FORMAL, NONFORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract – This article presents a conceptual framework for understanding the interrelationships among formal, nonformal and informal education. It provides a typology of modes of education across the life span, from childhood to old age. The nonformal education mode is the focus of the article as examples of programs for differing ages, sexes, social classes and ethnic groups are discussed. The third section of the article raises questions regarding the relationship between nonformal education for individual and social change within and across cultural and socio-economic groups. It also discusses the relationship between nonformal and formal education relative to their respective scope and outcomes.

The author argues that educational resources must be viewed as interacting modes of emphasis rather than as discrete entities. Hence, all individuals are engaged in learning experiences at all times, from planned, compulsory and intentional to unplanned, voluntary and incidental. It is also argued that nonformal education may be more strongly associated with socio-economic, sex and ethno-religious groups than is formal education. Because of these strong socio-economic and cultural ties, the utility of nonformal education for social, as opposed to individual, change is often restricted. The value of nonformal, as opposed to formal, education for access to the opportunity structure for low socio-economic status populations is also questioned because of the greater legitimacy typically associated with schooling.

Zusammenfassung – Dieser Artikel legt einen konzeptuellen Rahmen für das Verständnis der Wechselbeziehungen zwischen formaler, nicht-formaler und informaler Erziehung vor. Er bietet eine Typologie von Erziehungsweisen, die sich über das ganze Leben erstrecken, von der Kindheit bis zum späten Alter. Im Zentrum des Artikels steht der nicht-formale Erziehungsmodus; Beispiele von Programmen für verschiedene Altersstufen, Geschlechter, soziale Klassen und ethnische Gruppen werden gegeben. Der dritte Teil wirft Fragen der Beziehungen zwischen nicht-formaler Erziehung für individuellen und sozialen Wandel innerhalb kultureller und sozio-ökonomischer Gruppen sowie gruppen-übergreifend auf. Ferner wird das Verhältnis nicht-formaler zu formaler Erziehung in bezug auf ihren jeweiligen Umfang und ihre Ergebnisse besprochen.

Der Verfasser führt aus, daß Bildungsressourcen als interaktive Schwerpunktsetzung und nicht als getrennte Ganzheiten anzusehen sind. Somit machen alle Menschen jederzeit ihre Lernerfahrungen, von geplantem, pflichtmäßigem und absichtlichem Lernen bis zu ungeplantem, freiwilligem und zufälligem. Weiterhin wird hervorgehoben, daß nicht-formale Erziehung wohl stärker als formale mit sozio-ökonomischen, ethnisch-religiösen und Geschlechtsgruppen assoziiert ist. Wegen dieser festen sozio-ökonomischen und kulturellen Bindungen ist die Nützlichkeit nicht-formaler Erziehung für sozialen, im Gegensatz zu individuellem, Wandel oft begrenzt. Fraglich erscheint auch der Wert nicht-formaler, im Gegensatz zu formaler, Erziehung für den

Zugang von Gruppen mit niedrigem sozio-ökonomischen Status zu der Chancen-
struktur, weil der Schule allgemein größere Legitimität zugeschrieben wird.

Résumé – Cet article présente un cadre conceptuel pour une meilleure compréhension
des interrelations de l'éducation formelle, non formelle et diffuse. Il présente une
typologie des differents modes d'éducation qui se succèdent au cours d'une existence,
depuis l'enfance jusqu'à la vieillesse. Le mode d'éducation non formelle constitue le
thème central de cet article où sont discutés des exemples de programmes en fonction
de l'âge, du sexe, de la classe sociale et du groupe ethnique. La troisième partie de
l'article soulève des questions sur les relations entre l'éducation non formelle de
l'individu et le changement social à l'intérieur des groupes culturels et socio-
économiques, mais aussi entre ces groupes. Il traite également de la relation entre
l'éducation non formelle et l'éducation formelle en ce qui regarde leur champs d'action
respectifs et leur résultats.

L'auteur soutient que les resources éducatives doivent être considérées comme des
facteurs de mise en valeur réciproque plutôt que comme des discrètes entités. Par suite,
tous les individus sont engagés à tout moment dans des expériences d'apprentissage,
qu'elles soient concertées, obligatoires et délibérées ou bien involontaires, imprévues et
fortuites. L'auteur ajoute que l'éducation non formelle pourrait être plus fortement
associée aux groupes socio-économiques, sexuels et ethno-religieux que l'éducation
formelle. Ces liens culturels et socio-économiques puissants restreignent souvent,
l'efficacité de l'éducation non formelle dans le changement social, contrairement à ce
qui se passe pour l'individu. La valeur de l'éducation non formelle – à la différence de
l'éducation formelle – comme voie d'accès aux structures de rattrapage pour les
populations d'un statut socio-économique défavorisé, est aussi contestée par suite de la
légitimité supérieure typiquement associée à la scolarité.

Introduction

The term, 'nonformal education', was introduced in the late 1960's to signal a
need for creating out-of-school responses to new and differing demands for
education. Although there has always been some attention placed on out-of-
school education and on acknowledging the importance of community re-
sources for teaching and learning, the new term, 'nonformal', helped to
legitimate this attention.

During the 1970's, in much of the Third World, nonformal education
became a more frequent programmatic alternative for some youth and adults
who were either unserved or poorly served by schools, or who needed to
supplement the schooling they already received. In these instances, nonformal
education often assisted in bringing educational services to a rapidly growing
population that could not be adequately addressed through schools that had
to be built, equipped and staffed through a complex economic, managerial
and political bureaucracy. Nonformal education has also demonstrated some
utility for youth and adults in responding to societal problems involving
health, nutrition, unemployment, food production, and so on, that tend to
characterize Third World concerns.

In the more industrialized countries, nonformal education has also been of potential use in meeting educational demands. For children and youth it provides a possible complement or supplement to schools that are variously criticized for their authoritarianism and inflexibility, their lack of relevance to subordinate populations, and their inability to deliver basic skills. For adults, it has often meant individual and social development, health and safety instruction, and job training. In common with Third World countries, schools in these later societies are also subject to financial constraints and the need to address a wide range of social problems which make satisfying diverse demands all but impossible. Nonformal education has been used in these instances as well. Likewise, while educators in the industrialized states are not contronted by an inability to meet the demand for formal education, there is a need for greater integration and co-ordination of the various institutional and non-institutional forms of education. Basically, in all countries, the issues of cost effectiveness, flexibility, basic skills, equity, health, economic production, and so on, have led to what appears to be a greater use of nonformal education.

Given this wide range of potential applications of nonformal education throughout the world it is important to consider conceptual frameworks that are relevant to out-of-school processes of teaching and learning. This paper examines such frameworks by first providing a typology of interactive educational modes based upon the definitions of Coombs and Ahmed (1974). This typology is used to highlight the importance of lifelong learning with an emphasis on nonformal education. Second, examples of program activities are presented to indicate the nature of nonformal education throughout the life span. The third and final section of the paper discusses the relationship of nonformal education to the individual and social change process within and across socio-economic and ethnic group boundaries.

Formal, Nonformal and Informal Education

If a society's institutions are to become a resource for education, it is important that we be able to talk about the types of education that are likely to occur in various settings. Coombs and Ahmed (1974) equate education with learning and identify three types. These include informal, nonformal, and formal education. They define these terms as follows: informal education is 'the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment'; nonformal education is 'any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as

well as children'. A major difference between these two processes rests with the deliberate instructional and programmatic emphases present in nonformal education but absent in informal education. The third or formal mode of learning is defined by the authors as the 'institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system, spanning lower primary school and the upper reaches of the university' (p. 8). Because schools are typically sanctioned by the state, while nonformal education need not be so sanctioned (e.g., religious instruction, job training), a major difference between formal and nonformal education often rests with the influence of the government on the sponsorship of the two types of educational programs (La Belle, 1981).

In practice, informal, nonformal and formal education should be viewed as predominant modes of learning rather than, as Coombs and Ahmed imply, discrete entities. As modes of emphasis, formal, nonformal, and informal education may exist simultaneously, sometimes in concert with one another and sometimes in conflict. In a formal education situation, for example, the classroom reflects not only the stated curriculum of the teacher and the school but also the more subtle informal learning associated with how the classroom is organized, the rules by which it operates, and the knowledge transmitted among peers. In this case, simple participation in the school process fosters informal learning, but it may have little to do with the deliberate and systematic teaching and learning of the teacher. Likewise, the school fosters nonformal education through extra-curricular activities which have little to do with credits, grades, or diplomas, yet do reflect deliberate and systematic teaching and learning.

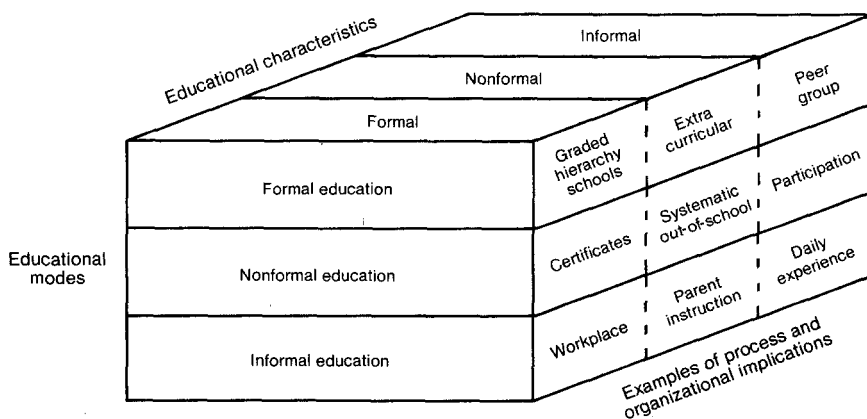Figure 1 attempts to treat formal, nonformal, and informal education as

Figure 1. *The Modes and Characteristics of Education*

predominant educational modes rather than as discrete entities (La Belle, 1976). Along the vertical line are the predominant modes of education or learning. These reflect the dominant type of learning process that is occurring from the perspective of the observer and/or the learner. In other words, a single school classroom may reflect all three modes of education simultaneously but the observer may choose to concentrate on only one mode – say, the formal one represented by the teacher passing on the sanctioned curriculum – rather than the informal one represented by the interaction of peers that may be occurring simultaneously in the same classroom.

Across the top of Figure 1 are the characteristics of the educational types. Here attention is on the structure rather than the process of education. Formal educational characteristics reflect hierarchical ordering, compulsory attendance, admissions requirements, standardized curricula, prerequisites, and certificates. Nonformal educational characteristics indicate that the activity must be separate from state-sanctioned schooling yet be preplanned and systematic and be able to lead a particular group of learners toward some specific goals. It does not depend, however, as does formal education, on standardized means or ends for its existence. Likewise, it must sometimes be defined by the intentions of the teacher and learner (e.g., media) (La Belle, 1981). Finally, informal educational characteristics reflect the contact individuals have with a variety of environmental influences that result in day-to-day learning.

Where the educational modes meet the educational characteristics in the matrix, the result is a particular form of educational activity. In the case of the formal educational mode for example, we can take the formal characteristics of formal education and arrive at the Coombs and Ahmed definition of the school. Nonformal implications of formal education may be extra-curricular activities, whereas informal implications may be peer group processes. Within the nonformal education mode, the formal characteristics may lead to the granting of badges or certificates, as in scouting, the nonformal characteristics to the out-of-school definition of Coombs and Ahmed, and the informal characteristics of nonformal education to institutional participation. Finally, within the informal education mode there may exist formal characteristics associated with certain rites of passage in formal organizations like the military or the workplace, nonformal characteristics associated with deliberate parental instruction, and informal characteristics of informal education which leads us to the informal education definition of Coombs and Ahmed.

The intent of the matrix is to enable an expanded conception of educational resources in society and their possible interaction. It is not important to categorize each possible educational activity by use of the matrix, but instead to employ it as a heuristic device which displays the interrelationships among

modes. In this regard it is worthwhile to note the broken vertical lines between the educational characteristics, suggesting that within a predominant mode there exist secondary and tertiary opportunities for learning that are possibly occurring in the same institutional setting and perhaps simultaneously. Such is the case with the formal educational mode, for example, where both extra-curricular and peer group structures may occur at the same time and place.

Throughout an individual's lifetime, he or she comes into contact with these modes of education, depending on a particular mode's availability and an individual's access and need. For example, most young children prior to school age are engaged primarily in the informal mode. In some instances however, it is also possible that early in a child's life, a family's resources and the availability of nonformal programs in the community (e.g., television) might permit some children to engage in nonformal learning prior to contact with schools. Subsequently, beginning approximately at the age of five, initial formal education contact may be made. For children and youth in some countries, the formal mode may be the dominant influence for twenty or more years while for others it may last less than a year. Irrespective of the formal education contact, however, it may be common for some nonformal education involvement to occur during the age when formal schooling is most common.

As the individual either continues in schooling or enters the work force as an adult, the constellation of educational influences continues to take on unique patterns. In some situations informal education predominates while in others nonformal education is predominant. For example, work-related skills may depend on nonformal or formal education, depending in part on the appropriateness of the training as well as the importance of diplomas and credentials. Likewise, there may be a tradition in certain situations of pursuing formal or nonformal education at various points in a lifetime to receive training for either a new career path or for mobility within the same career. As will be suggested below, the particular contact made with differing educational modes or with the interactions within those modes, depends to a considerable extent on the social class of the individual and his or her ability to exercise educational options throughout the life span.

The important issue to stress at this point in the discussion is the potential of integrating the concept of lifelong learning with the discussion of predominant educational modes, thereby strengthening our understanding of how and when individuals come into contact with different educational resources and what the likely outcome will be.

The Nonformal Mode

When attention has been placed in the past on the nonformal education mode, there has been a tendency to be concerned with youth and adults who are in the most productive period of their lives rather than with either children or the elderly. If the previous discussion reflects reality, however, nonformal education should be assessed throughout the life span. While this broader perspective opens up a large variety of program types, it is important to note that not all types are accessible to all cultural and socio-economic strata in a given society. Instead, we are beginning to learn more about the differential participation rates among populations whose ethnicity, social class, sex and urban and rural residency influence, if not dictate, availability and access to nonformal participation. In some instances, for example, nonformal education is used to enhance religious or ethnic solidarity, while in others it is intended to provide skills for socio-economic mobility. In some programs the goal is to provide leisure time activities for the upper classes while in others it is intended to serve as political socialization for those who seek to revitalize a society. In the discussion of program types that follows, the various characteristics of the clientele served in nonformal education should be kept in mind as should the nature of the society in which such programs are likely to be found.

Children and Youth
Nonformal education for children and youth focuses on the development of the individual child as a participant in society. Best seen as a part of socialization research, attention is typically directed to the interaction between an individual and those who seek to influence that individual. Concern is with the learning that leads the child to acquire loyalties to symbols and other human beings as well as to the learning of certain knowledge, skills, feelings and desires that are considered appropriate to a person of a particular sex, age and social group. Little is known of the contribution of nonformal education to these kinds of learning. In most societies we know little about which children participate in nonformal education and/or why their parents want the child to participate, the nature of the process or outcomes of such participation, and the sponsorship, delivery, cost or quality of such activity.

At the younger age levels, the participation of children in nonformal education programs is probably most closely associated with the normative guidelines that the child's parents use in attempting to both shape and respond to the personality and skill of a given child. Social class, ethnicity and sex roles take on importance here as some parents seek certain out-of-school experiences for their children based on socially appropriate youth and adult performance requirements. These requirements are linked to the parents' desire to see children develop physical, social, and personal attributes that are

valued by a particular segment of a society. The parents operate on an understanding of what it means to be a member of a group and the assumed attributes needed to perform a particular role in that group. Because nonformal education typically depends on the voluntary association of individuals with a particular set of experiences, such programs provide settings for the linkage between the family, the social class and the ethnic group on one side and the desired orientations and abilities sought for children on the other. In this sense, the study of nonformal education as childhood socialization is forward looking, as parents may have in mind some conception of what a child is supposed to become in later life and then choose programs to fulfill those goals. Given the present constraints on most parents in their attempts to choose a particular school and school curricula for their children, nonformal education programs provide some parents with an opportunity to round out the socialization experiences for children by enrolling them in activities which provide a particular set of skills, values and other learnings. In this way, nonformal education ensures an opportunity for educational choice that is not generally available through the formal school.

Although this adult-centered, childhood socialization rationale may appear to provide the most logical set of reasons underlying nonformal education participation for children, there are other reasons which are also worthy of consideration. For example, parents may simply need child care or baby-sitting services so that the parents can pursue employment opportunities. This may be a very pragmatic reason, given the climbing employment rates among women in some societies. It is also possible that the parents of some children and perhaps most youth, may detect peer pressure on the child to participate in certain programs. This peer pressure may be communicated through the individual child or youth, his or her peers, the school, through other parents or through the mass media. Nonformal education participation may also relate to ease of access including geographical location, travel time, transportation availability and cost. In other words, individuals may simply participate in programs that are readily available. Whatever the reasons, most of this kind of activity appears linked to more industrialized countries and to larger urban settings in the Third World.

The rationale for nonformal education participation for children and youth may vary by society, social group, family and individual. Likewise, these factors may influence who decides that an individual should participate. Thus, parents may decide the nature and extent of the participation for the child to a given age, at which time the child assumes more responsibility and authority for making such decisions. In addition, the responsibility and authority held by the child as opposed to the parents, and the extent to which child and parents converge or conflict in preference, may also vary by social class and ethnicity.

Nonformal education programs for children and youth range from those of a private profit-making type to those of a public and private non-profit type. In the first type there are summer and vacation camps, pre-school, day-care and after-school clubs, music and artistic instruction, tutoring and counseling services, apprenticeship training and, of course, various forms of media including books, magazines, radio and television. With the exception of some of the media and the apprenticeship training opportunities, most of the privately sponsored nonformal education programs serve middle and upper socio-economic status youngsters and thereby reinforce a network of individuals whose social and cultural background is often held in common. Males and females tend to participate differentially in accord with the requirements and goals of the program. The majority of the profit-making programs are found in urban areas, especially in more industrialized countries.

A second type of nonformal education activity includes private and public non-profit programs. These include a wide range of ethno-religious and political socialization activities, youth clubs and sports and recreation programs. The ethno-religious programs are typically weekend and after-school instructional activities, often tied to particular ethno-linguistic populations that transcend national boundaries. These programs evidence many formal characteristics and have been traditionally important for moral training. Political socialization activities among nonformal programs for children and youth are also typical in many countries of the world. Sometimes these programs are associated with ethno-religious groups, as in Northern Ireland among Catholics and Protestants, while others are more directly linked to political and social action groups. In this latter instance, it is not uncommon, for example, to see children and youth prepared to assume particular responsibilities in a revolutionary struggle, as has occurred recently in Iran and Nicaragua.

A second activity of a private and public non-profit type for children and youth concerns organized clubs and youth groups. These are traditionally sex-linked organizations that serve the dominant group such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, and they are often chartered nationally. Nonformal and informal characteristics tend to predominate in these activities. The situation is similar with the third and final activity of this type of children and youth programs, sports and recreation. Organized athletic teams and leagues appear to have served principally males, with certain sports participation traditionally associated with social class differences. For example, where special equipment and facilities like tennis rackets and courts or golf courses are required, it is unlikely that subordinate populations will be counted frequently among the participants.

Although, as suggested above, we know very little about nonformal education participation for children and youth throughout the world, what we do

know seems to point in the following directions. Nonformal education activities are probably most common in industrialized countries or urban centers and are dependent on adult influence and direction. Social class lines tend to dominate the characteristics of those who participate in such activities, especially the private-for-profit programs. Accompanying social class lines are the ethno-religious and sex linkages which, depending on the activity, tend to favor one group over another. Because of the social class bias, it appears safe to argue that the population served by nonformal education programs for children and youth worldwide may be relatively small. Such nonformal education is likely to be used to extend middle and upper class, or dominant group values, and thereby reinforce cultural and structural distances among groups.

Nonformal Education for Adults

Nonformal education for adults is as varied as that for children and youth. Depending on a program's orientation, adult nonformal education also differentially serves socio-economic and cultural groups by sex and residency. One significant characteristic of adult participation in nonformal education is an emphasis on the direct utility of participation. This is in contrast to much of the children and youth participation, which is often intended to reap the most important benefits, at least as perceived by adults, at a later time. Hence, much of the children and youth participation is anticipatory, whereas much of the adult participation appears likely to be more pragmatic and related to current needs and wants.

Although it is possible to categorize adult nonformal education programs in the same way as was done above for children and youth, other categories of participation appear more appropriate. These adult categories include programs for social and individual development, health and safety, and job-training. Under social and individual development, six activities appear likely. These include moral instruction (e.g., religious instruction); appreciation of the arts (e.g., instruction in how to play a musical instrument, to dance or to paint); values (e.g., interpersonal relations through marriage encounter groups, consciousness raising); problem solving (e.g., home and auto repair, community development, learning to drive an automobile); leisure time (e.g., hobbies, sports lessons); and basic skills (e.g., literacy and numeracy). These activities appear to evidence more emphasis on nonformal and informal characteristics within the nonformal mode.

The second category is health and safety, with the preventive examples encompassing such activities as family planning and first aid, and the remedial examples including learning to stop smoking, to lose weight, alcoholics anonymous, and physical and mental therapy. The category of job-training covers a wide range of alternatives, from becoming barbers, beauticians and

bar-tenders to real estate sales-persons, industrial workers, members of the military, trade-skills and executive in-service training. In these two categories the characteristics appear to be nonformal and formal in nature as instruction is more structured and deliberate.

The possible explanations for participation in nonformal education by adults can be discussed by the three main categories. With regard to social and individual development, there appear to be two principal reasons for participation. First, individuals have very few institutions in society to turn to outside of the nonformal education mode to learn to carry out the many activities needed to function in today's society. Living in a dense urban environment, for example, may necessitate looking for help in coping with alienation and anomie, with the changes in institutions like the family, or help with new roles as with single parents or liberated women. Gaining insight into oneself, enhancing interpersonal relations, creating social structures for community action, improving one's ability to function satisfactorily in a chosen career, and so on, appear to be the sought-after goals. Likewise, the need for community organization in the rural context through co-operatives or community enterprises may necessitate nonformal education. The second reason for participation may result from a desire to recreate through learning new games, hobbies, and sports. This participation is usually self-initiated and again depends primarily on the existence of nonformal programs which provide a mechanism through which people can both 'enjoy life' as well as 'escape'.

Adult participation in health and safety programs, both preventive and remedial, is explained through the dependence of most individuals on expert consultants in fields that are not commonly understood by a lay population. Likewise, in some cases the kind of health treatment involved may depend on group interaction and support rather than independent action, as with alcoholics anonymous. There are likely to be some rather strong social class ties here. For example, lower class populations may be more likely to participate in family planning programs while upper class populations may be more likely to be involved in programs to lose weight or stop smoking. Again, nonformal educational programs are probably the only source for these health and safety programs, as both the formal and informal modes are typically non-existent or inadequate.

The final category of adult participation is job-training. Here nonformal education participation may be popular because of the lack of effectiveness or availability of formal school programs for skill training. Hence, on-the-job or casual training and re-training may be offered as part of adult evening extension and non-degree programs in colleges and universities, by agricultural extension programs, or by private enterprise. Job-related nonformal education program participation for adults is likely to be a pragmatic re-

sponse to the realities of linking education and work. In effect, participation in such programs probably relates to a perceived opportunity to learn a set of skills and either become employable or to switch employment.

Among elderly adults it is assumed that nonformal education continues to play an important role in providing learning opportunities. Because some of the members of the retired population become more dependent on the decisions of others than do younger adults, however, they may not have the same autonomy to participate in programs of their choice. Likewise, physical movement may become more difficult and a dependence on others for transportation and other logistical concerns may make participation problematic. Actual nonformal education activities of the elderly may be different than those of other adults. For example, the activities may be held in total institutions like retirement communities or homes, and the goals of the programs may be somewhat narrow. It is also possible that the emphasis may be placed on issues of role identity and status change among the elderly, enabling individuals to cope with the transitions from adulthood to retirement and possibly death. Finally, there are fewer formal characteristics and probably less of a utilitarian bias in nonformal education participation among the elderly than among adults. This is especially obvious with job-training, which declines in old age and is replaced by more activities of an individual and social development type, especially in the areas of leisure time, problem solving and the appreciation of the arts.

Integrating Community Resources for Change

As attempts are made to link educational modes with one another or with other institutions and opportunities in society, it has become common to view nonformal education as a contributor to individual behavioral change as well as social change. Whether nonformal education has the potential of accomplishing either of these outcomes depends on the particular characteristics of the programs and the context in which they operate. Likewise, it depends on the criteria (e.g., extent and nature of individual or societal change) used to judge the efficacy of such programs.

If individuals are in need of basic skills or if society is viewed as a system in need of adaptation, then nonformal education might well be viewed as a contributor. This is especially the case when it is able to provide services to a socio-economically and ethnically homogeneous group that participates voluntarily. In these instances, programs contribute to adaptation because they are designed to reinforce a population's current cultural and structural position in society. When nonformal education is used across socio-economic or ethnic group boundaries to facilitate more radical change involving access to

political and economic resources, however, the result is likely to be more frustrating. While individuals may still benefit in such instances, nonformal education can become rather impotent for groups, probably more impotent than formal schools, because of the political and economic barriers it must confront.

In planning nonformal education programs there has been a tendency to overlook the presence of socio-economic and ethnic dependency relationships in a situation. Instead, it has been common in program planning to assume that major obstacles to the achievement of program ends either do not exist or may be overcome and that all of the individuals and institutions involved are working toward common goals. In job-training, for example, it is often argued that a community's commercial, political, and industrial resources and expertise are available and willing to foster employment opportunities. Likewise, it might be assumed that siblings, parents, peers and teachers will come together as important role-models in the everyday life of the child such that they provide continuity and direction in personality development and general socialization for adult roles. Even in basic skills programs like literacy, there is a tendency to assume that once the nonformal program has delivered the skills, there will be constructive opportunities available for applying what has been learned. Unfortunately, most such arguments have not been supported by experience.

The assumption that educational resources can be integrated is often tied to what we think occurs in less complex societies. Anthropologists, for example, inform us that teaching and learning in these simpler societies are often carried out at the place or site where new knowledge and skills are to be applied, rather than in programs removed from everyday life. In these traditional contexts there is considerable reliance on demonstration and practice. Young people often spend the major part of their period of maturation at the side of adults or siblings, who guide their behavior by offering appropriate instruction, demonstration and practice in the learning of new information and behavior.

A major difficulty with transfering these anthropological lessons is that more complex societies are divided structurally and culturally, and are integrated politically and economically at the national level. The nation often supplants community control and identity to focus on the dominant group's cultural heritage, and the school becomes a major institution for the transmission of national and often international perspectives and goals (Cohen, 1971). The emphasis on learning may shift to teaching, the practical and applied may be supplanted by the theoretical and abstract, what is taught becomes more important than who does the teaching, and the site of the process is shifted from the family and workplace to the school and similar institutional settings (see, for example, Mead, 1943).

As the school becomes tied to the state as the primary institution for cultural transmission, it often becomes more difficult to link it with other institutions in the educational process. The school is often separated from other processes of cultural transmission and it takes on unique attributes. For example, in schools the student population is typically captive or involuntary, and there is little or no attention given to the transfer of what is learned inside schools to the reality that the individual knows outside. Likewise, there is typically little attention paid in schools to the learning that occurs in the home and community settings that may be strengthened or built upon through the school curricula. The relative isolation of the school program from the community tends to support an emphasis on pedagogical practices and assessment techniques which deal with the individual rather than the group, and with paper and pencil tests rather than with other forms of behavior that emphasize community based applications of what is learned. These school characteristics are most often overcome in social and cultural contexts that form a stable and continuous system. In other words, the children, teachers and educational decision-makers become an extension of the home and community and teaching and learning are reinforced systemically.

The view that nonformal education can be a contributor to social progress assumes that such consistent and continuous reinforcements to perceived needs and wants exist. In turn, their existence leads to the assumption that when learning is fostered through a combination of institutions in the every-day environment of the individual, the probabilities that the learning will be manifested as a characteristic part of the individual's behavior are substantially increased.

Even if such continuity is present in a community, school based learning is most likely to be valued to a greater extent than nonformal education. In most societies, schools become the major surrogate institution for the teaching and learning that occurred at a prior period in the family and the community. The workplace and the family become further divided, and institutions such as the family are then asked to assume supporting rather than primary roles, as the cultural heritage to be transmitted to the new generation through the school transcends particular community settings. In such a context, learning becomes synonymous with schooling. Jobs and status are conferred on those who have achieved more schooling, and what is valued becomes the more universal and abstract knowledge that can be demonstrated inside classrooms. Access to schools is seldom equal for all segments of the population, however, and schools often serve as selection devices permitting only those individuals who satisfy the cultural criteria of the more powerful segments in society the opportunities to participate in the political and economic system at the highest levels.

When nonformal education is viewed in this alternative setting character-

ized by dependency, vested interests and discontinuity, rather than continuity, it is difficult to see how it can make a major contribution to social as opposed to individual change, since access to opportunities is tied so firmly to schooling. An appropriate example is the relationship between education and work, where the assumption is often made that the acquisition of technical skills through nonformal education will lead to participation in the economic market-place. Here is where the utility of educational experiences is said to reap benefits for the individual, the employer and the society at large. But it is also likely that the acquisition of skills may not be the most important variable in occupational stratification. Instead, employers may be as concerned with cultural and socio-economic attributes as with skills and knowledge. But schools, not nonformal education, impart dominant group values and manners which form a primary basis for the selection process into the work force. Here is where the scope and outcome of schools and nonformal education are often different. What nonformal education may be imparting is skills but not the cultural characteristics and legitimacy needed for access to the opportunity structure. Nonformal education in such situations may be reinforcing rather than altering socio-economic boundaries.

These relationships between schooling and nonformal education, along with their potential conflict with other institutions, has taught us that it is often inappropriate to assume a more adaptive and systemic approach to the planning and analysis of nonformal education programs. The goals of many programs, the marginal status of many clientele and the cultural and structural obstacles characteristic of many situations, set up nonformal education to fail. At the same time, such a systemic approach has analytic strength in situations where adaptation and individual behavioral change rather than social change is required. In integrating community resources for education, therefore, it is important to determine the extent to which dependency and vested interests influence the prospects for achieving sought-after goals. Realistically, it may be that all educational contributions, but especially nonformal ones, may not be appropriate interventions to promote social change. Such a realization when diagnosing and planning a program might well conserve the energies and aspirations of all concerned.

Conclusion

In conclusion, several observations on the nature and use of nonformal education are possible. First, after more than a decade of use, the concept of nonformal education has demonstrated its heuristic utility in describing and analyzing a wide array of out-of-school educational activities that exist world wide. Second, it is important to view nonformal education as one of three

educational modes of emphasis rather than as a discrete entity. Third, these modes are interactive such that all individuals at all times are engaged in one or more learning experiences, from planned, compulsory and intentional to unplanned, voluntary and incidental. Although group patterns across these modes are common, each individual also composes his or her own configuration of educational influences.

Fourth, nonformal education, perhaps to a greater extent than formal education, is strongly associated with socio-economic, sex and ethnoreligious identities. Among children and youth, parental resources enable a choice among program alternatives that are often delimited by sex and ethnoreligious characteristics. Among adults, some program types, such as family planning or literacy, clearly differentiate populations by socio-economic status. Other programs, such as job-training are frequented by different sexes and social classes depending on the nature of the training (e.g., inservice executive training *versus* beautician training or learning a building trade).

A fifth observation concerns the analysis and use of nonformal education in the change process. When the intent of nonformal education is individual change and adaptation, and both the teachers and learners represent similar socio-economic and ethno-religious backgrounds, the programs tend to reinforce and build upon existing value orientations, skills and other attributes of the populations involved. In these instances of continuity as opposed to conflict within the environment, confidence in the potency of nonformal education may be warranted. When the intent of nonformal education seeks social change, however, especially involving teachers and learners from different socio-economic and ethno-religious backgrounds, the potential for conflict exists. In these instances, the differential bases in power that affect the application of what is learned must be taken into account in the planning process.

A sixth and final observation concerns the relationship between formal and nonformal education. The standardized and stereotyped nature of formal education, when combined with state-sanctioned diplomas and credentials, enables it to reflect greater educational legitimacy than nonformal education. This means that the value of nonformal education, especially among the disenfranchised and marginal populations, may be low, relative to formal education, for access to the opportunity structure. At the same time, however, nonformal education experiences for the more politically and economically powerful in society (who are already well schooled) may provide considerable socio-economic benefits. In effect, nonformal education may offer only skills for the unschooled whereas it may provide both skills and legitimacy for the schooled. Attention to such distinct individual and socio-economic group outcomes must be considered when nonformal education programs are designed for various socio-economic groups.

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