p. 4)

In the UK, learning and talent development departments are ‘more business-focused (38%)’ and have experienced ‘a reduction in external suppliers and a move to in-house provision (31%), and redundancies of staff (20%)’ (CIPD 2010, p. 4).

As economic conditions drive a laser focusing of priorities, organizations are placing emphasis on creating a learning culture and on talent development. In 2009, the annual CIPD survey noted that:

The greatest changes in learning and training methods that have occurred over the last two years are the introduction of new programmes to develop the role of line managers (61%) and efforts to develop a learning and development culture across organizations (50%). (p. 2)

A strategic focus on creating a learning culture is essential in today's context.

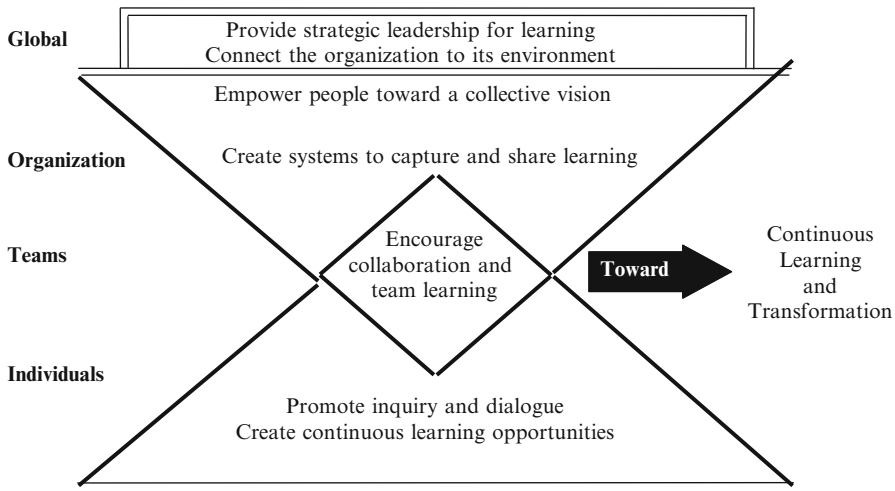
## Creating a Learning Culture

Over the last two decades, informal learning strategies have increasingly complemented training to meet continuous learning needs. But it is clear that these strategies alone cannot adequately prepare for the future needs of employees and organizations. More emphasis is being placed on developing a culture that can motivate and reward learning and change throughout the organization across departments, hierarchical levels, employee turnover, and changing economic conditions. The social, organic nature of effective learning is being acknowledged. These changes have revolutionized learning and development to support more learning on the job that is integrated with work. Gone is reliance on individual training, equated with seat time in a classroom.

Organizations Seek to Develop Core Competencies:

Core competencies are the collective learning in the organization, especially how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies. ... it is also about the organization of work and the delivery of value. ... Core competence is communication, involvement, and a deep commitment to working across organizational boundaries. It involves many levels of people and all functions. ... Unlike physical assets, which do deteriorate over time, competencies are enhanced as they are applied and shared. (Prahalad and Hamel 1990, p. 82)

Such competencies enable adaptive, learning cultures that support continuous learning of an often virtual, globally dispersed, migrating workforce. In a global market competing for highly skilled employees, ‘Clearly the best way for companies to win the talent wars is to turn themselves into learning organizations. The trouble



**Fig. 52.1** Watkins and Marsick (1993) model of dimensions of a learning organization

is that few of them know how to do this' (Wooldridge 2006, p. 20). The idea of the learning organization, popularized by Peter Senge (1990), emerged as an attempt to identify the competencies that enable rapid organizational transformation and evolution. Although learning organization initiatives have also been fads, the enduring concept of strategic organizational learning is very much alive.

Organizational learning relies on culture as a primary means of growing organizational capacity:

the culture of the organization is both the consequence of the organization's prior experience and learning, and the basis for its continuing capacity to learn. What the organization can or cannot do will depend very much upon the actual content of its culture and how that culture aligns or integrates the various sub-cultures of its sub-systems. And the long-range adaptability of the organization will depend upon its ability to perpetuate the core elements of its culture through socialization processes, while maintaining enough slack to allow for the evolution of new cultural assumptions to take into account new ideas. (Schein 1996, p. 3)

One approach to understanding and assessing whether or not an organization is structured to promote organizational learning is found in the work of Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1997; Marsick and Watkins 1999, 2003). They identified key dimensions essential to creating a learning culture, one in which continuous learning is fundamental to business success. A learning organization has an enhanced capacity to learn and change. Figure 52.1 depicts the model of the learning organization developed by Watkins and Marsick.

Organizations structured to promote continuous learning have a culture that: values and provides resources and tools for individual learning; ensures opportunities for dialogue and inquiry, including capturing suggestions for change; emphasizes team learning and collaboration to promote cross-unit learning; empowers people to enact a collective vision; creates systems to capture and share this learning; makes systemic connections between the organization and its environment, scanning the

environment to learn and anticipate future needs; and provides leadership for learning through managers who know how to facilitate talent development of their employees and who themselves model learning.

Watkins and Marsick developed a diagnostic tool to measure changes in organizational learning practices and culture based on their model, as well as measures of change in financial and knowledge performance: the *Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire* (DLOQ) (Watkins and Marsick 1997). This instrument diagnoses factors that influence the overall adaptiveness of the organization. The DLOQ has been tested and modified through numerous research studies.

Through the work of Watkins and Marsick, other scholars, and that of their and others' students, the dimensions of a learning culture have been explored throughout the world. Over 70 studies have now been published reporting results from the DLOQ and over 20,000 people have completed the survey. Studies outside the US include those in Australia, Brazil, China, Columbia, Indonesia, Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Turkey, and Yemen. The DLOQ is now in multiple languages including Arabic, Bahasa Melayn (Malay), Chinese, Dutch, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish.

A meta-analysis across all of these studies shows that:

- Across languages, cultures, and types of organizations, these dimensions are durable and correlate with soft and hard measures of performance.
- Creating a learning culture correlates with knowledge performance which correlates with financial performance.
- Organizational level changes are more significant for changes in knowledge and financial performance than individual level changes, especially:
  - Embedding systems to capture and share learning (correlates 0.676 with knowledge performance; 0.589 with financial performance<sup>1</sup>).
  - Empowering people toward a collective vision (correlates 0.691 with knowledge performance; 0.625 with financial performance).
  - Making systemic connections to the environment (correlates 0.689 with knowledge performance; 0.655 with financial performance).
  - Providing leadership for learning (correlates 0.660 with knowledge performance; 0.629 with financial performance).

The correlation between dimensions of a learning culture and performance has helped leaders to see the importance of embedding learning systems and infrastructure to support continuous learning throughout the organization. Bersin and Associates (Mallon 2010) also developed a survey of learning culture and administered it to 40,000 training, HR and business leaders. They then compared their responses to ten performance measures. Their data show that 'learning culture, represented by 40 high-impact learning culture practices, directly accounts for 45% of overall improved business outcomes' (p. 7). Their model identified six core elements of a learning culture:

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<sup>1</sup>Data from Watkins and Milton (2009).

building trust, empowering reflection, demonstrating learning's value, enabling knowledge sharing, empowering employees, and formalizing learning as a process (p. 5).

Creating a learning culture, then, is one means of situating lifelong learning in the very DNA of the organization. The focus on learning puts more responsibility on learners to seek continuous learning, and on leaders and organizations to create the infrastructure to support that learning. This can include everything from access to databases, to desktop learning systems, or to reading groups. It requires leaders to ensure that people are given time and resources to support their learning. Increasingly, it has also required line managers to take a more proactive role in facilitating learning.

The 2010 annual CIPD Survey noted that the greatest change affecting learning and talent development in the next 5 years would be 'a greater integration between coaching, organizational development and performance management to drive organizational change. For almost four in ten (37%), it will be greater responsibility devolved to line managers' (CIPD 2010, p. 2). Management-led or directed strategies include coaching and mentoring, project assignments, job rotation, job shadowing, one-on-one sessions with higher level managers, and action learning programs.

## National Policy to Build Learning Culture

Drawing on research using the DLOQ, Kim (2007) has helped shape national policy to build learning culture in small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Korea. SMEs comprise more than 99% of all business enterprises and 88% of employees in Korea (KSMBA 2009) (see Table 52.2). These percentages are larger than the average percentage in many other countries. SMEs in Korea typically provide parts and material to larger manufacturing industries.

Therefore, a critical policy issue in Korea is to make SMEs competitive and provide for the quality of life for SME employees. Policy focuses on skill development. The Ministry of Employment and Labor supports skill development using funds raised by employment insurance based on 0.3–0.7.5% of individual incomes. However, only formal education and training are refundable.

**Table 52.2** Percent of employees by enterprise size in Korea

Enterprise size in Korea	Employees in Korea (%)
5–9	50.1
10–19	25.8
20–49	16.4
50–99	4.7
100–299	2.5
300 or more	11.6
Total	100

*Source:* Small and Medium Business Administration (2007)

**Table 52.3** Need for formal education and training by enterprise size

Necessity for formal education and training	% Response by organizational size ( <i>N</i> =2,059 SMEs)			
	5–9	10–49	50–99	100–299
Training is necessary	41	81.8	88	90.5
Training is not necessary	59	18.2	12	9.5
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: KOSBI (2007)

**Table 52.4** Gap between need for and practice of formal education and training by enterprise size

Need and practice, formal education and training	% Response by organizational size ( <i>N</i> =2,059 SMEs)				
	5–9	10–49	50–99	100–299	Sub-total
Yes, we need, and are conducting	12.7	53.5	70.8	77.8	45.3
Yes, we need, but are not conducting	46.3	28.2	17.2	12.7	30.9
No, we do not need, and are not conducting	41.0	18.2	12.0	9.5	23.8
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: KOSBI (2007)

The Korean government decided to launch the Learning Organization Initiative (LOI) as an innovative experiment to meet SME needs. The framework used was the learning organization as operationalized by the DLOQ. The learning organization was seen as a better fit with characteristics of SMEs' skills formation, because SMEs often rely primarily on informal workplace learning (Ashton and Sung 2006; Kim 2007; Kim et al. 2008). Tables 52.3 and 52.4 show the discrepancy between SME needs and the governmental scheme of skill development. Surveys showed less reliance on formal training in SMEs. Policy makers and HRD scholars also noticed that SMEs' participation in free formal training programs had decreased substantially.

A challenge in designing this initiative was to provide flexibility in choice to enterprises with different needs and organizational cultures, while also creating a uniform structure that could be implemented across enterprises. This called for an implementable standard package with a stable, required core and a flexible range of options that remained consistent with learning organization practices and culture.

Kim used Watkins and Marsick's seven dimensions of learning organization to develop the framework for the standard package. He reverse engineered the DLOQ to identify practices likely to support the development of each dimension of the learning organization. He drew on research insofar as possible, along with lessons from action learning and total quality management. He adapted these practices based on both national culture and differences in organizational culture between SMEs and large organizations. The package was subsidized to support implementation in SMEs.

The LOI package was composed of seven sub-programs in three categories. The first category, improved infrastructure for facilitating learning, included a consulting service for a supportive HR system; constructing a training room to provide space



for learning; and building a learning team to provide infrastructure for team and organizational learning. The second category, learning activities for facilitating individual and collective learning, included regularly scheduled team learning hours, mentoring between skilled and unskilled employees, and structured on-the-job training (SOJT). The third category focused on developing a knowledge management system (KMS) that included ways to celebrate and share learning in consultation with management.

Participating SMEs could choose among many of these components, but all SMEs had to adopt and develop a learning team at the heart of its efforts. The learning team – comprising management, learning facilitators, and employee representatives – provided organizational slack for continuous team learning. It was a place to negotiate differences in views that provided time and space for collective learning. The learning space not only provided physical space; it also symbolized empowerment by validating the idea that everyone could learn. Consulting helped to develop skill in managing learning, create organizational settings that support learning, and enhance problem solving. Coaching focused on customized interventions to motivate employees and build capacity to set and achieve learning goals. Appreciation of the learning team's results validated knowledge sharing, and rewarded learning performance. SOJT systematized learning on the job in ways that increased management confidence that time and effort invested in learning would yield results, such as reducing repetitive mistakes and defect rates (Jacobs 2003).

The initiative helped to build a learning network of HR staff and learning team leaders across SMEs. The network facilitated problem solving and learning, as well as enabling benchmarking of one another. HR staff and learning team leaders experienced similar challenges when implementing learning team activities and other new approaches. Sharing what they learned in the network enabled collective learning.

A key driving force for implementing the LOI was financial support, along with resources (i.e. manuals and training), and motivation instilled by competition for high performance among engaged SMEs. Kim, as the LOI advisor, used an action research approach to implementing the initiative given that he could not anticipate all of the problems that would arise among the more than 300 SMEs participating and given the customized and adaptive nature of the initiative.

The LOI was launched in 2006, and data have been collected each year from participating organizations. In addition to DLOQ data, which include survey-based measures of knowledge and financial performance, Kim assessed a broad range of outcomes using measures for: physical and financial infrastructure for learning; job skills, knowledge and attitude; performance; quantity and quality of learning activities; knowledge creation; organizational effectiveness; industrial relationships; quality of working life; and safety and health at the workplace.

The Government assessed results and impact on performance in order to decide whether or not to sustain the LOI. Assessment can help to understand the value and effectiveness of an LOI in practice, and further expand knowledge about the learning organization culture as well as informal learning, which was the dominant mode in these SMEs.

One matched control design study was undertaken using a control group selected from a database of the Korean Chamber of Commerce matched closely by firm size and industry, and by respondents' gender, age and education. The *t*-test was deployed to test the mean difference of the two groups. The LOI group scored higher on most criteria than the non-LOI group. The LOI organizations' infrastructure of learning, quantity and quality of their learning, job and general skills, employee relationship and safety and health at the workplace were more improved than that of the other group. However, there were no significant differences between the groups in the following variables: foreign language ability, computer skills, qualification attainment, patent registration, required formal training and official procedures, as well as job and organization satisfaction, or work and family balance. Thus, the results of the organizational initiative can be attributed to the cultural variables measured by the DLOQ, not to other mediating variables such as demographics.

Additional evidence of success is that more SMEs want to participate because they observed the changes that took place in the engaged SMEs. These results also show that it is possible to use strategic practices to help companies function more like learning organizations. Diagnosis helps to configure customized initiatives, based on understanding of a company's learning culture, infrastructure for learning, and quantity and quality of learning. These data demonstrated that while different interventions were needed in each organization, what was important in driving results was the common underlying dynamics of a healthy learning culture.

The study thus supported the organic, contextualized nature of informal learning in a learning culture. The organization's work is to empower employees to become self-directed and to support them in participating in various learning activities designed to achieve strategic goals. Formal education and training are often necessary as the backbone of skill development but are not sufficient to meet new needs. Informal learning within work settings is a key enabler of bridging learning and organization culture (Marsick et al. 2009).

This national HRD LOI policy experiment offers an alternative, centered on developing a learning culture, to conventional formal education and training strategy. The LOI cultivates self-directed lifelong learning along with knowledge sharing within and across SMEs. The LOI shows how to formulate a new institutional implementation framework to fit into policy makers' norms and responsibility as well as tailoring it to the unique workplace context.

## Developing Global Leadership Talent

A critical focus that merits increasing attention, despite cost, is leadership development. Mattioli (2009) notes that, despite layoffs and recession-starved budgets, many employers are investing in leadership-development, hoping not to be caught short of strong managers when the economy recovers. 'Identifying and grooming leaders is important in good times', says Bret Furio, senior vice president of

consumer lifestyle for Philips Electronics North America. ‘In times of crisis when the economy is struggling’, he adds, ‘it’s imperative’ (p B4).

From a talent development perspective, acquiring and developing individuals with critical talents enriches the core capacities of the organization. Burgelman and Siegel (2008) believe that a primary component of organizational core competencies is the talents and competencies of key managers: ‘the venture’s distinctive competencies, which encompass the technical, commercial, and administrative and managerial competencies in which it excels to create customer value relative to competitors’ (p. 141). The *11th PwC Global CEO Survey* found that 62% of organizations believe that to compete for talent they need to change the way they recruit, motivate and develop their employees (Price-Waterhouse 2008). Deloitte Research (2007) describes a talent paradox as survival of the skilled – managers skilled in ensuring coordination among a globally dispersed workforce, managing a global workforce with varied demographic profiles, skill sets and expectations, who understand the impact of changing demographics and skill sets in different locations, and who can plan accordingly (p 2). In the UK, employers see a gap in leadership skills in managing performance and leading and managing change. In addition, they believe that the next 12 months will require skill in leading in a strategic, future-focused way (CIPD 2010, p. 2). Clearly much is expected of leaders – and of talent development programs.

O’Leonard (2009) is concerned that funding for leadership development may diminish:

These programs are typically expensive to deliver and many organizations are modifying their leadership programs with blended-learning approaches to save money. We believe it would be unwise to cut these programs altogether. Forward-thinking companies will continue to invest in leadership development for their futures. (p. 5)

Leaders are also the architects and sustainers of a learning culture.

The Center for Creative Leadership defines leadership as the social processes for producing the shared outcomes of direction, alignment and commitment; and a leadership culture as the self-reinforcing web of individual and collective beliefs and practices in an organization for producing these outcomes (Drath et al. 2008). Key to their model is the idea that new skills of leaders can bridge the gap between where the organization is now and where it needs to go, that is, to be able to conceptualize and lead the organization toward a new capacity requires a new capacity in the leader. For modern organizations, they argue that cultures must move from dependent or independent to *interdependent* – where leadership is a collective activity that requires mutual inquiry, learning, and a capacity to work with complex challenges. Leadership that is isolated and focused on individual talents cannot compete with the demands of this workplace context. Yet few leadership programs develop leaders to work in team environments.

To prepare leaders to work in this context, we need equally adaptive and generative talent development programs. Action learning is particularly effective in creating this kind of complex, team learning rich context because it is an explicit strategy both to enhance learner’s capacity to make critical judgments, and to

work collaboratively, as well as to improve business results. Talent development approaches are using more high impact learning approaches such as experiential or on-the-job learning, action learning and other collaborative approaches, coaching/mentoring, and job rotations (CIPD 2010, p. 7).

## Evaluating Lifelong Learning in Organizations

As corporations face unprecedented financial turbulence, leaders have to make difficult choices. Many have already slashed training and development budgets (Berta 2009), even cutting whole training departments. On the other hand, many have held tight to their most strategic asset, their people, and have continued to invest cautiously in human resource development. Faced with global talent gaps in high need employees, and particularly in leaders, human resource executives have struggled to make the business case for retaining their services.

Learning and development departments have become more vigilant, not only about spending, but also in measuring results. As demonstrated in the Korean LOI, HRD often wants to identify and retain what works, and also demonstrate the value-added impact of lifelong learning, in part to argue for their survival. CIPD (2009) found that ‘almost two-thirds (65%) anticipate that learning and development activity will become more closely integrated with business strategy and 60% feel that there will be a greater emphasis on the evaluation of training effectiveness’ (p. 2). These findings are interrelated: to align tightly with organizational strategy, lifelong learning must deliver results that are tied to business goals.

O’Leonard (2009) argues that training departments need to run themselves like any other business: tracking and controlling spending, assessing value, and delivering programs closely aligned with corporate goals. Most human resources units would argue that they do this already, but there is considerable evidence that the majority of learning and talent development activities are not well evaluated. Without compelling data on the value of programs, organizations rely on employee self-report [48%], anecdotal data about changes [35%] and feedback from line managers [42%], but 11% do not evaluate talent development programs at all (CIPD 2010, p. 22). Other metrics used – such as retention of high potential employees, internal promotions, and the costs of replacing key employees – capture the *cost* of *not* doing talent development, but do not assess the *effectiveness* of what is being done.

O’Leonard (2008) notes that some organizations evaluate by using a balanced score card looking at ‘talent-related metrics, such as retention, promotions and certifications – as well as cost-related metrics, such as cost per learning activity, infrastructure costs and total training expenditures as a percent of company revenue’ [p. 6]. These value-added metrics help these departments tie learning and talent development efforts to business strategy.

Scholars can help learning and talent development departments make these critical choices by providing evaluation research to demonstrate the business returns of their investments in lifelong learning. This, however, is not readily accomplished.

The distance between financial gains from investments in learning and performance outcomes is too great – with a plethora of intervening variables. Moreover, financial gain may not be assessable in terms of new income, but rather in terms of costs not incurred, such as the cost of replacing a key employee. Developers have struggled to find meaningful metrics and measures.

For example, one of the most prevalent strategies for executive development is coaching. Data from the CIPD illustrates the difficulty of assessing outcomes. They found that:

Coaching takes place in four-fifths (82%) of organizations. Among organizations using coaching, only a third (36%) have a system to evaluate it. This system relies mainly on the collection of post-course evaluations (58%), individuals' testimonies (56%), on assessing the impact on business Key Performance Indicators of coaching (44%), and measuring the return on expectation (40%). (CIPD 2010, p. 25)

Since the purpose of coaching is to improve leadership effectiveness, these measures are at best weak indicators of success.

The training literature has focused on the best conditions and strategies to maximize learning transfer after training takes place (Baldwin and Ford 1988; Burke and Hutchins 2007; Choi and Ruona 2008). Kirkpatrick (1994) built a widely cited four-tier model of evaluation that looks at reactions to training, learning gained, behavioral outcomes, and the business impact or results. The Kirkpatrick model, however, only speaks to level of outcome, not to measures of effectiveness. Many models also focus primarily on formal education and training.

Increasingly, development is organic and holistic, as illustrated in the Korean SME LOI. Learning grows out of challenging experiences on the job that require new knowledge acquisition and skill development, as well as collaborative learning to solve real business problems. Employees and their managers increasingly self-identify desired outcomes, and take advantage of serendipitous outcomes tied to their experiences. Learning varies with the context, resources available, and problems faced. Attention shifts from pre-designed training to support in real time for the situated nature of workplace learning. Metrics for evaluating the success of these action-oriented, experiential learning programs should be equally organic, focusing on business results and individual and organizational impact. New models that capture salient outcomes and the impact of these programs on the business are needed.

One promising model is the theory-of-change model of evaluation. Funded by the Gates and Packard Foundations, The Evaluation Forum (2003) created a guide for evaluating leadership development programs based on identifying anticipated causal pathways that underlie a program. One begins by identifying key activities and how they lead to intended outcomes. Pathways are mapped and metrics collected at each step of the way to learn more about patterns of implementation. Of particular interest for action learning programs that operate at individual, team, and organizational levels is that they specify outcomes at four levels:

1. Short-term individual level (changes in knowledge and skill in the program).
2. Intermediate individual level (changes in participant behavior demonstrated at some period after the program).

3. Organizational level (changes in the organization that result, in part, from expanded roles of participants).
4. System level (changes that result in new policies, procedures, etc. that result from having better trained leaders in the organization). (p. 6)

From this tiered analysis, designers of learning programs can better understand outcomes from each step in implementation and how outcomes interact across levels.

## Conclusion

Even as organizations begin to recover from the global financial crisis, learning and development in organizations is emerging as a more strategic and focused partner in enabling organizations to move toward an uncertain future. As the CIPD concluded:

In difficult times it is easy to concentrate on core spending and dispense with what are sometimes perceived as 'discretionary' activities. However, that can lead people to assume that learning and talent development is being downplayed. The results show little evidence of that, instead it is clear that learning is being challenged to deliver value to organizations in different ways. Whilst two-thirds of respondents have seen a decline in their economic circumstances in the past year, at the height of recession this was just under half. This has led to a tightening of funding but it is not a simple story of slashed budgets. It appears as though learning and talent development is becoming more focused on value and impact; it is doing more with less. Furthermore, what emerges is a dynamic and shifting picture with real opportunities for Learning & Talent Development to benefit from the new emphasis on talent and the integration of coaching, organizational development and knowledge management into compelling change and agility programmes. (CIPD 2010, p. 32)

While learning and talent development programs will benefit by being more strategic, there are a number of concerns worth noting. First, as Price-Waterhouse and Cooper (2008) found, initiative fatigue is a key barrier to change, cited by 32% of respondents. Employee resistance was cited by 33% and people issues by 32%. Many of the strategies being used for lifelong learning in organizations are less expensive because they are not instructor-led. This means that employees themselves, their peers, or their managers are picking up more of the burden of designing learning. This decentralization of responsibility for learning will not be effective if learning departments are not strategic in providing appropriate tools, clear direction, and training for managers in their new roles as facilitators of learning. Overtaxed employees and leaders will need compelling reasons to engage in this learning on their own.

A related concern from a critical cultural perspective (Fenwick 2000) is that 'any system is a complex site of competing cultures' (p. 256) that includes competing systems of power that can also alter the course and effectiveness of learning and development.

Critical cultural perspectives suggest that learning in a particular cultural space is shaped by the discourses and their semiotics (signs, codes, and texts) that are most visible and accorded most authority by different groups. These discourses often create dualistic categories such as man/woman, reflection/action, learning/doing, and formal/informal which determine unequal distribution of authority and resources. (Ibid., p. 257)

Lifelong learning is both critical to success in the global knowledge economy and differentially available to employees, depending on their level, industry, geography, business size, and other factors. As the Korean example demonstrates, national policy matters. Governments can have a significant role in creating a learning culture.

HRD is becoming more closely aligned with business strategies. This means that learning is part of the culture of the organization, and a major means to developing its key talent. A critical need is to develop ways to measure the success of these efforts that honor the more informal, organic integration of learning and work.

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# Chapter 53

## The Impact of Lifelong Learning on Communities

Stephen Brookfield

### Introduction

### Unpacking Development

Development, like so many other words in the discourse surrounding adult learning, sounds on the surface unobjectionable, even benign. Education, learning, training, change, development – these can only be good, only improving, can't they? My position is that these terms are always problematic; that is, that although they seem on the surface to be empirically neutral, when they are employed in speech and used to justify action they are always normatively based, always representing a set of interests deemed to be inherently desirable by those holding them. In this chapter, I want to explain more fully how normative and empirical elements are always interwoven in understandings of community development. I also want to argue that the concept of community development can be reframed in a way that grounds it in the normative pursuit of true democracy – a democracy that is participatory and economic. As part of this reframing I need to examine the learning tasks facing adults that this notion of community entails. These are learning to develop a worldview in which individual and collective well-being are seen as fundamentally interwoven, learning to develop agency, and learning to develop collective forms of association, communication and production.

Of course, if all conceptions of development are normative, then my own is equally so. In this chapter I explicate a notion of community development grounded

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in a particular set of values – those of democratic socialism. Specifically, in the example I use in the second half (of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers) the interests of one group (migrant workers) were advanced at the expense of another group (farm owners). This normative aspect of development was brought home to me early in my career in my first full-time job as an adult educator. My position was as a ‘Lecturer/Organizer’ (yes, that was the official job title) for a Department of Community, Social and Environmental Development in an English college of adult education. Implicit in the job descriptor was the assumption that the things I was working to develop in the community would somehow benefit the lives of those involved and that the way development was understood enjoyed broad support from the community at large. This neatly sidestepped the conflicts of interest based on race, class, gender, sexuality and ideology that represented different community groups’ notions of what should be developed and what that process should look like.

This sidestepping is familiar in adult education. In their review of adult development and cognitive development, Merriam et al. (2007) outline the dominance of psychological models of development in adult education, although they also acknowledge that socio-cultural models are becoming more prominent. In both these approaches development is defined as the ability to engage in increasingly complex forms of thinking about an ever more differentiated array of ideas, situations and actions. As the canvas of adult life is drawn ever more widely, adults need to create meaning out of anticipated events, but also unexpected crises. They learn from experiences that confirm existing intuitions, but also from confronting multiple contradictions, and from trying to reconcile discrepancies between what actually happens to them and what they believe should be happening to them.

So far, so good. Up to now, our discussion seems to suggest that adult development is, by definition, desirable. It enables us to account for the bewildering fragmentation of life in a diverse, rapidly changing world. However, the notion of development begs the massive questions of direction, interest and purpose. It is quite possible to extrapolate the logic described above and apply it to purposes that many would consider harmful and immoral. And, by extension, those same objectors would probably argue that that kind of development should be stopped – killed before it gets totally out of hand. Development is not neutral – it is always in a certain direction, always serving some interests rather than others. Like self-directed learning (which is often spoken of as similarly desirable and disconnected from questions of direction or interest) development is always for a purpose. We learn and develop (or others desire us to learn and develop) in certain ways to accomplish certain objectives, or to bring about a particular state of affairs. And sometimes the development of one person or group in a particular direction can only be achieved by the suppression of others.

Take the example of White supremacy or other doctrines of racial purity involving ethnic ‘cleansing’. Those communities who subscribe to the idea of Aryan superiority as embedded in particular bloodlines have developed ever more sophisticated arguments as to why their ideology is empirically correct. They have developed a

capacity to quote evidence selectively and to choose methods of communication that use symbolism, imagery and pageantry to persuade others of their case. The use of the term 'cleansing' with its connotations of removing the dirty, staining elements from something, is one such trick. Calling a unilateral, imperialist invasion a 'war of liberation' is another. Advocates of racial purity deliberately develop the ability to propose arguments that counter the most frequently voiced objections to their ideology. They also wish to implement curricula and organize education that develops others in this direction. Those devoted to White supremacy can meet the empirical conditions of development identified earlier (of reasoning in more complex ways about an increasingly wide range of issues and problems) while being passionate advocates of their cause.

The same argument could be made of those who develop a capacity for other forms of ideological manipulation. Political leaders develop the ability to ignore contrary evidence and to argue in the strongest possible ways for a cause that others consider reprehensible. The commitment of the Bush and Blair administrations to the invasion of Iraq is one such example. Such leaders see part of their political leadership as using the bully pulpit of office, along with various forms of nepotism, to persuade opinion leaders, and through them the broader citizenry, to develop public opinion in a certain direction. A developmental imperative in such a situation becomes creating the widespread perception that expressing opposition to an invasion is an unpatriotic act that only gives succour to democracy's enemies. Along similar lines, corporations, governments, sports teams and other entities seek to develop a brand to identify what they stand for, communicate a particular message and build support for their activities. Any counter message to this branding stands no chance of being heard in the mainstream media which themselves are corporations dependent on other corporations and governments for licences, funding and advertising dollars.

Of course, as one group in a community seeks to develop its capacities in one direction, other groups seek development in contrary directions. The oil industry wishes to develop the tax system and environmental policy in one direction, Greenpeace in another. The World Bank wishes to develop the economy in one direction, the Democratic Socialists of America in another. In families, communities and organizations, individuals and groups have strong commitments to developing themselves and their surroundings in ways that conflict directly with each other. And we must remember that the playing field on which these developmental wars are waged is not level. The dominant ideologies of capitalism, White supremacy and the tyranny of the democratic majority ensure that socialist ethics and organizations are defined as undemocratic and/or irrelevant and that racism is seen as having been addressed by desegregation legislation and affirmative action. White supremacy defines racism as a matter of individual choice rather than as systematic form of control in which media images and legal frameworks intersect to convince people that affirmative action has ensured that all now start life equal. So there is nothing inherently humanistic or benign about development; it all depends on the ways people frame its purpose and direction.

## **What Kind of Lifelong Learning Develops Communities in a Critical Way?**

A critical approach to conceptualizing community development sees it as a collective movement entailing three distinctive learning tasks. First is the task of people learning to recognize how their individual well-being, and their identity development, is inextricably linked to the interests of the wider group. Second is learning to develop agency, defined here as the inclination and capacity to act on, and in, the world in a way that furthers co-operative socialist values and practices. Third is learning to develop collective forms, movements, and organizations.

### ***Learning Task 1: Learning Collective Identity Development***

In this kind of lifelong learning, adults learn how to question the privatized perspectives and practices into which they have been socialized by dominant ideology, and then to develop a sense of personal identity that is tied to the collective. Privatization here is defined as a way of living that places self and family at the centre of the universe and interprets behaving responsibly as striving to gain the greatest advantages, and greatest measure of protection, for self and family. It sees competition for advantage (rather than competition linked to creative inspiration, as when one musician competes with another to crank out the rawest power or most beautiful melodic inspiration) as the natural condition of humankind. It also regards any form of state control – no matter how participatory or accountable – as inherently totalitarian and diminishing of humankind.

Countering a privatized worldview is a massive and daunting learning project, involving as it does confronting the full weight of history and socialization. It also entails great risks. One need only think of the history of the trade union movement in which all and every form of intimidation up to and including murder have been employed to ‘persuade’ workers that unions will lose them jobs and livelihoods and therefore stand against their interests. Of course, in naked political repression or union busting the lines of combat are clearly defined. In the hegemony of everyday socialization things are murkier as people see it as in their best interests not to contemplate any form of collective ownership or control. Thus, workers at Wal-Mart see the union movement as their enemy, parents of children in state schools see their best option as gaining a place at a private academy, and ordinary citizens see state-provided universal health care as the thin end of the wedge of totalitarian repression.

### ***Learning Task 2: Developing Agency***

The second lifelong learning task is to develop the inclination and capacity to act on and in the world in a way that furthers co-operative values and practices. Because capacity is as important as inclination, this means that such learning involves developing

skills to work with others to create collective movements and institutions. Hence, agency is exerted in such initiatives as the effort to unionize, to mobilize protests against illegal invasions, to create worker or economic co-operatives, to institute universal health care, to abolish private education and to create and nurture a revolutionary party. Several strategic and tactical dimensions to the learning of agency are discernible. There is learning how to create clear agendas and goals, so that whatever energy is available is not wasted on fruitless endeavours. Developing agency also involves learning to keep the broad social goal of long-term transformation in mind, while working on short- and medium-term goals that are achievable. Achieving short-term goals is itself inherently empowering, giving people the sense that their agency is real and waiting to be galvanized. Part of developing agency is also working out under which circumstances manipulation and coercion are justified along the lines discussed in Baptiste's pedagogy of justified ethical coercion (Baptiste 2000).

Learning to develop agency also means learning how to create support amongst groups of like-minded peers that cross lines of race, class, gender and sexuality – in mainstream political terms the creation of 'rainbow' coalitions. The literature on self-help groups (White and Madara 2002) has established beyond doubt the crucial role that such groups play in keeping members focused on their goals for change and feeling that their efforts are valued by others. Strategically, support groups are vital for all kinds of survival – psychological, physical, professional and so on. Anyone who has lived underground, subscribed to an ideology outlawed by the state, come to new sexual identity in the face of rampant homophobia, or developed race pride in a White Supremacist world knows how irreplaceable is the support offered by groups of peers. In McGary's (1997) view, the ability of African Americans to learn how "to form their own supportive communities in the midst of a hostile environment" – even in the worst of slavery – allowed them "to maintain healthy self-concepts through acts of resistance and communal nourishment" (p. 292). The considerable literature on transformative learning pays strong empirical testimony to the importance of groups for the development of radically new perspectives, meaning schemes and habits of mind (Mezirow and Associates 2000; Taylor 2000). Adults in the throes of transformative change usually depend on such groups to provide arenas in which new identities can be tested out and confirmed.

Finally, learning to develop agency also entails the capacity to stand fast and deepen commitment in the face of strengthening opposition, even in the face of failure. For those with an interest in democratic socialism such a capacity has always been crucial, given the power of monopoly and global capitalism. However, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, many who previously were potential allies now see socialism as a totally discredited idea. It does not seem to matter that many socialists were as critical of what they considered to be the state capitalism, rigid ideological control and suppression of dissent (both internally and amongst members of the Warsaw pact) exercised by the Soviet Union, as were the most right wing, free market thinkers. Additionally, the surge in post-modernist ideas has meant that 'grand' ideas such as justice, fairness and equity are now seen as suspect and that neo-Marxism and critical theory are viewed by many as irrelevant analyses because they were produced by dead, White, European males. Standing fast and deepening commitment are well nigh impossible tasks unless the support groups mentioned previously are present.

### ***Learning Task 3: Learning to Develop Collective Community Structures and Processes***

The third lifelong learning task is learning to develop collective forms, movements and organizations. Working class culture has long been lionized for its mutuality and collective nature – seen most famously perhaps in the trade union movement – but these values are also present in other settings. To take two brief examples, scholarship on gender has explored ‘the tradition that has no name’ to use Belenky’s and others’ formulation (Belenky et al. 1997). Building on their notion of connected knowing as a female form of epistemology (one that looks for interconnectedness and empathy in others’ ideas) Belenky and her co-authors elaborate a social and political tradition of interconnectedness that allows women to survive in the face of oppression and also to pursue interests held in common. This is the tradition of interdependence that holds that the well-being of the individual and of the collective can never be separated. In their study of groups of women in rural Vermont, Belenky and her co-authors note how the women studied view leadership as developed and exercised collectively, and how the task of leadership is to raise up one’s peers rather than to persuade them to one’s will.

The same tradition is embodied in the motto of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (founded in 1896) – ‘to lift as we climb’ – ensuring that “we must climb in such a way as to guarantee that all of our sisters, regardless of social class, and indeed all of our brothers, climb with us” (Davis 1990, p. 5). In the face of sexism and patriarchy, women have provided emotional support and practical assistance to each other, as the institutions of the state and civil society have proved unwilling to deal with their subjugation. The defining characteristic of the sisterhood of feminism is viewing the oppression of one as the diminution of all. This calls forth the need to organize across lines of race and class around “a revolutionary, multi-racial women’s movement that seriously addresses the main issues affecting poor and working class women” (Davis 1990, p. 7).

The Africentric paradigm, as articulated by writers such as Asante (1998a, b) and explored in adult education by Colin (2002) similarly views individual and collective identity as intertwined. In recent years, the African American Pre-Conference of the annual Adult Education Research Conference, along with activities of scholars such as Colin and Guy (1998), Guy and Colin (1998) and Sheard (1999), have generated a vigorous discourse around what constitutes an African-centred interpretation of adult educational practices and adult learning concepts. Instead of drawing on a Eurocentric body of work, Africentrism argues for the generation of an alternative discourse – including a discourse of criticality – that is grounded in the traditions and cultures of the African continent. It believes that work that draws on European traditions of thought, however well intentioned this work might be and however much these traditions might be reframed in terms of African American interests, always neglects the cultural traditions of Africa. Since such traditions are crucial constitutive elements of the identity of African Americans, the Africentric paradigm holds that it is these traditions that should dominate theorizing on behalf of African Americans.

## Learning to Exercise Community Leadership

When communities learn to develop collective leadership they mount a direct challenge to the individualized model of leadership typical of American culture. When leadership is collectively exercised three things typically happen. First, and most commonly, a community engages in a period of debate and analysis before deciding on a course of action that the majority of its members support. Second, when it comes to selecting who is to speak on behalf of the community, the community itself – and not some external authority – decides who that shall be. Third, whoever is selected as a temporary spokesperson can be recalled and replaced at any time; indeed, many groups exercising collective leadership introduce a rotating system in which everyone takes a turn at representing the group in any wider negotiations that take place.

Collective leadership challenges that most enduring of American myths – the self-made man or strong, self-sufficient pioneer woman, facing wilderness and danger with only their own fortitude and intelligence to call on, eventually triumphing against insuperable odds and carving out a piece of the world for themselves. Add the power of this myth to the socialistic connotations that the word ‘collective’ has for many people (collectivizing the countryside means taking hard-earned goods, services and property away from the peasantry and destroying private ownership and individual enterprise) and you have a powerful one-two ideological punch that ensures that anything collective is viewed as somehow un-American. Parenthetically, the pharmaceutical, insurance and medical establishment has successfully demonized socialized medicine as some sort of communistic plot to take health care away from ordinary people – when its whole point is to put decisions back in the hands of citizens rather than in the budget committees of Health Maintenance Organization (HMO’s). In Britain, the Prime Ministership (some would say Presidency) of Margaret Thatcher and then of Tony Blair destroyed the idea of collective cabinet responsibility; in other words, of a decision argued, fought over, made and then publicly defended by a whole group. It is perhaps not surprising that the notion of collective leadership has such a hard time establishing itself when union membership has declined precipitously and where the most successful corporation of all – Wal-Mart – is known for its union-busting practices.

When collective leadership is being authentically practised, all community members are committed to creating and implementing a shared vision. All assume some leadership responsibility. All have an opportunity to play a leadership role. All are willing to subordinate themselves to the group’s goals and interests. And when collective leadership prevails, there is no one person whom everyone else depends upon. Rather, work is done interdependently, so that everyone is seen as being necessary to the group’s success. It should be noted, as Joseph Raelin (2003) has pointed out in *Creating Leaderful Organizations: How to Bring Out Leadership In Everyone*, that some people have used the adjective ‘leaderless’ to describe situations where collective leadership is practised. Raelin argues that this term is a misnomer and that collective leadership more accurately refers to those contexts where everyone is a leader and is thus better characterized as ‘leaderful’.

Individuals in leaderful groups must alternately learn to lead and to follow, must understand when to push things forward and when to wait for others to exert healthy pressure on the group. Such leaders learn that everyone cannot lead at once, that there are times to voice a strong opinion or take a strong stand and other times to defer quietly and respectfully to others. In collective leadership everyone learns to accept responsibility for outcomes and to do everything possible to keep moving the community in productive and mutually engaging directions. Although there are always going to be disagreements and dissent about what the group is trying to accomplish, collective leadership models do oblige individuals, for the most part, to learn how to put self-interest aside and to align with the group's sense of the common good.

More than any other model of leadership, collective leadership asks community members to learn how to abandon their own individual ambitions in favour of the group's jointly arrived at aspirations. In this process, half measures are not workable. It is unreasonable to ask community members to give up their own ambitions and to support group goals if they have not had significant input into the construction of those goals. Only when the group's aims and decisions are constructed through a process to which everyone has made a contribution, can individuals be expected to set aside their self-interest to support the group's communal yearnings and to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. It is critical, then, that groups seeking to lead collectively also learn to implement envisioning, goal-setting and prioritizing activities that are consciously and conscientiously shared. This is at the heart of Jurgen Habermas's (1996) discourse theory of democracy, which argues that people will commit to decisions that have been arrived at only after full, democratic, public to-ing and fro-ing.

## **An Example of Lifelong Learning for Community Leadership: Cesar Chavez**

Although he became known around the world for his personal charisma, by vocation Cesar Chavez – most well known for organizing the National Farm Workers Union – was a *community* organizer. He believed that the most intractable problems of people were best addressed through activating the collective power and shared resources of the entire community. Central to such organizing was learning – learning about power, about how best to mobilize people, about using conflict to galvanize energies, and about how to recognize embryonic leaders. Chavez knew, too, that a sense of community does not emerge naturally; it must be carefully nurtured in the face of flagging energy. Leaders therefore need to learn what it takes to keep a sense of community vital and strong. For Cesar Chavez, the union community that he created to secure rights for farm workers was important, but so was the larger community of millions who boycotted non-union products and donated money to support the farm workers' cause. In the end, though, Chavez's effort to forge a community had one central and unified purpose: 'To overthrow a system that treats farm workers...as if they are not important human beings' (quoted in Dalton 2003, p. 9).



Those who joined the community that Cesar Chavez fashioned were united and inspired by this one simple and yet incredibly daunting goal.

In his quest to restore the human dignity of the farm workers, Chavez saw community building as his most important leadership task. In fact, as Dalton (2003) points out, Chavez's vision included the idea that 'our humanity is verified by joining together in communities of solidarity characterized by sacrificial service, voluntary poverty, and nonviolent action' (p. 164). Chavez never supported communities that were in any way exclusive or only concerned with the welfare of the farm workers. His community leadership always entailed a commitment to mutual service, to every member being held in some way responsible for the welfare of others, no matter what any individual's relative power might be. Although his leadership was most visibly exercised on behalf of farm workers, Chavez viewed it as being in pursuit of a society in which no one goes hungry, no one is kept out of work and everyone is accorded respect as a valued human being. In the process of building the Farm Workers Union, Chavez made sure that this organization was more than just a union designed to secure steady work and fair wages for its members, but truly a community of people who looked after each other across many realms, including health services, childcare, education and immigration.

Chavez's efforts to serve the farm workers were set against a history of 125 years of exploitation and violence. The growers had always been in control and had always been backed by California's leading institutions – from the police to the courts to the banks. Chavez had come to know this history well and was thus aware of just how difficult his task would be. But as he said, sometimes the only way to overcome such daunting odds is to pursue your goal as if nothing else mattered, even if it meant coming across as a fanatic, a fanatic for basic rights, a fanatic for community, a fanatic for human dignity. One of the ways dominant power controls threats to its dominance is by naming those who challenge it as fanatics. In response to this labeling Chavez said, 'There's nothing wrong with being a fanatic. Those are the only ones that get things done' (Levy 1975, p. 161).

His fanaticism was most evident in the inexhaustible energy he expended talking to people and getting them interested in a union. He moved to Delano, California, a central location for many of the farm workers. His method was simple, a variation on the house system developed by Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) founder, Saul Alinsky. You visited poor people's homes in their own neighbourhoods and you asked questions about what they thought was needed to make life in these neighbourhoods better. You also asked them about a union and whether they thought it could be one of the solutions to their problems. You did this night after night after night, even if it meant you were talking to only a half dozen people at a time. You listened mostly, but you also made sure there was time to talk about your own vision about how to improve life in the community. You wrote down names and phone numbers and you were happy if 1 person out of 20 was interested enough to continue to work with you, to help mould a community of like-minded leaders.

One of the most striking and significant aspects of Chavez's work as a community builder was his openness to new learning – learning about the dynamics of power, the incremental nature of mobilization and the need to develop organic

leaders grounded firmly in the community. When Fred Ross first approached him about helping the CSO to organize San Jose, Ross recognized something special about Chavez's commitment. For one thing, he asked questions that showed how interested he was and how much he wanted to learn. But there was something else. It was what Ross called "a kind of burning interest rather than one of those inflammatory things that lasts the night and is then forgotten" (Levy 1975, p. 102). Ross discerned early on that, like Ross himself, Chavez would persevere to achieve his goals. He would not give up easily. Ross also appreciated Chavez's quick, absorbent mind. Chavez may not have had much formal education, but he understood with surprising rapidity that it was necessary to consolidate the power of the Chicano community to make change. Ross noted: 'He made the connections very quickly between the civic weakness of the group and the social neglect of the barrio, and also conversely, what could be done about that social neglect once the power was developed' (Levy 1975, p. 102).

Chavez did learn quickly about power. Without an understanding of power and without knowing how to use it, the work of building community was rendered nearly impossible. When he was at the height of his influence as a union leader in California, he stressed that power formation was the key ingredient of change. When dealing with his adversaries, Chavez found that it was best to have some power, some influence over them before actually staging a meeting. He knew as well that such power did not come easily, that to generate it required an enormous amount of work, a huge commitment to organizing people. Although he was realistic about the necessity of accumulating power, he was actually rather distressed that wielding power was the only way to bring about real change. He attributed this to the flawed nature of humans, and noted often, like so many before him, that as important as power was, excessive power could corrupt even the most righteous movement. He was quick to add, however, that his own work was rarely if ever plagued by such a dilemma, as the farm workers' movement hardly suffered from a surfeit of power.

What Chavez learned about power in the most concrete sense was that it could only be developed by one person and one house meeting at a time. Every time he held a meeting of perhaps a dozen people in a person's home, he hoped to gain one solid ally, one person whom he could help and who in return would support the farm workers. As Chavez said, 'helping people was an organizing technique...I was willing to work day and night and go to hell and back for people – provided they did something for the CSO in return' (Levy 1975, p. 111). In other words, you organize and you build a power base slowly and painstakingly by establishing relationships with individual people. You get to know them by listening to them, by expressing a genuine interest in their situation and by doing what you can to improve their lot and address their problems. Slowly, but inexorably, you build a community of people who have been helped by the organization, and who, in turn, want to be of some service to others. Chavez expresses it simply but powerfully: 'the only way to build solid groups' is through problem solving with them around the situations that most drain their energies. In the process of doing this you not only learn how to solve people's problems, you learn 'how to help people by making them responsible' (Levy 1975, p. 111).

The lessons about community power, problem solving and encouraging communities to take responsibility were related to another lesson that Chavez never forgot. When dealing with the problems faced by poor people, you never go to the established leadership. You go to the grassroots, to the communities who are struggling on an everyday basis with a lack of power. There you develop leaders out of the rank and file, out of the people who know directly what it means to be poor and what it feels like to be exploited. In such a manner, community leadership is always embedded in the desires and concerns of the least advantaged. This is a direct implementation of what Gramsci (1971) meant when he described organic intellectuals as directors and persuaders of a movement that arose out of an oppressed group.

## Conclusion

Learning to create and preserve community – to foster the commons and re-build what Habermas (1984) called the public sphere – is a crucial lifelong learning task. But it is one in which the form and purpose of learning constantly changes. Even as geographical communities everywhere are disintegrating as suburbs sprawl and urban re-development cuts neighbourhoods apart, communities of function and virtual communities are formed in cyberspace as communication possibilities bring people together in common cause. However, models of collective leadership within communities are still rare. In adult education, teachers and facilitators mostly work solo. So the kind of lifelong learning the field can most usefully foster to create community is learning to develop collective leadership in the ways that Cesar Chavez and Ella Baker, amongst others, have demonstrated.

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# Chapter 54

## Is Lifelong Learning Making a Difference? Research-Based Evidence on the Impact of Adult Learning

**John Field**

### Introduction

We have, in recent years, seen a remarkable expansion in serious research attention to lifelong learning and its benefits (Schuller and Desjardins 2007). Many researchers and policy specialists find this work particularly persuasive, because it is based on large scale longitudinal survey data. These surveys follow a sample of individuals over time, asking them periodically about different aspect of their lives. Where the surveys ask for details about people's learning, the results can be correlated with other information about their lives. Much of this research is by British researchers, undertaken in two centres that were launched by the UK government in 1999 to investigate the economic and non-economic benefits of learning. The centres have attracted extensive international interest and are widely recognised as being at the leading edge of educational research. After here summarising and commenting on this work, as well as findings from other countries where available, I then consider the implications for policy, practice and research.

### The Economic Impact of Lifelong Learning

Economic factors such as income and employment play an important part in life-long learning. They can provide people with reasons for joining learning programs, as well as featuring in policy decisions on financing provision. The direct economic

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effects of lifelong learning potentially include impacts on earnings, on employability and on the wider economy. And since higher incomes or steady employment tends to have further effects on health, well-being and sociability, it also follows that the economic effects of learning have indirect outcomes.

Much recent research on the rates of return to learning has focused on the gains to the individual and less frequently the organisation (enterprise), rather than estimating the rate of return to the community. There has also been a very marked concentration on initial education. These problems are illustrated in the way that economists often use the number of years of schooling as an indicator of education investment, and formal qualifications as an indicator of output. Both are very crude proxy indicators of what economists are seeking to measure, and both reflect a focus on the initial education system. Recent analyses of longitudinal data have therefore been important in turning attention towards the longer term effects of learning across the life span.

In respect of adult learning, most of the literature concerns work-related training. If we look at changes in wages in Britain between 1981 and 1991, employer-provided training leads to a rise in average earnings for men, although the findings for women have not been statistically significant. Courses leading to a higher vocational qualification (those qualifications rated as third-level, whether gained through an educational institution, professional association or by other means) produced an earnings gain of 8% for men and 10% for women; there are also higher returns for longer courses (Blundell et al. 1996). Muriel Egerton (2000), using data from the British General Household Survey, found that graduates who achieved their degree later in working life had lower incomes than those who achieved their degree on leaving school. However, Jenkins et al. (2003) found that acquiring a vocational qualification later in working life had no apparent impact on earning levels. Two Swedish studies found little or no impact of adult learning on incomes (Ekström 2003; Albrecht et al. 2007).

In the UK, researchers have paid particular attention to the effects of relatively low-level vocational qualifications. Within the UK, government has often favoured interventions designed to raise the number of workers with vocational qualifications at Level two within the national qualifications framework. This level is often compared with the school examinations for 16-year-olds and is slightly below the standards usually required of skilled workers who have completed an apprenticeship or similar training. Studies of workers who gained Level two qualifications during the 1990s showed that the wage benefits were extremely low or even negative (Dearden, McIntosh, Myck and Vignoles 2002; McIntosh 2004; Jenkins et al. 2007). This may be because employers made rather negative assumptions about workers whose highest qualification is an NVQ gained in adult life. A more recent analysis showed that men who gained an NVQ between 2000 and 2004 earned no more as a result, and that the same qualification was associated with a drop in women's wages. However, by this time those workers who had taken their NVQ2 between 1996 and 2000 were experiencing higher earnings, with a marked gain for women workers and a statistically insignificant gain for men (De Coulon and Vignoles 2008). This suggests a lag in the wage effects of lifelong learning, as well as a decidedly

uneven effect for different workers. In respect of gender, it may be that women tend to experience wage gains because they are more likely to work in sectors and enterprises where NVQ2 is valued, but it should be noted that qualifications of all kinds are generally more influential on women's wages than men's.

In general, then, work-based training is shown in some studies to be associated with higher wages, but this finding is not consistent across the literature. Nor can we be certain that it is the learning that has produced the wage effects. One group of scholars points out that as employers select those workers they think most capable for training, it is not clear whether it was the training or a manager's belief in the workers' ability which produced higher earnings (Vignoles et al. 2004).

Much less research has been undertaken into general adult learning. A Canadian study (Zhang and Palameta 2006) showed that, among adult workers who participated in education, there were clear wage effects for those who received a certificate, but minimal returns for those who did not. This study also found that the wage benefits from certificated learning were clear for men of all ages and for younger women, but that older women workers experienced higher hourly wages combined with static overall earning. The researchers attributed this to job switching by women who were able to maintain earnings through shorter hours. Two British studies have examined rates of return on basic skills improvements. Changes in numeracy and literacy test scores appeared to yield higher earnings for men, while self-reported improvements in basic literacy and numeracy appeared to produce higher earnings for both women and men (McIntosh and Vignoles 2001; Ananiadou, Jenkins, and Wolf, A. 2003). A more recent study of participants in the 1970 British Cohort Survey showed significant gains in earnings associated with improved performance in literacy and numeracy tests, at broadly similar levels for both genders. Moreover, the wage premium from basic skills has been increasing over time (De Coulon et al. 2007). In an international context, though, the value of basic skills in the UK labour market is comparatively high, suggesting a relative scarcity of these skills as compared with some other countries (Hansen and Vignoles 2005).

As well as wage effects, adult learning can also affect employability. Many governments recognise the importance of employment to social inclusion, particularly through training for unemployed people and other vulnerable groups, such as single parents and people with disability. A British study showed that women who were inactive in the labour market and then obtained qualifications as adults were much more likely to find paid employment (Jenkins 2006). Another study showed a marked impact of education on moving out of non-employment into employment for women and men, along with a smaller impact on the tendency to remain within the workforce for women (Jenkins et al. 2003). UK researchers have shown that acquiring an NVQ2 has no discernable effect on employability for women or men, though this is partly because most adults who take NVQ2 already have a job (De Coulon and Vignoles 2008). There is much more limited evidence on the impact of adult learning on the extension of working life – perhaps surprisingly, as this is an important policy goal of the European Union. However, one Swedish study found no evidence that adult education had any impact on older workers' decisions on retirement from the labour market (de Luna et al. 2010).

One recent study has examined the combined effects of learning on earnings and employability. The authors argue that previous studies have tended to examine each in isolation. Their work, based on longitudinal labour force data, shows evidence of an employability effect: people who learn are more likely to be in work, especially if they have been out of the labour market for some time. When taken together with wage effects, the employability benefits help produce quite significant increases in overall earnings (Dorsett et al. 2010).

Most studies of the economic effects of adult learning, then, are broadly in line with what human capital theories might lead us to expect. That is, those who invest in new skills tend to reap a return in higher wages; however, the nearer they are to retirement, the lower the rate of return. Against these findings, a minority of studies suggest that learning can have a nil effect on wages, or even a negative effect. While it is tempting to dismiss these, in fact they might help us understand why human capital theory on its own is an insufficient explanation, even where wages are shown to rise after learning. The limited benefits from gaining an NVQ2 are probably best explained by seeing this qualification as a negative signal in the eyes of many employers, who appear to think it indicates low ability rather than the reverse. Conversely, it may be that employers value higher qualifications more for their screening effect than because they value the specific knowledge and skills that the qualification supposedly embodies: for employers, a higher qualification indicates that the holder is potentially capable of learning new and complex material. Human capital can take us part of the way, then, but it cannot explain all the findings of this new and powerful body of research.

## **Impact on Well-Being**

There are good reasons for considering well-being to be among the most important outcomes of adult learning, at least in its significance for the wider community as well as for learners themselves. It is not just that well-being is desirable in itself; it also has further consequences, not least for learning. For learners, a positive outlook on the future and a sense of one's ability to take charge of one's life are indispensable to further, continuing successful learning. Well-being is also associated with better health, higher levels of social and civic engagement and greater resilience in the face of external crises (Cooper et al. 2010). Conversely, the absence of well-being is a cause for wider concern. The recent growth of research into lifelong learning and well-being is therefore an important development.

### ***Social and Personal Well-Being***

Researchers have long been interested in the influence of adult learning on personal development, while the impact of education on learner confidence and self-esteem



are among the most frequently mentioned items in the professional literature. A considerable body of recent research has explored the relationship between adult learning and well-being. Some of this work examines the effects of adult learning upon factors directly relevant to well-being, such as self-efficacy, confidence or the ability to create support networks. Others address factors that are indirectly – sometimes rather loosely – associated with well-being, such as earnings and employability. In both cases, the accumulated evidence points to positive associations between participation in learning and subjective well-being, and between participation in learning and mental health. These are important findings, for even if the effects are comparatively small ones, they nevertheless offer policy makers one possible way of influencing levels of well-being among the wider population. However, participation in learning also has a downside, and there is some evidence that, for some people, in some circumstances, learning can be associated with stress and anxiety, and erode factors that have helped people maintain good mental health.

In a review of community learning, Veronica McGivney reported that participation in learning has positive consequences for mental health (McGivney 1999). One British study of people shortlisted for adult learning awards found that almost nine out of ten reported positive emotional or mental health benefits, albeit among what is clearly a rather skewed sample (Aldridge and Lavender 2000). In one study, four-fifths of learners aged 51–70 reported a positive impact on such areas as confidence, life satisfaction or their capacity to cope (Dench and Regan 1999; see also Schleiter 2008). There is also some evidence from projects involving health providers in referring selected patients to learning opportunities (James 2004).

These findings have recently been supplemented by longitudinal studies. Feinstein and Hammond used the 1958 cohort survey to compare changes in the health behaviours of learners and non-learners between the ages of 33 and 42, showing that participation in learning had positive effects in terms of smoking cessation and exercise taken. The same authors also found a growth in self-rated health among those who participated in learning as compared with adults who did not (Feinstein and Hammond 2004; Hammond and Feinstein 2006). Sabates and Feinstein (2006) found that adult learning was positively associated with the probability of taking up cervical screening for women. While the effect sizes are small ones in all these studies, again it is important to note that adult values and behaviour rarely change much, so this finding is of consequence. Even though the size of the change was comparatively small, its importance is high. Accredited learning appears to protect individuals against depression, although it seemingly has little or no impact on happiness, and there may be some association (whether causal or not) between depression and leisure courses (Feinstein et al. 2003). But qualitative research suggests that general adult education helps counter depression (Schuller et al. 2004). Participation in learning does have an impact on adults' levels of life satisfaction, which is an important aspect of well-being, as well as showing gains among learners in optimism and self-rated well-being (Feinstein et al. 2003; Hammond and Feinstein 2006).

Survey data demonstrate a close association between participation in adult learning and engagement in a variety of social and civic activities, though as these findings are based on cross-sectional data, they cannot be held to show causation

(Field 2005). Participation in learning tends to enhance social capital, by helping develop social competences, extending social networks and promoting shared norms and tolerance of others (Schuller et al. 2004). Both of these studies showed that participation in learning can also cause stresses to close bonding ties. A survey of over 600 literacy and numeracy learners in Scotland over time showed: significant increases among females and older people in the proportion going out regularly; greater clarity about future intentions on community involvement; and a rise in the number who could identify someone they could turn to for help. The learners were particularly likely to have extended their ‘bridging’ networks, through contacts with tutors, other staff and fellow students (Tett and Maclachlan 2007). Hammond and Feinstein (2006), using longitudinal data, found that learners were more likely to report gains in self-efficacy and sense of agency (perceived control over important life choices) than were non-learners.

Taken together, these findings suggest that adult learning has positive direct effects on well-being. This influence is measurable and the evidence is reasonably consistent. While most of the quantitative studies suggest that it is comparatively small, this is by no means to suggest that it is trivial. Given that policy makers repeatedly find that influencing the behaviour of adult citizens is difficult, and sometimes downright impossible (as illustrated by the limited success of public health campaigns in many countries), it is highly significant that adult learning has these positive results, both for individuals and for collective groups more widely. Of course, these findings are usually at the aggregate level, and they tend to rest on bodies of evidence that take little account of the experiences of people who drop out along the way, or who are deterred from enrolling by poor provider behaviour. For some people, experiences of learning are deeply unsatisfactory, and the next section explores this issue further. But we should not lose sight of remarkably consistent findings from research that suggests an overall positive influence of adult learning on the way people feel about themselves and their lives.

### *Negative Effects of Learning*

It is natural to focus on the positive consequences of learning, especially when so many researchers come from a background of practice. Nevertheless, participation in learning can sometimes have negative consequences; far from improving people’s well-being, it can actively damage it. This is rather different from acknowledging that serious learning can be demanding, even painful, yet worthwhile in the longer term. The study of people nominated for Adult Learners’ Awards – a sample that is likely to be biased towards comparatively successful learners – found that, while there were many benefits, most of their respondents also experienced ‘disbenefits’ such as stress, broken relationships and a new dissatisfaction with one’s present way of life (Aldridge and Lavender 2000). One factor here is that adult education can evoke – even if unintentionally – unpleasant and stressful experiences from people’s earlier lives. A study of adult basic education participants found that anxieties were

particularly acute ‘if elements of the learning environment recalled people’s previous negative experiences of education or authority, or other traumatic or painful events from their histories’ (Barton et al. 2007). Further, although learning can help extend some social networks, it can also disrupt existing ones (Barton et al. 2007; Field 2009). This effect is inseparable from the processes of social mobility and change that learning produces. In particular, while learning tends to extend those wider and more heterogeneous networks that some social capital analysts call ‘bridging ties’, it can also disrupt ‘bonding ties’, such as close kinship and neighbourhood connections. And while bonding ties can often form a barrier to social and geographical mobility, they can also provide access to types of social support that can be extremely important in times of trouble (Field 2008). This can in turn increase vulnerability to ill-health, including poor mental health, and undermine resilience.

## Conclusions

The evidence is, on balance, persuasive. Adult learning positively influences people’s income and employability, as well the attitudes and behaviours that affect people’s mental well-being. In principle, the benefits could be assigned an economic value, which could then be set against the costs of investing in adult learning. In practice, there are enormous data weaknesses, the relationship seems to be non-linear and adults’ life-courses are complex and highly context-dependent, so it is highly unlikely that a realistic cost–benefit analysis is feasible or even worthwhile (some might argue that it is better not to know, either because the answer might be inconvenient or because they think it tends to reduce everything to cash). Nevertheless, even if we cannot assign a simple economic value to the well-being that people derive from learning, in general the evidence suggests a clear positive relationship. These effects can be found for some general adult learning as well as vocational learning, and they are particularly marked for basic literacy and numeracy.

A number of qualifications need to be made. First, statistical analyses of longitudinal data can at best show evidence of probabilistic relationships. Their existence does not mean that everyone who takes a course will feel happier and better about themselves. And it is in the nature of longitudinal data that the findings are related to events and experiences that are now in the past; predicting the future on the basis of probabilistic findings is extremely shaky. Second, in all the studies reviewed above, the effect sizes are relatively small. Even so, the findings are reasonably consistent, and we know – for example from health promotion campaigns or health and safety training – that attitudes and behaviour in adult life are entrenched, so even small shifts are significant. Third, it is not possible to be confident about causation, as it is possible that unobserved factors might explain both findings. This can only be clarified through further research. Fourth, much of the quantitative research takes learning as a given, and does not identify those features and types of learning that are particularly likely to promote well-being. Fourth, virtually none of the

research on the benefits of learning identifies its costs. None of the studies I have seen even attempts to identify the costs of achieving a particular benefit. This reduces its value for policy makers, who are required to compare any potential intervention with other ways of achieving similar ends (Behrman 2010). Finally, there are some areas of well-being where there is no evidence – at least, not yet – of well-being effects from education and training. We do not yet have any evidence that learning prevents the onset of dementia (though it seems to delay the appearance of symptoms) nor that participating in adult learning can counter infant-acquired or genetic disabilities such as dyslexia or ADHD (though it is possible that it can help to address some of the problems that these disabilities produce). We should not overstate the case.

For some, of course, this whole debate is hotly contested. For some feminist and radical critics such as Tara Fenwick, the assumptions and techniques of performance measurement are embedded in, and more or less tacitly endorse, a managerialist and ultimately oppressive view of education and training (Fenwick 2004). The application of social statistics in adult education research has also been widely criticised. Interpretative and constructivist researchers note, reasonably enough, that quantitative data cannot tell us what people's responses actually mean to them, let alone how they construct and share the process of making meaning in their lives (Bagnall 1989; Hodkinson 2008). From a feminist perspective, it is argued that positivist research occupies a privileged status within both academic institutions and policy circles, allowing its exponents to pose as neutral and value-free, when in reality their work is gendered and politicised, representing 'regimes of truth that re/privilege masculinised, white racialised and Westernised ways of knowing' (Jackson and Burke 2007, pp. 26–27).

Despite these criticisms, and allowing for the gaps, I believe that the longitudinal studies represent a major advance in our knowledge of the economic, individual and social impact of learning. They provide a basis on which further work may develop. This remains, then, a ripe area for further research (Desjardins 2008). It has, of course, benefitted from an explosion of interest in empirical studies of learning and its benefits, and the reasons for this are worth bearing in mind. One concerns the nature of lifelong learning as a policy interest. Governments are promoting lifelong learning partly in response to a series of well-established policy concerns over competitiveness, innovation and growth; some governments also see lifelong learning as contributing to social cohesion and inclusion, as well as in the modernisation of public services. It therefore has a potentially important role to play in the shift towards a knowledge economy, and this has led to a more intensive analysis of education and learning throughout life (Field 2006). Second, a number of Western governments have shifted away from a concern with providing services directly, and increasingly focus instead on securing provision through a variety of actors; government concentrates on outputs, seeking to manage providers through the use of performance data. Information and measurement issues play a significant role in the 'new public management', which has generally been associated with the use of research evidence in policy making (Barzelay 2001). Third, international govern-

mental agencies have played a key role in promoting the adoption of lifelong learning (Schemmann 2007). Two organisations have a particularly important role in the collection and publication of monitoring statistics: the European Union, especially since it adopted the so-called open method of co-ordination of member states' policies, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which pioneered the use of comparative educational indicators (Ioannidou 2007).

So policy interests may be expected to ensure that this field of research continues to thrive. In addition, technical developments in the social sciences have made it increasingly possible to process and analyse large amounts of data, qualitative as well as quantitative. Thanks largely to rapid technological developments, it is now relatively easy to apply complex statistical techniques to large-scale survey data and analyse the findings in ways that control for other factors than educational participation. This allows researchers to identify causation, though such large data sets do not allow us to specify precisely what types of learning have which particular consequences – not yet, at any rate. This has proven a fruitful field of investigation, and although the findings need to be interpreted with caution, their significance for policy and practice is enormous.

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# Chapter 55

## Transformation or Accommodation?

### A Re-assessment of Lifelong Learning

Richard G. Bagnall

#### Introduction

Contemporary lifelong education and lifelong learning theory<sup>1</sup> may be understood as a reaction against a diverse array of counter-emancipatory value emphases and conceptual distinctions characterising prevailing educational provision at the time of its foundational formulation, during the 1960s and 1970s. Those counter-emancipatory characteristics have been identified as including the following:

(1) a focus on educational *provision*; (2) a concern with the *taught* curriculum; (3) a focus on the learning of disciplinary *content*; (4) a preoccupation with education for *children and youth*; (5) a preoccupation with *constraining* and *policing* learning; (6) a structure of learning assessment that has progressively *excluded* students from access to further education on the grounds of their having reached the limits of their educational potential; (7) approaches to learning assessment and credentialing that have seen them as *inseparable* from educational engagement; (8) a *hierarchy of segregated* types of knowledge and learning, in which the most highly valued knowledge has been *propositional*; (9) the *differentiation* of education from other cultural institutions and realities; (10) a focus on *societal* learning needs; (11) a presumption that students may best be taught as members of *idealised developmental categories*; and (12) educational systems and approaches that are framed by *tradition, ideology* and *policy*. (Bagnall 2007, pp 242–243)

In responding to that diverse array of counter-emancipatory characteristics, lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy have advanced a corresponding

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<sup>1</sup>Henceforth, here, termed ‘lifelong education and learning theory’.

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array of agendas for change. That array, paralleling the above-listed limitations, has sought to focus 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 their evidenced 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 individual learner in his or her cultural context (rather than the individual as a member of a developmental category); and (12) empirical experience, practical utility and secular knowledge (rather than tradition, ideology and policy) in the framing of educational interventions. (Bagnall 2007, p 243)

Early critique of lifelong education and learning theory identified the confusion that this array of reform agendas created, with, for example, Lawson (1982) focusing critical attention on the diverse conceptions of lifelong education that were evident in the literature, and the general failure there to recognise important conceptual differences.

This chapter argues the thesis that, in its attempt to embrace all those and related reform agendas, lifelong education and learning theory has sought both to shift value emphases in education and to deny conceptual distinctions that were seen as contributing to the identified weaknesses of contemporary educational provision and engagement. However, it is argued here that, in doing so, lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy have denied conceptual distinctions that are crucial to the practical realisation of the emancipatory potential of the shifts in value emphases that are driving the program of reform. In consequence, the lifelong education and learning program of reform has failed to realise the transformational and liberatory thrusts of the theory and has, instead, captured its conservative and domesticating features. It is suggested, then, that any future realisation of the lifelong education and learning program of reform will be dependent upon the recognition and utilisation of the initially denied distinctions. With such a recognition, it may be seen that the formal reforms to date of educational policy and practice flowing from lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy may serve as the foundation of an educational renaissance, which may more fulsomely realise the transformative and liberatory drive of the theory.

## **Lifelong Learning Theory as Conceptually Homogenising**

Lifelong education and learning theory has been grounded in a process of denying the value and moral legitimacy of conceptual distinctions. This has been most comprehensively argued and articulated by Kenneth Wain, initially in his foundational attempt to identify a philosophy for lifelong education (Wain 1987) and, more recently,

in his reflections on the wisdom and success of that venture (Wain 2004). Wain, in these works, drew from informing lifelong education and learning theory to argue that the program of reform that is driven by the theory is grounded in the denial of such otherwise crucial distinctions as those between learning and education, between desirable and actual learning outcomes, between what is educationally normative and empirically evident, between engagements that are more educationally valuable and productive than others, and between educational and other lived activities (Bagnall 1990). He sharpened and clarified a selection of earlier lifelong learning arguments for all of life's events to be regarded as educational and for education to be recognised as a criterionless and standardless celebration of learning in all of its magnificently joyous diversity. Education, as learning, thus should be, and simultaneously is, lifelong and life-wide. Education should be, and is, thus totally inclusive. No longer is it academically elitist, discriminatory or preoccupied with scholarly standards of attainment and with educational achievements painstakingly argued to be of cultural value. All learning that anyone regards as being valuable is, by that fact, of equal value to all other learning and is, ipso facto, educational in virtue of that fact. Thus conceptualised, lifelong education is grounded in the view that 'All events in which one is consciously involved throughout one's lifespan constitute education (as process) and contribute to and are a part of one's education (as outcome). Education is the process and on-going product of living' (Bagnall 1990, p 6).

Since this conception of lifelong education denigrates education as being undesirably constrained by normative commitments to criteria and standards of quality, while valorising learning of all kinds, lifelong education theory naturally led to the re-designation of 'education' as 'learning'. What was initially 'lifelong education' thus became 'lifelong learning', as the natural and logical zenith of the trajectory of the lifelong education program of educational reform.

In denying the normative distinction between education and learning, one is denied the (logical) capacity to distinguish between learning that is more educationally valuable from that which is less so, between engagements that lead to more desirable learning outcomes from those that lead to less desirable outcomes, between different educational interactions that are more effective or efficient than others, and hence to distinguish between individuals who are more in need of educational intervention on grounds of educational equity from those who are less so, or to distinguish between individuals and categories of individuals in society who are less educationally advantaged from those who are more so (Bagnall 1990; Lawson 1982). It is this conceptual homogenisation that both renders lifelong learning so beguilingly appealing and defines the limits of its capacity to inform reforms in educational policy, provision and engagement.

## **Lifelong Learning Theory as Transformative**

Another important appeal of lifelong education and learning theory – arguably its major appeal – has been its transformative nature. In spite of its conceptual homogenisation, lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy seek to transform

education into a force for radical social change in addressing individual developmental and social needs, empowering disadvantaged individuals and groups and responding to technological change. These transformative dimensions may be understood as having been driven by three clearly recognisable but interrelated informing progressive sentiments: the individual, the democratic and the adaptive.

Lifelong education and learning ideology, theory and advocacy over the last five decades may be seen as informed, very largely, by three progressive sentiments: the individual, the democratic and the adaptive.

The notion of an informing progressive sentiment is that of a stream, current or strand of commitment to cultural reform – one that is defined by a central programmatic purpose for reform of the cultural institutions affected (the educational institution in our case). That purpose, then, constitutes an organizing ideal to which advocacy is directed, around which theory is constructed, and in support of which evidence is gathered. It captures the ethical meaning and import of the educational ideal. The three progressive sentiments here recognized are seen as capturing the dominant currents of thought that have shaped our contemporary understanding of lifelong learning. However, their recognition and presentation here involves some degree of distillation from the cultural contexts in which they are embedded, and of separation from each other, for in educational theory and practice they are inter-related, being neither isolated from each other nor discrete in themselves. They combine in different ways and with different emphases to form the more conventionally recognized philosophical traditions in education: progressive, humanist, democratic socialist, liberal and so on. They importantly cut across or transcend epistemology, although they are differently expressed within different epistemologies. They emerge, then, in the ideological commitments of philosophical traditions (and are expressed in particular educational ideologies) informing lifelong education and learning advocacy. Each does so in what may be termed its progressive, authentic or genuine form: that form which is directed to the achievement of human liberation, emancipation, progress and development, through the central programmatic purpose of the sentiment. Those ideologies, and their supporting theories of learning and education, therefore give expression to the progressive sentiments in various hybrid forms. The references here to exemplifying sources in each case must, accordingly, be seen as indicative only, and not as identifying evidence of any unalloyed sentiment.

### *The Individual Progressive Sentiment*

The individual progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic commitment to individual growth and development. It seeks liberation from ignorance (through individual enlightenment), from dependence (through individual empowerment), from constraint (through the individual transformation of perspectives), or from inadequacy (through individual development). Lifelong education and learning works that are strongly grounded in this sentiment include those of Brockett and

Hiemstra (1991), Longworth and Davies (1996), Overly (1979), Taylor (1998) and Wain (1987).

The focus of its educational advocacy depends on the ideological emphasis given to each of the abovementioned liberatory commitments. An emphasis on liberation from ignorance gives a focus on cognitive or intellectual development and understanding, commonly (but not necessarily) through the academic disciplines (Lawson 1979; Paterson 1979; Taylor 1998). An emphasis on liberation from dependence gives a focus on the development of skills and on socialization into social conventions and practices (Knowles 1980; Overly 1979). An emphasis on liberation from constraint gives a focus on the transformation and transcendence of frameworks of individual understanding and capability, particularly those acquired through passive acculturation (Barnett 1994; Collins 1991; Mezirow 1991). An emphasis on liberation from inadequacy gives a focus on individual growth and development (Dewey 1961; Houle 1980; Wain 1987).

Its case for lifelong education and learning is based, variously, on the vast breadth and depth, and the constant progressive advance, of human knowledge with which to come to grips (Paterson 1979; Taylor 1998), on the changing developmental needs of different life tasks at different periods or phases of individual development (Allman 1982; Havighurst 1972; Heymans 1992), on the continuing need for educational transformation in the vast expanse of human conformism (Barnett 1994; Brookfield 1984), and on the endless journey of individual growth in an evolving social context (Houle 1980; Wain 1987).

Although this sentiment focuses on individual development, it nevertheless tends to frame a perception of public benefit from education. This benefit is seen as being through the development of individuals who are more functionally independent, culturally informed and publicly aware (Houle 1980; Olafson 1973; Paterson 1979). The actions of such persons are seen as being more likely to be characterized by individual responsibility and capability, an ethical orientation, and a sensitivity and responsiveness to others and to the public welfare. A society of such persons, then, is seen as being more likely to be one in which the monitoring and moderation of human action is largely individualized and collective – requiring only minimal state investment in surveillance, policing and administration of justice. Accordingly, this progressive sentiment tends to be associated with a perception of the public value of (lifelong) education as being high. Correspondingly, there tends to be the advocacy of state support (including financial support) for lifelong education and learning, for all citizens, to the limit of their ability to benefit from it, including that for adults, but particularly those who have been unable to capitalize on earlier educational opportunities (Commission on Social Justice 1994; Lawson 1982; Paterson 1979).

Through this sentiment, the educational institution tends to be seen as both important and importantly distinct from other social institutions. Individual development through education calls both for specialist educational expertise on the part of teachers and for specialist organizations through which it is undertaken. The nature of that expertise and the sorts of organizations, however, vary somewhat with the ideological emphasis: an emphasis on cognitive development commonly giving

a commitment to teachers schooled in the academic disciplines, and to organizations reflective of academic values; an emphasis on liberation from dependence sees a focus on the formation of teacher capabilities in facilitating the development of autonomous, self-directed learners; an emphasis on transformation is more likely to see a commitment to teacher expertise in the management of learning situations and to similarly structured organizations; whereas an emphasis on individual growth is more associated with the development of interpersonal understanding, empathy and interpersonal skills in teachers (Barnett 1994; Copley 1977; Goad 1984).

### *The Democratic Progressive Sentiment*

The democratic progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic commitment to social justice, equity and social development through participative democratic involvement. It seeks liberation from inherited authority of all forms, whether autocratic, oligarchic, theocratic or whatever, and from oppression, servitude and poverty, in the creation of a truly civil society (Faure 1972; Gutmann 1987; Illich 1973; Walker 1992; White 1983). Education, then, is to serve and mirror those ends (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Freire 1972; Gelpi 1985).

The focus of its educational advocacy is on cultural reform through education – cultural reform in the directions noted above and through broadening access to any or all of the liberating learnings of the individual progressive sentiment (Gelpi 1984; Schuller 1979; Walker 1992). The purpose of education is to inform social action for the development of a more humane, tolerant, just and egalitarian society of liberated, empowered individuals, acting collegially in the public good. Education is seen as informing both social action itself and the reflective and discursive evaluation of that action: an on-going process of action and reflection, together commonly labelled ‘praxis’ (Freire 1972). It is seen as being directed particularly to the liberation of oppressed, marginalized and exploited sectors of society. Education is therefore to be directed to achieving cultural change for the good of humanity as a whole.

Its case for lifelong education and learning is essentially that human liberation from oppression and exploitation calls for continuing vigilance and action as new forms of oppression are instituted or old ones revived in new forms (Fragniere 1976; Gelpi 1984; Illich and Verne 1976).

Lifelong education and learning, accordingly, is seen as being, first and foremost, a public good. It is from the public good that the private, individual benefit flows (Faure 1972; Peters and Marshall 1996). The provision of education, correspondingly, is a state responsibility, calling for relatively high levels of state support, including financial support, for educational engagement by all citizens (Faure 1972; Fragniere 1976; Illich 1970).

Educational ideology that is strongly informed by this sentiment calls for teachers to be relatively well educated themselves, to be actively involved in cultural reform, to be committed to the democratic sentiment and to be skilled in their role as teachers (Hatcher 1998). The important reflective and culturally critical aspects of educational

change call for a degree of institutional autonomy in educational organizations, but one which, nevertheless, is engaged with broader social issues and public policy (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Walker 1992).

### *The Adaptive Progressive Sentiment*

The adaptive progressive sentiment is defined by its programmatic responsiveness to cultural change. It seeks liberation from deprivation, poverty and dependence, through adaptive learning. Such development may be at any level of social organization – individual, organizational, national, global or whatever, depending upon the learning need (Jessup 1969; Knapper and Cropley 1985; Kofman and Senge 1995; Kozlowski 1995; Longworth 1995).

The focus of educational advocacy, then, is on the creation of educational systems and policies that make it possible for individuals, organizations and so on to keep pace with cultural change and to advance themselves in the changing cultural context (Evans 1985; Hiemstra 1976; McClusky 1974). Individuals are thereby enabled either to maintain themselves as contributing members of society, avoiding an otherwise inevitable slide into anachronistic irrelevance and dependence on state welfare or others, or to develop themselves as contributing members of society, if they are already or are still dependent (Cropley 1977; Knapper and Cropley 1985). Organizations are enabled to maintain themselves as viable, thriving entities, in an increasingly competitive and global marketplace (Kofman and Senge 1995; Kozlowski 1995). And nations are enabled to provide a fiscal, political and social context that facilitates the development of their citizens and their interests, while providing welfare support for those who are deemed to need and deserve it (Carnevale 1991; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 1996). Its progressive thrust is grounded in the freedom, particularly the negative freedom (i.e. freedom *from* restraint and constraint) to enjoy the good life, to contribute constructively to society and to pursue one's interests.

Its case for lifelong education and learning is based on the impact of accelerating cultural change on the learning needs of individuals, organizations and nations. That impact is on adults as much as it is on children, and on the elderly as much as on those in middle age (Chapman and Aspin 1997; Cropley 1977; Evans 1985). Changing modes of work and employment, production and consumption, communication, exchange and signification all impact on individuals throughout their lives, albeit in different ways. Through lifelong learning, then, education is seen as being directed to a process of lifelong adaptation to the changing cultural context (Hiemstra 1976; Jessup 1969). That context calls also, though, for education to be directed to the development of meta-cognitive skills, to allow learners to manage their own actions *as* lifelong learners (Knapper and Cropley 1985; Smith 1992).

Educational benefit through this sentiment has both public and private aspects, depending principally on the balance of perceived benefit. It tends to be focused, though, more strongly on the private, particularly in the post-compulsory sectors of education (Marginson 1993). Through education at that level, individuals or

organizations are seen as the primary beneficiaries – through their enhanced or maintained capacity to profit within the changing cultural context. Public benefit tends, then, to be seen as secondary – as a consequence of private gains. From enhanced private security and advantage can flow generosity, altruism, beneficence and an active concern for the public good. State support for education thus tends to be seen as ideally limited to areas of welfare support, basic skills development, socialization, rehabilitation and public education – areas, nonetheless, which constitute a large and important slice of educational activity (Jessup 1969). The state's role in other areas of educational reform is seen as being more that of regulation, of standard setting and of establishing and maintaining frameworks for the recognition and transfer of adaptive learning (Melody 1997).

Educational ideology that is strongly informed by this sentiment calls for educational provision and engagement to be contextualized, to be optimally embedded in the adaptive life tasks to which the learning is directed (Gustavsson 1997; Kozlowski 1995). It calls for the cost of education to be privatized to the individuals, collectivities or organizations to the extent that those entities are seen as being its most direct and immediate beneficiaries (Marginson 1993). Correspondingly, good teachers are seen as those who bring relevant (particularly recent) life task experience and expertise to their teaching role, who have an appropriately responsive and open-minded attitude to change, and who have the requisite skills for effectively and efficiently transferring their relevant learning to others (Cropley 1977; Cropley and Dave 1978). Educational ideology and policy tend to have a strong element of enculturation into the ever-changing realities of lived experience, and of coping with the demands of those realities (Gee and Lankshear 1995; Ohliger 1974).

The transformative nature of lifelong education and learning theory and policy that flows from the influence of these three progressive sentiments may be seen as the essence of the theory. That it is associated with the conceptual homogenisation of intentions and realities in education and learning with their cultural contexts is no coincidence. The critical discourse in which the theorisation is embedded makes it clear that conceptual distinctions have been seen as the enemy of educational reform. The impression created is that differentiating between education and learning, for example, devalues that learning which is seen as being non-educational, when all learning should be equally valued. Similarly, to distinguish between learning intent and learning outcomes devalues those learning attainments that were not intended, which is, ipso facto, undesirable. Likewise, distinguishing between (educational) curriculum and learning engagements in other life events privileges the educational at the expense of the other, which is also, ipso facto, undesirable.

## **Lifelong Learning Policy as Domesticating**

Before examining the impact of conceptual homogenisation on the possibility of realising the transformative teleology articulated in lifelong education and learning theory, I will say a little about the substantive thrust of critique of lifelong learning policy and practice.

The one singular evaluative theme of such critique over the last 20 years has been the failure of lifelong learning policy and practice to capture and realise the transformative thrust of the theory. The three sentiments identified above are seen as having been transmogrified into lifelong learning policy and programs that are essentially domesticating. Crowther (2004), for example, sees lifelong learning discourse as being complicit in the capitalist, neo-liberal agenda of corporatizing learning, and as having falsely acquired the progressive mantle of lifelong education. Griffin (1999) presents lifelong learning as lacking the progressive humanism of lifelong education. And Boshier (1998) argues that there is a conceptual discontinuity between the traditional concept of lifelong education, as it was developed through the work of the UNESCO, and the more recent notion of lifelong learning.

It may, of course, be argued that the nature of such work is precisely to find fault. However, even if we admit that point (and it must, indeed, be admitted to some extent at least), I would want to counter with the point that there is no *necessary* focus of the criticism on the failure of policy and practice to realise the transformative thrust of the theory. The consistent focus of critique on the domesticating nature of contemporary lifelong learning policy and programming may be taken as expressing an empirically objective failure to capture the transformative teleology, unless we admit to a most extraordinary intellectual conspiracy of negativity towards the theory. Dismissing the latter as untenable, and countering with the simple observation that much of the critique is from within a lifelong learning discourse that is sympathetic to the theory, we are left with the conclusion that the transformative thrust of lifelong education and learning theory has not been significantly realised in educational policy and practice.

## Significant Educational Achievements of Lifelong Learning

Having drawn that conclusion, though, it is important to note that there have been important shifts in educational policy and practice over the last 40 or so years. A number of those reforms are at least sympathetic to lifelong education and learning theory, and I would want to suggest here that the theorisation and advocacy has served both to give direction to those reforms and to give them impetus. In making that suggestion, though, I acknowledge that, in an important sense, both lifelong education and learning theory and educational reform are embedded within and are responding to imperatives for reform in the same broader cultural context. That cultural context has been characterised as increasingly privatised, inclusive, heterogeneous, economistic, electronically and information driven, global, sceptical and technical (Bagnall 2004). That acknowledgement, though, does not invalidate my claim here that lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy have importantly shaped and driven the reform associated with the broader contemporary cultural context. I note here what I see as five such reforms, in no particular order of importance: a heightened educational inclusiveness and participation; the greater breadth of educational curricula; enhanced educational responsiveness; the pervasion of economic, organizational and developmental discourse with



lifelong learning theory; and the re-casting of individual and social identity as identities of lifelong learning (Ananiadou et al. 2003; Dearden et al. 2002; Dorsett et al. 2010; Schuller 2006, 2009).

Heightened educational inclusiveness and participation refers to the engagement of learners in educational situations. It captures the extent to which individuals who were previously judged – whether by others or themselves – as unfit to benefit from educational engagement, are now included as learners and supported in being so. It captures also the extent to which older individuals, who were previously considered to have used up, abused or relinquished their right to educational engagement, can now engage or re-engage in education at primary, secondary or tertiary level and can do so with appropriate levels of public support. It captures also the extent to which education has come to be seen as facilitating, and often as essential to, successful transition from economically and socially unproductive situations, such as unemployment, under-employment and anti-social engagements, into productive economic and social engagements. Such heightened educational inclusiveness and participation has been a notable empirical feature of educational reform in recent decades. It has been driven strongly by educational and economic policy, including that at the international level, where the focus has been on enhancing the participation of excluded individuals and categories of individuals in all educational sectors. Many countries in the world have responded with programs of policy reform (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2003).

Paralleling that trend for heightened educational inclusiveness and participation has been a reform of *curricula* to make them more useful to students who engage with them. This trend thus captures a general trend towards increasingly more instrumental education. It has seen a pervasive vocationalisation at all levels of education (Hyland 2001). It has also seen a focus on developing and assessing basic skills – not only vocational skills, but also more general social and political skills and those of literacy and numeracy.

Linked to both of those reforms has been an enhanced educational responsiveness to the learning needs and situations of learners or categories of learners. This responsiveness is reflected in both the *curricula* per se and the ways in which they are provided. Not only are *curricula* being drawn up in such a way that they both *respond* to and are flexibly *open* in response to learners' needs and interests, but they are also *presented* – through flexible, open, blended and other such approaches to educational engagement – in such a way as to respond to learners' circumstances and preferences for learning engagement.

The pervasion of economic, organizational and developmental discourse with lifelong education and learning theory is most conspicuously evidenced in the inclusion of lifelong learning in mission statements and strategic planning documents of public and private organizations and companies of all types (Field 2006). It is evidenced also in the international planning documents of organizations such as the UNESCO (2005), OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 1996) and the World Bank (Rivera 2009). It is evidenced in the international movements to construct learning organizations, learning communities, learning towns and such like (Marsick and Watkins 1999). And it is evidenced

in national policy initiatives to create lifelong learning societies – such as the recent initiative in the UK to develop a ‘citizens’ curriculum’ as part of a lifelong learning policy agenda for the country (Schuller and Watson 2009).

Relatedly, the re-casting of individual and social identity as identities of lifelong learning may be seen a major achievement of lifelong education and learning theory in practice. What I am referring to here is the extent to which individuals now see themselves as being lifelong learners and the extent to which this construction is a feature of the social identities that those individuals share – social identities such as those of the workplace, the profession or the interest group to which each belongs. Seeing oneself *as* a lifelong learner and identifying with the group or organisation that sees its members as lifelong learners takes on a number of different dimensions. For many it is importantly an instrumental commitment, in which lifelong learning is seen as being a means, often a necessity, for maintaining currency in one’s work, profession or other engagements. For others, it may take the form of intrinsic commitment to learning for the satisfaction that the engagement and/or its outcomes are seen as bringing. It may, alternatively, take the form of a recognition that one’s progression through life, or that of the organisation or group, unavoidably involves repeated, if not constant, learning and that recognising and embracing that reality can contribute to one’s progressing in a more engaging, satisfying, enriching and rewarding manner.

## Evaluating Those Achievements

These changes, both individually and collectively, may be seen as significant and major shifts in educational practice. They have, though, been strongly criticised as failing to capture the transformative thrust of lifelong education and learning theory. Indeed, as noted above, it has been suggested by a number of commentators that the changes have contributed to a general *reduction* in the transformative nature of educational provision and engagement.

I want to suggest here that this general failure to realise the transformative thrust of lifelong education and learning theory may be an unavoidable consequence of the conceptual homogenisation that suffuses the theory, but that the achievements here attributed (at least in part) to the theory and its advocacy provide a foundation on which lifelong learning may become truly transformative. However, the realisation of that potential will be dependent upon the conceptual de-homogenisation of the theory.

Such an argument requires that there be no *necessary* association between the conceptual homogenisation and the transformative dimensions of lifelong education and learning theory. It requires, rather, that the contemporary association be situationally contingent, a product of its cultural context in the formative years of the lifelong education and learning movement. Counter-traditional and post-modernist cultural currents developing strongly in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s in Western societies presented a beguilingly and largely irresistibly attractive ideology

for radical change on which the transformative agenda could be carried with popular intellectual and political enthusiasm. Any major educational reform as radical as that proposed in lifelong education theory would have been much more difficult to champion and drive had it not been associated with the similarly radical counter-traditional and post-modernist currents prevailing at the time. Those currents were picked up by the UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) in the UNESCO, as well as by others driving and articulating the reform agenda. They were picked up and sharpened subsequently by those, such as Kenneth Wain, who sought to further systematise the agenda and to give it some philosophical legitimacy. They were picked up also by other movements for educational reform associated with the lifelong education movement such as that which led to the formation of the International Association of Adult Education and its many regional associations and bodies throughout the world. Those currents inevitably flowed through the deliberations of international bodies through which the educational policy frameworks were developed, since so many of the key advisors and other contributors were common among these reform initiatives. Thus, the work of the major UNESCO congresses in adult and lifelong education and learning – those held in Elsinore (1949), Montreal (1960), Tokyo (1972) and Hamburg (1997) – through which lifelong education policy at that level has been developed and appraised, is suffused with not only the transformative dimensions of the reform, but also the confounding conceptual homogenisation (see, e.g. Kidd 1974; Welton 2005). Parallel reform agendas, such as that run through the OECD's Council for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 1973) and the Council of Europe (Fragiere 1976), have been similarly affected. Major educational policy reviews commissioned as part of these reform agendas likewise are riven with this association, including those of Faure (1972), Delors (1996) and the European Union (European Commission 2001).

## **An Educational Renaissance of Transformative Learning?**

An interesting and encouraging observation for the future of educational reform informed by lifelong learning theory is that the attraction of post-traditional and post-modern cultural constructivism has waned considerably over the last two decades. It may thus be an opportune time to revisit the theory itself and to decouple its transformative elements from the debilitating influence of the conceptual homogenization – to rework the theory by infusing it with conceptual rigor, sufficient to carry the transformative reforms.

I am arguing here that this general failure to realise the transformative thrust of lifelong education and learning theory may be an unavoidable consequence of the conceptual homogenization that suffuses the theory, but that the educational reforms here articulated (at least in part) to lifelong education and learning theory and advocacy provide a foundation on which lifelong learning may become truly transformative. The realization of that potential, though, may be dependent upon the conceptual de-homogenization of the theory.

For educational engagements to lead strongly to transformative learning, requires the recognition of those educational interventions and those features of educational interventions that are linked more strongly than others to transformative outcomes. It requires the recognition and valuing of transformative learning over learning that is not transformative in nature. It thus requires a clear theorization and assessment of the nature, dimensions, variability and situatedness of transformative learning. More fundamentally, it requires a willingness to recognise that some learning engagements are of greater educational benefit than others, that some individuals and groups have greater educational needs than others, and that some learning outcomes are more educational than others; in other words, that not all learning – whether as process, need or outcome – is of equal value.

In order to remove these and related barriers to realizing the transformative potential of lifelong education and learning theory, a review of lifelong learning theory is thus indicated. That review must work to eliminate the conceptual homogenization that presently pervades lifelong learning theory. In its place must be introduced a clear recognition of educational differences in value and a grounding of educational value in important dimensions of the human condition.

## Conclusion

Lifelong education and learning theory has been grounded in a process of denying the value and moral legitimacy of conceptual distinctions. In consequence, while the theorisation of lifelong education and learning has focused on its transformative dimensions, lifelong learning policy and practice has focused on accommodating individuals to the demands of cultural contingencies. Nevertheless, the promulgation of lifelong education and learning may be seen as having contributed to significant contemporary changes in the educational landscape, especially those of enhanced educational inclusiveness and participation, expanded curricula, enhanced educational responsiveness, the pervasion of economic and developmental discourse with lifelong learning theory, and the re-casting of individual and social identity as identities of lifelong learning. While these changes, in themselves, are educationally of at least arguable value, they may be seen also as creating the opportunity for an educational renaissance of transformative learning. For that renaissance to occur may require, though, the rebuilding of lifelong learning theory in such a way that it embraces important conceptual distinctions that facilitate transformative learning, but which it currently denies.

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