Intergenerational Education and Learning: We Are in a New Place

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Abstract

This chapter reviews and synthesizes contemporary theorizations and empirical research on intergenerational education and learning. Fast-changing contexts (such as aging populations, migration, and environmental crises), international policy, and interdisciplinary research all suggest intergenerational education is in a new and exciting "place." At the center of much of the contemporary literature is the idea that contact between generations can and does lead to intergenerational learning for participants. However, this review suggests three emerging and necessary orientations for theory, policy, and practice in support of intergenerational education and learning: (1) the need to shift from looking at program inputs and outputs in a unigenerational manner toward an appreciation of how the processes of intergenerational learning and practice are relationally and reciprocally experienced and impactful across generations; (2) the need to shift from looking at intergenerational learning within families to harnessing the

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S. Punch et al. (eds.), *Families, Intergenerationality, and Peer Group Relations*,
Geographies of Children and Young People 5, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-026-1_5

untapped potential for extrafamilial places of intergenerational encounters as contexts of learning; and (3) the need to widen the purposes of intergenerational programs: these will include improved relations between the generations but should also include improved ecosocial wellbeing. Taken together, these three shifts are suggestive of a need for a place-responsive understanding of intergenerational education and learning.

Keywords

Baby boomers · Beanpole family structures · Children's participation programs · Cohesion · Cohort-based approach · Cultural commons · Ecosocial wellbeing · European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) · Extrafamilial intergenerational relations · Formal school systems · Generation · Geographically oriented perspectives · Intergenerational education · Inclusive and reciprocal process · Intergenerational practice · Intrafamilial multigenerational relations · National and international governmental policy · Non-representational theory · Place-based intergenerational differences · Place-based learning · Radical collegiality · Sociological studies of family life · Sociology of childhood · Unigenerational focus

1 Introduction

Policy is now framing intergenerational learning as an important area for development toward more cohesive and sustainable futures. A nexus of wider concerns and potentialities are set to sustain this drive: the need for members of families, organizations, business, education, and other communities to encourage better transfers of knowledge, values, and dispositions in order to address social issues (such as cohesion and migration), and environmental and ecological issues. There is a scarcity of intergenerational education projects on the ground that are sustained over longer periods of time, and even fewer empirical studies of these. It is also only relatively recently that theoretical definitions have been offered. Hence, intergenerational education is very much an emerging field but it does provide a rich seam for further growth in policy and practice, and a new horizon for research.

The chapter is structured in the following manner. The first sections set out the selected sources to outline the context, background, and terminology used in intergenerational education research. Intergenerational learning and education can be said to be in a new place but where is the field to go next? Three "shifts" in direction are offered and some key implications considered. These shifts are:

1. From looking at inputs and outputs of education as unigenerational toward more relational and reciprocal framings
2. From looking at intergenerational encounters as mainly or solely intrafamilial toward realizing that untapped potential for extrafamilial intergenerational contact.

3. From seeing the goal as mainly or solely for improved relations between the generations toward an understanding that intergenerational education provides a distinctive opportunity to address wider issues such as ecosocial wellbeing

2 Contexts and Terminology

Changes in the demographics of the population across the world mean that people are living longer and this is bringing dramatic changes in the nature of family life and community ties. We have seen growing concerns with how different generations transfer capital wealth, care, and other social goods between them (Kohli and Künemund 2003). On the one hand, as Minority World populations age, there are concerns over increased generational niching (for example with some neighborhoods becoming "childfree"), which are seen to restrict intergenerational encounters. There has also been a worry over the loss of expertise as older workers retire in increasingly higher numbers. There is a perceived increase in the proverbial generation gap, a process that likely began about 50 years ago (see Sánchez et al. 2007). The aging of some countries' populations, new research on learning in older adulthood, and advances in understandings of the potential contributions of the young to social problems, all mean there are new potentialities for intergenerational encounters and for these encounters to be educational or to result in significant learning. What we notice is that as old forms of intergenerational relation are being extinguished, new intergenerational spaces and relations also gain traction within formal social institutions (such as schools and businesses) and beyond, for example, young people's political action online and in community-based green activism. With these new practices comes the need to research and understand how intergenerational learning "takes place" and what its various reciprocal effects are. We need a geography of intergenerational education.

One area emerging as a goal for intergenerational learning is the desire to address sustainability. At national and supranational levels, as we face new threats of climate change, the loss of tangible and intangible heritage, habitat destruction, fuel and food poverty, calls are made for a reconsideration of the contract between current, past, and future generations. With new threats, the environmental and other injustices done to past, current, and future generations are coming more into view. Across space and time, as more countries face the effects of cross-border and cross-generational environmental and social issues (such as manmade climate change, migration, and terrorism), the need for better and more purposeful intergenerational contact and communication comes to the fore (see Tremmel 2010; Sylvain and Tremmel 2010). Intergenerational encounters are seen as a force for challenging age-segregation (Strom and Strom 2016) and diverse forms of ecosocial injustices (Corcoran and Hollingshead 2014).

Understanding places as intergenerationally made, remade, and inscribed lead us to some interesting challenges and tensions. Within and through intergenerational practices and relations come new problems but also some possibilities. Rather than solely looking at intergenerational relations as sites of competition for financial

transfers or as a battleground for age-differentiated meaning making, this chapter seeks to extend the field by considering the intergenerational dimensions of learning. In the chapter, learning can be understood as the gaining of new knowledge, skills, and dispositions or values through a potentially reciprocal process occurring across generational divides. Given what we have said about the ecosocial context, and considering social demographics and intergenerational justice, when it comes to intergenerational education and learning, we can say we are in a "new place."

2.1 Generation as a Conceptual Organizer

The term generation carries different emphases depending on how you characterize it and each provides a platform for understanding how learning and education can intergenerationally occur. Three possible views can be in operation – often at the same time.

(i) For some, "generation" has a predominantly intrafamilial meaning. A within-family definition of generation will lead us to consider the relations among older and younger members of a family; for sure, learning occurs within families and interesting studies are emerging that show how reciprocal learning among siblings and parents can occur in bilingual homes (Gregory 2001) and how learning is mutually experienced among grandparents and the young to promote cultural continuity as well as change (Kenner et al. 2007).
(ii) For others, a more societal view of generation is what is meant: generations inhabit different social groups. Within the social view, learning can be seen as occurring through contact between often overly niched social groups within but also outside of the family.
(iii) For yet others, a chronological or cohort-based approach carries more leverage (Alanen and Mayall 2001): the so-called baby boomers are, for example, a distinct cohort whose distinct experiences characterize their dispositions to the world. Learning about and from the experiences of diverse family members, from folk outside of our families, and from cohorts of past, current, and future groups can help us notice how intergenerational learning occurs.

As we might expect, different ideas of generation lead us to different views on what counts as intergenerational learning and education. For this chapter, no one of these meanings of generation will suffice to capture a person's intergenerational position or the complete set of opportunities for learning across generational divides. In fact, in any one setting, social, familial, and cohort perspectives on generation seem interconnected and permeable as perspectives on intergenerational education and making meaning. Indeed, for any one person with their set of intergenerational relations, all three forms of generational understanding are possible and with these comes a wide array of possible opportunities for intergenerational education and learning. To allow for this enriched generational perspective, the evidence in this chapter suggests that we need all three lenses on generation to appreciate the

contemporary situation and the possible futures. There are encounters between generations at all levels, between social groups, between cohorts over time, and among different age groups at any one time and through these encounters people have the potential to learn. Thus, intergenerational learning occurs within the intimate spaces of family life and outside of them, through everyday lived moments here and now and across a longer arc of time. Hence, we can begin to see how a generationally informed and "geographical" perspective on learning can help us address all kinds of social and ecological issues whilst also highlighting the need for better intergenerational relations.

2.2 Intergenerational Practice

Intergenerational practice as a term began to be used in the 1980s as projects of various kinds sprung up to help build relationships between generations and facilitate exchanges of ideas and resources. In early definitions, it has more recently been described as an inclusive and reciprocal process that builds on the resources brought by each generation and having the following aim: "to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities" (Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2001, cited in Beth Johnson Foundation 2011). Intergenerational projects often seek to function as "vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits" (Hatton-Yeo 2006, p. 2). Kaplan's (2004) useful typology helps describe intergenerational practice with some forms of intergenerational practice being irregular or once off, while others are more programmatic and involve sustained interactions over time perhaps forming intergenerational communities. While early discourses regarding intergenerational practice focused on one-way exchanges and outcomes, such as efforts to get adults to educate the young or getting the young to support, serve, or assist older members of society; now there is a widespread acceptance of the importance of seeing intergenerational practice as a *reciprocal* process involving all-age exchanges (Jarrott et al. 2006; VanderVen 1999, 2004; Mannion 2012). The following Generations United definition emphasizes this reciprocity. For them, intergenerational practice involves:

> activities or programmes that increase cooperation, interaction and exchange between people from any two generations. They share their knowledge and resources and provide mutual support in relations benefiting not only individuals but their community. These programs provide opportunities for people, families and communities to enjoy and benefit from a society for all ages. (Generations United, undated) (cited in Sánchez et al. 2007, p. 35, italics in original).

Commentators have worried over the possibility of greater and multiple generation gaps emerging as older and younger people begin to experience forms of

segregation from each other and/or from the rest of society. The fear of increased generation gaps and intensified generational niching means governments have begun to react with policy initiatives. National and international governmental policy now more clearly attends to the need to address and improve relations among people from all generations. These policies often center on the keynote idea of the creation of a "society for all ages" (UN), which is seen as an effort to reduce the segregation of society, improve intergenerational ties, and support mutually productive exchanges between generations (Krašovec and Kump 2010; United Nations 2007).

2.3 Intergenerational Education and Learning

While "intergenerational practice" framed policy at the turn of the millennium, in the last decade, an interest in looking more closely at intergenerational learning has emerged in policy and in a number of academic disciplines. This is because policy makers, practitioners, and academics have realized that learning could play an even greater part in the way inter- and intragenerational relations and practices are sustained and reinvented. Intergenerational learning, however conceived, will be founded to some degree on the sustenance, creation, and expression of relations between generations. In academia and in practice, the move to looking at the relations between generations has been pivotal in a range of disciplines and here the concern for extrafamilial encounters are seen as key (see Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). Gerontology, education, sociology, and business studies are the cases in point we look at these later in the chapter.

There is now a marked focus on intergenerational learning that has led to a plethora of EU and other international policy and research initiatives. As a result, more robust definitions and some early empirical work on the scope and nature of *intergenerational learning* and *intergenerational education* are now available. New networks such as the European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) (see: http://www.enilnet.eu) have been influential. The European Network for Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) defines intergenerational learning as a partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality involving people of different ages in gaining skills, values, and knowledge. For ENIL, intergenerational learning must be multigenerational, planned to achieve purposeful and progressive learning and lead to mutually beneficial learning outcomes (ENIL 2012). Kaplan (2004) emphasizes that the outcomes will be reciprocally experienced, however, even though one generation may be nominally the provider and another the recipient. Hence, intergenerational learning requires some interaction between the generations and some cross-generational transfers. Notably, it is not necessarily the case that all participating generations will be in receipt of the *same* inputs or educational programing or that, as outputs they would learn the same thing. Nevertheless, these definitions might only capture some aspects of the significance of intergenerational learning's impacts.

Geographically oriented perspectives are emerging too. Mannion (2012) emphasizes the reciprocal and place-based elements in intergenerational education.

Mannion (2012) notes that much of the earlier commentary and research on intergenerational practice set out to *describe* practice and to name many diverse *outcomes* in health, leisure, educational, public service, and personal development (Brown and Ohsako 2003) in order to raise its profile. Since outcomes are so diverse, the challenge has been to discern what is distinctive about intergenerational education. Drawing on empirical work on diverse programs of intergenerational education, Mannion (2012) offers a more extended and place-sensitized characterization of what is needed for intergenerational learning to potentially occur including an emphasis on the situated or emplaced nature of all learning:

> Intergenerational education (a) involves people from two or more generations participating in a common practice that happens in some place; (b) involves different interests across the generations and can be employed to address the betterment of individual, community, and ecological well-being through tackling some problem or challenge; (c) requires a willingness to reciprocally communicate across generational divides (through activities involving consensus, conflict, or cooperation) with the hope of generating and sharing new intergenerational meanings, practices, and places that are to some degree held in common, and (d) requires a willingness to be responsive to places and one another in an ongoing manner (Mannion 2012, p. 397).

Looking at *purposes* is another way to discern the distinctiveness of intergenerational learning. As demonstrated above, intergenerational education would expectedly aim to promote *greater understanding and respect between generations*. Without this outcome, almost any form of education that involves different age groups could claim to be "intergenerational." Mannion (2012) suggests improved intergenerational relations are *not sufficient* as goals. Taking a situated view, because intergenerational programs are always located some "where" or place, they will generate new meanings, practices, and effects within these places. Like Mannion (2012), Granville and Ellis (1999, p. 236) argue for this expanded view of goals arguing that a truly intergenerational program must show a benefit and value for both generations *and* "demonstrate an improvement in the quality of life for both, and from that, an improvement in the quality of life for all." Similarly, Mannion (2012) notices and theorizes how it is *within and through place-change* processes that intergenerational education occurs. This has implications for what directions intergenerational programming might be considered and is captured below.

3 Intergenerational Education and Learning: In a New Place

We have seen the reasons why intergenerational learning and education might be considered to have arrived at a new juncture and how policy, practice, and theory might be responding. The next section summarizes the new directions of travel for the field which seem set to reposition it further in a new place. In formal, nonformal, and informal learning, three emerging shifts or step changes are noticeable. It can be agued that taking each on board will help gain the as yet unrealized benefits of intergenerational contact and learning. These shifts mean intergenerational

education and the learning can be better understood, supported, and utilized more effectively for ecosocial wellbeing. Three "shifts" signpost new directions for intergenerational education theory, policy, and practice.

The three shifts are:

1. From looking at inputs and outputs of education as unigenerational toward more relational and reciprocal framings
2. From looking at intergenerational encounters as mainly or solely intrafamilial towards realizing that untapped potential for extrafamilial intergenerational contact
3. From seeing the goal as mainly or solely for improved relations between the generations toward an understanding that intergenerational education provides a distinctive opportunity to address wider issues such as ecosocial wellbeing

The next sections take these "shifts" in turn explicating some of the rationales and the implications of each. While these three shifts are already in train to some degree across many arenas, they need to be more comprehensively taken on board for a more forthright direction of travel to emerge. As we will see, early responses to the changes in demographic structure were unigenerational, intrafamilial, and concerned with single-issue features (for example lifelong learning in workforces). Now, there is increased interest in taking a more relational view on the role of intergenerational education and learning as part of a wider set of inputs, processes and impacts of societal changes. Indeed, a relational view permeates these shifts in perspective or reframings. This is critical if we are to understand the intergenerational dimensions of sociomaterial practice and learning in many spheres of life and across discipline: *inter alia*, formal education (at school, college, and in higher education), in sociology, in gerontology, in issues such as children's rights and participation, in the workplace, and in wider society as it faces ecological and other challenges.

1. Moving from Unigenerational to Intergenerational Framings of Education and Learning

The initial response to the changing population profile in research had been to pay closer attention to the experience of older members of society. In social and health-related studies (for example, in health, welfare, and employment) researchers began to look at the experiences of older people (Atchley 1980). More recently, a relational turn is noticeable across many disciplines that had taken a singular or unigenerational focus. Influenced by generational changes in demographics and wider intergenerational exchange, in many disciplines, especially in the last 10–15 years, researchers have turned their attention to intergenerational matters. This has been the case for research in education, social policy, welfare, and health. This has been possible, in part, through the application of a generational or cohort approach to the social experience Mannheim (1952). The relational turn is noticeable in many disciplines: gerontology, sociology, and education are the examples we can consider briefly next.

Gerontology, unsurprisingly, has focused on the care, welfare, heath, and ongoing contribution to society of aging populations (Hooyman and Kiyak 2008). Until recently, the field did not pay much attention to the relations and processes that conspire to create the social and medical condition and experience of aging. More lately, it has become clear that a more relational account of aging was needed to understand the dynamics of the aging population (Andershed 2006). Renewed interest is now found in, for example, studies of the age-old contract between generations or what encourages members from one generation to give financial and other resources to another (see Albertini and Kohli 2012) but do not take transfers of learning as a possible intergenerational conduit of exchange.

The education and learning of older adults has come to the fore in gerontology too. Strom and Strom (2016) challenge false assumptions about the age at which people are considered to have stopped learning, arguing that as people live longer we need to provide for older adult education and not underestimate the abilities of older people and the potential for all generations to engage in reciprocal forms of learning (among older adults, grandchildren, and their grandchildren's parents). In education, schools are experimenting with intergenerational models (Mannion and Adey 2011; Intergenerational Schools 2014) with multiage classrooms both indoors and out where there is ample opportunity for peer-to-peer learning with adults working as mentors and co-learners.

Somewhat separately, in the sociology of childhood, until the late 1990s at least, the focus had been firmly on children and childhood as a life phase. In much of the late 1980s and 1990s, studies of childhood and children's lives, in the so-called New Sociology of Childhood (Prout and James 1990) sought to understand the experience of children and young people as participants with rights and agency in society in their own right (Qvortrup 1994). As services and research communities sought to respond to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Tisdall and Punch (2012) note that in that period binary framings of adult-and-child were used less than critically alongside modernist "mantras" about the need to understand young people's own cultures, and the need to advance their agency and participation.

In response, in sociological research on children's rights and participation, there are calls to recognize a more relational perspective on pupil voice and children's views (Mannion 2007; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Wyness 2013). Fielding (1999) suggests that schools in particular should adopt a form of "radical collegiality" between pupils and teachers. Mannion (2007) emphasizes that "intergenerational becoming" better characterizes so-called children's participation programs since adulthood and childhood and intertwined and it is both adults and children who coconstruct the opportunities for participation. Taft (2014), however, warns that children's positioning as less powerful than adults means we need to attend to this aspect with great care for intergenerational dialogue to be effective. Either way, children's participation research calls into the frame the need for improved adult-child relations as key to addressing the rights of young people to having a say in matters that affect them.

Similarly, in sociological studies of family life, taking a relational, generational, or intergenerational reading has become more significant (see for example, Brannen

et al. 2013; Thomson 2014). Looking at the effects of demographic changes in a relational way has led researchers to reappraise all kinds of social exchange practices: for example, sibling relations (Punch and Tisdall 2014; see also Punch, this volume), fatherhood (Brannen et al. 2011), motherhood (Davis 2012), and the longitudinal changes in the intergenerational division of work and care (Brannen et al. 2004).

In education itself, as with other disciplines at the outset, a unigenerational and unidirectional view on learning between generations was taken. Brătianu and Orzea (2012) suggest that intergenerational learning was historically a process found mainly *in family life* through which the older people shared their values, beliefs, and tacit knowledge with younger members. The flow of education was from older to younger, through transmission and cultural reproduction. "Research on intergenerational learning within families includes a range of studies that focus on the transmission of beliefs and practices and the modelling of behaviors from generation to generation" (Gadsden and Hall 1996, p. 1). Brătianu and Orzea (2012) note that new demographic changes particularly in the Minority World have led to the increasing size of the older population and that this will lead to the emergence of the new extrafamilial paradigm of intergenerational learning.

The impacts of the aging of the population have been strongly felt in some research on education and learning. Initially, in lifelong learning research on "third age" learners (Dale 2001), older workers (DeLong 2004; Field and Canning 2014), we can see that the early impetus had been to worry over the aging population that was becoming less included and a workforce undergoing loss of experience as workers began to retire in ever larger numbers. Orzea and Brătianu (2012) show how we continue to worry over the effects of the retirement shock wave leading to substantial knowledge losses. Rather than fixing the problem with unigenerational approaches, they see intergenerational learning as a way of stemming the tide of this loss and as a way of maintaining competitive advantage. Research has sought to look at when and how older workers can be retained, retrained, and when and how their experience can be drawn upon.

Across disciplines, it is only more recently that an intergenerational lens has been applied to what on the face of it appeared initially to be unigenerational issues. When we consider the effects of the aging population in a relational way, for example, we can notice some ongoing impacts on family life which will have knock-on effects on learning within the family home. Intergenerational studies have shown that an aging population results in altered childcare practices and intergenerational transfers of resources (Hoff 2007). Demographic changes can also lead to challenges to workforce sustainability and development as a larger number of aging knowledgeable workers leave organizations without opportunity to pass on their skills and experience. Mobile workforces and migration mean that there is less face-to-face contact between younger generations and the older population but changes in digital technologies mean people have more opportunity to have social contact with a much wider intergenerational cohorts of relations and friends (see Dhoest 2015). In contrast, formal schooling has been critiqued as being remarkably resistant to working closely with communities or linking in a sustained way with adults without

professional educational qualifications. In theoretical debates, commentators now advance the idea that young people's participation cannot be understood outside of a consideration of place and generation (Mannion 2007). These examples show that taking a multi- and intergenerational lens can help us refresh how we address what might appear to be unigenerational issues.

2. Moving from Solely Intrafamilial to Include Extrafamilial Intergenerational Contact for Learning

In the early industrial age, in Minority World economies the family decreased in size and became "nuclear." As work patterns changed, this meant fewer family members were living under the same roof or nearby and concerns emerged about the effects of a widening generation gap on social harmony and cohesion. In the postindustrial period, some distinctive effects on intergenerational relations of the changes in demographics were notable. As the population ages, we have begun to notice the rise in "beanpole" family structures (Vern et al. 1995; Brannen 2003) with up to four generations alive at the same time leading to a doubling of the timespan for intergenerational relationships. With these changes, in fact there comes increased opportunity for multigenerational relations across increased intergenerational contact lifespans within and outside the home. As family size shrinks and the population ages across the globe, we are also noticing the increasing importance of multigenerational bonds within families (Bengtson 2001) and the increased potential for extrafamilial relations too though this is seen as less well harnessed in practice into the way society creates cohesiveness. The potential for educational response here is immense but is as yet untapped.

Extrafamilial intergenerational relations have come to the fore in organizational and business studies as a concern as a result of changes in demographics. In Europe, as society ages, and the baby boomer generation (born after World War II) start to retire (2015–2035), a bulging number of older workers near retirement and exit the workforce. At this time, one worry is that insufficient time and energy will be spent on knowledge sharing between the generations to the detriment of organizations' ability to grow, prosper, and change. In economic analyses, intergenerational learning is seen as an imperative for survival in the world of business and organizational survival. Ropes (2013) suggests that intergenerational learning is one approach to combating loss of knowledge, skills, and values through older worker retirement. Intergenerational learning, he argues can improve an organization's capacity through stimulating new knowledge and improving work processes.

Alongside changes in demographics, the changes in the actual opportunity for intergenerational contact leads commentators to worry over threats to community cohesion and arguments for supporting it. Some pressures on intergenerational cohesion include the increased need for "eldercare" in general (with fewer people in work to "pay" for their care), the rise of childless couples (leading to concerns for who might care for them as they age), the falling birth rate (which leads to some communities and countries ageing faster than others), international and urban-to-rural migration (leading to less contact between family members of different

generations). These kinds of changes mean that contemporary Minority World beanpole family members are perhaps hard pressed to maintain links as their family structures change and as they become more dislocated across space and time. Multigenerational coresidence in the family home becoming less common or possible as multilocal, multigenerational families become the norm (Hoff 2007). In this light, any program of intergenerational education would need to understand the situated nature of its provisions.

Interestingly, a mixed picture emerges about the classic concern over generational gaps and community cohesion. Some analysts are more hopeful than others. As Bengtson (2001) summarizes, intrafamilial multigenerational relations are increasingly diverse (through divorce and stepfamily relationships, increased longevity, and increased diversity of intergenerational relationships). As the generations share longer lives together, Bengtson (2001) notices the increasing importance of grandparents in childcare and overall intergenerational solidarity. Other literature reviews of empirical studies of intergenerational transfers and relationships have not found any substantial weakening of ties in late modern families (Nauck et al. 2009). Intergenerational structures within families are changing for sure but this now means intergenerational relationships *outside* families can and are becoming increasingly important. As a backdrop to these statistical analyses, commentators note that there is no elaborated theory of intergenerational relationships (Nauck et al. 2009) or intergenerational education and learning, but this is an area that is getting some new attention.

Like Mannion (2012, see above), Kump and Krašovec (2014) review the rise of intergenerational approaches to learning and they emphasize the extrafamilial aspects. They suggest intergenerational learning programs are now appearing in various forms in schools, community organizations, hospitals, and beyond. Kump and Krašovec (2014) note that intergenerational learning is connected to community education since it involves active participation for a common good. Intergenerational learning, like community education, can be social and collaborative, and be dedicated to mutual empowerment, community renewal, intergenerational solidarity, and social equity. It will often set out to advance social cohesiveness and inclusion, citizenship, and generate new forms of social capital. Nonetheless, we have some way to go before the policy and practice fields are adequately sensitized to the benefits of extrafamilial intergenerational contact for education and learning.

3. Moving from the Goal of Improved Intergenerational Relations to Wider Ecosocial Wellbeing in Places

Intergenerational learning and education remain untapped as ideas in many realms for researchers and policy makers alike. As we have seen, the argument is that intergenerational contacts can lead to education and learning in ways that offer scope in addressing some key social policy "wicked problems" including social cohesion and inclusion. With a more place-responsive approach, intergenerational education is also apt as an approach to addressing issues other than just the social. Many issues are both socially relational and ecologically significant (for example,

the issues of climate change or the effects of desertification on migration). From the analysis presented here, the main argument is that intergenerational education and learning remains needs to be understood as an explicit approach to issues that are themselves both ecologically and socially relational.

A distinctively geographical reading of intergenerational education and learning can help us here. On the one hand, we see the limitations of seeing an age segregated society as a problem to be solved unigenerationally and in ways that fails to take account of context and place. From the perspective of the health and wellbeing of humans and their inhabited locales, intergenerational contact can be seen as part of a wider movement towards ecosocial wellbeing (see Mannion 2012). The rationale from this perspective is that "aging population opens new opportunities for numerous people who otherwise think and function differently, but who are united in the common goal of benefiting the community and its human and natural resources" (Kump and Krašovec 2014, p. 167). Attending to the need for more sustainable relations between people and places has been the goal of environmental education since at least the 1960s. Stapp (1969, p. 34) "suggest that environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve these problems, and motivated to work toward their solution." Many in environmental education indicate that intergenerational encounter can be an antidote to what some have described as a sense of deplacement (Orr 1994) as inhabitants. Early environmentally focused intergenerational education looked at how the younger learner experiencing an age-segregated program might go on to influence and educate their families about environmental issues (Uzzell et al. 1994).

More recent studies of intergenerational forms of environmental education research have found empirical evidence that participants from all generations can benefit through learning via intergenerational encounters, reciprocal inputs and outcomes, and mutual engagement in places. Intrafamilial intergenerational learning is coming under the research spotlight (Jessel 2009). New "material geographies" look at how artifacts, green cultures, and participatory citizenship inform research on the political ecology of household and everyday sustainability (Gorman-Murray and Lane 2012). In the home, relations and learning between generations are seen as key to green lifestyle growth. Bowers (2009) has argued for some time that younger and older people need more interact to pass on and sustain what he calls the "cultural commons" or the "activities, knowledge, skills, and patterns of mutual support that do not rely on a monetized economy" (Bowers 2009, p. 196). He suggests that it is in the local cultural commons that we learn alternatives to the consumer dependent lifestyle that he sees as undermining community and degrading the Earth's natural systems. There are inevitable tensions and debates about what kinds of knowledge gets passed on to whom and to what ends; not all intergenerational learning will support improved human and ecological wellbeing to the same extent and some may degrade it.

Other evidence too supports the view that intrafamilial intergenerational learning will likely be insufficient to address larger social and ecological challenges. Payne's (2010) study of "green" families looked to find out if the intimate space of family life

could provide an effective form of environmental education. Payne noted, however, that even though values, practices, and dispositions to being green were being passed on between the generations that the members of these families appeared to be swimming subversively against the tide of wider formidable pressures of consumer culture. Collins (2015) rightly notes that we should not expect the youth of today to tackle the challenges of sustainability alone. Within the family but also, critically, outside of it, she argues, we should help engage adults and young people separately and together since there are likely to be exchanges in both directions. However, there are a few nationally supported programs of education emerging that securely build on this realization. Exceptions in research include Mannion and Adey's (2011) study of a school-linked community garden and Peterat and Mayer-Smith's (2006) intergenerational farm study and Gilbert and Mannion's (2014) study of the role of stories in connecting people of all ages with their local natural and cultural heritage. Through taking a geographical and environmental reading, these three studies all argue for the potential for intergenerational practice and education to address ecosocial wellbeing within and through improved intergenerational contact and relations. Mannion (2012) and Krašovec and Kump (2010) recommend we begin to "think differently" about social and environmental policy since the improvement of welfare in the community and the sustainability of its human and natural resources are in fact joint goals. One might say that all place-based education can have an intergenerational practice dimension and vice versa.

4 Schools as Places of Intergenerational Learning?

There are numerous research-informed benefits to taking an intergenerational approach to formal schooling. The possible advantages of creating an intergenerational dimension of formal schooling would accrue to pupils, the older participants, their relations among them, and the wider community too. Whether it be gardening, literacy, computer learning, or local history projects, intergenerational school-linked projects of many kinds, all show the linked nature in which they can improve outcomes for pupils, engage learners in settings beyond classrooms, and improve interage community involvement. The evidence on community gardening projects, for example, shows enhancements in academic learning for pupils (Williams and Dixon 2013), while other research has shown that relations among the teachers, pupils, parents, and wider community are enhanced (Mayer-Smith et al. 2009). Mannion et al. (2010) exemplify this linked synergy in their analysis of place-based intergenerational projects. They showed that the way in which meanings were generated within the curriculum making processes were changed through taking an intergenerational and place-responsive approach. They summarized what happened in one school thus:

> There was a realisation that there was an untapped potential in community people, visiting facilitators and pupils. Teachers could see new possibilities within new curriculum framings for connecting coursework to these approaches in ways that could meet teaching and

> learning outcome imperatives in locally specific ways. Pupils noted that community members brought new authentic, situated, perspectives and had locally valuable knowledge bases. We found that intergenerational place-based learning was quite materially-focused, hands-on, sensory in nature and engendered opportunities for encounters with living and changing places inhabited by people, now, in the past and to be inhabited differently in the future. The activities allowed pupils to be connected with local places in new ways through encounters with living things (domesticated animals as well as wildlife) and non-living things (eg water in the burn, archaeology). These experiences brought many pupils to reflect on how they live now and how they might live in new ways in a place (Mannion et al. 2010, p. 32).

As the case of intergenerational school-linked gardening shows us, the outcomes for pupil learning, community cohesion, and other impacts can be intimately connected. To date, these interlinked synergies have not always been captured since research often focuses on one or other of the participating generations or one or other of the different kinds of outcomes. Since inputs, outcomes and effects are more likely reciprocal when schools move to engage with curriculum making in an intergenerational way, there is a need for research to inform when and how schools might be supported to take such an approach across the different spheres of school life: in class teaching, in the extended curriculum, in governance groups, and beyond. The experiments in full-blown intergenerational schools in practice are at an early stage of development but are showing signs of positive impact (Intergenerational Schools 2014). Mannion et al. (2010) noted how in one secondary taking an intergenerational turn was a big step change for a traditionally organized school. Krašovec and Kump (2010) warn that the participation of the older adult in schooling will work better if they receive adequate training for taking up these roles (as volunteers or otherwise). School leaders that understand these issues and are encouraged through policy and inspection and monitoring regimes will be more likely to experiment with a more coconstructive approach to curriculum making with parents, community members within local places. Further policy shifts and supports are, therefore, needed before teachers will readily harness outside agencies of other generations to be found in community groups but as contexts for learning beyond classrooms are becoming more expected as the norm, intergenerational practice seems set to feed more directly into the core business of school-based learning. For the moment, however, we have still some way to go before we can say intergenerational education can take a firm hold in formal school systems.

5 Toward Place- and Generation-Responsive Curriculum Making

Taken together, the evidence from diverse disciplines is strongly in support of the view that intergenerational approaches to learning and education are needed, viable, and worthwhile. While early literature sought to describe intergenerational practices and record effects, new theories of intergenerational education are now finding expression in research (Mannion 2012). Theory can be employed to express how

learning occurs through intergenerational contact and what the purposes of such learning might be. Some advances on setting out a theory of intergenerational education have been made; some rest on links between theories of learning and theories of place and how these connect to address intergenerational concerns. Geographical and philosophical theories of place can help us here.

Mannion and Adey (2011) note that any learning curricula are made within the process of the production of relations between adults and children alongside place change processes. For Mannion and Gilbert (2015), the links between intergenerational practice and place are understood within a relational ontology where materials, places, practices, and people are intermeshed. It is the idea of the "eventfulness" of all the tangible elements of a place (Casey 1998) that makes learning possible. It is our embodied experience and responsiveness to differences found in places and the way places act back upon us reciprocally that results in emergent learning. For Casey, places are events emplacing things in complex ways with diverse effects. "It is an issue of experiencing a place differently, experiencing its eventfulness otherwise" (Casey 1998, p. 337). Mannion and Gilbert (2015) build on that fluid and relational view of place to suggest *intergenerational learning* occurs when people of more than one generation respond to generational differences found within a given place. Mannion and Gilbert (2015) thus bring together various strands of intergenerational theory (Vanderbeck 2007; Mannion 2012), other theories of place (Casey 1993), place-based learning (Somerville 2010), and embodied experience (Grosz 2005) to derive two premises for intergenerational education:

(a) The first is that people from different generations and places are reciprocally enmeshed and coemergent.
(b) The second is that people from different generations learn from each other through making embodied responses to differences found in places.

Mannion (2012) builds on these premises to argue that intergenerational pedagogies should encourage learners to be responsive not only to intergenerational differences but also to the differences found in the situated places they seek to inhabit. Within a relational ontological view, participating generations need to be responsive to each other and to a changing and contingent environment in which we are enmeshed.

Given the many threats to knowledge formation, social cohesion, and the sustainability of the Earth, environmental education provides a framing for intergenerational education and vice versa. Place-based education and intergenerational education can be seen as two sides of the same process. This work will involve educators, learners, and their collaborators in actively seeking out *place-based intergenerational differences*. Mannion (2012) and Ross and Mannion (2012) suggest working in *nonrepresentational ways* to do this. Nonrepresentational theory, they suggest, invites us to employ more experimental approaches to understanding, imparting, and documenting the world and our lived experiences of it. Nonrepresentational approaches build on an ontology of becoming where people, plants, animals, and materials are not static but changing in relation.

Because of this, we can never adequately represent in research or education. Many forms of research and curriculum making are seen as being too extractive and reductive of experience and in various ways fail to capture the material, embodied, affective richness of everyday life (Jones 2008). Instead, nonrepresentational approaches seek to invent, perform, and create new relations. In a nonrepresentational place- and generation-responsive curriculum, differences are to be found in our relations with place and with others through our embodied activities within families, in the public sphere, in schools or colleges, and in organizations. But reciprocally responding to differences found among people-in-place will generate a starting point for a viable intergenerational curriculum. Put simply, response making comprises how we grow and change as a person and this, in part, happens through intergenerational relations within our lived experiences of an ever-changing place (Mannion 2012). Place-responsive forms of intergenerational education may therefore be critical for the creation of more inclusive, sustainable forms of ecosocial flourishing.

6 Conclusion

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this chapter has explored the history, definitions, and theorizations of intergenerational education and learning. The chapter shows how interdisciplinary understandings of intergenerational practice and learning and its sociomaterial context can help us notice three shifts required to tap into its potential to address ecosocial wellbeing. The relatively unconnected fields of inquiry (health, geography, economics, sociology, gerontology, and education) have thus far noticed that the concern over the aging population has initially sought to address issues that are distinctively pertinent to the older adult population themselves: their health, economic transfer, their employability and presence at work, and the need to keep learning, socially included and active. But, as the chapter has shown, these fields have each moved toward a more relational view albeit in diverse ways. In the end, each discipline realizes that unigenerational fixes are not seen as effective as intergenerational ones. Reciprocal outcomes for all participants in multigenerational contact are also seen as relevant. Extrafamilial intergenerational encounters offer untapped potential to address more than the sustainability of business and the drain of older generations as they retire. Looking to address solely the needs of older adults – through initiatives around active aging or the university of the third age – also misses the potential for more engaged reciprocal forms of learning across all ages and generations. Similarly, looking to address children's needs to participate without addressing intergenerational dimensions will be remiss.

Looking at intergenerational contacts, contracts, and encounters as potential learning experiences leads to the recognition of a stronger contemporary need to reorient public institutions (schools and beyond) to allow for greater opportunities for formal, nonformal, and informal intergenerational education and learning. A consideration of the purposes of intergenerational education indicates the scope for addressing wider ecological and social ills within formal, nonformal, and informal learning. This means

that intergenerational practice and learning should be a growth area within all kinds and places of education since many of these could be vital to the creation of more inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable ways of life. There are many yet-to-be-imagined forms of intergenerational encounter and education. These have the potential to make the shared ecosocial sphere life enhancing for all. If we are to use education to address contemporary concerns, we must start by enabling participants from all generations to be more reciprocally responsive to each other and to the places they collectively inhabit.

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