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Introduction

The 46th SCUTREA Conference: *Adult Education for Inclusion and Diversity*

Adult education matters. It matters at home, in work, and in the community. It matters to families, to the economy and to our health and wellbeing. Austerity policies are marginalising adult education. Its decline is indicative of the huge price this and future generations are set to pay for the politics of austerity. Yet it could be argued that we are living through times that demand more adult education and learning, not less.

It is far too easy to cut adult education. So what can be learned from ongoing initiatives and projects in these areas? What messages can be sent back to government politicians and policy makers? The papers from this conference explore the education of adults within the contemporary context of austerity, neoliberal economic policies, increasing inequalities and the positive impacts and benefits of adult education.



Dr Ellen Boeren

Centre for Research in Education Inclusion & Diversity, University of Edinburgh

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PAPERS

Open and distance education as a device for sustainable adult education in Nigeria: The role of National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

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Abstract

The 21st century has seen an explosion in the attempts of countries to invest in education as a means of economic viability. While developed countries may have already achieved significant progress, developing countries still have a long way to go in increasing their citizen's rate of literacy and education levels. This paper presents the case of Nigeria and the potential of ODE in increasing the sustainability of adult education. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is found to be operating within the framework formulated by the National Policy on Education (2004) for the delivery of adult education. Through its vision for social inclusion and equity, NOUN as the primary ODE institution in Nigeria is making significant progress towards the provision of sustainable adult education.

Keywords

ODE in Nigeria, Role of NOUN as a Device for Sustainable Adult Education in Nigeria

Background and context

The past two decades have seen an increase in the popularity of open and distance education in the world. Consequently, there has been an enormous transformation of attitudes towards the practice evidenced by the massive investment in infrastructure and increased expectations from ODE particularly in western nations. Additionally, the level of innovations to deliver quality learning in virtual environments has contributed to the increased acceptability of the mode of erudition. Although the rate of adoption of the mode of learning in Africa has been comparatively slow, various nations have achieved significant progress in the field of ODE. International organisations such as the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have played a pivotal role in promoting education in Africa. The organisations have promoted the formulation of policies relating to education, have stimulated cohesion among learners, and have provided financial backing to promote education in Africa. Consequently, the majority of nations have used these opportunities as foundations and managed to establish proper education systems to cater for the educational needs of the young and adult population in the host countries.

Nigeria represents one of the countries in Africa, which have significantly made advancements in education. The nation has incorporated education as a key strategy in achieving economic development in a world where active economies rely on the inputs of their citizens to attain sustainable development. According to data from the World Bank (2016), the country had an average literacy rate of 59.568% as at 2015, rising from 51.078 in 2008 in individuals aged 15 years and above. Despite the fact that these figures do not label it as the most literate country in Africa, they paint the progress of the country in boosting its education systems. The advent of the open and distance education in higher education systems within the country opened up pathways of boosting adult education among its citizens.

This paper primarily outlines the role of ODE in ensuring sustainable adult education in Nigeria. It begins by defining several terminologies utilised in the paper before embarking

on an in-depth literature review to identify the need for adult education within the country, with consideration of its unique attributes regarding its demographic composition and its ability to ensure equality in adult development across the various groups within the country. The paper also outlines the role of the country's main ODE institution, the National and Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), and gives its primary role in promoting adult literacy.

Adult education

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) remains a heavily contested field where scholars have failed to achieve consensus over the best-fitting definitions to cover the activities within the field. According to Holyoke & Larson (2009), there is a shortage of literature addressing the range of characteristics and preferences of adult learners; most definitions tend to be plagued with a generalist attitude that groups all learners, despite their differences, into one category. There is a lack of distinction between the different histories, preferences, and values applied during the process of educating adult learners. Scholars have had an implicit application of keywords accumulated from generations of research within the field and have come up with several definitions. According to Eyibe (2005, p.4), adult education can be termed as any education designed for the unskilled and semi-skilled population, formal school dropouts as well as the men or women who dropped out of school due to some reason. Another definition by Shamsideen (2016) states that adult education is any form of learning which is provided outside the formal learning system for mature men and women. However, a review of the literature reveals that most authors have passed UNESCO's (2001) definition of the concept as more inclusive of the elements of adult education. The organisation defines adult education as "the process by which men and women seek to improve themselves and the society by increasing their knowledge, skills or their sensitivity" (p.1). This review sees this definition as sufficient for exploring the nature of adult education in Nigeria.

The complexity of adult education is increased by nature of interaction and interdependence that it has with other fields. Researchers have acknowledged some fields which include continuing education, lifelong learning, adult literacy and adult basic education. To begin with, continuing education can be defined as a part time subset of adult education that seeks to positively link the aspirations and needs of people with educational activities, to enable a boost in social, political and economic development in a nation. The term 'continuing' infers a type of education that does not begin from scratch; in fact, it is expected to impart skills for those who had already started the school system but dropped out for some reason. Hussain, Alhassan & Kamba (2013) reiterate that continuing education programs are established to meet expressed or identified learning needs of adults.

Secondly, lifelong learning is an activity that is aimed at enhancing the skills and abilities of persons as it is based on the belief that human beings are the fundamental basis for economic wealth in nations (Oseghale & Adeyomoye, 2011). The UNESCO asserts that lifelong learning is incorporated into three main forms; formal education, non-formal education, and informal learning (Yang, et al., 2015). The first category of formal education involves very entrenched, hierarchically structured and systematic structures spanning from childhood education higher education (Yang, et al., 2015). Non-formal learning incorporates any regular, procedural, educational activity practices beyond the formal system to avail several types of learning in the society. Finally, informal learning is the acquisition of skills, insights, attitude and knowledge as a result of lifelong exposure to the environment.

Thirdly, adult education is considered to relate to the concept of adult literacy. There is a need to differentiate the difference between literate and educated persons. A literate person is one who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her daily life. Within this definition, literacy is considered as a limited set of skills acquired through selected methods such as schooling, non-formal programmes and literacy campaigns. On the other hand, education is considered as a set of skills and knowledge acquired through the formal school systems and can be applied to make a living. In this case, education is more in-depth than literacy and therefore has the upper hand.

There seems to have been some realistic issues encompassing the significance and extent of adult education. It is perceived that casual learning shapes part of the learning pattern in which grown-ups customarily pick up information and comprehension; adult and non-formal instruction is for the most part used to indicate programs and activities done outside the school system. The communal setting and situations of a given society firmly influence the pace and example of adult education advancement.

History of adult education in Nigeria

The increasing number of research publications on Nigeria's educational systems demonstrates the high levels of interest from local scholars within recent years. This has also been accompanied by an influx in international studies linking adult education to national development. As demonstrated by Akinyemi & Basse (2012), education remains the primary driver of national development. Adult education in Nigeria has a very long history from the precolonial evangelical eras. According to Osuji (2005), adult education was kick-started by Muslim missionary activities as early as the fourteenth century as they embarked on activities of teaching the languages to bring the population to an understanding of Islam. In this case, the Muslim missionaries embarked on teaching the Arabic language to the population, leading to what were known as Qur'anic schools. Additionally, Christian missionaries in the 18th century also embarked in teaching the population so that they could grasp some concepts within the Bible. These teaching activities were primarily carried out through prayer and class meetings as well as Sunday school. According to a literature review by Osuji (2005), converts had to be made literate before being admitted into the church. Moreover, the missionaries trained the locals on how to translate the English language to their own so that they could manage to translate biblical concepts to their language. Moreover, the missionaries also established facilities to train various groups in the society. For instance, missionaries established training homes for women to empower their skills regarding their house management and marriage training classes.

Adult education has to a great extent been twentieth-century advancement. The field is as yet developing as specialists, policy creators and specialists meet intermittently to examine the shape, content and different coordinations of this very urgent instruction framework mode. In Nigeria, the advancement of adult and non-formal instruction has been interlaced with the historical backdrop of formal tutoring. From the early times of the colonial period, the Queen's government in Nigeria gave little consideration to the arrangement of adult education and training. The British never desired any advancement for the locals as it would dilute their hegemony over the nation. Adult education was only provided to locals who were seen by the colonial regime as useful assets towards their course. It was only after the pressure and negative reactions originating from the "Phelps-Stokes Commission report" that the colonial administration made some weak and inconclusive endeavours to enhance instructive arrangements in the West African Colonies. The regime belatedly realised the need for literacy late into their rule and consequently planned to increase

literacy via a declaration in the Mass Education in African Society (1944). The programme was established in Nigeria in 1946; adults acquired basic literacy skills for the purpose of valuable participation in economic, political and social progress of their native societies.

The mass literacy initiatives picked momentum especially after the end of the colonial rule in the country. Among one of the key milestones were the key literacy drives within the 1970s, which saw a significant increase significantly. According to Omoyeni & Ajayi (2010), the intervention of international organisations such as UNESCO and COL saw significant progress in the field of adult education and literacy. Moreover, the country was able to significantly lower the enrolment gap between genders; the Comprehensive Education Analysis (CEA) detected growths in admission by sex from 310,113 to 603,309 for males, and 236,143 to 539,831 for females in 1991. Despite the statistics, the Federal Ministry of Education (2003) in Nigeria asserted that the country still had a long way to go to meet the targets before the turn of the century (UNESCO, 2002).

Adult education in the contemporary Nigeria

While most developed countries managed to eradicate illiteracy and promote education by the end of the 20th century, Nigeria as a developing country did not have the means to do so. The country is still on its way to recovering from the long colonial rule that slowed its ability to develop a sustainable educational system. The state of ALE in Nigeria was slowly progressing but was plagued by a plethora of problems. One of the key milestones in promoting ALE was the National Policy on Education that defined the scope of adult learning. According to Section 6 of Policy of Education (2004) ALE is divided into five main parts which include (1) functional literacy – the delivery of knowledge and skills to youths and adults who have never been in a formal education system or beyond primary education; (2) remedial education – the provision of supplementary and functional skills for people who never completed secondary school; (3) further education – the polishing of the knowledge and skills of those adults who completed both primary and secondary education; (4) on-the-job education, professional educational training and professional training – skills and knowledge delivery to individuals who are already working and, (5) aesthetic, cultural and civic education – giving the citizens of the country the fundamental artistic, cultural and civic education for their enlightenment (Nnamani, 2014). In this regard, adult learning in Nigeria is perceived as an interaction of several modes of formal and informal education. It is distinguished from childhood edification through its voluntary nature; one joins in the courses due to self-motivation. Additionally, ALE is offered for knowledge build-up; therefore, it is used to construct upon previously prevailing aids and knowledge.

There are rarely any industrialised nations without an established ALE framework. These systems give a rich assortment of courses that react to both individual and national improvement needs while trying to evacuate hindrances to investments in adult learning (Festus & Adekola, 2015). Developed nations know the relationship between education and learning and the progress of the current economy. The financial benefit of instruction for the most part, is based on the theories of human capital hypothesis. The theory upholds the quest for training for monetary profitability.

Training specifically adds to the development of national economy by enhancing the abilities of the professionals. On the other hand, the absence of ALE keeps people and countries poor (Hassan, 2009). The complications of human capital hypothesis for the person with regards to a present day economy which underlines information, aptitudes, and innovation is that the acquirement and constant overhauling of learning and abilities is fundamental.

The unpredictability of present day society requires the administrations of an assortment of various occupations, which requests the planning of vast quantities of individuals for the diverse professions (NMEC, 2008). In addition, the current society needs information specialists in different fields to promote earnings. This is because purposeful quests for learning about the physical and social world can best be dealt with by specialists. Along these lines, professionalisation, or the truth of the 'master society' makes the securing of 'master information and abilities', reachable from cooperation in training, an essential prerequisite for selection into occupations (Nnazor, 2005). Nations likewise put resources into instruction since training encourages individual and social advancement. It is turning out to be progressively restricting for anybody to work in present day society without a decent measure of instruction.

ODE in Nigeria: the role of NOUN in sustainable adult education

Over the years, the concept of Open and Distance Education, also interchangeably labelled as Open and Distance Learning, has gained increasing prominence globally. Although the distance learning (DL) is part of distance education (DE), the general meaning of open and distance education in this paper will be defined as being the process of education where facilitator of the learning process is separated from the learner by a mental or spatial distance, and his/her role involves collecting, collating and giving information in a form that is learnable to learners who have decided to learn (Biao, 2012).

The National Open University of Nigeria, as the most successful Open and Distance Learning Institutions within Nigeria, currently holds the bulk of responsibilities when it comes to ensuring education and literacy. It runs about 78 centres across the country; having over 150 programmes across different specialisations except for medicine, pharmacy and engineering (NOUN, 2014). Within these years of operation, NOUN has produced many graduates with degrees, diplomas and certificates within its limited resources (NOUN, 2014). Despite being unveiled in the 1980s, the institution only became functional in 2001 due to the series of challenges mentioned above (Jimoh, 2013, p.4). NOUN's vision is to be regarded as the first university providing widely accessible and quality education, rooted in the principles of social justice, equity, equality and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transforms all barriers with a goal of achieving the non-acquired (NOUN, 2002). The author of this paper has proof of that in his pilot study (Abdulkadir, 2016).

The university operates on the policy of providing accessible learning to overcome the barriers preventing education and providing its students with the relevant means to succeed. Additionally, the institution's policy acknowledges the importance of social justice and equality in education. According to the university's manifesto, its programmes are intended at promoting equal opportunities. Abdulkadir (2016), in a pilot study investigating the challenges facing higher education in Nigeria, interviewed participants who acknowledged the importance of the university in providing education to various groups within the society. These included women, who experience intense challenges in balancing their responsibilities in their familial and professional capacity. Moreover, the institution has paved way for professionals to advance their skills; an activity which many authors assert has the capacity to ensure sustainable development of a country's economy. In this case, ODE in Nigeria continues as a fascinating topic because of the expectancy that it will result in an amplification of the skills and abilities pertaining to the labour force in the mounting Nigerian population as well accommodate for the enormous number of candidates who missed on the opportunities of being admitted into traditional institutions. Such an approach will be effective in the provision of education being

inclusive.

ODE is also seen as a cost-effective and efficient method of promoting access to opportunities of lifelong learning, a concept closely linked to adult education (Akinyemi & Bassey, 2012). On the side of the government, ODE is an efficient and economic way of aggregating people's access to lifelong learning to improve their competencies without the establishments having to spend too much on infrastructure (Olakulehin & Panda, 2011). Furthermore, the approach of learning allows entry to education for diverse groups of students who may not want to travel immense distances in search of information for the reason of the nature of their everyday jobs at home or the workplace. ODE has become a satisfactory and obligatory part of mainstream learning as the regime becomes progressively aware of the budding potential of ODE in accomplishing the essential rights of all people to education and of the necessity to integrate it within the structure of human capital development.

The onset of Open and Distance Education (ODE) in Nigeria presented a wave of opportunities for education in the country. The adoption of technology for ODE in Nigeria has been overwhelming. The main driver for ODE has been the reliance on learning for sustainable growth and development (Ademola, et al., 2014). As the most populous country in Africa, the country had to continually seek for potent ways to improve its populations' access to education, and literacy rates among the members of the burgeoning population. Despite the resolve to improve the status of education within Nigeria, the government was faced by a series of challenges in actualising its plans for higher education within Nigeria (Mbah, 2014). These challenges began at the higher levels of government where policy challenges contributed to the lag of implementation of open and distance education in Nigeria. Additional challenges included the lack of facilities and staff as well as quality and acceptability challenges (Jimoh, 2013). These challenges have become deeply rooted within the country's education systems and have already begun to affect the delivery of adult education.

Conclusion

The paper reveals that Nigeria has made significant progress in eradicating illiteracy and promoting education among adults. Through a literature review, the paper confirms that Nigeria's main ODE institution is properly positioned to provide equitable and accessible education to individuals from all groups to ensure inclusion and economic development within the nation. However, the fierce nature of the challenges facing the institution in the provision of education paints a grim picture on the sustainability of its services. There is the need to promote robust policies that advocate for the strengthening of ODE establishments. Moreover, there is the need to continuously improve on the nature of services offered to ensure that they are within the acceptable standards as regards the global dynamic environment.

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Adult literacy education and social inclusion

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Introduction

Literacy has been used by the UK government as a 'key indicator of social exclusion' (Hamilton and Pitt, 2011, p.598; Behavioural Insights, 2014). Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that a major concern of adult literacy education would be to promote an inclusive society. Based on an understanding of the concept of social inclusion as 'enabling people or communities to fully participate in society' (Charity Commission, 2001, p.2) this paper explores the relationship between adult literacy education in England and social inclusion as it is perceived in current education policy and by teachers of adult literacy and their learners.

For ease of reference, the term 'literacy' will be used throughout the paper, although the replacement of the term with 'English' has been advocated in policy (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011). Much of the policy to which the paper refers is that of the UK's Coalition Government (2010 to 2015) as there appears to be little or no new policy relating to adult literacy education in the country since 2015. An 'adult learner' is considered to be of the age of nineteen and above.

Background

Previous policy on adult literacy education in the UK from the 1970s Right to Read campaign and the Skills for Life initiative in 2001 up to the introduction of Functional Skills qualifications for adult learners in 2012 has been the focus of various analyses (Hamilton and Merrifield, 1999; Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; Taylor, 2008; Kendall and McGrath, 2014). Analysis of these policies has identified a variety of ways in which literacy has been conceptualised over time, including the prominence of a 'deficit' model of literacy which views literacy as something lacking in illiterate people. Alongside this, discourses of functionalism and employability in which the focus is on literacy as a means to employment and economic success, both of the individual and of the nation as a whole, are apparent, along with a concern for standardisation, targets, testing and reporting. In her analysis of the Skills for Life initiative, Hamilton (2012, p.172) suggests that the Government's use of literacy as indicative of social exclusion was part of a wider policy agenda which also included the regeneration of communities, concern with children's and young people's well-being and an interest in family learning. She argues, however, that over time this changed and a narrower 'economic discourse' around literacy emerged in which the focus was almost completely on the relationship between literacy and employability.

Similar perceptions can be seen in international policy. Benavot (2015, p.279), for example, explains how in Asia and the Middle East 'official' policy definitions of literacy refer to fixed notions of reading and writing which are competency-based and limited to printed texts. He compares this with the wider 'socio-cultural notions of literacy' that are often held by Non-Government Organisations and which include '...community development, income generation, individual empowerment and gender equality.' Similarly, analyses of literacy and skills surveys such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) conducted in over twenty countries in the 1990s and the more recent Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), identified discourses of functionalism in relation to literacy, including concerns with literacy levels and measurement, productivity and national and individual prosperity (Bartlett, 2008; Black and

Yasukawa, 2014; Walker and Rubenson, 2014). They highlighted wider concerns in policy too. Post (2016, p761), for instance, argues that PIAAC links literacy with 'such possible social consequences as political efficacy and civic engagement ... adults' willingness to engage in the political process...trust and good health'. He does, however, go on to say that although significant attention has been given to 'the economic impact of literacy ... there are non-market benefits of literacy which remain to be fully understood.' He argues that while recent research has considered various aspects of literacy, including the different ways in which the concept is understood, there have been fewer studies of its 'social consequences' (ibid., p766). Bearing in mind these previous analyses of UK and international policy on adult literacy education then, this paper considers the extent to which concern with social inclusion features in current policy for adult education in England and how this compares with the views of teachers and learners.

Methodology

The paper is informed by research into the ways in which literacy is conceptualised in current education policy compared to the perceptions held by teachers of adult literacy and their learners. The study was influenced by a social practice view of literacy as a socially determined collection of practices rather than a single concept or set of technical skills (Street, 1997) and employed three qualitative approaches: analysis of policy documents, interviews with literacy teachers and discussions with adult literacy learners. A definitive expression of current UK government policy on adult literacy proved difficult to identify as there appears to be a lack of significant new policy in this area since Functional Skills qualifications were introduced for adults in 2012. The main policy focus seems to be on younger learners leaving school without minimum grades in English and maths (Allatt, 2016). However, one particular document was finally identified as seeming to present the most current indication of policy on adult literacy and this is the Coalition Government's response to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee's 2014 inquiry into adult literacy and numeracy. A further document, 'Implementing the Further Education and Skills Reform Programme' (2016) which includes a brief section on English and maths provision for young people and adults was also analysed. Initial analysis of the documents was carried out using Wordsmith Tools 6.0 lexical analysis software which identified the frequency of occurrence and collocation of words within the texts (Scott, 2015) helping with the identification of key words and possible themes. This was followed by a more thorough analysis using a Critical Discourse Analysis approach influenced by the work of Norman Fairclough (2003) which provides a framework for the analysis of texts based on lexical choice, sentence structure, use of modal verbs and persuasive techniques, among other features.

In addition to document analysis, seventeen semi-structured interviews with teachers of adult literacy carried out via the telephone and face-to-face explored participants' perceptions of literacy. The interviews were conducted over a two-year period with teachers in a range of organisations including further education colleges, private and local education authority training providers and non-governmental organisations within West and South Yorkshire. Finally, during the spring of 2017 two groups of adult literacy learners took part in discussions about what literacy meant to them. One group was participating in a privately run class intended to develop literacy through creative writing. The other was a Functional Skills class, which included some ESOL learners, in an inner city adult education centre. Thematic analysis of the data from the interviews and discussions revealed a range of emerging themes in relation to literacy, including digital literacy, employability, family and children, social interaction, autonomy and independence, well-being and empowerment.

Current policy on adult literacy education

The Coalition Government's response to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee inquiry into adult literacy and numeracy (2014) sets out its plans for literacy and numeracy education. The plans include funding for free tuition, a move towards GCSEs rather than Functional Skills as the preferred qualifications for most adults and a focus on the needs of certain identified groups of learners, such as the unemployed, prisoners, the homeless and 18 to 21 year olds). It also claims that continuing to support English and maths is a Government priority, but without emphasizing adult learning. (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014). Literacy itself is clearly defined as skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening and in its description of literacy as a 'problem' to be 'tackled' (ibid.,p3.) the document employs the 'deficit' model recognised in previous policy analyses. It also presents discourses relating to the economy and to employability in relation to literacy education. Such discourses emerge through the use of economic and financial language; 'market', 'performance', 'sustainability', investment, 'Net Present Value', 'returns', 'impact', 'earnings', for example. Repetition of the terms 'employment', 'employers' and 'work' help to reinforce them. A discourse of functionalism can also be identified in the concerns with 'measurement', 'levels', 'outcomes', 'personal efficacy' and 'skills'. Although the phrase social inclusion is not actually used, there are hints at this in the mention of 'wider social and personal benefits' that may be achieved through literacy education such as improvements to an individual's self-confidence, their health and their family life along with greater social mobility (ibid., p.2) and success in further study. In identifying who the Government feels would benefit most from improved literacy, particularly unemployed people, 'more disadvantaged' and the 'inactive' (ibid.,p.3) there is perhaps a concern with social inclusion more generally in addition to employability.

These perceptions of literacy and literacy education are echoed in the document 'Implementing the Further Education and Skills Reform Programme' (2016) which also has a focus on finding and sustaining employment but mentions, in addition, the 'wider social and personal benefits' of literacy education including 'improved self-confidence, health, social mobility and family life'. (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2016, p.6). However, concerns for social inclusion using the definition outlined at the start of this paper feature only very minimally in these policy documents, with the economic, functional and employability discourses being overwhelmingly the more dominant. It is clearly acknowledged, for instance, that '... labour market engagement, ie. work, is the biggest driver of skills development.' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014, p.4).

Teachers' perceptions

Teachers' responses identified a broad range of perceptions of literacy. To the interviewees, literacy included not only speaking, listening, reading and writing in print based forms, but also the development of critical awareness, and the use of digital media. In addition, analysis of interview transcripts highlighted, among other issues, autonomy and independence, the development of personal identity, the relationship between literacy and numeracy, employability and the need to help children with homework as the reasons for developing or improving literacy. Over two thirds of participants gave responses relating to social inclusion based on the definition given in the introduction to this paper, that is, full participation in society. In fact, participating in society was a commonly occurring idea, as one interviewee explained when asked why adults should be literate:

They can't participate fully in the social, economic life of the country or society without those literacy skills as effectively as other people ... It's a functional need in order to be able to have the opportunity and participate as an adult member of society ... to get the best advantage.

Others felt that without literacy, a person could:

...be disadvantaged ... in dealings with authorities and organisations

... very well lead an isolated life and have the potential not to be an outgoing person.

Having access to opportunities, advantages and services features regularly in the teachers' responses, with a recurring sense of literacy as playing a role in extending the environments in which people may be involved or the 'wider world' or 'wider community'. Typical comments are that:

There is a whole world that becomes accessible once a person is literate.

I think it's a case of people being able to be active in their community. To be able to access all the services that they should ...to be able to be an effective member of society.

I think your life must be so limited if you're not able to read.

Access to banking, housing and digital environments were all mentioned in the teachers' responses, as were learners' involvement in their children's schooling and prospects.

I also think it helps benefit the next generation because obviously you know it's been well researched hasn't it that if parents are literate then their children have more chance of moving on in life.

For a number of participants, empowerment also featured strongly; among the reasons given for adults being literate were the ability to do things for themselves and to 'manage their own affairs' (making decisions about the best gas and electricity provider, for instance). Teachers also felt literacy development resulted in learners being more active in their communities, developing social skills, knowing how to communicate appropriately in different situations and having the confidence to express opinions. For some literacy teachers, literacy involved not just reading, but reading critically and 'reading between the lines'.

... for example, Brexit, the ability to actually understand that what you're reading may not be entirely what's meant ...

... is someone trying to persuade you about something in their advertising?

It seems, therefore, that many of the teachers' comments suggest a perception of literacy as being about helping people to become informed and active visible members of society with, overall, a very broad perception of what literacy and literacy education should be about:

It's not just about the skills and abilities an adult should have ...should people be trained up just to do the jobs they do?

It's not just about passing an exam. It's about enjoyment as well ... a means of self-expression.

One teacher remarked that literacy is not just in English, a comment I did not come across anywhere else, but found interesting given that current policy requires the replacement of the term 'literacy' with 'English' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011).

This may suggest implications for diversity and inclusion which are beyond the scope of this paper.

Learners' perceptions

Learners' definitions of literacy echoed those of the teachers – reading, writing (in both print and electronic formats) speaking and listening, but they also offered a highly varied range of perspectives on the need for literacy and literacy education. Employment was also mentioned in both groups, but only briefly. When asked about the reasons for improving literacy, a couple of learners mentioned job prospects. Many responses, however, appear to relate to social inclusion in a broad sense (although learners did not use this phrase). Communication was a common feature across the groups, particularly the development of skills and confidence in communicating in a range of social contexts was a key theme (in the community, in children's schools, in work etc.). This included having the confidence to express one's own opinions and to be able to listen to and understand the opinions of others:

It's like communication with different people.

Literacy's ability to break down barriers was also a common idea, including the provision of access to further study, with one learner describing how issues with literacy had prevented him studying other subjects, such as music and business studies. All agreed that numeracy and literacy shared a close relationship, with some explaining how developing their literacy had helped them in their maths classes.

Because we are doing maths as well if we don't understand what we are reading then we are not going to resolve the problem.

For most learners involved in the discussions, improved literacy helped them to support their children with schoolwork.

If you don't have that [literacy] you can't support your children, which is disempowering.

For some, this was not just about helping them through school in the short-term, but also related to long term aspirations around social mobility.

Increased community involvement was linked to their literacy learning by some participants. One learner, for example, described how it had given her the confidence to become a 'Reading Friend' at her son's school which she felt allowed her to make a positive contribution in her community, while increasing independence was another frequently recurring theme across the groups, particularly in the sense of no longer having to rely on other people.

'...you have to be able to do things yourself...'

According to the learners, literacy also gave them self-esteem, a sense of identity and helped them to 'face life's challenges'.

Learners unanimously linked literacy with the use of technology and increasing confidence in digital environments was clear from many of their responses. Some group members explained how they had never used computers before but as a result of their literacy classes were now using the Internet for research, contributing to blogs, using Kindles, social media and texting their children and friends. All felt that this was still literacy even though a digital rather than print format was being used.

In addition to my meetings with literacy learners, two of the teachers involved in the interviews had also asked their groups of students what literacy meant to them and they shared the outcome of these discussions with me. One of these groups was in an adult training centre affiliated to a large inner city Further Education college, the other a class run by an educational charity. These learners gave similar responses to those outlined above; independence, empowerment, confidence, self-esteem, identity and feeling more able to support their children through school. A greater willingness to interact with others came out of the discussion in one group and computer literacy was also an important factor to them.

Conclusion

To what extent, then, is social inclusion a concern within adult literacy education? Policy documents, teachers' views and learners' perceptions all appear, to a certain extent, to relate improvements in a person's literacy to increasing participation in society. The policy documents analysed, though not referring to social inclusion directly, hint at certain benefits including social mobility, health and self-confidence that could be attained through improved literacy, although the policy focus seems to be on a narrower view which emphasizes economic and employability outcomes. Social inclusion, however, is a clear theme emerging from teachers' and learners' responses to questions about their perceptions of literacy in which economic and employability outcomes feature to a significantly lesser extent than they do in the policy documents. Teachers and learners expressed a much greater sense of social participation and involvement as a result of literacy education. For learners, this comes with increased confidence in self-expression and communication with others, more confidence in dealing with authorities and improved abilities in the use of information technology and social media. It gives them greater access to a range of services and more involvement in their children's education while allowing them to make a contribution to their communities. In practice then, a broad notion of social inclusion as an outcome of adult literacy education seems to be in operation, which goes beyond the functional and the economic concerns of policy.

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Academic support and its influence on HE participation decisions: The continuing power of local culture

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Introduction

This paper explores why a group of young adults, living within traditionally working-class communities in Northtown, choose not to participate in HE and the influence that academic support has on their decision making. It considers the academic support on offer to the participants, at their place of study, and how the various mechanisms influenced their participation decision. The research indicates a particular complex attitude toward support, with participants appearing to view the academic related support offered by their sixth form as being a vital ingredient for success. This research proposes that the participants seemed to be comforted by the support they receive and that this, as part of an institution's habitus, (Reay, David and Ball, 2001) influences their decision making.

Methodology and data collection

This research follows a case study approach and draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Findings are drawn from a set of semi-structured interviews with 22 young adults at one sixth form. The Academy, of which Village sixth form is a part, is a relatively newly established provider of post-16 education in Northtown, opened in 2006. Those students attaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics is low and the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and others in the school is wide. A general thematic approach was employed to analyse the qualitative data (Braun and Clarke (2006)). Whilst I was not looking for a predetermined list of specific codes and themes, I did take account of key Bourdieuan concepts that might help to explain the impact of academic support on the participants' HE decision making. For example, when reading the transcripts, I looked for codes and themes that might help to explain the participants' practices pertaining to academic support. For Bourdieu, practice is the carrying out of an activity that is formally named. Practices have structures, limits, points of harmony and meaning. I was looking for examples of common patterns of reaction that the participants shared, what they viewed as being acceptable ways of doing things when it came to academic support (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984 and 1990). I also looked for examples of the influence of the participants' place of study. In his interview with Loic Wacquant (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989) and in *The Rules of Art* (1996), Bourdieu describes a field as a social arena that has its own particular logic where struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1989). He also suggests that a social world which is made up of multiple fields can be divided into sub-fields which follow the logic of the larger field, but that also has its own logic and rules (Bourdieu, 1998). Therefore, within this paper, I consider Village sixth form as a sub-field of the Field of Education and pay attention to the participants' position within that particular sub-field. I also looked for codes and themes that might explain the participants' habitus. Habitus can be understood by considering the inclination towards certain dispositions to actions and values which are gained from cultural history, or through being a member of a particular social group or class (Bourdieu, 1977; 1993).

Findings and discussion

The quotes that are referred to within this paper were chosen because they were the most interesting and they best represented the participants' points of view. The main themes

that emerged from the data were: a vital ingredient for success; an over reliance on academic support and contradictory viewpoints. I am aware that gathering data via semi-structured interviews can limit the claims and assertions that can legitimately be made and that this, to an extent, limits this paper's ability to provide conclusive evidence. However, after accepting these caveats, this research nevertheless sheds further light on the influence that academic support can have on HE participation decisions.

A vital ingredient for success

When considering HE participation, the participants regularly referred to the stress and pressure that they associated with the intensity of the work and an increased workload, lots of deadlines, exams (rather than exams and course work), things being much harder and that, above all else, they would have to rely on themselves much more which worried them as they were not used to it. Autonomy was not something they appeared to want when it came to their studies. Whilst becoming more autonomous is likely to be a concern for all perspective HE students, for the participants, the idea that HE institutions would have much less support on offer was seemingly a real issue. It is worth considering the work of Fuller (2011) who looked at the importance of wider networks which were characterised by high levels of trust, emotional support and taken-for-granted assumptions that can generate collective perceptions of what the right decision is for a particular individual. The majority of the participants gave the impression that they were comforted by the support they received from their network, particularly within their sixth form environment. This point is illustrated by participant 19 when discussing what university life might be like:

I don't think it'd be as good as here 'cause, like, you've got loads of students haven't you at uni...here you can have 1:1 time with your teachers, 'cause classes are only really that small so I think it'd be a big change for me to go to uni to study. I feel at home here, you can go to teachers whenever you want and they'll help you...they don't make you feel like idiots.

This support appeared to instil a sense of belonging and even solidarity amongst participants. When it came to the expectation of support, for them it was the norm in terms of their educational expectations. They had common patterns of reaction and acceptable ways of doing things when it came to support (practices) (Bourdieu, 1977). The participants had even developed their own discourse that related to support in regard to getting it when they wanted it and the need for it, with participants talking about support in similar ways, in terms of the need for it and what would be needed should they have chosen to participate. As participant 3 points out:

Like working on my own where, like, here you get loads and loads of help and that from teachers, whereas there, like, you get your lectures and then you work on your own and it's not like that here, so I'm not quite that ready for it... At sixth form we get it when we want really, I wouldn't finish without because I need it.

In this particular instance, the structure of the sub-field of sixth form education and the habitus of the participants were aligned. Within this particular sub-field, it was taken for granted by the participants that they would receive an amount of support that would enable them to pass their Level 3 qualification. Their habitus was structured by the present circumstances in which they found themselves. It matched the logic of the sub-field; the participants seemed to be attuned to the practices of the sub-field, the unwritten rules of the game, the doxa. Within Village sixth form they felt like 'fish in water'. Their habitus had provided them with a feel for the game, a practical mastery (Bourdieu and Wacquant,

1989). As level 3 students, the participants may be seen to have some credibility, or capital, in this particular sub-field, with only a small percentage of the population of Northtown gaining a level 3 qualification, yet if they were to participate in HE, success in this particular field was far from certain, as it would be dependent on them mastering that field's unwritten codes, manners and behaviours (Atkins, 2009, citing Grenfell and James, 1998). For them, this required support – a lot of support. The interview testimony gave the impression that there was a definite fear and a belief that such support would not be available if they participated in HE. They would not have anyone to turn to. Their expectations of the support mechanisms on offer to them, should they participate, appear to have impacted on their strategies and seem to have, in part, guided the participants' choices and behaviours which has then impacted on their decision making. As participant 20 points out:

Yeah, here I feel like I've got some more support and I, like, know teachers so they are easier to approach and to ask for help. If we're stuck on a certain part of us course, we can go and say "will you be able to help me out with this?" and they'll come and sit down with you and spend so long with you until you get hang of it.

An over reliance on academic support

The idea of what makes the right amount of support is particularly interesting, as it seems that the support that the majority of the participants had been offered at their place of study hindered their progression into HE. Indirectly, something that is to all intents and purposes seen as a positive appears to be having a detrimental effect, as the expectation of a lack of continuing academic-related support is a reason for non-participation as the participants have not learnt to cope independently. Without any exception, all of the participants discussed the amount of support they received at their place of study and many quickly related this to what they would need from HE, should they participate. There was also reference to relaxed deadlines at sixth form and the participants did not expect to get the same treatment at university. Participants either made direct reference to second chances or alluded to them. This is illustrated in the testimony of participants 15 and 16:

Second chances here, like, if you don't hand summat in then "give it me next week" makes you get it in but there I don't think you'd get that. I think it'd be if you don't get it on this day, you don't get it in. You get a lot more assistance I think than you would there. I think it'd just be like, right you listen, you do that and then you go off and do it.

Because if I don't meet deadline here then they just give you a different deadline or say "give me it when you've finished" where at university I'd probably get kicked out or summat.

As a result of the support mechanisms that are in place, the agency of the participants appeared to be reduced. Atkins' (2009) suggests that individuals can become over-reliant on the support offered by some educational institutions (as part of an overall network), which can lead to what could be described as a 'diminished self' and reduced agency, with a discourse of fragility being bought into (Ecclestone, 2004, 2007 cited in Atkins, 2009)

The majority of the participants outlined how the additional support they received helped to build their confidence and self-esteem academically, although, in actual fact, as discussed above such personalised one-to-one support appeared to have a negative impact in relation to their participation in HE. The idea of standing on their own two feet, with what they believed to be little or no support, was seen as a reason for non-participation. They did not appear to have the cultural repertoire or 'toolkit' to enable them to develop appropriate strategies that would allow for them to participate in HE because they viewed

support as the main ingredient of success. None of participants indicated any awareness that, at some point, they would have to be able to do things for themselves. The perceived lack of support seems to have impacted on the strategies that they devised. This was not to deal with a potential lack of support should they participate, but to find an alternative to participation.

An over-reliance on support mechanisms at their sixth form appears to have disempowered them. As a result, there was a real belief that they could not cope without the same amount of support they received whilst at sixth form, with participants expecting, and becoming reliant upon, support. This is illustrated well by participant 7:

As soon as we get into the common room they ask us what they can help us with before I've even thought about it...this suits me fine.

The objective conditions provided by the sixth form seems to have made this reliance on support a fruitful strategy, within this particular sub-field, as all of the participants gained their level 3 qualification. Support in the sixth form was easily obtainable because it appeared to have become part of the fabric of the institution. The history and the experiences (Ingham, 2009) of the sixth form seemed to have partly shaped the institutions' habitus in relation to what it communicates to members of staff and students. Support that stunts the autonomy of the participants seems to have been inculcated into the habitus of the participants by their sixth form. Support, as a value, seems to have been institutionalised into the institutions habitus. Patterson (2010) points out that the key to institutionalising a value as being to concentrate power in the hands of those who believe in the value. Consequently, the importance of support is transmitted from the sixth form's hierarchy, to the respective staff members and finally to the participants.

As schools and sixth forms are judged in terms of results and achievement, it is not surprising that they offer so much support. However, this appears to have become counter-productive in relation to HE participation. What appears to be excessive support is viewed as the norm and the fact that the majority of participants seem to suggest that they needed the support on offer appears to a reason for non-participation.

Contradictory viewpoints

Whilst there were not many definite gender differences in the participants' reasons for not participating in HE, there were some with a minority of male participants' attitudes to support. Whilst there appeared to be little evidence of my male participants viewing participation in HE as being incompatible with their notions of working-class masculinity, there was evidence that the support they envisaged needing involved costs and risks to their masculine identities (Archer and Leathwood, 2003). However, it is worth pointing out that this minority of male participants was somewhat contradictory in its viewpoint. On the one hand, they discussed the benefits of support and how it was something that would be needed should they participate, yet there was also an inference, from some, that this was a weakness.

What's the point of going to uni if you can't do it yourself and you need loads of help from people you don't know? What's the point...? (Participant 6)

There were also some examples of 'laddish' behaviour with some participants blaming being lazy or the fact that they "... couldn't be arsed" (participant 12) as a reason for not participating in HE (Mac and Ghail, 1994; Francis, 1999). Yet interestingly, for these participants, the support on offer seemed to counterbalance their own self-proclaimed laziness or lack of motivation. One possible explanation is that, for this minority of male

participants, the support they anticipated needing to successfully participate negatively impacted on how they viewed themselves. I am not suggesting that the constructions of 'laddishness' as 'being lazy' was used as a strategy to protect self-worth (Jackson, 2002 cited in Burke, 2007) as the participants clearly had some academic ability and were not as lazy as they led me to believe, given the qualifications that they gained. It was more that being recognised as someone who needed "...a shed load of support..." (Participant 12) in an alien environment appears to have made them worry about how this made them look to people they did not know. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, excessive support in an environment where it was the norm was viewed as acceptable and expected. Being known as someone who was getting support in an arena where it was not viewed as the norm appeared to be unacceptable for this small group of males. The most confusing aspect of this discourse was that these participants were not expecting any support, had they participated in HE anyway, yet they seemed to worry just as much about getting excessive support as about it not being available. However, in spite of this minority discourse, it is worth noting that both the majority of the male and all of the female participants had the same attitude to support. These participants were happy to talk about needing support, should they participate. There was no indication of this being viewed as a weakness it was something that was needed and something they valued.

Conclusions

This paper has indicated that participants appear to view the academic related support mechanisms offered at their sixth form as being a vital ingredient for success, and that the anticipation of less or no support, should they participate in HE, was a reason behind their choice not to participate. The testimony suggests that participants seem to be comforted by the support they received at sixth form and that this, as part of the institutions' habitus, appears to give them a sense of belonging. Within their sixth forms, their habitus appears to align with the sub-field of sixth form education. They were attuned to the practices of the field and the unwritten rules of the game; they were 'fish in water'. As discussed throughout, the sixth form appears to have instilled a need for academic related support in the participants. Whilst this helped to build their self-confidence within the sub-field of sixth form education, without guarantees of similar levels of academic related support in HE, the participants gave the impression that they were not prepared to participate – to gamble. The expectation of academic related support was the norm in terms of their educational experiences and expectations, if they were going to succeed. The low expectations of academic support, should they participate, seemed to have a negative impact on them with regard to HE participation. Their cultural repertoire, their 'tool kit', did not appear to stretch to HE participation without a substantial amount of academic related support. Academic related support appeared to have been inculcated into their habitus and support as a value had been institutionalised within the sixth forms and normalised by the participants, so much so that the majority inferred that they were unable to participate unless they had guarantees of the same amounts and types of support, should they participate.

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Voices of deaf adults: Ideas for transition and implications for adult educators

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In the United States and other countries transition from secondary education to adulthood for deaf students typically involves participation in transition programs or services. The voices of deaf people who have successfully transitioned and are leading independent adult lives provide insight into important adult life tasks that may be lacking from transition programs. Considering inclusion and diversity in adult education, my study begins the conversation in the field of adult education concerning future interactions that may be possible between adult education practitioners and transition planners.

The field of adult education has for many years focused on the social issues that shape adults, such as growing up in poverty or the effects of gender and race differences. My study placed attention on collecting data from a group of adults with similar physiological issues. This paper focuses on the inclusion of deaf adult's voices regarding important adult life tasks that may be situated within the field of adult education.

Although we all arrive at chronological adulthood in the same way by aging, we do not all arrive at adulthood with the same learned tasks necessary in adulthood. With the goal of transition focusing on preparation for adulthood, one assumes the young adult should have the ability to function in the various tasks of the adult world. This may not be the case for all deaf emerging adults. Several authors have demonstrated that many deaf emerging adults are not functioning as an independent adult after leaving secondary school transition (Arumburo, 2003; Bowe, 2003; Luckner, 2002; Luft, 2014).

Improvements in transition require a shift from completing a checklist to a greater focus on the emerging adult's needs and preparation for adult life. Much time is lost if focus is placed on inappropriate goals and only meeting compliance (Bowe, 2003; Luckner, 2002). In the United States when transition programs follow compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is assumed the deaf emerging adult benefited from their transition experiences. If those assumptions are incorrect, it is the emerging adults who pay the cost of not being prepared for adult life.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is United States' federal law enacted in 1990 and reauthorized in 1997, and in 2004 (US Dept. of Education, 2007). Since IDEA was authorized in 1990, it has undergone several reauthorizations placing even more emphasis on transition, particularly with the reauthorization in 2004. Despite these efforts in the United States, there are arguments that transition planning may not be preparing deaf emerging adults for adulthood and they suggest advocacy skills, life choices, independent living skills, appropriate academic and/or job training opportunities should be the focus of transition (Arumburo, 2003; Bowe, 2003; Luckner, 2002; Luft, 2014). Furthermore, these topics should be delivered in the emerging adult's individual communication mode (Bowe, 2003; Gravel & O'Gara, 2003; Hauser, O'Hearn, McKee, Steider, & Thew, 2010; Marschark & Knoors, 2012).

What seems to be missing in transition is a focus on adult life tasks and skills that would benefit the emerging adult who does not plan on attending postsecondary education, while still benefitting those emerging adults that do attempt postsecondary training.

Considerations for educating deaf emerging adults

For deaf emerging adults living in a hearing-based society, learning adult life tasks are not as effortlessly obtained as they are for hearing emerging adults. Incidental learning occurs for hearing children and adults by listening to every day conversations and picking up information. This opportunity is not available if communication is not made accessible to deaf individuals (Gravel & O’Gara, 2003; Hauser et al., 2010; Marschark & Knoors, 2012). Based on the ineffectiveness of the incidental and social learning channels, deaf learners require intentional teaching delivered in their communication mode in order to close the gaps in their learning and gain new concepts.

Understanding the needs of deaf learners is important because their experiences and access to learning creates the adult they become. Luft (2014) stated, ‘it is through language that adults and peers scaffold life experiences into meaningful learning events. Access to the general curriculum or classroom and to transition services may be substantially occluded by nonfluent linguistic abilities’ (p.178). Applied to the field of adult education, practitioners must realize the significant lifelong learning implications for deaf adults due to hearing loss (Sarchet, Marschark, Borgna, Convertino, Sapere, & Dirmyer, 2014).

In deaf transition research conducted by Luft (2014) outcomes showed that deaf emerging adults’ transition planning, required greater depth and attention to their unique challenges. Without specialized attention to specific deaf transition issues, deaf emerging adults may become deaf adults who are low functioning and unable to participate as an independent adult in our society. As a result of language, communication and educational difficulties faced by deaf emerging adults, transition may not be successful if we do not optimize the outcomes (Cawthon & Caemerer, 2014; Hauser et al., 2010; Luckner 2002; Luft, 2014).

The United States is not alone in issues associated with deaf emerging adults and transition. Deaf emerging adults experienced a similar lack of preparation for adulthood in the United Kingdom, which was the impetus behind educational transition requirements being changed to begin at age 14 (O’Brien, 2015).

Educational and transition concerns for deaf students in Ireland were due to similar issues as seen in the U.S., ‘lower educational expectations, barriers to incidental learning opportunities, poor communication at home, learned helplessness, and poor literacy and numeracy skills’ (Mathews, 2015, p.1). School to work transition and barriers to employment opportunities for deaf emerging adults were issues experienced in Australia (Punch, Hyde, & Creed, 2004).

Study overview

In his seminal work, Havighurst (1953) established life tasks to be accomplished across the lifespan. Life tasks ‘are those things that constitute healthy and satisfactory growth in our society. They are the things a person must learn if he is to be judged and to judge himself to be a reasonably happy and successful person’ (Havighurst, 1953, p.2). The life tasks of childhood and adolescence certainly are pedagogical concerns of primary and secondary education and, naturally, life tasks build on the acquisition of earlier tasks.

More than sixty-five years later there are certainly different demands faced in adulthood. Developments in technology of today were not known at the time of Havighurst’s work. Nor were the changes we see in modern social society. Although society and the demands have changed, life tasks are still vital. The necessary element of adult life tasks underpinned my study basis in that federally mandated transition programs should include training in adult life tasks. As an adult experiences different situations in society, new adult

life tasks must be added to the arsenal of previously learned tasks by observing, overhearing, or in the case of deaf adults, intentionally being taught new adult life tasks.

Whenever life tasks are specified, it raises the question of who has the right to determine what life tasks someone else may need in their life. After Havighurst (1953), I turned to the literature to compile a more comprehensive and modern list of life tasks from many perspectives developed over the last half century. A few examples of adult life tasks are: value self-reliance, develop personal values, meet adult independent needs, prepare for their job or career, advocate for disability needs, recognize other’s opinions, decide to obey rules of safety, understand consequences of their actions affect others.

In order to obtain an emic perspective, I undertook a survey to determine what adult life tasks people really needed. Providing an avenue for voice, deaf adults’ perspective concerning what adult life tasks are necessary for meeting the demands of adulthood were captured. My study was unique in the fact that it relied solely on the voices of deaf adults to produce empirical data. In my study, these deaf adults were considered experts because they met the following criteria: (a) adults who are deaf themselves, and (b) have attained the level of education or certification to teach deaf students. These experts have demonstrated they are functioning as an adult and had the capability to successfully complete postsecondary education, complete educator certification requirements or obtain employment in a position of educational leadership.

One of the founding fathers of adult education, Knowles (1980) referred to six adult role categories as ‘life tasks of American adults.’ These adult roles were measures of adulthood or constructs for my study with the addition of the construct *Establishing Independence* by the researcher.

Table 1 presents the top ten Deaf Expert Survey items with means and medians, and standard deviations. The ranked means originally included all 67 items, but only the items with means of 4.0 – 5.0 were considered important life tasks and only the top ten of those are included in this table. Item ranks tied in value were described as such.

Table 1: Means Rank and Medians of Top Ten Responses

Rank	Item	Mean (SD)	Median
1	16. Preparing emerging adults to advocate for their disability needs in the workplace (V)	4.67 (.707)	5
2	17. Preparing emerging adults to request appropriate assistance in the workplace (V)	4.56 (.726)	5
3.5 (tie)	2. Preparing emerging adults for residential independence (E)	4.44 (.726)	5
3.5 (tie)	12. Helping emerging adults to prepare for their job or career (V)	4.44 (.726)	5
7.5 (tie)	18. Preparing emerging adults to coordinate different approaches to a task in the workplace workplace (V)	4.33 (.707)	4
7.5 (tie)	20. Preparing emerging adults to achieve what they set out to do in the workplace (V)	4.33 (.707)	4
7.5 (tie)	28. Preparing emerging adults for home-life responsibilities (HF)	4.33 (.866)	5
7.5 (tie)	40. Helping emerging adults learn effective ways of expressing self (P)	4.33 (.707)	4

Rank	Item	Mean (SD)	Median
7.5 (tie)	59. Helping emerging adults learn to effectively communicate with a wide range of people (C)	4.33 (1.0)	5
7.5 (tie)	60. Preparing emerging adults to be respectful in dealing with people who are different from them. (C)	4.33 (.707)	4

V-Vocation and Career, E- Establishing Independence, HF – Home and Family Living, P – Personal Development, C – Community Living

Within the top ten ranked responses from my study, the construct *Vocation and Career*, had the two highest overall ranked items rated as important to cover in transition. The top two rated items dealt with advocating for disability needs in the workplace and requesting appropriate assistance in the workplace. These items are very specific to the physiological condition of being deaf and were considered very important. Also in the top ten were two other ranked items from the construct *Vocation and Career*. They included helping emerging adults prepare for job or career and preparing emerging adults to coordinate different approaches to a task in the workplace. Findings from the full survey show the *Vocation and Career* construct items were rated overall high values.

From the construct *Establishing Independence*, tied at rank 3.5 was the item related to residential independence. The construct *Home and Family Living*'s highest ranked item was tied at 7.5 dealing with preparing for home-life responsibilities. The highest ranked item from the construct *Personal Development* was tied at 7.5 dealing with learning effective ways of expressing self. *Community Living* construct included two highest ranked items in the top ten, both tied at 7.5. The items included learning to effectively communicate with a wide range of people and to be respectful in dealing with people who are different from them.

Findings from the full survey responses show the construct *Enjoyment of Leisure Time* had the lowest overall ratings among all of the constructs and no items from this construct were included in a subsequent study provided to recently transitioned deaf emerging adults. The construct *Health* had an item with the highest mean of 4.11 and four items were tied with means of 4.0 at the rank of 39.5, but no items from the construct *Health* ranked in the top ten to be displayed in Table 1.

Ideas for transition and implications for adult educators

Adult education philosophy guides adult educators to begin where the adult may benefit. Adult education philosophy is interested in involving the adult learner in practical, life-long learning. Perhaps entrance to an independent adult life may be influenced by shifting the transitional focus towards adult life tasks necessary for transitioning to adulthood, rather than meeting childhood educational goals alone.

Transition planners and adult educators should return to offering adult life task training to improve outcomes for deaf emerging adults. This opinion was supported by deaf individuals who were also deaf educators and served as participants in my study. The study found the ratings of the deaf adults on the importance of adult life tasks affirmed that many adult life tasks are necessary for transition programs to cover, particularly items from the construct of vocation and career.

There may be possibilities to take advantage of the gained insight and opportunities to intentionally teach adult life tasks, while deaf emerging adults are in secondary and possibly postsecondary programs. Individuals experience achieving adulthood in very different ways. Mapping the life stages of adult development for individuals with disabilities

is an area of research that should be situated in the field of adult education.

The intentional purposes of transition programs are to prepare individuals for adult life and to be able to confront the tasks of adulthood. Adult educators should become involved in transition planning to prepare emerging adults for future adult education opportunities that will present themselves over the life course.

Specifically, adult education as a practice promotes empowerment of the learner. In this case, trusting deaf emerging adults to lead or self-direct their own transition planning and working towards a common goal is adult education andragogy in action (Knowles, 1980). Allowing deaf emerging adults to express literacy across multiple modalities may lead to new assessments. Considering literacy in linguistic, digital, visual, aural, gestural, or spatial experiences may demonstrate deaf emerging adults' ability to function as an adult (Garberoglio, Cawthon, & Bond, 2014; Maiorana-Basas & Pagliaro, 2014).

Adult educators should incorporate the spirit of disability legislation by striving for inclusion along with access. Some ways this is accomplished is by learning about your learners and allowing them to learn about themselves; providing learners with choices based on their strengths, rather than on impossible factors; understanding the impact of audism, even if unintentional (Ballenger, 2013).

Practitioners should promote deaf emerging adults to achieve a greater sense of adulthood, potentially offsetting the lack of transition preparation, by providing opportunities and experiences to increase exposure to adult life tasks and roles. Establishing realistic individual degree goals and appropriate programs of study to meet these goals is needed (Cuculick & Kelly, 2003). There is a demonstrated need for both secondary transition programs and postsecondary institutions to provide practical and specialized elements based on the realities of each deaf emerging adult's goals and preparation (Ballenger, 2016).

Secondary example: if a student's transition goal is postsecondary college entrance, but they are still reading at the primary level, perhaps redirect their transition goal to a realistic goal of vocational training and adult life preparation. This new realistic goal of a vocation they choose may be motivating for the student and may provide an opportunity to be successful in the end.

Postsecondary example: when postsecondary institutions enroll deaf emerging adults who recently transitioned out of secondary school, specialized advising and selection of instructors with awareness of language and communication issues should take place. Perhaps postsecondary opportunities may be provided for incorporating adult life tasks and academic skills for deaf emerging adults.

Outcomes of my study are important adult life tasks that deaf education professionals considered as necessary. The developed instrument has applicability to future research examining preparation for adulthood by deaf emerging adults, emerging adults with various disabilities, as well as adults without disabilities. To a great extent, both in design and evaluation, transition programs designed by educational experts are based on limited input from deaf adults. Although educational experts can be correct, input from the individuals the decisions affect is necessary by taking a realistic look at the outcomes of the participants who experienced the transition programs.

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Mentorship programs for workplace inclusion and learning

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Introduction

Mentorship has proven to be a superior way to learn on the job. In an experimental study, a group who participated in a mentoring program was compared to a group who attended a traditional training approach. The participants in the mentoring program increased their leadership effectiveness compared to the group with a traditional approach:

Generally speaking, our results suggest that the more organizations can move away from one-size-fits-all training toward one-on-one mentorships characterized by trust, the more likely those program interventions will be able to take advantage of the developmental readiness of participants in those programs. (Lester et al., 2011).

One explanation was that mentors could provide individual support to mentees to help them understand and create meaning about their experiences. Another explanation was that mentors could help mentees to formulate their leadership identity (Lester et al., 2011). It has been reported that the traditional education approach has low efficiency when it comes to meeting organizations' needs (Naquin & Holton, 2006). With a traditional training approach, ie. education based on a fixed curriculum that is not adapted to a problem or to an organization, it might be difficult or even impossible to apply what you have learned when you get back to your own organization. The reason is the barriers that can be found on management and organizational level: lack of strategic clarity, an authoritarian management style, a politically charged environment and conflicts between functions (Beer, Finnström & Schrader, 2016). Education and training in mentoring programs are often based on problem-oriented learning in a specific work context. Problem-oriented learning in the workplace, as an alternative to a traditional courses, has many advantages, for example that learning is linked to everyday tasks (Frost & Wallingford, 2013). In addition to job-specific knowledge and skills, mentorship may still require further development of critical thinking, social competence and specific knowledge (for example technical skills) that are not available within the workplace.

Participation in a mentoring program can bring benefits for both the mentor and mentee, such as positive career development and job satisfaction (Hoffmeister et al., 2011; Martin & Book, 2015). Moreover, one should not forget that career development and personal growth often involves learning on behalf of both mentor and mentee; mentoring can help with the understanding of different parts of the business and they can give different perspectives on work-related problems in relation to or beyond the topic treated (Homitz & Berge, 2008). Mentoring programs can be a way to attract and retain staff, increase communication, loyalty to the workplace and performance, and reduce staff turnover (Siegel, Schultz & Landy, 2011). It is a common way to develop leaders in the organization and can influence behavior, attitudes and performance in general (Lester, et. al., 2011).

Introducing a mentorship program in an organization entails certain costs, especially because of working-time absence due to participation in the program and ongoing training of the mentors as well as the mentees. Despite this, it can be cost-effective because the organization uses existing resources and the content is customized to the specific needs at the workplace. The cost effectiveness of informal education or training initiatives, such as mentorship programs, means that mentorship programs can be attractive if

management does not see the value of external education efforts. Cost-effectiveness and fit to the organization may be one reason that this form of education and training is attractive to small and medium-sized companies (Hargis & Bradley, 2011). In some countries, formal mentoring programs can furthermore be included as a criterion in assessing which companies are the best employers (Martin & Bok, 2015).

Mentorship has long been identified as a key factor for workplace education and training. Surprisingly few studies have, however, devoted attention to mentorship programs, especially in the industrial and construction sectors (Hoffmeister, et al., 2011). There is thus a need to develop knowledge about mentorship programs and to provide an overview of previous studies on the topic. Against this background, the purpose of this report is to review previous studies of mentorship programs. In this paper, we present the result from a systematic literature review and we discuss the findings in terms of what previous studies can say about mentorship programs and highlight a few problems that should be addressed in future studies.

A systematic literature review

The paper presents a systematic literature review of research articles (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011). In short, we can say that we did a search on the term 'mentorship program' because we were primarily interested in program layouts and not aspects of mentoring in general. The search was limited to peer review articles and was carried out in four databases: ABI/INFORM, Business Source Premier, ERIC and PsycINFO. We got 315 hits and in the next selection we took out the articles about mentoring programs at workplaces, that is, we excluded those articles that dealt with mentoring programs in formal education at all levels. After this sorting, 106 articles remained. While the literature review was based on mentorship programs in general, we have focused on mentoring programs in relation to the industrial sector. The reason is that there is a lack of research in this area combined with a need in several industries for competence development. A literature review was a fruitful way to gather what has been identified in research so far. After an additional review of the full papers, we assessed that 16 articles were relevant for our purpose of identifying what we can learn from research articles about mentorship programs in the industrial sector.

We have not included articles dealing with leadership programs, or articles where mentorship is just mentioned as one of several opportunities for learning. Leadership programs and mentorship programs share many similarities, but while leadership programs are aimed at developing leadership skills, there may be different purposes with mentorship programs. A mentorship program is always based on an individualized study plan. The interaction between individuals in a mentorship relationship is an important factor for learning. The following conclusion from a study of a leadership program is an example that expresses this:

While Horizon participants were exposed to leadership theories, techniques, hypotheticals and a myriad of experiential exercises, the most valued learning experiences came from interaction with Industry Leaders and with each other.” (Sayers & Talvé, 2009, sid. 522).

We want to clarify that theories, techniques, hypotheses and exercises are not necessarily excluded from mentorship as they can be ways to promote learning. They are, however, not mandatory in mentorship efforts. In Table 1 the 16 articles that are reviewed in this report are listed.

Table 1: Articles connected to mentorship programs in the industrial sector

1. Bamber, D. & Castka, P. (2006). Personality, organizational orientations and self-reported learning outcomes. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 18(2), 73-92.
2. Carter, E. Vincent & Donohue, Mary (2012). Whole Person Learning: Embedding Ethical Enterprise Leadership in Business Education. *American Journal of Business Education*, 5(6), 677-692.
3. Frost, D. E. & Wallingford, V. (2013). Experiential learning for developing managers: a practical model. *Journal of Management Development*, 32(7), 756-767.
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5. Hoffmeister, K., Cigularov, K. P., Sampson, J., Rosecrance, J. C. & Chen, P. Y. (2011). A perspective on effective mentoring in the construction industry. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 32(7), 673-688.
6. Homitz, D. J. & Berge, Z. L. (2008). Using e-mentoring to sustain distance training and education. *The Learning Organization*, 15(4), 326-335.
7. Kyrgidou, L. P. & Petridou, E. (2013). Developing women entrepreneurs' knowledge, skills and attitudes through e-mentoring support. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(3), 548-566.
8. Leck, J. D., Elliott, C. & Rockwell, B. (2012). E-Mentoring Women: Lessons Learned from a Pilot Program. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 7(2), 83-96.
9. Leidner, D., Koch, H. & Gonzales, E. (2010). Assimilating Generation Y IT New Hires into USAA's Workforce: The Role of an Enterprise 2.0 System. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 9(4), 229-242.
10. Lester, P. B., Hannah, S. T., Harms, P. D., Vogelgesang, G. R. & Avolio, B. J. (2011). Mentoring Impact on Leader Efficacy Development: A Field Experiment. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10(3), 409-429.
11. Martin, D. & Bok, S. (2015). Social dominance orientation and mentorship. *Personnel Review*, 44(4), 592-610.
12. Pigeon, N. G., Cook, W. & Nimnicht, J. L. (2012). Women managers to women employees: helping hands or competitive jerks? *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 27(6), 417-425.
13. Purcell, E. P., Mitchell, C., Celestin, M. D., Evans, K. R., Haynes, V., Mcfall, A., Troyer, L. & Sanchez, M. A. (2013). Research to Reality (R2R) Mentorship Program. *Health Promotion Practice*, 14(3), 321-327.
14. Sampson, E. & St James, W. (2012). Mentorship interactions in the aviation or aerospace industries. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 11(2), 35-49.
15. Sarri, K. K. (2011). Mentoring female entrepreneurs: a mentors' training intervention evaluation. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 35(7), 721-741.
16. Siegel, P. H., Schultz, T. & Landy, S. (2011). Formal Versus Informal Mentoring of MAS Professionals. *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 27(2), 5-11.

When reading these articles, three areas emerged as recurrent topics in the texts:

- Mentorship definitions
- Characteristics of a good mentor
- Mentorship program structures

Below, these areas are presented.

Mentorship programs in the industrial sector

Mentorship definitions

There are different definitions of mentorship but the distinction between them is small. A common definition in the articles is Kram's definition from the book *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life* (Kram, 1985):

The present study used Kram's (1985) original and sufficiently broad definition of a mentor as a senior, more experienced employee, who serves as a role model and aids in the development of a junior, less experienced employee, the protégé. (Hoffmeister, Cigularov, Sampson, Rosecrance & Chen, 2011, s. 675).

This definition is similar to the etymological understanding of the concept mentorship:

According to the Greek myth, mentoring is about the transfer of wisdom, knowledge and thoughts from an experienced person to another person with less experience, through a relationship based on equality with the active participation of both parts, so as to encourage the mentee to find solutions to problems on his/her own. (Sarri, 2011, sid. 722).

The etymological definition is broader in that it emphasizes that both parties should be active and that mentorship may also include the transfer of wisdom in general, not just professional skills. A third way to define mentorship is to put it in relation to external courses and programs. When this happens, mentorship is defined as an informal education or training initiative that takes place internally in a workplace (Hargis & Bradley, 2011). This means that it is an education or training that is adapted to the needs of the individual.

A distinction can be made between formal and informal mentorship programs, that is, how formalized a mentorship program is within the organization (Siegel, Schultz & Landy, 2011). A formal mentorship program includes a starting date, a definite end point, matching processes for choosing mentors and mentees and content frameworks. Informal mentorship refers to mentoring relationships that grow organically where individuals themselves take the initiative for development and where they have no fixed time frame. Interaction with experienced leaders is an important component regardless the degree of formalization (Sayers & Talvé, 2009).

Characteristics of a good mentor

Mentorship can have several positive effects, and the mentor's characteristics are considered important for the outcome. Mentoring is based on interaction and exchange between mentor and mentee, but the mentor is responsible. Because of that, the people participating as mentors in a mentorship program are crucial to the result achieved.

Any mentoring program, however, is only going to be as strong as its mentors. (Homitz & Berge, 2008).

In the articles reviewed, there are two main reasons to pay attention to the mentor's

characteristics: (1) To identify, through tests and evaluations, appropriate mentors that possess the desirable characteristics, or (2) to identify the characteristics that support mentorship and to further develop them among existing staff before entering a mentorship program.

The desired characteristics identified in different studies are relatively similar, although they may be given different rankings in different studies (Hoffmeister, et al., 2011). When individuals from the construction industry ranked mentors' qualities, they wanted the mentor to possess professional skills, to share knowledge, to provide guidance, to build trust, to learn new skills, to share positive information and to provide negative feedback (Hoffmeister, et al., 2011). The ranking list that identified effective and ineffective mentors, and thus considered to be most relevant to the construction industry, identified the following key features for an effective mentor:

- good listener
- willing to share negative information
- comfortable around superiors
- allows an apprentice to make a mistake
- willing to give negative feedback
- willing to share knowledge
- possesses trade knowledge
- has a vision
- is a role model
- is objective (Hoffmeister, et al., 2011).

The idea of creating scales and tools to assess the mentor's qualities or to match mentor and mentee with each other is that this will lead to better performance. By identifying mentors who possess the desirable qualities, one wants to make sure that mentoring will work (Hoffmeister, Cigularov, Sampson, Rosecrance & Chen, 2011; Martin & Bok, 2015). Testing can also be a way to find those people who do not fit as mentors and in that way avoid problems between mentor and mentee. Mentors who based their judgement of other on social hierarchies, such as ethnicity, gender or academic background (discipline), had lower expectations on the outcome of mentorship (Martin & Bok, 2015). This means that individual differences among mentors have an impact on the success of mentorship and because of that it may be important to identify negative stereotypes before a mentor is selected.

Differences between mentor and mentee can be an advantage in a mentorship program, while similarities may facilitate understanding of the situation of others. Mentorship has been identified as a way to support women in their career development by providing support and information to understand the power and politics of the organization, and to receive feedback and access to resources (Leck, Elliott & Rockwell, 2012). Therefore, several organizations have established mentorship programs to bridge gender segregation and promote women's careers. The mentorship is said to be more effective if both mentor and mentee are women because a woman is regarded as a relevant role model. A male-female mentorship can be at risk of being misunderstood as a romantic relationship which can result in rumors and jealousy (Leck, Elliott & Rockwell, 2012). However, a study in the United States showed that based on the assumption that the mentor is also the

manager (with a focus on career development), women who have a woman as mentors may experience slower wage development (Pigeon, Cook & Nimnicht, 2012).

Gender differences between mentor and mentee can be a strength as well as a weakness. Differences between mentor and mentee (differences in ambition, experience, decision style, social commitment, emotional intelligence, technical skills, leadership level and leadership style and security) can contribute new and different perspectives while similarities between mentor and mentee (driving force, ambition, personality, communication skills, gender, family life, geographic origin and work sector) gave increased comfort in the relationship (Leck, Elliott & Rockwell, 2012). When the mentees in a program with both men and women as mentors described an ideal mentor, they evaluated how well the mentor supported career-development, the mentors' psycho-social functions and the personal characteristics of the mentor. To be female was one of the qualities the female mentees appreciated in a mentor. The mentors in the program, on the other hand, emphasized the ability to be patient.

Identifying and recruiting mentors is often referred to as a success factor, but equally important is the education and training of these mentors. Identifying the desired characteristics can provide a basis for further development of existing staff through continuous education (Sampson & St James, 2012). Unsuccessful efforts with mentoring programs can often be traced to the mentors not being competent enough to handle different situations (Homitz & Berge, 2008). Since the mentor's ability is crucial to the success of the program, selection and training become central and, for example, gender awareness can determine if a mentor succeeds or not (Sarri, 2011). Peer-to-peer mentorship, when colleagues at the same hierarchical level act as each other's mentors and engage in a learning process, can be a way to develop mentor skills (Martin & Bok, 2015; Purcell, et al., 2013). Action learning can emphasize the experience-based and problem-oriented aspects of working life (Frost & Wallingford, 2013). This way of working also clarifies the relationship between individual development and the organization's development plan.

To work with self-assessment can be a way to develop in a working life context. Development of leadership through a self-assessment model can be included as a part of a mentorship program (Frost & Wallingford, 2013). Although mentorship is not the same thing as leadership, leadership can be one of several areas that the mentor needs to master. Being a mentor involves taking on parallel roles, such as leader, role model, coach, teacher, counselor, consultant and friend (Sarri, 2011).

A readiness to learn provides better prerequisites for achieving results, as well as the mentors ability to create trust and goodwill (Lester et al., 2011). The mentorship relationship is based on the social interaction wherein a professional identity is formed. This works better if the individuals are open, motivated and if they can explore both their strengths and weaknesses. An environment that supports openness, exploration and learning promotes the development that takes place in the mentorship dyad.

The link between personality and learning can also be used to create an understanding of different skills and dimensions of workplace learning. When personality, organization orientation and self-taught learning goals were merged, an illustration of different ways of learning in organizations emerged: gradual innovation and change, radical change, the need for stability and changeability, and ability to change (Bamber & Castka. 2006). Increased complexity in terms of understanding learning in the workplace means that individuals can develop insights about multiple approaches that work in different situations

and from the perspective of different stakeholders. Learning is based on flexibility in planning and adaptation to different work situations and mentoring programs can meet these requirements (Bamber & Castka, 2006). An effective mentorship is based on the ability to give support, ask the right questions and encourage independence.

Mentorship program structures

The situation, the profession and the organizational character should be considered when setting up a mentorship program. Employees in rapidly changing environments can however benefit from informal mentorship that grows organically to be able to adapt to changes (Siegel, Schultz & Landy, 2011). Mentorship should thus be adapted to the individual in terms of content, methods and structure in order to be successful. Support from management is another key issue to promote the effectiveness of a program (Homitz & Berge, 2008).

Training at the workplace has the advantage that it can be directly linked to the tasks. In that way, mentorship becomes cost-effective. To have a skilled and experienced employee train new employees is the most common form of education and training in smaller companies, according to 75.6% of 752 employers in the US in different industries (Hargis & Bradley, 2011). In the same study, 35.4% of employers indicated that this kind of education and training usually lasted between 3-12 months (14.3% indicated longer and the rest shorter).

A center working with mentorship program have identified the need to have a coordinator for the program and a selection process to choose participants. The program itself has the following steps:

1. Publication of the program.
2. Mentor selection, preparation and training.
3. Mentee selection and training.
4. Mentor-mentee matching.
5. Development of the relationship.
6. Publication of the project and evaluation (Sarri, 2011, p. 724).

Key factors for a mentoring program to be effective are an agreement on goals, communication and training, the matching process, evaluation and review of the program (Sarri, 2011). When setting up a mentorship program, a holistic perspective can be useful. This can imply to include micro and macro perspectives when linking a theoretical education to a concrete work situation, but also to include a discussion about trust and ethical values and possible contributions at both individual and social level (Carter & Donohue, 2012). Trust is emphasized to create a good relationship between mentor and mentee. There are several aspects to consider when building trust (Leck, Elliott & Rockwell, 2012):

- Procedural (confidentiality/ethics statement, clarify expectations, program structures, synchronous meetings)
- Establishing ability (goal achievement, demonstration of expertise, sharing of information)
- Establishing integrity (confident, show commitment, be available)
- Establishing benevolence (encourage networking, be open and welcoming,

establish a personal contact, show genuine interest to other people, share personal stories and experiences)

Mentorship is regarded positive to support women in their careers. In some areas, however, there is a lack of experienced women who can assume the mentor role, which means that e-mentoring can be a solution. E-mentorship offers a global pool of possible mentors, it can reduce issues based on gender, social status, age and ethnicity; it is easier to have multiple contacts that leads to a larger contact network, and it may be easier to leave a dysfunctional relationship in e-mentoring. The disadvantage of e-mentorship is that it can complicate communication, especially when it comes to psycho-social aspects and complex issues, and that it means that the mentor probably does not come from the same organization and have specific knowledge about the context (Leck, Elliott & Rockwell, 2012). An important outcome of e-mentorship is the development of ICT skills for both mentor and mentee. (Kyrgidou & Petridou, 2013).

In vocational distance education, a mentor (e-mentor or on-site) can support by asking questions, engage in dialogue, show possible alternatives, and act as a general support in education and training online (Homitz & Berge, 2008). E-mentoring can be a complement to traditional mentorship and offer flexibility regarding time and space. In an IT department in a large IT company in the United States with about 22,000 employees, an ICT system was used to replace the traditional mentorship role. There were two reasons for this change:

1. The existing middle managers who were expected to act as mentors for new employees were too busy with their own work and did not fulfill their mentorship role;
2. The expectations and attitudes among new employees from the so-called generation Y demanded a change in the way social media was included (Leidner, Koch & Gonzales, 2010).

To facilitate socialization, increase loyalty and assimilate new employees into the organization, a new system was created that replaced the middle managers as mentors.

Another big challenge was associated with IT middle managers, who were expected to serve as mentors for new hires but were too busy to pay much attention to them. Furthermore, differences in job responsibilities and age impeded middle managers' ability to provide technical and social mentoring for new hires. Recognizing that "It simply costs too much to bring new hires in and train them, only to have them leave shortly thereafter," the IT director charged with revamping the new hire program decided to leverage the power of social networking to improve the program. To achieve this, he empowered the new hires to create Nexus, an Enterprise 2.0 system. (Leidner, Koch & Gonzales, 2010, sid. 231).

The new system was based on a combination of working life and private life. This corresponds to the idea that both professional and personal development are central in mentorship. The new system had support from senior management and the newly employed could, among other things, have a senior manager as a sponsor of an activity. The introduction of the new system got positive response from the new employees, creating, among other things, a sense of togetherness and joy, and when they themselves started contributing with content, they felt proud and satisfied (Leidner, Koch & Gonzales, 2010).

To work with an ICT system that replaces mentorship programs is probably something we

will see more of. This means that learning from traditional mentorship programs is required but in combination with new and innovative ways to work.

Discussion

To set up a mentorship program requires contextual knowledge, insights about the situation, the profession and the organizational character as well as adaptation to individual needs. In addition, mentorship programs can have different purposes that also influence the set-up of a program. Some examples of different purposes are to:

- assist new employees on their way into the company
- support leadership development within the company
- develop expertise, within and between companies
- develop small and medium-sized growth companies
- support women's careers
- facilitate transition between education and vocational training.

In this section of the paper, we also want to comment on the following three areas: attitudes towards mentoring programs, between the lines and the digitalization of mentorship.

Attitudes towards mentoring programs

The research articles provide definitions of mentorship and we see that it is important to emphasize mutual learning, as opposed to one-way learning. In other words, we do not understand mentorship as a transfer of knowledge from one individual to another. However, at the same time mentorship is built on the idea that one individual has knowledge and experience that should be shared, usually from the mentor to the mentee. In this sense, the mentorship relation is asymmetric and this can be expressed in different ways. The mentorship dyad can be based on a combination of:

- senior – junior
- more experienced – less experienced
- younger - older
- manager – employee.

Although the relationship is asymmetric, the learning process should be mutual and shared and probably involves learning different things. To talk about a shared learning process is connected to attitudes towards learning and this is linked to the existing culture at the work place. The organizational culture provides a frame for mentorship that either supports openness and learning new things or preservation of existing knowledge and working methods. Attitudes towards learning thus become a strategic issue for management because it is about how to create a mentorship program that promotes learning in relation to the strategy of the organization.

Between the lines

The literature study includes a limited number of articles as a basis for what we have discussed in this report. Based on the existing material, there have also been a few questions about what is said implicitly between the lines. After a critical reading of the results, we want to highlight and further discuss the mentor's characteristics, context of study and mentoring for women's career.

The characteristics and abilities of the mentor are mentioned explicitly but also implicitly. There are lists that define the mentor's qualities and abilities in the articles. This can provide guidance and understanding of how a mentor should be and act. It is however problematic that those articles emphasize the importance of identifying the mentor's qualities before a program, as if all organizations are in a situation where they can freely choose among a large number of possible mentors and mentees and match these candidates with each other. In small and medium-sized companies, this is often not possible as there are few employees or professionals in the field that have the specific knowledge that is to be transferred and developed.

The issue of the contexts in the articles should also be discussed, as this affects the ability to transfer results from one context to another. Particularly in a case where mentorship programs are said to be most effective if they are contextualized. A conclusion from the articles is that the context means a lot for the design of a mentorship program. The studies presented in the articles are conducted in the national contexts of Greece, Canada and the United States. Does this mean that results and conclusions are relevant to other contexts? The countries are all western countries that are comparable in some ways but since culture and context are important for designing a program, they should rather be seen as important facts that need to be evaluated and assessed when designing a new program in other contexts.

Finally, we want to comment on the limitless expectations that seem to flourish when it comes to mentorship programs to support women's careers. Four out of sixteen articles have women and (e-)mentorship as the focus. The results of these studies are that mentoring has both advantages and disadvantages for women's careers. It might be possible that the mentorship approach can be a way to overcome inequalities based on ethnicity, disability, gender, class, sexuality and age. However, if it were as easy as introducing mentorship programs, these kinds of inequalities would probably already be solved in organizations. Instead, it is interesting to discuss whether mentors are aware about diversity and inequality and how this can be addressed within a program structure.

The digitalization of mentorship

E-mentorship and mentorship systems were recurring topics in the articles. One article described how an ICT system replaced the middle managers as mentors. To have a system replacing mentors is probably something we will see more of in the ongoing digitalization of workplaces. In the study of the ICT mentorship system, this had the consequence that the responsibility for assimilation into the organization was transferred to the newly employed. The digitalization of mentorship can benefit from knowledge from traditional mentorship programs but at the same time it can open for new and innovative ways of working with learning in organizations. It can also provide opportunities for further adjustments of mentorship programs in relation to the context in which they are to be implemented.

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Adult pathways to inclusion and diversity in higher education

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Introduction

Societies are characterised by social and economic inequalities, which include, and are exacerbated by, barriers to higher educational access, particularly for learners from various ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds and immigration experiences. Research has identified the importance of higher education for future earnings (Ostrovsky & Frenette 2014), quality of life, and life chances (Bannerjee & Verma 2012). In this paper, we share our findings from a Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSRHC) funded study entitled “Diversities of Resilience: Understanding the Strategies for Success used by Underrepresented Students in Canadian Universities,” which involved traditional and non-traditional students from various ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds and immigration experiences who have persisted to graduation.

We used an electronic survey of 1555 students (690 of whom completed the survey) and one-to-one interviews with 30 students who are either currently studying and nearly ready to graduate or have recently graduated from undergraduate degree programs. Participants are located in three universities in three Canadian regions (Mount Saint Vincent University [MSVU] in Nova Scotia in the Atlantic region, University of Ontario Institute of Technology [UOIT] in Ontario in the central region, and University of Winnipeg [UWin] in Manitoba in the Prairie region). For the purpose of this paper, we narrow in on data of non-traditional students. Data include statistics from 690 surveys, as well as selected comments from the surveys and 14 individual interviews.

We examine our data through the lens of resilience theory. Resilience, defined broadly, is being able to adapt to difficult circumstances despite adversity (Bandura, 1997), embracing challenges, maintaining optimism (Rashid & Gregory, 2014) and harnessing resources to sustain well-being (Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013). Yet, in acknowledgement of McCubbin, et al.’s (1998) caution that there are limitations to trying to apply standard measures in the resiliency framework to various “other racial or ethnic groups” (p.322), we emphasize the plurality of our participants’ experiences and contexts. We expand on the ways that our participants develop resilience and the specific factors that contribute to resilience, including their sense of cultural identity, their sense of belonging and inclusion in various learning environments, engagement with community, involvement in extracurricular activities, familial and kinship bonds, relationships, mentorships/partnerships, and university-provided supports. We take into consideration participants’ multiple realities, including in their personal, university and community lives, and how those realities intersect and inform one other as participants negotiate life and learning. Our findings, in which we briefly draw on the qualitative data and selected direct quotes from individual interviews, contribute to understandings of resilience in adulthood and its link to success in tertiary institutions.

The non-traditional student

While “non-traditional student” is not a precise term, the National Center for Education

Statistics (NCES) defines a non-traditional student as having any of the following characteristics:

- Delays enrolment: (does not enter college or postsecondary immediately after high school)
- Attends part-time rather than full-time
- Works 35 hours a week or more while enrolled
- Is financially independent as defined by financial aid criteria
- Has dependents other than a spouse (usually children but sometimes others)
- Is a single parent
- Lacks a high school diploma, though may have a GED or other high school equivalency (NCES, 2002, p.3)

Tertiary education institutions in North America began to see more non-traditional students enrolling in their programs around 1970. By 1999/2000, a full 73 percent of undergraduates were in some way “non-traditional” (NCES, 2002, p.1). Our study involved participants who are mature students (many in their 40s and 50s), studying part-time, with dependent children, single parents and many of whom identify as Canadian-born visible minorities or Aboriginal.

Resilience

As noted above, resilience is defined as being able to adapt to difficult circumstances, face challenges, maintain optimism, and draw on resources to sustain well-being. It is a process that “empowers individuals to shape their environment and to be shaped by it in turn” (Garmezy, 1991).

While we are interested in understanding common themes in our data, which can help tertiary institutions play a role in creating caring learning contexts that foster resilience and assist students achieve success and persist to graduation, we do not assume that generalizations about what constitutes resilience is true for all students. Further, we recognize that resilience is a dynamic process; an individual may be more resilient at certain times than at other times depending on circumstances and the interaction of protective and risk factors (Winfield, 1991; Werner & Smith, 1992; Borman & Rachuba, 2001).

Findings

Regression analyses of the quantitative data show that non-traditional students were somewhat more likely to delay their university education to earn money to attend. They were less likely to receive scholarships or bursaries and more likely to get student loans compared with younger students. Also, non-traditional students who speak more than one language, identify with a higher importance of cultural identity, and were Islamic or Indigenous, were all more likely to have financial concerns that kept them out of university for at least one semester.

With regards to the qualitative data, we focus on the interviews with 14 mature students, 10 of whom are from MSVU, two from UOIT, and two from UWin. Of these, all faced challenges of varying degrees. These challenges included financial, single-parenting (three mentioned having adult children who have mental health issues), lack of confidence or imposter syndrome, being unsuccessful at university before trying again, having had

negative experiences in high school (e.g., experiencing racism) and feeling that high school did not adequately prepare them for university. Some also spoke of experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination on campus. For this paper, we are highlighting four significant factors that impacted on the ability of these students to be successful in reaching their final year of university: family support, a sense of belonging or community when attending school, developing a relationship with one or more professors, and the ability to manage or cope with stress.

Family support

While family support is often understood to be a positive “protective” factor for resilience, in some of the participants’ lives, family members not only failed to provide a support system, they actively discouraged the participants’ pursuit of tertiary education. For example, Meg (all names are pseudonyms) asserts that distancing herself from specific family members helped her to stay focused on her goal of completing her degree. Karim, a divorced father of three, had to go against some of his family members’ expectations of him. One expectation was that he should not pursue tertiary education but instead work in his father’s retail store. He adds:

[My family] just thought I was being irresponsible, and they clearly have no idea of how much work goes in to do this kind of work [studying at university], and to pay for this kind of work, to do it at the same time. Yeah, they don’t have a clue how dedicated I think an older person has to be to go to school without money.

Tammy, who is of Indigenous African Nova Scotian and First Nations heritage and a mother of three, also notes that as a first-generation student, her family could not understand her challenges of going to university. She explained that she did not have anyone in her family to talk to about navigating tertiary education and no one in her family could understand what she was going through.

For other participants, family members were their biggest supporters emotionally (if not financially). For example, Priya, says her father chose to move the family to Canada (despite having a good career in Pakistan) so all five of his daughters could have their own opinions and a better future. Her father encouraged his daughters in education.

Fatima, a single mother of a toddler who came to Canada as a WUSC student, says her family gave her encouragement to do her best in high school. “Without my family and my mom, I don’t think I would be studying at [name of University]... because my mom gave up a lot because of sending us to school.” She elaborates, “I had to be the top 20 student. It was my only way out of the refugee camp. So I had a strong purpose.”

A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging in the university was a critical factor for many of the participants. For example, Rose, an Aboriginal single mother of three, who had tried to do a degree before, said that she has gone from “feeling invisible” to knowing a lot of people and not being afraid:

[That’s a] big one too, like knowing people, just walking down the hall and knowing people, it’s a big thing. Now when I walk through the hallway it takes at least 20 to 30 minutes to get to where I’m going ... because ...I’ll meet people along the way. ... And it’s completely changed around from before when I walked through the school, and kind of felt invisible. ... I guess the fear that I had before is because my experience with going to school was that people were racist, they were mean, and being lost in the

background, ... if you're lost in the background you're not really engaged in what you're doing.

Rose attributes this to the Aboriginal student centre where she connected with other people and her culture, as well as to her studies, which included a "Mi'kmaq scholar, so she did the classes differently, in a more Mi'kmaq traditional way, which you know, was super awesome."

Like Rose, Bella is an Aboriginal student who is a single mother. She had completed high school and first enrolled at university when she was in her early twenties, but said: "I didn't feel it. It wasn't me." When she was in her thirties, with limited job prospects and a young daughter to support and be a role model for, she enrolled in and has now graduated from a program that interested her more. Bella stated that her Aboriginal culture helped give her a sense of purpose at university because she feels that she is representing her people and becoming a successful role model. Although this provides more a sense of joy than added pressure, she feels that failure is not an option.

Relationships with professors

Even though their life circumstances are very different, both Mark and Anne commented on the importance of having a vision or goal and of having a relationship with their professors. Mark, a 26-year old Canadian-born non-visible minority student who acknowledges his privilege as "a white cis male," first went to university at 17 years old, but believes he was not mature enough and lacked the focus to succeed at that time: "I'm way more engaged in [university]. My grades are like exponentially better, and yeah, I really feel like—like I came back with sort of like an idea in mind and a career in mind, and I want to learn skills and get good grades, and I feel like I'm meeting people in class. It just feels entirely different." He notes that the support of his parents and one professor have helped him to cope. Anne, a 53-year old Métis student with adult children, also commented on the importance of speaking with her professors right away, even "just to get an idea of what they're looking for in this assignment because each professor is different, and it can be very disappointing when you've put your heart and soul into something, and realize you were way off or they wanted it done a certain way."

Destressing or finding ways to cope with or manage stress

Being able to cope with or manage stress is a hallmark of resilience. The mature students in our study have developed different coping strategies such as self-talk and self-care. Bella, for instance, engages in self-talk: "I guess I rationalize things first and say 'Is this a big issue? What needs to be done here?' I guess I have a philosophy, 'Time cures everything,' so just let things pass I guess." When things pile up, she will experience anxiety and will get moody and irritable, which she deals with through exercise and telling herself "It's not the end of the world." She has found it hard to really take care of herself properly just because of lack of time. It wasn't until third and fourth year that she became better at time management." One comment made to her in third year helped her to relax into being a student: "You don't have to be smart to be here." The implication was that she could be successful through hard work. The campus Aboriginal Resource Centre, where she took part in some social activities like beadwork and making moccasins, as well as speaking with elders were also important in helping her relax. The welcome she felt there was significant in her sense of belongingness to the university community and her ability to cope with the stresses of being a single parent attending university full-time.

Other students mentioned spirituality and religion including prayer or relationship with a higher being, meditation and breathing exercises, which Karim explains: "There are many

things I think I did to succeed... some alternative things, like I got into meditation and correct breathing exercises to deal with anxiety, because I couldn't deal with all the people in these exam rooms sometimes. I just couldn't deal with the stress and the pressure, so I learned how to breathe and calm down." Most of the mature students did not attend Orientation events because they feared not fitting in due to their age or because of family or work commitments. As a result, they missed out on the opportunity to make friends and to learn about resources early in their university career; this led to some added stress in their ability to succeed in their studies. Priya, however, is one exception. She attended Orientation where she made friends, learned about campus groups, and built the confidence to take on leadership roles later on.

Several students talked about volunteering to help other students on an individual or student group basis. For example, Priya and Fatima both work with WUSC to assist refugee students and Tammy tutored with the Africentric support group. This has contributed to a sense of belonging and contributed to a way of coping with their academic and personal stresses.

Like many of the students we have interviewed, Frank, a 28-year old Indigenous student, deals with stress by being organized and not procrastinating. He feels he was successful because he made time for himself. He would also work ahead on labs and assignments if he had free time, so he would sometimes be three weeks ahead, for example. When he studied, he would take lots of breaks rather than trying to sit for long periods. If he had homework, he would do it early, so that if there was a problem he couldn't solve, he had time to get help.

Discussion and conclusion

Key to their success at university was what the participants referred to as a different level of maturity: being older, being driven because "there's no time to waste", having a clear purpose, taking classes seriously/never missing classes, and being self-motivated. Their life experience also gave them a sense of confidence in reaching out to professors without fear or embarrassment. It also helped them to overcome the negative comments from others, including some family members, who believed that they should be working to support their family rather than attending school or that "girls" should not be allowed to go to university. In the broad sense of the concept of resilience as the ability to cope with both the small day-to-day and larger life challenges, the mature students we discussed demonstrate that while there is no single way to cope with challenges, there are parallels even across the differences in their experiences and backgrounds.

One thing that is clear is that this resilience is supported when the university environment is welcoming and the structure of the university encourages more than simply the integration of mature students into traditional university structures. These students need to feel fully included, whether it is in events such as Orientation or on campus through the provision of spaces for mature students or after-hours access to services. One student commented specifically on the need for a Mature Student Association and that the administration only paid lip service to supporting mature students. Another stated, "I took the majority of my courses at night because I had to work full-time to support myself and pay for tuition... all of the university services that my tuition was supposed to pay for closed at 4:30, so I never had access to any of them. I'd have to take time off work and lose income in order to do anything at the school which made life difficult." At an institutional level, with students already overcoming many challenges just to attend, easing the burden through accessible hours and providing a supportive space for mature students makes sense in the current environment of universities seeking to increase enrolment and

persistence.

Just as many of the Indigenous students in Nova Scotia, Ontario and Manitoba found strong support and a sense of belongingness in their aboriginal resource centres, all of the African Nova Scotian students (which is 4 of the 14 interviewees) highlight the value of the Africentric Support Group (ASG). In particular, the person who leads the ASG helped them connect with others, provided them help in navigating through the university system, tutoring, and social engagement activities with an African-centred focus. The ASG reflected a level of caring that gave them a sense of belonging on campus. The success of these types of groups and centres in providing a sense of community speaks to the potential of associations for mature students to do the same for other students. This underscores the need to be attentive to the influence of culture and context when examining the mediating factors associated with resilience (Ungar, 2008).

Some facilitative factors of resilience are beyond the control of the university, such as family support; however, the other factors we have identified are within the ability of the university to support. These include a sense of belonging to the university community, positive relationships with instructors, access to resources to support the management of stress, and funding scholarships and bursaries for mature students. For instance, providing access to university services and resource outside of standard business hours through a centre for mature students, a space, which could also include a dedicated lounge or study area, should be feasible for universities no matter their size. Similarly, providing truly accessible space on campus for students to de-stress is also important. The benefit of providing accommodations such as these for mature students will also extend to others on campus who may not fit the definition of mature student but are nonetheless “non-traditional” and perhaps, for example, coping with working full-time or near full-time hours in addition to carrying a full load of classes. In other words, what benefits one disadvantaged group of students will likely benefit most students.

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***Optimism through the generations – Miss C, Ms Kaye and Angie: Second-chance education from grandmother to granddaughter* [Paper not available]**

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Adult newcomers following second-language courses: A qualitative social network analysis grasping their social capital and social inclusion

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Abstract

During recent years, the number of immigrants and refugees is on the rise in Europe. Research shows they are at risk of social exclusion, partly due to disruptive social networks. To counter these social challenges, adult education has an important role to play in offering second-language courses. Obtaining the host country language is one of the crucial factors in order to achieve successful integration. Acknowledging these trends, the current study examines the social capital and social inclusion of newcomers who follow second-language courses (N=30) through individual interviews. We have developed a qualitative instrument to map their social network, from which we derive information about their social capital and social inclusion. Our findings reveal that the newcomers maintain social capital through transnational and local relationships with family and friends. Participation in the L2-course also seems to be a source of social capital because adults build new relationships with peers and their teachers. Besides this, newcomers' social inclusion is constrained due to their educational participation and their lack of language skills. However, they are able to engage in more social activities and feel more related to society because of improving their language skills. Based on these findings, we conclude with two implications for the adult education practice in order to foster social capital and social inclusion of adult newcomers.

Introduction

Immigration to Europe has increased tremendously over the past fifteen years according to the United Nations (2016). Additional numbers show that the amount of refugees has never been as high since World War II. In Europe, the migration and refugee population faces high risks of poverty and social exclusion (Lelkes & Zolyomi, 2011). In countering these social challenges, adult education plays a crucial role through the provision of second-language courses. Newcomers are urged to learn the host country language because it is indispensable throughout the integration process (De Paola & Brunello, 2016). Research also showed that participation in adult education is positively related to benefits such as social inclusion and social capital (Manninen et al., 2014), especially for newcomers (Cocquyt, Diep, Zhu, De Greef, & Vanwing, 2017). Building on these findings, the current study examines the social capital and social inclusion of newcomers who follow second-language courses (i.e. L2-courses).

Theoretical framework

Social capital

The reciprocal relationship between adult education and social capital was outlined by Field (2005), stating that social capital influences adult learning, which in turn affects social capital. According to Bourdieu (1980), social capital consists of the resources arising from the possession of a durable social network. Next, Coleman (1988) emphasized the functional and productive role of social capital, since it produces benefits to individuals. In the present study, the individual-structural approach to social capital is employed, because of the focus on individual's social networks which produce important resources. Consequently, the following definition of social capital is proposed: 'the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual by virtue of possessing a durable network of

more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.119). Additionally, Putnam (2000) conceptualized social capital as consisting of close personal ties (i.e., bonding social capital) as well as ties which build bridges between different societal groups (i.e., bridging social capital). Granovetter (1973) described bridging social capital as 'weak ties' and bonding social capital as 'strong ties'. Weak ties are valuable in retrieving information normally not available to people in their immediate social network (i.e. bonding social capital). Social capital is connected to other outcomes of adult education, being human and identity capital (Schuller, Preston, Hammond, Brassett-Grundy, & Bynner, 2004).

Social inclusion

Not only policy-makers, but researchers worldwide connected adult education to social inclusion. Social inclusion implies that citizens fully participate in society (World Bank, 2016). In addition, affective components of social inclusion have been brought to attention (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Tolan, & Marrington, 2013). Capturing the participatory and affective function, social inclusion is defined as the combination of social participation and social connectedness. Social participation is defined as 'the extent to which a subject takes part in different social networks and other activities in society' (Ekström, Ivanoff, & Elmstahl, 2013, p.459). Social connectedness refers to the 'self-evaluation of the degree of closeness between the self and other people, the community, and society at large' (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008, p.415).

Problem statement: Social capital and social inclusion of newcomers

Since newcomers are at risk of social exclusion (Lelkes & Zolyomi, 2011), it is valuable to understand their experiences regarding social capital and social inclusion while they are engaged in L2-courses. Some studies already scrutinized the social benefits of adult education (Cocquyt et al., 2017; Manninen et al., 2014), while others mapped the social networks of immigrants (de Miguel Luken & Tranmer, 2010; Herz, 2015). This study brings together both approaches. The main objective was to explore the social capital and social inclusion of adult newcomers following L2-courses in Flanders (Belgium), from a social network perspective. Therefore, we propose the following research question: How do adult newcomers give shape to their social capital and social inclusion during their participation in L2-courses?

Methodology

The current study applied a qualitative exploratory case-study design. This approach allows an 'intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is –at least in part- to shed light on a larger class of cases' (Gerring, 2007, p.20).

Context and participants

In Flanders, the centers for Adult Education and centers for Adult Basic Education (ABE) offer L2-courses to adult newcomers. The centers for ABE organize L2-courses only for low-educated newcomers. It was in this context that the study was conducted. To optimize the participation of newcomers, a step-wise approach was followed. First, the permission of the overarching Federation of centers for ABE was granted. The Federation distributed the call for participation among all centers, four of which approved. Depending on the readiness of each individual teacher, the research was presented to the adult learners during their lessons. After the presentation, the learners could decide if they wanted to engage in an interview.

In total, 30 adult learners participated in the study. The majority was female, whereas only nine male learners collaborated. Respondents had an average age of 36, ranging from 18

to 63. The adults were originally from different countries and spoke various languages as mother tongue. Most respondents came from the Middle-East, e.g. Syria, and Africa, e.g. Congo, few had their roots in Eastern-Europe or Asia. In general, the participants were already living in Belgium for approximately one or two years. With the exception of some adults who were in the country for a longer period. Additional socio-demographic information shows that almost all respondents are unemployed, have children and have access to internet at home. All of them were directed to L2-courses at the centers for ABE because of their limited previous education or low literacy levels. Due to their background, all demonstrated a low level of Dutch, i.e. the regional language.

Data collection and analysis

Before conducting the individual interviews, observations were made to be able to contextualize their responses. Next, interviews were organized to gain insights into the social capital and social inclusion of the participants. The interviews took place during classes to increase participation. Participants could speak their native language during the interview in order to express themselves fully. In case the participant spoke a language other than French or English, the support of a translator was arranged. All translators were briefed about the purpose of the interview beforehand and translated participants' responses literally.

At the beginning of the interview, participants were guaranteed anonymity. The interview consisted of three parts. First, the respondents filled in a brief background questionnaire. For the second part, we developed an instrument inspired by Van Waes et al. (2016) to conduct qualitative social network analysis (SNA). The qualitative SNA sheds light on newcomers' social networks, focusing on four life domains: their family, friends, people from the course, and significant others. The respondents depicted their social relationships in those domains visually on a network 'map'. The visual representation of the adult learner's social networks gives us information about their social capital. While conducting the qualitative SNA, the newcomers were probed by questioning the meaning and importance of their social network. Finally, the qualitative SNA was complemented by in depth-questions about adult newcomer's social inclusion and experiences throughout the course so far.

All interviews were transcribed literally and thematically coded using NVivo. Besides this, photographs were taken from all network maps. We analyzed them not only by looking at the amount of social relationships, but especially according to the meaning participants had attributed to them. The results of the thematic coding and the qualitative SNA were combined in order to answer the research question.

Results

A view on adult newcomer's social capital: transnational and positive relationships

The findings of the qualitative SNA show that the newcomers maintain relationships with family and friends across borders. Their social networks consist of the combination of local and transnational relationships. This reveals the transnational nature of newcomers' social networks.

My wife is in Iraq. And I am also in good contact with my brothers and sisters. They still live in Iraq too. I have four sisters, with two I have a good relationship. I use Viber to talk to them. [R12]

Next, it seems that most respondents have built positive relationships with their peers and teachers in the center for ABE. However, respondents indicate that sharing a common language is a prerequisite to develop a close relationship.

In school, I do not have close friends, because most of the people in my class are talking Arabic. I am not Arabic, so I do not understand them. We just say hello and goodbye. There is another girl from my country, she is a friend, but we are not in the same class. [R20]

Once a close tie has formed, peers offer each other help with homework, taking care of the children, finding a job or a new place to stay. Some participants even consider people they got to know in school as true friends or family.

She is a bit older, she is like a big sister to me. She is also Turkish, and we can communicate well. That is why I feel really close. [R25]

Our analysis also reveals that access to a 'key figure' who is proficient in the language of the host country is important. This key figure makes access to services available, gives emotional support and aids to undertake social activities.

When we have a problem with things related to Belgium, we go to Ahmed's house because he lives here for a long time and can help. Because he knows the systems and such. [R26]

Patricia for example, she encouraged me to leave Brussels so I could integrate better and learn the language better. Because she, she writes and speaks Dutch very very very well. She grew up here and speaks Dutch so well. She truly encourages me. [R1]

Perspectives on social inclusion: constrained social participation and social connectedness

From the analyses, it emerges that participant's social participation is constrained due to their educational participation. Throughout the interviews, newcomers report limited participation in social activities: they visit family or friends in the weekend or go shopping for groceries. Some of the participants describe the impact of their extensive engagement in the L2-course on their social lives.

I come to school to learn, and after school I do my homework. It's just leaving home to go to school and going back home after class. Sometimes I go out into the city, that's it. During the weekend I take care of household chores or go to the market to buy groceries. [R6]

Most respondents also indicate that their lack of understanding and speaking the language limits their activities. However, following the L2-course has equipped them with improved language skills. As a consequence, they are able to do more things by themselves.

My Dutch has improved so much, before I could not speak it at all, I understood nothing. Now, I can go buy groceries by myself, I can communicate with the vendors, I can communicate with people, I can voice my opinion. [R6]

Some adults would like to increase their social participation. They ask to be involved in voluntary work in order to get to know new people and to practice language skills.

We do not have a lot of contact with Belgians, that is why I would ask the school to organize some voluntary work for us. It is not necessary to get paid for it, that is not my intention, but one or three hours a week would be so good to practice the language. En plus, we can mean something as a volunteer, that is a positive experience. [R30]

Regarding social connectedness, most respondents acknowledge the importance of acquiring the language of the host country. As long as they cannot express themselves properly, they feel poorly connected to society. Respondent 26 says: 'I feel more citizen this way because I am able to speak the language better now'.

Discussion

Concerning social capital, the results of the qualitative SNA reveal that adult newcomers sustain local and transnational networks. This means that they have relationships with family and friends in the home and host country. Therefore, they can rely on various people in their network to give them support or access to information. In other words, their social capital not only originates from local, but also from transnational relationships. According to Herz (2015) transnational relationships are an important source of emotional support. On the local level, access to a key figure seems valuable. A key figure is someone in their network who has been in the host country for a considerable amount of time and who is proficient in the regional language. According to our results, this key figure is often a relative or a very close friend. The importance of the key figure lays in the fact that s/he is able to enlarge adult newcomer's bridging social capital, i.e. information or resources that are not directly accessible in their own surroundings.

Furthermore, participation in the L2-course also seems to be a source of social capital. Adults build new relationships with peers and their teachers during their participation. However, sharing a common language is a prerequisite in order to develop a close relationship according to the participants. Building such close ties entails social capital benefits for the adult learners. In other words, they create access to new support sources and enlarge their network. On the other hand, those kinds of relationships could yield disadvantages for the class group as a whole. Adults who do not share a mutual language with their peers could feel excluded. As a result, the sense of community among peers could be negatively influenced and social capital might decrease.

The social inclusion of the participating newcomers is constrained due to their educational participation and their lack of language skills. The respondents do not engage extensively in social activities nor feel closely connected to the society because of two reasons. First of all, they engage a lot of time and effort in their language education, leaving limited leisure time. Besides, their rather low levels of language proficiency inhibit them from engagement in activities in which Dutch is the official language. Lack of social participation might also cause limited feelings of social connectedness. However, we can derive from the interviews that participation in L2-courses is perceived as valuable because it enhances respondent's language skills. In turn, improved language proficiency might increase their social participation and social connectedness. In other words, adult newcomers are able to do more activities by themselves and feel more related to society due to developing their language skills. This finding demonstrates the interplay between human capital and social outcomes of learning (Schuller et al., 2004). Our results identify the necessity to develop more human capital (i.e. language skills) first, in order to promote enhanced self-esteem, social inclusion or social capital. It is through acquiring better language skills, that newcomers feel more confident to engage in social activities and experience social connectedness. Hence, our results confirm the reciprocal relationship between human, social and identity capital.

Implications for adult education

Our results yield two major implications for the adult education practice. First of all, teachers could aspire to foster community-building among all peers irrespective of their native language, in order to enhance newcomer's social capital. Possible methods might

be collaborative learning such as an online group-chat in which all learners write or speak Dutch with each other, whether or not facilitated by a teacher. Secondly, newcomers' social inclusion could be enhanced due to more opportunities to practice their language skills and connect to society. As some participants suggested, volunteering could facilitate great learning and network opportunities. Going out on field trips together with the class might also help to reduce barriers to participate in certain events or organizations.

Conclusion

The current results acknowledge that newcomers are able to maintain their existing social capital through local and transnational relationships. Moreover, they also seem to enhance their social capital through relationships with peers in the classroom and connections with a key figure. Next to this, our findings reveal constrained social inclusion. Yet, acquiring better language skills throughout the L2-course encourages the newcomers to engage more in social activities. As a result, they feel more socially connected. Therefore, adult newcomers seem to develop their social capital and boost their social inclusion during their participation in second-language courses.

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Redressing political inequality in Scottish communities: What can adult educators do? [Paper not available]

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Model making as a research method

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This paper will look at the benefits and challenges of using a creative method of data collection in social science research. It shares the findings of the final strand of a research project into the perspectives of FE pre- service student teachers around mental health awareness and teaching, using this as an example of the method but focusing on creativity in research. The research question for student teachers preparing to work with adults in FE settings was; How do mental health issues affect teaching and learning? The overall methodology of the research used a phenomenological approach to capture the voices, thoughts and opinions of the participants about their own experiences and those of their learners. The model making strand discussed here was purely qualitative and the method for data collection was specifically chosen to meet the needs of the participants and to protect them from any negative effects whilst encouraging discussion around an emotive issue.

The full research project was carried out to consider the perceptions of staff and students about mental health and how issues affect teaching and learning. The research consisted of an initial questionnaire which was sent electronically to staff and students on Initial Teacher Training(ITT) programmes at three English universities; two in the north west and one in the Midlands. Tutors on ITT programmes were interviewed using a set of semi structured questions about whether they included awareness raising around mental health in the curriculum already or would consider doing so. The final strand of the research, the basis for this paper, just looks at data from the student teachers themselves, who were nearly at the end of their intensive Post Graduate or Professional Graduate Certificate course and who were brought together in model making focus groups to discuss their needs, concerns and awareness around mental health issues and the impact of these on teaching and learning.

The Pre- service FE student teachers in the focus groups had various levels of teaching experience but it had to be considered that some students would only have their placement teaching to draw upon for experiences of mental health. It was possible that participants would not discuss their teaching experience but instead would draw on personal experience or that of family and friends. The topic of the research was acknowledged to be sensitive. The first and second stages of the research had emphasised the stigma that is still experienced around issues of wellbeing so finding a suitable method through which to question trainees proved problematic. Interviews were considered but rejected as being invasive and possibly too intense as the topic could lead to disclosures of mental health issues. Focus groups were decided upon so that a collaborative and supportive approach could be taken. The possibility within the focus group of some voices not being heard or being drowned out by stronger opinions led to the decision to facilitate everyone having an equal time to speak. The researcher still faced the difficulty of overcoming stigma and making the participants feel confident enough to speak out about a difficult subject. This was resolved by the use of a creative approach to data collection and the decision was made to use the making of models from a wide selection of craft materials as a medium through which participants could describe their thoughts and opinions; each taking an equal turn as participants were given thirty minutes to construct their models and then had to speak for just five minutes each about their creation. Kara (2015) considered that there was an opportunity to use innovative, arts based creative methods in focus group methodology. There was an additional benefit to

using this method of research as student teachers could hopefully consider the method as something to be used in their own practice and research. This additional benefit was advertised when seeking participants for the focus groups. When the groups came together rules were set up and participants all had to agree that any disclosures made would be treated with empathy and in confidence and that all opinions stated would be accepted as equal. Materials were available highlighting resources for support and I made myself available for individual tutorials for anyone affected by the experience.

Using models in teaching and learning links most directly with the production of Lego models in Narantzi and Despard's (2014) research into using models to aid reflection on an HE teacher training course. They chose model making to allow their Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) students to start a professional, reflective, discussion with their tutor at the end of the module. The models provided a starting point and students reported that having the model to discuss led to them feeling 'more relaxed.' (p33) Observers noted that students were, 'having fun and some were absorbed in the task..' (p33) The notion of play was seen by the participants using Lego as a positive and something which could be built into teaching with adults more widely. This linked with the added benefit to student teachers of experimenting with model making during the focus groups. The model as data however is unconventional and the method of analysis applied to such a visual form of information needed careful consideration. Pillow (2003, p.176) suggests that qualitative researchers need to show that they are: 'making visible, through reflexivity how we do the work of representation.'

This type of research was linked to work around creativity in the classroom and how this can be built into research methods. It also drew on literature from three separate fields which were used to create a method which allowed the question to be answered safely. The models made were predominantly a form of visual representation in research. The second strand of theory represented is the work on metaphor as the physical models created were representative of abstract thoughts and feelings. Finally, because of the chosen method of analysis the paper sits within the field of using narrative in research.

Most participants were excited and keen to start making models but when faced with the craft materials and a thirty, minute deadline they became less sure of their ability. There were some participants who worried about their level of creative talent and felt under pressure when faced with an alternative method of assessment. Harvey and Harvey (2012) looked at creative teaching in lifelong learning and considered that environmental conditions needed to be met to be successful in integrating creativity. One of their conditions was the, 'capacity to live with uncertainty' (p2) This was a consideration for the research method chosen as the participants were faced with the uncertainty around what was expected and how they could share their views and opinions through a craft based model.

Data from the model making groups was deep and diverse; participants described the physical model that they had made and this always led to more data around feelings and perceptions. James and Brookfield (2014) suggest that the benefit of using imagination and being creative in teaching and learning is that students are using different senses when they use different modalities and that this always leads to 'depth and complexity' (p4) The overwhelming contribution from the model making to the research project was that trainee teachers needed awareness raising around mental health and some/ more strategies to help them to break down barriers to learning. All participants demonstrated a willingness to learn more and this was in contrast to the responses from their tutors and the questionnaire results which mentioned referral as the most important strategy and a

named person in each organisation being responsible for student support. This was reflected upon in terms of self- selection for participation which might have indicated interest. Stigma and fear were frequently mentioned even when a desire to help was stated.

The research into mental health affecting teaching and learning involved the fields of both health and education. This multidisciplinary aspect was problematic and the model making provided a vehicle to allow discussion from both perspectives. Eaves (2014) considered that arts production 'blurs discipline boundaries.' (p149) and thus a creative approach was therefore ideal for these focus groups. The benefit of creating a visual representation is summed up by Butler (2008 cited in Eaves 2014 p149) to 'increase voice and reflexivity and expand the possibilities of multiple, diverse realities and understandings.' The topic under discussion was abstract and complex and therefore the models were a suitable vehicle to phenomenologically capture the views of the participants.

Looking at the models made as data links with research into the use of metaphor in educational research. In the findings models represented mental health in the form of barriers, muddled and complex creatures/ creations. The models used colour and shade to discuss dark and isolated states of minds and the colourful happy state to which everyone aspired. The materials used expressed the 'hard edges' of stress and difficulties and how teachers could soften those edges and provide comfort, safety and support. The focus group data fits with work on the power of metaphor as the model stands as a representation of what needs to be explained. Hamilton (2016) claims that, 'multimodality offered varied and nuanced ways for participants to represent and share metaphor.' (p.33) Using a creative medium to make a model and then participants adding a commentary to discuss their creation allowed for additional depth and detail. Saban(2004) suggests that metaphors are useful to describe ideas which are might be difficult to deal with using just language.

McBain et al (2015) summarise that, 'Creative work can also be a useful vehicle for taking a deeper look at ourselves and our practices by engaging with metaphor and symbol.' (p.2) This focus on reflection is wholly appropriate to the models made in the focus group which needed participants to reflect on their practice and / or experiences outside the classroom with mental health issues. Thomson (2016) draws on the work of Leary (2007) who considers that metaphors allow us to understand thoughts and preconceptions and they provide some insight into attitudes and understanding. Awareness raising is about dispelling myths and misconceptions and the need to eradicate stigma was at the heart of the model making process. The metaphors allowed participants to talk about fear and uncertainty through the model and this meant that they were not judged for any negative response.

The model making technique used in the focus groups mirrored the making of Sandboxes (Mannay, 2016) which was used to aid adult participants from difficult to reach groups to share their thoughts and feelings. The participants used model characters and artefacts and placed them in a sand box to allow them to describe abstract notions and feelings. The difference between this approach and the data reflected on in this paper is that, in the study under focus, the participant's interpretation was supplemented with a narrative created by the researcher in which I added data from the conversation which took place as the models were being made and the response of the group to the model, this deepened the complexity of the data. The narratives were, of course, a construction of the researcher and I was open to criticism for not accurately representing the voice of the student teacher. Construction of a narrative was considered however to provide a richer source of data than

just the description of the model as often participants made disclosures and discussed best practice as they were creating.

Caulley (2008) suggested that a narrative approach is one way to make qualitative reports, 'less boring' and he suggests using fiction techniques to write non-fiction and to get to the 'truth' (p.424)

Data from the model-making focus groups was twofold. The models created were the first consideration and the words surrounding these models during the presentations added to the understanding of the visual phenomenon. The presentations were transcribed from the video footage but it was felt that this left out some depth of explanation which had been shared during the model making process and the response to the model which added a richer understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the participants.

To analyse the data from the models in full therefore a narrative was constructed for each one which allowed for reflection and revisiting of the video footage and the models themselves to be sure that the meaning was captured as accurately as possible. The data produced in the form of these narratives was then fed into NVIVO to allow for a closer analysis of the thematic basis of the models.

To elucidate the usefulness of this approach the following passage is an example of one of the narratives created. The chosen example reports on a very simple model which showed a small, cardboard box with a fitting lid with the words, 'learning environment' printed around the outside edge. The box was open and lying on top of the box and not fitting in was a twisted, pipe cleaner 'learner'.

Narrative for Imogen's model

The box is a simple representation of learning. The box represents education and the tangle of pipe cleaners represents a learner with complexities which are not all visible on the surface.

If you are a learner, without any difficulties, you can fit perfectly into the box but this learner has mental health issues which are represented by the jumbled nature of the model and the teacher can try to force the learner to fit in but it is clearly impossible. Imogen describes the people who fit perfectly as 'happy' and their learning journey is 'easy' and 'smooth'. The learner depicted here however can only access parts of learning which come into contact with the surface area inside the box. The bits sticking out at the side represent missed opportunities and because of the spiral curriculum once missed some of this information can never be revisited and the gaps are there permanently.

This easy model makes many points simultaneously and visually. The need to make learners conform is the first point being made as we try to make all learners fit one size of box. This links to a medical model of disability because a social model would offer a range of learning environments to meet the needs of individuals. In this version the teacher is unable to repackage the learning into a container that fits the learner and this is what personalised learning would look like. There is also a time element here as the learner is wedged into the box to make contact with whatever learning is possible but the bits missed are not made available in any other form. The box concept links with theory from Assessment For Learning and the 'Black Box' of the classroom and it can be seen that this learner is not going to do well in assessments because they haven't had all the input that they need.

The fact that the learner doesn't fit is obvious to everyone and this must increase their

feelings of being 'other' and their discomfort. It is also more obvious to their peers that there is something different about this person and this can make forming relationships more difficult. If the box was more accommodating, then the learner could fit alongside their peers and learn from them too. The peers might be empathetic as the difference is now amongst them rather than at a distance. This could link to the notion of exclusion and segregation of learners with difference and the box represents, at present, a medical model of disability as it is rigid and the learner doesn't fit. If the box was altered, then it could represent the social model where the learning has been adapted to meet the needs of the learner. This example shows some of the benefits of the approach.

All models made were recorded in this way and this enabled a full range of reactions and responses to be gathered. In every group there were some fearful reactions and often teacher trainees spoke of concern that they would make things worse. These models were often based on the notion of permanent barriers and insurmountable obstacles to the teacher/ student relationship.

Some models showed the range of mental health issues presenting in class and there was discussion around the fact that anyone can be affected. One creation looked at how the need to maintain positive wellbeing for teachers is often negatively affected by trying to deal with the many issues that learners needed help with. This particular model was based on the teaching of a group of students seeking asylum who had specific needs. The group reaction to this was to remind the creator that her needs were also important and that she needed a work life balance.

In every group the notion of breaking down barriers by building positive relationships, treating learners with positive regard and having empathy and understanding were built into models. There were many who used the metaphor of before and after showing dark places where students felt alone and the light and colourful classroom when a positive relationship had been built.

Many models showed the complexity of thoughts/ understanding around mental health. Individual students were portrayed as having jumbled, negative thought processes and teacher trainees portrayed themselves as separate and not able to help.

In conclusion an important element of this research was the consideration of 'Freedom' (McBain and Donnelly 2015) which the participants felt in discussing their models and which added a feeling of safety and distance which were essential in not causing distress and possibly even a stigmatised response. This makes model making a positive choice of data collection method around many topics.

All participants were able to create a model although some said that it was, 'difficult' and one wondered if creativity could be learned as he felt unsure about his abilities. Most models were simple but effective and reassurance was given at every stage of the process that there was no judgment or assessment being made of the model itself and that the group members just wanted to share the thoughts and feelings of the creator.

A very useful, additional product of using model making in research was that it gave an opportunity to introduce the notion to teacher trainees who could then, in turn, use it with their own learners in a variety of ways. Models have been used following this research in modules teaching: reflective practice and other abstract concepts, such as happiness, equality, inclusion and education. Participants from this research and others who have attended model making workshops at PGCE conferences have reported finding multiple uses for models in their own teaching. Some have used models to help learners to

express themselves and explain difficult ideas. Also model making meets the needs of learners who prefer a hands on approach. Some teacher trainees have reported using the technique with learners on the autistic spectrum to encourage communication.

The paper has looked at model making as a research method and suggests wider uses for the technique which could enhance adult learning. The findings of the research advocate mental health awareness raising for pre- service and existing teachers of adults which can help to provide information, resources and strategies for improving the wellbeing of learners and teachers.

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***Faces of adult education in Georgia* [Paper not available]**

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This study explores perceptions of adult students' learning experiences in adult basic education programs in the state of Georgia. We present rich, descriptive narratives of their descriptions of their educational experiences. Understanding how adult students assess and evaluate their learning experiences can greatly inform adult basic education programs in Georgia.

Thinking through evocative, cultural objects to construct an inclusive learning environment

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Introduction

This paper examines how spaces of research and learning can engage education professionals in reflexive thinking about their own knowledge, practice and discourse. Specifically, I enter the debate about professional lives in education in uncertain neoliberal times (Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Gewirtz *et al.*, 2009; Barnett, 2008) by exploring how conditions of fragmentation may be meaningfully researched using biographical (Reid, 2015; West, 2004, 1996; Dominicé, 2007) and art-based approaches (Jarvis, 2015; Loads, 2010).

To this end, I draw on an auto/biographical, co-operative inquiry project (Formenti, 2008; Heron, 1996) in which two groups of professionals from higher education, health and social work explored their relationships with knowledge and processes of self-construction in a university setting in Italy or the UK over an eight-month period. The study was theoretically underpinned by Donald Winnicott's (1971) work on play and the self, and Charlot's (1997) proposal that we negotiate who we are and how we know within a social space of knowledge relations.

I present the narratives of two participants in the co-operative research group at Canterbury Christ Church University: an art therapist, Vanessa, and a lecturer, Dilbert. These accounts illuminate issues of alienation and indicate ways in which a transformative research setting can "upset" professionals' epistemologies, facilitating more playful engagement with knowing, and more integral and integrated selves.

The narratives were produced during a workshop at which Borges' short story *The Circular Ruins* was approached evocatively to stimulate play with different kinds of knowledge (biographical, professional, intellectual, intuitive, imaginal, sensual, etc.). The evocative use of cultural objects (literary texts, films, poems, songs) to engage professionals more holistically with the personal in the professional is my focus here.

I now go on to clarify what I mean by professional alienation and to review research approaches fostering 'meaningful professionalism' (West, 2004, p.311). After describing the overall study design, I then examine Vanessa's and Dilbert's narratives and draw conclusions about the use of evocative objects in research.

The alienation of education professionals

Professionals in education are alienated from their emotions, intuition, and imagination. Research can be a learning space in which professionals integrate aspects of themselves via holistic knowing.

Many have expressed concerns about current trends towards greater bureaucratization and performativity in educational contexts and professions (Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Barnett, 2011, 2008; Biesta, 2010; Gewirtz *et al.*, 2009). Barnett (2011) has spoken about a loss of 'mystery' in how learning and knowing are understood in higher education, because neoliberal discourses rule out all that is not explicit. Professionals experience multiple competing pressures to be knowledgeable as well as accountable to a variety of stakeholders (Barnett, 2008), and find their authority challenged by feelings of inadequacy.

Competition among perfectible individuals is increasing across all sectors of our market-based society, 'from science and education to health care and the media' (Verhaeghe, 2012, p.113). Psychiatrist R.D. Laing (1967) early pointed out the condition of alienation affecting contemporary Western societies, which splits experience into 'inner' and 'outer',

[...] but perception, imagination, phantasy, reverie, dreams, memory, are simply different modalities of experience, no more "inner" or "outer" than any others (Laing, 1967, p.18)

Since the 1980s, feminist researchers have emphasized the need to research embodied subjects, creatively devising new methodologies that reflect the complexities of doing research (Merrill and West, 2009). Informed by feminism and psychoanalysis, Linden West's biographical research with MPs (family physicians) in southern England identified discourses of the doctor as an omnipotent and omniscient hero, possibly 'partly as defence against fears of inadequacy and [doctors] own emotional difficulties' (West, 2004, p.301). Professional socialization into an intellectual model overlooks more subjective ways of knowing.

West's conclusion that biographical research may 'illuminate more of what doctors, in reality, *may need to know*, including the place of self and emotional understanding' (ibid, my italics), also applies – I believe – to education professionals. Pierre Dominicé has claimed that using educational biographies as a reflexive training tool with adult educators¹ serves to illustrate 'the social context in which learning takes place' (Dominicé, 2007, p.248): indeed, much of our professional learning derives from our connections with other people across all areas of our lives, both public and private.

Auto/biography brings to light the interplay of 'personal and public worlds, intimate and wider experience, past, present and future' (West, 1996, p.xv), and the 'capacity to learn from within' (West, 2004, p.310), potentially leading the practitioner to be 'more reflective ... but also effective' (ibid). New research applying psychoanalytical concepts to education also seems promising (Bainbridge and West, 2012).

Research design

In my study, I implemented an auto/biographically oriented co-operative inquiry methodology (Formenti, 2008; Heron, 1996) with two groups of education professionals, at the University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy) and Canterbury Christ Church University (UK). A colleague and I facilitated the two groups in telling stories of knowing and becoming a professional. I also explored how a specifically designed research setting might encourage participants to connect thinking and acting, narrated and enacted identities.

Six monthly co-operative workshops were run simultaneously in Milan and Canterbury from January to June 2015, with a follow-up four months later. An opportunistic sampling approach was used to form two groups: nine participants in Bicocca and five in CCCU. Each session took a ritual format based on Heron's (1996) steps of knowledge, whereby the sensuous ('experience'), imagination/intuition ('presentation') and rational understanding ('proposition') are drawn together to develop new lines of action. By translating lived learning lives, or aspects of them, into different forms of knowledge, I hoped to foster complementary modes of knowing and novel thinking. The sessions also involved writing, reading and discussion of life events, in which learning was stimulated by a to and fro movement between individual and group, and written-organized and oral-dynamic expression (Formenti, 2008).

The emergence of a group was crucial here, as were ideas of uncertainty and crisis: experiencing what sociologist Marianella Sclavi (2003) terms 'embarrassment' bore both

epistemological and emotional value, helping me as researcher to view critical incidents and moments of frictions as opportunities for learning. Such tensions can also indicate how the group is learning, whether it is 'good enough' (Winnicott, 1971) and supportive of individual developments, and whether discussion is empathic or silences different others (Belenky and Stanton, 2000).

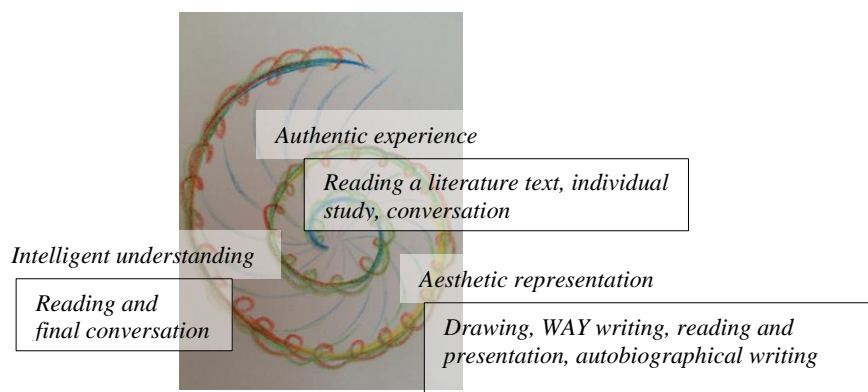
As the process unfolded, I introduced texts, picture cards, and films as external material for the group to draw on in discussing their learning lives. I subsequently realized that cultural heritage not only offers metaphors for thinking about knowledge and professional experience, but also provides transitional objects for self-making, re-negotiation and expression (Mosconi, 1996). I return in the conclusion to how the use of artwork can challenge previous understandings and stimulate critical reflexivity.

I now present two narratives illustrating how a literary text fostered reflection about knowing and not knowing among the participants, and how I worked with aesthetic representation and autobiographical writing to stimulate connections between the personal and the professional – or what Belenky and Stanton (2000) call 'connected knowing'.

Stories of mentors

The figure below illustrates the format of the fourth research session, held on 18 April 2015. At this meeting, I proposed exploring participants' relationship with a mentor² through the medium of Borges' 1964 short story *The Circular Ruins*. We read the story together and discussed it briefly; then participants produced individual portraits of a mentor and presented him/her to the group; finally, each wrote an autobiographical account of a significant other and read it aloud.

Figure 1



Both Vanessa and Dilbert were present. Vanessa was an art psychotherapist working both for public mental health services and in private practice. As an artist, she explored existential and transpersonal themes. Having come to higher education as an adult learner, she reported feeling uncomfortable in academic space. She positioned herself as 'outside' of the university, from which deep imaginative thinking is excluded, and resisted self-validating academic talk from the start of the research.

Annabel: ... We do get into this sort of taken for granted ways of doing things, ways of thinking about things. Sort of organizational cultures that grow, the way we do things around here...

Vanessa: That is quite excluding in a way.

Annabel: Hmm, yes it is.

Dilbert was a Senior Lecturer in Education. He had previously been Head of Languages at a local school, and had lengthy experience in teaching the visual and performing arts, but also had academic qualifications in Philosophy and Modern Literature. He was now pursuing an EdD. He spoke about his experience as though he were reproducing the academic discourse about education (Biesta, 2010), often using the impersonal 'you' form.

I had chosen *The Circular Ruins* because it was about a magician's efforts to give life to another man – a pedagogical situation. It had the merit of presenting a shift from a rational to a loving relationship with knowing in poetic allusive language. Vanessa was especially drawn to Borges' descriptions of physical qualities and states of awareness, enthusiastically labelling her favourite passages as 'gorgeous' and 'cool'. She was beginning to express herself more freely in the foreign land of academia.

As the conversation progressed, Dilbert spoke about the illusory nature of knowing: the magician/mentor 'is creating the body [of the other] in his own image because that's all he knows'. He concluded with an autobiographical reading of his own sense of disillusionment, making a link with parenting. In the dialogue that followed Vanessa drew on her therapeutic knowledge to offer him some holding:

Dilbert: ... we think we work out knowledge from areas of certainty and it is completely miserable. And on one hand you could make a link to Frankenstein and the terrific irresponsibility of creating a creature when you don't have any awareness of the divine ... when I had my son, no idea [smiles], no idea apart from love. So, incredibly irresponsible.

Gaia: Is there an alternative?

Dilbert: Well, we have to – as limited humans-, we have to have faith... faith in what? Oh my goodness. I am glad I had it then because I would never have it now. [...]

Vanessa: It [the text] says "all fathers are interested in the children they have procreated (they have permitted to exist) in mere confusion or pleasure". I am a woman and I feel the same about bringing children into the world, probably confusion and pleasure.

Dilbert: Yes that is very true.

Vanessa and Dilbert positioned themselves differently in relation to *not knowing*, John Keats's negative capability of 'being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts' (1958, p.79). The dialogue led Dilbert into a sort of crisis (Sclavi, 2003).

Dilbert: ... to have our lives revealed as phantomed, as not being formed from free will, as being shaped by others who don't know what they're doing ... To have that level of illusion revealed is paralyzing. How can we operate within that?

Vanessa: Oh no I think it frees us.

Dilbert: Well free to what? What can you then establish, what can you substantiate?
How can you operate when you have nothing to relate to?

Psychoanalyst Adam Phillips (2012) has written about 'getting it' or the compulsion to understand and to be understood. This feeds into Slavoj Zizek's 'attitude of overinterpretation' of significant others as specialists: a 'fantasy of purity' (ibid p.65) is built up around those "in the know" – parents, teachers, Shakespeare -, and a sense of inadequacy is created. Dilbert and Vanessa were testing the resonances between their respective professional socializations and personal histories of knowing.

The next activity – aesthetically representing a mentoring figure – called up difficult associations for Vanessa.

Figure 2



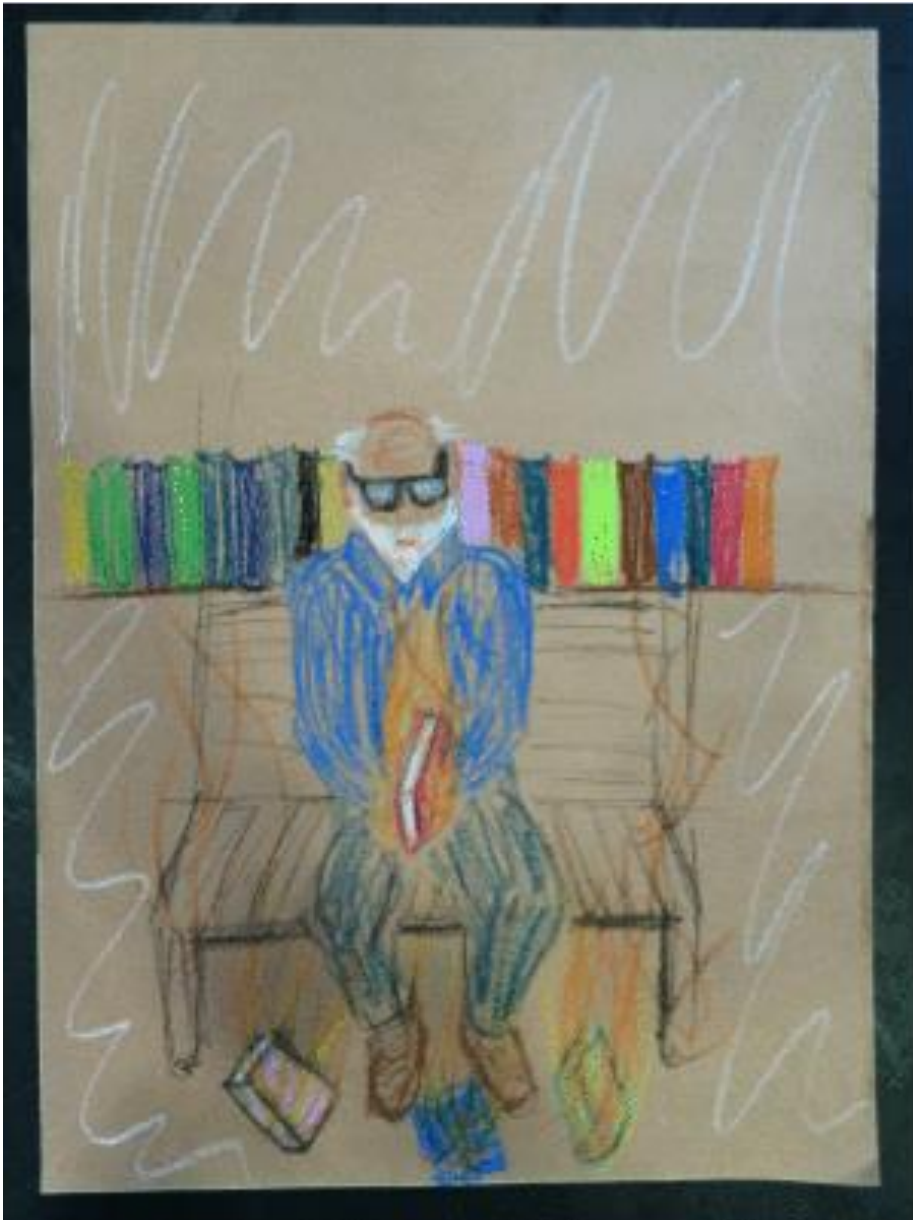
She is ambiguous
Light
Dark
Mysterious
Transporting
Holding
Rejecting
Enlightened
Shut
Opaque

Vanessa's ten adjectives for the mentor seemed to lead her into a critical analysis of her

confused desire to find a mentor, which she expressed in therapeutic language: 'my attachment is kind of non-existing there ... I haven't been able to form that ... I had to kind of "do it yourself"'. She referred to someone who had been a mentor to her at school, yet the relationship exposed her to the desires and frailties of adult relations. Was she linking her career choice with her educational experience?

Dilbert's mentor portrait and adjectives represented a professional's fragmentation under pressures to know.

Figure 3



The mentor is calm/frantic
Aged
Opaque
Unsure
Floating
Consumed
Looking for assistance
Burnt
Trapped

Dilbert commented that books are 'at the heart of learning in Western culture' and explained that the mentor was 'setting himself on fire, by coming across knowledge that he can't comprehend'.

Dilbert: He is actually looking up to the mentee for answers as it were... sometimes we are ... expected to know, and we might feel we don't have anything to say.

He then told us about two mentors from two distinct halves of his life: a literature professor, a 'knowledgeable man with a love for life' who helped him trust the process of learning; and the other his boxing teacher, 'in boxing terms [an] erudite ... [though] no, in life generally Tony wasn't good at all'. Dilbert seemed to enjoy recomposing these different aspects of himself, lecturer and boxer, in the public space of the university.

The evocative use of cultural objects

These examples show how a literary text was used to elicit free associative thinking about professionals' learning lives, with the aim of integrating personal and professional, conscious and less conscious, intellectual and affective dimensions into the reflexive process. In the remainder of this paper, I succinctly develop the key points in my argument for using cultural objects in auto/biographical research:

1. Donald Winnicott (1971) was interested in processes of self-integration and fuller expression of different aspects of the self as 'a never complete product of relationship with actual people and diverse objects, including the symbolic' (Merrill and West, 2009, p.70). In sum, provided we have access to a space that is 'good enough' – meaning supportive and not exploitative –, in adulthood we may become creative knowers who 'use the whole personality' (Winnicott, 1971, p.73).

This intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect to its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the greater part of the infant's experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative living, and to creative scientific work (Winnicott, 1971, p.19)

2. One such 'transitional space' is cultural experience – which, I argue, may take the form of a research workshop - in which we can live in an unchallenged area of separation and connection between me and not-me. Nicole Mosconi (1996) suggested that we think of cultural heritage, in its localized and contextual form, as presenting specific objects that have been created by drawing on a social imaginary, and 'exist and have value inside of and thanks to their social institution' (ibid p.96).
3. Recently Christopher Bollas (2009) has discussed how humans think by engaging with actual objects and making them objects of thought.

Moving in the world of objects, we live in an evocative world ... The integrity of an object, the character of its thingness, has a potential to start evocative processes. (Bollas, 2009, p.102)

I propose that cultural objects may be used in research with professionals as 'evocative' mediators of autobiographical sense-making. Each cultural object (text, film, image, music, etc.) is physically encountered and 'carr[ies] the weight of the real' (ibid p.84) into individual thinking processes: it is historically, linguistically, geographically, socially, and materially embedded. The encounter may be

displacing.

4. An artwork presents an ambiguity, as it attempts to embrace opposites in a complex way, dealing with 'man's quest for grace' (Bateson, 1972, p.129), or the 'problem of integration [of] ... "consciousness" and the other the "unconscious"' (ibid). To this end, we can avail of any cultural object³ with the power to challenge taken-for-granted separations between subjective and objective knowledge, intentional and relaxed consciousness, knowing and not knowing.
5. Aesthetic representation (Heron, 1996) is proposed as a means of walking the bridge between *experiencing* cultural objects and *reflexively thinking* about our lives through them. Furthermore, using different forms of representation can stimulate critical analysis by leading subjects to re-experience knowledge (Richardson, 1997), that is to say, to practice thinking through feeling, challenge what they know, and recompose fragmented areas of their personal and professional selves. Lastly, such playful practice may bring forth more 'connected knowing' (Belenky and Stanton, 2000) among the participants in the enquiry process, giving rise to a more inclusive learning space.

Narrative material from an auto/biographical co-operative study was offered here to argue psychoanalytically that cultural objects can challenge professionals' epistemology, practice and discourse and evoke connections between the personal and the professional, thus enabling more integrated selves and inclusive dialogue.

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¹ Following Dominicé (2007), I refer to both formal and informal adult educators: teachers, therapists, medical doctors and nurses, social workers, human resource managers, etc.

² In the Odyssey, Mentor is a friend of Odysseus, who puts him in charge of his son Telemachus when he leaves for the Trojan War. This etymology evokes ambiguities in the relationship that tend to disappear in the business literature.

³ Others have argued for only selecting objects of recognised artistic status (Kokkos, 2010).

The ethics of inclusion and engaging with the 'vulnerable': exploring adult learning and arts-based research approaches with female survivors of childhood trauma

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The term 'survivor' is used to acknowledge the strength of an individual who is 'recovering as an adult [from] what they have endured as a child' (NHS Scotland 2009, p.2). In Scotland, a number of charitable agencies help survivors overcome childhood trauma, supporting people in their journey to recovery so that they can 'go beyond simply surviving' and live fuller, happier lives (Ainscough and Toon 1993, p.4). I have the opportunity to work with female survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) at a Glasgow-based charity which supports young women on their recovery journeys. I propose to facilitate art and crafts sessions with the service users in the charity offices, framing this opportunity as an informal adult learning space. From this, I intend to involve the women in participatory, Arts-Based Research for my doctoral thesis, in which wider themes of identity, self-perception and place will be explored.

Survivors accessing the charity could be considered inherently vulnerable and therefore have the right to be protected from exploitation, re-traumatisation and/or un-ethical work practices. It is likely that those accessing the support organisation will have physical and mental health issues in adulthood, stemming from the trauma experienced as children. Some service users will present with additional issues and vulnerabilities, such as drugs and alcohol abuse, employment and housing problems (many will have experienced recent homelessness due to their history of abuse), relationship breakdowns, financial concerns and other (yet) unknown factors which can lead to varying levels of disruption in their adult lives. A key challenge in undertaking this work is circumnavigating the ethical constraints imposed by the academic community to safeguard and protect vulnerable people in the research process. This paper considers my reasons for wanting to involve female adult survivors in this research, my proposed 'empowering' art-based methodology and the important ethical considerations I need to consider when involving CSA survivors in the research process.

The impact of childhood sexual abuse on women's learning

Although estimates vary, there is a general consensus that women are more likely to be victims of sexual abuse (Cawson *et al.* 2000). The most recent Crime Survey for England and Wales, for example, found that 'women were 4 times as likely as men to be a survivor of sexual abuse during childhood (11% compared with 3%)' (Flatley 2016, p.3). Globally, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate higher numbers, with one in five women in comparison to one in 13 men reporting sexually abuse as a child (WHO 2016).

CSA is known to have wide ranging impacts on a survivor's physical and mental health (Radford *et al.* 2011). Those with a history of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to experience mental health problems, including 'post-traumatic stress symptoms, borderline personality disorder, depression, problems with food, suicide/attempted suicide and self-harm, severe substance misuse, anxiety disorders and loss of self-esteem' (NHS Scotland 2009, p.5). The adverse psychological, emotional and physical consequences of child sexual abuse can impact on a survivor's adult life, long after the abuse has stopped (Kane

and Bamford 2003). As adults, CSA survivors are likely to present with a variety of psychological, emotional, social and physical difficulties, which range in severity dependent on the complex needs of the individual (Chouliara *et al.* 2011). Recovery from childhood trauma can be a complex undertaking (Jacobson and Greenley 2001) and is often understood in relation to an individual's medical, social and psychological support needs for recovery (Hermann 2016). This research is significant because it considers the recovery process through an adult learning lens, rather than a more medicalised or psychological perspective.

Trickett and colleagues (1994) argue that it is reasonable to expect that children who have experienced CSA to exhibit academic problems in the school classroom, because of the psychological trauma of the early abuse,

'That is, high levels of depression, anxiety, and dissociation should affect a student's ability to concentrate and pay attention within the classroom and have a deleterious effect on the motivation to learn.' (Trickett *et al.* 1994, p.184).

Links have been made between CSA, poor cognitive performance and lower academic achievement in women by young adulthood (Noll *et al.* 2010; Robst 2010). In Thomas and Hall's (2008) examination of the life trajectories of women abused in childhood, women reported struggling with 'distractibility, social bullying, and isolation' and the ability to learn was 'impaired by the maltreatment they were experiencing at home' (Thomas and Hall 2008, p.154). Although being a survivor of CSA does not automatically determine academic success or failure in school, survivors often have to cope with deep-rooted feelings of shame, crippling low self-esteem and complex trust issues (Robst 2008, p.408). Exposure to childhood abuse can therefore impact on the adult sense of identity and contribute to negative perceptions of self, often in relation to their perceived abilities and lowered self-confidence. If they have a negative experience of school, this can have an enduring impact on an adult's attitude to education (NIACE 2014, p.7).

Engaging marginalised adult learners through art activity and arts-based research

Enabling more marginalized communities to engage with adult learning is a complex task. NIACE, the UK's 'National Voice for Lifelong Learning', recognise that harmful early educational experiences could form rigid dispositional barriers to learning (NIACE, 2014). Such psychological dispositional barriers (often involving negative perceptions, attitudes and assumptions) can affect confidence and motivation of the would-be learner. Art may provide a pathway to learning for such marginalised adults. Learning through the arts is often promoted as an active, social, and 'fun' activity for people to engage with, rather than the more passive, more rigid and assessed formalised processes of education. Studies have shown that 'individuals directly involved in creating or organizing artistic activity may learn skills that they did not previously have and may demonstrate greater creativity' (Guerzkow 2002, p.11). The beneficial impact of participation in the arts is widely recognized, but extremely difficult to evidence (Long *et al.* 2002). Links between participation in the arts, learning and positive social and psychological outcomes are much celebrated, as this author illustrates,

The arts have been said to improve health, mental well-being, cognitive functioning, creative ability and academic performance (Guetzkow. 2002, p.10)

In Scotland, novel steps have been taken using the 'arts' with the prison population to engage marginalised adults with learning (Holt and Duff, 2012). Visual image creation, 3-D modelling, dance and drama have all been taken into Scottish women's prisons. These educational art activities have been used to 'improve self-esteem and mental wellbeing,

and provide ways for participants to look at their self-image and relationships with others' (Holt and Duff 2012, p.8). The art activities are framed as part-rehabilitation, part-learning, part-therapeutic expression. Such initiatives are encouraged by the Scottish prison service with the hope that involvement in creative arts may enhance the participant's engagement with learning, challenge harmful self-perceptions and help tackle internalised negative identities (Tett *et al.* 2012). This link to creativity, skill development and helping challenge learner's more damaging self-perspectives is of particular interest to me in my research. I would like to explore further with survivors the notion that learning can be transformative, as stated by Fergus McNeill and colleagues (2011) in their reflections on the creative work undertaken in Scottish prisons,

'...learning is not only about acquiring new skills and practices but is also about changes in people's identity' (McNeill *et al.* 2011, p.2).

I intend to use an innovative, qualitative, Arts-Based Research (ABR) approach, which will involve conversation and visual art production (including drawing, painting, photography and sculpture). ABR uses the arts, and ABR practitioners argue that this is beneficial because of the strengths of the visual. There are a range of benefits, but uppermost it is thought that the highly engaging nature of the arts mean that ABR approaches have the capacity to evoke strong positive emotions, to 'jar' people into action, to create empathy, and to enable change, thought and action (Cole and Knowles 2008, Leavy 2015, Sinding 2008). ABR is framed as a research approach with a social and moral dimension. It is likened to Participatory Action Research and is viewed as one of the 'transformative framework' models in which 'disempowered groups, communities and individuals are empowered' (Kara 2015, p.45). A core value of ABR therefore is the involvement of participants to shape the inquiry, to control the research process, and to be empowered as a result of their contribution. I have purposefully selected this methodology for two reasons. Firstly, it will allow the participants to utilise their newly developed arts skills. Secondly, I want to explore the wide claims made about using this methodology and seek to understand how empowering a research process it can be for these participants.

Ethics of inclusion

There are complex ethical dilemmas to negotiate when involving those deemed vulnerable in qualitative research. Academics have considered the potential risks and sensitivities of involving women that have experienced abuse and/or trauma in research, including those to the participant and the researcher (Brzuzy *et al.* 1997; Alderidge 2015; Bahn and Weatherhill 2013). Jo Aldridge (2015) argues that it is important to consider the impact(s) of involvement in research for women who are deemed 'multiple vulnerable' or marginalized due to their lived experience of violence and abuse. Alderidge encourages the participatory researcher to identify safeguards to protect vulnerable respondents from current or further abuse, and to work to ensure that the research process does not in any way further endanger the lives of participants.

The potential vulnerability of the participant

Brzuzy and colleagues (1997) recommended that the researcher meet the participants beforehand to build rapport and decrease any potential discomfort. The researcher and participant should discuss the 'possible anticipatory reactions the survivors may experience - anxiety, reduced concentration, flashbacks, and generalised anticipatory distress - as a means of both fully informing the survivor of the potential consequences of participation and normalising these feelings in advance of their occurrence' (Brzuzy *et al.* 1997, p.80). It is important to recognise these trauma responses, but my research will not specifically ask people to recall their abuse or focus on their traumatic histories. However, I

do appreciate that through the group work and creation of art the women may experience 'triggers' which lead to them feeling upset, emotional, angry and unable to cope. To counter this, before each session, the women will be reminded that if they feel any of these things during the art making process they can leave the room, seek assistance from a staff member or take some time away and then return when ready. The participants will be reminded that the session is a safe place to create art and if any issues do develop through dialogue or art work, I will attempt to utilise my supportive, enabling role to allow the participant to voice their concerns and seek the right level of support for their needs.

When involving vulnerable people in research, consent should be considered as an 'ongoing process'. To counter participant vulnerability, I propose to adopt this form of 'rolling consent' in my research; Throughout the year the women will be asked about consent and their feelings about the research process.

Care of researcher

'In order to delve into the participant's intimate worlds to collect data, researchers need to establish trust and rapport with participants as well as empathy and understanding.' (Bahn and Weatherill 2013, p.21). Even the most experienced interviewer may experience distress or discomfort when speaking to respondents who have lived experience of trauma. Bruzy and colleagues (1997) speak of the need of the interviewer to attend to their own emotional needs when working with survivors. This is particularly important if the researcher is a witness of the impacts of trauma or if unhappily, the interviewer is also a survivor. I am not a survivor of CSA, but have an interest in working in this area as an intellectual advocate for women that have experienced abuse. I go into this research aware of the potential impacts on shaping my future opinions as a researcher and as a woman; as a witness to the long-term impacts of abuse on vulnerable people's self-perceptions and perceived self-worth.

Bahn and Weatherill (2013) warn that researchers can feel tired and exhausted due to the emotional strain of interviewing vulnerable participants (p.22). The need for researchers to care for themselves, as well as their participants is a key consideration for my proposed research as although the women will be encouraged not to divulge any 'trigger' information about their experiences in the art sessions, there is the possibility of my feeling distress as a result of exposure to stories of violence or other trauma. I am prepared to draw on support services for my own well-being, and have put in place three female professionals who work with survivors of CSA to support me throughout the process. This support network should provide an outlet to discuss the work and its wide-ranging impacts, whilst protecting the confidentiality of the participants. I also intend to record my emotions, seek to understand the ramifications of research process on my well-being and apply emotional insights into my ongoing research. Finally, I intend to work reflexively and will keep a written and visual research journal throughout the process. This will give a further insight into the impacts of the research on my mental health, wellbeing and wider social perspectives.

Conclusion

My ideas are not yet fully formed, but I am very aware of the need to consider what precautions I can take at every stage of the research, in order to 'maximise the possible benefits and minimise the potential risks' (Seedat *et al.* 2004). I intend to work with female survivors of CSA in order to explore adult learning and arts-based research approaches. The participants will be service users of a Glasgow-based charity, where support staff will be available to the women through the lifetime of the research project. However, even when the research is taking place in a secure, supportive environment, I must carefully

consider how the participants could be re-traumatised through the research and work to counter this throughout the process. I also need to protect myself from harm and clearly articulate the risks and the benefits of the research to my research participants, their support workers and to the wider academic community.

ABR provides a rich and diverse approach in the rehabilitation of many victim groups. In this short article, I have explored the ethical implications surrounding ABR with vulnerable, abused women and I have made mention of ABR applied with the Scottish prison population. In the literature, there are many different instances of the application of the ABR approach which discuss the ethics of inclusion. Akesson and colleagues (2014) review ABR and the ethical considerations as researchers when working with war affected children. Many of the points that they draw attention to are common to my own work. A key question set by the authors is whether art can be used as a tool for social change, and if so 'what are the ethical implications of employing methods that seek transformation where such a transformation can be in no way guaranteed?' (p.83). This is a dilemma for the qualitative, ABR researcher. The authors conclude that there are four key critical ethical issues when using ABR and vulnerable groups, which are '(1) informed consent; (2) truth, interpretation, and representation; (3) dangerous emotional terrain; and (4) aesthetics' (Akesson *et al.* 2014, p.79). I have reflected on the first three points raised by the Akesson study. The fourth point linking aesthetics and ethics is perplexing. Who gets to determine what is 'good' artwork? Do we need to analyse the end product? In this paper, I have aimed to illustrate the many complex considerations when including vulnerable adult learners in the research process, yet highlighted the importance of providing such opportunities and creative platforms from which often-silenced groups can speak.

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How are different types of online participation related to adult learners' learning performance and social capital?

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Abstract

An empirical study was conducted to discern the relationship between adult learners' online participation, their learning performance, and perceptions of social capital enhancement. Participants ($n=171$) were adult learners following a blended learning program in Specific Teacher Training at different adult education centers in Flanders (Belgium). A questionnaire was developed to measure adult learners' socio-demographics, their grade point average (GPA) as measure of learning performance, online participation and social capital enhancement. Multiple regressions were employed to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that adult learners' online participation was not significantly related to their learning performance. In addition, learners who were older perceived greater enhancement of both bonding and bridging social capital, i.e. age is a significant predictor. As for different types of online participation, not all of them enhanced learners' perceived social capital. Accordingly, learners who contributed more to discussion reported greater bonding capital ($\beta=.20$, $p<.05$) whereas learners who were active facilitators of collaborative works perceived greater bridging capital ($\beta=.31$, $p<.001$). The variances explained in bonding and bridging capital are $R^2=.17$ and $R^2=.19$, respectively. The findings confirm that online interaction should be enhanced to enable greater social capital building among the adult learners whilst findings on the role of online participation with regard to learning have been mixed. In addition, the instructors should pay attention to ensure that learners can assume different roles during online interactions with peers so that both types of social capital can be sustained.

Keywords

adult education, online participation, learning performance, social capital

Introduction

Studies on the benefits of ICT-based education regarding traditional students are confirming the position of ICT in the educational landscape. Yet, to what extent ICT-based adult education contributes to the broad societal goals of social inclusion remains largely unanswered. This question is important because to date, findings on the empowering function of ICT for the marginalized groups are not favorable. For instance, the results from a longitudinal study of White and Selwyn (2013) from 2002-2010 in the United Kingdom show that ICT use for educational purposes by adults are structured by their socio-economic status (educational levels and occupational background) and demographic backgrounds (age and gender).

In adult education contexts, blended learning, a combination of face-to-face and online instruction (Graham, 2006) is believed to be the new normal training mode (Norberg, Dziuban, & Moskal, 2011). In this approach, online participation on the part of the learners is demanding to help them construct their knowledge and maintain social relationships with others (Hrastinski, 2009). Recent studies confirm the positive relationship between online participation, learning performance, and the building of social capital in virtual learning communities (Williams, 2006; Zhang & Kaufman, 2015). Yet, online participation in these studies is measured generally by frequency rather than capturing more nuances of the

types of one's online contribution. Also, as being conducted in virtual settings, the generalization of the results in an educational setting, more particularly adult education, cannot be upheld. Thus, investigating how online participation during a blended learning program facilitates adult learners' process of social inclusion in addition to academic achievement bears theoretical and practical significance.

Against these backgrounds, the present study examines how effort invested in online participation on the part of the adult learners enhances their learning performance and social capital as a proxy measure of social inclusion. Accordingly, three research questions (RQs) are put forward:

RQ1. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their learning performance measure by their grade point average (GPA)?

RQ2. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their bonding capital?

RQ3. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their bridging capital?

Theoretical framework

Online participation and learning performance

Blended learning necessitates the interaction among learners for co-construction of knowledge. Individual learners' online participation is therefore crucial to sustain the online learning community. The relationship between learners' online participation and learning performance still displays mixed findings. Davies and Graff (2005) and Eom, Wen, and Ashill (2006) found that online participation was not related to learners' performance, but their satisfaction with the course. Addressing the non-significant finding, Eom et al (2006) suggest that there are other salient factors that need to be examined. They recommend an examination of the quality of online participation rather than measuring the number of hits as indicator of online participation in their original study. Regarding this aspect, Yang, Quadir, Chen, and Miao (2016) found that online presence, as measured by teaching, cognitive presence, and social presence, is significantly correlated to learning performance. Yet as measures of cognitive and social presence are group-based, i.e. the quality of interaction is the sum of all individual contribution rather than the quality of individual contribution per se. Thus it is still a question to date if learners' online participation contributes to their learning performance.

Online participation and social capital

Social capital is a concept that has been conceptualized from different perspectives and embodied several dimensions. While Putnam (2000) views social capital as a public good that is embedded in the social networks of a given community, Williams (2006) and Zhang and Kaufman (2015) view social capital as an individual asset. Regarding the latter, Williams (2006) refers to "networks and relationships built up among people of similar backgrounds" as bonding capital and "weak ties among people outside one's intimate circle" as bridging social capital.

Previous research has established a positive relationship between online interaction and social capital. For examples, Su and Chan (2017) found that the more university students used Facebook, the more increased bonding and bridging social capital was gained. Regarding the nature of online interaction taking place in different social networking platforms, Phua, Jin, & Kim (2017) found that interacting with members in Twitter results in the greatest bridging social capital, followed by Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. As for bonding social capital, the greatest bonding social capital development was derived from online interaction in Snapchat, followed by Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In

explaining the differences found, Phua et al (2017) refer to the nature of relationship among the members in these platforms. For example, Twitter users are able to interact and follow those they do not know whereas Facebook users can only exchange information mostly with their friends and family due to the privacy policies specific to each platform. Nevertheless, findings from Su and Chan (2017) and Phua et al (2017) support the hypothesis that online interaction is a significant predictor of social capital. Apart from virtual environments, in adult education settings, Cocquyt, Diep, Zhu, De Greef, and Vanwing (2017) found that adult learners perceived greater enhancement of social capital as a result of following an online or blended learning program. Yet, which factors in the learning environment contribute to learners' gained social capital has not been investigated in Cocquyt's et al (2017) study. Combining this initial findings from Cocquyt et al (2017) and the established relationship between online interaction and social capital in virtual settings, it is reasonable to hypothesize that online interaction between peers in a blended learning program are likely to increase their bonding and social capital.

The online interaction among peers in program is slightly different from those in virtual settings such that the primary goal is to help each other construct knowledge. In addition, Hrastinski (2009) defined online participation as "a process of learning by taking part and maintaining relations with others. It is a complex process comprising doing, communicating, thinking, feeling and belonging, which occurs both online and offline"(p.80). This definition underlines different types of content contributed by the learners to the discussion under questions. Researchers such as Ke and Xie (2009) and Song and McNary (2011) also identify different types of learners' online participation, e.g. knowledge sharing, teamwork coordination, and social conversation. Diep, Cocquyt, Zhu, and Vanwing (2016) by examining different perspectives on online participation, have categorized online participation into three types: discussion contribution, collaborative facilitation, and social interaction. In this paper, we adopt this categorization as this reflects online learning theory proposed by Hrastinski (2009) and overcomes the limitation in the measurement of online interaction by means of frequency indication (e.g. Su & Chan, 2017).

Methodology

Research context and participants

The present study employed a cross-sectional design and data were collected at one time using convenience sampling. Participants were adult learners following a blended program, namely Specific Teacher Training, at different adult education centers in Flanders. In total there are 179 participants who have a mean age of 31.90. Female learners accounted for 61.5%, and male learners 38.5%. Roughly half of the participants hold a higher secondary degree. Another 39% have obtained a higher education degree, and only a small portion of them (3.4%) are lower secondary degree holders. Regarding employment status, 63.1% of the participants had a fulltime job whereas 19.6% were parttimers and 17.3% were fulltime-registered learners.

Instrument

In the present study, the independent variables, namely online participation, include discussion contribution, collaborative facilitation, and social interaction, are scales adopted from Diep et al (2016). As for discussion contribution, 12 items capture the learners' effort to "explain, analyze, challenge, justify a point of view under discussion, and explicitly reflect on one's own conceptual changes and behaviors" (Diep et al., 2016, p.86). The collaborative facilitation dimension consists of seven items and reflects how the learners engage in facilitating and encouraging their peers in order to achieve the group learning goals. The social interaction dimension refers to those online interactions that are non-

content related and focuses on informal social exchanges among the learners, presented by four items. Cronbach's alpha of the original scales were satisfactory, ranging from .87 and .97.

With regard to the dependent variables, learning performance was measured by grade point average (GPA) obtained from the most recent semester as reported by the learners themselves. Social capital including bonding and bridging ties was adopted from the scales validated by Williams (2006) and comprised of 16 items. Cronbach's alpha of the original scales was .89 for bonding capital and .84 for bridging capital.

In addition to the main variables, questions related to the learners' socio-demographics were included. The learners were requested information about their age, gender, highest degree obtained, and their employment status. In total the questionnaire consisted of 44 items.

Data analysis method

In order to examine the relationship between the three different types of online participation and adult learners' performance (GPA) and bonding and bridging social capital, multiple regressions were performed using SPSS 24. Accordingly, variables related to adult learners' socio-demographics and three variables (discussion contribution, collaborative facilitation, and social interaction) were entered as independent variables and GPA, bonding and bridging social capital as dependent variables. Thus, three multiple regressions were conducted in total.

Results

RQ1. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their learning performance measure by their grade point average (GPA)?

It was expected that the more adult learners engaged in online participation, the better their learning performance. Nevertheless, the result from multiple regression analysis shows that neither socio-demographic variables nor the different types of online participation are significant predictors of learning performance. In total, the variables accounted for 10% of learning performance but the whole model is non-significant. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Regression analysis predicting learning performance measured by GPA (grade point average)

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI
Gender	0.27	0.17	.16	[-.05, .60]
Age	-0.01	0.01	-.06	[-.03, .01]
Full-time employed	-0.10	0.26	-.06	[-.61, .42]
Part-time employed	0.00	0.29	.00	[-.59, .58]
Educational levels	-0.10	0.15	-.06	[-.39, .20]
Discussion contribution	0.16	0.14	.15	[-.13, .44]
Collaborative facilitation	0.02	0.11	.02	[-.20, .24]
Social interaction	0.10	0.14	.09	[-.18, .38]

$R^2 = .10$, Adjusted $R^2 = .03$

Notes: B = unstandardized regression coefficients. SE B = standard error. β = standardized regression coefficients, 95% CI = confidence interval for B

RQ2. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their bonding capital?

According to the analysis, among the socio-demographics, age was found to significantly

predict bonding social capital ($\beta=.15$, $p<.05$). This means learners who are older perceives greater bonding social capital increase. Of the three dimensions of online participation, only those who exhibited more discussion contribution reported a greater enhancement of bonding social capital ($\beta=.23$, $p<.05$). The result can be found in Table 2. Altogether, the two variables accounted for a variance of 17% of bonding capital.

Table 2: Regression analysis predicting bonding social capital

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI
Gender	-0.11	0.11	-.08	[-.32, .10]
Age	0.01	0.01	.15*	[.04, .00]
Full-time employed	-0.26	0.17	-.16	[-.6, .09]
Part-time employed	-0.04	0.20	-.02	[-.43, .35]
Educational levels	-0.06	0.10	-.04	[-.25, .14]
Discussion contribution	0.22	0.09	.23*	[.04, .40]
Collaborative facilitation	0.13	0.08	.13	[-.02, .29]
Social interaction	0.07	0.09	.07	[-.12, .25]

$R^2 = .17$, Adjusted $R^2 = .14$

Notes: B = unstandardized regression coefficients. SE B = standard error. β = standardized regression coefficients, 95% CI = confidence interval for B. * $p<.05$

RQ3. To what extent adult learners' online participation predicts their bridging capital?

Similar to the previous findings, age significantly predicts bridging capital ($\beta=.20$, $p<.05$). As for the three types of online participation, adult learners who reported more collaborative facilitation posts revealed greater bridging capital ($\beta=.31$, $p<.001$). In total, age and collaborative collaboration account for an explained variance of 19%. Table 3 presents the result from the multiple regression analysis.

Table 3: Regression analysis predicting bridging social capital

Variable	B	SE B	β	95% CI
Gender	-0.01	0.12	-.01	[-.24, .23]
Age	0.02	0.01	.20*	[.00, .03]
Full-time employed	-0.31	0.19	-.21	[-.68, .06]
Part-time employed	-0.19	0.21	-.11	[-.61, .22]
Educational levels	-0.08	0.11	-.06	[-.29, .13]
Discussion contribution	0.01	0.10	.01	[-.20, .21]
Collaborative facilitation	0.26	0.08	.31***	[.10, .42]
Social interaction	0.07	0.10	.08	[-.13, .27]

$R^2 = .19$, Adjusted $R^2 = .13$

Notes: B = unstandardized regression coefficients. SE B = standard error. β = standardized regression coefficients, 95% CI = confidence interval for B. * $p<.05$, *** $p<.001$

Discussion and conclusion

The present study explores the relationship between adult learners' online participation, their learning performance and bonding and bridging social capital, taking into account socio-demographic variables. The findings revealed that greater extent of learners' online participation was significantly correlated to bonding and bridging social capital, but not their learning performance. Among the socio-demographics variables, age was found to be a significant factor, i.e. older learners perceived greater social capital thanks to following the blended learning program.

Attempting to explore the role of learners' online participation in a blended learning environment, the present study has added more insight into critical factors regarding adults' learning performance. Despite overcoming previous limitation in measuring online participation, i.e. we have tried to capture more nuances in the types of online participation made, the result shows that online participation is not related to learning performance. This is in line with findings from Davies and Graff (2005) and Eom et al (2006). To some extent, the finding implies that different types of online posts contributed to the learners are less important than the quality of the online discussion under question as endorsed by Yang et al (2016). In addition, given the context of this study, namely blended learning, the requirement of online participation on the part of the learners may be less demanding compared to that in online learning context wherein face-to-face contact is not available. Thus, whether learners' online participation is related to their learning performance depends greatly on the instructional design, which can either make online participation an integral or supplementary part of the course. Therefore, it is worthwhile that future research can explore the relative importance of online participation in learners' knowledge construction process compared to face-to-face activities. At the same time, the quality of online discussions might be taken into account. In so doing, it is believed that more in-depth understanding and practical implications upon the role and design of online interaction in relation to learning performance can be drawn.

As for social capital enhancement, that age is positively correlated with both types of social capital suggests that when older learners participate more online, their bonding and bridging social capital are enhanced. This finding is interesting such that older learners are less likely to participate in online discussion due to their lower level of Internet self-efficacy (Chu, 2010). Thus helping older learners to engage in online participation can bring about more social outcomes in addition to the knowledge and skills targeted.

In line with existent studies on the relationship between online participation and social capital in virtual learning communities and social networking systems (Shu & Chan, 2007; Steinfeld, Ellison, & Lampe, 2008), our finding confirms this positive relationship in sample of adult learners following a blended learning programs. Nevertheless, not all types of online participation are related to social capital. We found that learners who posted comments on learning-content (discussion contribution) perceived an increase in bonding social capital whereas learners who are active facilitators of collaborative works reported greater bridging social capital. Therefore, the findings complemented previous studies that used frequency of posts as measures of online participation. It is suggested that the nature of the online participation, when explored further, can bear important implications for educational practices aimed at social outcomes. Accordingly, the instructors are encouraged to help demonstrate and provide guidance of what constitutes high quality online contribution, e.g. reflecting a consideration of different points of view and a thorough analysis of the question under discussion. In addition, learners should be equipped with facilitating skills and provided an opportunity to facilitate the collaborative work. This, on the one hand, will help them engage more on the learning process. On the other hand, through this facilitating process, adult learners' will have better socio-emotional interpersonal knowledge of their peers (Nistor, Daxecker, Stanciu, & Diekamp, 2015), which in turns results in greater bridging social capital.

As adult education has increasingly implemented blended learning as an instructional approach, findings from the present study prompts that learners' online participation should remain an important component of the design. This is because it can help them develop greater social capital, which is considered as both a pathway for social inclusion and an important enabler of adult learning (Field, 2005).

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'I'm only a volunteer': Unravelling the complexities of the mundane in roles undertaken by volunteers

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Introduction

Hospice volunteers in this study carry out their role both in the hospice itself and outside in the wider community. They may work independently and alongside paid staff within in-patient and day care, reception duties, fundraising and retail; the board of trustees is also comprised of volunteers. This paper focuses specifically on volunteers working within the hospice setting carrying out what may be considered to be low skilled and in other workplaces usually low paid jobs such as reception, providing refreshments, driving, and administrative duties,

Extensive literature exists which explores the concept of workplace learning including formal, informal and emotional aspects of learning (Billet 2004, Rainbird et al. 2004, Eraut 2004, Duguid et al 2013, Benozzo and Colley 2012, Fuller and Unwin 2010). There is some published research into the work of volunteers (Livingstone 2011, Schugurensky et al 2010) and their informal learning (Morris, et al 2013). This paper draws on data from an ethnographic study which examined volunteers' work in a professional workplace. The research took place within a hospice over a period of four years, where I immersed myself as a researcher in the setting. This approach helped obtain 'thick description' (Geertz 1973), and rich, detailed data from one institution, leading to findings which are likely to be particularistic and even unique to the hospice (Henn et al 2009). One could liken the approach metaphorically to a police investigation into a specific crime, involving finger-tip searching, house-to-house enquiries and use of local knowledge, whilst at the same time, as appropriate, drawing on data from National databases and similar cases elsewhere. The crime itself will be unique but findings and patterns may subsequently contribute to detection of crime elsewhere.

The research suggests there is a shared understanding amongst volunteers and paid staff of some aspects of the work of volunteers and some specific knowledge and skills required to carry out a particular role. These are explicit in artefacts relating to volunteers such as the hospice website, policy documents and volunteers' induction training. However, there is a difference between the ways in which volunteer roles are described, and the volunteers' practices as they enact their role. Brown and Duguid (1991) explain this as the difference between 'canonical practice' and 'non-canonical practices.' This concept will be explored more fully below with reference to the data.

Aside from the clearly defined learning, volunteers acquire culturally transmitted knowledge about death and dying and find themselves needing to learn about palliative care, forming relationships and dealing with the unexpected. This learning is situated and contingent upon the hospice culture, and characterises the work and learning of hospice volunteers. It is that learning and 'workplace responsiveness' of volunteers associated with the demands and complexities of their work at the hospice which is explored within this paper.

Background

The world's first modern hospice, St Christopher's, was founded in London in 1967. A network of independent hospices was subsequently established across the UK, to provide holistic, palliative care to people in the final stages of life. Palliative care has since

developed into a complex medical specialism in its own right and today's hospices employ highly trained, professional specialists in medical, clinical and non-clinical areas. Operating within the charitable sector, their workforce has always included both volunteers and paid staff within all aspects of the service they provide. With a UK volunteer workforce of approximately 70,000 in adult hospices, the economic value of volunteers to independent charitable hospices in the UK is estimated to be over £112 million (Help the Hospices 2014). Volunteers also gift their time, their emotion and their labour to the hospice movement.

Methodology

As a trustee, and a volunteer at the hospice in other various capacities for over 30 years, I decided to undertake an ethnography within the institution in order to quite literally position myself in close proximity to staff and volunteers in a way that trustees would not normally be seen within a hospice. Trustees are responsible for strategic management, major policy decisions and upholding the vision and ethos of the organisation. The role requires trustees to have a degree of distance from the everyday running of the hospice; operational decisions rest with the Senior Management Team. I recognise I have a pre-conceived notion of the work of volunteers based on my knowledge and experience as a trustee, but the ethnography enabled me to see things as those involved see things and 'to grasp the native's point of view' (Denscombe 2007). Finding out about the experiences of volunteers through an ethnography, also helped to better understand some of the institutional and cultural processes which shape them.

I saw examples of the work of volunteers at first hand, and this is already helping to shape my strategic thinking and consider the impact of management decisions on the people they affect. I feel privileged to have been able to spend time within the hospice, seeing and hearing about the work volunteers do and the stories they tell. It is perhaps something which others in managerial and strategic roles might usefully undertake in their organizations to better understand individual roles and to give voice to subordinates within an institutional hierarchy.

Given my role as a trustee, it has been important for me to establish relationships from the outset and be explicit about the intended approach, encouraging active input and involvement of volunteers and staff. These ongoing relationships and reassurances were established and developed through letters, regular conversations with groups and individuals, email correspondence and posters displayed within the hospice.

To collect data I have immersed myself in the setting over an extended period, observing, shadowing volunteers and attending meetings and events at the hospice. The ethnography also included additional data collection tools: interviews and supported focus groups with both volunteers and paid staff and consideration of visual and textual artefacts.

Discussion

The hospice website lists the various options for volunteering, with a succinct descriptor of the roles. These role descriptors would be examples of what Brown and Duguid (1991) term 'canonical practice' in which, 'the role of the volunteer as espoused by the organisation, is presented'. The roles are descriptive, highlighting specific skills and qualities as a prerequisite of the job. Non-canonical practices' are the actual practices that staff, or in this case, volunteers engage in and learn through to get the work done.

For example, the description of the receptionist role is:

Good interpersonal and telephone skills are essential. The reception desk is the first port of call for most people visiting the hospice; therefore, a warm and welcoming manner is required.

The reception area in the hospice is run by volunteers. Located near the hospice's main entrance and directly in front of an office where paid administrative staff are based, reception is the first point of contact for all visitors to the hospice. It is a central point for telephone enquiries, deliveries and is adjacent to a seating area for patients and visitors.

Volunteer receptionist AB talked about her first day on the reception:

The first Sunday I was on, then somebody died, so of course all the relatives are coming out, so I have to sit them down, would you like a cup of tea, bring round the tissues and you know, behave appropriately and then some child brings in some money and they're going oh look at me, I've brought all this ...

Volunteer receptionist, AS spoke of an incident which captures both the mundane and the complex:

I do think it's difficult for them to come through the doors for the first time. ... yesterday, when I was on reception, she probably was only in her late twenties, thirties, and she'd come in with her partner and she was looking a little bit, you know, nervous and she'd obviously sort of was visibly upset and I said, you know, are you ok, and she said oh, we've just come to see the leaf and they'd bought a leaf for the mosaic. ... Next thing, she's walking back, obviously after the school had finished, with her three children. So she said I've brought them to see, you know, the leaf. Well the older child was visibly, she was visibly upset. The two younger ones were more interested in what we had for sale in the fridge and by the time we'd finished, I was going round to the kitchen to get spoons for them because they ended up buying chocolate cake and cream. So they were all sat in reception, but it's nice that they can feel that they can do that, because how could you do that at the hospital?

The extract demonstrates a complexity which I will refer to as 'workplace responsiveness': comprising elements of spontaneity, intuition, cognition and emotion in dealing with the situation. An immediacy was required which did not allow for consultation or reflection; there was knowledge and understanding of the context and the practices of the setting, and an engagement with the emotional demands. This aspect of the work was not reflected in the description of the role as laid out in the hospice documentation; data provided similar examples of that dissonance between role descriptors and actual practice.

Volunteer receptionist MR described her first day:

I did Reception for one, one day and there was a really awful case, ... I had to go into see one of the patients, with the phone, because what they did in those days, they, if somebody wanted to talk to them, they'd ring us and we'd say right can you ring the mobile phone and then we'd take the mobile phone in there and there was like a five minute gap and I was sat with this girl, who was only in her twenties, desperately ill, very, very upset and it was horrible and raining outside ... I can talk to anybody about anything. I hadn't a clue what to say to her, I just didn't know, I couldn't say isn't it a nice day, have you watched television, you know, what are you doing, how are you feeling, because I could see and I just said I can't, I can't do that, I don't want to do that anymore, ... No, I hadn't expected that, well I didn't know, ... I didn't realise that you did things like that.

The description of the Day Hospice driver role on the hospice website is:

We require careful drivers to bring our patients to Day Hospice (using their own cars) and take them home again. Mileage/petrol costs will be reimbursed.

Volunteer drivers are usually the first point of contact for a new day hospice patient. Typically, a patient will come to day hospice when they are within the final stages of their illness but are still able to continue to live at home. Volunteer drivers are allocated a patient and usually that driver will become their main driver for the days they attend the hospice. The first contact is a telephone call by the driver to the patient to make arrangements for the first visit.

You never know what you'll find when you get there. You just have to use your initiative. They might have gone to hospital. They might have just gone out ...they might have died and nobody let the hospice know ...

(DS: volunteer driver)

The drivers have talked about the conversations they have with patients and the ways in which they support and encourage them on occasions. They described when patients make the decision to come to day hospice. It can be seen by some as a turning point in patients' lives as some know little about hospices apart from the connection with death and dying. Patients were described as being 'nervous', 'apprehensive' and in one case 'terrified' during that first journey to the hospice.

Some of the journeys are some distance from the patient's home to the hospice and place the volunteers for considerable periods of time in a confined space on a one-to-one basis with some very poorly and vulnerable people.

And they chat to you on the way home ... There was an empty chair for a couple of sessions and she asked me where x was. I had to tell her he'd died. She'd waited all day to ask ...

(NM: volunteer driver)

This highlights some of the challenges faced by volunteers which are often not anticipated or planned for. Again, the dissonance of described and actual practice is apparent along with the 'workplace responsiveness' aspect of the role.

Some staff did recognise challenges volunteers may need to deal with:

They [the volunteers] probably know a lot more than sometimes that patient shares with us and also we've had a few where, you know, they're going to the home situation, it's a bit of a crisis point, because our patients are poorly ... a bit of a 999 situation. So it's reassuring the volunteers we're there. But they're fantastic, couldn't do without them.

(Sister: Day Hospice)

The dissonances of the role as described and the actual practices also raise issues relating to training and support available for volunteers. A volunteer who distributes refreshments on the Inpatient Unit described his training for his role:

How to use the, ... erm, I call it a pot wash, ..., I've got one at home ... dishwasher.., that's it, how to use that. ... Which bins to empty, which routine to use, where to put the

recyclables, de da, de da, de da. ... and then come round and meet some patients. If there's any pots on, take them away and so on and so on. So it was generally helping the nursing staff, taking something away from them, if you like. And then when there's sort of nothing to do, she said you can go and chat with the patients if you want. I said yeah, fine, I've no problem with that. so I got my training off her and she said right, I'll let you loose on your own now.

This contrasted with his description of experience:

A few weeks ago there was a gentleman and he's been in twice now, erm, for respite, you know, he has Motor Neurone Disease. I used to play rugby with him, you know. So it's, it was strange at first, you know, me, you know, how are you doing, oh you know, and he wanted to tell everybody, all the nursing staff, I used to play rugby with him. Unfortunately (x) can't do anything for himself. So I gave him his tea, ... one of the nurses said will you be alright? I said yeah, fine, so I gave him his tea and one thing and another, which is fine by me ... and I do get a lot out of it..., this is strange, some years ago, I could never accept death, or I couldn't talk about it and I couldn't, I'm perfectly honest about it, if it was ever brought up in conversation, I would either go out of the room or I just wouldn't speak about it, but since I've started at (the hospice), it's not so much acceptance of it, but I can talk freely with people, about it, if you like.

All volunteers were able to describe Induction and some mandatory training but there was little awareness of other training available to them in the hospice. Some described learning from other volunteers when they first started their role, working alongside a more experienced volunteer for their first few sessions. There was no mention of volunteers being made aware of or trained for the 'workplace responsiveness' aspect of their role as captured in the data.

When asked about support available to them, with some prompting, the volunteers were able to name someone within the hospice who they would go to if they needed support in carrying out their role. They often interpreted 'support' as pertaining to help from a paid member of staff in dealing with a particular set of circumstances which required knowledge or skills the volunteer didn't have at the time, or aspects of the job they saw as beyond their remit. When prompted about other aspects of support, some volunteers, despite the demands of their role, talked about not requiring support or that in their role it was unmerited.

Well I haven't felt as if I've needed it, to be honest, you know, sort of if you came in and it's in a morning, usually somebody's died, oh gosh, you know, so you've talked about it in that respect. No I didn't feel as if I needed to sort of come in and weeping about it, because that's not why you're here, you're only upsetting other people if they see you doing that.....That doesn't mean to say you don't feel it because you do, you do, over the years, I've got attached to a lot of people.

(LM Volunteer driver)

Having variously observed, shadowed and spoken to volunteers, the formal descriptions and in many instances the volunteers' own awareness oversimplify the role they actually perform, and those descriptions belie the complexities of these volunteers' work. Orr (1990) suggests that many organizations are willing to assume that complex tasks can be successfully mapped onto a set of simple, Tayloristic steps that can be followed without need of significant understanding or insight, and thus without need of significant investment in training. That seems to imply a conscious and informed strategic decision on

the part of those organisations. However, in the case of the hospice, whilst this is possible, some staff and volunteers are clearly unaware of the complexity, and have needed considerable prompting during the research process to describe it. Furthermore, there was an apparent 'unknowing' or 'unconscious naivety' on the part of the volunteers as to the nature of their work. They required prompting to elicit descriptions of their work beyond the basic skills and often underplayed the impact of the demands and importance of the role: 'I'm only a volunteer' was a recurring phrase in their narratives.

Conclusion

As both a researcher and hospice trustee one of the most rewarding aspects of the research has been witnessing and making more explicit the rich and often hidden complexity of the volunteer role. Having uncovered that 'workplace responsiveness', the research presents certain dilemmas. The dichotomy between role description and role enactment highlights the importance of further discussion about the extent and nature of any training and support required and/or made available to volunteers to prepare and sustain them in their role. The duty of care of an organisation should include the offer, or indeed requirement for wider and on-going training for its volunteers but formal training focusing on 'workplace responsiveness' could lead to a reductionist outcome. It may be counter-productive to make volunteers explicitly aware of the possible complexity of actual practice, since some volunteers might feel daunted and shy away from the role, thinking it would be something they should not or could not do.

Finally, the 'unknowing' or 'unconscious naivety' of volunteers about the nature of their work, does somehow seem to enable the sophisticated 'workplace responsiveness' characteristic of their work and learning, so confirming the value and unique contribution of volunteers within a professional workplace.

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Migrant and ethnic minority learners' experience of higher education: A case study approach to the exploration of migrant learner perspectives of higher education in Ireland in austere times

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Introduction

Globalisation, immigration and socio-political shifts have increased diversity of Irish society creating new challenges for the traditional university. The International Education Strategy 2010-2015 refers to Ireland as being reliant “fundamentally on international engagement” and internationalisation in higher education is expected to provide students with “intercultural expertise demanded in the global economy” (Education Ireland, 2010: 3). The Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) have continually prioritised improved equity of access to higher education. Participation by mature learners has grown from 4% to 13%, with participation in part-time higher education programmes seen significant growth over the last decade from 7% to 17% of all students (Ryan, 2016: 324). The Institute of Technology Carlow has the highest percentage of lifelong learners in the Higher Education Sector in Ireland with 83 nationalities on campus (Mulcahy, 2017).

The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019 acknowledges that new approaches are needed to make higher education opportunities a realistic prospect for its citizens. By 2020 its vision is to have a student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels reflecting the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

This study took place in the Institute of Technology Carlow and was conducted through focus group interviews with international students enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree through the part-time provision offered by the Lifelong Learning Department. As the focus of this research was to understand the experiences of international students in higher education, a constructivist approach was taken utilising a qualitative method of research. Focus group interviews were used to illuminate the lived experiences of these students. The findings from this empirical study on migration and lifelong learning focus on issues of great importance to the theme of the conference.

Empirical findings

The findings from this study acknowledge that access to third level education for migrants provides perceived benefits, including better levels of income, improved social standing and a means for making social connections and learning about Irish Society.

Migrant motivations

Lack of recognition of international qualifications and of prior learning by employers and career advancement was identified by migrants as an impetus for enrolling in their higher education programme.

I had like level eight in Nigeria but I came back to Ireland. I did a course in IT Tallaght. I did one year course just to remedy from African certificate to be Irish was to... You see a job for accounting or an accountant but what they offer is accounting technician.

That's the only thing they offer. I went to so many interviews but they will take you but the position you applied for is not where you'd be placed.

First of all I never had the education, I didn't study in Ireland at all and unfortunately the Ukrainian diploma doesn't mean anything in Ireland so it's not that I couldn't live without it. I have a good job. And I could still get away without being with any diploma, but I just felt the job where I'm working now this is my eight year in it, and it just gets to the stage where I didn't progress anymore ... There is no progression anymore ...

Progress however has been made by higher education providers in recognition of international qualifications with many migrants enrolling on progression programmes in the Institute. More students are entering higher education on the basis of awards made in the further education sector.

I think for me it's a mix because I had been several years ago in Ireland, another course but it was in travel and tourism, and that was not level eight or something like that. That was for me just level six but that was for me a new experience in Ireland. It was my first college and my English was so bad but despite that I was so motivated that I could pass my exams.

Another motivator cited was for social inclusion and integration to Irish society.

I just want to know about the country where I live ... So to know how to apply to our children that are growing up here in this time. To know about the culture because studying social studies make me know much about culture in Ireland and the law, constitutional law. That is the main things that make me come today. To know much about this Ireland. This country, the college, and the psychology and sociology of everything. It's really helped. It's really helped.

Structural supports were a motivating factor in migrants enrolling in the Institute of Technology, with the eligibility for mature student status over 23 years taking account of learners lived experience in accessing higher education. This coupled with migrants' intrinsic motivation to fulfil an individualised desire for education, remains "an important construct, reflecting the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate" (Ryan & Deci, 2000:54).

I always wanted to do law but my grandpa used to be a cop in Soviet Union, and for him a lawyer is, so this is a direct quote, "Other person who puts the scumbags he put behind bar out of the bars or a prosecutor who puts his family in danger", because this was like his view of it and I know it's very narrow and he didn't see the whole the regulatory side of it or anything but I always wanted to do law, and once I kind of turned twenty-four like you know well I make my own decisions so ...

Financial Supports with free fees constitute an external motivating support to participation in higher education with migrants citing their eligibility for a European Union Funded Springboard Programme as a contributing factor to access.¹

But here, look at us, some of us grey hair, baldy hair but the government here said look if you want to study you can do it, and we are going to support you. I think the only thing that we need to do is to create the time and also have the passion and commitment ... Because look how much money is the government paying for each one of us for this particular course? ... So I like this country for that. I know this is not going to continue. It will come to an end Springboard.

“Access without support in NOT opportunity” (Tinto, 2014)

Information, support and positive relationships with lecturers and staff are key factors that facilitate international students' sense of belonging and success on their programme.

All talk about the receptivity they received from staff and of the culture of openness and welcome that they experience both in the Institute and among the Lifelong Learning Department.

I would say like our course we are just very lucky. We have like, the students are just amazing and the lecturers they're very, very helpful. I have been to several classes. I've done like FETAC level five, and I'm not saying I can't compare to like the class we have now. They're just carrying everybody along. No matter your level they'll pick you up. There's motivation. There's encouragement in my class yeah.

We will study in lifelong learning. I've never called for anything; no matter the issue it's going to be resolved immediately. Immediately, hmm...If it is one they cannot resolve they will direct you to the person that will be able to resolve it for you. So they're very, very good.

Indeed for many it has meant choosing to travel a distance and in some cases by-passing a nearer college to participate in their degree programme.

Actually I wanted to go to another IT (Institute of Technology). It was one of my friend, she came here, she studied here, and she said oh my God go to Carlow. You can't go to XXXX, you know, she said no Carlow is the best. Carlow is good. Go to Carlow. How can I drive from Newbridge to Carlow? She said oh no, not that long. If you go to a far place to study you have peace, it's better than to go Carlow. We came for the open day. So she brought me here [laughs]. So that was it. Then in the second year I'm happy.

Other students spoke about re-locating to attend the IT in Carlow and of the huge personal and financial sacrifices that they made to attend their programme.

Three nights I was in the bed and breakfast because I am late shift, and my course, my last course is ten o'clock in the evening and there was no bus nor no train, and that was why I said okay, it is for me some students in my courses they leave earlier for example, eighty thirty until we are not finished until ten o'clock, but for me that was not the case because I wanted to stay at the end of my courses, and the two months I was in a bed and breakfast. I said okay I can stay in the bed and breakfast, but after two months I saw that my private life is not successful because I said okay I am three nights here in the bed and breakfast. My husband is in Kildare and that why I spoke with my husband and we decided to move to Carlow, yeah.

A positive relationship with academic staff is associated with academic success for the international student in the host institution.

I think for me I can say, I think the lecturers. They were really helpful because they had time for me, for example, even if it's not lecture hours, whether it's weekend or what if I sent an email asking a particular question or something like that, I could always get a reply. So you could put your request in an email, and it would be answered.

English as a Second Language

Interviews with migrants also identified emersion in English language as essential for success in higher education and for social inclusion and integration to Irish society. Emersion in the language of their programme of study poses the biggest challenge for migrants especially in the area of academic writing.

Sometimes I have to think in Ukrainian because I don't know some of the words probably in some of the cases, and I find it easier to kind of... Even, for example, when I writing the assignments sometimes I write the Ukrainian word and then look for English word which will be similar to, the meaning will be similar to the one that I'm going to put in. In academic language I can't think in English yet but compared to what I was in September I think I kind of grow quite big in academic language as well to be honest.

Finding their academic voice is a particular difficulty for students whose English is not their first language.

Yeah like if you want to write in the essay, you know, every topic has their own register. It's a bit difficult to like to get the register that you use to write the... Like Irish person, somebody that have English as their first language, it wouldn't be an issue whatsoever. But somebody like now have to like use the dictionary and check and recite the register that is applicable to that topic before I would be able to, and paraphrasing is kind of difficult even to understand it properly then paraphrase it in your own words because I feel I don't have enough vocabulary to like use it then. The semantics and the syntax of like writing it is a bit of a problem.

Hence it is imperative that lecturers put their lecture notes and learning materials on Blackboard² to ensure equity of opportunity for all, ensuring resources and supports are available to facilitate the emersion in the language.

You know, it always happened to me that I am printing every slide on the lecture, so every time when I had those slides and would be sitting at the lecture, I just highlighted the words which I was unsure or knew or I didn't understand, and I had to do so. When I was coming back home I had to translate that to sometimes find not even a single translation from word-to-word but to find the meaning.

Uploading content to blackboard provides a support to migrant students, but in particular ensuring that the content on blackboard reflects and resonates with lecture content is a necessity.

Findings from interviews note a lack of clear, consistent and relevant information for academic writing among lecturers. Interviews identified inconsistencies in approaches to academic writing which lead to confusion and misunderstandings in assignment submissions.

At the beginning there was issue about referencing because it was not really, em, clear for everybody. Even like, you know, you can print it off like a little book or whatever from Blackboard about referencing but it's easier if somebody would just tell you how to do it. I feel like I don't know probably like a hundred per cent which way you know. Even lecturers go sometimes, like which way should we do like referencing. Okay, so how are you going to correct our job if you don't know which way we're going to ...? (Laughs).

Other participants noted the need for clarity with regards to expectations for assignments.

Every lecturer sometimes he want something else for assignment. Some say you put picture or tables in the assignments, and it's not on the text. Some you put many paragraph, some you put only one big paragraph. Some you put headings. Some say not put headings. And you only learn when you get feedback so you have two assignments you can do the second better.

Success was achieved when lecturers provided clear guidance on the assignment brief.

(The) lecturer actually had a class dedicated to, not the class but say about half an hour out of the three hours he had dedicated two assignments, and em, so he kind of gave us the instructions how to do it, so we were not lost.

Curriculum

Data suggests that curriculum is the most powerful tool to facilitate intercultural communication among students. Group assignments or projects are identified as effective factors that facilitate intercultural contact among students. This is achieved through lecturers' involvement in the process by encouraging students to form culturally mixed groups instead of working with co-nationals.

Participants interviewed, stated they were able to learn how to work in groups of students from different backgrounds, improve their English and intercultural communication skills and gain more insights into Irish culture by engaging with Irish students.

It depends which modules of course, but in general in our classes we work our group even though we join by different classes, em, our group works together quite often, and even if it's not in the classroom, it could be over the phones. It could be over the WhatsApp, library, at the coffee shop, em, in relation of teachers again it depends.

What I found this year one of the lecturers was brilliant to interact with the class, and he done lots of case studies, and he would dedicate a second half of the class to work with people and let people work... He would let the students work and then he would interact with them in conversations, and I found that this is a very nice way of understanding. Like for me even because sometimes theory could be quite complex and the language could be quite difficult to understand. Even the Irish people not always understand what the lecturers are talking about.

International curriculum

Findings from interviews suggest that programmes undertaken provided opportunities for students to experience an international curriculum.

I think my module is yes for international students because that is about pharmaceutical regulatory affairs and it is something international and we do in the course a lot of, yeah international law, and US law and European law and Japanese and something like that, and I think this course is really international and in my classes we are I think just twelve people. We are one, two, three, and four. Four of us is foreign people and the rest of the people are Irish, and I think that is really international course, my course.

Migrant students also referred to opportunities for intercultural learnings.

Like sociology, when you are in first year, there was a lecture about the topic that concerns Africa. You know the topic that goes with Africa like about say, you know, about going out about how women, you know. We had feminism. You said it's not possible so I showed you that in Africa. Feminists' perspectives in Africa. So there's a lot

of things that brought an African issue. No that is just we're giving an example of what women are allowed to do in Africa, and what they are allowed to here. Like previously it will be the same like if you're married, and you're working as a woman in Ireland, you have to give up your job to take care of the family. Just things like that...its sociology always bring another countries together with Ireland.

Interestingly some migrants articulated a view that some curriculum delivery was weighted too much on international examples, suggesting a preference for Irish cases, with migrants often choosing to pursue a programme to learn about the Irish context in terms of gaining knowledge and employability skills for working in Ireland.

What I found is and that's probably normal because Ireland doesn't have much of a production, you know, the businesses are small but still I would love to have more of any business module to be based a lot on Irish businesses more than US businesses. Yeah I do understand, you know, this is the way we can learn a bigger picture but I would love may be to have a bit more of the Irish business involved because we all like, I'm not sure about the girls but I'm not going anywhere. (Laughs). So and I do work for a small Irish business, and when I was doing my assignments a lot of it was based on the company that I work for but a lot of the stuff I just couldn't prepare on the company because my company is a family owned business, and it's hard to prepare a big, huge theory on the small kind of business.

Timetabling

The study findings show that timetabling emerges as a key factor in supporting successful internationalisation in higher education. While migrants noted that information workshops (e.g. academic writing) were offered by the college, they viewed the support provision as supplementary to their course and not a core part of their programme noting it is offered in timeslots directly before their timetabled modules and on days that some were unable to attend.

They (college) do organise information, and because I come from Dublin and it's always... I finish work by four and have to be on the road. So they put in a meeting from five, I'll be driving so I never ever had but I know they have some information evening.

In my case it was complicated because I'm living pretty far from here, so I couldn't participate in those workshops organised, and the library..... workshops were organised, you know, usually on the days when I was not present in the college. I couldn't come here everyday.

Identity & otherness

Migrants' participation in higher education is embedded in a world of meaning and experiences which create and shape a unique context for each students learning identity. For many it is endeavouring to find the balance of integrating whilst being mindful of cultural difference.

That is for me yeah to have to be careful what I said, and yeah because it is not my language, my mother language. That is why I have to be always careful what I say because the people don't may be don't like that the people trick them, and that is why I am a little careful. Yeah, I think we can deal all with that, with the cultural differences because as a foreign people, for example, into the country you have be capable. You have to do because you want in that country and you have try to be, I don't know is this another word, you have to be...respectful and that you can join the life in that country, and that is why yeah you have to do yourself, I don't know what's the word. You have to

adopt yourself in the country, the culture, the people, and yeah. It takes time and you have more experience with the people. I think that would be like a training. It is like a training for life.

Interestingly students note that as they become more integrated in the Irish way of life and language, they begin to experience moments of otherness with their families, their mother tongue being the most obvious symbol of their identity evolving. The challenge for them, being their 'student-selves', and talking about their course to their family in their native language; sometimes they cannot find the word in the native language to talk about the specifics of their programme of study.

The only difficulty I have at the moment is just I don't use my own languages anymore. I find it really difficult trying to explain some topics that I'm studying to my mom, and she's obviously a Russian speaker and her English isn't quite ... but there's certain things that I obviously learn and I've learnt about it in the last ten years that I'm here, or I learnt of them in English language, and I have no clue how to translate them into Russian. . Like I don't know ... Yeah and then I would have to translate from Lithuanian to Russian so it's even worse ... Like I kind of know what it is and I'm trying to explain it to my mom in Russian words but I don't actually know the correct terminology in Russian because I never touched.

Future plans

All migrants interviewed in this research noted their intention to remain in Ireland permanently or for the foreseeable future.

My wish for future is after my course is when I am finished with course that I can find a job in that area. That is my really highest priority to find a job in that area as we can stay here because without job you are not settled here. It is for me my wish after this course to have as soon as possible a job in that time and stay in Ireland.

This data supports the HEA's (2014) annual report on 'What do graduates do?' that International graduates are choosing to remain in Ireland rather than moving overseas, which shows that Ireland continues to be a popular destination for employment.

Conclusion

Data from the interviews indicate that students understand that information and support is key to their retention and success on their programmes. In relation to student participation and retention Thomas argues that:

... If an institutional habitus is inclusive and excepting of difference, and does not prioritise or valorise one of characteristics, but rather celebrates and prizes diversity and difference ... students from diverse backgrounds will find greater acceptance of and respect for their own practices and knowledge, and this in turn will promote higher levels of persistence in Higher Education (Thomas, 2002: 431)

Thomas (2016: 276) argues for explorative changes to "curriculum design and associated pedagogy, such as a focus on the first year transition experience, different assessment regimes and developing students' academic confidence and skills". It is essential that Irish tertiary education incorporates an intercultural dimension into the curriculum and makes effective use of it whilst also taking account of migrant students' desire for social inclusion and integration to their host country.

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¹ The Springboard+ Initiative in higher education offers free courses at certificate, degree and masters level leading to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy. Springboard+ is co-funded by the Irish government and the European Social Fund as part of the programme for employability, inclusion and learning 2014-2020.

² Blackboard Learn is a virtual learning environment and course management system used by the Institute of Technology Carlow that facilitates the uploading of course content and learning material by lecturers for students.

Reflections on deliberative walks: A participatory method and learning process

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Introduction

The background of this paper is a combined interest in deliberative democratic innovations, place-based learning and learning processes.

According to Szczepanski (2013), *where* education takes place is a vital pedagogical and didactic question, which emphasizes the meaning of place in the learning process. As a theoretical starting point we refer to Sharps (1943) emphasis on interaction between different learning environments in education:

”That which ought and can be taught inside the schoolrooms should there be taught, and that which can best be learned through experience dealing directly with native materials and life situations outside the school should there be learned” (Sharp, 1943, s. 363-364).

Smith (2002) points out that “the primary value of place-based education lies in the way it serves to strengthen children’s (and adults) connections to others and to the regions in which they live” (Smith, 2002, pp 593-594). Gruenewald & Smith (2008) consider place-based educational initiatives part of “a broader social movement reclaiming the significance of the local in the global age” (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p.XIII). Wattschow & Brown (2011), in turn, note that this is part of a “new localism”, a reaction to economic globalization and corporate capitalism and further argue that “outdoor educators who are sympathetic to the cause of educating for ecological sustainability (and, by association, with community sustainability) would see the potential to form alliances with other place-based or place-inspired educators and programs (Wattschow & Brown, 2011).

Cornwall (2002) emphasize that “Spaces for public involvement become sites for ‘citizen participation’ only when citizens gain meaningful opportunities to exercise voice and hold to account those who invite them to participate (Cornwall, 2002, p.56).

According to Dahlgren & Szczepanski (2004) the essence of outdoor pedagogics is to transfer the learning process to new circumstances, usually outside the traditional spaces, (class)rooms, for learning and consider outdoor pedagogics a necessary complement to traditional (indoor) pedagogics. (Dahlgren & Szczepanski, 2004, pp.13, 17). I argue that a combination of indoor and outdoor, place-based, learning, make deliberations more inclusive, and more interesting to participate in, for groups or individuals that prefer more practical forms of learning.

“Embedding democratic innovations that increase and deepen citizen participation in political decision-making could thus be perceived as one strategy (amongst others) for re-engaging a disillusioned and disenchanting citizenry.” (Smith, 2009, p.4).

In this paper I argue for a wider focus on the learning process in deliberations. I will first present deliberative theory and the methods Citizens’ Jury (CJ), Development Walk and Deliberative Walk (DW). The latter method incorporates the prior two and combine indoor and outdoor pedagogy. I will present a pilot case study of DW, as well as conclusions and, lastly, a discussion.

Deliberative theory

Lindell (2015) argues that deliberative democracy theory is based on the view that individuals not only look to their selfish needs, but also reason and focus on the common good. The standpoint is that the individual has capacity and interest to deliberate political issues that concerns him or her (Lindell, 2015, pp.5, 7).

Various deliberative models have been developed for increasing citizen participation. Here I focus on Citizens' Jury, Development Walks and, especially, the Deliberative Walks method.

Hartz-Karp & Stocker (2013) summarize deliberative democracy as a collaborative action oriented learning process for a more sustainable future. For citizens, this involves understanding deliberative democracy and specific methods, learning about specific issues and places, as well as democracy in practice, including *how* to argue, *why* to argue, *when* to argue, and *with whom* to argue, and in extension how to participate and influence policy. For authorities and decision-makers, deliberative democracy also involves a (difficult) learning process. It is not uncommon that citizen participation is treated as a disturbance by decision makers that, for example, aggravate the possibilities for fast-track demolition or building permits. However, research show that ordinary citizens are indeed able to consider and analyze their opinions (Dryzek, 2010, s. 158). According to Lindell (2015), there is a relatively large consensus between researchers that learning is underlying this change of opinion. However, it is unclear what it is that leads to learning. There are results that imply that learning is affected most by the group discussions, but there are also results that point out information as the element most affecting learning (Lindell, 2015, p.88).

Citizens jury and mini-publics

The Citizens' Jury (CJ) method was invented in the early 1970s (Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005).

It (Citizens Jury) is distinguished from other methods by the length of time people are brought together and the selection process for participants. The typical Citizens Jury project lasts five full days. The goal is to make sure that a group of people – randomly selected and demographically balanced- have enough time to learn about the issue from witnesses and to be able to talk among themselves about what they are learning (Crosby & Hottinger, 2011).

A central principle of CJs is to form a target population in miniature. The focus is on small group deliberations, generally a maximum of 24 participants. Information given to the jurors need to be of high quality and facilitators guarantee the quality of deliberative discussions. Ideals of equality and fairness drive the process. Finally, there need to be enough time for deliberation, usually 3 to 5 days (Leighninger 2014; Fung 2015).

The CJ-model, then, is understood as a deliberative mini-public. These mini-publics include practices such as Consensus Conferences, Deliberative Polls, 21st Century Town Meetings and Citizens' Parliaments (e.g. Gastil & Levine 2005). Blacksher et al. (2012: 16) have presented a minimum definition of such public deliberation. They emphasize three elements that should be realized:

[T]he provision of balanced, factual information that improves participants' knowledge of the issue."... "The inclusion of diverse perspectives to counter the well-documented tendency of better educated and wealthier citizens to participate disproportionately in

deliberative opportunities and to identify points of view and conflicting interests that might otherwise go untapped....

The opportunity to reflect on and discuss freely a wide spectrum of viewpoint Facilitators of deliberation should not be too consensus oriented as it could lead to that many conflicting opinions become neglected and the legitimacy of the process compromised (see e.g. Karpowitz & Mansbridge 2005).

In Finland a number of CJs have comprised of participants exclusively from different sectors (Raisio, 2014) and for example the New Locality (Uusi paikallisuus) project (2011–2015), developed new practices in public participation, focusing on CJs and Development Walks. Raisio & Lindell (2013) concluded that the CJ discussions seemed high-class, and that the CJs were most successful in creating qualitative discussions (Raisio & Lindell, 2013, p.32). A mid-term review concluded that most interviews in all target groups found the CJ a positive experience (Tuominen & Vainio, 2013, s. 17). Likewise, a report on deliberative experiments over the whole project period found the results promising (Ehrström, 2015)

Development walks and similar methods

The origins of Development Walks can be traced back to women's safety audits, developed in Canada in the late 1980s as a response to increasing concerns related to insecurity and violence against women (Lambrick & Travers 2008).

Safety and security walks, developed in Sweden in the early 2000s, share similarities with women's safety audits: "Safety and security walks involve a group of people going through an area and carrying out a systematic inventory from the point of view of safety and security" (Brå 2009: 1). The recommended number of participants is a maximum 20 persons (Tryggare och Männskligare Göteborg 2007).

Development Walk builds on these two aforementioned participatory methods. Even though the underlying mechanisms are the same, Development Walks strive towards fuller representativeness (ideally a locality in miniature) than women's safety audits and a wider perspective than safety and security walks. Ehrström & Katajamäki (2013) identified Development Walks as an important method for citizen participation. The hypothesis being that the learning process improves by in situ observations of specific situations and places. At the same time complex planning issues, for example, are concretized (Ehrström, 2015, p.17).

Facilitated by the walk leader(s), participants proceed through a pre-defined route, discuss and make remarks of their surroundings, after which participants convene and develop proposals for development, which are then summarized and communicated to public officials.

Ehrström & Katajamäki (2013) concluded that when an opportunity is given, local residents are interested in developing their local community:

One walk produced several propositions for (re)development... A common walk gives the opportunity to discuss, recollect, and create new ideas (Ehrström & Katajamäki, 2013, p.76).

Defining deliberative walks

Deliberative Walks (DW) builds on the principles of Citizens' Juries and Development Walks. By integrating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic ways of learning and doing, DWs

ideally make us able to grasp the issue under deliberation in a more holistic way. The process is more than the individual parts of CJs and Development Walks.

The working definition of Deliberative Walks is: “A participatory process in which the participants, by deliberating in small groups and joining facilitated walks, tackle a complex policy issue that has highly intertwined social and physical dimensions” (Raisio & Ehrström, forthcoming).

In practice, a Development Walk is organized within the frame of a Citizens’ Jury, in order to strengthen and widen the learning process and knowledge base of the participants and to inspire active participation. There are prior experiences of combining walks and seminars, but DWs systematically integrates two prior methods, one talk-centric and other more observation-oriented. Raisio & Ehrström (forthcoming) argue that by combining these various ways to learn, participants can feel and imagine in a more complete manner. While Development Walks concentrate on more tangible issues within the built environment, CJs emphasize more abstract policy issues in the social environment.

There are examples where participants of CJs have taken field trips (e.g. Niemeyer 2004; Niemeyer & Russell 2005), but usually in these cases research has not been notably focused on this particular aspect of participation. Also, there is a significant scarcity of academic research on Development Walks and similar methods. Deliberative Walk can be understood as an instructive concept through which to operationalize the emerged whole.

Case study: campus forum

Background

The Campus Forum was implemented in November 2014. The chosen locality includes several higher education institutions surrounded by a densely populated residential area and various small enterprises. In the past it had been contemplated how the synergies between different institutions could be increased and how the campuses could be more open to local inhabitants. It was thought that a more participatory practice, such as a Deliberative Walk, may give novel insights to the issue. The Campus Forum was implemented and tasked with a question of “how to create a common campus for all”.

During the project earlier implemented CJs typically struggled in attracting enough participants and in gaining actual influence in policy-making, but most participants enjoyed taking part in the processes and found this participation useful. Development Walks succeeded better in attracting participants, especially when they concerned local planning and redevelopment. With these experiences in mind a Deliberative Walk was tested.

Description of the forum-process

Campus Forum was organized in three 3,5-hours long sessions. It was convened in the facilities of the local branch of the Finnish Federation of Settlements, located near the campus. The first day began with a presentation of the process, introduction of the theme, and getting to know each other, followed by three expert presentations. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions to the experts, after which the participants were divided into two subgroups for discussions, with a facilitator and a scribe appointed for each group. The first night ended with a short common discussion involving all participants.

The second day session was a “Development Walk day”. The participating group convened on the campus. Walk leader held a short introduction and then guided the group on a route, via eight different stops, where experts and/or managers held short informative presentations (10 minutes each). The participants had the opportunity to ask questions at each stop, and as some of the presenters joined the walk, the participants had an

opportunity to continue the discussions among themselves or with presenters between stops. A minute-maker made notes and took photographs to supplement the notes. The walk lasted for two full hours, after which the participants returned to the original facilities for discussion and reflections. Some of the presenters joined in, which was an unplanned added value.

The third day followed a Citizens' Jury pattern as it concentrated on participants deliberating in both small groups and a full Forum, writing a declaration with (in this case five) development proposals. Roughly a week later, the declaration was formally handed over to the chairman of the City council at a presentation seminar. The process of the Campus Forum, and the detailed content of the declaration, were presented, after which representatives of the city and stakeholders were given the floor for comments. An open discussion followed. Media attended the seminar, resulting in newspaper articles about the Campus Forum and the declaration.

Eighteen persons registered for the Campus Forum, seventeen participated. Six were students, four working in the locality, and four other were local inhabitants. Three participants were entrepreneurs. The aim here was to gather together a heterogeneous sample of different stakeholders, e.g. inhabitants of the locality, students, employees of the institutes of higher education and locality-based entrepreneurs. Age ranged from 20 to 67 years old. However, due to different reasons, only six of the seventeen participants participated for the whole duration of the Campus Forum. This was unsatisfactory, partly explained by misinterpreted information, as for example four announced that they had thought that Campus Forum was only a one-night event and could not attend the other nights.

As the research objective was to analyze the process as a whole, only participants that participated for the full three days were interviewed. A supplementary interview was committed with a person (Female, 50+) that participated both as participant (two days) and as presenter during the on-site Campus walk. Interviews were made by telephone and recorded.

Perceptions of the participants

The participants expressed various positive aspects concerning the walk. The expert presentations and the physical walk were considered to support each other. Or as one of the participants expressed: "*It felt more perceivable to visit tangible places*" (Male, 26). Another participant said that even though it was good that, for example, zoning illustrations were shown, it was also good to actually see the places that were shown and talked about. A third participant argued "*[the walk] is where it really starts. Although there were discussions, through the walk one saw how things really were*" (Male, 67). The use of different senses was also explicitly highlighted: "*These are several senses then, and you can see visually in front of you what people are talking about, instead of just talking about it or see the image... you're there and you see it in three dimensions, yes.*" (Male, 30)

Participants that were not so familiar with the campus area welcomed the possibility of a walk-about session: "*The Development Walk was very good, interesting. And to be able to see all those places where I hadn't been before, and actually even couldn't have visited as doors are locked... it was a very good walk. Comprehensive, and really fun.*" (Female, 60+)

The participants that were most familiar with the campus area pointed out the value of the walk for participants with lesser prior knowledge of the place. The presenters at each stop were also appreciated, and their presentations supplemented each participants own

observations of the surroundings. Walking also stimulated discussions: “[The walk] *created a lively discussion. Participants were together and during the walk we talked little with everybody. It felt like it in a way liberated people to have a chat.*” (Male, 26).

This view was supported by a participant/expert/manager (Female, 50+), who found that Campus Forum increased informational interaction between experts/managers and citizens, especially during the walk.

In short, the experiences of the Campus Forum participants were in many ways alike those of another DW pilot case study, the Pirkka14 Citizens’ Jury (Raisio & Ehrström, forthcoming).

The walk itself did not receive much critique, but there was some mention of the participants being few and representing few societal groups. One participant felt a lack of time: “...*there was some feeling of haste in the discussions, a feeling that you always had to rush on and that perhaps you couldn’t say all that you wanted*” (Female, 23). The time for deliberations was also somewhat shorter than usual (3 nights). One participant warned that consensus-seeking result in diluted proposals: “*And then when it came to the conclusions, they became a bit watered down, as usually is the case when you try to find a common denominator*” (Male, 30).

The declaration of the Campus Forum was very well-received by the officials, but it remains questionable if it will have any real influence. There is strong need for a systematic following-up of the declaration. As one participant stated: “*It’s important that it has some kind of impact. Otherwise, if it doesn’t, people wouldn’t participate for three evenings*” (Male, 26).

Conclusions

In the literature on deliberative mini-publics, the focus is often on issues such as discourse quality, opinion changes and political influence, and learning aspects are correspondingly somewhat neglected.

Tolbert & Theobald (2006) note that place-based (learning) advocates have argued that “a society with allegiances to democracy or democratic processes requires a citizenry educated well enough to play a political role with their lives... also as members of any number of a myriad of local associations that exist to improve and vitalize local community life” (Tolbert & Theobald, 2006, p 272).

Deliberative Walks are introduced as a vehicle for learning in a more complete manner, and the preliminary results seems promising. Participants have strongly pointed out the value of combining different forms of learning and their appreciation of place-based learning as one ingredient of the deliberative learning process. As one participant answered the question “How does this kind of active observation work as part of a CJ?”:

“It was so great... I would say the best (part). It suited it perfectly. It sure was much better than watching a video or something, it was so much better to see the entire place (Female, 60+).

People learn in different ways. Ideally Deliberative Walk could make learning processes more equal. A person who has challenges in learning by listening to experts or reading information packages, could learn by seeing, observing and feeling. As the interviews highlight, the off-site components of the both case studies, at a minimum, made issues more tangible, and at best, made it possible to use all their senses. As one of the

participants stated, in the field one can ideally use his or her ears and eyes and heart, and thus being able to truly see. Indeed, maybe some issues cannot be deliberated in a complete manner solely in a warm, nice classroom. Following the ideals of outdoor and place-responsive pedagogics (Wattchow & Brown 2011) the participants were able to have embodied encounters with different places as well as hear place-based narratives from the experts/managers.

Sometimes a single CJ or a single Development walk just is not enough. Based on two case studies, Raisio & Ehrström (forthcoming) suggest that on place-specific deliberations Deliberative Walk is a suitable method when the issue being tackled has highly intertwined social and physical dimensions, while on situation-specific deliberations Deliberative Walks has an added value when the issue needs a more complete learning experience.

The current research, however, is not without its limitations. Neither of the thus far accomplished case studies fully met the ideal of Deliberative Walk. The Campus Forum highlighted in this paper had an active field experience, but suffered from a limited number of participants.

In interviews a (somewhat skewed) representation and (limited) influence were noted. However, the ambition of the Deliberative Walk methods to improve the learning process was considered successful. Participants experienced that combining theoretical input and place-based physical observations improved the learning process and increased their understanding and knowledge of the deliberated issues.

Discussion: deliberations and the learning process

The literature on deliberation rarely focuses on learning processes. Even though improved learning is often stressed as a value, typically there is not much time, space or thought, focused on the actual learning process. To study deliberations from a learning process point of view is therefore a somewhat novel approach.

Deliberations may increase citizen participation (for example in local planning and decision making), but, for this to happen, authorities and decision-makers need to learn to appreciate citizen participation. DW is understood as a reciprocal learning process, one that should benefit from combining theoretical and place-based learning.

CJs have been organized as student experiments. Tammi, Raisio & Ollila (2014), for example, studied student experiences from three cases of Citizens' Jury and concluded that CJ is a noticeable alternative for colleges to increase knowledge and influence interest in democratic ways to operate.

More focus on the learning aspects is needed, including a detailed study of theoretically more ideal cases of Deliberative Walks. Ideally, Deliberative Walks improve the learning processes for participants as well as increase their interest to participate (in other contexts).

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Becoming the role model: Youth recreation leaders, occupational choice and a will to include [Paper not available]

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The aim of this article is to analyse how a discourse on the role model operates in youth recreational work. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concepts of subjectivity, discourse and power/knowledge, the article analyses interviews with youth recreation leader students enrolled at a folk high school, and their talk about occupational choice. The analysis illustrates how a discourse on the role model emerge and operate through the ways students' descriptions of 'being', and 'doing' intersect with their becoming as role models. The analysis raises several important questions. Should youth recreational work only target those young people who are already marginalised? Are there other subject positions than the role model, available to take up in youth recreation work? Are experiences of marginalisation necessary in order for a desirable youth recreation leader to emerge?

‘When it comes to what employers are looking for, I don’t think I’m it for a lot of them’: Experiencing class inequalities in higher education and beyond into the labour market [Paper not available]

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Being a peer educator: Perspectives from young women working with Home-Start and some reflections on the role

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Keywords

Peer education; informal learning; social inclusion; empowerment; recognition

Abstract

This paper focusses on young women working as peer educators through the charity *Home-Start* in the north of England. The paper is conceptual whilst incorporating findings from a small-scale empirical study undertaken in 2016. It holds relevance to the following SCUTREA conference themes: active citizenship; families and communities; formal and informal learning; social inclusion in times of austerity. The peer educators who participated are undertaking their work in a context where educational achievement is increasingly measured by certification and at a time when occupational hierarchies have been 'professionalised' whilst notions of what it is to be a professional have been drained of meaning in ways which can be seen as potentially democratising. State educational imperatives in the UK have focussed on academic excellence (for 'the gifted few') and the promotion of vocational opportunities (intended for those from 'hard working families') such as 'apprenticeships'. Deeper and more critical understandings of learning, commitment and achievement are generally unrecognised and largely not valued by the state, remaining in the relatively invisible domain of third sector organisations, and at the level of community activism. Our conception of peer education is based on a democratic ethos which does not privilege the peer educator and which does not set the role in contradiction to work undertaken by 'high quality educated professionals'. We see the peer educator as generally similar to the individuals with whom and the groups with which they are working. They are likely to share characteristics including some (but not all) of the following: age, gender, ethnicity, social class, educational attainment, parental status, and specific social categories which may be applicable in relation to sexual orientation, and the use of alcohol and substances. The peer educators who participated in this study have worked together in circumstances that lead to mutual benefits which stand largely outside the educational mainstream. This paper considers the motivations for involvement as a peer educator, peer educators' perspectives on the benefits/value of their involvement in this work, the impact of being a peer educator as well as discussing the peer educators' experiences in relation to their engagements with professionals. The paper is informed by thinking on the power of informal learning, on citizenship and co-production, and by issues relating to recognition and empowerment arising from informal learning through the peer educator role. It briefly considers the potential power of peer education in an age of connectivity through communications technology.

Introduction

Educational achievement is increasingly measured by certification, in a society where political rhetoric speaks of equality of opportunity and offers the promise of social mobility, and social cohesion, as rewards for individual effort. Occupational hierarchies have been

professionalised whilst what it is to be a professional has been drained of meaning by audit and regulation mechanisms (see Fisher and Fisher 2007). Austerity politics created a need for ameliorative social policy that can be operationalised outside shrinking state funded social care (Taylor-Gooby 2013). Working class identities have been transformed by the intensification of cultures of consumption, the breakup of traditional industries, and the global flow of labour (Standing 2014) as well as by access to new technologies. Educational imperatives have focussed on academic excellence for the more 'able', and vocational opportunities for those from 'hard working families'. Deeper conceptions of learning, commitment and achievement are largely unrecognised and unvalued by the state, remaining in the relatively invisible domain of third sector organisations. This study, in recognising aspects of the social factors indicated above, focuses on young women within a peer educator scheme operated through the charity Home-Start.

Informal learning and peer educators

The benefits of peer learning, based on cognitive psychology derived from the work of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky and their respective traditions, have long been recognised by educationalists (Damon 1984). It is, however, in a context of credentialism in employment and a tendency towards pedagogisation in higher education (HE) that the value of informal learning is relatively unappreciated. Peer education has had many adherents and proselytizers. We are regarding the bulk of the learning of these peer educators as 'informal' though they benefitted from a training programme operated by Home-Start on one day a week over nine weeks. Our focus, however, was on the experiences and feelings of the peer educators through interactions with other peer educators and with Home-Start.

Peer educators have long been a feature of social and health education, especially in the USA (Badura Brack, Millard and Shah 2008). Shiner (1999) pointed to difficulties around definition, the term 'peer' having often been used in relation to delivery by health professionals. Some studies utilise the term 'near peer' where there are status differentials. Shiner (1999) points to a need for clarity regarding what 'peerness' means. Given the wide range of factors that might denote 'somebody like us' Shiner argues that the key factor is that of 'age' although this is not seen as constituting a 'master status that overrides all other possible sources of identity' (p.558). Shiner highlights the significance of aims and methods arguing that peer education is '...primarily viewed as a method of delivery' (p.559). Burdette Williams (2011) discusses the trajectory of peer education within American HE, seeing peer educators as part of the changing nature of the HE cohort (more mature, more part-time), and of the move to learner centred pedagogy. Burdette Williams also argues that peer educators can provide 'critical assistance' to a 'high quality, educated professional workforce' and that they can do this 'at a fraction of the cost' (p.2).

Our conception of the peer educator is based on a democratic ethos which does not privilege the role and which, at the same time, does not set it in contra-distinction to 'high quality educated professionals'. We see the peer educator as likely to share characteristics that would include some (but not all) of: age, gender, ethnicity, social class, educational attainment, parental status, specific social categories which may be applicable in relation to sexual orientation, and, in some instances, the use of alcohol and substances. This could be conceptualised as a form of 'pure peer-ness'. In computer networks a 'pure' peer-to-peer network is one where all nodes possess equal ability/capacity. This returns us to Shiner's (1999) notion of 'somebody like us'. The key factors, we suggest are,

- the principle method of 'delivery' for the associated learning processes,

- the nature of the relationship (a high degree of 'peerness')

Some issues with peer education

Frankham (1998) pointed to an 'almost religious tenor' in discourse about peer education with claims which are 'overstated' or 'disingenuous' (p.179). Frankham's review of the literature found:

- little evidence that conversations between peers lead to any learning
- evidence that 'peer pressure'/influences on young people '...may have been greatly exaggerated...' (p.186).
- young people were drawn into being a peer educator primarily for the purpose of their own learning or to build their CV
- peer educators may well be the primary beneficiaries of their efforts.

She also fears that the role can place peer educators in 'an invidious position' (p.190) of pronouncing on issues where not qualified. Further issues arise from being at the intersection of professional and peer cultures, and from the contradictions around what peer educators are supposed to accept or resist.

Southgate and Aggleton (2017) have encapsulated issues afflicting studies of peer education. They see three problematics

- a technician interpretation of education unable to provide an account of the processes of peer education
- a 'black box approach' which frequently measures inputs and outputs but fails to examine '...socially mediated processes between learners (and educators) entering the educative moment...' (p.6).
- limited attention given to the social dynamics '...inherent to educative processes such as ethical and power relations, the role of emotion and embodiment, and the evocation of tacit knowledge or practical wisdom...' (p.6).

This places a focus on who the peer is, and the extent to which they embody the qualities for the specific context of their work. Southgate and Aggleton point to a need for critical theories of power relations and authority.

Home-Start and the context of this study

Home-Start was founded in Leicester, UK in 1973. It supports parents through volunteers who are parents. In the UK Home-Start has approximately 16,000 volunteers working to support 30,000 families – there are 269 local Home-Starts (Home-Start 2016).

In the UK:

- Frost et al (1996; 2000) found that Home-Start was seen as a flexible, non-stigmatising service filling a gap between health and social services (Frost et al 2000 p.331). Frost et al found that, over a six month period, 64% of the sample saw an improvement in emotional well-being, 55% saw an improvement in their informal networks, 51% saw an improvement in parenting issues (with 6% reporting a deterioration).

This study

This study is based on the completion of questionnaires by eight Home-Start peer educators, and the conduct of a focus group comprising five Home-Start peer educators

and a Home-Start worker, an interview with a Home-Start worker, and a telephone interview with a Home-Start peer educator.

The identities of participants have been anonymised.

Motivations for involvement as a Home-Start peer educator

The voluntary nature of the work is indicative of altruistic values and a commitment to others. One peer educator commented that,

...I do enjoy coming and speaking to everybody and just helping people as well. Like I've worked in the groups and I've also worked one-to-one with some mums as well, doing things like [...] sorting out housing or like [...] college applications and things, and just being a support for other people has been...it's quite rewarding.

There are instrumental motivations, another peer educator became involved to enhance her application to HE,

...applying for university I needed a hundred hours voluntary work, and they put me in touch with Home-Start [...] I did all my training and everything, and I had a plan to do like my hundred hours and I've been here [...] two years now [laughter in group].

Participants valued their participation in a community with a social purpose. Being a peer educator is a way of promoting personal objectives whilst enhancing the lives of others.

Relations with professional workers

One peer educator remarked that, 'A lot of people turned around to me and said "how are you supposed to look after a child when you're still a child yourself? You know, 'you can't do anything for yourself".' Another recounted an incident when her two year old was rushed to hospital having swallowed a coin, 'The whole time we were there, I lived with my mum at the time, everybody spoke to my mum, and it absolutely riled me. And in the end I were like "you do know I'm this child's mother? I might be eighteen but I am her mother. So if you've got something to say can you speak to me please, not to my mum".'

Fisher (2007 p.584), in a study involving parents of disabled babies, argued that their "... attempts towards the construction of their own wellbeing are being undermined by their contact with the health and social care services where they are confronted with oppressive frameworks of meaning that attribute 'damaged' identities to them and their children whilst failing to recognise their particularity and authenticity." Fisher applies the work of Honneth (2001, 2003) to argue that identities form intersubjectively with misrecognition arising through the application of normative frameworks. Parents' experiences within the context of the family may well contribute to the construction of narratives of wellbeing which are both authentic and meaningful but which are not validated by processes of professional recognition which are defined by 'expert' agendas. Peer educator relationships can remove the stigma which is sometimes enacted in professional/client interactions.

Peer educators' views on the benefits/value of involvement in this work

New Labour, between 1997 and 2010, enacted policies based on notions of empowerment through the citizen as a reflexive agent. The Coalition Government (2010-2015) which followed captured this in the ethos of the 'Big Society' (a form of conservative communitarianism). Parenting is conceptualised as a form of occupation based on the application of skills which can be regulated by professionals, all in a framework of well-being based on paid employment. As Fisher (2007 p.585) has pointed out, within policy discourses the '...notion that life within the private sphere may also provide the basis for

self-esteem and wellbeing and be seen as a hallmark of participation is conspicuously absent.'

Intersubjective recognition enables the development of the reflective and competent citizen actor (Sointu 2006) able to attain the positive 'practical-relation to self' (Yar 2001 p.299) which provides for self-empowerment. Recognition is a prerequisite for agency. Honneth (2001, 2003) argues that recognition is institutionalised across three spheres of life: these are 'love' (relationships), the 'legal order' (equality in law) and 'achievement' (through self-esteem derived from the value accorded to abilities). All three depend on recognition by others. 'Love', according to Honneth (2003, 2006), is primarily engendered through the private sphere (family and friends). 'Achievement' follows success in the public sphere (jobs/career). As argued elsewhere,

Misrecognition may be attached to social marginalisation through socio-economic circumstances, religion and or disability (of the parent) and parents who simply lead unconventional lives are likely to be subjected to normalising judgements and the exercise of 'disciplinary power'...contributing to processes of misrecognition by an over-zealous policing of people's lives...linked to an increasing tendency to perceive individuals' 'needs' for resources and services in terms of personal failings ... (Fisher, 2007 p.593).

Whilst Honneth's analysis (2001, 2003) is premised on a separation of private and public realms, the testimonies of the participants in this study suggest that the peer educator project provides recognition across boundaries. One peer educator stated that,

I went through a bad relationship about six months ago, and I got all my support through Home-Start, like benefits, having to go find a house, everything. That's helped me do that. And then because of that I came out a better person, and then she asked me if I wanted to do the peer educator training.

It was clear that learning for the peer educators went well beyond their training sessions and that much of it arose from their informal interactions with each other,

...the practical side of it really helped [...] it was stuff like thinking that I'd not done stuff right. So, I'd be at home with her and I'd panic, and then I'd come to [the] group and I'd be like 'oh John did so-and-so, so-and-so and they'd all be like 'oh that's fine, my baby does that too', and I thought 'oh does it?' [laughter] You know, just the relief of knowing that you're not actually a bad parent.

The sense of being part of a peer community was simultaneously empowering and supportive.

Impact on life plans and aspirations

The experience of working as a peer educator had clearly positively influenced life choices and aspiration. For one the peer educator engagement with Home-Start had proven a platform to joining a college course,

I'm starting college this September as well and I wouldn't be able to do that without Home-Start either, getting back into education and doing what I want to do [...] I probably wouldn't have known about the course because Jenny did it and that's kind of how I knew there were an access to nursing course.

For some the commitment was seen as long term,

... I'd love to [carry on in the role], just because Home-Start have done so much for me and I would not be here, I would not be the person that I am today if it weren't for Home-Start.

Conclusion

I'm really busy all the time [...] I feel like, like Wonder Woman, like I can do anything now like. I can't possibly go through any more shit in my life. I can just do anything. But having people to talk to [...] with peer educating, helping other people, and now I feel like because I've been through that much, I can tell people 'you're going to be alright'.

The peer educators in this study are engaged in the active construction of relationships that link with their rights of recognition. This is achieved through valuing individual particularity and authenticity. Peer education legitimises a broader definition of achievement that includes 'expertise by experience', often associated with the private realm. Nancy Fraser (1997) has argued that those belonging to socially excluded groups should resist through the development of 'subaltern counterpublics' (or discursive arenas) constructing interests and oppositional identities based on 'counter discourses'. Elsewhere, in a consideration of auto-didacticism amongst parents of disabled babies (Fisher and Fisher, 2007), it has been argued that this process is being enacted through cyber-communities leading away from professional expertise and towards the development of expertise through experiential knowledge which has its genesis in the domestic sphere. Utilising Granic and Lamey's (2000) conception of the Internet as 'a self-organising system' with the capacity to 'catalyse major shifts in the cognitive styles and beliefs of its interactants' (p.94) frequent internet participation might well transform cognitive patterns and build confidence/expertise and the development of non-binary worldviews. Our sense in relation to this group of non-virtual peer educators was that the sheer viscerality of working with others in person and in the present was a key part of their transform.

Lingard (2005) has discussed uses of pedagogy which,

... challenge the modernist provincialism of an 'education-bound' conception of pedagogies, as well as challenging the salience of contemporary education and its traditional pedagogies...(p.167-8)

We see pure forms of peer education as generally situated outside educational institutions, and we conceive peer education as propagating forms of pedagogy which are relatively free of authoritative relationships associated with 'teaching'. In the domestic/private sphere, parents nurture relationships in which they receive and provide recognition grounded in affection and love. The refusal of recognition in the public sphere must be addressed.

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Adult outreach: Just a means to an end? Appropriating the widening participation agenda to promote critical pedagogy

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The rise of extremism and intolerance brutally illustrated in the UK by recent events in Manchester and London as well as the murder of Jo Cox a West Yorkshire Member of Parliament in 2016, has raised questions about the robustness of liberal democracies. Damian Collins, chair of the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport select committee, commented to The Guardian that fake news threatens 'the integrity of democracy'. The danger, he argues 'is if for many people the main source of news is Facebook and if the news they get on Facebook is mostly fake news, they could be voting based on lies.' The article states that the top 20 fake news stories in the last three months of the US election had more 'shares' than the top 20 stories that were in fact true. Given current concerns about the normalisation of untruths, these are prescient thoughts from Hannah Arendt interviewed in 1978,

a people that no longer can believe anything cannot make up its mind. It is deprived not only of its capacity to act but also of its capacity to think and to judge. And with such a people you can then do what you please (Errera, 1978).

Henry Giroux in 'Beyond Pedagogies of Repression' observes,

At a time when the public good is under attack and there seems to be a growing apathy towards the social contract or any other civic-minded investment in public values and the larger common good, education has to be seen as more than a credential or a pathway to a job, and pedagogy as more than teaching to the test.

Giroux restates the importance of critical pedagogy as being vital for understanding and overcoming the current crises of agency, our need 'to reclaim the role that education has historically played in developing critical literacies and civic capacities', the task of 'critically engaged agents' who can take active roles in enhancing and further developing the mechanisms for a vibrant democracy.

This is surely adult education terrain. University lifelong learning or adult continuing education departments historically would have been one of a number of adult education sites for what Nixon says would be, 'a protected space within which to think against the grain of received opinion: a space to question and challenge, to imagine the world from different standpoints (Nixon,2015). However throughout the UK, university lifelong learning departments have been in grave decline with recent lifelong learning closures at the Universities of Leicester and Bangor. This is in tandem with much reduced adult education provision.

Since 2010, the adult skills budget, which funds non higher education and training for those 19 or over, has been cut by 40% in England. The allocation of community learning funding is under severe threat with government priorities focussing on apprenticeships and vocational provision. The Association of Colleges has warned that there may be no publicly funded adult education by 2020. A research report for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Adult Education (Hughes et al, 2016) provides evidence of the decline in adult participation in skills training as well as broader credit and non-credit bearing provision.

In this paper then, I want to reflect on how despite this bleak climate, it is possible to engage in critical pedagogy with local working class communities. I will concentrate on the widening participation (WP) agenda, which aims to address the under-representation of particular socio-economic and minority groups in English universities, considering how it can be appropriated for more expansive aims. The starting point will be a brief exploration into the changing nature of WP and outreach, followed by an outline of the practice at the University of Leeds. This will draw on recent research which was undertaken as part of an Office of Fair Access (OFFA) commissioned study by four English universities into understanding the impact of outreach on access to higher education for disadvantaged adult learners. The Leeds strand explores the experience of participants' involvement in the range of outreach activity offered by the University. Finally, I consider whether there are hooks that might encourage universities to be more engaged in critical pedagogy with their local communities.

Policy background

The concepts of widening participation and educational outreach have become synonymous with school partnerships. However this has not always been the case, 'before the current focus on the participation of young people in HE, much of the work in WP was focussed on returners to education who were over 21' (JM Consulting, 2004).

The first tranche of funding for widening participation (1995-1998) was targeted predominantly at adults through non award-bearing continuing education (NABCE) and it is telling that the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education was commissioned to undertake the evaluation. In his report conclusions, McNair gives weight to the need for a collective response as well as catering for the needs of individuals, 'the key to successful impact on excluded communities lies in a multi-stranded, capacity building approach....engaging with the community on several fronts simultaneously' (McNair,2000).

Subsequently, young people have become the clear focus of widening participation policy. The allocation of widening participation funding has followed this policy narrative, the most recent tranche of funding (£30 million in 2016/17, increasing to £60 million per annum from 2017/18) aims to: 'support the most disadvantaged young people in England to progress into higher education' (HEFCE, 2017) - no mention of adults. Yet it is periodically cited that there is a clear correlation between mature, part-time students and under-represented groups. A stated concern about their rapid decline since the inception of fees. According to OFFA mature students are more likely to:

- come from lower socio-economic backgrounds
- have family or caring responsibilities
- be disabled
- be from black and minority ethnic groups
- leave higher education within a year of entering (OFFA, 2015).

Outreach is defined by OFFA as activity which raises the awareness, aspirations and attainment of people from disadvantaged backgrounds through various activities linking with schools as well as 'forming and sustaining links with employers and communities'.¹ Nevertheless, again it is clear from policy documents and funding streams that schools should be the key beneficiary of outreach.

I would argue that the educational outreach concept in UK universities was initially driven by those working with adults. It was very much a part and parcel of work undertaken with

adults from socially and economically deprived backgrounds since the 1980s. Outreach was undertaken to provide 'learning opportunities provided through grassroots, community-based activities which are familiar and relevant to people's everyday lives (DfEE, 1997).

However recruitment is now just one factor in the evolving meanings of widening participation. Universities are currently required to demonstrate measures alleviating obstacles to retention and achievement. This opens up opportunities to appropriate the agenda in the guise of preparatory activity, 'Adult Educators have grown used to working creatively in the spaces of government policy: invited spaces thus become creative spaces' (Coare, 2003).

The Leeds experience

The Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) at the University of Leeds provides bespoke adult programme delivery as well as being the hub supporting mature and part-time students across the University. A key part of its widening participation remit is the work undertaken with economically and socially deprived communities.

Local community engagement has been central to the adult education work at Leeds for more than 30 years. It has been maintained through a number of funding streams and policy initiatives. However whatever the stated aims and objectives of the work, I adhere to Rennie Johnston's assertion that, 'Social purpose educators like myself need to maintain a critical perspective on social inclusion and government motives for promoting it, but we should also engage with it actively as part of our commitment to social justice, greater social and economic equality and the promotion of a critical democracy' (Johnston, 2000). Even though the widening participation agenda has narrowed, there is enough rhetoric to make the case for work with adults, particularly given stated concerns around recruitment numbers, 'all institutions have a responsibility to consider how they might work to support part-time and mature learners' (OFFA, 2017).

A framework entitled Transforming Horizons incorporates a range of outreach activity. It includes three stages a) initial links with non-formal learning and community groups, through to b) work with adults in adult learning provision across the city, c) preparing for progression to University foundation years and degree provision. On average, we work with 1800 adults per annum with 500 attending campus events e.g. study days, non-accredited adult education or summer school activity.

Our outreach model has been adapted from a purist community-based approach to a blend of local and on-campus provision (currently experimenting with social media and digital learning). One reason being a response to the changing demographics of the city and issues that arise from rapid shifts in neighbourhoods. During the last decade the number of Leeds residents born outside of the UK has almost doubled to over 86,000 people leading to,

very localised impacts across the city, with complex related issues such as the speed of change, 'national identity', language proficiency, transient populations and variations in birth rates that in turn influence service provision and the wider interface between communities (LJSNA, 2015).

Through intensive partnership-working, adults are encouraged to step out of their communities coming together on campus, a perceived neutral space which can provide an opportunity to think, question, reflect on life experiences, sharing and comparing with others. Hannah Arendt saw education 'as providing a necessary transitional zone

between private and public – a semi-public space within which we can test our opinions, interpretations and judgements’. (Nixon J 2015). This resonates with the aim of connecting communities in critical engagement on-campus.

Inclusion of student achievement into widening participation policy gives the opportunity to stress the need for an emphasis on academic skills and critical thinking prior to study (see Thomas, 2011). It provides a reason for including and being able to report on critical pedagogy as an integral component of the various outreach activities in the community and on-campus. Examples of methods being used include: straw polling on topical issues at community summer galas as a trigger for debate; using craft, telling stories, play as creative ways of connecting life experiences to theoretical perspectives with groups; collective exercises in reflection and action; the use of photovoice methodology which, ‘places the medium of the camera into the hands of the learners to democratize the image-making dynamic and give them the power to show and speak their own realities’ (Clover, 2006).

The research undertaken as part of the OFFA study was both quantitative, analysing the impact of different interventions and qualitative, interviewing a sample of outreach participants (6men, 8 women) from a diverse range of backgrounds, age range, with few qualifications, residing in low participation neighbourhoods. Selected participants included those who have already progressed to higher education and others who have not taken this trajectory.

The following topics were discussed in a semi-structured interview format:

- Educational and social background;
- Reasons for engaging in the outreach intervention;
- Any perceived correlation between consequent actions relating to educational/vocational/civic activity and outreach interventions;
- Participant feedback and reflections regarding intervention/s;
- Attitudes towards a university engaging in community-based outreach activity.

The themes that emerge from the research are perennial, demonstrating the depressing rigidity of structural barriers, social capital constraints in addition to the negative experiences of schooling affecting choice and opportunity. The interviews highlighted how haphazard and random participation in adult learning can be for adults with few formal qualifications (greatly reduced provision, dearth of advice and guidance, no resources for community development). Key to adult learning participation are personal interactions: family/friends, community education tutors, community-based workers or chance meetings,

I got on the bus one day and I overheard a lady talking about a local centre that they had a crèche available.... so people could go there and do GCSEs (intermediate qualifications) so I like, I interrupted her conversation and started asking her a whole bunch of questions. (x1)

Quantitative data analysis indicated that outreach participants were more likely to engage with the university seriously if they undertook more substantial interactions. Some talked about a ‘*drip, drip*’ effect, the need to take ‘*tiny steps*’ in raising confidence, self-esteem, self-belief that going to university is a possibility:

Yeah I think that contact is important because things can get in the way. Life gets in the way, you know, we have problems and stuff. But the fact that I was invited to this and then invited to that and then I'm going to progress to having a meeting, a one to one, it's given me like a pathway. (x6)

In terms of critical pedagogy, there were responses from those who were not in formal education as well as those that have progressed. They indicate an interest in broadening perspectives and thinking differently undertaken in a relaxed context with other adults from similar socio-economic backgrounds. For some this is a starting point preparing for academic study, but for all who attend, we are offering the tools and techniques to engage in critical discussion of sensitive topics e.g. immigration, national identity etc.

We did about the Brexit (prior to referendum) ... it gave us an idea of how ... you argued things and not just believe everything you see in the papers like I actually did. Yeah, so it did give you an idea of how to be like an academic learner, just a small taster wasn't it? (x14)

Yeah it was explained to us ...to not go on what you think without having something to back it with...through my education ...you were spoon-fed all the information whereas this it's sort of developing that, yes, you may think that is correct but until you've gone and looked up stuff either to back it up or just to find out. I'd never thought of that way ... it's not the black and white what you read in the paper. (x.4)

The outreach groups reflect the demographics of inner-city Leeds. For many participants, being in such a diverse environment is an unusual occurrence. Reinforcing the notion of using campus as an inclusive space, working with pedagogy that elicits commonalities and shared experiences.

Every week there were a lot of interaction, no matter what the subject were. We worked in groups or sometimes we worked as a whole group...they got everybody involved. And you're all different backgrounds and you all interact and you found out that people were there for the same reason to find out more. (x3)

It was just like everyone in the same boat, same experience. I mean I remember listening to other mature students saying how they had a bad time at school....yeah, we could see the common ground. I mean for myself coming from an ethnic background, I thought it was maybe we're alone, the ones who experienced a bad experience and to realise that there's other people and they struggle with it, whatever reasons they have in their lives. So that was a common ground. (x9)

A general feeling was given by participants that their ideas and opinions were of no consequence. The importance of feeling valued was cited with their knowledge and life experience being respected.

You feel like you make a contribution, that you're welcome, that you're not just numbers, your input is valued even if you feel you don't have the knowledge to contribute, that your input is still valued and you'll always take something out of your opinion no matter how accurate it is. (x13)

I felt listened to in that course...I've always gone through life where I felt a bit worthless in the education side, I think, cos I left school and I always quoted meself as being thick. (x10)

Research participants were asked whether it made a difference that the university were

the providers of this outreach. Some were not clear that the Lifelong Learning Centre was a part of the University but for others it had made an impression,

I think coming out and doing this kind of thing (study day) does make people like me believe that you (the university) are interested in having us there. (x10)

And I think the difference is because its university if there's somebody in the university and it might sound corny but if there's somebody there telling you that you can actually do this (academic study) and this is what I tell people now. Give it a go. (x2)

Universities shouldn't just wait for people to enrol, cos there is a lot of issues or things going on in people's life and they (people) are not coming (to university) so it needs to go out to them and really work constantly with them and bring people in...It shouldn't just be about recruitment but really selling what's good about education to them. (x9)

Conclusions

As a lifelong learning provider with rather more resource and agency than its community partners, the LLC is endeavouring to utilise its remit for the wider social good. It is very obvious the detrimental impact austerity is having on working class neighbourhoods and essential that we encourage people to have some critical understanding of the issues they face, making the connections with structural inequalities. Giroux talks about the centrality of education to engender 'dangerous thinking' which questions and challenges, dealing critically with the 'use and effects of power' (Giroux, 2017). Although his discourse may be focussed on Faculty teaching, I would contend that universities have wider responsibilities which also connect to their own self-interest.

This was made evident in the 2016 referendum. After campaigning vociferously to remain in the European Union, many universities were surrounded by communities that voted 'leave'. Given the negative impact of Brexit on the higher education sector, there has subsequently been some discussion about 'town/gown' relationships and how to engender a greater understanding of universities' contribution to their localities. According to Andy Westwood, universities must change their relationships with local communities as,

... too many people feel too distant from what we do and what we know. This is just as pertinent in places with universities too – from Sunderland to Sheffield, Warwick to Wolverhampton. It's time to redefine outreach and impact' (Westwood, 2016).

For many institutions, instrumentalism has prevailed over a civic mission serving the common good. At a recent event on civic engagement curriculum, there was a recognition that universities can be perceived as mining their local environments in terms of recruitment, research, placements, volunteering that supports student employability etc. Concerns were raised regarding universities not having effective mutually beneficial relationships with their local communities and about their ethics of engagement. If this agenda is revisited, then there may be opportunities to influence a more inclusive, democratic approach - territory that lifelong learning occupies.

Finally returning to widening participation, the commissioning of adult outreach research indicates there has been some recognition that this work has a role to play in the recruitment of mature and part-time students. Our research makes recommendations arguing for the need to undertake intensive work with adults over a period of time if they are wishing to progress onto and achieve in higher education, given the dearth of post 19 pathways. Recognising that any steer or additional resource in this direction would undoubtedly open up potential spaces for wider civic learning.

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¹ <https://www.offa.org.uk/glossary/#outreach>

Transitions to adulthood and processes of social inclusion: A biographical research on careleavers' experiences

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Introduction

A 'care leaver' is a young adult who has been in foster care, separated from a sentenced abusing or negligent family, and faces a dramatic change in his/her life. The huge investment of resources to protect children sustains a system of intervention that produces learning, at many levels, but what kind of learning? Is it functional to freedom, self-direction, reflexivity, and a meaningful life (Jackson & Martin, 1998)? Which conditions bring to a 'good enough' learning experience (Reid & West, 2015) and allow these young adults to cope with a difficult transition, from school to work, from protection to agency, from a 'welfare life' to self-direction and responsibility?

This paper presents an ongoing research project in Lombardy (Italy), where biographic interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires are used to understand this transition. We identified different labels used in literature to name these subjects: *vulnerable* children and adolescents (or even *at risk*), *NEETs*, *Looked After*, and *Care Leavers*. After using ourselves these terms interchangeably for a while, we realized how much they illuminate discourses of vulnerability, each associated with a different systemic level: macro, meso and micro (Formenti, 2014, 2015).

From vulnerable children to NEETs: a self-fulfilling prophecy?

At the macro-level, the widespread use of the category of 'vulnerability' functions as a rationale for policy makers and professionals to intervene, e.g. to justify separation from home. However, an Italian survey (Belotti, 2010) signalled that among 39,698 minors who experienced separation from their family, only 2% were orphans; 8% fatherless; 7% motherless; 33% were referred for 'serious relational problems' within the family; 23% for parental inadequacy, mostly related to addiction (27%) or neglecting conduct (67%), and 26% for *severe economic problems*. These figures draw a map of vulnerabilities, where poverty is among the main factors, a sheer violation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the Italian Constitution. The dominant narrative says that separation is done in the name of the 'vulnerable child'; in fact, after completion of major age, these people disappear from records: they cease to belong to a targeted category.

Another macro-level category is NEET (Not Education, Employment, Training), i.e. young adults who exit formal education and do not work; OECD and EUROSTAT use this category to measure the risk of social exclusion and to estimate the labour market dynamics. In 2015, Italy counted 2.500.000 NEETs, among the highest rates in Europe (Rosina, 2015). Young adults who experienced fosterage seem at risk to intersect this category, especially in the transition, due to lack of social capital (Field, 2008) and family support; lack of father increases risk of exclusion from labour market (Alfieri & Marta, 2014).

Looked after people: the reproduction of care and control

The 'looked after' category highlights, at a meso-level, the position of these subjects in the care process, within their proximal system of interactions. Being 'looked after' (not necessarily entailing being 'seen') is a passive verb with a connotation of dependence: by

receiving care and attention, the subject is *proved to be* needing, vulnerable and not enough competent or autonomous. There is also a connotation of surveillance: in fact, life within foster houses is constantly monitored. Analysis at this level should focus the hidden assumptions (and related practices) of child protection agencies and professional educators. In Italy, while children are more likely placed in families, teenagers are more easily directed to residence (Belotti, 2010); systematic research on these practices and models of social intervention is lacking, but different models are implemented, due to regional differences (Belotti, 2010). At European level, comparative research (Eurochild, 2010) has shown fragmentation (Thoburn, 2010; Berto, Canali, 2012) and lack of data; e.g. none of the six countries considered by ANCI (Germany, France, Britain, Italy, Belgium and Spain) produced regular statistics (ANCI, 2012, p.19); besides, the absence of a standard model hinders collection of comparable data.

More qualitative data show that institutionalization becomes too easily repetitive and chronic: in Italy 1/3 fostered minors had a previous experience of outplacement; average duration of fosterage (a 'temporary measure'!) is 4,2 years (law suggests no more than 1). Once entered the system, being discharged is rare, also due to lack of intervention on the problems that originated the outplacement. These minors can be seen as 'victims' as well as 'experts' of the fosterage system.

Care leavers: biographical transition and challenging transformations

The 'care leaver' label shifts our focus to the micro-level: a subject is developing a (new) identity related to a change of context. Leaving care is an active verb of movement, signalling the process, more than individual features: it entails interactions, new challenges, and transforming narratives. 'Care leavers', as a category, points to the moment when these young adults are asked, authorized, or forced to leave a protective environment and to take responsibilities, hence to think of themselves as independent and autonomous adults (or not). Research suggests that this transition is accelerated and compressed, as a consequence of the sudden demand to pass from being 'looked after' to living independently (Allen, 2003; Stein & Munro, 2008, Pandolfi, 2015). Research from the Children's Rights Director (Morgan, 2011) consistently shows that most care leavers are not prepared; furthermore, they may be hindered by lack of cultural and social capital (Field, 2008), leading to poverty, isolation or crime (higher rates than general population, see Carr & McAlister, 2016). Following Belotti (2010), 50% care leavers decide not to re-enter their system (family of origin, relatives, or acquaintances); 11% begin a life of their own by searching a job; foreigners choose autonomy three times more than Italians. National data (ISTAT, 2013) showed these figures: 8% care leavers went independent; 31% returned to their families and 24% were in secondary care protection. Similar findings were outlined for previous years by Belotti (2010).

Our study: methodology

Our research is based on stories and a participatory process of critical reflection on them, developed through different phases. We decided to start with auto/biographical interviews (Merrill & West, 2009; Formenti, 2015; Reid and West, 2015), to enter the phenomenon from the insiders' perspective. We invited professionals who work in residential units to join our research; a meeting with four of them enhanced a rich conversation that challenged from the very beginning our ideas and revealed hidden assumptions on both parts. They helped us to define a sample of eight young adults (6 men; 2 women), not meant to be representative, but diverse and heterogeneous, in order to nurture reflexivity by difference.

Auto/biographical interviews started with an open question: *This interview is about your*

experience as a fostered child... from where would you start to tell? We let the narration flow, but we also had a guideline of four topics/questions to explore: information about past, present and future, education and training, relationship with the foster system and professionals, becoming adult.

After the interviews, participants checked the transcript and were invited to further meetings. In the present phase, we are organizing meetings with both groups in order to reflect together on the results of our analyses.

Interview analysis: an example

In our analysis we assumed that participants positioned themselves during the interview, and developed their personal theory, in relation to received stories of stigma, failure and lack of resources (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004). How do received narrations enter in the development of adult identity? Are there clues of a self-fulfilling prophecy? We searched for their positioning in relation to the categories presented above. The following is an example of analysis based on one participant's (Marco) narrative.

The macro-level

How do our participants position themselves in relation to 'the vulnerable child' (and consequently vulnerable adult) or NEET categories? Does their past predict their future? How are past and present related?

Marco immediately faces an eventual prejudice on himself, refusing to indulge in the "negative situation" he lived at home and that resulted in a child residence centre. He declares to remember few things of living together with his mother ("alcoholic and depressed") and his father ("absent"), and, anyway, "I could tell you these old episodes but I would not have a distressed attitude... if this is what this experience [the interview] expects from me ..."

The meso-level

We explore the way of positioning in relation to family, foster family, peer group at residence centre, social care professionals, schoolmates, teachers, etc. How do stories received in these relationships and contexts evolve? Are myths, social representations, identities created? How is being 'looked after' related with the building of identity?

Marco, along the whole interview, expresses his ideas on the "right" way to be an educator in a child residence centre. He complains that he met few persons and many "professionals" who tried to understand, interpret and explain his behaviour: "sometimes for professional reasons they [educators] forget that they deal with children and not with other professionals... I felt more psycho-analyzed than listened to". Educators and other professionals (social workers and psychologists) are a constant reference in Marco's interview. Criticized, as well as desired, as someone who could give attention. This was a titanic endeavour in the residence centre, as other seven young boys were also asking for attention, by crashing doors or coming home under drugs effect. How did Marco try to gain the educators' attention? "I always tried to be part of them and not the pupil to take care of. I still have all the residence keys, I knew all the educators' shifts, the amount of money given to the other boys... that was my way to have attention." His effort to be level to adults around him often resulted in violent quarrels: "sometimes I provoked the other just for the taste of it, just to face him/her and hold my head high, just to prove that I am not a young boy but your equal, even if I wasn't like that. I felt myself growing up through this feeling of being equal with adults". Deep down Manuel doesn't feel ready to take the place of the educators he met, even if he struggled to be considered equal of

them.: "I know that I am not ready to take care of another person... it is probably something that is related to my experience... I still feel like the one to be taken care of."

The micro-level

We are interested in how participants deal with their story. Which kind of learning processes have happened in the past and are going on in their lives? What representation/myth of themselves did they elaborate in relation to this? How do they relate their experience of 'leaving care' with their own identity? Do they perceive themselves as adults?

When Marco left the residence, a difficult period begun for him: "when you go back home you receive all the packs in a row". Even if the residence was considered "home", after leaving he realized that it was also a "bubble" that had not prepared him to the future: going back to his father, no friends, job difficulties, poverty. Marco worked through thanks to significant others' help: his grandparents bought him a car to move and a neighbour found him a job. Now, at 25, Marco is engaged with a 43 years old man "that for me is the best choice as he is youngish - we do the same things - and at the same time he has experience that allows him to be my mentor and my guide." Marco draws a thread between his present relationship with his partner and his previous relationship with the educators: "I am glad when he simply hugs me. But the pupil in the residence has the same desire... he/she's just not interested in someone standing on the other side of the desk and trying to understand him/her". Today Marco does not represent himself like an adult, as he feels that he "doesn't face the world all alone yet". Living with his boyfriend - and his mother – means that he does not need to care about many fundamental things: "I still have to learn how to manage bills and rent payments...".. This advantage has a reverse side: "after 25 years I still don't have a place I consider mine". What makes him feeling different and "more adult" is a different perspective of himself on him and his life: "the unique thing that makes me proud about my life is that it didn't crash me... I didn't defeat my life and I was not defeated... I just make my life part of myself... I might live it with coldness but I remember it warmly. I don't see my life like a tragedy, I don't see it neither happy nor sad. It is the route that I made to get to be myself, as I am now."

Conclusions

What kind of learning are our participants showing and witnessing? Being positioned by categories, from social discourse and professional care discourses might lead to adaptation ('I'm exactly like that'), counter dependence ('I'm different'), or to a process of questioning and re-positioning. We consider re-positioning as a complex process, whose different levels can generate questions that may result in disorienting dilemmas. Following Mezirow's definition of transformative learning (2012) disorienting dilemmas have the power to disclose those frames of references that structured a life world and its 'truths'. A crisis, then, is the blessed occasion to take a reflective stance and, potentially, trigger transformative learning (Illeris, 2014). Transitions (Field et al 2009, Field, 2015) from foster care to the "world outside there" are a crucial moment, and narratives reveal subjective processes of micro-positioning within a network of relationships; each subject develops his/her own idea of adulthood, and an adult identity in continuity/discontinuity to received discourses, both from the proximal system that 'looked after' him/her and from the dominant social discourse representing him/her as a vulnerable person and potential NEET. The tension between falling into a mainstream category and developing a new script, a different identity/theory, or even a deeper understanding of the action of social determinants ("biographicity", see Alheit & Dausien, 2000) is always present and has no linear or permanent solutions. It may be considered another dilemma itself.

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Putting out to tender: How UK adult education policy might shape the contractual obligations of prison learning providers

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Introduction

There is some disparity across national contexts around the question of whether prisoner education is primarily a component of prisoner rehabilitation, or a human right (Vorhaus, 2014). Arguments have been made that if the focus lies with rehabilitation then there is a requirement to gather evidence of education having a positive 'effect' on prisoners that might serve the social or economic good. The difficulty here is that this is an instrumental defence of prison education (ibid, p.162) that encourages the delivery of corresponding instrumental and functional skills based education programmes, an argument supported by Costelloe & Warner's (2014) comparative analysis of prison education legislation in Norway and England & Wales).

This paper considers prisoner education from the Scottish context, suggesting that suggests the national policy context for adult education may be a further influence, along with leadership from the Further Education sector which has made use of a favourable policy to negotiate contractual arrangements allowing the creation of programmes better orientated towards students' needs. However, in line with Czerniawski (2016) and Rogers et al (2014), my analysis supports the view that the negative influence of competitive tendering for prison contracts is significance if education is to be developed as a right for prisoners.

I present the high-level documentary analysis of some of the historical contracts held between Further Education colleges and prisons for the delivery of prisoner education in Scotland released via Freedom of Information requests (see ICO, 2000). Focussing my examination upon a sequence of historical contracts from the Scottish context, dating from 2005 and 2011, I begin by describing the setting for prison education in the UK and in so doing I justify the strategy that guided my analysis. Here I consider the influences of managerialism (Gleeson and Shain, 1999) in the prison education setting, as a consequence of UK prison education being subjected to commercial contracting (Rogers et al, 2014; Czerniawski, 2016). Secondly, I consider the Scottish education policy context (e.g. Scottish Executive, 2001; 2005; Scottish Government, 2004) and discuss implications for prison education curricula. Thirdly, I address the wider purposes of prisoner education including the idea that prison education should 'rehabilitate' people. Finally, I utilise Goffman's understanding of the 'total institution' to consider the impact of prison on the identity of prisoners (Goffman, 1961), with implications for education.

Managerialism and prison education

There are some similarities between the contexts for prison education across both England & Wales and Scotland. Both national contexts boast the highest imprisonment rates in Western Europe (Czerniawski, 2016). Likewise for both, prison education is contracted out commercially for delivery by third party providers. Further Education colleges in the UK are not new to operating to a business model, in part as a consequence of the Thatcher government's Further and Higher Education Act (1992) (Gleeson and Shain, 1999) which re-instituted colleges with independent corporate status. Arguably, these developments encouraged a culture of managerialism where the professional values

of educators' conflict with a managerial paradigm focused upon income generation. Prison education research in England & Wales confirms this, demonstrating an emphasis on 'outputs' where 'bite size' accreditations are offered at a low level and with few opportunities for students to progress (Champion, 2013, p 17).

Whilst the third party contracting of prison education is common across the UK there are differences in education policy which could have influence over the formulation of the contracts. To explain the potential significance of this I summarise adult literacy learning policy in Scotland, as literacy and numeracy learning forms the bulk of the prison curriculum.

The Scottish education policy context.

The Scottish context for the policy and practice of adult literacies education differs England, where a movement towards instrumentalism has been analysed and tracked (Ade-Ojo and Duckworth, 2015). Since 2006, aims have been orientated towards functional skills through employer-led rather than learner-responsive initiatives (Tett, Hamilton and Crowther, 2012, pp 35-36). In Scotland adult literacies education, largely remains the responsibility of local council youth and community services where policy continues to support a 'social practice' (Scottish Executive, 2001; 2005). Here, importance is attached to contexts and processes of learning rather than the specification of pre-defined content to be learned or demonstrated, with curricula orientated towards learners' needs and goals. The more recent roll out of Scotland's 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) (Scottish Executive, 2004) reinforces some aspects of this approach to literacies education within schools, supported in part by the idea of a process curriculum, where opportunities for inter-disciplinary learning, learning outside of the classroom and active citizenship are encouraged (Priestley & Humes, 2010). The Scottish policy context described here suggests that a prison education focus upon literacy and numeracy need not result in functional and instrumental programmes and Scottish prison contracts were examined for reference to education policy and discourse relating to 'social practice' approaches to literacies learning.

The purpose of prisoner education: rights or rehabilitation.

Education in prisons is under-researched (Czerniawski, 2016) and internationally, a large proportion of existing research focuses upon the idea that education might serve to 'rehabilitate' prisoners. For example, Ellison et al (2017) found 4302 researched evaluations of prison learning projects where recidivism and/or employment was a focus. However, the notion of rehabilitation originates within the discipline of criminology and there is a dearth of critical engagement with this concept from a contemporary adult education perspective. Historically, advocates for adult literacy education held assumptions about how learning could improve moral character amongst the 'deviant', including prisoners (see Hamilton, 1996, pp.146-47; Lankshear and Knobel, 2003, p.4). However, research has exposed this premise as a damaging myth (e.g. Street, 1984) as part of a field of scholarship which laid the basis for the abovementioned 'social practice' conceptualisation currently found within Scottish education policy.

In the UK, the idea of rehabilitative programmes gained currency in the 1990s, following criticism that the practices of probation services focused mainly upon assisting and helping 'offenders', whilst neglecting to demand that individuals take responsibility for their criminal actions (McNeill, 2006). Alternatives required individuals to commit to changes in their behaviour whilst simultaneously receiving assistance and help (ibid, p 44). Desistance theory offers ways of understanding how 'offenders' come to change their behaviour (ibid, p 46) and qualitative research has informed theoretical developments that stress the

significance of subjective changes in relation to a person's sense of self, where 'offenders' might experience an underlying alteration in their identities. Here lies the potential to link with adult learning theories, including social practice understandings of literacies learning, though this remains underexplored. For example, research supports the idea adult learning might support students in authoring their own identities to gain influence over dominant discourses (Janks, 2010), or garner social capital (Ade-Ojo & Duckworth, 2015). However, these conceptualisations are aimed at empowering students rather than 'rehabilitation'.

Early literacies learning programmes in the UK were rooted in deficit thinking (Hamilton, 1996). More broadly, Williams (1961) describes the history of influential strands of thought as it relates to adult education in nineteenth century Britain, where at times those supporting universal access to education drew upon elitist arguments that high culture might nourish 'spiritual health' (ibid, p 162 – 163). Given Williams' analysis, it may be significant to note the striking numbers of researched prison learning projects focused upon culture and the liberal arts, whilst making a link to the idea of rehabilitation or desistance (e.g. Sams, 2014; Tett et al, 2012; Keehan, 2015; Clennon, 2013; Clements, 2014; McDowall, 2014).

Taking account of the above discussion, prison learning contracts were examined for indication of educational purpose, be it rehabilitation, employment needs, cultural benefit or empowerment.

Impact of prison on the self

Goffman (1961) describes prison as a 'total institution' and summarises the affects upon inmates as a 'mortification' of the self. On entering prison, an individual 'begins a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of self' (p24). They are subjected to procedures which ignore their ways of self-identifying prior to entrance (ibid, p26) and are so stripped of their 'identity-kit', which is then re-created through participation within highly regulated institutional regimes (ibid, p 30 - 50). Perhaps this conceptualisation does not sit well with the positive identity change associated either with processes of 'rehabilitation'. However, there is a lack of prison learning research acknowledging the potential collision between a prison environment and possible alternatives experienced within an educational space. Exceptions include Carrigan & Maunsell (2014) who acknowledge Goffman's 'total institution' as the context for their research into learners' identities. Pike & Adams (2012) describe distance learning assisting prisoners to 'cope', whilst Bhatti and Ghazari (2010) conclude that organised prison learning is often the only space in a prison offering hope and optimism.

Prison learning contracts are brokered between the criminal justice and education systems which have divergences in aims, purposes, policy and culture that might have visibility within Contract discourses. The Contracts were examined for indication of this type of tension and also for acknowledgement of the impact of prison upon prisoners' identities.

Analysis of prison contracts

In 2005 and 2-11, two Colleges of Further Education were contracted to deliver prison learning in Scotland – Lauder College and Motherwell College¹. The contracts are between the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and the supplier, making Scotland's Minister for Justice responsible for prison education rather than the Minister for Education. Vocational education in Scottish Prisons is delivered by SPS staff, i.e. prison officers, so the delivery of workplace learning is not included in contractual terms. A high-level analysis of the contracts was undertaken, examining the discourse in relation to the four

themes set out above. I consider the contracts in chronological order.

Scottish Prison Service education contracts – 2005

In 2005, two Contracts were agreed, each with identical wording, suggesting that college suppliers had no influence upon the Contract contents. The discourse within the contracts supports this conclusion.

Indication of educational purpose

The educational objectives are drawn entirely from Scottish Prison Service vision statements and no reference is made to any education policy throughout the Contracts. Instead, foci are selected from a SPS vision document and converted into a series of 'deliverables', where prisoners should be:

- Able to read, write and count.
- More employable.
- Having the knowledge of how to access community support on release.
- Able to live independently.

The supplier is contracted to develop these four objectives, creating learning opportunities around the themes of Learning for Health, Life, Work and Leisure. They are also required to work in partnership with prison officers, supporting literacies learning as part of vocational training programmes (ibid, p6, p19-20), where the contractor can allocate a maximum of 90% of delivery time towards the communication and numeracy skills programmes depending upon the 'prisoners' needs' (ibid, Schedule A, Annex 2). Whilst making prisoners *less 'likely to re-offend'* (ibid Schedule A, p5) is part of the SPS 'vision', 'rehabilitation' is not a contractual objective.

Though adult literacy policy goes unreferenced within the Contracts, the text give some indication of the Prison Service's understanding of education and student need. Notably, the curriculum is presented as 'content' rather than 'process'; incoherent with a 'social practice' approach which places emphasis upon processes of learning. However there is stipulation that students should have an 'individual learning plan', in line with Scottish policy. The contract also outlines how provision should be integrated fully with other SPS and community services outside of the prisons, but with no reference to Community Learning and Development policy that might inform this type of development (ibid, p24).

Culture of managerialism

Schedule D of the Contracts contains a detailed performance management framework. It is noteworthy that it contains no plan for evaluating progress with the abovementioned development of community integration. Likewise there is no indication of how 'high quality' learning might be evaluated. Instead, the Colleges are measured against twenty-four numerical indicators, e.g. number of new prisoners enrolling, entries or certifications for accredited units and courses by subject and level etc., with fines applied in some circumstances if targets are not met. The college receives bonus payments for each accreditation awarded to a prisoner (ibid, Schedule C, p 2). Here, the college does not report upon the length (i.e. credit) of accredited courses, so that, for example, the successful completion of a ten hour 'module' earns the payment as a year-long course of study, seemingly incentivising the College to deliver 'bite size' and low level courses.

Indications of divergence between the criminal justice and education systems

In summary, the 2005 contracts indicate the provision of education driven by the Scottish Prison Service's internal strategy, with no explicit reference to education policy and driven

by numerical performance indicators that incentivise the delivery of low level qualifications. There is no plan for evaluating the quality of provision, or to appraise the development of integration of prison learning with community services, which the College is contractually obliged to deliver.

Scottish Prison Service education contracts – 2011

The next generation of prison education contracts in Scotland were agreed in 2011 between the SPS and the same College suppliers – Motherwell College and Carnegie College (which has changed its name). The Contracts agreed in 2011 are non-identical, due to the insertion of a 'delivery plan' containing textual input from the College (Contracts Reference 00892 C and M, Schedule D), which offers indication into how College leaderships have influenced the contractual agreement.

Indication of educational purpose

In line with the 2005 contracts, there is continued emphasis upon delivering literacy and numeracy learning with reference to Scottish education policy for *schools* (Scottish Government, 2004) but still no mention of adult literacy policy. The Contracts state an obligation to apply 'the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence...through contextualised learning to develop the key capacities' (Contract Reference 00892 M, Schedule D, p 19). The 'key capacities' refers to the encouragement of successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, suggesting the possibility for wider purposes for education where the learning process has some primacy over content (Priestley and Humes, 2010).

Whilst the SPS continues to exclude rehabilitation as an aim for education, in the 'delivery plan' Colleges introduce discourse around behaviour improvement and identity change particularly in relation their plans for applying CfE principles to the curriculum. Carnegie gives examples of student engagement with history projects, music and the arts, stating how education might 'promote a paradigm shift in the outlook, behaviours and goals' of young men in particular (00892C, Schedule D, p 11). Motherwell College places specific emphasis upon the Expressive Arts and Social Studies as vehicles to developing CfE capacities, utilising the discourse associated with rehabilitation backed up by arts based research with prisoners (e.g. Tett et al, 2012). Here, arts projects are justified because they 'offer participants a creative outlet [sic] have a positive impact on offenders', for 'by engaging in experiences within the expressive arts, prisoners will recognise and represent feelings and emotions, both their own and those of others' (Contract 00892M, p97 - 98).

Evidence of a 'social practice' approach

Carnegie College (in contract 00892C, Schedule D) cites a report from the Scottish inspectorate of education (HMIE, 2010) as a model for their delivery, implicitly allying their plan to a 'social practice' approach aimed at the 'empowerment' of learners rather than 'remediation' (ibid, p 36), but there is no explicit mention of 'social practice' within the Contracts. However, Colleges do outline how contextualised literacies learning might be supported within the prison environment through approaches that, arguably, are broadly in line with a social practice model.

Indications of divergence between the criminal justice and education systems

The 2011 contracts reveal a bridging between the two systems of criminal justice and education, by including reference to an engagement with Scottish education policy (albeit for schools), as specified by the SPS. There is a small indication, found in Carnegie College's contract, that education might serve to mitigate the effects of prison life (Contract 00892C, Schedule D, s p 13), revealed within a short case study of a prisoner named

'Dominic'. The description explains how Dominic had been in prison for most of a long sentence before entering the Learning Centre for the first time, where he was recorded to have presented as being 'fragile', neglectful of 'personal hygiene' and with his 'self-esteem very low'. He goes on to develop very productive relationships with learning centre staff and to achieve some success with his education.

Culture of managerialism

Whilst the two contracts include separate different delivery plans for each College representing contractually agreed variances, there is no corresponding difference in the performance management frameworks, now based upon 29 items of numerical data with financial penalties in force but no bonuses for completed accreditations. For example, the contractually agreed delivery of expressive arts education by Motherwell does not include corresponding and appropriate evaluation strategy. It seems fair to question whether this indication of non-alignment between purpose and evaluation strategy might have repercussions for programme developers, teachers and students. Remarkably, there is no attempt to evaluate activity in relation to the delivery of the principles of the Curriculum for Excellence, though it features centrally within the Contracts' specification sections. .

Summary and conclusion

In this paper I have described some of the context for prison education in Scotland as compared to England & Wales and used this to develop and justify a strategy for analysing Scottish prison learning contracts. This involved examining contracts from 2005 and 2011, considering the four themes of educational purpose, Scottish education policy including the 'social practice model', indication of managerialism and divergence between criminal justice and education systems.

High level analysis demonstrated how educational purpose in 2005 was tightly focused upon the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills as they related to employment. In 2011, whilst literacy and numeracy continued to dominate, the specification of school education policy coupled with a co-production approach to contracting allowed leadership from Colleges to widen the scope of the curriculum to include expressive arts, social studies and approaches to supporting the complex needs of individuals. However, performance management systems remained largely unchanged, suggesting tensions where contractually agreed education programmes were unrecognised by quality systems.

Returning to the rights versus rehabilitation question framing this paper. Vorhaus's (2014) argument centres around how rehabilitation approaches to prisoner education might encourage instrumental approaches. From analysing the contracts, the Scottish context seems more complex, where contractual arrangements and associated performance management systems may be the central driver of functional and instrumental approaches. However, a brief critique of prison learning research suggests tentatively that the idea of rehabilitation might align with historical thought linking arts and cultural education for adults with aims of improving the moral character of working class people (Williams, 1962). If so, the detection of 'rehabilitation' discourse within prison learning contracts is worthy of enquiry by educationalists as well criminologists.

In Scotland, responsibility for prison education lies with the Minister for Justice rather than the Education Minister, with consequences for the policy ownership. For example, vocational education is absent from my analysis because responsibility for this lies with the SPS rather than Colleges of Further Education. Arguably, vocational education in Scotland should be overseen by colleges rather than prisons, but research, including that reported in this paper, suggests that competitive tendering may not be the best vehicle for achieving

this (Czerniawski, 2016; Rogers et al, 2014). However, it does seem that the process of co-producing the contracts agreed between the SPS and Colleges in 2011, offered Colleges the opportunity to take leadership in influencing the content and delivery of prison learning, making some use of a favourable education policy context.

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¹ Lauder College later became known as Carnegie College and following college mergers in 2013 is now part of Fife College. Motherwell College is now part of New College Lanarkshire. In this paper I refer to the colleges by the names current at the time when each contract was agreed.

Mature students' first chance at higher education and second chance at getting over 'the English barrier': A joint researcher-practitioner perspective

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Introduction

This paper describes findings from a qualitative study of 4 cohorts of mature learners who graduated a special course of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Qualitative data was derived from in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The purpose of the study was to explore students' perceptions of their own academic and personal development and change following the English course. Special emphasis is given in this paper to the theme of "first chance", as the students reflect on their decision to enter higher- education at a prestigious research university, and on the theme of "second chance", as the students describe their experiences and notions of success in overcoming "the English barrier". This paper describes some aspects of the interplay between the students' 'academic self' and their 'English self' within the framework of the learning experience in the English course. Themes emerging from the data analysis are complemented and set against insights of the cohorts' teacher.

Background and context

Israel's student population is on average older than its counterparts in western countries, due to compulsory army service and other socio-economic factors. The mean age of undergraduates, which was 23.9 in 1990, was 24.8 in 2016 ([CBS, 2016](#)). In 2016, students between the ages of 30-45+ comprised around 8% of the student body and the age group relevant to the study comprised about 4%. Few universities have access programs for mature students, but most institutions have lenient admission policies towards degree-taking mature students.

Academic English requirements in Israel

The dominant status of English in the academic world in general ([Crystal, 2003](#)) and in Israel in particular ([Kheimets and Epstein, 2005](#); [Spolsky and Shohamy, 2001](#)) mandates an adequate mastery in reading academic English. Incoming students at every degree-granting academic institution in Israel are either exempt from or placed into courses according to their scores in the English portion of the National Psychometric Entrance Test (PET). Typically EAP courses (also known as 'Exemption Courses') emphasize reading skills, enabling students to reach the desired level of reading bibliographical material. Higher education admission and placement policies, which include the PET and the EAP courses, can therefore be viewed both as a tool for standardization and as a gate-keeping mechanism ([Feniger and Ayalon, 2016](#))

Mature students at the Hebrew University

The current access program, called "Ma'ale" (Hebrew acronym for Academic Strand for Mature Students), is rooted in the idea of enrichment courses for the general population. In the 90s changes were made towards a credit-oriented program leading to a B.A degree in the Faculty of Humanities. The minimum age for eligibility at the time the study was conducted was 40 and acceptance is without threshold pre-requirements. Students have to accumulate between 16-48 credits and maintain a 75 grade average in their chosen courses to be eligible for a 'regular student status'. This move, however, is conditioned upon achieving an exemption status in English.

The EAP course for mature students

In the late 1990s the department of English as a Foreign Language at the Hebrew University initiated an experimental EAP course to meet the needs of these mature students while maintaining the required exit level. The following major modifications were introduced into the course:

- Small, homogenous cohorts of Ma'ale students
- Additional weekly hours and a slower learning pace
- A choice of reading material with relevance and interest
- An emphasis on progress and participation, not on grades
- A friendlier form of tests and a flexible threshold for passing

This course format introduced a form of *exclusivity* to the otherwise *inclusive* model of the access program

The study

This paper focuses on a study of 4 cohorts of mature students who graduated the course successfully. All 4 groups studied for 4-5 semesters and were taught by the same teacher for at least one semester. The researcher followed all 4 groups for the entire length of their courses.

A pilot study of 10 students was followed by the main study. 38 in-depth semi-structured interviews, complemented by questionnaires, were analyzed using Grounded Theory approach ([Strauss and Corbin, 1994](#)) and ATLAS.Ti tools. A narrative approach ([Clandinin and Connelly, 1994](#); [Merrill and West, 2008](#)) complemented the analysis.

Participants' average age was 47, 31 women and 7 men. 29 were Israeli born, 7 of North African origins and 2 of European origins. 13 had a full matriculation certificate and the rest had a partial certificate or none at all. 28 were taking university courses at the time of the English course and 10 took English by itself as a form of pre-sessional course.

Theoretical issues

Theories of self and educational theories were chosen following salient themes in the interviews. These theories relate to the dynamics of the participants' motivations and experiences both as university students and as English learners in a compulsory EAP course.

Possible Selves theory

Possible Selves ([Markus, 2006](#); [Markus and Nurius, 1986](#)) is a motivational theory which is at the interface of motivational psychology and the psychology of personality and it links cognition and motivation. Concepts and conceptions about the 'Self' are linked in three future orientations: *The Ideal Possible Self* (What people aspire to be or to do), *Possible Self* (what people might be able to be or do) and what people are afraid of becoming (*The Feared Self*). The Possible Self changes throughout life, involving complex or simple visions or realistic future representations. It acts as a self-regulator on the basis of an optimistic belief in change but it is contingent on the existence of several conditions. The theory is relevant and significant for understanding adult learners' development and transformation ([Frazier and Hooker, 2006](#); [Rossiter, 2007](#))

The L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS)

Possible Selves Theory is at the basis of the L2 Motivational Self system ([Dörnyei, 2009](#);

[Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011](#)), a tripartite dynamic motivational theory of language learners, which views language learning motivation as part of learners' vision and self-concept. *The Ideal L2 Self* involves a strong visionary element and acts as a motivator to reduce the discrepancy between the L2 ideal and the L2 reality. *The Ought-to Self* involves attributes learners believe they ought to have to meet expectations (social, cultural, family etc.) and to avoid negative outcomes. *The Learning Experience* involves "Situated, 'executive' motives" which relate to the learners' environment and the learning experience (e.g. classroom climate, teachers, choice of learning materials, experience of success). The theory acknowledges the complexity of motivational processes and the changing contextual dynamics of the language learning process.

Key educational experiences

In a large qualitative study investigating the impact of education, Yair ([Yair, 2008](#), [2009](#)) challenges the notion of the accumulative nature of education, and defines key educational experiences as "short and intense instructional episodes that students remember to have had a decisive effect on their lives". *Self-discovery* is a key feature in these experiences, which are related to three major contexts in higher education. Firstly, academically challenging circumstances bring about identity transformations, as they expand and challenge existing knowledge, demand higher skills and involve a sense of excitement, control and empowerment. Secondly, the challenge is mediated by educational figures with significant supportive pedagogic ability and "sage wisdom", whose impact is long-lasting in learners' lives and changing identities. Thirdly, the educational experience provides a rehabilitative second chance, especially for students with low self-esteem and negative past educational experiences. This positive experience creates a sense of opening doors and building bridges towards academic studies and it brings about meaningful educational and biographical turning points.

Central themes emerging from the study

Two central themes which relate to the participants' experiences were chosen. Most of the participants were already taking university courses at the time of the interviews, and were thus able to both describe their **university experience** and relate it to their **experiences in the English course**.

The university experience: The first chance at fulfilling the dream

The prime motivator for joining the access program, even for those who decided to take English first, is presented by the participants as an intrinsic, intellectual and psychological drive to finally fulfil a life-long dream. Phrases like "I've always wanted to study", and "It's been my dream" appear in all the interviews. The theme of dream fulfillment is almost always intertwined with the participants' life story and in particular, with their educational histories, often characterized by a sense of missed opportunities, combined with feelings of academic inadequacy and awe. Instrumental motivations, such as professional advancement are rarely presented as significant, but participants do refer to family changes and other turning points in their personal or professional lives. All the participants perceive the Ma'ale access program as a decisive factor and a significant "door opener", providing them with the first chance "to taste" academic life. Noga (a medical secretary):

Look, I wanted to study all my life and all my life I've been taking courses. I've always been afraid of academic studies because I thought I wasn't good enough at it and that I won't succeed. ...

I really wanted something deep and I had a crisis at work ...that really gave me a slap in the face, a slap... and I decided - wait a minute I can definitely try something now ... I

knew about the program but I never dared ... I said I'm going. I've got to get over my fears.

The 'Academic Self'

The term 'The Academic Self' is used in the analysis to describe the participants' perception of their learner identity, which is shaped by and reflected through experiences in the educational system, by formal and informal further education and through the intellectual challenges and pleasures of university courses.

Many participants reflect negatively or critically on their school experiences, portraying a picture of educational deprivation, failure to diagnose learning difficulties, inadequate language learning and unqualified teachers in a variety of educational frameworks, from Kibbutz schools to a Yeshiva. Many participants see their schooling years as a precursor for their perceived academic inadequacy and as a barrier for higher education. However, participants also perceive of themselves as life-long learners, motivated by on-the-job further education opportunities and by personal interest. Sie (administrative assistant at the university):

"[Higher education] was and is my good dream. During childhood I was busy with survival. I came to the country at age 10 and it took me a long time to understand the language because we didn't have Ulpan (language school) then. You could say that until I finished elementary school, from my point of view I didn't read the language, but from the moment I could, I haven't stopped studying. I never studied in a formal framework, but I always took courses and more topics related to my job. So [Ma'ale] was a wonderful opportunity to go back to formal schooling.

Challenge and self-discovery

Since the Ma'ale program is an inclusive model, in which mature students take regular university courses, the process of adjustment proved particularly challenging to many of the participants. They describe cognitive challenges (e.g. memorizing, language skills), difficulties learning the "rules of the academic game" (e.g. academic writing and studying skills), affective challenges (e.g. stress, self-doubt) and logistical challenges. However, these are counter-balanced by a sense of deep satisfaction which is related to two major perceptions of the university experience: a rejuvenating intellectual enrichment, and an arena for self-discovery and self-fulfillment.

'Therapy for the soul', 'freshness', 'new horizons' and 'inner enrichment' are some of the expressions used by participants to describe a newly found "connectedness" between their interests, past knowledge and newly acquired knowledge. Participants perceive their university experience as an opportunity for discovering and developing their repressed academic potential and as a space for transformation in their outlook and beliefs. In addition, participants enjoyed, for the most part, studying together with younger students and even felt that their age, life experience and "maturity" were advantageous.

The English (EAP) course experience

The English course experience is intertwined with the narrative of "the first chance" and the notion of 'the English self-concept'. During the course an additional story evolves from the complex learning process, the motivation to complete the course and the change and development which take place. Shoshana (University librarian):

When I failed a few times, wow, it killed me. I saw my world crumbling, my world crumbling. And that my whole dream - it will be difficult for me to reach it. But afterwards, when I already got [good grades], I recuperated, I said 'No, here, I'm capable, I can'. So

it's all a struggle, it's not simple. It's a struggle within a struggle, of providing and of everything, and it's a single-parent family

The second chance: Overcoming "the English barrier"

Central to the participants' 'English Self-Concept' is the metaphor of "the English barrier", which is used in several different senses by the participants to describe what they judge to be a linguistic inadequacy, a result of poor teaching in school and most significantly, a fear of failure "to pass the exemption" required in higher education. The English course is viewed against the background of this educational history, long periods of disuse and generally negative attitudes towards studying English. This kind of 'Anglophobia' is very prevalent among people of that generation in Israel. For many, especially those entering at the basic level, the course is a daunting challenge. The institutional requirement is seen as an unfair additional hurdle, and the participants express ambivalence towards the dominance of English in academic studies in Israeli universities. The need for reading proficiency and mastery of English, however, is not challenged.

Despite criticism towards specific aspects of the course, the modified EAP course is perceived as a "second chance", and by many, "the only chance", to "lift the English barrier" and "The Exemption" is a meaningful accomplishment in light of the participants' starting point and their considerable investment.

The changing 'English self-concept': Emergent motivations and attitudinal transformations

Although the prime motivation at the outset of the course is an instrumental, "no choice" motivation (institutional requirement), the dynamics and nature of the course create emergent motivations and the course turns into a prime or additional motivational enhancer for academic studies. Moreover, the learners, for the most part, undergo a transformative attitudinal change towards English during and after the course.

Four major emergent motivations represent the dynamic process of interaction between the specific learning environment in this course and the learners evolving English and Academic Selves.

Relational motivators refer to an unusual relationship these learners all had with Ruth, who consistently played the part of "the enabler" and "confidence builder" and whom many participants credit for their success. Equally supportive and sustaining motivator is the group and in particular, a form of cooperative learning in which knowledge – English and general – is gained and shared communally.

Connectedness is a central and significant motivational concept taken from the interviews and it is strongly related to the intellectual contribution of the course, to the links with the academic content and intellectual demands of other university courses, and to the participants' previous knowledge and life experiences. At least in part, it explains the deep involvement of these students and their enhanced interest in the reading materials.

Developmental motivators are strongly related to temporal and progress-related factors which boost motivation (e.g. grades, improved vocabulary and reading speed). ***Personal-affective motivators*** are related to the transformational change towards studying English. The elements of emergent enjoyment and self-confidence are particularly significant in light of the participants' great fear of English. Lilach (administrator):

After a test, when you look and read the test text and you say 'wow, I can whiz through it'. It floods me with unbelievable happiness, because, again, English was my 'Achilles Heel' ...

The transformational narrative shared by the majority of the participants is related to Mezirow's "Transformational Learning" ([Mezirow, 1991](#)) although it is attitudinal more than conceptual. Almost all the participants describe a course progression along three stages: *stage of apprehension and anxiety, gradual progress and distinct turning points, accomplishment and future plans* – although boundaries between them are very diffuse. At the time of the interviews all participants felt a profound change in attitude towards studying and reading in English, though not necessarily towards their willingness to communicate in the language.

The teacher's perspective

A different, and sometimes more critical perspective is offered by Ruth, who has taught all 4 cohorts, and focuses on the students' abilities vs. their English self-concept, their expectations from the course and the group dynamics.

Ruth divides the students into different groups. The first group consists of students with high expectations. These students were generally confident and their level of English was higher than the average. They had succeeded in other courses and they read extensively in Hebrew. In this group, those students whose expectations were met exited the course with a sense of satisfaction, contributed to class discussion and were patient with and encouraging towards the slower learners. Those whose expectations were not met were competitive and frustrated by the weaker students.

In contrast is the group of students with low initial expectations of themselves and of the course. While they were often 'objectively' weaker than the average student, there were a few who underestimated or were unaware of their ability. Some students in this group nevertheless left with a sense of achievement. They invested in the course, became more confident as they improved academically and with time, changed their self-perception and were able to overcome the barrier of English exemption. Other students left the course with a sense of failure. They appear to have poor literacy skills in Hebrew and are consequently challenged by their other courses. They were unsure of their place in academia and were unwilling, or in some cases unable, to invest in the English course. In the best case other students were supportive and helped them squeak through, so for them, group dynamics were crucial.

Conclusion

This paper focuses on the interaction between the 'academic-self' and the 'English-self' of mature students who embark on a parallel, 'first chance' challenging journey of adjusting to the academic demands of university courses and the struggle to succeed in their 'second chance' to overcome "the English barrier" in their EAP course. Unlike studies which emphasize a sense of marginality and alienation of mature students in higher education (e.g. [Bowl, 2001](#); [Quinnan, 1997](#)), participants project a feeling of inclusion and empowerment. Academic courses are viewed as a source of intellectual rejuvenation and a path to knowledge, despite cognitive and other challenges. Both their 'first chance' and their 'second chance' experiences are perceived as rehabilitative, in light of their disadvantaged educational histories and both provide an arena for self-discovery and a chance to pursue and fulfil a Possible Self. The English course in particular, is viewed by many as a "key experience" and a "turning point" ([Yair, 2008](#)). Failure in English is part of the participants' Feared Self, and success in the course is perceived as an affirmation of

the participants' academic self-efficacy and their vision of themselves as better language learners (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011). To some degree, the EAP class plays the role of "the connecting class" (Kasworm, 2008) and from a motivational point of view, "no choice" motivation and negative attitudes towards learning English can turn into positive and motivating forces when the language learning experience is perceived as rehabilitative and connected to the world of knowledge.

However, the study also raises some questions as to the role of English as a "gate keeper" and a further stumbling block for mature students entering HE. In addition, it raises questions about the possible gap between the students' perceptions of themselves as learners, as reflected in the interviews, and the observations and insights of the practitioner. Mature learners should be studied within a multiple context of their own lives, educational histories and actual learning and teaching perspectives.

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Troubling perspectives: Learning about insider/outsider viewpoints from fiction

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‘Without a book in your lap, how can you build empathy for other people?’

Philippa Dowding, Canadian author

Teaching learners about diversity is never easy because it involves troubling taken-for-granted assumptions and understandings about the world in which we live. Considering diversity entails an exploration of difficult issues such as individual and systemic forms of power and privilege. This paper begins with an exploration of the concept of insider/outsider and takes up how it has been used in the adult education and lifelong learning literature and then how it has been used in fiction. It then provides a brief overview of our research study. The paper then brings insights shared by some of the authors we interviewed about the insider/outsider perspective. It draws upon Mezirow’s concept of transformative learning to consider how it may be a useful resource for educators committed to teaching learners about diversity.

Insider/outsider in adult education

The idea of insider/outsider has been used by numerous scholars as a way to explore diversity concerns. In adult education, this idea has been used to explore minority issues and often draws upon a narrative or biographical approach (Smith, 2004; West, 2016).

Insider/outsider metaphors can help to examine the often ambivalent and challenging situations that members of minority groups must learn to navigate in various educational contexts. For example, Smith (2004) comments that African American scholars in universities often find that they ‘must act both at the margins and at the center’ (p.61). As a visible minority faculty member, he says ‘I gain access to decision-making processes at higher levels than many of my white colleagues. At the same time, I am silenced because of my status as marginal, invisible or token minority’ (p.62).

In a qualitative study on Fulbright scholars, Eddy (2014) explores the beneficial ways in which the concept of insider/outsider can broaden the perspective of faculty who engage in working, living, and teaching in a different country and culture. Her research looked at the experience of American and Irish scholars doing exchange work in countries with different cultural expectations, she but did not take up other social-structural issues such as race or ethnicity differences. Eddy (2014) found that many of the scholars she interviewed encountered unexpected or unanticipated behavior and attitudes in their host countries based on differences in distinct cultural norms and that ‘faculty experienced a move from expert/insider to novice/outsider as a result of the new international context’ (p.24). This experience challenged faculty to view their own taken-for-granted assumptions about education differently. Eddy argues that ‘when faculty members work abroad, they incorporate their new experiences into their underlying schemas and ways of knowing’ (p.21). Upon their return, she argues that there can be benefits in that they are more likely to be open to internationalization and alternative approaches to teaching and learning.

Fiction, diversity, and insider/outsider perspectives

We are interested in looking at how fiction provides opportunities for learners to reflect on the role of insiders and outsiders to explore diversity issues, which may include race, culture, gender, ability, or sexual orientation. Through fiction, learners can gain insights into situations or cultures from the vantage point of different characters. As readers they come to the same stories from various backgrounds and perspectives, which will affect the way they may interpret or understand the issues being addressed in a novel. From these assorted perspectives, a fictional account may serve as a bridge to engage in dialogue to discuss differences.

When writing fiction, authors determine whether they will write from a vantage point that mirrors their own experiences of the world, or whether they will diverge and explore a different persona or character. Fiction writers will often consciously take themes which explore difference, positionality, and commonalities. Readers can also debate then why authors make these decisions and consider how seeing the world from the vantage point of various characters provides insights into how people interact with others and make significant decisions, ultimately shaping the way that the story evolves. In fiction, you can experience the lifeworld of different characters by listening to their inner thoughts, accessing their memories, and feeling physical sensations of their bodies.

Critical educators argue that all too often, multiculturalism has been taken up in ways that celebrate and emphasize stereotypical versions of cultural identity (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). Fiction, by contrast, often challenges stereotypes that gloss over difference by exploring underlying cultural belief systems and practices, for example, in relation to assumptions about how to raise children; roles of extended family; spatial norms; attitudes toward leadership; notions of beauty; the importance of time. Since it is often through the minutia of details in setting, small ambivalences in attitudes, and fine attention to mannerisms that fictional worlds are built upon, characterization and the nuances in language in fictional narratives can successfully engage learners in deeper levels of cultural analysis.

Martínez-Roldán (2008) argues that literature is a tool 'to engage teachers in learning about others' cultures and about themselves' (p.246). She examines the positionalities of students and educators in a teacher education context. Glenn (2012) remarks that controversy in discussing fictionalized narratives is a two-sided coin: 'Connection is comfortable, and the identification of commonalities across culture helps us feel united. Difference, however, holds the potential for dissension' (p.345). The relational feeling of being an insider or an outsider is often more poignant when reading fiction than in typical every day or scholarly conversations. It is like a spotlight is shone upon your own identity. Since you, as the reader, are forced to view the world through the eyes of the narrator, who may be the protagonist, a side character, or omniscient – you often either feel a sense of union or discord with that view. It is almost a visceral experience.

By using literature as a tool of lifelong learning, a panacea of feelings may be experienced which cannot always be anticipated by adult educators facilitating the learning experience. This visceral response can be a powerful means then to harness a transformative learning experience to invite learners to explore new frames of reference, even if doing so is not always a comfortable experience, or easy to talk about with peers whose experiences might be quite distinct.

Research study

This paper draws upon research from our SSHRC (Social Science and Humanities

Research Council) study on fiction writing, creativity, and lifelong learning. Thus far we have conducted over thirty interviews with successfully published authors. We use a life history approach to the author interviews because this provides us with insights into the various factors that have shaped their learning experiences over the years as they have developed their careers as fiction writers. We are interested in delving into their creative processes as well as their biographies, and have found that many writers are also able to share their pedagogical approaches to teaching the art of creative writing.

While most interviews are with Canadian authors, for comparative purposes, we are also interviewing writers in the United Kingdom and the United States. We use purposive sampling to select authors from a range of geographical locations, culture, and gender. In the larger study, we are also conducting interviews with key informants who run innovative programming or events connected to fiction writing, both physical and online learning sites. Although it is common for authors to work in several genres, we focused on authors who have published in these three areas: (a) literary fiction; (b) crime fiction; (c) children/young adult fiction.

Insiders/Outsiders and writing fiction

When writing fiction, authors can choose to create characters whose experiences differ significantly from their own lives. Yet in many instances, authors will create characters whose experiences draw upon insider knowledge or perspectives gained in their own lives. Through the life history interviews with fiction authors it is interesting to explore how personal biography and lived experience shapes some of the decisions that authors make around the development of the characters in their novels and the stories that they choose to tell. For example, Bradley Somer, a Canadian literary author who writes a dark critique of the beauty industry from the perspective of a male model who ends up partially dismembered in the trunk of a car, says:

I've never been asked the question, and I think it's the question that should be asked, is why a male model instead of a female model? And I think that the reason I chose that is of course that it's easier to identify with male thoughts and feelings for me. It's a lot harder to write outside of your own gender or sex.

As an archeologist who wrote this book while out in the oil sands camps in Northern Alberta, his own lived experience was significantly different from that of his protagonist. Yet although Somer was an outsider to the beauty industry, he found that it was easier to create a character who was male because he felt that he could get inside his head and understand his thought processes better than if he had chosen to write from the perspective of a female protagonist.

Sometimes the decision to write from the insider perspective is important because it validates one's lived experience. Melanie Little talks about the significance of winning a writing contest:

It made me realize that in my own voice I have something to offer. So it's no coincidence that my first collection of stories went on to be quite autobiographical...as a woman writer you hear a lot of snarky remarks, of kitchen sink realism and women's stories, and just real denigration of writing one's life. I think I have always had pretensions to greatness. I think we all do or we don't become writers...I always worried I was setting the bar too low by using personal material in my work that was an Aha moment [when I realized] that was not true ... it wasn't setting the bar low at all, it was being real on the page.

For Little, she draws upon her own gendered experiences to inform her writing. For example, in *Confidence* (2003), Little loosely bases the narrative on her own childhood in working-class northern Ontario. These fictional narratives develop strong characters that readers, whether they love or despise these characters, want to read on, compelled and drawn in by the story.

The outsider perspective creates different tensions, such as when writing from an alternative cultural perspective. Martha Baillie talking about her writing project:

In my most recent book a young man leaves Germany in 1980 and goes for a long hike on Baffin Island. I'm interested in how time sped up for the Inuit when Europeans first arrived, how overnight they were made into people you could display in a zoo. I wanted to send a European to the far North and turn the tables on him and make him an object of scrutiny.

Later, in reflecting on the process of writing this book, Baillie says:

I was very uncomfortable and very cognizant that I'm a non-First Nations person writing about a history that has been gravely distorted multiple times. So I wanted to be very clear that the entire novel is being told by someone ready to admit that someone else looking at this material with a different set of ambitions, with a different set of desires, would be telling a different story.

In her novel, Baillie creates a character whose life is very much outside of her own experience, and she is also looking at the experiences of the Inuit from an outsider perspective. But by trying to reverse the roles so that the Inuit are the insiders in the culture in which the protagonist finds himself, as the author she also challenges readers to question their taken-for-granted interpretations and assumptions of belonging, identity, and privilege.

Insider/Outsiders and reading fiction

Reading is also a means to explore the issues of insider/outside to consider diverse perspectives. Author Carrienne Leung explains how books became her way of learning about Canadian culture:

I was born in Hong Kong and we immigrated to Canada when I was almost six years old. I started grade one in Canada without knowing any English at all so it was a pretty traumatic few years. But what I think was that how I was able to acquire language quite quickly was through my love of books and my love of story.

By engaging with fiction, Leung was also able to work through the difficult emotional labour of feeling like an outsider in a new country. She explains:

One of my favorite writers is Jean Little. I wrote her fan mail years later as an adult about what she meant to me because when I first came to Canada I felt incredibly lonely and isolated. She was one of the few writers in Children's Literature that talked about children in pain in a way that made me feel not alone, you know? So the importance of books for me even at that young of an age, I really understood what it could do. They were friends, right? They were ways in which to navigate through the world.

Teaching fiction and transformative learning

Reading or writing fiction could be used as a strategy to foster transformative learning which Mezirow (2003) defines as ‘learning that transforms problematic frames of reference — sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) — to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change’ (p.58). Using fiction as a resource for adult learning goes beyond sharing personal interactions to use diverse stories to gain insight into ‘taken-for-granted frames of reference (that may) include fixed interpersonal relationships, political orientations, cultural bias, ideologies, schemata, stereotyped attitudes and practices, occupational habits of mind, religious doctrine, [and] moral-ethical norms’ (Mezirow, 2003, p.59).

Fiction, as a tool for the adult educator, can be used to foster a disposition amongst adult learners to participate in sensitive conversations about cultural diversity. Transformative learning considers how ‘disorienting dilemmas’ can challenge adults to begin to explore alternative meaning frames. Using stories from around the world can expose adult learners to different ways of being and to normalize diverse cultural experiences rather than always working from the narrow narrative of the societal dominant discourses we are individually immersed in. Novels set in other cultures, stories told from the perspective of characters who practice a different religion, or plots that delve into complicated moral or ethical issues, are all fodder for stimulating transformative learning opportunities. This is particularly true in democratic learning environments, where adult educators can encourage respectful dialogue and critical investigation to have learners to reflect and deliberate on taken-for-granted assumptions.

Implications for adult educators

Butterwick and Selman (2012), whose work focuses on popular theatre, nevertheless articulate an important point related to any form of storytelling: ‘Story leads to meaning, with remembered events layering self-knowledge and knowledge of others’ (p.66). Thus, bridging between prior knowledge and experiences to what is new can deepen cultural understanding. Sun (2013), for example, recommends that adult educators working with international students should “create *connections* to their (the international students’) learning and life, such as asking and applying events and stories from their culture to help them feel more like an *insider* than an *outsider* (Sun, 2012, p.210). Like Butterwick and Selman, Sun posits that adult educators need to devise their pedagogy to use learners’ current understandings to bridge into new concepts. In the same way, fiction could be used to promote discussion amongst learners who may come from different ethnic or cultural background to help provide insight into different values or belief systems.

Craft (2014), drawing upon Eisner (2002), highlights the ‘special and motivational role of the arts in a more flexible purposing of education through curiosity allowing for the unexpected, together with arts’ capacity for refining perception” (p.28). In our own classes, we have used fiction to teach about diversity. Asking adult learners to infer by reading the subtext of any story is an important first step to cultural sensitivity. In posing questions about the frames of reference for any story, adult educators can also avoid reducing cultural diversity to the ‘exotic’ or ‘the Other’ (Said, 1979). A more nuanced understanding of diversity requires attention to the intersections of identity and power that shape human experience. Through fiction we can see how not only readers and authors, but also the characters that live in the pages of novels, can each be positioned at different times in these roles of insiders/outsiders.

West (2016) talks about developing ‘democratic sensibilities’ which ultimately ‘has to do

with cultivating qualities of space that might nurture people's capacities, in multicultural communities, to remain open to difference' (p.4). The notion of insider/outsider is also useful for educators who strive to incorporate creative and innovative approaches in professional education such as business or medicine, for example, where students can read or write fictional accounts to consider how the vantage points of clients or patients may differ because of perceptions related to age or ability, or beliefs connected to religious or cultural backgrounds.

From a feminist perspective, these questions of insider/outsider status draw attention to continued inequities that disadvantage women adult learners. Blackmore (2006) observes that unfortunately, today 'literacy is increasingly treated as a vocational skill rather than a means of personal empowerment', noting that in the past 'literacy classes were as much about personal development and community as facilitating access to further training for work for women of non-English-speaking backgrounds' (p.16). Rao and Robinson-Pant (2006) advocate for "a rights-based approach to adult education [that] can help women to mobilise as a group to tackle gender-based oppression, whether in relation to domestic violence, corruption or economic activities' (p.135). Feminists see that for education to truly meet the needs of women, lifelong learning, which has its roots in a long tradition of critical engagement with larger societal power dynamics must consider the intersectionality of gender, race, social class, and ability as central to any learning endeavor. Fiction offers a window into such power dynamics.

For adult educators who might be experimenting with teaching by having students read fiction, some questions that could get the conversation rolling include: 'What if this story were told from another character's viewpoint?'; 'What descriptive details help us to picture this place?'; 'What is the history or political context that provides a background to the story?'; 'What does the reaction of the characters say about the societal norms?'; 'What do I feel when I read this particular passage?' These types of questions are a starting point for using fiction to explore diversity. We all have biases, which are difficult to overcome. Thus, as adult educators, we need to draw upon a range of pedagogical resources, including fiction, to reach students whose thoughts on diversity have as of yet remained unchallenged. Through using the narrative arts, such as fiction, opportunities for transformative learning about diversity issues may be fostered.

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Educators of sexual and gender minority young adults as anti-oppression allies

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Sexual and gender minorities compose a diverse population that, among others, includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer Indigenous individuals. This multivariate population increases in complexity in intersections with race, ethnocultural location, class, and other relational differences (Grace 2015). In Canada, Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* safeguards the equality rights of sexual and gender minority (SGM) citizens and guarantees them individual protection against discrimination. Nevertheless, SGM young adults (aged 20 to 29 years) remain vulnerable and are often marginalized in Canadian communities and institutions, including education and healthcare. Ample evidence of the adversity, trauma, and negative outcomes that they experience is poignantly recounted in *Youth and young adults: life in transition*, which is the first ever national research report that the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada (2011) issued on the state of public health of this constituency. As this report disturbingly points out, SGM young people are commonly at inordinate risk of experiencing physical and electronic bullying, verbal and sexual harassment, and physical violence in institutional and community contexts. They are also more likely to ideate about, attempt, or complete suicide. In the face of variously experienced stressors and risks, SGM young adults also face more comprehensive health problems, which the research report states are exacerbated by a lack of adequate and appropriate healthcare and educational policies, healthcare and social services, protective measures, and educational and community programs.

In light of these evidence-based outcomes, we assert that educators and peers of SGM young adults need to be allies who focus on recognition and accommodation of the vulnerable. For us, to be considered allies means that these educators and peers need to be advocates and change agents who, in turn, nurture and motivate SGM young people to be advocates and change agents in their own lives and, when they feel ready, in the lives of others still at risk. In discussing these dynamics in this paper, we begin by discussing the still pervasive need for allies in post-*Charter* Canada. We then consider what it means to be an ally and do ally work. Here we speak to the importance of SGM young adults finding allies across caring professions including education, social work, and counselling. We conclude with a critical social perspective on becoming an ally, drawing particularly on the theorizing and practice of allyship researcher Anne Bishop.

The SGM need for allies in post-*Charter* Canada

While the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees equality rights for sexual minorities and, in its spirit as a living document, gender minorities (Grace 2015), SGM individuals still experience the failure of systems including education and healthcare to recognize and accommodate them (Grace 2015; Stonefish & Lafreniere 2015). In Canada, as elsewhere, anti-progressive political, ideological, and historical forces, as they are driven by ignorance and fear, fuel heterosexism, genderism, and homo/bi/transphobia (Dewey, Schlosser, Kinney & Burkard 2014; Eichler 2010; Grace & Wells 2016). Daily, 'heterosexism, [genderism] and homo[bi/trans]phobia ... [spawn] a public pedagogy of negation, erasure and violence that violates queer identity' (Grace & Benson 2000, p.90).

The still pervasive cultural assault on queer integrity has the potential to have lasting and

devastating consequences, particularly for vulnerable SGM young people deemed “unable to conform” to the heterosexual [and gender] norm[s]’ (Stonefish & Lafreniere 2015, p.5). Thus, even in liberal democracies like Canada, allies acting in solidarity with the multivariate SGM population remain vital cultural workers and contributors to efforts to transgress institutional and cultural homo/bi/transphobia, end enacted stigma, and achieve equality for SGM individuals (Grace 2015; Rostosky, Black, Riggle & Rosenkrantz 2015). Allies can assist in coalition building and in educating others about the impacts of heterosexual and cisgender privileging in mainstream culture (Rostosky, Black, Riggle & Rosenkrantz 2015). This work has to start with self-education that engenders self-efficacy. Gillian, an ally we interviewed, attests to this when she speaks about her personal learning journey to be, become, and belong as an ally:

I feel the queer rights movement is the current social movement. I really wanted to get involved. I thought there was a place for straight allies. I thought I’m just going to go ahead and jump right in, start learning, and see what I can do to bridge the gap between the two worlds. That’s how I got involved.

It’s good to question your assumptions, and I think working with queer people helps me grapple with my own identity. It’s a learning experience to walk into a room and have everyone, unless they know you, think, ‘She must be gay or she must be bisexual’. It’s a reversal in that you are assumed queer until you identify yourself as straight. I think it’s really great to have that experience. I’m really appreciative of it. That’s because heterosexual privilege is inherent. You don’t really question it, and you don’t even recognize that you have it until you live in the queer world for a while. You hear these stories about people having to struggle with coming out, and having to struggle with finding themselves on a spectrum. That makes you really question heterosexual privilege, what you can take for granted, and what everybody else you meet takes for granted.

Gillian’s self-reflexivity as she analyzes her allyship is vital because, even conceptually, the ally position is not without critique. Mizock and Page (2016) argue that subordinate and dominant statuses built into an ally designation risk replicating and reinforcing power inequities across groups, while also positioning allies as outsiders to oppression. They assert this scenario reduces ally awareness of being complicit in a system of inequality: ‘By positioning oneself as ally to a social group, an ally becomes situated outside of a problem. This outsider position may not fully capture the universally toxic effects of oppression and motivate effective engagement in social action’ (p.26).

Being an ally and doing ally work

Basically, an ally is someone who stands up for human and civil rights by spreading awareness of a subjugated group among members of a dominant group, and by supporting the activism of members of the subjugated group (Alberta Education 2013; Mizock & Page 2016). Gaffney (2016) relates that taking on an ally role means broadly recognizing systems of oppression, whether or not the ally belongs to an oppressed group, and standing in solidarity with anyone who is targeted or marginalized. There is a caveat: ‘While (any individual) can become an ally, the journey might look different depending on identity, experience, and familiarity with issues of power and privilege’ (Gaffney 2016, p.44). Thus, an ally needs to engage in a critical examination of the ways power and privilege work in one’s daily life, and this awareness can become an important tool in ally work that assists a subjugated group to achieve specific objectives in the quest for social change (Mizock & Page 2016). In this regard, ally building is an ecological and contextual dynamic. It is about individual identification and location, social development, assessing

needs, building relationships across differences, and anticipating actions that variously position allies as advocates, agents, and activists who affirm and assist (Grace 2015; Moe, Perera-Diltz, Sepulveda & Finnerty 2014).

Doing ally work in SGM contexts, an ally is proactive in making sense of the issues that SGM individuals face in relation to 'the emphasis placed on heteronormativity and strict gender roles and gender binary, the intersectionality of identities, and the consequences of allowing LGBTQ discrimination to persist unchallenged' (McCabe 2014, p.1). Knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy acquired on the journey to allyship, then, may facilitate individual and cultural competence, enhancing citizenship and better equipping allies to contribute in a pluralistic society (Craig, Doiron & Dillon 2015; Rostosky et al. 2015). Gillian provided us with this example of contributing as an ally at her university:

We had a couple of our Day of Silence (to promote SGM awareness) posters half torched with a lighter but, in a way, it worked to our advantage because someone used them to make another poster with the caption 'Homophobia at work. We are not imagining.' We used the new poster when reporters, interviewing us about the Day of Silence and the ways SGM people are silenced, asked, 'Isn't homophobia over?' We were able to say, 'Here is some visual evidence that it's not.' Turning the torched posters into a new poster became a way to talk about homophobia still at work. It was a good way to teach people.

While it could be argued that one does not have to do anything extraordinary to be recognized as an ally (Ji, Du Bois & Finnissy 2009), Gillian's cultural work indicates there is a useful distinction to be made between ally and ally-activist. Eichler (2010) suggests that becoming an ally-activist for SGM persons requires two transformations. The first is attitudinal, which involves a paradigm shift away from seeing SGM people as less than cisgender heterosexuals. The ally unlearns anti-SGM viewpoints. The second transformation is vocational whereby the ally is called to action as an activist motivated to help address the harm done by heterosexist, genderist, and homo/bi/transphobic systems and structures. Gillian provided this perspective:

Regarding my role as an ally, one thing that I always do is step back a bit when I am listening to queer people tell their stories. I have always kept that in mind from the beginning—my experiences should not usurp the people that I am listening to because, as a straight ally, there are always things to learn. I want to do what I can to help, but I think it is important for allies to realize that we are allies. We cannot be patronizing in the sense that 'I am going to help you out.' Take feminism, for example. Sometimes the Take Back the Night movement wants men to support them, but they want them babysitting the kids or cheering them on from the sidelines—not walking down the street because that defeats the purpose. I think the strength of the queer community is you want the strength to come from within—you don't want 'us and them'. I think allies have an important, albeit secondary, role in queer activism. I always try to keep that in mind.

Straight-identifying allies associating with sexual and gender minorities can face numerous challenges. For instance, some allies can be conflicted as they experience dissonance between their pro-SGM stance and their religious beliefs, worrying they may become disconnected from their faith groups (Dewey et al. 2014; Ji, Du Bois & Finnissy 2009). Some allies feel like hypocrites and doubt their credibility as allies simply because they do not have an SGM family member (Ji 2007). Allies who lack knowledge about SGM issues can feel apprehensive about making mistakes when interacting with SGM persons (Ji et al. 2009). Allies, particularly cisgender, heterosexual males, may also fear the potential

consequences of being perceived as non-heterosexual (Dewey, Schlosser, Kinney & Burkard 2014; Ji 2007, Ji et al. 2009; Watson, Varjas, Meyers & Graybill 2010). Indeed, allies may also struggle with their own 'coming-out' process in becoming allies and activists (Ji et al. 2009). To counter such fears, Ji and his colleagues (2009) found that allies need role models to help them 'identify and clarify their internal struggles about becoming LGBT allies' (p.412), and to provide positive feedback confirming their credibility and effectiveness as allies.

While an ally designation can have these potential pitfalls, their existence can actually trigger reflexivity and knowledge building as allies analyze being, becoming, belonging, and acting in ally and ally-activist roles. In this process, allies can grapple with such risks as tokenism, complacency, complicity, and paternalism. Allies must first harness a strong sense of their own identity and privilege, but acknowledging personal privilege is not enough: 'When trying to become a better ally, self-education should come first.... There is always more to learn about different identity groups and about how others experience oppression; without this knowledge, expressions of allyship can ring hollow' (Ali Michael in Gaffney 2016, p.45). Allies to SGM persons can acquire needed knowledge through training programs, which are most effective when they encourage discussion about sensitive issues affecting sexual and gender minorities, focus on skill rehearsal, and take advantage of ally-to-ally mentorship and role modelling (Craig et al. 2015; Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine 2013). Understanding how ecological systems function, grasping the intrinsically relational nature of social justice work, and valuing an intersectional model that recognizes commonalities and differences in how oppression operates in relational contexts can enable allies to pool their efforts and engage in broad-based social action across communities (Mizock & Page 2016; Watson et al. 2010).

Training educators and other caring professionals like social workers and counsellors to be allies means providing them with knowledge, understanding, skills, and resources to recognize and accommodate SGM young people as a multivariate population exhibiting an array of needs, issues, and apprehensions (Case & Meier 2014; Grace 2015, 2016a & b). Such preparation has not been, but should be a norm in pre-service and continuing professional development across caring professions (Grace 2015, 2016a). Ethically, higher educational institutions that prepare educators and other caring professionals have a responsibility to provide this preparation as a foundation for appropriate professional conduct that attends to sexual and gender diversity as a multidimensional social reality (Grace 2016a). In this regard, caring professional preparation in higher education programs and subsequent sustained continuing professional development need to focus on providing just and equitable treatment for sexual and gender minorities, laying a foundation for allyship that positions caring professionals as knowing supporters.

Concluding perspective: on becoming an ally

Allies of sexual and gender minorities should compose a diverse group that is demographically complex in terms of sexual, gender, cultural, and other differences, reflecting the multivariate SGM population they acknowledge, accept, and support. As advocates, agents, pedagogues, practitioners, and cultural workers, these allies work toward a socially cohesive world that recognizes and accommodates those historically disenfranchised for having variant sexual and gender identities not conforming to heterosexual and cisgender norms. Their will to act to achieve social justice for sexual and gender minorities is driven by hope and the possibility of a better world (Grace 2013). For allies of sexual and gender minorities, following Bishop's (2015) manifesto for becoming an ally, there is no hierarchy of oppressions. There are just recognized and pervasive oppressions perpetuated by cultures and social systems and structures that subjugate and

blame those exhibiting sexual and gender differences (Grace 2015).

Bishop (2015) asserts, '(W)e are all part of one vast network of life' (p.9). In keeping with this logic, she contends 'that all oppressions are interdependent, all come from the same worldview, and none can be solved in isolation' (pp.9-10). In her conceptualization of this structural worldview, Bishop maintains it is one in which people are perennially conditioned to 'see themselves as individuals in an ahistorical, binary reality' (p.112). In terms of sexuality and gender then, we all struggle together in a world where binaries like heterosexual-homosexual and cisgender male-female pit a dominant category against a subjugated category, confining difference to a matter of one or the other. There is no room for categories in between or beyond. Anti-oppression allies fight against such inequities and the denial of space and place for differences. Bishop positions these allies as learners always willing to learn more as a basis for engaging in strategic action. Allies of sexual and gender minorities work to transgress sexual and gender binaries and they seek transformation of systems and structures regulated by these hegemonic dualities (Grace 2013, 2015). To become an ally, Bishop stresses the importance of being a cultural worker who walks 'towards your fear to find your power' (p.94). This requires allies to take a reflexive approach whereby action emanates from personal and peer comprehension of the dynamics and impacts of individual liberation struggles and intersecting oppressions. It also requires allies to reflect on their value to groups involved in liberation struggles. Bishop reflects, 'I observe the groups I belong to interacting creatively with allies or mistreating allies, and I can use my own experience as an ally to understand what is going on and figure out what to do about it' (p.101). In this regard, she points out that oppressed groups should see allies as a useful source of information and insights that can assist them in developing a strategy for action that considers desired changes, potential change makers, important constituencies, and available leverage points for enabling the process. Bishop adds, 'The allies are already engaged in reflection and action, on a journey of liberation from their own experiences of oppression while taking responsibility for their privilege in the areas where they have it' (p.109).

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Validation of prior learning: An effective means to foster social and labour market inclusion?

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Introduction

The validation and recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (VPL) is a priority of EU educational policies and central to lifelong and life-wide learning. The aim is to strengthen the flexibility of learning pathways to increase labour market inclusion and mobility across Europe. One key objective thereby is to enhance labour market opportunities and educational perspectives for disadvantaged individuals such as the low skilled, unemployed, migrant workers, refugees and individuals with restricted labour market and learning opportunities. Hence, VPL is seen and conceptualised as a tool to enhance social inclusion and labour market mobility of individuals of all age groups. The approach furthermore emphasises the centrality of the individual, placing, in principle at least, the individual and individual needs, interests and benefits at the centre of validation (Cedefop 2015)

In the past two decades, many different VPL initiatives at the national and European level have been started and implemented and have led to the significant advancement of VPL, particularly in terms of creating policy frameworks and piloting validation methods and procedures. Still, VPL in Europe presents a fragmented picture with some countries not yet having engaged in the process. While continued efforts at various levels as well as the development of common European principles for VPL seek to move from fragmentation to stronger coherence, very limited evidence exists concerning the impact and effectiveness of validation and what benefits actually derive for individuals who have completed or accomplished a validation of their prior learning.

In this paper, we will present initial findings from a recently started ERASMUS+ project that evaluates the advancement and effectiveness of VPL policies and practice in Denmark, Germany, Poland and Turkey. The focus thereby is placed on benefits of VPL for the individual and the impact validation has in terms of social inclusion. In the first part, we contextualise the link between validation and social inclusion to then sketch the national approaches of VPL in Denmark, Germany and Poland against European guidelines and developments. In the second part we discuss the potentials of validation to enhance social inclusion on the basis of developments and qualification needs in the sector of care work, where we find a considerable number of low skilled and unskilled (mostly female) workers.

VPL and social inclusion

In the context of promoting lifelong learning, which has influenced international as well as national education policies significantly over the past decades, we can observe a change of understanding of learning and its key processes and elements. The concept of lifelong learning thereby strengthens the idea that a person is learning throughout their entire life and in every context of life. To take account of this multi-dimensionality, education policies started to address and to develop strategies, programmes and qualification frameworks that could support the validation and recognition of competences obtained throughout the lifespan (Bohlinger/Münchhausen 2011). At the European level, lifelong learning is defined along a threefold division: Formal learning, non-formal learning and informal learning. Thereby, formal learning comprises learning that takes place in an organised and

structured educational environment, usually leading to a certificate or diploma, while non-formal learning takes place in similar contexts, but without resulting in obtaining a formal qualification certificate. Informal learning, by contrast, is based on an open, typically non-structured learning process, often taking place in relation to practical activities, including work practice.

During the last decades, informal learning has gained great importance. In the context of vocational and adult education, it is described as being as important as formal learning (Severing 2015). Recognising and validating prior and especially informal learning thereby is considered to foster social inclusion in various ways, particularly as it is set out to increase the labour market mobility and inclusion of individuals and to prevent social isolation (Schöpf 2015). Particularly for the low skilled workers and workers in non-standard employment increasing the transparency and usability of informal learning outcomes can support them in overcoming precarious employment and working conditions. Additionally, in labour market segments and sectors where skills gaps are an issue of concern, the validation of already existing skills and competence of individuals can bring qualified people into work more quickly.

VPL in comparative perspective

In the following, we provide insight into VPL approaches in Denmark, Germany and Poland to facilitate a comparative perspective.

Denmark

In Denmark, the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been on the policy agenda for about 20 years. Based on common principles, a legal framework for validation of prior learning in the adult education and training sector has been in place since 2007, regulating the validation of prior learning by law¹. Thereby, the implementation of the legislation is decentralised in Denmark.

According to Danish law, the assessment of the validation application must be conducted by the educational institution that offers the corresponding study programmes. Other bodies can be in charge of providing information and guidance in a broader perspective, in particular, during the preparation phase of the assessment process. This 'pre-phase' involves providing information and supporting identification and documentation. 'Other bodies' include, among others, trade unions, employers' associations, job-centres, unemployment insurance funds, civic education institutions, study committees, 'eVejledning' (online guidance service) and third sector institutions.

VPL in Denmark has the aim to (i) enable access to formal education; (ii) tailor a study programme or award credits for certain classes up to Masters level; or (iii) award a 'Competence certificate' if the participant meets the requirements of part of an educational programme. Denmark has a comprehensive NQF covering all types and levels of qualifications that can be awarded by public authorities. This eight level framework was adopted in 2009 and referenced to the EQF in 2011. Most of the qualifications in the Danish NQF can also be acquired on the basis of validation. Furthermore, the process of VPL in Denmark explicitly includes the four phases of validation: identification, documentation, assessment and certification (Aagaard, 2015).

Germany

In Germany, VPL is increasingly receiving attention in educational research and practice, not least as a response to the developments of educational policies at the European level.

¹ <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=25349>

However, the German validation landscape remains sketchy and patchwork, particularly as compared to the situation in other European countries with less regulated and formalised education and vocational training systems. Hence, VPL in Germany presents a picture of rather uncoordinated regulations, programmes, processes and projects headed by different authorities and with varying outreach. Common guidelines or a common strategy to establish flexible and transparent validation processes do not exist (Seidel, 2011). Among other reasons, this is due to the highly regulated education system that focuses on formal qualifications and the close linkage between school-based and work-based learning in the framework of the formalised and nationally regulated dual system of vocational education and training (Greinert 2007).² While informal and practice-based learning at the workplace is considered important, it is not taken into account in the context of validation, mainly because it takes place outside of the formal system. Linkages between validation and the German Qualification Framework (DQR), which was developed by an expert committee on the basis of the EQF and adopted in May 2013, is loose. However, the focus on competence of the eight-level DQR matrix could potentially be used for the classification of professional and personal competences acquired in all educational sectors and contexts and facilitate the integration of VPL. Below, we outline three validation approaches that are legally framed.

First, the recognition of prior learning to obtain permission for taking an external examination that forms part of the formal education system: For vocational training, this procedure was established in the 1960s to give people not formally trained under the dual apprenticeship programme the chance to acquire a formal vocational qualification. According to the National Vocational Qualification Law (§45 (2) BBiG) and regulations set up by the chamber of crafts (§37 (2) HwO), people are allowed to apply for taking the final examination without having attended the respective vocational training programme ('Externenprüfung') if they comply with certain requirements, including the proof of relevant work experience covering 1.5 times the duration of the regular training programme. Alternatively, it is also possible to prove that relevant competences have been acquired in other ways.

Second, the recognition of prior learning to obtain access to different learning pathways: Different procedures and pilot projects (e. g. ANKOM³) were developed to recognise prior learning for getting access to or moving between different learning pathways. The aim is to avoid repetition, shorten educational pathways and increase permeability, also between vocational tracks and higher education. The various approaches, which exclusively include access to higher education without holding a University entry qualification, are largely decentralised to the university level.

Third, the recognition of equivalence of prior learning to national education standards and certificates: The Vocational Qualifications Assessment Law (BQFG, also called "Recognition Law") was introduced in April 2012. It guarantees individuals the right to get foreign qualifications recognised by a competent authority within three months as being equal to a respective national qualification. Although the law focuses on assessing and comparing formal qualifications, informally acquired competences and relevant work experience can be considered when formal certificates are missing or are incomplete (see BQFG § 3 section 1). The recognition process is, in the first place, based on assessing relevant documents such as training certificates, certificates of capability and proofs of

² The dual system is characterised by the combination of subject-oriented and general education in vocational schools and company-based training. Depending on their vocational specialisation, apprentices spend about 15% of their training in vocational schools and the remaining time in the company, which also holds employment contracts with the apprentices.

³ <http://ankom.his.de/>

relevant domain-specific work experience acquired in a foreign country or in Germany (see § 3 BQFG section 1). Complementary, competence assessment is also possible based on practical tests, work proofs and interviews. When significant skill gaps impede full recognition, a partial recognition can be awarded that can be supplemented, for example, by further training (Böse et al., 2014).

While VPL in Germany is being promoted and, in principle at least, facilitated by the DQR through the learning outcomes approach, a legislative framework for VPL does not exist and validation procedures have thus far mainly been piloted on a project basis. The outcomes (e. g. of the APEL-procedure) (Merrill & Hill 2003), however, could be used for formally establishing validation processes.

Poland

VPL in Poland has been known for a long time, in particular in the context of vocational qualifications and crafts. For these domains, VPL was legally regulated in 1989. With the resolutions of the European Commission (2004; 2009), validation became a key element in the development of the Polish Qualification Framework, in particular to foster the transparency of qualifications and labour market mobility and flexibility (European Commission 2016). Since 2010, VPL has been introduced more systematically, while the true change in the system was done in 2012 with introducing the possibility of passing an extramural vocational examination (without going through the formal vocational education)⁴.

Overall, several legislative changes gradually lead to the restructuring of the system of which the majority took place between 2012 and 2017 (Duda 2016). The legislative Acts also include procedures for quality assurance, allocating responsibilities of institutions and defining requirements for validation processes. The aim is to build a consistent system of VPL in Poland with coherent and nationally defined procedures that recognise the competences individuals have acquired in different learning settings and through different forms of learning. The approach seeks to recognise these forms as equivalent to formal education. Verifying learning outcomes outside of the formal education system, however, requires careful examination and systematisation. For this purpose, Poland has established two pillars: the Polish Qualification Framework and the Integrated Qualification System. The Act on the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS), which came into force on 15th January 2016⁵, combined separate, already existing regulations on VPL into one system and introduced key elements for assuring quality. While initially the IQS mainly covered full and partial qualifications from formal education, also other qualifications (e. g. those obtained from further training) are gradually being included based on requests from associations of entrepreneurs and the industry sectors. Despite all these efforts, validation practice in Poland is only at the initial stage.

State-regulated VPL includes (i) the vocational extramural examinations conducted by Regional Examination Commissions (OKE); (ii) Chambers of Crafts examinations; and (iii) special professional qualifications (e.g. in the field of civil engineering). The methods used for validation are theoretical and practical examinations. In addition, based on the Integrated Qualification Systems Act of 22 December 2015, some pilot initiatives introduce new ways of validation, placing the individual and learning outcomes in the centre of attention rather than the educational system. These competence-based approaches that recognise learning outcomes require a shared understanding of validation, relevant information, staff to be appropriately trained and a system of providing guidance.

⁴ Dziennik Ustaw Journal of Laws 2012 item 188

⁵ Dziennik Ustaw Official Journal of Laws of 2016 item 64

Furthermore, it is necessary to have a good cooperation between many partners and actors (including employers), secure apt validation conditions by institutions and ensure that the process is applied in line with the legal framework. One such pilot was carried out in 2014-2015 in Małopolska by the Regional Labour Office Kraków in cooperation with other actors. The pilot covered 33 participants in the domains of CNC machine operation, real property management, baking in retail facilities and team management in maintenance services. The validation methods included interviewing, portfolio, evidence analysis, self-assessment, knowledge test, practical test, on-site observation and simulation (work samples). A main outcome was that the preparation of validation scenarios and procedures in line with the quality assurance principles was a challenge for the actors and institutions involved. In particular, the validation process requires staff training and competence standards for specific roles (e. g. the assessor role) and a guidebook on process implementation.

Social inclusion through VPL – The example of the sector of care work

In the sector of care work and for individuals providing care, VPL is a prominent and frequently discussed issue in various European countries. Five main reasons can be highlighted why possibilities for validation of prior learning would be of great benefit for both employees and employers (Cedefop 2016).

1. Validation can strongly support obtaining qualifications in a legal manner.
2. Many national labour markets encounter a shortage of skilled workers in the sector.
3. Validation would provide a good chance for many low skilled workers to enter the labour market through this specific sector.
4. Validation would facilitate the integration of migrant workers and refugees into the labour market given that we find high numbers of workers with a migrant background working in the care sector.
5. Validation would greatly support and enhance the human resource development in the companies and institutions that provide care services.

Especially European countries with a high demand for care workers like Germany and Denmark, but also France and Great Britain, are developing regulations and frameworks for validating the competences of low skilled workers in this particular sector. Due to demographic shifts and social changes, these countries have introduced quality standards for the provision of care services, which has also lead to the professionalisation of the caring professions. This trend, however, is contrasted with the concurrent shortage of well-qualified care workers. Given the relatively poor working conditions, low salaries and often deregulated employment structures in the sector of care work, we find considerable numbers of low skilled workers and migrants employed in the field. Those, however, often dispose of valuable practical experience based on care work related to their family duties, taking care of their relatives or volunteering work. However, due to gatekeeping mechanisms and lack of permeability of the formal education system, it is difficult for them to get these competences validated or up-graded. This group could greatly benefit from validation of their skills and competence acquired through non-formal and informal learning, thereby increasing their chances of finding employment and/or moving between jobs without having to go back into the formal education system.

In Germany, several projects and examples of validating prior learning and work experience of low skilled workers exist. One project investigated the possibilities to acquire parts of formally obtained vocational education and training qualifications in elderly care through validation (Cedefop 2016). In addition, several vocational schools and other

institutions together with employers developed assessment tools and procedures to accommodate and facilitate validation. The aim was to give individuals the opportunity to obtain a qualification by fulfilling a shortened training programme. Overall, this programme comprises six phases: The first step includes initial clarification of individuals' needs and options that the validation procedure offers. Second, applicants are required to prepare a portfolio of their learning experiences in formal, informal and non-formal settings. In the third phase, candidates are asked to compare their competences with those required for the qualification. Based on the competence standards for elderly care in Germany, this reflection process and self-assessment is followed by written, oral and practical examinations. The practical performance is assessed based on observation and an assessment grid. In the fourth step, all results are compiled and forwarded to the respective competence assessment body, for example the designated educational authority of the respective German Federal State (in this case it was Lower Saxony). If all requirements are fulfilled, the responsible authority recognises the competences of the candidate. Missing competences can be acquired through a special training programme. Then, after passing a final examination the qualification can be awarded.

For migrants and refugees, validation of their informal learning can be interlinked with the recognition of their formal qualifications obtained in a foreign country. In the context of recognising foreign qualifications as regulated by the German Vocational Qualifications Assessment Law (BQFG, enacted in 2012) domain-specific work experience or other proofs of relevant competence can be taken into account when assessing the equivalence of foreign qualifications to German educational and vocational standards. Similarly, for validation processes in Denmark that are based on portfolio work, missing competences can be substituted by undergoing special additional or further courses to obtain a fully recognised certificate, for example as social or health care helper. Also in Denmark, low level qualifications in the sector of care work are guided by the idea of fostering the social inclusion of low qualified individuals, youth at risk and female workers with a migrant background. Also in Poland and Turkey, validation approaches address the same target groups. Especially low skilled female and migrant workers, who want to enter the labour market, can increase their labour market possibilities significantly when they are able to obtain a certificate that also recognises their prior learning. This will also significantly enhance their job and social mobility within Europe.

Overall, the growing market of care work across Europe requires many well prepared and skilled workers, who can be employed quickly. VPL may be a way to meet this demand by at the same time facilitating the integration of the low skilled as well as migrant worker into the labour market, thereby enhancing labour market flexibility and responding to growing demands of qualified personnel. In Denmark, Germany and Poland, but also in Turkey, we can find several initiatives piloting this approach.

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Exploring the voice of the young adult in developing lifelong learning attributes: Entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills in Nigeria

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Introduction

Faced with the challenges of unemployment, high dropout rates, a lack of application of learning into practice and disengagement of students from education and training, the attention of policy in Nigeria has been on increase of the young adult development of lifelong learning attributes (entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills). There was little agreement on the degree to which lifelong learning attributes can be developed and whose responsibility is to teach them (Freeman, *et al.*, 2008; Treleaven and Voola, 2008). It was argued that development of competences and skills are influenced by pedagogical processes that promote practice and active engagement of learners (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Meanwhile Knowles (1975) argues that adults' capacity for self-direction and confidence is being influence by teaching and learning that helps towards seeing the immediate outcome of learning. The research is drawing from number of assumptions on processes that influence young adult development of lifelong learning attributes (entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills) due to complex nature of lifelong learning, which is very difficult to be address from single theoretical framework. Therefore, the study draws from the works of (Rae 1999; Mezirow, 2009; World Economic Forum; Lave and Wenger 1991 and Wenger, 1998).

The paper draws on the qualitative interviews conducted with young adult who participated in Youth Craft Village with a view to develop lifelong learning attributes (self-independent, self-employment, self-direction and enterprising skills and capacity for learning through life). The study focused on the triggers for young adult participation in entrepreneurship programmes and factors that influence the development entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills among the participants. The preliminary finding of the study has shown that necessity, pressures and quest for learning to fulfilling life dream are triggers; it also shows that teaching and learning approaches that gives opportunity for practice seems to help students' to develop confidence, self-direction and greater appreciation of learning. It shows the limitation of the practical pedagogy in promoting some entrepreneurial skills.

Context of the study

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with the population of 163 million people (National Bureau for Statistics, 2010) with the annual growth rate of 2.8%. The projected population as at 2016 based on 2.8 annual growth rates placed the population 183 million people. The country is endowed with human and material resources. According to National literacy survey (2010) literacy profile of the country is at 56.9% and this shows that 43.1% are not literate. This indicator of the literacy rate is measured using English language as a yardstick, thereby not acknowledging literacy from other perspectives. The unemployment is high in the country, for example the unemployment rate for Female is 51.9% whereas for Male is at 48.1%. The young person that constitutes the strength of the country aged 15-35 constitutes 64 million across gender (NBS, 2010). However, they are affected with so many challenges ranging from unemployment, dropout rate, lack of application of learning into practice as well as disengagement from education and training.

The unemployment profile of the young people in the country is 54% of the total 64 million

youth and the youth lack the appropriate skills for living in the 21st century. This is to the detriment of the peaceful co-existence of the country. Evidence suggests the growing restlessness of young people is frustrated by unemployment, lack of opportunity; increasing competition for jobs; and disengagement from education training (Bloom *et al.*, 2010). Ifeoma, (2013) confirms that youth unemployment and disengagement from education and training promotes robbery, destitution, political thuggery, kidnapping and social unrest that is disturbing Nigeria. With the precarious situation within the context government at both national and state level has been making efforts in the promoting of entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills among the youth (National Policy on Education, 2004). For example, the National Council on Education has recommended entrepreneurship courses at all level of the Nigeria's educational system. National Policy on Education (2004) enshrined lifelong learning at all level of education to serve as a means of developing institutional and individual capacities for access and integration:

Lifelong learning to serve for the development of the individuals into sound and effective citizens and their full integration into community...and the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country...at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both within and outside of the formal school system (NPE, 2004, p.2).

With this background the present study seeks to examine the process to which young adult acquire lifelong learning attributes. For the purpose of this study, I will look at the young adult at Youth Craft Village (YCV) in Nigeria, to examine the triggers for their participation as well as how the teaching and learning approaches help to promote entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills among young adults.

Youth Craft Village is a programme designed to prepare young adult at disadvantage for self-employment and further learning (YCV, Manual, 2016). The YCV is funded by Katsina State Government. It selects disadvantaged and marginalised youth aged 17 to 30 and train them with the appropriate skills for life (USAID, 2016). The school also offers counselling to trainees, many of whom come from troubled backgrounds, and integrates into the mainstreaming of educational process. According to the interview I conducted recently with the officials of YCV they said there is no age limits for females because of their perceived disadvantage within the society. The programme was first established in 2009 and according (USAID, 2016) the institution has trained over 10,000 young adult, however there was no tracker of the activities of the young adult as to their progress after graduation. The mission of the institution is to remove unemployed youths from the streets by providing skills, knowledge and attitude for self-employment and learning (YCV Manual, 2016). The Katsina State Education Sector Plan (2010) shows that all the existing educational policies in the state are in accordance with the policies of lifelong learning as enshrined in the (NPE, 2004).

Definitions of concepts and Literature review

Entrepreneurship skills

The concept of entrepreneurship is associated with terms such as entrepreneur, enterprise and small scale business often used interchangeably (Henry, Hill and Leitch, 2005). For example, an entrepreneur is someone has the capacity to take a risk, evaluate opportunities, gather resources, and initiate necessary action to take advantage of those resources for making profits to sustain business activity (Meredith, Nelson, and Neck, 1982; Tiernan et al., 1996). There has been an increased concern at the policy level towards the promotion of such as values as innovation, self-reliance, self-direction, risk-taking, financial management, openness to new information, networking and financial control (Volkman, 2009). With the Rae (1999) and World Economic Forum (2011)

arguments entrepreneurs grows through combination of processes through formal and informal situations. Rae (1999) argues that entrepreneurship qualities may as a result of experiential learning and networks of relationship with other stakeholders.

A study by Rae and Carswell (2000) found that learning-by-doing build learners experience and entrepreneurial attributes. Kanji and Greenwood (2001) found that opportunity centred-learning is best achieved by actions to be conducted by the students. A recent study by Chang, Benamraoui, and Rieple (2014) found that learning through practice and doing activity enable students to developed entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of social business; and also found that the strategy is capable of developing entrepreneurial skills but with limitation. However, Schlee, Curren and Harich (2009) earlier found that many social entrepreneurship programme that emphasis classroom learning, with little opportunities for students to practice and create ideas does not develop the students capacity to take risk. Rae and Carswell (2000) found that classroom teaching hardly promote such competences such as overcoming fear and ability to deal with uncertain challenges. Erik de Corte (1996) suggests to developed lifelong skills the teaching and learning environment should have some powerful features. Erik de Corte (1996) suggests:

“a good balance between discovery learning and personal exploration’ and systematic instruction and guidance”; progressively increase’ of ‘share of self-regulation and opportunities to use a rich array of resources’ and for ‘social interaction and collaboration’; “flexible adaptation of the instructional support to accommodate individual differences and stages of learning”; “facilitate the acquisition of general learning and thinking skills” (Erik de Corte, 1996, p.123-124).

These shows that certain pedagogies influence the development of entrepreneurship skills, for example, Wenger (1998) argues that not only pedagogies influence learning, confidence, curiosity but they also promote social interaction among students to learn and develop interest in further learning.

Learning-to-Learn skills

Learning-to-learn skills was argued to be essential for effective lifelong learning to develop through lifespan of individuals (Candy, Crebert, and O’leary, 1994; Cornford, 2002). Learning-to-learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one’s own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups (EC, 2006 p.8).

The EC (2006) suggests that building on learning-to-learn make learners be able to access, gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills. This requires management of learning and time, critical reflection, perseverance, autonomous learning with self-discipline. Previous research associated learning-to-learn skills with meta-cognitive skills such as self-regulation, self-direction and self-image (Knapper and Cropley, 2000). Making a case for strategies for development of learning-to-learn skills, Sternberg (1998) suggests that metacognitive skills, which require planning, monitoring and evaluation as learning-to-learn, are only likely to be achieved through work experience. Weinstein and Meyer, 1994) suggests that teaching through practice is likely to development learning-to-learn skills. Lave and Wenger (1991) shows that the apprentices are the ones more dramatically transformed because of increase participation in the practice activities. This is in line with Billet (2014) who suggests that ‘most learning for occupation...is the product of active engagement of learners rather than being taught (Billet, 2014, p.1).

Methodology

This paper draws from an on-going project that is investigating lifelong learning attributes among young adult in Nigeria. It is an on-going project and it involve interviews with students and instructors with a view of understanding the triggers and pedagogies that influence the development of lifelong learning attributes among young adult learners. The interviews were face-face and lasted for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Qualitative research approach was adopted based on the believed that knowledge is socially constructed through engagement, experience and interaction with multiples processes within the society (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The study examines the voices of young adult and the researcher was part of the process as an insider. The interviews were conducted in local language in order to generate data and the used of the local language has supported the research with large volume of data. The interviews were good source of data however; sometimes the participants keep on rescheduling the interviews.

The data was thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke (2006). The data was sorted and categories and themes were identified, analysed and reported. The themes emerged from the interview transcripts with ease. The next paragraph will provide the preliminary findings of the study in relation to triggers for young adult learners returning to education. It will also provide report on the impact of pedagogical process in the young adult development of lifelong learning attributes. The study is a work in progress as it would just reflect on summary of the preliminary findings.

Summary of the Preliminary Findings and Discussion

The findings show the emergence of themes such as necessity and major transition in life; pressures; quest for learning and fulfilling life dreams as the factors responsible for young adults returning to learning, for example, comment from students revealed as follows:

Life was very difficult especially now, I am living with parents after being divorced and I have a little daughter to look after and protect; I just want be self-employed or be gainfully employed (L6)

I just decided to find something to do with my time before I start my National service which is expected of every graduate (L15)

Eh...honestly, I made my decision because I was tired of being idle and also the pressure from relative that I am unproductive... That makes me to get engaged with learning again especially learning to be independent L14

The findings indicated the triggers for young adults' participation in learning. This finding reflected Mezirow's (2009) transformative theory. It has reflected sense of dissatisfaction with the prior situation as reasons for young adult engagement with education and training.

The second analysis reflected the role of practical pedagogy, group learning and sharing among fellows in the promotion of lifelong learning attributes. The finding revealed that practical pedagogies has influence in the young adult development of confidence, self-direction, and team work, opportunity for practice, sharing and application of skills. All of the participants have shown that there engaged in practical learning and it boosted their confidence and curiosity. This has reflected Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) where they suggested that knowing and understanding are influence by pedagogies that promote practice and discussion. This is also in line with Billet (2014) who suggests that 'most learning for occupation...is the product of active engagement of learners rather than being taught (Billet, 2014, p.1). Hillier (2002) suggests that education has a transformative potential; if participants learn to make changes in their personal, social and political life

through practice, action and critical reflection.

The finding also revealed that those practical pedagogies are limited in the development of academic rigor and entrepreneurial skills. Many of the participants have indicated the limitation of practical pedagogy in the development of entrepreneurial skills. The finding is against the Schlee, Curren and Harich (2009), which suggest that emphasis on classroom learning, with little opportunities for students to practice and create ideas does not develop the students' capacity to take risk. It has been argued that developing entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills requires active methods (Cornford, 2002; Rae, 1999).

The analysis indicated some informal process among the fellows help the young adult to developed lifelong learning skills. The informal learning structure was found to be effective source of learning and building confidence. Overall some lifelong learning skills have been developed on the basis of the evidence of analysis of the interview transcripts but not without limitation to the achievement of other lifelong learning attributes.

Conclusion

In conclusion the study listen to the voices of the participants with regards to the role of pedagogy and learning space in the transformation of students toward development of learning-to-learn skills and entrepreneurship attributes. The finding is a preliminary working to map out the categories and themes that emerged from the overall study. This qualitative study analyses the learners' motivations and experiences for engaging in Youth Craft Village entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn skills programme. The findings have indicated significant improvement in the young adults' achievement of lifelong learning attributes. The finding is in line with Erik de Corte (1996) who suggested that flexible adaptation of the instructional support that accommodate individual differences and stages of learning; facilitate the acquisition of general learning and thinking skills" (Erik de Corte, 1996, p.123-124). The last part of examines the outcomes and impact of entrepreneurship and learning-to-learn among young adult graduates and their respective communities.

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***The distribution of the sensible: Aesthetics, politics and democracy* [Abstract only]**

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This paper explores possibilities for more democratic approaches to researching learning in and through practice. This links with a concern with who is able to speak in representations of learning at work, what is able to be spoken about and how knowing, learning and experience are inscribed in theories of practice. Ranciere's proposal for understanding experience, knowledge and politics as aesthetic provides a useful way of rethinking experience and its relation to knowledge and learning. Drawing on Ranciere's discussion of aesthetic experience, which opens up the possibility of knowledge without hierarchies, the implications for researching learning in and through practice are explored. Ranciere's proposition that academics should start from a position of equality provides a resource of hope as it enables counter stories to the story of destiny when writing about workplace experience.

Learning and identity formation in the coming out process: 'I'm gay, and God loves me.'

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Introduction

Coming out stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer individuals raised in homophobic Christian environments whose sexual identity conflicts with Christian beliefs and values provide an opportunity to explore the learning and unlearning processes involved in negotiating identity conflicts. Drawing upon queer theory, this paper uses coming out narratives to explore *learning as identity formation*. How do adult learners harmonize their sexual and Christian identities? What is the role of religion/spirituality in that process? This paper explores these questions.

This paper is based on my doctoral study which took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the largest city in Atlantic Canada. Canada has advanced human rights protection through the nation's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, established in 1985; discrimination based on sexual orientation has been prohibited since 1995. Same-sex marriage, legalized in 2005 (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2010), has the support of most Canadians (Ipsos-Global Advisor, 2013). Freedom of religion is a constitutionally protected right in Canada, and although more Canadians than ever belong to minority faiths, the country remains largely Christian, with 39% of Canadians identifying as Catholic, and 27% as Protestant (Pew Research Centre, 2013).

Learning and religious/spiritual sexual identity conflict

Religion is understood to be communal, comprising a set of common beliefs and practices, whereas spirituality is understood to be individual and self-defined (Hill and Pargament, 2008). It is widely recognized that most mainstream Christian churches are sites of homophobia (Rodrigues, 2010). Many queer individuals who grow up in a homophobic religious environment experience internalized homophobia (Barnes and Meyer, 2012; Harris, Cook, and Kashubeck-West, 2008; Kralovec, Fartacek et al., 2012), which is defined as the "formation of self-hatred associated with a lifetime of experiencing negative stereotyping related to homosexuality" (Seegers, 2007, p.11). Queer people with conservative religious backgrounds find it particularly challenging to negotiate their sexual identities and religious identities (Anderton, Pender and Asner-Self, 2011). How they resolve such identity conflicts has been studied (Anderton, Pender, and Asner-Self, 2011), but the *unlearning and relearning processes* involved in resolving states of conflict are not well understood. The role of religion and/or spirituality (R/S) in that process has also not been explored.

Spirituality has been shown to enhance academic performance (Astin, 2011). Tolliver and Tisdell (2006) argue that spirituality can augment the ability of learners 'to come to a greater understanding of their core essence through transformative learning experiences that help them reclaim their authenticity' (p.38). Coming out, considered essential to queer identity formation and integration (Legate, 2012), has been framed as reclaiming authenticity (Orlov and Allen, 2014); as 'naming oneself as somebody out of the dominant system, which defines the social roles'; as 'an act of untying secrets and silence, and feeling free' (Cleaver, 1995, cited in Ribas, 2004, p.84).

This paper is framed by queer theory, which 'critically analyzes the meaning of identity,

focusing on intersections of identities and resisting oppressive social constructions of sexual orientation and gender...and provides a framework for resisting heteronormativity' (Abes and Kasch, 2007). I apply a queer theoretical framework to three coming out narratives in hopes of understanding how the participants negotiated their multiple identities and how educators can support students in their identity negotiations.

About the research

This paper focuses on three of the eight individuals interviewed for my doctoral study: Julian (34), raised in rural Nova Scotia; Winter (31) who grew up in various communities of the northern United States and the Canadian Maritimes; and Charleen (52), who grew up in South America but immigrated to Canada as a university student. Recruited through local networks, participants self-selected based on the study criteria, i.e., they were living in Halifax, were 18 or older, identified as male, female or genderqueer, were living as an out queer person, and identified as having experienced a "deeply religious and homophobic Christian upbringing, and conflict between their religion/spirituality and sexuality". Julian identified as queer, and Charleen and Winter identified as lesbian.

Participants were interviewed twice about their sexual and gender identity; Christian upbringing; spiritual path; practices and beliefs; sense of spiritual self and relationship to religion, and how those things may have changed over time. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim and codes developed. Transcripts were analyzed using interpretive description, which seeks to understand how and when individuals experience shifts or changes in perceptions and worldviews in response to additional information and experiences (Thorne, 2008).

Results

The results have been framed using Judith Butler's theory of performativity, focusing on intersections of identities and resistance to heteronormativity. Butler asserts that gendered behaviour is learned and repeated as a performance of gender in response to dominant conventions of gender. Butler challenged the notion that 'on the basis of a given anatomy, an identification will follow', arguing that a 'coherent identification' has to be 'cultivated, policed and enforced', and that contraventions of the gender norms will be punished (Butler in Kotz, 1992, p.88). The ideology of heterosexuality, which undergirds dominant gender norms, thrives and is dependent on the repetition of (often) oppressive and painful gender norms to uphold idealized heterosexuality. Gender, understood in these terms, is achieved rather than innate, and 'is real only to the extent that it is performed' (Butler, 1990, p.278). Nevertheless, Butler recognizes that people can resist this process – disrupt it – by not agreeing to go along with the pre-existing categories.

Participants

Charleen grew up in South America with a 'very traditional' Catholic mother who attended church every day and prayed the rosary every night, and a father who had had a religious awakening when Charleen was a child and subsequently embraced the charismatic stream of Catholicism. Her parents were 'both very religious' for a time, eventually gravitating to the 'moderate side of those two extremes'. Charleen's Catholic life included Sunday Mass, a Catholic education, regular recitation of the rosary and a brief stint in the Marian movement. Charleen described Catholicism as 'the default', and given her reasonably happy childhood, the default 'was just fine'. However, Charleen felt 'more prayerful' when she was in nature, 'seeing sunsets or the waves'. Her spiritual life, which she distinguished from her religious life, gave her a sense of connection and a 'little reminder there is a God'.

Winter grew up in a Pentecostal household to parents who were both ordained ministers. Her family 'moved around a lot', as her parents pastored congregations in the United States and the Maritimes. Sundays included a morning service for families and an evening service 'for the diehard, holy rollers'. Evening services lasted for hours and 'sometimes past midnight'. Winter's religious activities were extensive: 'I spent my whole upbringing sleeping under pews . . . I was just at church all the time, and especially as a teen.' Winter's religious life provided a sense of community and protection, and answers to life's questions. A self-described spiritual child from an early age, as a young teen she often journaled, wondering, 'What does this all mean?' and 'What's out there?'

Julian said he could not remember a time when he did not feel a connection to God. His parents took him to church until he was 10, long enough to finish catechism classes, and then stopped attending. Julian continued going with his grandmother, but at 12, dissatisfied with 'dead' Catholic services, he left to for 'something bigger, something more alive' and began attending a Baptist church. At 15, disenchanted with Baptist pastor's stance on women's rights, he left for another Protestant church, where worship services lasted for 'two or three hours', and the church band would 'work themselves into a musical state and then just lay on the floor and pray for each other'. On Sunday evenings, he began attending a Pentecostal church where 'pastor spoke in tongues during his sermon'. By his mid-teens, Julian's church involvement became extensive, and he was there 'more than the pastor was, six days a week'. His religious life became a refuge from a dysfunctional home life: 'It was the first place that I actually felt loved by something bigger than human.'

Learning homophobia

Julian, Winter, and Charleen absorbed homophobia from four sources: parents, religious environment, and the broader society, especially school. However, their parents most influenced their perceptions about homosexuality. Charleen recalled her mother's comments about the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s: 'That's God's answer to homosexuality.' She watched her mother cross the street one day to avoid 'a couple of gay guys', and her mother's reaction to a family member who developed AIDS was particularly salient: 'There was a tremendous amount of hatred.'

Winter remembered sermons about homosexuality that 'clumped' homosexuals with 'the drunkards and the murderers' and her youth pastor talking about homosexuality 'with a very flamboyant lisp and making fun of it'. However, a comment made by her mother to Winter when she was 15 seemed to evoke the most emotion: 'You could come home pregnant, you could come home addicted to drugs, but if you told me you were a lesbian, that would break my heart.'

Julian remembered noticing a boy at his church and thinking 'he did something for me', but he was confused: 'Why am I so obsessed with this person?' That was when he began to realize he was different. He was not aware of his church's stance on homosexuality until he was in high school Sunday School, and his class read a book that was 'about homosexuality and praying the gay away', and he realized: 'Oh my God, this is me. This is talking about me...it scared the shit out of me.' One weekend, he made an exploratory trip to Halifax to 'be around people I identified with', and while there, attended 'gay church'. When his church leadership learned of his trip, they demanded to meet with him and insisted he submit to conversion therapy. The church paid for him to attend an ex-gay¹ ministry in California.

Gender trouble

Participants' perception of difference from the norm became particularly salient at puberty and intensified in their teens. When Charleen, labelled a tomboy as a young girl, became aware at 12 that she was 'supposed to like fashion, clothes and make-up' she was confused by her disinterest: 'If this has no appeal for me, maybe I am un-normal.' By 15, she wondered: 'What does it mean that I have no interest in boys?' As she began realizing she liked girls, she was horrified at the 'category of lesbian'. Between 15-16, she kept hoping 'maybe it'll go away' and that 'things might still be fluid', but at 17, she realized: 'This is no passing phase, and I was very depressed, and I just really felt like I'm fucked.'

Julian, who began questioning his sexuality when he developed his first crush on a boy, 'didn't know what to call it back then'. Instead of identifying as gay, he reasoned, 'I was that kid that wore bright yellow pants with black underwear so you could see the underwear, but I wasn't gay, I was just *artistic*.'

Winter, who had been involved in sports from an early age, was considered a tomboy in childhood, but when she realized she liked girls: 'I would just think, I need to fix this, like I need to be healed and would just beg God, like why? Why do I feel this way? Can you just take it away?' She continued to pray that way throughout high school, and dated boys both trying to hide, and yet sort out her sexuality.

Untying secrets: unlearning homophobia

Eventually, each participant began rejecting and unlearning homophobic religious beliefs and values. Unlearning has been defined as 'abandoning outdated, misleading, inefficient and useless knowledge' (Klein, 2008, p.80) and is considered vital to changing 'rigid beliefs, standards, values and routines' (Klein, 2008, p.80). This process occurred for the participants in their late teens and early 20s. Away from home, and exposed to additional information and new social lives, they re-examined their beliefs about religion and sexuality.

Charleen left her country to attend university in Canada 'to explore and find out what (her sexual orientation) means'. Fearful of disclosing, however, she remained closeted until the end of her undergraduate degree, when she found herself at a crossroads: 'To live not knowing and not exploring and not being myself felt like hell.' She reached out to an off-campus group of lesbians and there found the support she needed to begin coming out. After nine months, Julian eventually fled the ex-gay ministry for San Francisco, where he found a 'gay evangelical church'. There, at a bible study, 'I had a moment when (I realized) I don't ever intentionally sin with being gay...so if I'm not intentionally sinning, then it's who I am, and I realized, "I'm gay and God loves me".' When he returned home, however, his church rejected him for having left the ex-gay ministry. Descending into drug addiction he tried to commit suicide and wound up in detox several times before finally finding the help he needed to begin the long slow work of accepting himself. He continued praying throughout this process. Winter came out after moving to Vancouver and witnessing a Christian come out publicly as 'same-gender attracted' in an interdenominational service. Shortly after, she came out to a Christian friend and then began disclosing to friends and family.

Discussion

Butler's theory of performativity has proved a useful analytic framework for analyzing coming out narratives. Participant stories reveal the extent to which they had absorbed gender norms of the broader culture, accentuated through church teachings and reinforced and policed by parents and church authorities. By adolescence, all had a tightly packed set

of meanings about themselves and their sexuality accumulated from their individual history/experience. Experiences, received ideologies, and perceptions shaped by the homophobic and heterosexist religious culture together formed a frame of reference through which they interpreted their world. Having to negotiate homophobic messages intensified by the religious meanings attached to them made resolving identify conflicts exceptionally challenging, consumed enormous amounts of time and energy, and threatened their mental health.

Despite enormous pressure from family, religious communities and the broader culture to conform to heterosexual norms, over time, participants disentangled themselves from oppressive values and beliefs and began aligning their outer lives with their inner realities. The unique aspect of these coming out narratives is that these participants underwent an unlearning process, a disentanglement, that propelled them to renegotiate both their sexual and gender identities.

Spirituality and authenticity

This paper focuses on Charleen, Julian and Winter because unlike the other research participants, they continued dialoguing with God throughout the coming out process.

Tolliver and Tisdell (2006) argue that spirituality can enhance the ability of learners ‘to come to a greater understanding of their core essence through transformative learning experiences that help them reclaim their authenticity’ (p.38). A private spiritual life cultivated from childhood enabled Julian, Charleen and Winter to uncouple institutionalized religion from their spirituality and move beyond it to embrace their sexual and spiritual identities. The ‘pro-gay, pro-evangelical’ bible study was where Julian’s beliefs about homosexuality first shifted. During his recovery from drug addiction, he continued to pray and to find safe places to worship God and explore his spirituality. He came to conclude that his issues were with the ‘institution of religion - not the Christ’.

After coming in Canada, Charleen continued to attend religious services, ‘because I just needed some sense of familiarity’, yet knew she could not turn to a priest for help. Though she tried secular counselling, it was a ‘horrible’ experience because ‘there was no cultural understanding of what [religion] had meant for me, what I was actually battling’. Though meeting other lesbians was critical to her unlearning internalized homophobia, her spiritual life was key to undoing the self-condemnation:

Sometimes I’d go to an empty church just to sit in a church and kind of feel like okay, what’s going on here? Am I doing the wrong thing, am I doing the right thing? And always there was that calm, “No, you’re just not fitting in, and that’s okay, not fitting in is not a crime, so just stay with this [and] do what you need to do.”

Winter’s conversations with God continued during her coming out but began shifting because of her theological deconstructions: ‘I started to really understand who God is, and that’s when the conversation started to shift.’ A Christian friend who supported this process once asked Winter: ‘Do you ever think that maybe God is actually really stoked for you and happy that you’re living your truth?’ For Winter, the thought of God being ‘happy’ about her coming out was ‘a good identifier of how the conversations started to change’.

Lessons for educators

Each participant’s narrative unfolds against the backdrop of their school and university lives. Their narratives indicate just how all-consuming their identity conflicts were and how much time and space they occupied. In addition, the isolation caused by their hiding and anxiety, and the energy expended in keeping up appearances of ‘normality’ had

implications for their mental health, as well as being at odds with their peers' developmental stages (e.g., dating, talking about love and loss). The fact that these individuals repressed and hid their sexuality for their entire school careers, speaks volumes about the overarching dominance of heteronormativity in the participants' lives both in terms of their religion and the broader culture. At the same time, the narratives reveal enormous resilience, persistence, and agency.

The role of educators is critical in schools and post-secondary education. Educators either cooperate with, or disrupt the heteronormative relations of power that dominate educational institutions. If educators do not unpack the dichotomous constructions of male and female, of deviant and normal, they may end up reinforcing and re-inscribing the hegemony of heteronormativity.

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¹ Emerging in the early 1970s, these ministries aimed to (a) eliminate the "sins" of same-sex desire and intimacy, and (b) "convert" queer persons to a heterosexual "lifestyle" (Grace, 2001).

Exploring the experiences of ‘safe spaces’ by women doctoral students and graduate assistants with differing positionalities

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Introduction

This study will explore the diverse experiences of the authors who are two women doctoral students, one international Korean student, and one white student from the Southeastern United States who is also a mother, both pursuing their degrees in Adult Education and working as graduate assistants. In this paper, we put our own stories to work, in dialogue with each other and in dialogue with theories of feminist positionalities, subjectivities, and spaces in order to explore our experiences of safe and unsafe spaces encountered during our time as doctoral students of Adult Education.

In our narratives we found that ‘safe spaces’ are complicated and shift depending on positionality, subjectivities, and physical space itself. Finally, we discussed how different teaching and learning spaces might influence our own teaching/learning and how we might create new spaces for inclusion and diversity as students of Adult Education who are interested in enacting feminist pedagogies and socially just ways of knowing and being. We argue that, while ‘safe spaces’ may be impossible to achieve in any sort of pure form, studying the experiences of safe and unsafe spaces for women doctoral students of varying positionalities and backgrounds can help inform the creation of less harmful and more inclusive spaces for teaching and learning with women and other marginalized adult learners.

Literature review

This paper builds from feminist literature in the field of Adult Education that is interested in creating more inclusive learning environments through the use of multicultural feminist approaches to pedagogy (Tisdell, 1995) and exploring the educational potential of work through feminist perspectives (Hart, 1992). Tisdell (1995) has argued that in order for adult educators to meet the needs of diverse learners, they must consider the politics of knowledge creation and the power dynamics at the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Tisdell (1995) argued for combining multicultural and feminist approaches to pedagogy in order to achieve more inclusive environments where adults can learn, and also pointed out the importance of considering how the learning environment is nested within a particular societal context.

Mechthild Hart (1992) argued that the concept of work is never simply about economic realities, but also draws upon cultural assumptions about work and production in powerful ways that signify attitudes toward the nature of existence and being. Hart (1992) also argued that illuminating hidden and marginalized experiences of work has profound educative potential. We seek to further value experience-based knowledge by highlighting our own unique experiences with space as women doctoral students and graduate assistants—a location between learning, teaching, and work itself. Through our narrative research, we intend to highlight our own experiences in order to expand upon this existing body of knowledge about how adults learn, teach, and work, and how spaces come to be recognized as safe or unsafe in the process of learning.

Theoretical framework

Collins' (2000) described power as a complex force that can be wielded to oppress certain groups, as well as an intangible phenomenon that flows through our society resulting in people experiencing inequalities in four domains: the structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains. The structural domain refers to institutional, economic, governmental, and legal realms of life, which could also include educational structures like a University. The disciplinary domain refers to the ideas and practices that sustain certain power relationships while the hegemonic domain refers to the images, symbols, and ideologies that shape our perceptions and consciousness. Finally, the interpersonal domain refers to the power interactions between individuals and groups. Exploring these four domains of power helps to illuminate how oppression and power is constructed and maintained along various identities and social locations that individuals hold at one time (Collins, 2000).

In Elizabeth Tisdell's (1998, 2001) work on poststructural feminist pedagogy she argued that our identities are always shifting, following the movement of our worlds, experiences, and social locations. Tisdell (2001) argued that when we examine our positionalities in the world, or how we are affected and affect others based on the social locations of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, that this shapes our identities as teachers and learners and our ways of knowing and being. To act in a socially-just or feminist way in one moment does not mean that one cannot wield power in an oppressive way at another moment. This is particularly powerful if we consider Collins' (2000) concepts of power as it operates on multiple levels and domains in our society, particularly in education where all of these domains are at play. An additional element to consider is Soja's (1989) argument that just as social practices shape space, space also produces social practices in dynamic ways. Following this line of thought, it is productive to consider the ways that physical spaces where adults teach, learn, and work impact possible courses of action.

Methods and data analysis

In this paper, we use the qualitative methodological approach of narrative inquiry, or narrative research (Clandinin & Caine, 2008), to explore our experiences. Narrative inquiry is an appropriate methodology for uncovering and understanding participants' and researchers' experiences by inquiring into their own stories and life experiences (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). In this paper, we position ourselves as both researchers and participants, and use our own stories as a way to understand our experiences.

Narrative inquiry also encourages researchers to attend to issues of space, temporality, and social practices (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). This is compatible with our intention to highlight how space exists, produces, or is produced in particular ways that impact teaching, learning, and working. In order to facilitate the creation of our narratives we asked of ourselves, and each other, two questions, 1) have you experienced any 'safe spaces' while working, learning, and teaching in graduate school, and 2) have you experienced any 'unsafe spaces' while working, learning, and teaching in graduate school? In the following section, we will share our stories.

Stories of our experiences of safe/unsafe spaces

While attempting to answer the questions of whether we had ever experienced a 'safe space' or an 'unsafe space' in our experiences teaching, learning, and working as graduate students of differing positionalities, we found that the answers were not so simply stated. The first story describes Brigitte's experience of searching for a safe space to continue breastfeeding her young infant while starting a new job as a Graduate Assistant at her University in order to pursue her doctoral degree full time. The second story

describes Chaewon's experience of being 'intersectional' at an American University in the South as an international woman graduate student from South Korea.

Searching for a safe space as a mother, student, and worker

During my second semester of graduate school I was hired to work as a Graduate Assistant for one of the offices of our University's administrative organizations. At the time, I had a seven-month old infant and was breastfeeding, so in my interview I mentioned that I would need a space to breastfeed every four hours or so, or a place to pump milk. I remember feeling terrified bringing this up during the interview, and I felt sure that this would diminish my chances of getting the position. However, the two women that interviewed me appeared receptive to my request that would allow me to take breaks as necessary during the work day to breastfeed or pump milk in a private space during the workday, and I was hired for the position.

Looming heavily over me at this time was the financial pressure of needing to keep my Graduate Assistantship in order to afford my school tuition, move from attending school part-time to full-time, and provide for my family's financial needs. At this time, we had no family who could assist us in caring for our son, and we could not afford alternate childcare. My husband reduced his work hours to part-time so that he could care for our son on the days when I would be working and bring him to my office so I could continue breastfeeding.

At first when I asked my supervisor about finding a place to breastfeed my son during days when I worked eight-hour long shifts, she told me that she would have to 'check with someone in the main office' to reserve a room for me, but that she would need to know one week in advance. I asked her to reserve the room for me the following week, and I agreed to use the shared staff break room downstairs in the meantime. The next week I brought up the issue again, and my supervisor acted as if it was the first time we had ever had the conversation. After this discussion, she never followed up, and never reserved a room for me. Fearing that my persistence would have consequences for my job, I did not press her on it further. Determined to make the best of the situation, I started using the shared employee breakroom to breastfeed my son.

My husband would usually arrive just before anyone would use the shared breakroom for lunch, so the space was mostly private. I carefully positioned myself in the corner of the room, parallel to the door, and my husband would sit in between myself and the door so that if anyone entered I would have time to make sure that I was not 'exposed' as I fed my son. Additionally, there was a key pad on the door that required anyone who entered to press a certain code, so prior to anyone entering I was also warned by the sound of the code being typed in and the automatic unlocking of the door. This usually provided me with a few extra moments to prepare a transition from private to public space.

Because the office was mainly women, there were only a few men that ever came into the breakroom while I was breastfeeding. Most of the men usually avoided acknowledging our existence and seemed very awkward and eager to get their food and leave. Some women also acted this way, most notably the primary administrator within the organization, while other women would make a point to say hello and ask about the baby. One woman in particular always made me feel welcome and shared that she was still breastfeeding her 2 ½ year-old child, and how she thought that it was great that my husband could bring my son to my work so I could continue breastfeeding. When she was in the breakroom, I did feel that the space was transformed into a safe space for me to care for my son and to be a working student.

Despite these positive moments during my breakroom breastfeeding strategy, I never felt completely comfortable or safe all the time. Because it was a public space, I could never be sure of who was coming or going, what their attitudes toward breastfeeding might be, and whether it would have consequences for my job and consequently my ability to pursue higher education. Somewhere in a combination of fear, sleep deprivation, and the general exhaustion that comes with being a new parent, I could not find the strength to confront my supervisor and ask that she provide a private space for me.

An alpha girl between two worlds: Chaewon's story

I was born in the early 1980s, the time when the speed of economic development in Korea was at its peak. At that time, our grandparents' generation still clung to the ideology that men were superior to women, and women should stay at home and take care of their families. Also, it was a common belief that women must assist their husbands to guarantee the husbands' social success. An even more complex problem is that our parents' generation grew up during that time when that ideology was prevalent—and although they were starting to imagine the possibility of changing gendered notions, there was no real consciousness-raising about those kinds of biases. Therefore, when I was young, several stereotypes of gender were still maintained by the adults around me.

However, economic development demanded a more skilled labor force, and the utilization of women was the most effective way to deal with the labor shortage. Therefore, equal educational opportunities for daughters and sons were encouraged. Parents began to feel proud of their smart daughters, and these young girls did not need to hide their talents or yield opportunities to their male siblings any more. This tendency was continued up to the time when I went to university and the term 'Alpha Girl' was coined. Along with our parents, we did not hesitate to think of ourselves as Alpha Girls, and at that time, I thought girls could do anything and everything that we wanted to do and enjoy equal respect as boys.

Unfortunately, after graduating from University, the real situation was very different from what I expected. Above all, entrance into the labor market for women was much harder and less possible than it was for men, and it began to get even harder for the 'Alpha Girls' to have opportunities for jobs. I think this situation was our first experience with despair. Our parents and teachers told us that we could do anything and everything, but we experienced a different reality.

Although struggling in the labor market and society as an adult woman, I found someone who encouraged me to seek higher education when I worked as a researcher in a Korean national research institution. I think I got my best learning experience from my boss at this institute. My boss was a female senior research fellow, and a working mother with two teenagers. She was a very supportive person, and I was able to enjoy diverse research and learning experiences working with her.

I decided to come to the United States to pursue my doctoral degree in an Adult Education program in 2013. Moving to another country meant a lot of things for me: living without family, adjusting to a different culture, studying in a second language, and being part of a minority group. The racial diversity in the United States is one of the most interesting experiences for me as an Asian woman graduate student. In Korea, I was concerned about the gender differences and sexual discriminations in schools and workplaces. However, my most interesting experiences with discrimination in the U.S. were related to racial differences.

One of my greatest concerns as an international woman graduate student has been

building relationships with native students in the classroom while working as a teaching assistant. I am most concerned with developing credibility and reliability as a professional teaching assistant, not only with the students but also with the professor I am working with. I am frequently asked about my future plans after graduation from the people surrounding me, and I usually say that I want to stay in the United States if there is an opportunity. However, when discussing the issue of marriage and future career plans, there are some people tell me to meet and marry American man. This assumes that all Asian women want to attain U.S. citizenship. While getting a job is much easier if Asian women have U.S. citizenship, in my case, I want to keep my own nationality even if I can work in the United States after graduation. I am not sure if people would ask the same question to international women students who have French or British nationalities. I also wonder whether the same “advice” would be offered Asian men in higher education.

I have also met some people who want to correct my accent, and I usually accept their behavior as an expression of kindness. However, some people correct the accent of Asian female professors in the classroom, which makes it difficult for them to be seen as a legitimate knowledge holder in the classroom and have the authority to create safer places for learning. I have experienced a dilemma of safe and unsafe space: while school and the classroom are sometimes safe spaces for me as an Asian woman graduate student, those places can also be an unsafe spaces for Asian woman professors.

Discussion

Brigette's story of searching for a safe space to breastfeed her child while working as a graduate assistant and transitioning to becoming a full-time Ph.D. student helps illuminate the complexity and fleeting existences of 'safe space' that surface in our daily lives. Chaewon's story also illuminates how she simultaneously felt that her University was a 'safe space' for her as a student in some situations, but also potentially unsafe if she were to take on more authority such as through her position as a teaching assistant, and her desire to continue working in the United States with her positionality as an Asian woman professor. In both stories, Brigette and Chaewon noted how space, and individuals within those spaces, impacted how they learned, taught, and worked in their positions as graduate student workers of varying positionalities.

While there were moments when Brigette described feeling like the public break room was a 'safe space,' those moments were fleeting, and dependent upon who was present in that particular space at any given time. For instance, she felt that the safe was 'safe' for her to breastfeed her son when other women engaged with her and acknowledged her presence, but that the space could become less safe when others entered the room and said nothing. Similarly, while Chaewon described feeling that the University classroom could be a 'safe space' for her as a student in Korea and the United States, as a teaching assistant and future Asian woman professor in the United States, she could recognize how the classroom could be transformed into an unsafe space for the teacher, or that might impact the teacher's authority to make the classroom safe for other marginalized students. Within the realm of the breakroom in Brigette's story and the classrooms of Chaewon's story, aspects of Collins' (2000) explanations of structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal realms of power were all at play surrounding the acceptability of breastfeeding and of 'having an accent' at work and as a student.

As feminist adult educators, we are highly interested in creating spaces for teaching, learning, and working that are inviting and as inclusive as possible. One of the ways that Tisdell (2001, 1998) recommends enacting a poststructural feminist pedagogy is through the use of personal narratives in teaching and learning to highlight how positionalities and

shifting subjectivities impact our teaching, learning, and working for social change. Our practice demonstrates that sharing our own personal narratives can be a powerful teaching tool to highlight how individuals of different positionalities are impacted along structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal, domains of power, and that physical spaces help to produce and facilitate how power functions.

Conclusions and recommendations

Using narratives from our own experiences of working, teaching, and learning during our time as doctoral students and graduate assistants, we have troubled the notion that a truly safe space for every person regardless of their positionality is possible. We recommend the use of story-telling as a tool to illuminate differences in how space is experienced by people of differing positionalities in order to shape individual identities and spaces in ways that create more inclusive and less harmful places for adults engaged in learning, teaching, and working. By highlighting the role of our physical spaces and how we move within them according to our own positionalities is essential to understanding how we might create new spaces and ways of being in the world that are less harmful and more inclusive, even if we never find our idyllic 'safe space.' Only through the process of striving for our ideals can we improve our practice and ways of being and knowing.

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Symposium – Adult education and the education of character

Organiser: John Holford
University of Nottingham, England, UK

Chair: Linden West
Canterbury Christ Church University, England, UK

Discussant: Mel Lenehan
Fircroft College, England, UK

This symposium addresses the genealogy and significance of the recent re-emergence of interest in the education of “character”. Announcing “a new focus on character education”, former (English) Education Secretary Nicky Morgan asserted that life in modern Britain required young people “not only grow academically, but also build character, resilience and grit.”¹ A Demos think-tank report calls on the government to “embed the development of character throughout the institutions of formal and non-formal education” in England (Demos 2015). An Association for Character Education held its inaugural conference in 2016; it is an off-shoot of the Jubilee Centre for Character Education, established at the University of Birmingham in 2010. (The Centre is “a multi-million pound investment by the John Templeton Foundation”, whose vision “derived from the late Sir John Templeton’s optimism about the possibility of acquiring ‘new spiritual information’”). Among the Centre’s many initiatives are a “Knightly Virtues Programme” enabling 9-11 year olds “to creatively explore great stories of knights and heroes and the virtues to which they aspired”.² This symposium traces some of the genealogy of such thinking in the theory and practice of 20th century adult educators.

Paper 1: Learning character in shared communities: Three contrasting transformative movements in interwar Britain

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Social movements in interwar Britain, as elsewhere, often shared an intense interest in developing new types of human being. While the language of ‘character’ was relatively rare, and largely confined to movements that focused on the provision of social service, ideas about transforming human nature and building a new ideal self were commonplace, most obviously in such notions as Mussolini’s search for the ‘new Fascist man’ or Communist archetypes of the ‘new Soviet man/person’ (in both cases the gendering was significant). These were particularly exaggerated, albeit influential, forms of a wider concern with structured resocialisation, but they were paralleled by a number of smaller attempts to rebuild character through transformative communities.

The paper explores ways in which ideas of character were worked through in three attempts to establish transformative learning communities in interwar Britain. The first is the Women’s Training Colony, established by a group of suffragettes and public health campaigners during the last year of the Great War, with the aim of developing women of

'wholesome character' as a stepping stone to economic independence. Second, Service Civil International, usually known in Britain as the International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVSP), was founded in 1920, with strong pacifist and Quaker associations. Its leaders saw it as providing an experience of hardship, sacrifice and community that paralleled that of military service, a message that was particularly important in countries where conscription was commonplace. Third, the Universities Council for Unemployed Camps emerged from Christian student circles in the early 1930s, and was explicitly concerned with character development, particularly among the unemployed, but also among the young student volunteers.

The women's training colony

Labour colonies were widespread in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain, as in a number of other European and white post-colonial nations (Field 2013). Generally founded by local government as an alternative to the workhouse, or by charities concerned with the least privileged, most labour colonies were intended for men, or in some cases – as with insane colonies and tuberculosis colonies – for both genders, albeit strictly separated. Most proposals for women's colonies failed to attract sufficient support, with the exception of the Women's Training Colony, which opened – and then closed – in 1917.

The Women's Training Colony emerged from the suffragette movement. Its founders included the prominent Sheffield suffragette and GP Helen Wilson, Jane Walker (the first president of the Medical Women's Federation), the suffragist and social reformer Millicent Fawcett, and the Oxford-educated suffragette (and later surrealist) Margaret Odeh. This was a well-connected group, with shared interests around public health and social reform, who mobilised other leading social reformers around the proposed women's colony, including William Henry Hunt, manager of the Christian Union for Social Service's colony at Lingfield, and Adelaide Cox, Commissioner in the Salvation Army and leader of its women's work.

The founders' aim was to create a colony 'modelled on the lines of the New York State Institutions at Hudson and Bedford', recruiting 'women whose lack of character and training renders them ineligible for other institutions, in the hope that wise teaching may fit them to become useful members of society'. It would do so through work which offered 'not only training but permanent employment' and a degree of self-government, with the ultimate goal of developing 'a sense of responsibility and independence'. It presented itself as using 'the most advanced scientific treatment and training, both mental and physical, and by moral influence, to build up, out of waste lives and human wreckage, women of wholesome character, capable of being good home-makers, or of entering the industrial world as competitive and independent wage-earners' (Modern Records Centre MRC 16C/3/W/1-7).

In short, the colony's aims were to turn prostitutes into respectable women citizens through a regime of work and exposure to nature, underpinned by restricted democratic self-management. It opened at Cope Hall, Newbury, in February 1917 and survived until 1919, placing the former sex workers in cottages around the Hall and employing them in handicrafts as well as on the farm and gardens, and allowing them to participate in management meetings after serving a short period of probation. As well as practical problems (Cope Hall turned out to be less suitable, and running a labour colony more expensive, than expected) the initiative suffered from the resistance of the women it recruited, few of whom stayed the course. And by 1919 the founders' brand of feminism was looking markedly old-fashioned, as was its version of social service (Snape 60-61). The venture was short-lived, and its demise was marked by both pedagogic and financial

failure; it presented a strong degree of continuity with the middle class philanthropic tradition, whose attempts to build 'wholesome character' among the stigmatised and disenfranchised no longer suited a more secular nation whose women were moving in new and different directions.

International voluntary service for peace

IVSP, the British branch of Service Civil International, emerged out of attempts at reconciliation in war-torn Europe. Initially active in the area around Verdun, SCI's 'services' involved young men and (more rarely) women volunteering to spend a summer repairing war damage. Young Britons found among the early volunteers, accounting for 20 of the 198 young people who in 1930 helped repair flood damage around Lagarde in the south of France; in the following year a group of the Lagarde volunteers settled for the summer in Brynmawr, in South Wales, living with local families and working with unemployed men to build amenities on a former spoil heap. Over the next decade IVS volunteers – including unemployed recruits – took part in regular summer 'services' in areas affected by the depression.

Following the lead of SCI and its Swiss founder Pierre Cérésolle, the British adherents of IVSP understood their work as a peaceful alternative to military service. The author of a brief history of the movement described the 'services' as offering 'war's moral equivalent in hard work and discipline', arguing that 'we must no longer leave to war the monopoly of costly service and sacrifice' (Anonymous, n.d.). Unusually, IVS recruited both women and men; but while the 'brothers' engaged in heavy manual labour, the role of the 'sisters' was largely to service the men's physical needs, repairing clothing and preparing meals (eg *Children's Newspaper*, 6 December 1936), a gender division that seems not to have been explicitly discussed until after the Second World War.

As an organisation IVSP fetishised heavy labour: its emblem was a shovel over a broken sword under a shield with the word 'Pax'; Jean Inebnit, a Leeds academic and British secretary for SCI, produced a pamphlet on its work titled *Pick and Shovel Peacemaking* (Hull History Centre IVSP 45/J/23), while Kitty Lewis from Wales insisted that cynical locals would be won over by 'the message of pick and shovel wielded in the cause of peace' (*Welsh Outlook*, September 1932). For the volunteers of IVSP, work was redemptive. The fact that it was a form of service, carried out voluntarily in disenfranchised and economically depressed communities, and involved students and other middle class activists living in those communities and working alongside local unemployed volunteers, underpinned the public pedagogy of the IVSP's work: it built things that were of public value, such as swimming pools and sports pitches and youth hostels, and it arranged ceremonies and plaques to mark its contribution symbolically. It had a religious dimension, with Quakers prominent among its leaders, but it was a low-key one that emphasised the importance of community and sacrifice. While it rarely if ever talked explicitly of character, its focus on 'war's moral equivalent in hard work and discipline' referred precisely to the manly virtues of the soldier.

Universities council for unemployed camps

UCUC, founded in 1933, had its origins in Anglican social service. Founded by Michael Sims-Williams, it sought to recruit university students to lead work camps for groups of unemployed men. While strongest in Cambridge, it also had branches in Oxford, Glasgow, St Andrews, Liverpool, Leeds, Kings College London and Southampton. Universities have been a common source of social service movements, and they were certainly fertile ground for UCUC, as they were for IVSP. The UCUC movement grew steadily in the mid-1930s, only going into decline when falling unemployment led to reduced recruitment, and

a women's unemployed holiday camp initiative emerged out of Girton College as a spin-off from the male-only UCUC.

Unlike IVSP, UCUC understood its role openly in terms of character building. Michael Sims-Williams, in his handbook for camp organisers, described the 'keynotes of the scheme' as 'strengthening of character and a direction of the will' among the male unemployed participants. The 1936 annual report spoke of the efforts 'made to develop the formation of character to face the environment of enforced idleness and indiscipline at home and to mitigate the evils of malnutrition'. Such language would have been familiar to many social service actors in the nineteenth century, but in practice the student organisers found strong resistance to a 'Lady Bountiful' model of service, and had to develop new skills of leadership and organisation. As well as undertaking five or six hours of heavy labour each day, the camp leaders also forged alliances with groups that were familiar to their unemployed participants, including the Workers' Educational Association, as well as accommodating themselves to the views and narratives of the unemployed men who shared their tents and their working days.

The experience of participating appears to have had lasting transformative effects on a number of the student organisers. Originally rooted in Christian ideals of social service, and officially committed to avoiding political controversy, in practice it seems political debate was common, and generally tended to lean towards the Left. The movement found that attitudes towards it were marked by a wider suspicion of do-gooders from the universities; the Council issued instructions that its student volunteers should avoid any open display of college identity such as scarves or sporting colours, and the camp leaders found themselves reflecting on the need to win trust and develop effective consensual leadership skills.

Discussion

These three movements demonstrate a number of continuities with earlier conceptions of character-building through social service. At the same time, they also show how the organisers worked through these ideas differently in response to different contexts. The language of character was most explicit in the rhetoric of those associated with the Women's Training Colony, and least visible in the rhetoric of those associated with Service Civil International. At the same time the practices and legitimating discourse of these three bodies was permeated with ideas about character.

SCI focused primarily upon the character of its most active volunteers, for whom the collective performance of heavy manual labour – symbolised in the fetishisation of the pick and shovel – helped to compensate for non-participation in military service. The UCUC and WTC both emphasised the contribution of their organisation to character-building among those whose morale and attitudes had been negatively affected by circumstances – unemployment in the first case, prostitution in the second. For both of these initiatives, character-building was for other people. In the event, WTC collapsed too quickly for any estimate to be made of its influence; the work of UCUC, by contrast, seems to have had a significant influence on the capacities and attitudes of its student volunteers (of course, it may have had a similar influence on the unemployed participants, but if so I can find no evidence to suggest this).

All three of these movements are relatively little known, even among historians of education, who have generally tended to focus on the major institutional providers of adult education, and less on the ways in which people tried to establish spaces in which different kinds of learning would be promoted, including the transformative learning that

was aimed at by all these three movements. An analysis of these movements therefore helps enrich our understanding of the more conventional adult education debates, as well as helping us understand the diversity and range of alternative learning spaces that developed in the interwar years.

Paper 2: ‘Character’ and citizenship in the educational thought of Richard Livingstone

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This paper explores the educational thought of Sir Richard Livingstone (1880-1960), and in particular his thinking about education for citizenship and character. A classical scholar, Livingstone became one of the most influential academic educationalists and university administrators of the mid-20th century. He was the son of an Anglican vicar; both his father and mother were from Ireland; his maternal grandfather was an Irish Baron. Richard was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford (he was a scholar at both), secured a double first in ‘Greats’ (classics, philosophy and ancient history) at Oxford. He won the chancellor’s Latin verse prize (1901) and Arnold historical essay prize (1905); in 1904 became fellow and tutor at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he remained (apart from a year as an assistant master at Eton, 1917-18) until 1924 (Palmer & Curthoys, 2004).

Academically, Livingstone built his reputation as a Classicist. His first major publication, *The Greek Genius and its Meaning to Us* (Livingstone (1912), second edition, Livingstone (1915)), was followed by *A Defence of Classical Education* (Livingstone, 1916), and then, in the 1920s, by three major compilations, *The Legacy of Greece* (Livingstone, 1921), *The Pageant of Greece* (Livingstone, 1923), and *The Mission of Greece* (Livingstone, 1928). By then he had served on a government committee (Committee to Inquire into the Position of Classics in the Educational System of the United Kingdom, 1921), and moved to Belfast as Vice Chancellor of Queen’s University. Returning to Oxford in his early fifties, with a knighthood and as President of Corpus, he continued with classical scholarship (*Greek Ideals and Modern Life* (Livingstone, 1935), *Portrait of Socrates* (Livingstone, 1938), *Plato: Selected Passages* (Livingstone, 1940), and an edition of Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* (Thucydides, 1943). In due course, Oxford’s ‘Buggins’ turn’ approach brought him the vice chancellorship for a three year term (1944-47).

Livingstone was formed intellectually within the Hellenist revival of late Victorian and Edwardian Oxford; the key figure in this was Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), professor of Greek at Glasgow (1889-99) and Oxford (1908-36). Like Murray, Livingstone ‘absorbed a vision of Hellenism as the basis of a reforming and educative mission’ (Stray, 2007, p.3). His intellectual position is well conveyed in the titles of his two monographs, written a quarter-century apart: *The Greek Genius and its Meaning to Us* (1912) and *Greek Ideals and Modern Life* (1935). Over the centuries, Greece had provided a model of eternal value, and continued to do so: ideals for a better modern world. Yet it was what managers today might call a ‘stretching target’. ‘Continually laid aside – it is too tremendous and fatiguing for the world to live up to’, it had been ‘continually rediscovered – for the world cannot live without it: that is the history of the Greek genius.’ (Livingstone, 1915, pp.12-13). What made the Greeks so powerful an exemplar was their ‘moral genius’, their ‘deliberate, laborious, and triumphant battle for virtue’ (p.24). He said little of politics – perhaps he considered that well covered by his friend Alfred Zimmern, whose *Greek Commonwealth* had appeared the previous year (Zimmern, 1911), pointing instead to key qualities that constituted the genius. The Greeks had, for instance, ‘an extraordinary heightened power of beauty’: ‘Where we speak of good’, the Greek ‘was ready to say beautiful; where we speak of evil, he was ready to say ugly’ (Livingstone, 1915, p.38). Greece ‘stands for humanity, simple and unashamed’; Greek humanism resulted from attempting to answer how, ‘with no revelation from God’ as guide, ‘man should live’

(p.247). Greece was 'the only *thinking* civilization in the world before our own'; it 'tried to base life on reason' (p.248).

Livingstone's Hellenism changed little, and eroded not at all, over his lifetime; what did, of course, change was the world about him. *Greek Ideals and Modern Life* appeared in the mid-1930s: Livingstone had seen the Great War, economies gripped by depression and unemployment for well over a decade, the rise of Mussolini and Hitler, the destructive testing of the League of Nations. But if the challenges were greater, the solution was essentially unchanged: 'Greece offers us a corrective of our errors and a guide in our uncertainties' (Livingstone, 1935, p.1).

Although only for brief periods his major focus, adult education was one of Livingstone's recurring interests. With Tawney, Temple, Zimmern³ and others he worked to raise standards, improve teaching, and broaden access to Oxford – the movement that culminated in *Oxford and Working Class Education* (1908): 'perhaps in some of the tutorial classes now being held under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association we may see, in minds capable of knowledge and from which knowledge has been hitherto withheld, some image of the Greek ... passionate desire to know' (Livingstone, 1915, p.209). It reappeared during the late 1930s and the Second World War, intermingled with an increasing emphasis on citizenship and character. In 1937-38 he was key to introducing Oxford's summer schools for colonial administrators (more important than perhaps it seems now), but Livingstone's thinking on education and character is contained chiefly in his books *The Future in Education* (Livingstone, 1941) and *Education for a World Adrift* (Livingstone, 1943). It has, however, strong continuities with his Hellenism – he was an admirer of Athenian democracy, and of Socrates and Aristotle, in particular. He argued that in a 'world adrift', with 'no standards, no principle to rule and discipline it' (Livingstone, 1943, pp.12-13), strengthening training in 'character' was essential. Central to this was ensuring a 'habitual vision of greatness' (Livingstone, 1943, p.51):

The sight of goodness in life or in literature or history gives a standard and a challenge. If anyone has been able to compare the first-rate with the second-rate, his criticism will not be merely bitter and barren, but creative, born of a vision perceiving the good, dominated by it and desiring to bring it to birth. (pp.54-55)

Livingstone took the *phrase* 'habitual vision of greatness' from Whitehead (with whom he served on the Prime Minister's committee on the classics in education), but the concept had been present in his thinking for many years. It is present, for instance, in the *methodology of The Greek Genius*:

To understand its genius, we must look, not at the men in whom some faint tincture of it was mixed with alien or indifferent things, but at those in whom it was most fully realized, as its 'saints'; and in these, we much fix our eyes, not on their weakness but on their strength: not on what they were but on what they were tending to be, ... their meaning. (Livingstone, 1915, pp.19-20)

His approach in *Greek Ideals* (Livingstone, 1935) was similar, but the urgency of mission stronger. The world was 'economically, in grave difficulties', and 'its spiritual condition is at least as unsatisfactory' (p.1). Christianity 'is no longer the creed of Europe, and nothing has taken its place' (p.3); 'our age' had no 'definite philosophy'. 'Intellectually it is adrift.' (p.3), and people had 'become the slaves of our material civilization and not its masters.' (p.2). In these circumstances, 'our greatest needs are clear standards and a definite philosophy of life', and 'the classics can help us' (p.4). He accepted that 'Greek life was lived on a lower level than this book suggests' (p.8), but to 'estimate its significance to the

world and its permanent contribution to history and human progress' called for 'concentrating on its greatness' (p.9).

This understanding permeated *Education for a World Adrift* (Livingstone, 1943). 'Our fundamental need and a chief task of education today is to form the right attitude to life and to give what our age lacks, clear values and definite standards.' (Livingstone, 1943, p.90) This could be achieved partly through making the 'habitual vision of greatness' central to all education.

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As I have noted elsewhere (Holford, 2003), Livingstone saw the need for 'visions of greatness' in all areas of society. People had 'functions' in all their social roles: in their families, as citizens, in their occupations, 'and each function is capable of a virtue, and excellence, which consists of doing a particular job well, in being a good son or daughter, a good citizen, good in his occupation – whether it is that of Prime Minister or of shop assistant.' (Livingstone, 1943, p.100)

The development of 'character' was part of the creation of good citizens. But Livingstone's other contribution – drawing theoretically on Aristotle – was to notice that citizens were 'made, not born'. This was achieved largely – as Livingstone came to see it – through informal learning: 'we become good citizens by doing what good citizens do' (Livingstone, 1943, p.150). Religion and institutional traditions such as parliamentary government were 'schools' which provided a 'general social education', but other institutions gave this 'a specific form, institutions whose members learn the habit of citizenship by being citizens' (p.150). The three institutions which he saw as particularly significant in this may today seem an odd assortment: boy scouts, boarding schools, and trade unions. Perhaps his gloss on the role of trade unions is significant: 'A strike may be inconvenient or even unjustifiable, but men who will throw up their work and livelihood for a common cause, possibly against their desire or even their judgement, have learnt one at least of the lessons of social education - how to act as a community.' (p.152) His emphasis on the boarding school played an important part in his advocacy of short-term residential colleges in the 1940s – he was also influenced in this by the Danish Folk High Schools.

The result of all this was that while he saw the great moral and political event of his time as 'the breakdown of democracy in so many countries' (Livingstone, 1946, p.42), in his view it was the Anglo-Saxon democracies above all that had 'acquired a sufficient quantum of public spirit, justice, fair play, consideration for others, to make democracy work' (p.42). He sought to identify (and build upon) the educational institutions which had contributed to the development of 'character', but it is key that he drew together institutions of informal education (or the informal learning that goes on in formal educational institutions) such as trade unions and residential schools with an emphasis on 'habitual visions of greatness'.

Paper 3: Utopianism and the New Age – modern man in search of himself: Sir George Trevelyan and the Shropshire Adult Education College

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The soul battle is solely against ourselves. The supposed insult thrown at us can be seen as a challenge to control our own reactions (Trevelyan, 1968, p.2).

Adult education has long been the space in which new ideas are developed and played out. It can be the place for dreaming about what best constitutes a society that works for everyone. To its detractors this can be dismissed as utopianism, a lack of realism, a rush after societal perfection which does not and cannot exist, or the stirrings of a dangerous radicalism which aims to unsettle the established order. At its best, adult education is “a polymorphous space – intellectual, social and communal” which fosters “favourable conditions for the interchange of different experiences and ways of knowing, and the coalescence of interests across various divides” (Gwinn, 2017, p.102). One such point of both division and coalescence can best be described as moral education, or the cultivation of virtue and character, which has exercised thinkers on both the political Left and Right, particularly at times of crisis.

Currently, in austerity-beleaguered Britain, character is again at the fore and is being defined in martial and adamant terms, particularly in political circles. Virtue has become increasingly synonymous with toughness, strength, stability (or stasis), resilience, nobility and pride. Democracy and intellectual flexibility and reflexivity – so long connected with the communitarian thrust of adult education – and the qualities of kindness, humility and sympathy central to human fellowship are in danger of being seen as quaint in such quarters. In the 19th century Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), argued that democracy is itself implicitly debased, subversive and weak, referring to it as the “collective degeneration of men” (1886/1973, p.129). He viewed it as utilitarian and lacking in imagination, with the weaker members of society calling for a dilution of nobility and noble values in pursuit of the twin chimeras of freedom and equality. The following year, in *On The Genealogy of Morals*, he developed the argument in his depiction of ‘master-slave morality’, averring that strong-willed men (masters – usually the nobility) create their own morality and values and the weak (slaves – the lower orders) must follow: “The noble type of man experiences *itself* as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, ‘what is harmful to me is harmful in itself’; it knows itself to be that which first accords honour to things; it is *value-creating*” (1887/1967, p.39). This tension - between democracy and control by a noble elite, who set the values for us - re-emerges when our certainties fall away.

This tension and search for certainty was an important feature of the post-Second World War period, which saw an intensification of anxieties about character, the human spirit and issues of nationhood. At that time, there was a profound interest in adult education as a spiritual or moral tool - terms often used interchangeably - both to bolster the existing societal order and to challenge it. The post-war years witnessed a powerful drive towards moral, intellectual and philosophical reconstruction, aimed at restoring a spirit of community and shared citizenship, in a country emerging from the trauma of war. Democracy was perceived as a bulwark against extremism and adult education stood at the interstices between the old order and the new, which was seeking to foster

emancipatory learning for a recently enfranchised class of people.

Sir George Trevelyan was Warden of one of the influential short-term residential adult education colleges, the Shropshire Adult Education College (SAEC) at Attingham Park, Shropshire, from 1948 to 1971. Such colleges, often located in stately homes or historic buildings recently vacated by the aristocracy, exemplified a convergence of 'master/slave' morality and the democratising impulse of a form of adult education aimed at all adults, irrespective of their social background or previous level of education. Trevelyan conceived of society as "more or less classless" (Trevelyan, *Adult Education and the Living Idea*, n.d, circa early 1950s, p.1) and his primary conviction, as Warden in the immediate post-war period, was that adult education should focus on recovering "peace-time values" (Trevelyan, quoted in Armstrong Ed., 2008, p.195) at a time when, as he perceived it, "so many values were slithering" (Trevelyan, 1991, p.10). Unpicking his conception of what these values were, and who possessed them, is not straightforward. However, it is clear that for Trevelyan they were bound up with ideas of virtue, nobility and the heroic. He stated that it was vital "to rest our minds on the great achievements of the human spirit in art, history, literature and heroic endeavour" (Trevelyan, quoted in Armstrong Ed., 2008, p.196).

His conception of "moral education" (Trevelyan, 1991, p.6) was imbued with a higher calling for restoring meaning to life, through embracing the great rather than the commonplace. It was also centred on the ideal of the Homeric hero, and the hero as the creator and upholder of values. Alongside the range of courses promoting liberal arts activities – such as music, drama, literature – Trevelyan's personal focus on questions about what society should look like, and the individual's place within it, were apparent. Early courses at the SAEC included *Adjusting to a Changing Social Order* and *Modern Man in Search of Himself*.

Trevelyan had a long-standing interest in the Danish Folk High School model of short-term residential adult education, which offered a broad-based and communitarian concept of education. The focus was on self-development and learning how to live well and righteously, particularly for the poorer elements in society. However, there was also a strong emphasis on a reinvigorated sense of national pride and on folk history, lores, folk tales and traditions which were understood as helping to create a shared sense of nationhood. Trevelyan greatly admired, and was influenced by the writings of, Sir Richard Livingstone, the classicist and educationalist, who was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University from 1944 to 1947 and was a major promoter of the Danish Folk High School movement. Both Livingstone and Trevelyan used the words of Alfred North Whitehead, the English philosopher and mathematician, who, in his work *The Aims of Education*, described the need for "habitual visions of greatness" (Whitehead, 1929 p.69). For Whitehead, this was part of a wider definition of liberal adult education which would enable people to "see the world as a web of interrelated processes of which we are integral parts, so that all of our choices and actions have consequences for the world around us" (Whitehead, quoted in Mesle, 2009, p.9). For Livingstone, cultivating "habitual visions of greatness" was a means of retaining our sense of awe and wonder in a world beset by triviality and sensory overload. Livingstone suggested that this could best be achieved through learning from literature and philosophy, which connect us with the great dangers and joys of human experience - love, beauty, terror, pity and pain. He also believed that people should fulfil their role in society through embodying personal greatness, irrespective of their own origins, looking to the "great thinkers" for guidance:

We are tied down, all our days and for the greater part of our days, to the commonplace. That is where contact with great thinkers, great literature helps. In their company we are still in the ordinary world, but it is the ordinary world transfigured and seen through the eyes of wisdom and genius. And some of their vision becomes our own (Livingstone, quoted in Hutchins, 1952, pp.2-3).

Trevelyan's particular conception of "habitual visions of greatness" diverged from Livingstone's in his concentration on cultivating a heightened connection with life through spiritual practice, and on imparting the means of achieving this to others. He viewed adult education as having a "special and in some sense a priestly task" (Trevelyan, *Adult Education and the Living Idea*, n.d., circa early 1950s, p.3). In 1942, at a lecture on anthroposophy, he finally found a way of bringing together his fascination with man's nobility and with spiritual self-mastery with his own pedagogical impulse towards education for the spirit. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher, scientist, architect and esotericist conceived anthroposophy as a means of bringing the acuity of Western philosophical thinking to bear on spiritual issues, and leading to more practical offshoots, such as school education and biodynamic agriculture, which were designed to promulgate anthroposophical thought. Anthroposophy postulates the existence of an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world accessible to direct experience through inner development. It focuses on the primacy of seeking a higher consciousness, by which Steiner was referring to reaching out to the spiritual world by a process of self-discipline at a cognitive and sensory level, with practices – such as meditation and spiritual teachings – designed to enable a connection with the natural world and the universe as a whole and to foster ethical and moral mastery. Steiner believed that, through a melding of thought and spiritual consciousness, the constraints of earthly existence could be transcended and that the human character could emerge unscathed from the testing fires of personal and moral weakness. This heady mix of interests converged in Trevelyan's educational thinking and the course programme he offered at the SAEC had a distinct anthroposophical leaning from early on.

Trevelyan is now considered a founder figure of the New Age, which is described by devotees as the coming of the Aquarian Age, the period of water and group consciousness, an epoch in which humankind needs to look both inwards and outwards to engage in a great "cleansing of the planet", to counter the "folly, greed and ignorance" (Trevelyan, New Pilgrimage lecture, n.d) of the modern age. For Trevelyan, planetary pollution, climate change and "faulty thinking" were the primary results and it was through adult education he chose to counter such developments. He believed earnestly in a holistic approach, breaking down the distinctions between mind, body and spirit and fostering a lifestyle keenly in touch with the natural world and engendering better stewardship of the earth. Along with literature, music and crafts, architecture and conservation, the curriculum evolved in an increasingly New Age direction, particularly after 1960, reflecting and articulating his particular vision of cosmological, spiritual and ecological unity. This utopian thinking spoke of the dangers of rampant materialism and destruction of the earth, but was intertwined with a romantic desire to conserve a British way of life overseen by the hereditary aristocracy and strayed into some aspects of thinking which bordered on the Far Right. Nietzsche's concept of master/slave morality can be recognised in elements within the anthroposophy movement, who believed in arcane knowledge centralised on an inner cognoscenti. The Soil Association held many of its conferences at the SAEC from the late 1940s onwards. It had emerged from earlier organic husbandry movements such as Kinship in Husbandry, an elite-led Far Right group which considered the aristocracy the rightful leaders of moral, ecological and ethical development. Other courses examined hidden allegories in literature and the struggle of the hero figure to overcome spiritual and

earthly trials. By 1971, immediately before Trevelyan retired, the SAEC was devoting a two-week long course to considering *The Doors of Perception*.

Despite the complexities implicit in some of his views, Trevelyan was bold and was attempting to create the space for debate about what humanity should be, through collaboration, communication and discussion. He remains important for his pioneering efforts to bring together a burgeoning New Age community network as early as the late 1950s. By 1965 *The Significance of the Group in the New Age* course at the SAEC attracted 200 people, all seeking to “heal the self and to re-enchant the collective through connections with the natural world and the world of spiritual experience” (Bauwens, 2013). Trevelyan became pivotal in a number of ecological and spiritual movements, such as the Findhorn Community in Moray, Scotland, and also the Lamplighter Movement, for which he became custodian in 1964, in which people lit an amber light in an upper room of their house to signal their spiritual intention to the world. In 1982 Trevelyan was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, the ‘Alternative Nobel prize’ in recognition of his efforts towards establishing an internationalist approach to spiritual education and harmonious living with the earth.

At a time when our martial tendencies are heightened, and our conceptions of virtue so limited, perhaps his utopianism is worthy of re-examination.

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¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/secretary-of-state-for-education-our-plan-for-education> (speech 27 Nov. 2014)

² <http://www.character-education.org.uk/resources>; see also <http://jubileecentre.ac.uk/1641/character-education>

³ It is interesting to consider some of Livingstone's contemporaries. R.H. Tawney (1880-1962), William Temple (1881-1944), Alfred Zimmern (1879-1957), were all Oxford undergraduates at the same time (Tawney and Temple came to Balliol from Rugby; Livingstone and Zimmern from Winchester to New College). A.D. Lindsay (1879-1952), arrived at Oxford later, after graduating from Glasgow. Among other figures in adult education, Albert Mansbridge (1876-1952) was slightly older; Robert Peers (1888-1972) and Harold Laski (1892-1950) rather younger.

Getting through the gate is only the first hurdle: Learning from disabled students and staff about their experience of inclusive teaching and learning

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Introduction

It is 22 years since the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), 12 years since the revisions (2005) and my first paper exploring disabled students experience of higher education in the UK. With the recent changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance funding in England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Student Opportunity fund designed to incentivise Higher Education Providers (HEP) to move to greater inclusive provision, it seems timely to: explore what has been happening behind the gate; find out if there are new or different hurdles awaiting students; and reflect on how HEP are addressing the inclusion and diversity agenda.

The original papers were based on the multi-institutional empirical European Social Fund (ESF) funded Disability Effective Inclusive Policies (DEIP) project that explored disabled students experience of university life and evaluated policies and practice at three universities, Sussex, Bristol and Lancaster. For copies of briefing papers see <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/projects/deip.htm>.

The initial journey through the gate explored models of disability and legislation that influenced institutional attitudes, policy and provision at the time. It also presented insights into disabled students' expectations, the diversity of students' needs, and the evolution of support services available during the student lifecycle (Houghton, 2005). A year later a thematic approach was adopted to discuss the cross cutting issues of disclosure, transition, policy and legislative requirements, such as reasonable adjustment and employability (Houghton, 2006). Although just over ten years ago, the topics and points raised remain pertinent to current debates and discussions relating to the experiences of disabled students in higher education (HE); there are however some differences.

The intention in this paper is to reflect on some of the changes that directly relate to the conference themes of inclusion and diversity, which arguably represent both the more subtle and obvious changes, but as with disability and other equality related terminology is open to multiple interpretations. I begin by summarising changes in participation rates – representing the students who get through the gate. Next, I discuss developments in policy and practice with reference to models of disability and how they both help and hinder the call for inclusion. Whereas the previous SCUTREA papers (Houghton, 2005, 2006) and the subsequent book based on the DEIP project (Coare, Houghton and McConnell, 2007) focused on student services, here I will give attention to exploring the on-course teaching and learning experiences of staff on students. I draw on new empirical data from students on the autistic spectrum and gathered as part of a wider evaluation for the institutions Access Agreement (McCrone and Houghton, 2016) and students with experience of mental health conditions gathered as part of two earlier projects for the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE, 2015) and the Higher Education Academy (Houghton and Anderson, 2017). Finally, I reflect on some of the current and future challenges.

Participation rates: Deciding the box to tick when you come through the gate

In 2005, I reported an increase in the numbers of disabled students participating in HE, since then the numbers have continued to increase, but the profile of disabled students has changed. Nationally in 2005 the dyslexia category represented the largest group of students reporting a disability with numbers increasing dramatically from 18% in 1995/6 to 41% in 2003/4 (Higher Education Statistical Agency – HESA). Whilst as a percentage of students within this category, which is now known as Specific Learning Difficulties (including dyslexia) is 43% in 2015/16, the actual numbers represent a 53% increase (see table 2).

Other groups of students, with fewer students participating in 2005/06 have seen a greater percentage increase in the past 10 years. For instance, students with mental health conditions have seen a 411% increase and now represent 18% of students known to have a disability (see tables 1 and 2). However, there is a general recognition and sense within the HE sector that because of the potential stigma associated with mental health that the number of students disclosing is an under-representation of the numbers of students experiencing mental health difficulties participating (HEFCE, 2015). Although the numbers and proportion of students with a disability falling into the Social Communication and Autistic Spectrum Disorder remains relatively small 4% in 2015/16, this group has risen by 617% in the past ten years (see tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Undergraduate disabled students as a percentage of all undergraduates and those known to have a disability.

	Total Undergraduate (UG)		Total UG known Disability	
	2015/16	2005/06	2015/16	2005/06
SpLD	5.3%	2.8%	43.1%	43.5%
SC-ASD	0.5%	0.1%	4.3%	0.9%
MH	2.2%	0.3%	18.2%	5.5%

Table 2: Numbers and percentage increase of undergraduate disabled students between 2005/06 and 2015/16.

	2015/16	2005/06	% increase
SpLD	30245	19740	53%
SC-ASD	3010	420	617%
MH	12730	2490	411%

When considering the diversity of the student profile it is important to recognise that analysis based on an individual characteristic such as disability is artificial, and does not reflect the nature of the individual students who come through the gate. Analysis by (Tinklin et al., 2004) suggests that there are fewer minority ethnic students with a disability. The challenges of who uses data and how is central to debates around inclusion but is outside the focus of this paper (see Houghton and Holland, 2016 and Holland et al., 2017). The multiple identities of each student and the influence of a specific characteristic on their opportunity, capacity and willingness to engage learning activities vary. As discussed later the use of an inclusive approach provides a way for a more holistic engagement.

A final observation regarding the complex decision regarding disclosure of a disability. Students not only need to decide whether to disclose but also when; before, during or after they have passed through the HE gate. Whilst institutions are increasingly proactive

encouraging students to disclose at the earliest opportunity to enable them to make reasonable adjustments and ensure support is in place from the student perspective, it is not a simple or straightforward decision. Some students do not recognise they 'have a disability' as defined by the Equality Act 2010, so simply ignore or dismiss information provided, this group also includes students who may have received support from school because they had a Special Educational Need (SEN) and assumed this will continue. Other students have concerns regarding the implications of a disclosure, with some afraid it will jeopardise their application or influence how staff and students perceive them. There are also students who feel it would place them at an unfair advantage, or conversely see no obvious benefits in disclosing. Finally, there is the argument that if HEPs were more inclusive that there would be no need to disclose, at least for the vast majority of students.

National influences on what happens beyond the gate

HEFCE has sought to enhance institutional provision since the 1990s, initially via a series of special initiatives that have encouraged participation (1993-1996), provided high quality provision (1996 – 1999) and improved provision for disabled students within higher education (1999 – 2005). As Wray (2013) notes in his paper comparing the experiences of disabled and non-disabled students, the inclusion of disabled students as a target group for inclusion in the national Aimhigher programme (a widening access initiative that concluded in 2011) and OFFA's guidance institutional access agreements has helped to raise their profile.

More recently, HEFCE commissioned two pieces of research to gain a better understanding of issues relating to students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and students with mental health problems and intensive support needs (HEFCE, 2015). Several national bodies have also focused attention on issues of mental health (see Houghton and Anderson, 2017 for a review of policy and research relating to this target group).

Changes to eligibility criteria for Disabled Students' Allowance were introduced for the academic year 2016/17 and HEP received increased disability student opportunity funding '*to meet the rapid rise in the number of students reporting mental health problems and to transition towards an inclusive social model of support for disabled students*' ([HEFCE Tackling inequality website](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/inequality/disabled/) url www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/inequality/disabled/). In January 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance on behalf of the Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group (DSSLG) regarding inclusive teaching and learning in higher education as a pathway to excellence. Other organisations such as the Equality Challenge Unit, Office of the Independent Adjudicator and Universities UK have also issued guidance and good practice designed to promote and underpin an inclusive approach that takes account of the increasing diversity within HEP.

Some of these developments operate at the macro level shaping the expectations of the sector, others reflect the micro level experiences of individual students or practices of academics or support staff seeking to respond to HEP policy. Although the focus of this paper is on developments within an English, UK context the debates and agenda is of global interest. In fact, the notion of universal design which I discuss next is an agenda that is more developed within a US context (Mole, 2013).

Inclusion and diversity: promoting an entitlement for all beyond the gate

As with many words associated with equality, the terms inclusion and diversity are two of the many words used interchangeably, as well as used differently over time or in school, Further Education and HE sectors. A common association is with inclusion and SEN,

whereas for diversity the connection is with multiculturalism. Grace and Gravestock use both terms in their book explaining, '*we believe that working inclusively is not quite the same as dealing with 'diverse' student groups*' (2009: 2). The HEA funded a series of subject specific guides using inclusivity as an encompassing term that encouraged consideration of the learning entitlement of all students, here an inclusive curriculum was described as one: *where all students' entitlement to access and participate in a course is anticipated, acknowledged and taken into account*' (Morgan and Houghton, 2011: 7).

The inclusive curriculum design (ICD) guides promote a social model approach which recognises the attitudes, social and physical barriers caused by policies, practices and procedures as well as the environment. This approach contrasts that of the medical or individual model of disability which attributes difficulties as the 'fault' or consequence of individual deficit or impairment. The emphasis on the social model and underpinning ICD principles which are: anticipatory, flexible, accountable, collaborative, transparent and equitable, mirror the approaches advocated within universal design.

Universal Design (UD) has emerged from basic design principles in the built environment, and is applied to the learning context to achieve the goals of inclusion whilst acknowledging individual diversity. Universal Instructional Design (UID) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are frameworks applying these principles to the learning context, as noted by DfE – DSSLG (2017) the terms are used interchangeably with inclusion which is the term they elect to use.

By adopting an anticipatory approach that emphasises universal or inclusive design principles the aim is to reduce the need for additional reasonable adjustments or accommodations and increases the benefits of an inclusive approach which have been identified as:

- Brand and reputation
- Quality
- Increased employment outcomes
- Improved teaching and learning
- Cost and time efficiency
- Assurance and accountability
- Improved recruitment and retention
- Better professional development
- Staff and student satisfaction (DfE – DSSLG, 2017: 14).

In the remainder of this paper I explore three of these benefits: improved teaching and learning, activities associated with recruitment and retention and the use of research and evaluation findings to support professional development for inclusion and diversity.

Smart Start: fostering independence beyond the gate

Smart Start is a programme of retention activities designed to foster independence and encourage peer support for students who disclose as having social communication issues or who are on the autistic spectrum. The three activities developed and delivered by Transition Officers working in Student Based Services and funded as part of Lancaster University's access agreement include: a pre-term residential, group mentoring sessions and peer mentoring opportunity. Activities explore issues relating to the wider student

experience as well as questions about academic conventions within the curriculum and exploration of strategies to support independence in self-directed learning that typifies the higher education experience. For example, the pre-term residential includes sessions from a faculty Learning Developer and Academic who help to demystify learning at university, this was identified as being especially helpful in, *'explaining a lot of 'tacit' knowledge like departmental hierarchies, including importance of departmental secretaries! And highlighting that terminology may differ between departments'* [observer notes].

The group mentoring sessions evolved and provided a flexible forum whereby students could bring their own questions and were encouraged to share strategies they found useful. This enabled some students to receive and provide information, a reciprocity discussed elsewhere (McCrone and Houghton, 2016). With respect to the peer mentoring group one student described how the sessions *'brought me out of my shell a bit socially but also helped me to be more independent'*. Adopting an inclusive approach where ideas are explicitly sought and valued is one that enables students to contribute to discussions within formal teaching sessions. Smart Start group mentoring was effective in providing a space for students to learn more about what was acceptable within the university context, for instance one student said they found it useful to know that, *'it's OK to speak up during a seminar, and suggested the idea of a speak up campaign'*. Similarly, the peer mentoring, allowed students to talk through and 'check out ideas' with another student who might accompany them to the library to access resources, offer reassurance or a sounding board to discuss different aspects of independent living and learning.

A key message in feedback from Smart Start students was about making expectations explicit, so that students knew what was required, but also to reduce the amount of time spent trying to work out what was appropriate and limit unnecessary anxiety arising from uncertainty. Of course, for many adult educators recognising and valuing students previous experience and contribution is second nature. Given the increasing diversity of our student groups with respect to the multiple identities it is important to think about how we might foster an inclusive learning environment and consider how we might enable students to explore topics drawing on broader and more diverse content or examples that resonate with their interests and experiences. As the Morgan and Houghton (2011) inclusive curriculum design guidance acknowledges this is easier or more obvious in some subjects.

Inclusive ways of valuing diversity: meeting and greeting and getting to know others beyond the gate

Interactive focus group discussions with students and staff as part of the HEA project exploring embedding wellbeing into the curriculum revealed the importance of a smile or simple greeting in helping them to feel welcome. Additionally, that basic sense of acceptance provided the basis on which they had confidence to ask questions, to make suggestions and engage more effectively in their learning and potentially support the university to fulfil their commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Looking more closely at teaching and learning, work undertaken with Jill Anderson on embedding wellbeing in the curriculum proposes thinking about content and process. Although mental wellbeing may feature explicitly in the curriculum of health and social care professional courses, the notion of curriculum infusion developed within the US offers creative opportunities for less obvious disciplines to incorporate mental health considerations into the curriculum. For example, the built environment and use of space, might include assessments or group projects involving students to consider wellbeing issues in their designs as much as accessible features for individuals with mobility or

sensory impairments. As an aside, recent feedback from Smart Start students requesting low sensory quiet spaces to enable them to manage those times when they are experiencing sensory overload have been fed into our major redesign of the SPINE (a thoroughfare running north to south through the Lancaster campus).

Whilst an inclusive content covering mental wellbeing may not always be possible, inclusive pedagogical approaches incorporated into the process of our teaching and learning are certainly worth considering. The five ways to wellbeing Take notice, Keep learning, Be active, Give and Connect provide a useful checklist for thinking about inclusivity and diversity within the learning environment. They are pointers not just for those teaching, but also useful for HEP to engage students as they move through the different transitions of the university student lifecycle.

A single gate or revolving door

There are multiple gates (transitions) through which students need to pass, as they move through the student lifecycle. Some transition experiences are heavily influenced by their disability, others by other factors such as their family support, financial circumstances and the need to work or perhaps combine their studies with caring responsibilities. Whilst national and institutional policy changes may bring uncertainty, for staff committed to raising the profile of inclusive pedagogies, there are potentially hidden advantages arising from the changes to Disabled Students Allowance. For instance, the increased expectation that HEP will become more proactive thinking about how they might anticipate barriers to learning and adopt more inclusive pedagogical approaches that reduce the need for the reactive reasonable adjustments. These changes will take time as they involve more than environmental adaptations, they involve staff working in academic departments, learning technologists, educational and learning developers, librarians, careers staff and multiple student service colleagues including disability officers who bring a particular expertise. These changes will also require a more strategic engagement of students themselves (for ideas see ECU and HEA, 2010).

Epilogue

As a wheelchair user, doors generally present a challenge, with respect to weight, the threshold or the safety springs or revolving features, despite this the sense of achievement in getting through such barriers should not be underestimated. The same sense of achievement and opportunity should be open to all students; hopefully the move towards greater inclusion will support that goal. A lot of changes have occurred in the past ten years, however, more are still needed. What is exciting is that as more diverse groups of students progress to higher education the learning environment is enriched and there is a greater chance for learning alongside others whose views, values, life and learning experiences are different from our own. When an inclusive curriculum design drawing on universal design approaches is taken seriously there is the possibility of teaching, both disciplinary knowledge and content, as well as features valued in adult education including a learner centred approach that values the lived experience of all learners who come through the gate.

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Information access and activism: Libraries and resource centres promoting and curating people's knowledge

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Amidst the jargon of the knowledge economy and information highway, libraries—the very institutions that specialize in information access and literacy—are struggling to stay afloat faced with cutbacks from administrations that no longer see libraries as vital components of a democratic society. This paper reports on the first phase of a research project examining the evolving role of libraries and resource centres supporting community development and civic participation, focusing on three aspects: Information literacy; documenting people's knowledge; and library space. Current literature in critical library studies is explored to survey the changing trends in information access, knowledge management, and documentation with an emphasis on social justice. The goal of the presentation is to invite discussion to integrate adult educators' perspectives on these issues.

There is an important role for collaboration with adult educators. Inclusive education requires inclusive information access. Gouthro and Holloway (2016) note the importance of libraries in austere times to provide access to information, and recognize the role of such places for nurturing cultural industries that contribute to economic development. Examples abound of systematized exclusion, such as Smythe's (2016) research demonstrating the practices of exclusion evidenced in government websites. Optimistic descriptions of open government and citizen participation are undermined by bureaucratic literacies that obfuscate information. Literacy instruction must constantly evolve to support learners to navigate convoluted information systems. Crowther and Mackie's (2015) research on citizens' information seeking patterns during the Scottish referendum note the importance of internet sources to assist in political decision making and participation. Add to this the high profile news stories of state-level propaganda, spin, and manipulation of news media, or surveillance of people's online activities—such examples point to what Jordan (2015) describes as 'political antagonism of information' (p143).

Framing the study

Libraries working in communities typically refer to public libraries, but I am also exploring examples from academic and special libraries, since staff in such institutions are also dealing with issues of evolving roles to keep pace with technological and social changes. Resource centres may be independent or linked to a development organisation (NGO) with a focus on their local communities offering services ranging from library collections to documentation and training. 'Community resource centres and community learning centres in many countries serve as focal points for popular education, community involvement and valuing local knowledge' (Adams et al 2002).

Acknowledgement of the dearth of library-focused research in the field of adult education has been cited over the years, though there are signs of renewed interest. Researchers in the mainstream library science field also have done little to contribute to a broadened understanding of librarianship explicitly as education. Sanford & Clover's (2016) research on adult learning in public libraries, note the reticence among library staff they interviewed to describe their work as adult education.

There are, however, areas of librarianship that have been more willing to embrace the educational role of library workers, particularly those working in social justice environments (Adams et al 2002). The contributions of critical and poststructural social theories have helped deepen the understanding of the political power of information, and the roles and responsibilities of librarians working in the “information ecosystem” (Gustafson 2017). Librarians have long advocated for freedom of access to information and pushed back against censorship. Outsiders to the field may be amused to hear of ‘anarchist librarians’ or ‘radical reference’ but such terms reflect a growing interest in making visible the explicitly educational role librarians can play to support people’s empowerment goals, and awareness of librarians’ activism in social justice work.

For the purpose of this review, I am focusing on three spheres of activity: Information literacy; people’s knowledge; and library space. I have selected these spheres as they address the activities of library workers, the collections they curate for people, and the physical space of libraries and resource centres embedded in the communities in which they serve.

Information literacy

Information literacy, generally, describes the skill development process to enable people to find and utilize the information they need. However, access to information alone is insufficient to foster engaged, active citizenship, and there is a growing awareness of the importance of examining the sources of information and issues of power in knowledge creation and dissemination. Issues that are driving the critical analysis of information literacy include:

- Perceptible resurgence in propaganda and spin
- Restrictions on access to relevant information, or financial barriers to access
- Oceans of data and documents available online, but how to navigate the waters

Sharing the theoretical framing of critical social science and critical pedagogy, ‘critical information literacy’ (Elmborg 2006) engages in critiques of mainstream knowledge production and provision, looking at power and control over information. Elmborg notes there is not universal agreement on the definition of information literacy which is problematic, thus Freire’s critical pedagogy provides a helpful push back:

Is the library a passive information bank where students and faculty make knowledge deposits and withdrawals, or is it a place where students actively engage existing knowledge and shape it to their own current and future uses? And what is the librarian’s role as an educator in this process (p 193)?

As the last question shows, the concept has meaning not only for the participant, but also for the librarian in terms of gaining the skill and confidence as a teacher to help develop the information literacy skills in others. Riedler and Eryaman (2010) draw upon critical and poststructural theories to examine the inherently political nature of librarianship, a move that confronts the traditional ‘positivist’ notions of libraries as unbiased keepers of information and promotes their potential to participate more fully in collective learning and community building.

Gustafson (2017) describes the importance of understanding the “information life cycle from creation to consumption” (p 1) in which people gain an understanding of the myriad contexts (political, historical, social, etc) that affect the creation of information and the ways people comprehend and make use of it, as well as researchers’ own participation in

creation through a hierarchical scholarly publishing framework.

Lankes (2016) summarizes the long history of librarianship, and the commitment to learning and sharing information that has defined the profession for generations, as well as the efforts of librarians to advocate for free and equitable access to information. Trosow (2014) also notes the concern expressed by librarians over the growing 'commodification' of information and influence of market forces. In response, there is a determination to defend 'the notion of information as a public good' (p 17) and resist attempts of 'enclosure' (p 22). I want to reiterate this point as a reminder that librarians have not only worked directly with people to provide instruction and access to information, many also advocate in the policy sphere to protect people's information rights, such as challenging restrictive copyright legislation. Trosow argues for the importance of political-economic analyses regarding information and libraries, and expresses concern when library advocacy efforts remain restricted to 'the particular narrow issue at hand' (p 21). I would suggest that the narrowing focus may be also be a symptom of low staffing levels and competing demands that remove people from the very aspects of the work of librarianship that drew them to the profession in the first place.

Assumptions that information literacy is just a matter of helping people learn and become comfortable with new technology is also a limiting factor. Eubanks (2011) describes her efforts to create computer training for women which stumbled until she developed a better understanding of the women's lives and existing daily interactions with technology. The women may have worked in tedious data entry jobs, or had faced the scrutiny of computer in the social services office which appeared to make all the decisions in their efforts to obtain financial assistance. Their aversion to the technology was not a result of ignorance, but of direct unjust experiences. For those of us working in libraries who find increasing amounts of our time on computer training and technical support, being aware of the people's contexts and priorities is important to ensure relevant support rather than replicating instructional methods that, in turn, replicate subordination. Torrell (2010) describes a collaboration between instructors and librarians using 'contact zone pedagogy' that helps students expose the power inequalities and potential manipulation of information as they go through numerous steps in a research task.

There is a tendency in some of this literature to set up an oppositional scenario of traditional versus critical library environments, (traditional=passive; critical=active) but I would argue that the divide is not so clear. Even the standard library practice of the 'reference interview' can be seen as a dialogic process of engaging a person into discussion and questioning to learn more about what it is they are really looking for, since a patron's initial question may be quite vague (which is probably the very reason why they are coming to the library to look for help in the first place!). Several cases describe the use of methods adopted from critical and feminist pedagogy for group learning settings, and may play with standard library instructional methods for one-to-one reference assistance.

'Source authority' refers to the knowledge that the information being used is reliable. This varies according to sector and use. Hoyer & MacDonald (2014) note that in some areas of the social services grey literature is very important, but for the reader it can be hard to determine the credibility of a small NGO's good research paper, and a 'shiny PDF' that looks good but may come from a biased source. 'In the social services sector, determining source authority comes not through traditional processes of looking at the type of publication or its origin but through interaction with the community of the authors and publishers, and knowledge of which authors and publishers are producing the most relevant and reliable information' (p 32).

Battista (2012) also argues that it is a critical skill of citizens to be able to seek and assess information to participate in society. Challenges to this ability come from western education systems that are increasingly skewed to treat education as job training and not citizen training, and by the vast amount of information from various forms that is now available. The academic emphasis on databases and peer-reviewed journals leads instruction to focus on search skills and sources of information that are only relevant to a university context that people will not have access to when they graduate. Battista pushes back by emphasizing the importance of integrating social media in library instruction since that is where people are already and it allows for more creativity for people to curate their own information sources. For example, people can add current news feeds that are more up to date than published academic literature. I would add the caveat from criticisms of social media potentially creating self-reinforcing bubbles where information is filtered through a person's existing network and preferences, reducing the serendipity of the unexpected.

People's knowledge: Whose information is accessible?

As people develop the critical skills to evaluate other sources of information, they may also begin identifying their potential roles as content creators to ensure their community's knowledge is preserved. Libraries are increasingly aware of their role in fostering collections and providing access to information that promotes the diversity of their communities, through initiatives bringing sexual diversity to light (Silva Alentejo, 2014), integrating indigenous knowledges (Kelly, 2010), or supporting political education and participation of previously excluded groups (Badawi, 2007). Local organisations have an important role as information hubs for regional development activity, particularly with the opportunities of internet access. Earlier discussions of the 'digital divide' have evolved to the call for 'digital inclusion' which considers the learning and engagement required for people to use information in their own knowledge creation, the issues run deeper than mere access to the technology. It cannot be forgotten that very real barriers to access remain, particularly in rural areas.

Social movements need information for evidence and mobilization but an incredible amount of information and knowledge is also generated as a result of their activities. Resource and documentation centres have a key role to play in curating knowledges that have been marginalized by the mainstream (see Clashes, 2013). Moran (2014) describes the work of anarchist libraries. She also uses the term 'infoshop' noting that anarchists have for a long time placed emphasis on the collection and sharing of literature: 'Anarchists, by definition suspicious of the state and its institutions, have also wanted to protect their own historical writings and culture' (Moran, p.175). She adds a quote that acknowledges that most of these collections that reside with activists within the movement 'remain in the hands of the producing communities, preserved by the people who participated in the very struggles that are being documented' (Hoyt, 2012, p.32 in Moran p.175). Moran describes 'independent community archives' which are often a local response to a failure of mainstream organisations to include those groups, much like the anarchist groups did. They are not 'vanity projects, nor as alternatives to active struggle, but rather as acts of resistance, consciously made' (p.176). Yet, their insistence on independence opens them to problems of organisation and sustainability both financially and in terms of preservation of the material, relying on a few dedicated souls. Some anarchist libraries become affiliated with a university to support them.

Allard and Ferris (2015) describe participatory archiving initiatives to gather information related to discrimination against indigenous peoples in Canada. The significance of this work is made all the more relevant following news in April 2016 that testimonies gathered while documenting abuses at residential schools will be destroyed after 15 years unless

claimants specifically request they be archived (Perkel April 4, 2016). This is a controversial decision since some claimants argue that this is vitally important first-person testimony of abuses.

Library spaces – and linkages

Public libraries in particular have long recognized their role in communities for providing a free, safe space for all, including vulnerable and marginalized populations. Riedler and Eryaman (2010) note the link of the shift to a transformative community-based library requires a rethinking of the space, and for the 'barriers that exist for underrepresented groups, including the digital divide, social and political exclusion from political participation and individual, institutional and structural inequalities of allocation and distribution of public resources' (p.93).

In response to events in the United States in recent years, this role has become more visible and politicized, and defined as 'sanctuary spaces.' Lankes (2016) refers to the libraries in Ferguson, Missouri and other areas that experienced riots, who resolutely remained open to provide safe spaces for the local population. Other libraries have been reassuring undocumented migrants and refugees that the library is a safe space for them to visit.

Part of this work also involves breaking down barriers and stereotypes of information work. Community or academic partners express appreciation for the skill of information workers and surprise that they didn't really think of their role before. Information people speak of their growing intentional political acts and critique of rules and processes that are typically described as being neutral, while being deeply embedded in cultural practices that privilege certain ways of know over other ways. Lankes (2016) describes 'community reference' and 'community collections' as strategies for library workers to take more active roles in local organisations, bringing their listening and questioning skills to projects.

At the time of writing this paper (2017), the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) has released 10 recommendations for libraries in Canada to respond to the call initiated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action to start healing the wounds of the legacy of abuses against indigenous peoples. The CFLA looked at the calls to see where libraries could play a role, and identified 10 key areas. The recommendations include issues of literacy, knowledge curation, and physical space that represents the indigenous worldviews.

Integrating adult educators' perspectives

As I noted in the introduction, this review of the literature is an early phase of a project to consider the evolving role of libraries and resource centres. Highlighting the research from the perspective of librarians is intended to generate discussion and engagement with the adult education community, who have decades of experience in critical and participatory education practices.

One thing that I have not seen described in detail in the cases I have read, is the hard work that is involved in participatory models—issues that have been discussed at length within adult education and community practice. Perhaps this area of the field is still too new to allow for such reflection and acknowledgement of challenges, so they are emphasizing the importance, legitimacy of this area of work. This is perhaps a space where adult educators and community development workers can contribute to the analysis and guidance on partnerships.

Some of the questions that currently interest me include:

- Where do adult educators see themselves in the library?
- What are the issues adult educators face regarding access to information?
- What is the role for adult educators to preserve knowledge?
- What ways can adult educators collaborate with librarians for critical literacy, citizen participation, and politicized learning?

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Identifying the potential risks of political e-participation for adult learners

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Abstract

Adult education encourages *digital* literacy as an unmitigated good. In the current conjuncture, it does not encourage *political* literacy to the same degree. There is undoubtedly a nexus between the two, with a need for political literacy in the online environment. This paper argues that many adult learners remain ill-equipped to competently 'read' and respond to the political messages they receive online. Moreover, the problem is escalating rapidly, as the methods that political parties employ to influence people become increasingly subtle and sophisticated. At the same time we see the rise in 'fake news,' in extremism of all kinds and the declining status of the 'expert' in a 'post truth world' (Mele et al., 2017). Given this context, this paper asks the following questions:

- what are the perceptions of a sample of trainee teachers working in UK further and adult education with regard to the place of online political literacy in the curriculum?
- do these perceptions chime with what we know of the status of political literacy in current UK qualifications and curricula?
- in light of the answers to these questions, are adult learners being adequately equipped to protect their data and interpret the political messages they receive through social media?

Whilst the authors recognise the potential of the internet to mobilise political engagement and as an enabler of activism in many contexts, this paper focuses on the attendant risks of e-participation.

What we did

This was a scoping study that asked participants for their own thoughts and ideas about the subject via a paper questionnaire. We were also able to compare our questionnaire findings with our own experience of observing sessions delivered by trainee teachers over the previous two academic years, concentrating on those sessions that sought to develop political literacy. The sample of trainees identified for the questionnaire constituted 408 people studying at a UK University for a teaching qualification in Post-16 education. This is a part time, in-service programme, meaning that all have an existing role in teaching prior to and throughout the course. A paper questionnaire was issued to the whole of the second year cohort at the close of a two-day conference taking place in April, 2017.

The questionnaire used the Citizenship Foundation's description of political literacy as being,

about helping young people become politically aware and effective. It is about giving them the ability to read issues and events politically. This means using the ideas, language, forms of thought, and argument that citizens use when dealing with [or talking about] a public issue (Citizenship Foundation, 2017).

We asked respondents whether they

- were aware of this kind of focus anywhere in their institution's curriculum,

- taught it themselves,
- thought it was important
- covered its online aspects in their own teaching
- thought its online aspects ought to be part of the curriculum

We compared our findings with our own experiences of teaching observation over the last two years. Finally, we endeavoured to set these findings in the context of the current curriculum offer and qualification framework in UK adult and further education.

Rationale

The motivation to conduct this study arose from a news report on the role of data analytics in the Brexit and Trump campaigns of 2016. Both campaigns employed the corporate publicity firm *Cambridge Analytica* to harvest data from various social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter. The extent to which this influenced the results is questionable. What is clear, however, is that the company used this data to engineer and micro-target political messages in an attempt to influence votes (Bershidsky, 2016). 'Crawling' social media posts enabled them to track our vulnerabilities around family breakdown, changes in circumstances, being a victim of crime, significant loss, peer pressure, religion, sexual orientation, attitudes to drug-use and so on. This 'psychographic profiling' is then combined with psychometric tests gathered through 'fun' online quizzes such as 'Are you a Type A or Type B personality?' 'What percent Badass are you?' or 'What's your Political Compass?' Whilst many consumers are aware that their online footprint is routinely used to target them with advertising, the prospect of political strategists using it to manipulate voting preferences is new and we would argue, troubling, particularly since usually no consent for such use has been gained. There are Data Protection Laws against this and in the run up to the UK General Election of 8th June 2017, the Information Commissioner launched a formal inquiry, feeling it necessary to warn all political parties of the 'data protection risk' of such practices and pointing out to them that campaigning tools were having 'a significant potential impact on individuals' privacy' (Stone, 2017).

A feature of the 2017 election has been a plethora of political advertisements tailored to individual social media users, paid for by the three main political parties. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism gained access to a dataset which appears to show how UK voters are being targeted with specific messages in an attempt to influence the way they vote. Will Moy, director of the independent fact checking website *Full Fact* warned that this is a 'dark ads' election, whereby people in the same household can receive different messages on the same topic;

It's possible to target dark ads at millions of people in this country without the rest of us knowing ... Inaccurate information could be spreading with no-one to scrutinise it. Democracy needs to be done in public. (McClenaghan, 2017)

Similarly, *the Guardian* reported in May, 2017 that the Welsh marginal constituency of Delyn had been subject to 'dark ads,' which became apparent through bids for advertising slots on Facebook. A Labour party activist setting up a link to a site where young people could register to vote saw the rate per click rise rapidly from £1.08 to £3.40. They were being outbid by Conservative Party advertisements, taking click-throughs to dark ads about 'Labour's 'death tax,' taken from a sensationalist and highly contested opinion piece in *the Express* newspaper (Cadwalladr, 2017).

People need a sophisticated level of political literacy to deal competently with such practices. Most social media users are unaware that they might be targeted in these ways. Further, an ability to distinguish content that has a basis in fact from 'spin' is also vital. Whether controversial claims are subsequently found to be untrue is almost immaterial. The advertisement cannot be unseen. Moreover, the newly acquired cultural heft of 'post-truth' politics and 'alternative facts' points to the dangers of a growing tendency to dismiss expert, evidence-based information. Faith is placed instead in moving stories of individual suffering or courage (Davies, 2017) and the credibility of statistics and authoritative research to accurately represent the world is declining, dismissed by many as a way for liberal elites to win people over to their world view. This state of affairs led us to question the extent to which adult learners are prepared to protect their data and to 'read' political online content critically and we began by asking a large sample of trainee teachers working in adult and further education for their perceptions.

What we found

The questionnaire

164 of 408 (40%) of the trainee teachers sampled returned a completed questionnaire. One session leader neglected to hand it out, therefore there are no returns from those teaching within the Humanities and Social Sciences discipline, which might have been expected to reveal some engagement with political education. Other tutors also reported leaving it to the last minute when some trainees were rushing for a train, so that we cannot say with certainty that the 60% who did not respond did not wish to take part. However, those who elected to complete the questionnaire might be those who thought this a more important issue and the results should be read with that caveat.

Figures 1 and 2 show the range of specialisms taught by respondents and in what kinds of institution.

Figure 1: Teaching specialisms of respondents

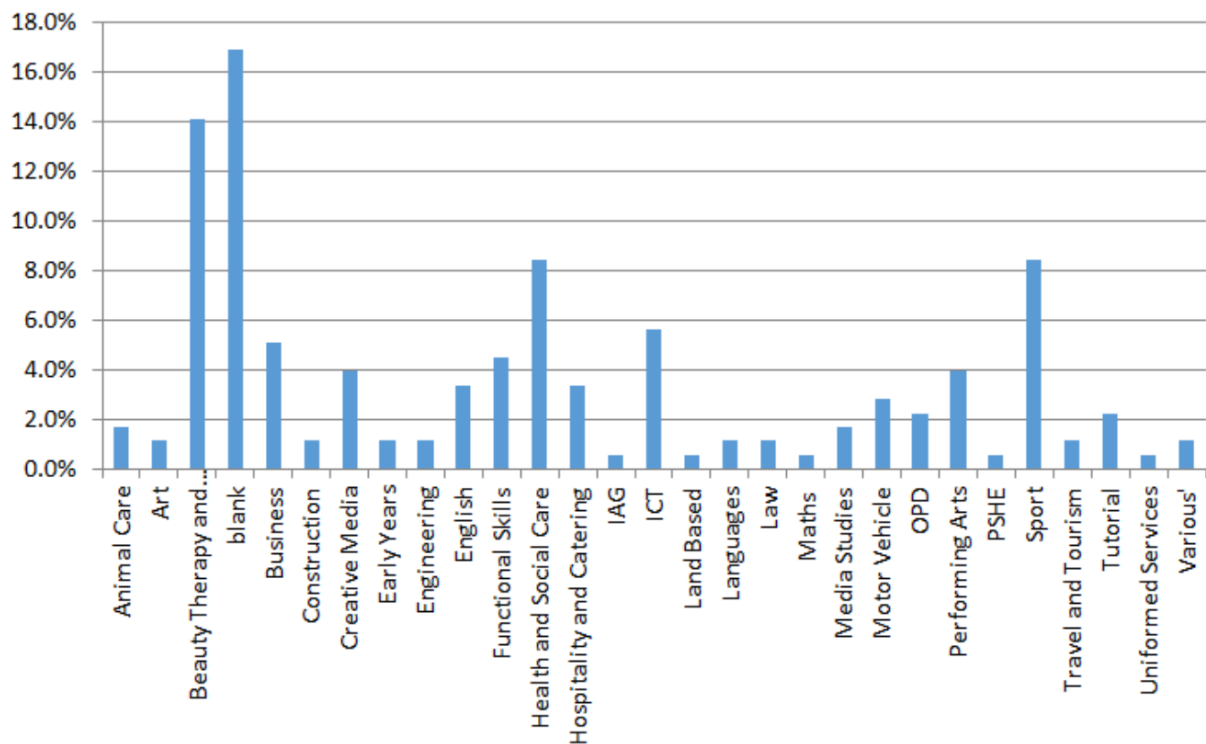
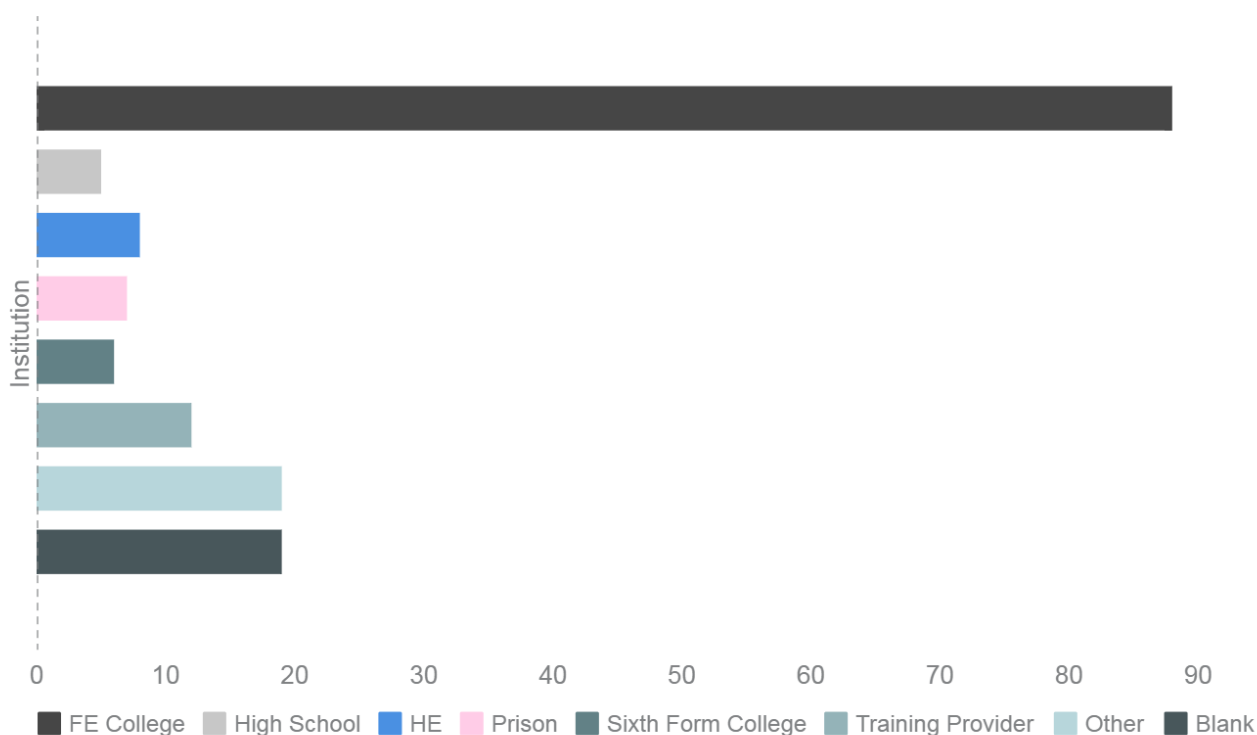


Figure 2: Type of institution in which they teach



These two figures show that the sample is diverse both in terms of subject taught and the context for this teaching and this is typical of adult and further education. There is a preponderance, however, of FE providers. Whilst a great deal of adult education occurs in FE colleges, a substantial portion of their provision is concerned with 14 to 19 year olds and the results and their relevance to adult education should also be read with that proviso.

Of those who returned a completed questionnaire, 71% were wholly unaware of any political literacy teaching at their own place of work. This does not necessarily mean that it does not take place. Though all are in-service teachers, some are relatively new to teaching and many are in voluntary or fractional roles. In this context, that 27% were aware of at least some teaching of political literacy might be an encouraging sign, although it is not clear at this stage what the extent of this teaching might be or with what percentage of students it might engage.

40% of respondents felt that they themselves *ought* to teach 'some' through to 'a great deal' of political literacy, with the implication that the remaining 60% see no place for it in their own subject. This is not to say that they think it should be entirely absent from the curriculum. However, the natural consequence where a majority think that it is 'not their business' and where there is no mandated need to cover it, is that it is liable to fall through the cracks, being covered by no-one. Only 17% of respondents felt that they taught any political literacy. This is cause for real concern in the current conjuncture. The imputation may be that political literacy is not being adequately covered as part of the teacher education curriculum. However, all trainees at this point in the course have studied a 'Curriculum and Professional Issues' module that focuses on political issues. Moreover, the trainees in this sample had, just a few hours earlier, heard a keynote that questioned the narrowness of a system wholly focussed on a skills agenda and the potential value of a

broader and more liberal education (Simmons, 2016).

Only 13% of respondents said that they made any effort to teach political literacy within social media environments. 45% thought it had no place in the curriculum. Since we meant the *whole* curriculum when we constructed the questionnaire, we were initially dismayed by this finding, although some respondents may have interpreted this as the curriculum for their own subject only.

The lesson observations

To provide context for these findings, we drew on lesson observations conducted by two teacher educators over the previous two years. Most took place at an adult education college for learners seeking to return to education, often without formal qualifications. The college also offers training for those active in community groups and trade unions and predictably, these exhibit a high level of engagement with political issues as part of their *raison d'être*. Beyond these, Access to Higher Education courses for over 19s explored a range of political issues. History and Politics units on such courses dealt competently with issues of power and democracy. English Literature classes covered post colonial and feminist perspectives, shedding light on the political nature of some literatures and providing strong examples of writing beyond the traditional canon. Teacher education sessions also showed a strong commitment to helping students to become more politically aware. None of these sessions, however, included any kind of focus on social media political literacy, a striking omission in a college where politics forms such a significant part of the curriculum offer. However, our questionnaire results indicate it is not out of line with provision elsewhere and is stronger in many respects.

A strong left-leaning bias was observed in the majority of sessions. Some sessions sought to develop learners' critical and evaluative faculties, encouraging them to balance opposing arguments. However, many presented a leftist view as the unproblematic truth. A range of critical education theorists, prominent amongst whom is Paulo Freire, (1996), have argued that left-leaning curricula are a vital antidote to the manufacture of consent by the powerful forces of global capitalism and are an important way in which the disempowered can begin to question the sources of their oppression and to challenge them. However this may be, presenting one set of arguments as always trumping another does not address the central call of this paper which is to encourage learners to question stances, to check claims and to be wary of vested interests in interpreting arguments. At its worst, learners appeared to parrot political maxims without the arguments to corroborate or explain them.

Only one session observed during the two year period illustrated any online political literacy teaching. This was a session on Religion that explored the notion of the 'meme' (2016). Richard Dawkins coined this term in 1976 to describe an idea, behaviour or style that spreads by imitation from person to person within a culture. Subsequently it has come to mean a multimedia artefact, combining images and text that has 'gone viral,' gaining millions of online views. The tutor was conscious that creating memes has provided a way for some younger adults to develop focussed criticism of a political or philosophical nature. He engaged the class in a 'meme hunting' activity and allowed them to share a range of examples followed by a discussion of their benefits and caveats. He used this as a way to introduce Dawkins' more general idea and linked this in to the spread of religion through human societies.

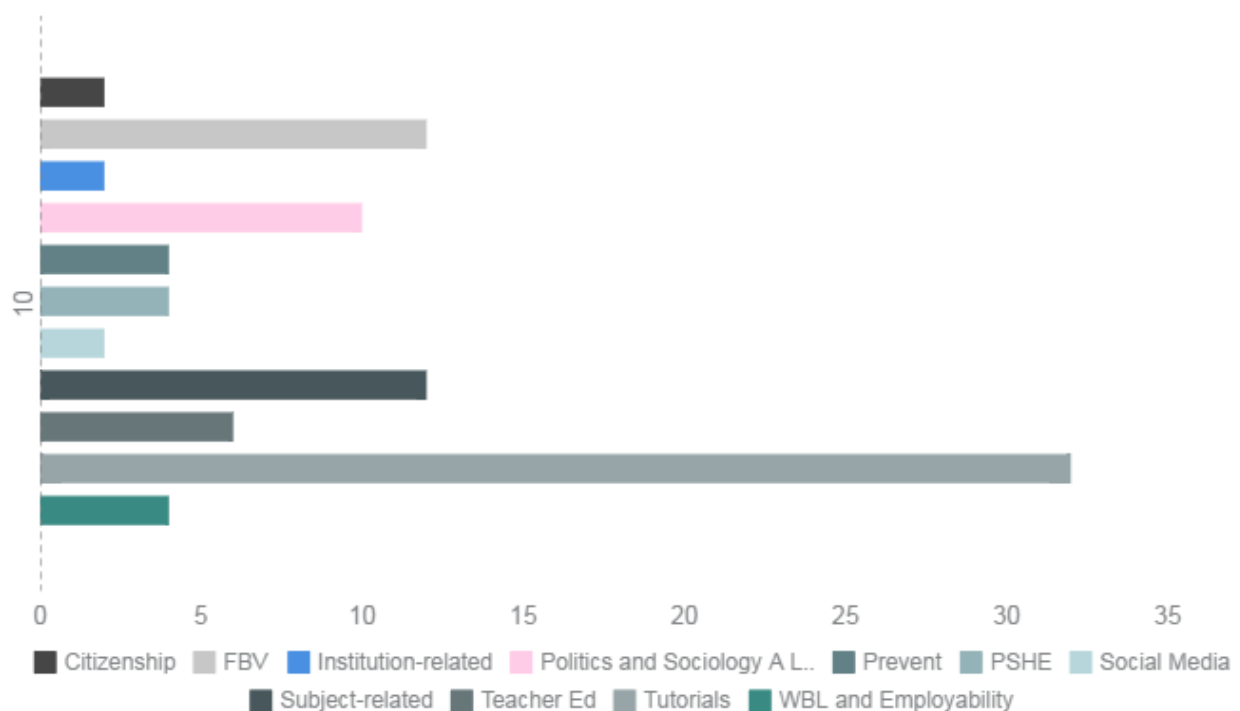
The session was a fun and engaging one, supported by the fact that memes are generally humorous, cute or provocative with challenge to authority figures and a degree of satire.

To develop this further, the tutor might have more thoroughly explored the controversial and misleading nature of some memes, for example those spread by British Nationalists to incite racial hatred; the photograph of Pakistani cricket fans labelled as Muslims celebrating the Paris shootings being a typical example. Checking the provenance of such pictures through sites like 'Tin Eye' is an easy way to scotch such content. The session could also have problematised the fact that truth is not a pre-requisite for a viral idea and that these can be seductive and harmful unless we learn how to read them more intelligently.

The curriculum context

Our sample of trainee teachers cited a range of locations for political literacy teaching in the curriculum (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Where in the curriculum is political literacy found?



Tutorials and Fundamental British Values came out highest followed by 'subject related' teaching, specified in a number of cases as Politics and Sociology A-Level. Notable by their absence are Access to Higher Education courses. FE providers across the UK do provide political education through such programmes as illustrated by our lesson observations reported above. Also notably absent are the politically informed Workers' Educational Association programmes: not surprising, perhaps given that they have been so badly affected by recent austerity measures.

It is also noteworthy that Citizenship came out as one of the lowest returns. This qualification was introduced as a school subject by a Labour Government in 2002 following the Crick Report, motivated in part by, 'the political apathy of young people [and] the democratic crisis of low voter turnout' (Crick, 1998) Attempts to address these issues through Education were no great surprise since greater voter turnout generally favours Labour in elections. This may also explain the recent shelving of the Citizenship A-Level

by the current Tory Government, with the last cohort of students due to go through in September 2017. There is an extant non-core, GCSE Citizenship qualification which aims to develop:

- keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and law
- skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically
- skills and knowledge to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments

Citizenship qualifications proved popular with rising numbers up until 2011 when the Coalition Government decided to concentrate on 'traditional subjects.' Critical Thinking A-Level, which developed reasoning and argument, has also been abolished. The declining fortunes of these useful subjects illustrate ways in which the curriculum might be manipulated to serve the needs of whoever is in power. The consequence is that subjects requiring post compulsory students to develop their in-depth thinking skills and knowledge of the political system have been lost, part of the long decline since the 1970s of General and Liberal Studies (Simmons, 2016). The only political content mandated by the government is that,

all schools must promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and, within this, 'fundamental British values'.

This is now called Citizenship. There is no requirement and diminished opportunity for the majority of students to explore the role of either the main stream media or of social media in the political life of the nation. Higher order, evaluative skills are not developed in a political context unless they are directly related to the subjects that a student chooses to study.

Though neither Citizenship nor Critical Thinking had any specific outcomes aimed at developing online political literacy, they did at least provide scope for students to explore the issues they raised in an online setting. Their demise is symptomatic of the hollowing out of critical and political thinking from the qualifications framework to the extent that political literacy teaching now has an *ad hoc*, contingent, inconsistent status. Little wonder then that trainee FE teachers report patchy and inconsistent provision.

Conclusion

This paper has reported that a sample of in-service trainee teachers working in UK further and adult education perceive political literacy and especially online political literacy to be either absent or patchy and inconsistent. Those perceptions chime with findings from lesson observations conducted over the last two years and with the embattled status of Citizenship and Critical Thinking in the current curriculum. Though this study has not asked students for their perceptions, studies from elsewhere report that students are ill-prepared for critical or political thinking in the online world. In the US, the Stanford History Group created a bank of assessments tools, for 'civic online reasoning,' administering them to students of different ages. They found that people's 'ability to reason about the information on the Internet can be summed up in one word: *bleak*' (Wineberg, Ortega, Breakstone, & McGrew, 2016).

This study indicates that UK adult education is not adequately equipping the majority of learners of all ages, including adults with the kinds of political literacy that they need in social media environments. The Internet enables unprecedented harvesting of data and dissemination of messages and it is perhaps inevitable that political parties will seek to exploit these affordances through the services of companies like *Cambridge Analytica*. It

is in the interests of such companies and their clients to remain unperceived so that people do not begin to protect their data. Similarly, a lack of critical thinking about online content makes people easier to influence. Driving political literacy out of the curriculum serves such interests. However, whilst a politically illiterate electorate are more vulnerable to the manufacture of consent and to political manipulation of this kind, such illiteracy also leaves them vulnerable to more extreme voices that sometimes tragically carry them beyond political apathy and into radicalisation. What is encouraging in this study is the fact that a significant minority of our sample of trainees seek to develop at least some political literacy under their own initiative and that of those who do not currently do so, a significant proportion feel that it ought to be part of what they do. The time is ripe to revisit how we might more consistently and productively support adult learners in this regard.

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Inclusion, diversity and ‘teaching excellence’

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No-one *opposes* inclusion and diversity, but the terms are used by politicians, educators and civil servants in the context of widely differing policies and practices. Close scrutiny of the way that discourses of inclusion and diversity are constructed reveals profound philosophical and political differences between authors. The language of social inclusion characterised a number of documents produced by the UK government to introduce the concept of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) for Higher Education (HE). The framework ranks teaching in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as Bronze, Silver or Gold. Whilst participation is voluntary, non-participation carries financial risk. The rationale for its introduction drew on the language of inclusion, and particularly on the concept of social mobility. Discussions and briefing events by the UK Department for Business Industry and Skills (BIS, since discontinued), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and presentations by the Minister of State for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson, referred to significant underachievement by specific groups of students (HEFCE 2015). HEIs were charged with demonstrating excellent outcomes for all groups of students, and central metrics, split by social advantage/disadvantage, ethnicity, gender, age and dis/ability, were designed to measure this. This was followed by detailed papers outlining the implementation process and the way judgements would be made. Results were published in June 2017.

This paper uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the development of this policy and its associated implementation strategy. I am mindful of the discourses relating to inclusion and diversity that characterise radical adult education, and use these as a counterpoint in the discussion when considering the way that the TEF discourse constructs these concepts. CDA can be used to analyse educational policy through the scrutiny of policy documents (Woodside-Jiron 2011). Using CDA, it is possible to see how policy texts reinforce particular interpretations of complex concepts. The term ‘critical’ indicates that discourse is analysed in the context of wider social and political structures, and is interpreted from the perspective of its contribution to the operation of power. Fairclough sets out the role of production and distribution of discourse in the development of ideology:

The relationship of discourse to such extra-discoursal structures and relations is not just representational but constitutive: ideology has material effects, discourse contributes to the creation and constant recreation of the relations, subjects (as recognised in the Althusserian concept of interpellation) and objects which populate the social world (Fairclough 1995, p.73).

There are significant theoretical differences and differences of emphasis between writers within the radical adult education tradition. Brookfield (2012, pp.4-5) discusses critical thinking as ‘ideological detoxification’ that tackles the ‘paradigmatic assumptions’ that reinforce the existing status quo. hooks analyses the ‘underlying assumption’ in mainstream education that ‘we are all equally committed to getting ahead, to moving up the ladder’ (as opposed to challenging the need for such stratification in the first place) (hooks 1994, p.177). What radical educators share, however, is a commitment to working *with* people to enable them to shape their education in ways that align authentically with their experiences and their sense of agency and community. Within that framework, inclusion and diversity are grounded in power sharing and in creating educational practice that is defined and determined by participants. The TEF, by contrast, creates a discourse

of inclusion and diversity that seeks to ensure socially disadvantaged groups are successful within the terms defined by existing social, political and educational authorities.

The TEF was first outlined in a Green Paper¹ (BIS 2015). It was refined in response to that consultation and to a technical consultation on the metrics and processes. A refined version was set out in a White Paper² (BIS 2016) and in guidance documents for HEIs outlining application and assessment processes. These iterations establish a discourse of equality and inclusivity as individual social mobility, disconnected from wider structures of power, and construct failures in social mobility in terms of the teaching weaknesses of individual HEIs. Politically, the TEF has survived challenges from the sector, from the National Union of Students and from the House of Lords, to establish itself as the dominant approach to defining teaching excellence.

First, the TEF repeatedly construes inclusion as 'social mobility'. In the Green Paper (BIS 2015), Jo Johnson claimed universities to be 'powerful engines of social mobility' (p.8). The paper expressed the government's determination to take this further by setting out plans to 'drive social mobility by further increasing higher education participation by those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups' (p.7). It also considers the performance of under-represented groups once in higher education, noting underachievement in terms of degree completion, degree classifications and employment outcomes (Britton et al. 2016; HEFCE 2015; HESA 2015). The concern is for more opportunity to move upwards in society (and by definition, downwards, although this is never mentioned) rather than the creation of a flatter, less hierarchical society.

The definition of inclusion and diversity as social mobility is reinforced by the marked absences of some research findings. The research reports to which the TEF policy documents refer are clear about the impact of wider social disadvantage on students' ability to succeed, but the Green and White Papers are selective in terms of the elements they follow through. The National Union of Students (NUS) for example, offers research which draws attention to the disconnect specific groups feel between the curriculum, the Faculty and their own social realities (NUS 2011), but those issues are not discussed in the TEF papers. The radical concept of challenging the curriculum, or developing a curriculum that challenges inequality is absent. The TEF assessment criteria demand that course design stretches students and develops 'independence, knowledge, understanding and skills' (Department for Education 2016, p.21) but the only reference to curriculum content is that the 'knowledge, skills and attributes' that students develop must be those that 'are valued by employers' and 'enhance their personal and/or professional lives' (p.22). Rather than challenging social inequalities, the TEF would seem to focus on ensuring that all groups have the opportunity to achieve within the terms set out by the social and education elite.

Finally, the narrowing of the question of inclusion and diversity is intensified by the inclusion of highly skilled employment (HSE) outcomes as a key metric. Six metrics are used as the basis for judgements, but HSE, together with retention, is privileged in the TEF descriptors that explain the ratings. The Gold descriptor states that the TEF panel will award a rating of Gold if the provider 'achieves consistently outstanding outcomes for its students from all backgrounds, *in particular with regards to retention and progression to highly skilled employment and further study*' (p.46). The descriptor quoted combines a focus on inclusion and diversity ('for its students from all backgrounds') with an assumption that the most important outcome for students is progression to highly skilled employment.

Thus inclusion is defined *for* students rather than *by* students, and means inclusion in an

education system leading to well-paid employment. The government intends to develop this metric to use graduate salaries, but as yet that data is too incomplete to use. This descriptor is only the end product of a discursive process that constructs good teaching as the production of individuals with highly skilled jobs. Paragraphs five and six in the White Paper offer a concentrated example of the way this discourse operates. It is too long to quote in full here but these extracts are indicative:

5. Higher education continues to be a sound financial and personal investment with a wide range of societal benefits. But there is more to be done for our university system to fulfil its potential as an engine of social mobility, a driver of economic growth and cornerstone of our cultural landscape. Access remains uneven, with young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds 2.4 times less likely to go into higher education than the most advantaged (...) over 60% of students feeling that all or some elements of their course are worse than expected and a third of these attributing this to concerns with teaching quality. Employers are suffering skills shortages, especially in high skilled STEM areas; at the same time around 20% of employed graduates are in non-professional roles three and a half years after graduating. While the graduate premium has remained substantial, even as student numbers have expanded rapidly in recent decades, recent research suggests there is large variation in graduate outcomes across both providers and subjects, and even for those that studied the same subject within the same provider.

6. At the heart of this lies insufficient competition and a lack of informed choice (...) The measures outlined here will help ensure that everyone with the potential to benefit from higher study can access relevant information to help them make the right choices from a wide range of high quality universities and benefit from excellent teaching that supports their future productivity. By introducing more competition and informed choice into higher education, we will deliver better outcomes and value for students, employers and the taxpayers who underwrite the system (BIS 2016, pp.7-8).

Notable is the way that coupling 'social mobility' with 'economic growth' in the second sentence brings these two concepts together. There is a strange progression between sentences three and four. One third of students are unhappy with their teaching – but this statement is followed by reference to skills shortages and the 20% of graduates in non-professional roles. It provides no evidence or argument to link the third who are not satisfied with their teaching to the 20% in non-professional roles, or to skills shortages; it just places these facts consecutively in the same paragraph creating a connection by implication. The conclusion in paragraph six, that the reason for 'this' ('this' presumably being dissatisfaction with teaching and the existence of skills shortages and graduates in non-graduate jobs) is insufficient competition and a lack of informed choice, is entirely unsupported by the preceding evidence or argument, but the discursive effect, the paragraph and sentence structures, present these concepts as logically connected. The desire to make HE even more of a market place is entirely ideological, but this document develops a discourse whereby marketization is essential in order to ensure good teaching. By the end of the paragraph good teaching has become something that 'supports their (students) future productivity'. In terms of inclusion and diversity this is miles away from the adult education approach in which students define their own needs and learn to 'read and write the world' in their own terms. Rather, a student experiences good teaching if it turns him/her into a unit of production. In the final paragraph we have moved away from the concept of inclusion, and even social mobility, and the hard reason for needing graduates to secure well paid employment emerges. Since the government withdrew almost all direct funding for university teaching, replaced by a system of income contingent

loans, securing loan repayment has become a primary political objective.

This discourse repositions social inclusion in teaching in terms of consumer choice, in which good teaching is equated with the level of salary achieved by the graduate. The TEF purports to measure teaching excellence, but provides no evidence or research to show that inspiring teachers produce the highest skilled employment (HSE) outcomes for students. The debates that took place during the technical consultation are pertinent here. The original proposal was that the employment outcomes of all graduates, even those who had retired, were too sick or disabled to work or had caring responsibilities, would be measured. This was changed as after considerable pressure and HSE scores are now benchmarked for disadvantage, age, subject, entry qualifications, gender and ethnicity. The evidence that regardless of subject studied, degree achieved or institution attended, social disadvantage and other factors, such as gender and ethnicity have profound effects on employment outcomes is so clear in HEFCE's own research that it could not be ignored. The underlying assumption, however, that good teaching equals getting a job, remains a dominant discourse and is enacted through the TEF assessment, which makes the two, one. The link to graduate salaries will intensify this. A student completing a law degree and working in an advice centre will be deemed to have had less effective teaching than one securing a highly paid post in corporate law. I do not wish to denigrate the value of a secure income and a respected profession. It is too easy to do so, when you have both. I believe universities should measure employment outcomes, but to make these a measure of teaching excellence changes the definition of teaching from an activity that seeks to enable an individual to achieve their goals to one which produces an economically productive citizen.

Further scrutiny of the TEF year two specification (Department for Education 2016) shows how the benchmarking process ensures that the economic return to the treasury trumps social inclusion. The HSE metric is the only one benchmarked for social disadvantage. Non-continuation, a measure of the numbers of students who progress from year one to year two, is not benchmarked for ethnicity, gender, disability or social disadvantage, in spite of the government's own research which demonstrates the impact of multiple factors on student retention (HEFCE 2015). Poor students are more likely to live at home, face a difficult commute, take extensive paid work alongside study, contribute to family finances and may find it challenging to buy books and equipment and participate in the enrichment and voluntary activities (Thomas & Jones 2017). Excluding social disadvantage, ethnicity, gender and disability from benchmarking sends a stark message that social mobility is a matter for individuals and for institutions and not part of wider systems of disadvantage. This builds a contradiction into the system in that the TEF provides a disincentive to the recruitment of disadvantaged students because they are more likely to be forced to withdraw from their courses and has the potential to cause institutions to close foundation years and access programmes. In effect, HEIs are incentivised not to waste resources on students who might not succeed.

Conclusion

The Teaching Excellence Framework has embedded a specific definition of inclusion and equality in English, and to a lesser extent, UK, HEIs. It seems likely to achieve some of its goals with respect to inclusion, in that it will intensify institutional focus on the differential outcomes achieved by disadvantaged, BME, and disabled students and draw attention to differences in achievement between genders and between young and mature students. It may force some institutions to look more closely at the service they offer and consider its suitability for all students, and to engage more systematically with those groups who underachieve in order to understand and address that underachievement. It has the

potential to orientate institutions towards a pro-active, rather than a compliant approach to equality and diversity, which will require them to interrogate underachievement and rethink some of their strategies. HEIs are still powerful institutions, with the power to validate knowledge. Credentialism still operates worldwide, and the degrees and professional qualifications HEIs offer influence life chances. It is important, therefore, when critiquing some of the TEF's underpinning assumptions, not to lose sight of the challenges it poses to powerful institutions to face their responsibilities for matters relating to inclusion and diversity.

The analysis in this paper suggests that in spite of these potential achievements the TEF has limitations with respect to promoting inclusion and diversity. It shows how the narrow interpretation of inclusion and diversity as social mobility combined with the location of responsibility for this with institutions rather than society has the potential to operate against inclusion by penalising institutions with the most socially disadvantaged cohorts.

It also shows how the definition of good teaching changes from the exercise of expertise that leads to student learning to the exercise of expertise to ensure specifically employment-related learning. It is not possible, within the discourse created by the TEF, to teach well, if the teaching does not lead to highly skilled employment. This has implications for inclusion, particularly with respect to learners who may not wish to enter the employment market and raises questions about the place of mature students in HE, who may be past retirement age or at a stage in their lives when they want to balance paid work with the development of their intellectual capacities.

The TEF has the potential to seed improvements in institutional practice, but legitimises and universalises a specific, narrow definition of social inclusion. The TEF deals with social inclusion and diversity quite differently from the social justice focus so commonly found amongst adult educators, in which, as Foley indicates:

Critical education makes judgements about injustices and attempts to rectify them by addressing their fundamental causes, their deeper dynamics and determining factors (Foley 2001, p.72).

Adult educators concerned with social justice can choose to wrestle with the discourse through consultation and participation, whilst taking advantage of the leverage it offers to shine a spotlight on major inequalities in our Higher Education Institutions.

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¹ A Green Paper is a government consultation document

² A White Paper is a government document setting out proposed legislation

Strategies and techniques that facilitate transformational learning in study abroad participants

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Introduction

As the need for a globally sophisticated citizenry and workforce grows, the demand for Study Abroad Programs has emerged as one of the nine top trends in higher education (Dennis, 2003; Lane, 2003; Mapp, 2012). Consequently, there has been a 250% increase in the number of U. S. students completing Study Abroad Programs in the last ten years (Institute of International Education [IIE], 2005; Krisantas, 2005).

Study Abroad Programs are defined as educational programs that take place outside of the geographical boundaries of the country of origin (Kitsantas, 2004). Most Study Abroad Programs typically involve a combination of course work, demonstrations, experiential activities, and tours. Students may choose to participate in programs sponsored by a U.S. college/university, a non-educational organization, or directly in a foreign university; these programs may vary in length from a full year to a semester, or even a mini-semester. However, some reports indicate that students are increasingly interested in short-term (less than 8 weeks) program models (Arenson, 2003; IEN, 2005; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Students from both public and private institutions are participating in short-term and long-term Study Abroad Programs.

Background of study

This research was based on an analysis of the experiences of two senior faculty members who have led Study Abroad Programs to Sub-Saharan Africa since 1999 and who teach at two research universities in the Southern U.S. In addition, the journals and focus group interviews of the students from eleven of the program cohorts were collected and analyzed.

Descriptions of participating universities

The University of Georgia was founded in 1785 and is one of oldest state-chartered land and sea-grant institutions in America. With an enrollment of over 32,000 students, the university is ranked among the nation's top public research universities. As the state's flagship university, UGA has a critical role in preparing the next generation of leaders for global competence. To meet these challenges, UGA is committed to offering international Study Abroad experiences. The University of Georgia offers its students over 100 faculty-led Study Abroad group programs in addition to exchange programs. UGA is also a member of various consortia and is affiliated with organizations that offer many additional programs. However, students are not limited to these opportunities, and can select from many of thousands of programs offered by other American universities or students can directly enroll in a foreign university for a semester, academic year, or summer. With more than 1,400 students participating in Study Abroad Programs each year, UGA ranks eighth in the nation among public university's sending students abroad (IIE, 2004).

The Southern Africa Study Abroad Program, which was established in 1999, is a short-term, three credit hour Adult Education course that is open to graduate students enrolled

at the University. In years past, the program has accepted cohort groups from other universities and has worked in partnership with universities in Southern Africa to sponsor educational conferences as part of a scholarly exchange. The two-week intensive Study Abroad Program averages 10 to 20 students each time. South Africa and Botswana are visited each time, with visits to the University of Botswana, University of Witwatersrand, University of the Western Cape, as regular stopovers. Other countries in Southern Africa are added in rotation and these have included Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, and Namibia.

The second university, Texas A&M University, founded in 1876 was Texas' first public institution of higher learning. It is a land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant institution with an enrollment of more than 48,000 students on its main campus. It ranks as the nation's fifth largest university with nine branch campuses throughout the state. It also operates branch campuses globally in Qatar, Mexico, and Italy. It is one of two flagship universities in Texas and boasts a presidential library and an endowment of more than \$5 billion.

At Texas A&M University, there are three types of Study Abroad Programs. The first type is a *Faculty-Led Program* that involves studying at a host institution with a Texas A&M professor and a group of students. The second type is a [*Reciprocal Exchange Program*](#) where you enroll at a foreign university and earn A&M credit. The third type is a [*Transfer Credit Program*](#) in which students study abroad with an affiliated or non-affiliated program provider.

The Sub-Saharan Africa Study Abroad Program based at Texas A&M is a graduate only program where participants earned six credit hours in Urban Education. The two-week intensive program has featured six educational conferences in: 1) Soweto, South Africa; 2) Johannesburg, South Africa; 3) Livingstone, Zambia; 4) Banjul, Gambia; 5) Dakar, Senegal; and 6) Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The conferences featured research presentations by professors from the participating African universities, selected student participants, and the program faculty leaders.

Relevant literature

As colleges and universities in the U.S. invest heavily in study abroad programs as a major initiative to internationalize their campuses, their emphasis has been focused primarily on undergraduate education (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). While the infrastructures are elaborate and costly, the return is unknown (Rowan-Kenyon, & Niehaus, 2011; Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), an international consortium of study abroad schools, developed an IES Model Assessment Practice, and reports that there are 4 major areas that must be covered and routinely assessed by a Study Abroad Program: the student learning environment, student learning and development of intercultural competence, resources for academic and student support, and program administration and development (Black & Duhon, 2006). Of the four areas, the second, student learning and development of intercultural development is directly related to encouraging learning that transforms the way students think and look at our global society.

Most Study Abroad Programs are designed for traditional college students. This means that students are restricted in their engagement and therefore their possible return benefits, since most decisions were pre-determined. The top four countries visited by U.S. students for Study Abroad Programs are the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and France, drawing 43 % of the over 220,000 students who studied abroad in 2005. The destinations that are increasing most in popularity as study locations are China and Argentina, with South Africa ranking 18th in destinations for U.S. students. However, with the growth of

service learning as a new focus for Study Abroad, developing nations are experiencing a rapid growth (Fuller, 2007; McMurtie, 2007; Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009; Williams, 2008).

Higher education institutions are expecting that Study Abroad Programs will promote intercultural sensitivity (Fuller, 2007) as well as assist in diversifying their curriculum (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Additionally, workplace recruiters and prospective employers are placing importance on a job candidates' international experience in the belief that such experiences provide students with a broad understanding of the emerging global workplace (Gardner, Steglitz, & Gross, 2009). The employers hold the position that employees with international knowledge will positively influence the company's ability to compete in the global market and that the study abroad experience directly connects to the participants' ability to work independently, undertake unfamiliar and risky tasks, identify new problems, and work effectively with others (Gardner, Steglitz, & Gross, 2009).

Program design

It is conjectured that Study Abroad Programs will increase social capital and civic engagement. In direct response to these facts, the practitioners designed their Study Abroad African Programs to encourage adults to contribute and connect to the African people they will meet as part of their travels. It is of particular note that only one African country, South Africa, falls in the top twenty Study Abroad destinations. Of equal significance is that U.S. minorities, African Americans and Hispanics, are not represented proportionately in Study Abroad Programs. The importance of these Study Abroad Programs being reviewed is that they feature African countries that are not part of conventional African Study Abroad Programs and the participants are non-traditional learners and minority students.

These Study Abroad Programs consist of two parts, a traditional graduate seminar course that includes readings and films on the history and culture of Sub-Saharan African countries and discussions and explorations of knowledge, beliefs, and concerns about traveling to Africa and the ground experience (the tour). There are two absolute conditions of the participation in the Study Abroad programs. The first is *the Full Heart, Empty Suitcase Principle*, which requires that each student take two suitcases on their trip. The contents of one of the suitcases are to be left behind. According to the group decision, the contents can be books, clothing, toiletries, toys, or medicines. In most years, the groups have elected to visit orphanages that care for children whose parents died in the AIDS epidemic and have donated books, toys, and monies for medicines and food.

Another condition of the Study Abroad Program is, *Scholar Traveler/Not Tourist*, so named as a constant reminder that the purpose is to learn and appreciate indigenous knowledge. The pursuit of African knowledge is operationalized by working with African scholars as subject matter experts, visits to women's cooperatives, such as the Oodi Weavers in Botswana, research exchanges through a day of presentations by Study Abroad faculty and students, African University faculty and students, and community leaders.

The second part of the Study Abroad Program is the Ground Experience, which includes working with a Non-Government Agency (NGO), such as TALK (Teaching African Language and Talk Knowledge) to learn and to become oriented to the African culture (Hartford, 2011; Ripple, 2010). This technique is employed to encourage critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995) which will support the process of transformation, and to keep the students from being *ugly Americans*, a term used to refer to perceptions of arrogant

behavior by Americans abroad. Using a theoretical frame grounded in Transformative Learning Theory, the adult educators work with the students to challenge assumptions, through critically reflection in their journals (Hutchinson & Rea, 2011) and thorough daily debriefing group meetings. In the program, students are coached on the conversational styles of Southern African culture, informed how to avoid common cultural clashes, instructed on manners (issues such as proper dress, appropriate greetings, and African handshakes), and introduced to the Southern Africa cuisine.

The developers of the Study Abroad Programs have developed Pre-Trip Strategies, Best Practices for the Field Experience, a Survival Tool-Kit Featuring Tales of Woe/Wonder, and a list of Post-Program Essentials. The exercises used are undergirded by transformative learning tenets that can provide intense learning experiences. The exercises draw upon postcolonial transnational perspectives (Dill & Zambrana, 2009) that help students deconstruct master narratives and work on developing new understandings of power, privilege, and nation-based positionalities.

Patten and Peters (2001) suggested that in planning an international program one should blend lecture and structured presentations to enhance the students' academic experience. This recommendation was of utmost importance in planning the African Programs. As a result, the programs collaborated with African institutions of higher education, junior-secondary schools, and senior-secondary schools. Concepts that are routinely part of the program are an exchange of lectures and presentations by students and faculty, public and open dialogues between American and African scholars, work with members from local community agencies to provide a method and outlet for additional educational opportunities. The course assignments/activities consist of daily journaling, three course lectures by the guiding faculty, at least one presentation in the evening by each participating student on an experience or observation, and over the course of the tour, a minimum of ten one-page abstracts of cultural, education, and historical visits, which have involved museum visits, and participating in classes at the hosts institutions.

There were several important adult education principles that were common across the programs that distinguish it from the typical undergraduate experience. For example, participants were allowed choices, particularly around events like church attendance or programs that might have been considered political in nature. More importantly, there were experiences built into the Study Abroad Programs that encouraged transformation. For example, there were regular debriefings and lengthy question and answer sessions with the speakers. In addition, the educators built in time for critical reflection and intermittently distributed questions that promoted critical thinking. Finally, the faculty modeled active sustained involvement with the staff and with the African programs visited, with the invitation extended to the participants to find a method that would foster their own independent association with the African communities included in the program.

Facilitating transformative learning in Study Abroad Programs

The researchers found that nine of the 10 phases of transformational learning that were set forth by Mezirow (1991) occurred in the collected data. The phases identified were: 1) disorienting dilemma, 2) self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, 3) critical assessment of assumptions, 4) recognition of shared transformative experience with other group members, 5) exploring options for new roles, 6) planning a course of action, 7) acquiring new knowledge and skills for new plans, 8) trying out new roles, and 9) integrating new assumptions based on new perspective. It is noted that the one phase that was not found in the data, building of competence and self-confidence in new roles, and relationships, was probably not observed because of the limited duration the Study Abroad

Programs studied.

Of the nine phases recognized by the Study Abroad facilitators as being present among the participant experiences, the most data were generated relative to three phases: the disorienting dilemma, self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, and using new knowledge to explore options for new roles. These three phases will be explored, with supporting data presented.

While the overall Study Abroad experience is generally seen as a disorienting experience for participants, the adult educators that developed these programs discovered in working with other Study Abroad Programs, as both students and faculty, that the transformative learning experiences were varied and often short lived. These adult educators attempted to create a Study Abroad experience that would lead to global engagement and have a long-term impact on students. The phases of Transformative Learning seen in the participants have been routinely manifested by the participants in several different ways.

The disorienting dilemma, the first phase of Mezirow's stages, occurs most often across the group and is perhaps both generally anticipated, but accepted by both the students and faculty in the Study Abroad Program. The disorienting dilemma begins in Part One of the experience (before leaving the U.S.) and continues throughout the study. However, the gradations of the disorienting dilemma vary according to the participant's previous experiences and positionality. It was noted that the disorientation was most severe with American White student participants who had never been a minority race person over a sustained period. In addition to being unsettled by their new minority status, the White American students also reported experiencing discomfort, anxiety, and fear. At the other end of the same continuum were African American students who reported feeling a new level of comfort by the occurrence of not being a minority in an environment over a sustained period for the first time. The Black students experienced joy and the newness of seeing "that all the people in charge look like me." Moreover, another interesting point was that process of transformation was not a linear and rational one as described by Mezirow (1991). Even near the programs' conclusion, participants were having disorienting dilemmas and using their prior experiences to skip the steps that involved shame and guilt, and were instead processing the new data quickly in order to resolve the conflicts and find their way to action. This is in direct contrast to the Transformative Learning process as presented by Mezirow (1991). One student, a thirty-five year old African American mother of five school-aged children, wrote of what she referred to as her fourth disorienting dilemma, which occurred after visiting an orphanage. According to her, each previous dilemma was different and apart from the others in the type of experience and in the resulting learning and evolution. She wrote of an overwhelming sadness that she imagined was the feelings of the AIDS orphans:

Do you have joy?
Joy in spite of? What is it to be alone?
To have your parents die?
To lose your childhood?
To wonder about your next meal...
Childhood is supposed to be a time of innocence
But happens when innocence is taken?

The African American participants who studied in South Africa quickly discovered the common ground of being unsettled by the recognition of the poverty and recent history and remnants of segregation in South Africa. These viewpoints were most readily realized as

they visited the Black townships, met with the children at the HIV/AIDS orphanages, met with political activists, and visited the Apartheid Museum. These sites and speakers were chosen with the intention of assuring that the students would not experience the Study Abroad Program as a tourist, but rather as an outsider exploring the inside (Hutchison, & Rea, 2011; Ripple, 2010).

Many of the students wrestled with feeling of guilt and shame during the first phase of the Study Aboard and these viewpoints continued through most of the tour. The students were open in reporting in their video and daily journals about their biases and fears regarding visiting the Dark Continent. One student, a twenty-nine year old Black male wrote: "I have several misconceptions about Africa. Africa is a continent, not a country, but somehow it is always imagined as one big country. When I picture Africa I see the hungry children with flies around them." Other disclosures that revealed the students uninformed attitudes concerning modern African society included discussions on their fear of wild animal attacks, questions regarding what kinds of exotic and/or substandard foods they would be forced to consume, and speculations on what kinds of huts would serve as their housing. Using film and readings, the participants discussed their commonly shared negative beliefs and toxic attitudes about the African continent, particularly Sub-Saharan African countries.

A third documented phase of the nine identified was the exploration of the participants' options for establishing a proactive stance towards Africa and their desire to use new knowledge to implement courses of action. One graduate student, a forty-five year old Cuban-American wrote in her journal:

A moment of sadness has come as I realize I am ending a journey, a journey that has been emotionally charged, and a journey that has challenged me. It has called into question who I am, who I want to be, and what I want my impact to be. The answers will go unknown until I return to my life. Does my life look different, a day, a month, a year, a decade from this day? This time? Do I remember and implement the lessons learned? Hopefully I will carry this with me forever. Hopefully I grow and learn with each moment and time. The tears fall, but this is not the end. It is a beginning. I have changed. I have begun again, a metamorphosis.

This student returned to South Africa three times since her Study Abroad Program ended and now works with UNESCO.

Conclusion

Overall, the Study Abroad Programs to Sub-Saharan Africa readily provided the conditions to enable a transformative learning experience for the Study Abroad participants. These conditions included cultural, linguistic, and epistemological factors. It was discovered that what was necessary to optimize the chances for learners to experience transformational learning was to provide structured opportunities for reflection, engagement, and community – all of which – or any of which can trigger a shift in perspective about identity, racism, colonialism, and privilege. Tools that promote reflection can include free style journals, guided journal assignments that address assigned topics, or questions that address cultural/regional differences, personal revelations, daily evening group discussions/debriefings, and post-return debriefings. Primary data collected from the participants suggested that the effect of the students' perspective transformation is enduring.

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Adult education in, between and for stronger communities

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Introduction

In previous case studies of adult education in societies recovering from conflict (Johnstone, 2014), it was found that adult education has an important role to play in stabilizing society and strengthening communities. The key means by which this happens is through helping learners to interrogate their relationships with others, giving them skills to work in and for their communities, and through offering a new social group for learners. The ways in which adult education is embedded in communities is seen by some, including Carron & Carr-Hill, as a defining feature of this type of learning: "Taking part in some collective learning-teaching experience is one way of searching for a sense of community." (Carron & Carr-Hill, 1991:31). Jeffs and Smith use four features to define a group, which can be applied to a community: associational structure; commitment to others; mutual aid; sense of belonging and identity (Jeffs & Smith, 1996:31-2) and it is noteworthy that these can be applied to both positive and negative effect. In this paper, three relationships of education and community are explored, drawing on examples of adult education provision in post-conflict Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq when communities were particularly fragile. The three relationships are: education ***in*** communities; education ***between*** communities; and, education ***for*** communities. Following the discussion of these three ways in which adult education can be linked to communities, some conceptual tools for managing adult education so that displaced and fragmented groups that are trying to establish cohesive social communities in new locations can be supported will be proposed.

Education in communities

Participating in education offers adults a new social group, consisting of fellow learners with shared goals and extending beyond the individual's family or employment networks. In this respect, adult education is located within communities. Lindeman (Lindeman, 1961) stressed that the voluntary nature of adult education and the formation of study groups strengthened the democratic process and adult education was regarded as a main route to increased social participation. Peter Senge (2006) has built on the theory to provide guidelines and tips for those who wish to strengthen a culture of learning and build learning organizations. In the edited book, *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society* (Putnam, 2002), civic engagement is seen as key to developing an individual's capabilities with the links between people in groups being as important as the learning of each person. Some community learning remains informal and is defined by how the people who come together to learn are linked, and how they build their social capital by and through that learning.

The effect on the group of an individual undertaking learning can operate at two levels, both creating a new environment of shared benefits while more directly increasing the overall group productivity.

In this context two levels of externality benefits can be distinguished. ... One level is within the firm or household. Some work environments, for example, contain many well-educated people, collegiality, and stimuli to new learning, facilitating an interchange whereby each individual's productivity benefits from knowledge gained from colleagues.

... A second level of shared externality benefits is from the environment in the community within which the firm or household lives. ... These community characteristics can include low crime rates, good public health, democratic processes, political stability and other characteristics. (McMahon, 1999:6)

The World Bank takes the view that a community should be at the heart of planning reconstruction after emergencies if any intervention is to be sustainable; it has made grants to schools that involve the community (World Bank, 2005:45). It also believes that reconstruction of schools can be used as an early vehicle for community engagement in post-conflict situations:

Social funds in many postconflict countries (such as Bosnia, Cambodia and Kosovo) provide an important mechanism for targeting resources at **community-focused** reconstruction programs [emphasis added]. (World Bank, 2005:57)

It appears from commentary that adult education can support strengthening in a group particularly where the individual is drawn to a more active role within the community, with outcomes being that the adult education can “increase social cohesion, reduce crime and improve income distribution” (Seitz, 2004:48). This is usually a positive outcome but Torres reminds us that there are contradictory constructs of the individual / community relationship.

Therefore, any discussion of educational reform ... involves competing and contradictory views and perceptions of the relationships between the individual and the community, a basic tension in the constitution of Western thought. (Torres, 1998:63)

Community-based learning organizations received assistance from international organizations in Bosnia, and in some cases the expectation was that the group would continue to represent and act for the community even once the learning activity had ended.

Community participation as part of strategies for people-centred development has been put forward as representing potential hope in addressing the global development crisis. And linked to this, voluntary and community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and people’s movements have been identified as having potentially vital and radical contributions. (Mayo, 1995:15)

Collective identity, which may be strengthened by an individual completing adult education, could be a source of division with difficulties resulting from defining membership of the group, and an increased chance of groups competing against each other. Cockburn, quoted by Davies, notes that ethnic movements build from such groups: “they mobilise culture, tradition, religion and notions of history and place to evoke a sense of unity” (Davies, 2008:30) – as seen in Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular. Davies also reminds us that the term ‘community’ implies a distinct group, with the implication of difference at its heart:

Yet within plural societies, these imagined, almost symbolic or metaphorical unities are still constraining thinking and leading to dangerous labelling. 'Community' has a nice feel, with the image of the meeting hall, the village shop, the neighbours, the self-help. ... This is mythological, but also has the problem of boundaries and where one 'community' begins and another ends. And, as Sen points out, the 'well-integrated' community where residents do great things for each other, can be the very same that throws bricks through the windows of immigrants. ...community, like an essentialist identity, connotes

an essentialist grouping of people who somehow have common and distinct values, lifestyles and claims. (Davies, 2008:78)

If adult education is to enhance relationships at the community level, it must take account of its potential to simultaneously stabilize and de-stabilize. It appears that the education that is most likely to strengthen communities is usually that which operates more slowly, dealing with the complex issues underpinning identity and values rather than using the positive bonding of the individual adult learners to achieve short-term effects within a narrowly defined 'in-group'. Learning – as an activity that takes place within a group and that strengthens the community – contributes to the acquisition of social capital, while the content of the adult education programme may contribute to the store of either economic or cultural capital. McClenaghan claims that social capital can be used to strengthen inequality and exclusion:

... Hence, social capital endows holders with advantages and opportunities accruing through membership in certain communities and it is an important means whereby social inequality and social exclusion are reproduced. (McClenaghan, 2000:568)

It is, therefore, important to consider adult education between groups – where there are separate communities of learners – and this is the focus of the next section.

Education between communities

Divisions along ethnic lines were a feature of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and several education interventions directly tackled this issue. Also in Bosnia and in Cambodia, too, there were considerable splits between groups who spent the period of the conflict away from their country as refugees and others who remained. In recent times, the increased number of people who are refugees across the globe has generated a focus on them as separate communities in the countries of settlement.

For Cambodians who had become refugees, educational opportunities were generally limited, although they may have been better than those available to people who had remained in Cambodia (Chopra, Mackinlay, & Minear, 1993:3G). In Thailand, for example, the government prohibited anything other than basic education until 1986 and the focus was on primary and pre-vocational education (Blom & Nooijer, 1992:ix). Ongoing support for such people once they have returned home may focus on developing the former refugees' economic self-sufficiency but other courses that assist in their reintegration into the community may – to a degree – avoid feelings of resentment, competition or divisiveness; this may be key to providing education between community groups.

In 2017, a number of communities that are hosts to groups of refugees in Australia have sought to provide adult education to help with integration for the newly arrived. However, there has also been parallel provision of adult education to the receiving community, building inter-community cohesion:

Yass Rural Australians for Refugees (YRAR) hosted its first 'Understanding the Refugee Experience' workshop for community members. The aim of the event was to raise awareness within the community and to provide practical advice about how to best support asylum seekers and refugees. (Vue, 2017)

In Bosnia, there was a tendency for each of the ethnic groups to be self-sufficient and, to challenge this structure, a number of adult education programmes were built around a mixed delivery team of international staff plus trainers from at least two of the groups with whom many residents identified. In Republika Srpska, 20 local people from the three major

groups were trained in skills used for conflict resolution and they worked alongside five international facilitators who had also received special training. The Neighbourhood Facilitators Project formed mixed local/international teams which then learned together about the particular problems in Banja Luka and then worked in the area to bring about solutions to perceived problems (Last, 2000:92). A mixed delivery team was also a feature of a United Methodist Committee on Relief initiative in Sarajevo, which had conflict resolution at its core and used adult education as a lever for change (Aall, 2000:131).

In this case, the international staff presence helped Bosnian staff from the different ethnic groups to begin working together. Mixing international with local staff is not universally welcomed, however. Tanil highlights that there is potential for this approach to be problematic when the external intervention is unaware of the strengths and successes of local provision (Tanil, 1997:13). There can be benefits from adult education within a closed group, and the education can also strengthen that community. The next section will consider adult education for communities.

Education for communities

The types of education for communities include where the education process helps build social capital, where education leads to community activism, and where democratic processes that give voice to a community are strengthened. Putnam's collection of studies on social capital (Putnam, 2002) considers eight advanced democracies and demonstrates the link between social capital, participation in educational activity and representative government. Putnam suggests, however, that we must not focus on the amount of social capital that is available; rather, we must look at the qualitative aspect. He identifies four axes on which we can place and assess social capital: "formal versus informal; ... thick versus thin; ... inward-looking versus outward-looking; ... bridging versus bonding" (Putnam, 2002:9-12).

Theorists who regard adult learning as an essential part of political activism are commonly associated with Latin America; Paulo Freire is one of the best known. In blurring the distinction between an adult's lived experience and learning, critical pedagogy and the dialogue of learning is linked to political activity. While the liberationist backdrop familiar to Freire may not always be present in communities, adult education programmes have the potential for political impact and Torres (2009) shows how this remains important in a modern, globalized world.

Opposing forces - those of the marketplace and those of the ideology of human rights - are making the discussion on democracy and citizenship even more complex and convoluted. Not surprisingly, education is caught in the storm. (Torres, 2009, p.127)

It can be seen that there is a tightly interwoven relationship between the adult education being provided, the development of stable communities and the management of the education process within a community. As a result, and as UNESCO notes, education is important in capacity building for communities:

Teachers, youth and adult educators should be drawn from the community, providing psycho-social benefits to the learners and to the community as a whole. Capacity-building for the community's role in school management should begin with in-service training of teachers and training of school management committees, **from the earliest stage of the emergency** [emphasis added]. (UNESCO, 2005:2)

During the international intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was a push to encourage representative politics across the country. OSCE supported local elections as

early as 1996 and adult education was part of this process:

Given the nature of the civil conflict, constructing a new multiethnic and democratic Bosnia from the ashes of three-and-a-half years of war was a daunting challenge. ... The long-term goal of the international community was to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina as a fully functioning and sustainable democracy that could integrate itself as a member of democratic Europe. This was not expected to be easy, however, because elections in the early 1990s had in part spawned the ultranationalist parties that started the civil war in the first place. (Dobbins et al., 2003:92)

Externally driven elections can be problematic for fragile societies recovering from conflict but progress is possible in one respect in particular, i.e. “creating political space for broadly based reconciliation.” (UN Development Programme, 2002:95). UNDP concludes, however, that an immature democracy will still be better than systems of authoritarian rule and is thus worth introducing early as a means of reducing violence in a fragile state:

... less rooted democracies are still better able than authoritarian regimes to cope with political unrest. Why? Probably because democracies, unlike dictatorships, offer non-violent ways of resolving political conflicts, and opposition groups have reason to hope that their turn will come. (UN Development Programme, 2002:85)

In Iraq, military occupation forces set up groups to allow Iraqis to express their views, participate in decision making and conduct some local administrative functions. However, these bodies were not elected through universal suffrage and some were entirely appointed. (Rogers, 2004:15) Although the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq supported the Independent High Electoral Commission in Iraq through capacity building and institutional development, and was invited to provide technical support to elections, there was not a focused campaign of public voter education such as that found in the United Nations intervention in Cambodia.

Can adult education be designed to strengthen its role in, between and for communities?

Quality assured provision is important but in situations where communities are fragmented or fragile, it is easy to excuse dips in quality due to the irregular nature of the adult education. There is little recognition that low quality adult education will usually be ineffective in strengthening communities. However, simply having regard to the checklist at Figure 1, which is a synthesis of the principles and standards that are prioritized for post conflict adult education will assist policymakers and practitioners.

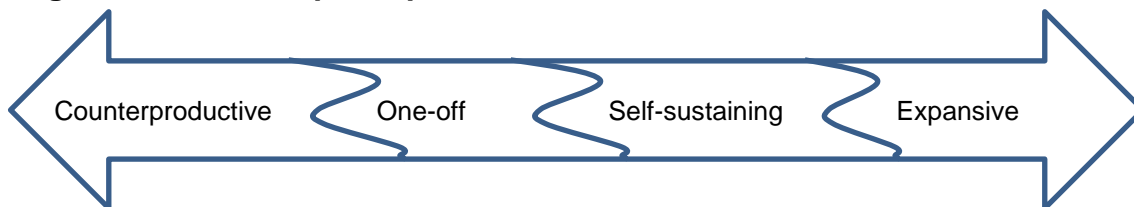
Figure 1: Checklist for designing adult education

1	Recognize that adult education is set in the context of the host society	√
2	Acknowledge embedded values : human rights, diversity and gender equality	√
3	Exploit community resources and encourage participation of all groups of all people	√
4	Meet adults' learning and psychosocial needs : learner-centred, participatory and inclusive learning	√
5	Use decent safe facilities , including multi-purpose venues if necessary	√
6	Provide CPD and qualifications for teachers who understand how adults learn	√

Note: Points 1, 3 and 4 are directly reliant on an interdependency between the community and its adult education.

In the context of a fragile community, or communities, it is particularly important that adult education provision should be sustainable and adaptable. In checking for sustainability, it is important to assess the impact of the programme or policy. The ideal is to move towards the right of the spectrum at Figure 2, aiming as a minimum for self-sustaining provision.

Figure 2: The impact spectrum of adult education



Conclusion

In this brief paper, it has been shown that adult education is rooted in a community context: it is delivered to individuals within their communities and community involvement in designing and managing the provision is valuable. However, there is a risk that strong community groups can be formed by exclusion of others and some adult education is focused on separate provision for distinct groups, and in building cohesion between them. In particular, education for communities of refugees (either when they return home or in the country of settlement) often addresses the lack of links between groups. Similarly, means to address different communities in a society divided into ethnically-defined groups were considered. Finally, the role of adult education in strengthening communities (education for community) was examined, with social capital, democracy programmes and community capacity building being three ways in which this might happen.

Given the importance of quality adult education in, between and for strong communities, the sustainable impact spectrum and a quick quality checklist which addresses community aspects of adult education provision were offered. Funders, policy makers and practitioners alike are invited to view adult education projects through a new lens that allows a golden thread of adult education to be woven through initiatives to re-establish cohesive social communities where people can thrive.

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An examination of the factors influencing students' decisions to study HE in FE

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This research considers a group of students who chose to study a Higher Education (HE) course in a Further Education (FE) College and examines the factors influencing their decision to study at an FE college rather than a University.

Since the 1963 Robbins Report there has been an emphasis in UK government policy on expanding higher education. This reflects the belief that more students in higher education is a positive thing for both the students themselves and for society at large. The 2011 White Paper (BIS, 2011:48) continued this commitment to expand higher education sector and called on FE colleges to play a significant role.

Approximately one in 10 HE students are studying their course at an FE college rather than a university; a proportion that has been fairly stable for most of this century (DfES, 2005, HEA, 2012). There seems to be an unspoken understanding that students at colleges are in some way different from students at universities perhaps academically weaker or less ambitious although this has been shown to be not necessarily the case (Avis and Orr, 2016).

In a hierarchical HE sector the status of the chosen institution has significant impact on future pathways. The numbers of all groups attending HEIs have increased but proportionally speaking, the participation of under-represented groups has remained roughly the same as it was prior to the widening participation agenda. More worryingly for many, those from under-represented groups are more likely to be studying the HE in FE courses thus putting them at a disadvantage. As FE courses are cheaper, this is assumed to reflect attitudes to debt.

This article suggests that students' attitudes to debt change between their options and this suggests more attention should be paid to the value of HE in different life experiences.

Methodology

This article is taken from a broader study and focuses here on attitudes to costs. It uses a narrative approach which is 'is particularly useful if you want to know something about how people make sense of their lives through the selective stories they tell' (Cousin, 2009:93).

It is based on unstructured interviews with an expedient sample (Freebody, 2003) of 15 students studying for a full-time HE qualification in Business or Computing at a FE college. They were encouraged to discuss the factors influencing their decision to study at the college. The participants reflected the (small) student population although this is not to claim they are a representative sample. They ranged from 19-34 years old, both men and women (although only men studied computing). There were three FE colleges in the city and two large universities, one a 'Russell group' and the other a 'post-1992' institution (and up to 5 others within daily commuting distance), offering a range of computing and business courses.

The analysis of the data compared themes appearing across the interviews, an analysis of narratives as opposed to a narrative analysis (Heath et al, 2009; Goodson and Sikes,

2001).

Previous research about costs and finance

Neoliberal approaches to this topic, implicit in most UK policy documents, present the decision to participate in HE as an investment decision. The qualification provides high returns (higher wages, better access to jobs) that outweigh the costs (fees, living expenses, delayed wages). This approach underpins the decision to introduce fees because, as the individual is the primary beneficiary, it should be the individual who bears the costs. A neo-liberal assumption is that for a rational agent the only barrier to making the beneficial investment in a university education is access to funding (financial liquidity). This underpins opposition to the imposition of and subsequent increases in fees. The UK response was the introduction of the student loans system and the government argument that this 'barrier' is overcome (see Lewis, 2012, 'You can afford to go to university, cited in Jones, 2016).

However, there is not much evidence that the introduction of fees has had a direct impact either positively or negatively. Patterns of participation have not significantly shifted and absolute numbers have increased over the period since fees were introduced,

Although young participation rates increased in both advantaged and disadvantaged areas, with proportional increases of +16 and +52 per cent respectively, the participation gap between them has remained broadly stable at around 40 percentage points. (HEFCE, 2013:3)

Research instead has looked for alternative ways to explain why those from disadvantaged backgrounds are still less likely to attend HE and, when they do, to choose lower status institutions. Callender (2002) and Callender and Jackson (2005) suggest the impact of financial circumstances is mediated through the individual's attitude to risk. In their research they found overall that

the lower-income group was more debt averse than the other groups, even after holding constant the type of educational institution they attended (for example, state school, further education college), gender, ethnicity and age. (2005:520)

However, there are suggestions that there are more complex factors at play. Although their data was not statistically significant, they found a clear indication that for those from low income groups who had taken A-levels (final high school exams) there was little debt-aversion, in contrast to those who had not taken A levels.

In a later article, Callender and Jackson (2008) found that students from lower income families are, 'more likely to see university in terms of unacceptable debt accrual rather than a beneficial investment' (p406). They also found that debt aversion (also referred to as 'fear of debt') is likely to encourage students to choose universities closer to home, choose a subject that they wanted rather than one that had 'better employment possibilities, and that it affects choice of university (p418).

Their work makes it clear, therefore, that the simple model of a rational agent making cost-benefit investment decisions is insufficient to fully explain student attitudes to HE choice. They emphasise how different groups experience debt in different ways.

Other research has further explored the ways in which the debt is experienced. Hesketh (1999) used Bourdieu to suggest that different classes and backgrounds will have different relationships to debt, so people with apparently similar financial situations will make

different decisions. Archer et al (2001), in examining working-class men's attitudes to HE participation, note that the issue of finance is reflected in differing attitudes to money. Their interviewees had limited confidence that the HE experience would lead to work at the end of the course and 'were troubled by the threat of loans and the risk of getting into debt' (ibid:437). In contrast, other groups have support networks that can make the experience of study more comfortable (financially and academically) and be called upon as contacts when finding work.

Reay et al (2005), Reay and Ball (1997) suggest that the attitude to school choice for working-class families is, 'infused with ambivalence, fear and a reluctance to invest too much in an area where failure is still a common working-class experience.' (Reay and Ball, 1997: 89). Differences in fees may also have an impact on the choice of institution.

Jones (2016) suggests that many young people articulate both debt tolerance and aversion. He develops a typology of attitudes to debt based on his own and previous research (Finnie, 2004, Reay et al 2005, Maringe et al, 2009 cited in Jones, 2016). He compares 'embedded' choosers (for whom participating or not participating is a foregone conclusion) and 'contingent' choosers (who are still considering whether to participate). Within these two groups debt aversion may reflect identity, lifestyle, culture or discomfort with debt, while debt tolerance may reflect lifestyle and identity or a resignation that the price must be paid because the qualification is important. These attitudes can be presented as characteristics that define the decision-maker.

There is some acknowledgement of students' perceptions of the returns to HE. For example, Robinson (2012) finds that younger full-time students are more instrumental in their approach and see a qualification as a way to improve work chances while older part-time students are more cynical about its value in the workplace.

Nevertheless, there is a tendency to view the students as making a single decision that weighs their personal attitude to debt against their personal attitude to HE.

Findings

It is clear that the participants in my research were conscious of costs as a significant factor in their choice of institution. Often this was expressed explicitly.

But the reason I chose the college was basically because it was cheaper (Ishaq)

I've learned things do cost money and money doesn't grow on trees because with my father having his own business we have had times when things were tight so this has affected my choice of courses. (Pete)

For the other students it was not the fees but the associated living costs, especially rent, that concerned them. Ishaq, Pete, Carl and Andrew all mentioned that they could save on these costs by living at home. They did not seem to consider that this saving would also be true if they attended one of the two universities in the city or the three universities within daily travelling distance.

I don't think I'm going to go to uni because I'll have to leave [the city]. (Carl)

As with previous research it was not a simple inability to pay but a concern about debt that affected the decision. For Andrew and Ishaq debt was a long term burden to be avoided.

I had schoolteachers at my old school still paying off their debts in their 30s. (Andrew)

I don't think the price difference was greatly significant but it does play on your mind and later on in life. I didn't want to have so many ties to hold me back (Ishaq)

None of the students suggested that the higher price of the university was beyond their reach nor were debt-concerns a barrier to going to university but it is clear that their attitudes to cost and debt reflect individual constructions of these concepts.

However, the continued discussions showed that the issue of costs and even the comparison between the institutions was more complex. Despite his concerns about being held back by debt, Ishaq had already repeated a year at school to improve his A-level results and he and a number of the others also later went to a university for a top-up (an extra year of study to convert the HND to a degree) which Ishaq then suspended and restarted. All of which entailed further costs. Similarly, when he had completed his HND, Mark began a full three-year degree rather than the top-up.

The decisions about paying for the course and debt were expressed as part of a comparison of options. Toni quite specifically compared the value for money between universities and colleges.

If it's an extra thousand pound to study somewhere else, it makes more sense to study here and you have less students per teacher which was always a selling point ... I would probably have felt the £3000 was worth it if I had got a better service at uni, more teachers, smaller classes (Toni)

For Andrew the HE qualification has instrumental value in the workplace so he compares total fees for achieving a final qualification, in this case the cost of the two-year HND with that of a three-year BSc.

I didn't like the idea of getting into a lot of debt whereas, if I came here, I could get an HND for about £4000, without any student loans or maintenance or anything like that, whereas if I went to the university, the minimum would be about £9000, so that was the main reason (Andrew)

Debt could be avoided by studying for the shorter, cheaper HND. Minimising debt risk is offered as a factor in the comparison but debt itself is not a barrier to studying the degree. Debt-aversion is present but the significance of financial factors was always linked to students' perception of the experience they would get while going into debt.

The students had a sense of the different status between the various institutions but it was not expressed as a direct influence on their decisions. They all had an instrumental approach to an HE qualification.

One of [my friends], when I said I was going to drop out [of university] said, 'You can't, you'll never get a good job.' (Daniel)

[My parents] taught us that education opens doors and it doesn't matter if you use them, or bank them and use them later on, but they're really important. (Sarah)

They also have modest expectations of how the qualification will help them.

If I chose to apply for a job, they may not accept me because I didn't have the skills so obviously, doing a course at HND with computing, I thought that if I did that, I'd have the skills to be suitable candidate. [Ishaq]

If I do HE I can easily get a higher up job and keep going from there. Just the idea of a proper career. (Nigel)

I looked around for what would give me a wide choice of careers and ended up with business HND. (Nigel)

It is also reflected in their impression of what little extra the university has to offer.

I think it's quite over-romanticised, the idea of a uni. There's all these intelligent people, all together, that are sitting down, drinking lattes and stuff like that. That's kind of what my idea is but it's never really the case. (Daniel)

I have been to one university lecture at Derby, when I was bored one day. It was in a huge hall, people took notes or fell asleep and it was very unengaging and that's a picture that I've had painted for me by a whole range of different, non-specific people that I've met in my life. (Sean)

Thus the decision to participate in HE for these students was perceived as a necessary step. However, there are various routes within the HE sector within which debt has varying significance. This is most clearly shown by three particular cases: Pete, Janice and Christine.

Pete had been seriously considering a more expensive and more specialized Games Programming Course at a University away from home. However, he was not confident of achieving the high grades that particular course required

I more or less saw the strength of my skills in that field, games programming, but in programming, I wasn't the best at it and companies only look at you if you are the best in that field. (Pete)

Abandoning this course, his options then became a more general computing course at the same university, at a university closer to home, or at the FE college. In this context his attitude to costs became significant.

Generally, I was thinking more in the ways of costs and things like that because if I move there [the generalist course at a university] I've got to pay for accommodation and things like that. I was a little bit hit and miss about that it could be fun, but I don't know if I can afford it sort of thing. (Pete)

He would have been willing to undertake the cost and move from home for the specialist course because he believed it to be more enjoyable and the potential for future success was higher, but the returns to a generalist course were available more cheaply in other institutions.

Similarly, mature student (34 years old) and experienced senior nurse, Janice weighed costs as part of different bundles. Despite her fairly comfortable economic standing, her decision had been influenced at one point by the possibility of financial support from the NHS.

If I'd stayed in London, I could probably have got the hospital to pay for my education, probably on an internal graduate training programme, but by coming to [this city with her husband's job] this option was gone. (Janice)

As a result, she completely changed her career strategy and instead of seeking an alternative route into hospital management, chose a business course with the aim of setting up her own business. Her final decision to choose the college over the university was swayed by her childcare responsibilities

It was just the way it was very personal here [the college]. The tutor was very understanding about my being a mother (Janice)

Once the option of the bursary was removed, costs became less important than support.

Christine had wanted to do an International Business course at one of the universities in the city but failed to get a place. Her mother tried to encourage her to accept a general business degree course at a different university. Christine realised that instead of doing a three-year general business course at a university, she could do the two-year HND at the college and then make a second attempt to join the preferred International Business course as a top up.

Conclusion

Research that examines working class attitudes to finance can pathologise the students' attitudes to finance. The terms 'debt aversion' and 'fear of debt' imply a weakness or an anxiety that is distorting rational decision-making. In this research, the students were quite reasonably minimizing debt and risk and weighing a range of options. Some of those options contrasted instrumentally similar courses at different prices. Others compared differing pathways (for example a preferred course) and in this context cost was less important.

This is in keeping with the overall instrumentalism of their approach to HE. To some extent they are not comparing HE courses but comparing pathways to future jobs. The students are very aware of the role that the HE qualification will play in getting them a job and have realistically modest expectations of the kind of job it will lead to (see Avis and Orr, 2016). The costs and risks involved therefore take a different significance depending on what each option offers in terms of future career opportunities, enjoyment and other factors; HE is not seen as homogeneous.

Emphasizing debt-aversion implicitly suggests that students are restricted from making the 'right' decision. However, the research here suggests that when an option that is right for them is available, cost is less of a barrier. While it is important to continue to consider how debt is experienced differently, it is also important to consider how the experience and value of HE is experienced differently and to consider whether a wider variety of routes through post-compulsory education might be more appropriate.

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Problematizing post-truths: Critical adult literacy in the United States in the era of ‘alternative facts’

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We won the Evangelicals. We won with young. We won with old. We won with highly educated. We won with poorly educated. I love the poorly educated. We're the smartest people, we're the most loyal people.' – Donald Trump, February 23, 2016, following a primary win in Nevada

A form of anti-intellectualism that devalues critique, informed expertise and culturally responsive and engaged learning processes has reached its apex with the ascension of US President Donald Trump and his cabinet of wealthy populists. This Republican resistance to divergent perspectives is not new, and it is not unsurprisingly situated alongside racist, misogynist and white nationalist ideologies that vilify political movements committed to resisting oppression (e.g., Black Lives Matter; Women's March) (Perlstein 2017; Weiner 2017). However, these expressions of conservatism in the Trump era are more deeply invested in their stance of not knowing, rejecting ideas based on scientific understandings, and embracing rhetorical populism (Fisher 2017; Mazo 2011; Nichols 2017) Furthermore, while Trump and his supporters decry identity politics, their politics is mired in identity – one that is white, male, heterosexual, extremely economically privileged and given license to present 'alternative facts' (lies) in response to criticism and resistance – which is then called 'fake news.'

Trump's avowed love for the poorly educated is steeped in practices that encourage a lack of awareness and a literal refusal to acknowledge differing perspectives and broader representations of the world. Republican leaning outlets like FOX news and Infowars craft a vision of America teeming with crime and conspiracies for millions of viewers using half-truths, exaggeration and distortion (Fisher 2017). Trump's Chief Strategist Steve Bannon – formerly of rightwing Breitbart news - refers to media outlets who question Trump's assertions as an 'opposition party.' In post-truth America, a President can blithely assert that something is inaccurate or false - without illuminating how and/or why - while those who question him are deemed dangerous (Jaser 2016). Alongside, white supremacy, disinformation serves to reinforce not only ignorance, but also the silencing and marginalization of communities of color, the poor and others who reject the normalization of the Trump administration's transparently discriminatory policies (Lieven 2016; Petrella & Loggins 2017).

The demeaning of critical reflection has a disproportionately negative impact on the lives of adult literacy learners and the programs in which they seek to educate themselves. It also represents a movement toward neoliberal policies and practices that undermine the possibilities for critical pedagogy and civic engagement that have traditionally defined many adult literacy programs (Freire 1970/2000; 1998; Giroux 2017). Under the most recent US federal budget, adult education – which was moving toward a workforce development model even before the Trump administration – is facing cuts of \$96 million dollars. This has been coupled with demonstrably less concern with education as a public good; an emphasis on 'choice' that valorizes a business/for-profit educational model, and reduced commitments to students who may need additional support (academic, financial) to finish their education (Blakely 2017; Hannah-Jones 2017).

Adult literacy learners in the United States – many of whom are impoverished, of color and/or isolated as a result of these statuses – already struggle to survive and resist marginalization. Trump’s campaign slogan ‘Make America Great Again’ continues to define his presidency and is an explicit recognition of white supremacist understandings about who has the right to be/exist in the US. Effectively mobilizing against rhetorical strategies designed to nurture ignorance, and foment fear and chaos requires an intersectional approach to education embedded in a multilayered understanding of oppression and experience (Collins 2000; hooks 1994; Tanz 2017). Actively engaging critical literacy practices using a social justice lens should focus on helping adult learners craft discourses of resistance within a ‘pedagogy of disruption’ (Giroux 2017). Through experiential theorizing, informed analysis and social action, adult educators can not only play a role in helping students problematize post truths, but also gain a deeper understanding of their pedagogy and themselves (Freire 1970/2000; 1998; Giroux 2013; hooks 1994).

Developing discourses of resistance

Critical literacy is situated within democratic pedagogical practices that center and honor the lives of students and encourage sociopolitical critique (Freire 1970/2000; 1998; Giroux 2013). Through questioning and active dialogue, the collective sense of urgency that is stimulated can initiate broader movements for social change as educational spaces ‘further modes of critical learning and civic agency, and thus enable (people) to learn how to govern rather than be governed’ (Giroux 2013, p.129). As educators for critical literacy, teachers support students as they make connections between their personal lives (and struggles) and the deeper institutionalized structures of oppression that collectively keep them in impoverished, under-resourced or rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods (Freire 1970/2000; Giroux 2017). Linking the experiential with learning and thinking that goes beyond the surface results in a more robust pedagogy that is also contextually defined (Giroux 2013)

By facilitating the development of counternarratives – oral and written stories of experience-based knowledges and social critiques – students generate a body of work that can potentially destabilize the white nationalist constructions of reality filtering through American culture. When situated alongside examinations of how colonization and imperialism have devastated communities, counternarratives can become recipes for revolutionary action. Mainstream narratives often emphasize what poor people, women and/or people of color lack, or define them against an American ideal steeped in capitalist constructions of success (Hamilton 2017; Nopper 2011). Furthermore, seemingly sympathetic statements like ‘immigrants make America great’ are problematic in that they often pit culturally marginalized communities against one another (e.g., immigrants vs. native born black people) by embracing the dominant culture’s view of who is a ‘hard worker’ or should be ‘grateful’ for being allowed to live in the country (Nayeri 2017; Nopper 2011). The life opportunities of adult literacy learners are often shaped by a culture of war and domination that requires certain communities be prepared to fight for and/or serve the powerful (Giroux 2017). Counternarratives illuminate how these communities interpret, survive, co-opt, thrive, surrender, attack and engage from the margins – creating a periphery of awareness not isolation/victimization (hooks 2000).

The transformational potential of adult literacy education is also diminished when learners are unable to decipher facts from propaganda or rely on stories told by powerful others to define their understanding of the world (Giroux 2013). The idea of ‘fake news’ exploded during the Trump campaign, and provided an example of how reporting designed to encourage intergroup loyalty (i.e., racial, political) can become a powerful source of disinformation, especially in a time of increasing partisanship (Smith 2017; Tanz 2017).

Critical literacy practices that provide adult learners with strategies to unpack and appraise a range of media sources is a key component of a discourse of resistance. Greater understanding of the sociopolitical challenges many adult learners face is supported through the development of a critical media literacy that integrates varying perspectives, and builds the necessary research skills to deconstruct social phenomena (Ember 2017; Kellner & Share 2005). Indeed, adult learners who have lived outside the US, may already be intimately familiar with the media tactics used to promote authoritarian political agendas, and thus provide crucial insights on how to resist these practices. The multitude of dubious sources, paid experts, and raw data that one is required to identify and sift through on a daily basis means that adult educators have a duty to help students decode, verify and if necessary, produce their own media (Davies 2016). The reality is that if vulnerable communities are not critical news consumers or do not have the ability to access reliable information sources, they risk being pushed further to the fringes.

The movement toward a workforce development model of adult education in the US (i.e., educating people for work not further education) was precipitated by the creation of a new High School Equivalency (HSE) test that focuses on content (vs. reading comprehension) and places greater emphasis on nonfiction texts. In some adult literacy programs, this has meant that less time is spent on reading (or listening to) literature and fiction. However, in a time of polarization, isolationism and distrust, literature can transform perspectives. Clearly, reading itself will not eliminate the structural forces that bolster the deep inequities faced by adult learners in the US, but a discourse of resistance that enriches lives through literary discussion does have the potential to facilitate necessary – even imaginative – thinking around resistance and co-existence (Warren 2017). Literature can also serve as a source of content that adds depth and context to traditional HSE subjects like social studies and science. Examining the lives of those who have withstood colonialism (e.g., *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez), endured deep culturally-based animosity (e.g., *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison), or navigated circumstances that confound traditional conceptions of time (e.g., *Kindred* by Octavia Butler), can push adult learners (and educators) to think in ways that “disrupt the totalitarian narrative” (Matar 2017) and undermine dominant constructions of what they can achieve.

Implementing a pedagogy of disruption

Dialogue, questioning and analysis about the ‘word and the world,’ can nurture a powerful and personal connection to political action (Freire 1970/2000; Giroux 2013). Linking acts of exploration to moments of intentional responsiveness and social action is an essential aspect of a pedagogy of disruption (Giroux 2013; 2017). The long history of social movements for change in the US is a source of knowledge, tactics and inspiration (Freire 1998; Giroux 2013). Learning that moves adult literacy learners into the streets and/or defines education within/through acts of civil disobedience, can be perceived as criminally disruptive by the political regime. Increasingly, however, there is a realization that education as a public good, and a right, will only be maintained by disrupting neoliberal policies and actions that identify students as commodities and work to keep them uneducated, in debt and/or enrolled in for-profit schools (Cottom 2017; Giroux, 2013; 2017; Hannah-Jones 2017). Actions that hold the government accountable for supporting education for critical awareness, and family sustaining employment opportunities are necessary responses to this situation.

A pedagogy of disruption recognizes that political expression is central to student engagement and learning (Giroux 2013). The sense of community that activism can foster may also be a real source of support to people who are marginalized due to the cultural identities they represent or embrace. In the US, mobilizing adult literacy students as a

national constituency has been difficult because the community is not only extremely diverse, but also because adult literacy is stigmatized. A student once remarked: 'They (larger society) feel like we already had our chance and we blew it.' Though investing in Pre-K or early childhood education is seen as more viable, research also makes it clear that parents must be sufficiently educated if their children are to thrive over the long term.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a form of activism that is embedded in systematic assessment and grounded theorizing for action (Torre & Fine 2010). Using PAR methods, students, and educators discuss and document specific concerns, and then use insights gained from an analysis of this data to develop a community-centered plan for action (Stoudt, Fine & Fox 2012). As a defined research model, PAR can also engage academics outside of the adult literacy community to share their knowledge and work with learners to co-create strategies for intervention (Stoudt, Fine & Fox 2012; Torre & Fine 2010). PAR requires that educators let students take the lead in the classroom, and relinquish some of the power that comes with being able to decide how they utilize what they learn. A plan for social change that comes out of students' own analyses also illuminates the critical connections between learning, critical reflection and action.

Nurturing a community of learners

Adult educators committed to critical pedagogies of social change must also be committed to self-reflection, which includes acknowledging their power as teachers, as well as the race, gender, class, religious and other privileges they bring into educational and activist spaces. Recent research on a small population of adult education programs highlighted the majority white, relatively well educated women who make up teaching staffs, and their primarily Hispanic and African American, non-working students (Cronen, Yin & Condelli 2015). While poor, uneducated white voters have been the focus in examinations of Trump's ascendance (MacGillis 2016) the reality is that fair numbers of well-educated, middle-class whites aligned with Trump as well. Forty-nine percent of white college educated Americans voted for Trump (compared to 22% of 'non-white' college graduates) and many of his white supporters had incomes that put them in the middle class or above (\$50,000+ annual income) (Rose 2017). This does not necessarily mean that a proportionate number of white adult literacy educators supported Trump. However, it does suggest that educators cannot enact critical literacy practices in their programs without paying attention to and discussing how whiteness, white supremacy, class and political power interconnect.

Though their education and class privilege potentially provides a modicum of socioemotional and fiscal reserves, adult educators of color must navigate the same rocky terrain of oppression as their similarly situated students. They are also a crucial source of validation and information for students of color in places where black and brown teachers are a minority (Sheared 1999). Though in some instances, compensated educational activities that are respectful of the time and space of teachers of color may be appropriate, they should not be held responsible for initiating discussions about race/culture or for helping white educators gain a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of oppression (Eddo-Lodge 2017). White educators must also take the lead in actively resisting bigotry and prejudice, advocating for their students' sociopolitical interests, and engaging in activism that paves the way for a more critically conscious and politically engaged adult literacy community.

Critical literacy praxis is hard, emotionally taxing work. Consequently, the adult literacy community must be committed to establishing routines for self- and community care; everyone needs a space where they can talk openly about their feelings, experience

growth-promoting relationships, and learn how to access social services/supports (e.g., mental health care, legal representation) they may need to survive (Horsman 2004). A commitment to emotionally responsive adult literacy practices requires that members of the community actively listen to each other, acknowledge personal and collective strengths, be open to diverse ways of working and communicating, and authentically reflect on difference (Giroux 2017; Horsman 2004; Jones 2012). For many students and teachers Trump's election has ushered in an especially dangerous and frightening time; a time when risks to their livelihoods, communities and even physical selves is extraordinarily high. Students and educators of color who require or request culturally or linguistically-specific spaces to express their anger and/or regroup for resistance, should have these needs affirmed and respected. They should determine how, in what language or with whom they speak (Freire, 1998).

@realDonaldTrump If U.C. Berkeley does not allow free speech and practices violence on innocent people with a different point of view - NO FEDERAL FUNDS?
3:13 AM - 2 Feb 2017

Through Mr. Trump's often feverish tweeting, the adult literacy community (and others) are constantly reminded of how a lack of appreciation for critical discourse can dilute civic values and provide a foundation for authoritarianism (Giroux 2013). A leader that threatens those who appropriately question his repressive tactics and 'loves' an uneducated populace does not want their nation to flourish (or resist). The fear and anger is palpable as educators engage with learners, but so is the hope. This hope is magnified by the clarity of purpose that the Trump administration's open embrace of ignorance and anti-intellectualism has revealed: *critical adult literacy matters*. A collective social consciousness rooted in contextualized knowledge(s) challenges untruths, and defies sociopolitical structures invested in the silencing and erasure of the oppressed.

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Assessing lifelong learning attributes in Thai higher education

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Keywords

Lifelong Learning, Student Competences, Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Introduction

In this era of the digital economy, rapidly changing technology and increasing competition in the business environment have nowadays become a significant source of pressure on society and higher education institutions (HEI). New graduates with the right skills and competencies for the job and the high-end skills needed to invent, develop and apply the new knowledge, instruments, or technology are in high demand in the workplace all over the world in both developed and developing countries. However, growing skills gaps, skills mismatches and low productivity in new graduates have become a global concern (McGowan & Andrews, 2015).

Improving student lifelong learning, retention, attainment and employability in higher education are key objectives for policy makers at the institutional, governmental, national and region levels. In particular, lifelong learning (LLL) is emphasised, since the concept of lifelong learning skills is a natural realisation of learning aspirations to improve the quality of life and enhance the employability as well as the productivity of the labour force (Idris, 2002). As such, lifelong learning is an optimal candidate for encouraging enhanced student employability skills (Babos, Lubyova, & Studená, 2015). Moreover, there is no single educational approach or learning styles that will fit all learners. In an age where lifelong learning has become a necessity for all citizens, which enables the workforce to be competitive in a global market, maintaining traditional approaches to learning, teaching, transmitting knowledge, values and completion appears to be a high-risk strategy (European Commission, 2011).

Thus, lifelong learning is becoming an important factor in the education system and society, it is characterized by self-directed learning, and collaborative learning has also been globally recognised as an essential element of education policy. There is a broad agreement that lifelong learning is a key circumstance for continuing development of skills, the education system and the country, which will relate directly to the goals of national development and the need to improve the ability of individuals, families, educational institutions, communities and workplaces (Baaijens, Cluitmans, Gelderblom, Huitema, & Waterreus, 1998). It is regarded as a crucial strategy to improve intellectual and human capital development for personal fulfilment, global citizenship, and social cohesion as well as lead to employability (European Communities, 2007). Additionally, it needs to be promoted throughout lives (Valenzuela Persico, 2014) and educational opportunities in many contexts.

McGarrah (2015) summarised the core dimensions of lifelong learning skills from previous literature into three aspects that are related to university and career readiness, namely: (a) critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity, collectively; (b) self-regulation, conscientiousness, mind-sets, and motivation for learning; and (c) social and emotional skills. Meanwhile, European Communities (2007) identified eight core competencies needed for effective lifelong learning, namely (a) communication in the mother tongue; (b)

communication in foreign languages; (c) mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; (d) digital competence; (e) learning to learn; (f) social and civic competences; (g) sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and (h) cultural awareness and expression. Lifelong learning is concerned with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills, which people need to fulfil their aspirations in all stages of life; however, not everyone can acquire the prerequisites to participate in lifelong learning, or can learn to gain knowledge in the same way, or has the same opportunity to access learning (Valenzuela Persico, 2014).

These differences may be due to background factors. Crick and Yu (2008) measured lifelong learning in seven domains: changing and learning, critical curiosity, meaning making, dependence and fragility, creativity, learning relationships, and strategic awareness as a whole through a 75-item long questionnaire. The study in Malaysia context of Meerah et al (2011) described effective life-long learners in term of the ability to (a) set goals, (b) apply appropriate knowledge and skills, (c) engage in self-direction, (d) locate required information, and (e) adapt their learning strategies to different conditions, and showed that there were significant differences in lifelong learning tendencies between male and female university students. Whilst Elaldi (2015) found no significant differences in terms of gender, there were significant differences in terms of grade levels for students at Cumhuriyet University in Turkey. This investigation explained that the 17-19 age range had the lowest disposition mean scores of lifelong learning while the 23-25 age range showed the highest dispositions; whereas for sub-dimensions, the highest mean scores belonged to the 20-22 age range. In the lack of self-regulation and lack of curiosity sub-dimensions, the highest scores belonged to the 26 and over age range. To prepare students to be productive members of society, to have an understanding of the real world and to successfully deal with the modern labour market, assessment of lifelong learning skills must be studied in detail.

Research purposes

The purposes of this quantitative study were to examine the reliability and validity of the lifelong learning instrument and to investigate lifelong learning attributes of undergraduate students in the Thai context.

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study were 196 undergraduate students from a university in Thailand: 139 students from the School of Information Technology and 57 from Health Sciences, with 67 female participants (34.20%) and 129 (65.80%) male.

Measure

Using the lifelong learning questionnaire, Drewery, Pennaforte, and Pretti (2016) developed the lifelong learning questionnaire based on the principles of the previous studies (Drewery, Pennaforte, & Pretti, 2016). Drewery et al.'s questionnaire was translated into Thai language. The lifelong learning questionnaire consists of 12 items for measuring four characteristics, namely: (1) Love of learning (2) Information seeking (3) Self-reflection and (4) Resilience. Participants were required to respond on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Statistical analysis

Quantitative data analysis was used in this study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the characteristics of the participants. Cronbach's Alpha reliability was used to measure internal consistency. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was employed to test

the construct validity of the measurement model of lifelong learning when applied in the context of Thai higher education. Furthermore, inferential statistics, the independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test the mean differences between demographics backgrounds (Khampirat, 2008; 2016).

Results

Reliability

The reliability statistics for the four factors are shown in Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha for lifelong learning indicated that the reliability alpha statistics were in a satisfactory range ($\alpha = 0.538$ and 0.761) and, therefore, confirmed the internal consistency of the aspects. The love of learning attribute was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .761$).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics.

	alpha	N	M	SD	Matrix Correlation			
					1)	2)	3)	4)
1) Love of learning	0.761	196	3.52	0.58	1.000			
2) Information seeking	0.538	196	3.42	0.53	.613**	1.000		
3) Self-reflection	0.575	196	3.66	0.63	.462**	.521**	1.000	
4) Resilience	0.702	196	3.50	0.54	.504**	.647**	.509**	1.000
Total	0.861	196	3.51	0.46	** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed.			

Note: * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$

Descriptive statistics and correlation among indicators

The values of M , SD , and the matrix of correlation coefficients for the four attributes of lifelong learning are listed in Table 1. The correlations between all variables were significantly correlated ($p \leq .01$) and positively related, ranging from .462 to .647. The results indicated that there was a real relationship in the population.

Construct validity: results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Table 2 shows the results of the CFA. It appears that the proposed model that allowed two error terms to be correlated provides an adequate fit ($\chi^2 [2, N = 196] = 2.331, p = 0.312$). The overall goodness-of-fit of the model, measured by the ratio of chi-square per degree of freedom, is 1.165, which suggested that the proposed model fits the data reasonably well. The other fit indices (RMSEA = 0.029, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.996, SRMR = 0.013) also confirm that the hypothesised model fits well and all of the standardised factor loadings are statistically significant and salient ($\beta > 0.4$, β were 0.919 and 0.792).

The standardised factor loadings in Table 2 are quite moderate, β were 0.403 and 0.453. The square multiple correlation (R^2) values included in Table 2 show the reliability of the measurements. The results of this study supported the hypothesis that the lifelong learning scale has a global factor composed of the four attributes and confirm that the four attributes define the lifelong learning construct very well.

Table 2: Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Factor	Standardized factor loadings	S.E.	Z-Test	P-Value	Residual Variances	R-Square
Love of learning	0.411	0.039	10.515	0.000	0.171	0.497
Information seeking	0.453	0.034	13.404	0.000	0.078	0.726

Self-reflection	0.403	0.044	9.17	0.000	0.237	0.406
Resilience	0.409	0.036	11.468	0.000	0.126	0.571
Chi-Square Test of Model Fit = 2.331, df = 2, p = 0.312, Chi-Square/df = 1.165 RMSEA = 0.029, CFI = 0.999, TLI = 0.996, SRMR = 0.013						

Testing the mean differences of lifelong learning

In order to compare the attributes of lifelong learning in males and females, the independent samples t-test was conducted, as shown in Table 3. The test found that males and females did not differ significantly on each attribute of lifelong learning.

A one-way ANOVA (Table 4) was conducted to compare the effect of GPA on each attribute of lifelong learning in Low GPA Group (<2.00), Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00) and High GPA Group (>3.00) conditions and categories. The results illustrated that there were no significant effects of GPA on the attributes of lifelong learning at the $p < .05$ level for the three conditions. These results suggest that GPA does not have an effect on lifelong learning either.

Table 3: The results of independent t-test: testing the mean difference between gender

Lifelong Learning Attribute	Gender	N	M	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		independent t-test		
					F	Sig.	t	df	P-Value
Love of learning	Male	67	3.53	0.63	0.59	0.44	0.22	194.00	0.83
	Female	129	3.52	0.56					
Information seeking	Male	67	3.46	0.57	0.93	0.34	0.69	194.00	0.49
	Female	129	3.40	0.52					
Self-reflection	Male	67	3.67	0.62	0.30	0.58	0.13	194.00	0.89
	Female	129	3.66	0.64					
Resilience	Male	67	3.52	0.52	0.12	0.73	0.40	194.00	0.69
	Female	129	3.48	0.55					
Total	Male	67	3.53	0.47	0.10	0.76	0.44	194.00	0.66
	Female	129	3.50	0.46					

Table 4: The results of one-way ANOVA: testing the mean difference between GPA

Lifelong Learning Attribute	GPA	N	M	SD
Love of learning	Low GPA Group (<2.00)	39	3.44	0.62
	Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00)	82	3.49	0.55
	High GPA Group (>3.00)	72	3.58	0.60
	Total	193	3.51	0.58
Information seeking	Low GPA Group (<2.00)	39	3.30	0.52
	Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00)	82	3.35	0.51
	High GPA Group (>3.00)	72	3.54	0.53

	Total	193	3.41	0.53
Self-reflection	Low GPA Group (<2.00)	39	3.59	0.68
	Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00)	82	3.57	0.52
	High GPA Group (>3.00)	72	3.79	0.69
	Total	193	3.66	0.63
Resilience	Low GPA Group (<2.00)	39	3.55	0.50
	Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00)	82	3.39	0.50
	High GPA Group (>3.00)	72	3.56	0.59
	Total	193	3.49	0.54
Total	Low GPA Group (<2.00)	39	3.46	0.49
	Middle GPA Group (2.00-3.00)	82	3.44	0.41
	High GPA Group (>3.00)	72	3.60	0.49
	Total	193	3.50	0.46

ANOVA						
	Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-Test	tests of the differences between particular pairs
Love of learning	Between Groups	0.55	2	0.28	0.81	
	Within Groups	64.60	190	0.34		
	Total	65.15	192			
Information seeking	Between Groups	2.07	2	1.04	3.80*	there are no differences between the pair
	Within Groups	51.77	190	0.27		
	Total	53.84	192			
Self-reflection	Between Groups	2.14	2	1.07	2.78	
	Within Groups	73.19	190	0.39		
	Total	75.34	192			
Resilience	Between Groups	1.43	2	0.72	2.49	
	Within Groups	54.53	190	0.29		
	Total	55.96	192			
Total	Between Groups	1.10	2	0.55	2.67	
	Within Groups	39.31	190	0.21		
	Total	40.41	192			

Conclusion

These research findings show that the most important areas for lifelong learning competence in the Thai context are Information seeking, followed by Resilience, Love of learning and Self-reflection, respectively. There are no significant differences between student backgrounds.

Since lifelong learning is more than training or continuing education (Fischer, 2000) most sectors recognise this as one of the most important skills that a person can possess. This

is because lifelong learning competence can enhance an understanding of the world and encourage new graduates to successfully deal with unrelenting technology-driven changes in the business sector as well as support the continuous learning and transformation needed to be effective people in the rapidly changing world of work, economics, and the social and political environment (Collins, 2009; Jivanjee, Pendell, Nissen, & Goodluck, 2016). In order to prepare students for lifelong learning, global citizenship, and real working world, HEI should apply collaboration, reflection, student autonomy, CWIE, and intrinsically-motivating activities to help students develop the metacognitive and self-directed learning skills needed for career opportunities and to retain performance, competitive and sustained growth advantages in today's world (Dunlap & Grabinger, 2003).

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Reconstruction higher education in Vietnam

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Introduction

The circulation of educational ideas and practices in the time of globalization has been the centre of attention in the debate on education reform. This circulation goes along with the aspiration of improving education systems. It is also a source of optimism that encourages educational reform programmes in many countries, including Vietnam. Vietnam is unique for its concern to maintain the leadership of its Communist Party and the socialist State.

The Vietnamese higher education system builds on the past, its unsettled present reality, as well as its future aspirations. Returning to the past, this system was rooted in the Confucian tradition of valuing education, the French-built universities of the early 20th Century, and the Soviet model of mono-disciplinary universities (Hayden &Thiep,2010). Moving closer to contemporary Vietnam, three milestones are salient, the *Đổi mới* policy in 1986¹, the system expansion in 1993 and the higher education reform agenda of 2005² have all contributed to shaping current Vietnamese higher education. First, the year 1986 is one of the most important imprints with the *Đổi mới* Policy replacing the Soviet-styled central planning economy with the socialist-oriented market economy. The *Đổi mới* policy started the country's initial experience of marketization and privatization in many areas, including higher education. The second milestone is the expansion of the higher education system in 1993³, marked by re-structuring and the merging of mono-disciplinary universities into national and regional ones as well as the introduction of fees. Thirdly, in 2005 the Vietnamese Government enacted its higher education reform agenda aiming to achieve comprehensive and fundamental changes by 2020. It proposed multiple scenarios with general and detailed objectives to restructure the university network, governance, teaching and research, teaching content and processes, lecturer training, international cooperation and funding. Three decades after *Đổi mới*, the higher education system remains located between the country's socialist-orientation and marketisation. In addition to their remit in generating and delivering knowledge, contemporary Vietnamese universities have an important mission in preserving and continuing the country's socialist transition.

This paper draws on narrative themes emerging from interviews with senior university, teacher union and student leaders in three public universities on reforming the current system of higher education. Their accounts are based on experiences and expectations as well as their identification of problematic university practices. Their assumptions and aspiration shaped their views on the what, the why and the how of reforming Vietnamese universities.

Social imaginary

The perspectives of university leaders, teacher union leaders and student leaders are their reflections on their professional positions within the collective imaginary and assumptive world. The concept of social imaginary anchored their perspectives in reconstructing higher education in Vietnam. Social imaginary is defined by Taylor (2002) as

the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, legends, and so on (p.105).

Rizvi and Lingard (2010) suggest that the social imaginary of neoliberal globalization has become the dominant imaginary, especially in the global communities of politicians, economists and policy makers. The neoliberal imaginary is closely related to the market-based forms of aspirations (Gale & Parker, 2015): from learning, to teaching and to leading. One of such imaginaries is the aspiration to pursue self-maximisation that has different meanings and opportunities for students, teachers and leaders. However, these aspirations are situated within not only their own identification but also by how this is perceived within the social ambience (Sellar, 2013) such as their professional contexts and constraints. In particular, students' aspirations for higher education are shaped by how they imagine themselves fitting in with others (Gale & Parker, 2015). This is also the case for teachers' and leaders' aspirations. Again, it is the question of how they imagine and accept themselves, in other words, how they interpret the scenario that best fits themselves.

In the context of Vietnam, for example, education development is considered as 'the cause of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the State, and the People'⁴ that might be far away from the ordinary people's imaginary of education. Whilst the Party and the State aspired to embrace market principles in educational development to build the precondition for the socialist transition, the People might merely internalize expected changes for their own good. However, the convergence between the political imaginary and the individual imaginary is the aspiration to better the status of the country's higher education. In addition to the Vietnamese methods with the continuity from the past to the present, adopting the neoliberal methods have opened up Vietnamese higher education to the diversity of the global methods.

University as 'a taken for granted dream'

The first narration of reconstructing Vietnamese higher education is the university rush as university is considered as '*a taken for granted dream*'. The social imaginary of education of Vietnamese people was no longer as learning to know how to read and write but as learning to be able to enter university. University dream is attached to the Vietnamese tradition of valuing education, the dream of escaping subsistence farmer life and the outcome of achievement from the country economic reform (Linh, 2010). The '*taken for granted dream*' was the remark of a retired senior officer of Ministry of Education and Training in elaborating on the university rush of young people. He also associated the expansion of the current system with the new generation of students coming to university as a must rather than a should:

In the past, not everyone had the privilege, capacity and expectation to study in university. But now it is the must for young people to go to university, because of family, society or situations. It is the move from should to must or from generations of should-learn students to the must-learn students.

This expansion linked with changes in the social imaginary of attending university: from *should-university* to *must-university* with generations of *should-learn students* and *must-learn students*. From *should* to *must*, there is a difference between the self-identification of choice and the external identification of encouragement. It is an acceleration of compulsion that illuminates as the dominant imaginary of entering university among young people. In locating their position between the *should* imaginary to *must* imaginary in entering university, students might easily lose track of their own aspiration in thinking about what and who university is for.

The imaginary of *must-university* is so dominant that attending university is considered as a taken for granted dream among young people. Take student leader of Capital City

University (CCU)⁵ for an example. Being able to attend university is so important that she rather chose to spend one year in her least wanted university waiting to re-take the entrance examination to her most wanted university rather than not being a student.

This university is my first choice since I entered high school. It not only has the reputation for foreign languages but I can also study economics in English. But when I did the entrance exam I thought I would not pass the exam. I was thinking to study at a particular university for one year to wait for re-taking the entrance exam so that I can get into CCU.

That might sound unreasonable but for school-leavers and their families, staying in a random university for a year might save them from losing face due to failing the entrance exam to the desired university. This aspiration is shaped by collective views of *must-university* from their peers, families and a society that is obsessed over education.

The obsessed dream of university among young people makes the effort of getting into universities one of the most memorable milestones. It is so memorable that almost everyone could reflect on his or her experience with different stories. There used to be the '*examination preparation oven*' for university examination in the big cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Students called it as an oven as the metaphor to describe the density of space and heat in small classroom for extra numbers of students. It reflected the social atmosphere of the obsessed dream: entering university. Reflected on his experience in learning for the entrance examination to university, one of the senior leaders of Science and Technology University (STU) commented, '*We all studied like buffalos and horses for the entrance exam to universities. Once we got there, we started to slide down in laziness*'. The illuminative imaginary of *must-university* is urging young people to empty themselves out for passing university entrance examinations. Additionally, it is the social imaginary of a qualification-valued society (Thiep, 2006) and the emphasis on qualification in job recruitment and promotion (Wilkinson and Chirot, 2011). This phenomenon has created a tendency of '*so many teachers (intellectuals), so few workers*', according to another university leader. He recommended that '*Life not only needs Einstein but also Edison*'.

Perhaps, it is not only the story for Vietnamese students but also for students in other countries getting lost in translating their future aspiration: whether university is a *should* or a *must*, a taken for granted dream or the dream that needs thinking otherwise. When students take the agency to internalize their capacity to aspire, university is still a desired destination but among many others.

University lecturers as 'teaching workers'

The second narration captured the social imaginary of teacher union leaders in reconstructing Vietnamese higher education. Their narratives unpacked the difficulties for university teachers in teaching and doing research. Compared to the account of students getting lost in their university dream, in a sense, the '*teaching workers*' seem to experience the similar confusion in understanding their professional self.

On the surface, the '*teaching workers*' concept reflects an overload of teaching and low salary but underneath, it implied the burnout of teachers as well as the repeating act of teaching. The teaching-focused practice in Vietnamese universities is partly the consequence of the residue from modelling the Soviet higher education in 1950s in Vietnam. In this Soviet model, universities were teaching-oriented while research was carried out in the independent institutions outside universities (Hayden & Thiep, 2010). The teaching overload can be seen in the regulation for teaching hours (Decision 64/2008/QD/BGDDT⁶) in which the regulated number of hours for university teachers is 40

per week, 1,760 per year with 900 for teaching, 500 for research and 360 for other professional activities.

Commenting on the low income of teachers in public universities, teacher union leaders of University of Economics- the Middle Region University (UEMR) explained

Just think about this reality: for a two-year-old child in kindergarten, the fee for a month is 3 million Vietnam Dong-VND (about £100) while for a public university student, tuition fee for the whole semester of 5 months is 3 million VND).

However, almost nobody working at the university has only a single source income from the official salary. Being in their academic profession helps them gain respect and status within community, which is favourable in doing other businesses alongside with being '*teaching workers*'.

In another account, teacher union leader in the Capital City University (CCU) raised the challenging issues for female teachers in balancing between the professional duties and family duties. In her words, such duties are '*billions of responsibilities*':

In our university, 70% of teachers are female and we go to work like men. Therefore, for us, there is the pressure of going to work and raising children. Now, most of the families have two children. We go to work, pick up children, take care of children and husband and fulfil duties with the in-laws.

In her account, CCU's teacher union leader used a series of verbs from '*go to work*', '*pick up children*', to '*take care of children and husband*' and '*fulfil duties with the in-laws*' to picture a typical day of a female teacher working at university and taking care of their families.

In addition to the teaching overload, low income and family responsible, challenges for teachers in doing research were voiced as another account needing to tackle in reconstructing Vietnamese higher education. Teacher union leaders see doing research as '*the silent business*' and as '*for the sake of appearance*'. Doing research becomes less favoured part of university teachers that a number of them agree to teach extra hours to compensate for the required research hours. This might be explained by the mind-set of Vietnamese in thinking about schooling and higher education as the means of social mobility (Linh, 2010) but not as a place to do research. As such, in the social imaginary of teachers, doing research somehow becomes secondary to teaching. '*The silent business*' refers to the lack of networking in sharing ideas in the academic community. However, approach to doing research has improved as pointed by CCU's teacher union leader for the change '*from doing research for the appearance sake to the more applicable and practical orientation*'.

Social imaginary of teacher union leaders in reconstructing higher education depicts their struggles in teaching, doing research and gaining professional satisfaction. These narratives suggested the necessity of altering the current realities of '*teaching workers*' and of research as '*silent business*' into the more fulfilled realities.

Conditional autonomy

Conditional autonomy is the final narration from university leaders as the quest for more freedom for public universities. The conditional autonomy is new governance paradigm in which the Ministry of Education and Training and the Vietnamese Government step by step lose their control over three areas of institutional autonomy (in terms of academic,

finance and staff). Liberating universities from the State-centric management has been a part of the Government agenda identified in the Agenda in 2005 (Hayden and Thiep, 2007) as well as the University Charter⁷ in 2010. Since 2010, the governance model has been renovated from state control to state supervision (Pham, 2012). However, from policy to practice, the stagnation of theory and reality is not always clear.

Granting autonomy for university is compared with the act of '*hands freeing for universities*' according to the president of University of Science and Technology (STU). In his account, '*public universities are no different from children living in the house where the ceiling is too low to stand tall*'. One of the consequences of the previous paradigm of governance is the passive practice of waiting for the permission from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), or '*All things wait for MOET*' (Madden, 2014). University autonomy has been proposed and placed into practice in the Agenda in 2005, University Charter in 2010 and the University Autonomy Project⁸ in 2014. However, the real autonomy given to public universities in Vietnam remains conditional (Dao, 2015). It is the change from the asking and giving paradigm to the reporting practice as in the case of Science and Technology University (STU)

The practice of autonomy for university is something newly formed and has not been well practiced yet. For example, STU already got the autonomy from MOET, autonomy in offering qualification for STU that means rather than asking and waiting for permission as in the past, now there is no need of permission but you have to report so that people know what you are doing.

Autonomy also means cutting down the State funding for universities and imposing the restriction of maximum for tuition fee

However, in terms of finance, you have the autonomy to increase the tuition fee under the ceiling level of MOET. This put the public universities like STU in the dilemma of funding: cutting down state funding but limiting the sources generating tuition fees.

Such is the similar case for the Capital City University (CCU). CCU was selected among four public universities for the University Autonomy Project from 2014- 2017. However, there is the ceiling regulation on the adjustment of increasing tuition fees, according to a CCU's senior leader:

In fact, CCU had the financial autonomy since 2008, meaning it no longer got the financial support of the State and the university self-raised the income to pay for staff and teachers' salary. Every year, the university only receives a small support of the expenditure for maintenance of infrastructure. The full autonomy means, such allowance from the state no longer exists.

In this case, universities like CCU are free to set their own fees but only up to a government legislated maximum. This might make a number of universities have budget deficits.

The quest for enhancing university autonomy in the social imaginary of university leaders reflected institutional demands of self-governance for self-maximization. The university leaders aspired their management model shifting from the passive waiting for permission to the active self-designing institutional strategy. The conditional autonomy for public universities is the distinctive governance character of Vietnamese higher education reflecting the political imprint in educational management.

Discussion and conclusion

Situated in the time of globalizing educational practice, these accounts are not only embracing the distinctive Vietnamese characters rooted from the past, constrained in the present practices but also aspire towards the future. For students, the university obsess dream rooted in the tradition (the past), that students get lost in translating their own expectation for university (the present), as such reform aspiration linked with this imaginary to make it better. For teacher, because of the absence of research culture (residue from the past), the over-teaching practices make them see themselves as '*teaching worker*'. For university leaders, the past and the present reality are shifted from the passive waiting for permission to the active self-designing institutional strategy. These narratives internalized neoliberal imaginary in their own terms with the absence of the individualistic and economic nature but the presence of the humanistic nature of the unsettled professional practices of each individual. These narratives have brought the agenda of reforming universities to life and expressed the disappointment, frustration and hidden expectations. They depict the eagerness of the new members of university (new students) in contrast with the burning out of the teachers and the limited freedom of university leaders. As such, there should be a paradigm for all three groups to relocate where they are, what their initial purposes are. Students should re-examine if university is the taken for granted dream or the dream that need thinking otherwise. Teachers' duty as the academic staff is more than simply teaching, they should integrate teaching with doing research as part of their professional identity. In the account of university leaders, higher education is governed with the strong imprint of political ideology. The ideological commitment has a crucial role in all the educational policy documents guiding the management of higher education.

Reforming is a big word and it refers to the need of change and upgrading as the current practice or situation no longer functions or fails to meet regulated requirements. In the system of higher education where academic staff becomes '*teaching workers*' and their research prospect is '*silent businesses*', reform should start with form. In other words, reform should be started with forming a research culture in universities. The same suggestion goes with the students. When the university system became one of high participation, university cannot give all students what they are looking for at the start of their journey. This is particular true for the generation of *the must learn students* who see universities as their *taken for granted* dream. As such, the meaning of re-form constructed here briefly is re-questioning, re-visiting, re-thinking their professional dreams before stepping into universities.

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Pedagogy of song and restor(y)ing hope: Stories and songs as social movement learning in Ada Songor salt movement

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Introduction

That's the way our people write. They put things in song for history (Kofi Larweh, 2016)

Creative dissent is not only a crucial part of social movement activism, but is also a key area of social movement learning. Over the past 8 years, an ongoing participatory study of social movement learning in Ada, Ghana, has documented the ways in which narrative restorying, as well as the creation and reviving of songs in Dangme, the Ada language, have been at the heart of this learning. The movement in Ada is defending an artisanal salt production practice that is 400 years old, and is the livelihood of roughly 60,000 people. This livelihood faces internal challenges from local rent-seeking elite, and external threats from National and International capitalist forces interested in using Ada salt in Ghana's newly established oil industry. A crucial dimension of the presentation will share how the emergence of women's leadership in this movement parallels the emergence of the narrative and song forms of creative dissent. This presentation also shares how this creative dissent builds on and reimagines Griff Foley's (1999) notion of learning in struggle.

This paper presentation shares empirical the results of this research documented so far (c.f. Langdon, 2015; Langdon & Larweh, 2015; Larweh & Langdon, 2014; Langdon, Larweh and Cameron), but takes this work further to look at recent developments in the social movement in Ada, where women's leadership has emerged at the forefront of the struggle, and is using creative means to disrupt both external power structures, as well as power dynamics within the movement itself. Songs are a central part of this creative dissent. Restorying (Kenyon and Randal, 1997), whereby stories are reworked to produce new learning, has also been a key component to this women's leadership assertion of their analysis of the situation in the lagoon over that of detached older male activists. Given that women make up the majority of salt winners in this movement, this shift in dynamics represents a democratic response. At the same time, this leadership has insisted on the resource being for all, and knowledge about the resource being for all. This pivot towards knowledge-democracy connects well with the conference theme of Activism and democracy. This presentation will, ultimately, focus on these three aspects of social movement learning in the Ada Songor salt movement (1. The pedagogy of songs; 2) restorying the movement; and 3) building the movement through knowledge-democracy).

Contexts of Ada

The rural communities of that surround the Songor Lagoon in Ada have been impacted

over time by the harsh nature of ‘accumulation through dispossession’— a Marxist concept further refined by David Harvey (2005). In the 1970s and 80s, the communities surrounding the Songor were dispossessed by a pair of companies, one of which whom used duplicitous tactics to claim almost the entire lagoon as a concession (Ada Songor Salt Cooperative, 1989; Manuh, 1994; Amate, 1999). Years of resistance and loss of life managed to reclaim the resource from these companies in the early 1990s, on the eve of Ghana’s return to democracy (Langdon & Larweh, 2017). Despite this success at reclaiming the resource, a plan to develop the resource to the benefit of local communities as well as potential business interest, called the Songor Master Plan, has yet to be implemented – leading older activists involved in this era to describe the victory as a “thumbless hand” – one where the resource was reclaimed but was not handled well afterwards (Langdon, Larweh and Cameron, 2014). This has led, in contemporary times, to entire communities being dispossessed from their livelihoods, as the communal salt resource is being turned into individualized accumulated possessions – whereby the 400 year old tradition of open salt flats of the lagoon in the dry season have been turned into individualized salt pans, known locally as ‘atsiakpo’ (ASAF, 2016; Langdon & Larweh 2017). A closer examination reveals the intricacies and intersections of such dispossession—the alienation of labour and resulting household insecurity leaves women exposed and vulnerable, standing at the forefront of those being dispossessed. Women once were able to access the Songor lagoon in Ada and win salt to supplement household finances, drawing on it as and when necessary to add to or replace lost earnings from other endeavors (Garbary, 2016). Some women, especially those living close to the lagoon, have also used it as one of the main sources of household income. It is through salt that many non-subsistence costs such as school fees, and health costs are paid for. Now they must work as labourers for an ‘atsiakpo’ owner, making a small wage, a mere fraction of what they had previously earned (Garbary, 2016). With limited options available to them, and few means to support their families, some women in these communities are submitting to sexual advances in order to acquire this access (ASAF, 2016).

The loss of common property through rapid and rough individualized accumulation has meant that women are the most pointed losers in this pervasive phenomenon of land grabbing. Given this reality, it becomes incredibly relevant that women’s voices from these communities are rising up and claiming leadership positions that were not possible a decade ago. Songs are at the heart of this transformation.

Beginning in 2010, with the emergence of the Ada Songor Advocacy Forum (ASAF) social movement, women from the Songor salt communities began voicing their concerns about atsiakpo. One woman in particular, Akpetiyo Lawer used her talent with song composition to encapsulate this concern and the analysis of women began to shape the broader movement’s thinking (Langdon & Larweh, 2015). This emergence led some to see women’s voice and leadership – and its absence in the last round of struggle to reclaim the resource – as the missing thumb to handle the resource well (Langdon, Larweh & Cameron, 2014). Since 2015, the women have consolidated this leadership with their own group within the broader ASAF movement, called the Ada Songor Salt Women’s Association (ASSWA), known more broadly by their catch phrase, “Yihi Katseme” or Brave Women! These Brave Women have taken inspiration from Akpetiyo and have deepened the use of song to mobilize their fellow community members to not only resist atsiakpo, but to more broadly call for a return to times past when the Songor was a communal resource for all – even those from outside Ada (Langdon, 2016).

Pedagogic elements of song

While songs entertain, they also currently serve deep pedagogic functions in the social

movement context of Ada. Women, marginalized, and at the same time bearing the brunt of economic implications of geopolitical changes in the area—processes of accumulation through dispossession (Harvey 2005)—have found a way to voice their analysis through song.

An important facet of our methodology that deserves special consideration is the dialogue-based process of theorizing change. Rather than beginning work and entering into relationships with preconceived ideas of how change will happen, our theorizing is a process that emerges from dialogue within the movement. In this way, this participatory action research is compelled to “move with the movement” (Langdon & Larweh, 2015) and engage with the people who are closest to the issue, thus creating space for local organizers to guide work that is mutually constituted by everyone involved. While Bevington and Dixon (2005) have called for this approach in studies of movement theorizing in general, Choudry and Kapoor (2010) underscore the importance of movement articulated theorizing especially in connection with learning, as well as in contexts outside of the Global North. In particular, Kapoor and Chowdry (2010) argue that it becomes imperative to document the knowledge production and learnings that emerge from these social movement contexts, as they are important sites of resistance, developing important critiques to dominant and oppressive power structures, and imagining visions for social change.

Example of Song from Ada

You have entered the room
You are keeping long to come out,
The community will be expecting you to give
birth to twins!

This traditional working song from Ada is translated from Dangme, and its use by the Yihi Katseme references older times, when resources were accessed communally, work was done together and the Songor lagoon was open to all. Edith Okabutey, a member of the ASSWA executive, shares her own reflections on the song, which points to how times have changed:

The music...tries to refresh our minds in the olden days where the women can work on their own, and housekeeping was not a problem for the men and women. At evening the women gather and sing this song: You have entered the room and are keeping long to come out. The community will be expecting you to give birth to twins. This is a song the women used to tease each other because of the excitement they have (Garbary 2016).

Women were independent labourers, owning their own labour, but still felt a sense of collective responsibility. Looking at the lyrics, there's a playfulness to the words, the song is a reminder of the importance of communal work, but also teases people for putting their own personal needs above the best interests of the community. The song points to women's dual responsibilities for productive and reproductive labour (Garbary, 2016). Revitalizing traditional songs that speak to communal spirit is the cornerstone of the women's mobilization strategy. They use the songs to draw people into a discussion over the differences between contemporary times and the past. In this way, they provoke a restorying learning context, where community gatherings can use stories of the past to rewrite what is possible in the present. The use of song by Yihi Katseme was begun by

Akpetiyo Lawer, the original pedagogue.

The original pedagogue

Akpetiyo Lawer has been writing songs her whole life. In recent years, as a leading member of ASAF and ASSWA, her songs have given the Ada movement an analytic foundation that has grounded its work and helped propel it forward. An expert, an activist, and a community elder, Akpetiyo Lawer is deeply engaged in sketching out a literacy of struggle. Larweh and Langdon (2011, 2015) have explored a selection of Akpetiyo's songs in previous publications associated with this study and propose that she has created a literacy of struggle, one that is oral and rooted in the history and epistemology of Ada and that engages listeners deeper into this history.

Akpetiyo Lawer's song, *None noko lio noko le* is composed in Dangme, the local language of the Ada people, and gives an important analysis of the struggle for resources—namely salt—and communal access to the Songor salt lagoon. Translated to English the song means, “What someone doesn't know, someone knows”, an idea she raises as both an indictment of those who have chosen to conceal details of their knowledge, and an invitation to others in the community to search out this hidden knowledge (ASAF, 2016). The song then encourages community members to “spread it” (ASAF, 2016). Her song reflects exactly what the Yihi Katseme have done; equipped with their own knowledge and analysis they have claimed space, marking a solid starting point for pushback against this accumulation through dispossession.

Arts-based Interventions in social movements

Creative dissent and arts-based interventions have long been the tools with which social movements across the globe have affected meaningful social change (Lynskey, 2011). From the anti-Apartheid protest music of South Africa, to civil rights anthems composed to the contemporary United States—all have used creative dissent in the form of music to further a political end. Lynskey (2011) reveals how the use of song has been intimately tied to social movements getting (people) informed about burning issues. On the notion of art as activism, Barndt (2015) maintains that, “whether verbal, or non-verbal, art making that ignites people's creativity, recovers repressed histories, builds community, and strengthens social movements is in itself a holistic form of action. The modes of expression are endless. Most important is that they are appropriate to a particular group, time, or place.” Artistic expression is a natural and essential part of life for the people of Ada; through music, dance, song, visual arts and a multitude of other art forms these communities convey their experiences of every day life. The emergence of song as an effective and powerful tool for social movement learning stems from its place as a traditional practice that is rooted in the culture of these communities. Perini (2008) asserts that when groups gather to share imaginative and creative processes, people can become connected in a way that “fosters collective, generative action” and as such “art creates accessible points of entry into political discussions, educating and mobilizing people in ways that may be difficult to quantify but nonetheless tangible” (p.183).

In the Ghanaian context, we are also observing the emergence of other art forms as pedagogic tools and as mediums for resistance and social dissent. One such tool is the tapestry commissioned by the Ada Songor Salt Women's Association. The convener of the Ada Songor Salt Women's Association and one of the authors, Sophia Kitcher, has stated that “songs and the tapestry are how we have spread our message” (ASAF, 2016). Much like song, the tapestry has been successful in overcoming obstacles that are known to hinder the dissemination of information in rural communities such as Ada; namely geographical isolation and illiteracy (Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada). Much like the

revitalization of traditional communal work songs described above, the tapestry is another form of restoring by the Yihi Katseme.

Women's leadership and empowerment

Women's organizing in the contexts of Ada is strongly connected to discourses of women's leadership and empowerment, looking at the many ways that gendered power relationships take shape in communities and change over time. Songor women have emerged as community leaders, raising their voices and delivering analyses of the issues affecting their communities.

The Yihi Katseme of Ada have spent years working to mobilize community members and raise awareness about the Songor lagoon, the issues surrounding it, and the grave costs associated with *atsiakpo*— its current balkanized state. The women have been travelling a winding road of self-driven empowerment, made all the more possible because of a commitment to self-teach through song and other creative art forms. Women have long been a part of the Ada Songor Advocacy Forum, where older, men had more prominent voices and held key positions of power within the movement. The women's process of empowerment was gradual yet impactful, as the Yihi Katseme are recognized as leaders of the Songor movement, with their analysis adopted by community members who previously refused to support the women's perspective. The self-driven process of empowerment that the Yihi Katseme experienced is a break from the literature and practice of many within the mainstream development paradigm. All too often the meaning of empowerment is technical in nature, as it is put forth as step-by-step procedural endeavour where at the end, an individual will be empowered. Within the discourse of empowerment in the aid sector, there has been a preoccupation with idea of women's economic empowerment, entrepreneurship, and specific externally-derived programming that will yield particular results of capitalist success. A tension exists within the literature— between self driven processes of empowerment and mainstream conceptions of 'being empowered by x,y,z' (Batliwala, 2009; Anyidoho & Manuh, 2010). The women of Ada have shown us the former, where they have demanded and taken space, it has not been handed to them.

In Ada, where Manuh (1994) notes historically women have been excluded from the leadership of the salt struggle, over the past 7 years women have insisted on their space and role as a leading force in struggle for a Songor for all. This has all taken place within the limits of a deeply patriarchal society. In the past, women involved in the Songor movement have drawn stark parallels—likening women to the lagoon, maintaining that they, like the Songor, have being treated like dogs, taken for granted and abused (Langdon, Larweh & Cameron, 2014). The women have undergone a transformative process of self-empowerment, and now describe themselves as wolves, protecting the lagoon. The women's analysis of the central issues of the Songor has emerged as the most rooted ones and is the focus of defending communal access to the lagoon in the face of small scale mining, known locally as '*atsiakpo*', and the threat of government expropriation of the lagoon. The Yihi Katseme have emerged as capable leaders, organizing demonstrations at key moments to raise awareness of issues in the lagoon.

Community radio

Community radio has been an instrumental partner to the ASAF and ASSWA social movements, not only in its pursuit to democratize the airwaves, and disseminate the voice of indigenous communities, but for its active work to create space for women to build their own analysis, share their perspective, and take step towards self-empowerment. In the Ada context, community radio through has created space and opportunity for women's

voice to be heard, has helped to reinforce the women's analysis, and has developed enabling mechanisms for women to dialogue together in a broader way.

Kofi Larweh, whose quote began this paper, links the importance of song to understanding the Ada world and the Ada people, explaining how the oral tradition of song is bound to the identity and expression of Ada, and serves a multitude of important social functions—most notably maintaining a historical record. Larweh further points to the essential role that community voice and social movement songs have been given in the community radio context, stating that “songs and their meaning are the center of our radio programming strategy” (ASAF 2016).

Radio Ada, the local community radio station, aims to be the voice of the Ada people and is committed to engaging in culturally relevant and appropriate ways of communication, which includes indigenizing broadcasts to support communities of listeners and the knowledge systems they uphold. In broadcasting the Yihi Katseme songs, Radio Ada provides a larger platform for the women's analysis to be shared with all of Ada, creating and supporting more accessible avenues that amplify marginalized voices.

Articulations of social movement learning

Studying articulations of social movement learning is inherently about connection and growth; looking at ways that people and their ideas can connect and ultimately grow and learn from that exchange. This current study has grown out of, and builds on many years of collective research and movement work; the theorizing around social movement learning and the articulation of ‘learning to struggle’ has surfaced through a Ghana-based dialogue reconfiguring Foley's notion of, ‘learning in struggle’ (1999) (c.f. Langdon, 2011). The former refers to the discrete learning that comes from conflict—demonstrations, campaigns, and rallies can all be spaces of deep learning. The Yihi Katseme organized a demonstration, marching to spread their message of a Songor for all, while sharing details and updates on various social media platforms. Importantly, this march included the presence of a brass marching band that added to the songs they sang as they marched. Initially, when the demonstration began the police presence attempted to stop the women marching, then as time went on and the women continued to march, and the band continued to play some police officers began walking with them. By the end of the march the women had so transformed their relationship with the police that officers were showing off their own marching techniques and the tension between the groups had eased. This type of learning is what can emerge from situations of conflict, learning through struggle.

The final extension of learning to struggle is happening and being theorized through song. For instance, songs have provoked a call for broadening who knows and who doesn't know about plans for the Songor. Songs have been used as a way to connect to a communal past, and to provoke discussion about how things have changed. They can also help restory this past to highlight the role women have played in establishing and maintaining Ada culture. Finally, the women have learned through struggle that songs can be used to create openings for relationship building and to undermine assumptions even in the minds of adversaries.

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Residential adult education: Transforming the lives of educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged adults

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There are currently four national adult residential colleges in England that receive funding from the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency; Fircroft College (est.1909), Hillcroft College (est. 1920, a women only college), Northern College (est. 1978) and Ruskin College (est. 1899). They form part of a network of nine organisations named Specially Designated Institutions under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and are now named Institutes for Adult Learning. Though each has its own history and heritage, all four colleges remain committed to residential education for social justice.

Most learners attending residential adult education colleges have experienced or are still experiencing some form of disadvantage; through previous negative experiences in education resulting in low levels of qualifications and consequentially economic disadvantage; life choices which have resulted in drug and alcohol addiction and/or criminal activity and for high numbers of students mental health issues, either as a result of or independently of the above. Some students may also have learning difficulties which may or may not have been diagnosed.

According to Deligiannis, Lazaridou and Papageorgiou (2011; 457), historically, adult education as a movement has always been concerned with improving social, economic and political conditions. They argue, however, that the current focus on techniques, methodologies and strategies has shaped adult education into a policy-formulated sphere, which tends to be empty of ideals. We need, therefore, they argue, to reclaim our ideological foundations as adult educationalists.

The residential colleges argue that we have maintained our commitment to critical adult education through our offer of transformational adult education, delivered to students who are socially, educationally or economically disadvantaged. Further, we would argue that the model of residential adult education, in particular, works for those students who couldn't learn anywhere else. As institutions, we offer a curriculum and supported learning experience which we know helps to contribute to our learner's social inclusion and, more generally, to the promotion of social justice.

All four residential colleges have high success rates which are significantly above national benchmark data on both short courses and Access programmes and student satisfaction ratings are amongst the highest in England (SFA Student Satisfaction Survey 2016). We all describe our model of adult education as transformational. The research, however, into how and why residential adult education is transformative, is extremely limited.

Field (1991:1) argues there are good logical reasons to suppose that learning is intensified by the fact of residence, which provides space, experimentation and exploration of the learners and teachers' personal identity and underlying values; yet this has received little or no attention from researchers. This paper seeks to begin to address this. It will attempt to answer what John Field expressed as two key questions:

- What can residency offer to the adult learner that is not available elsewhere?

- Why it is particularly suited to certain types of learning or of learner?

The paper will seek to address these questions using Mezirow's (1991) original theory of Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning and subsequent work on Transformative Learning such as Fleming (2016) in terms of adult students, life transitions and the role of recognition (self- confidence, self- respect and self – esteem).

Transformative learning is described by Mezirow (1997: 6) as “the process by which we transform problematic frames of reference, to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change.” We argue that residency creates the conditions in which transformative learning can happen in a very rapid way.

According to Mezirow, transformative learning starts with a disorienting dilemma. Calleja (2014: 129) writes that this is one of the major phases that such adult learners go through in their personal transformation. Usually this is triggered by a life crisis or a major transition. Many of the learners within the residential colleges are, as a result of their disorienting dilemma, dealing with some form of life transition. However, it is important to note here that it is crucial that this has already taken place, otherwise learners can be unready to start a course or experience the intensity of residential study.

Referral partners view the residential Colleges as key providers of the support and environment needed to help progress their clients on to a further stage in their development. In their rehabilitation, the involvement with Colleges tends to occur once they had already reached a point of stability and were perhaps nearing the end of their ‘treatment’. At that stage our referral partners feel integration is a really important outcome which residential adult education can provide because our cohorts are so diverse.

Though different independent organisations, our discussions have led all four Colleges to believe that there are nine key principles that define us and residential adult education. Many of the principles replicate the elements, phases and conditions present in Mezirow's and others theories of transformative learning.

Residential adult education is **intensive, absorbing and focused**. It can be short (over a few days or weeks or long (nine months for Access to H.E.) For many of our learners, an intensive transformative learning experience of 48 hours can be a more achievable commitment in terms of their physical and mental health and well-being and other issues in their lives. It also enables significant outcomes to be achieved in a very short space of time. For students accessing longer courses over nine months, there is more time for extended activity, skills development and practice and access to tutors and support staff. 95% of students say the residential environment supports their learning (Fircroft 2016:3)

The intensity of a short course enables completion in a compressed period of time. According to Lacognata (1961: 251) there is no wasted time by having to take time to “get back into subject” after a week's break which is the usual non-residential adult learning model. He also notes that learners felt that they could experience total immersion in their chosen subject and as a result were able to focus exclusively on their work which appears to lead to an “intensiveness and rapid progress” (IBID) In our partner research they describe residency as a “supercharged educational experience”.

In terms of our Access courses, the Adult Residential Review (2007:12) reported that the style and format of teaching offered by residential colleges is both intensive and supported. This allows significant learning gain over a relatively short period. The accelerated and supported learning offered by the colleges on their Access courses

enables adults to reach level 3 and 4 from a low base of prior learning attainment in the space of one academic year.

Our Colleges offer a **social, safe and inclusive environment** and atmosphere in which to learn. They are described by many students as a retreat or respite from the outside world and include comfortable bedrooms and regular and healthy meals. This is so important for our learners. Their lives can be complex and chaotic with many pressures that can thwart the learning process and successful outcomes.

Learners talk about the importance of stepping away from “the mundane” and every day into a different world. They value the therapeutic nature of the learning environment but also recognise the importance of being away from home-life distractions and experiencing a “time for reflection”.

All four Colleges are based in unique, beautiful and historic surroundings. Our learners say that the beauty and value of the historic buildings and grounds makes the learners feel valued themselves, it “gets away from such spaces only being for the rich”. Most of our learners have never had such experiences. They feel privileged and special to be able to access and learn in such environments.

Many of our learners have mental health difficulties. Residential adult education is not a cure but it contributes enormously to wellbeing, a sense of self and resilience. This then supports our learners’ ability to manage and cope with their mental or physical health issues. One student commented that her experience “saved my life- my mental health issues were due to stress. Now that I have learned to understand and how to cope with those symptoms, my life has changed immensely”.

The colleges have **strong organisational cultures**. Our missions remain committed to the original visions of our founders. Our values are embedded throughout and though not the same, reflect our focus on adult education for social justice. The Adult Residential Review (2007:12) reported that “all colleges have a strong sense of community and this is valued by the adults who take up both long and short courses. The sense of community is reinforced by the small size of each college”. Though we are small organisations our impact and reach is far. Since the establishment of what was called the long term residential (LTR’s) thousands and thousands of students have had their lives transformed through their experience of residential adult education.

We have very **diverse student communities**. For many of our learners failed by the school system, the college’s offer a 2nd, 3rd or last chance to access education and make some changes in their lives. Their engagement with the colleges can contribute to their social mobility. Most learners who complete the Access to H.E. Programmes will go to University and obtain degrees. Our learners come from all walks of life and can be any age over 19. This provides an incredible richness of experiences, views and opinions. Leiveson and Jackson (1991:31) note that learners “bring energy, pride and pleasure of outside commitments to share with others. Workshops, projects and cultural activities are made richer by the diversity of their sources of inspiration”. Learners often describe the opening up of their views of others and the world by mixing with people that they otherwise wouldn’t.

The residential colleges are **learner centred**. Our learners have high and sometimes complex support needs. The Adult Residential Review (2007:12) says “the colleges place strong emphasis on supporting all learners”. This support comes not only from teaching staff but also in the network offered by staff who support the residential and business

aspects. Learners place high value on this additional support which in their words “freed them up to concentrate on learning”. Our learners say they feel “safe”, that the colleges are “people-focused”, that support is “tailored to the individual” with an emphasis on “the well-being of the person”. All the colleges employ specialist learning support staff to help our develop study skills and overcome specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The review goes on to say that “in return for this high level of support, colleges expect learners to show a strong commitment to their studies with high quality outcomes in return. The expectation places them in a strong position to cope with the demands of higher education where support systems are not as highly tailored to their needs” (IBID)

The Colleges place a strong emphasis on **critical pedagogy** – the development of critical thinking and self- reflection. According to Mezirow (1997:5), Transformative Learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Shaprio et al (2011 289) argue that transformative learning is about both the process and the content of meaning-making; the changes in our epistemologies and the assumptions, perspectives and frames of reference that inform and underlie the meaning we make. Our learners say that their experience fosters critical thinking and a radical understanding of politics and society and that challenges the mainstream and the establishment view. It “changes the way we think about the world”.

Leiven and Jackson (1991:28) argue that residential institutions gain from the fact that they combine academic learning and living together so that many parts contribute to a whole leading to an active debate or even conflict, whose active resolution is a powerful form of learning. Debate, dialogue and exchange lead to thorough and engaged learning. In residential colleges these happen both inside and outside of the classroom, at the coffee machine, over breakfast, lunch and dinner and in the evenings after classes have finished. According to Leiven and Jackson (1991:30), because the challenge continues outside of the classroom “new ideas are not easily thrust aside by previous patterns of thought or the habits of new surroundings”. Our learners describe “conversations as learning”.

Bron (1991:16) contends that residential learning communities were constructed on the conviction that they provided a better climate for achieving educational as well as personal development goals. Critical thinking and self-reflection can lead to significant personal change. Leiven and Jackson (1991:30) observe that residential learners “experience changed roles and an interruption to their usual patterns of living. They see themselves in new ways and can risk doing things which they previously considered beyond their scope, or in some way unacceptable within their everyday roles, they take new risks in challenging themselves culturally and intellectually”. Calleja (2014:119) would say this is about “reintegrating the new perspective into life and acting it in the social dimension”.

The use of a critical, pedagogical approach in the residential colleges, makes full use of **experiential learning**. Our tutors embed the lived experience of our learners as part of content but always ensure this is within educational boundaries. Calleja (2014:118) argues that Mezirow’s contribution to the understanding of adult transformative learning experience “helps one understand the deep, structured shift experienced by individuals who allow themselves to learn from their own experience within a community of practice. A key notion in all literature is the role of experience and prior learning”.

The residential education model means our learners place great emphasis on **peer group support** and learning from each other’s views and personalities. They tell of feeling empowered by seeing “people like me achieving and succeeding”. In Leiven and Jackson’s time in one of the four residential College’s, they reported that learners “find

themselves developing their own talents and a confidence in what they do, at the same time as they must work with others whose support and contribution they need in order to be effective (1991:30)

According to Grill et al (2012 43), the residential education model speaks to the importance of learners roles in the learning community context. Learners in these communities, they argue, “must not only take responsibility for their own learning but for others in the community as well: they must develop greater interdependence with, understanding of and empathy with their peers. The resulting connections with others are “mutual, creative, energy-releasing and empowering for all participants.” In Lacognata’s (1961: 251) study, many respondents agreed that they were able to learn from each other and that 'knowledge is reinforced by discussion' and being in residence gave more opportunities for 'information exchange'.

According to Leiven and Jackson (1991:31) there is much discussion in educational theory of the significance which both role models and peer group influences have on learning and the confidence to learn. The two are sometimes contrasted they argue as the teacher as role model and learners as the peer group. In a residential community the two overlap and interact. “Those whose confidence is at a low ebb are encouraged by working alongside committed and serious people like themselves”.

Further, they argue that “because the working day is not confined to a strict timetable and formal and informal learning mingle in the residential college, each new body of students must create a mini society which will be effective for the period of their course. They have to find ways of dealing with the pressure and stress. They become more conscious of their strengths and weaknesses and find out how effectiveness results from building on their strengths” (IBID)

In the residential Colleges, **the role of tutor and learners is as equals**. According to Meizerow (1997:11), tutors are required to model the critically reflective role expected of learners. Further, the teacher becomes a co-learner by progressively transferring leadership to the group as it becomes more self-directive. The levels of support from tutorial and support/operational staff are vital and hugely appreciated by our learners. The small nature of the colleges allows for getting to know tutors and feeling that they can be approached as equals. Time outside the programmed lessons, for example mealtimes or bar time, is an opportunity for learners to get to know the tutor and vice versa.

In the College Leiven and Jackson (1991:30) refer to, new experiences are underpinned by the kind of relations which can develop between staff and students and between the students themselves. They observed that “there is support and friendship which goes beyond the help and advice normally available within an academic programme. Getting to know people in different contexts produces a more rounded view of students and teachers, who become known as people rather than just participants in the educational process. There is more freedom and opportunity to question and raise issues in a variety of contexts”.

Fleming (2016:13) argues that Honneth provides a useful set of ideas to better understand adult education. For residential adult education, the social dimension of learning is crucial. According to Fleming, Honneth’s main contribution to the debate is through his ideas on recognition. To Honneth, there are three levels of recognition, self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. All three levels of recognition are developed in different ways and conversely can be damaged by negative messages, abuse, denied rights, exclusion and discrimination. This damage then results in a struggle for recognition. The experience of

recognition within a residential college is very visible and is reinforced and supported by many of the key principals of residential education listed above.

As Fleming (2016:18) found in the research he quotes, whilst each learner's story is unique, the narrative of transformation that occurs within the residential colleges is typical. It is underpinned by the logic of recognition. Such stories tell of recognition that is developmental. For the learners of the residential colleges, the struggle for recognition can be a direct consequence of a disorienting dilemma. A life trauma can damage confidence, respect and esteem very quickly. The damage to recognition can also reinforce the damaging behaviours and choices that our learners have experienced to this point in their lives. When they come into residential education, they are at a point where the social dimension plays an enhanced role.

The growth in confidence, respect and esteem can result in increased social and civic engagement. Many of our students become volunteers for the organisations they have been supported by. They act as mentors and support workers both in the colleges and in other organisations. Many have experience in user engagement so improving the services that they access. Our alumni has an outstanding track record in campaigning for and giving back to their communities either locally, nationally or even on the global stage. In terms of their ambition, many of our students leave our colleges wanting to change society for the better. One of the learners said the College has given me "*the power of knowledge*" and my confidence has grown immeasurably. I want to help and give back and practice this through life."

In residential adult education we would argue that as well as motivations for learning, recognition is very often the unintended consequence of learning. Something which is often described as soft outcomes or additional outcomes. By placing these at the centre of our transformative teaching models, supercharged through the experience of residency, we can really give credence to our social justice missions and further articulate how and why the model of residential adult education works so well for the most disadvantaged learners. The Adult Residential Review (2007:12) concluded that, increasingly, the four adult residential colleges are becoming centres of expertise in enabling socially disadvantaged adults to take advantage of a second chance to learn.

Borrowing from Calleja (2014:119), the transformative learning that happens in residential colleges "shapes people, they are different afterwards in ways both they and others can recognise". More research is clearly required to examine how transformative learning is "supercharged" within a residential setting. What we do know is that adult learning goes beyond acquisition of knowledge. According to Calleja (2014:133) it "transforms action and in turn transforms the community in which learning takes place". Residential adult education creates the conditions for these communities to thrive. Ultimately residential adult education and transformational learning gives people choices and opportunities. It provides hope and builds pride and ambition. Residential adult education enables people to not be defined by their past or their present but to envisage and achieve a very different future for themselves, for their families and for their communities. Simply, it transforms lives.

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Transcultural literacies: Empowering adult learners in cosmopolitan times

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Mapping the terrain of transcultural literacies

Perspectives on transcultural literacies have been informed by research by the New London Group (1996) into multimodal literacies (Gee, 1993; Luke, 2002; Street, 1993), critical pedagogy (Freire, 1997), critical literary theory (Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1993) and Spatial Theory (Luke, 2004; Pratt, 1998). Literacy learning is complex, dynamic, multimodal and interwoven with social, cultural, and community contexts. New literacies evolve as a result of the continual interaction with the physical, social, and cultural environment. Conceptions of transcultural literacy are also linked to themes of identity, citizenship, belonging, and social justice. Transcultural literacy and learning extends beyond an understanding of binary and fixed conception of culture.

Don Cuccioletta (2001) writes that more than simple multiculturalism which “solidifies difference,” transculturalism “acknowledges hybrid identities, cultural fusion, and the interspersion of difference and sameness. It enables individuals to acknowledge that culture is in a state of change—always seeking new terrains of knowing and being” (p.26). In his seminal work, *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha (1994) writes that “we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (p.2). This liminal space is an opportunity for individuals to reimagine their future and personal potential that moves beyond binary conceptions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Past narratives of capitalism and colonial domination do not provide a foundational frame for understanding new paradigms of cultural identification. He writes:

Where once, the transmission of national tradition was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees---these border and frontier conditions---may be the terrains of world literature (p.12).

Teachers can encourage this process by providing opportunities for students to express themselves in creative ways that integrate art, spoken word poetry, process, inquiry based learning, autobiography, and digital production (Jocson, 2013; Magro, 2016). Transcultural literacies embrace the importance of understanding and valuing under-reported narratives. For example, Graham Reynold’s (2016) *Viola Desmond’s Canada: A History of Blacks and Racial Segregation in the Promised Land* details the racism that African-Canadians faced as they fled the United States in search of a safe haven. This can be compared with the narratives presented in Isabel Wilkerson’s (2010) *The Warmth of Other Suns* recounting the “great migration” (1920-1970s) of African American people from the southern states to find a better life and the protection of their civil rights in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York. Roseanne Deerchild’s (2015) *Calling Down the Sky* is a compilation of poetry that recounts her mother’s traumatic experiences in residential school in northern Manitoba and in turn, the impact that her experiences had on her children. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2015) recognizes the value of understanding complex and unique narratives:” Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can

also repair that broken dignity...when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise. (Adichie, 2015)

Teaching roles and responsibilities: The teacher as advocate, artist, and co-investigator

From the framework of transcultural literacies, the teacher's role shifts from being a "manager" or "instructor" to a challenger, an advocate, a co-learner, a resource person, a co-investigator, and a facilitator (Magro, 2015). While the teachers that I have interviewed did not necessarily use the term "transcultural" and "transformative" in expressing their approach to literacy learning, many of their ideas and their approaches to curriculum development and assessment reflected key transcultural literacy themes. In addition, the educators' insights into learning processes reflected significant dynamics found in the research literature on transformative learning theory (Magro, 2015; King, 2005).

Camille challenges the monomodal view of literacy and advocates for a creative, critical, and transformative approach to teaching and learning. While the classroom can potentially be a place for students to develop self-efficacy and personal empowerment, she explained that students can also learn about competition, unequal self-worth, and relational aggression. She hopes to create a psychological and social space in her classes where individual talents can be nurtured: She explained:

Part of being a critical educator is seeing that there is not a single definition of hope, social justice, or equity. It is not so much about covering content as it is about the depth of understanding. Learning to me involves a process of challenging my students to look at the complexity of issues from an intersection of race identity, culture, and experience. I use international short stories to encourage cultural awareness. We do not use art and poetry enough in teaching. I challenge my students to create a visual poem and symbol book representing key themes of the stories that impacted most. I want students to leave my class having read stories set in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. I strongly believe that you have to name the social justice topic and look at the source. I challenge the students to compare the inequities that they have read about with the inequities in their own communities.

Too often educators and pedagogues do not really want to address the barriers that prevent learners from succeeding. There are reasons why more than 50% of First Nations students leave middle and senior high school early. How does poverty really impact learning? What happens if you are one of thousands of youth in Winnipeg who happen to be living in a hotel because your community was displaced due to a flood? How does this interrupt learning? If you were living in foster care and your parents were living far away in the north or if your parents died, it is difficult to feel safe and secure. Some of our most vulnerable youth have been placed in hotels to live right in the inner city amid violence, prostitution, etc. Educators will use phrases such as "21st century learning" and "success for all learners" while really missing the discussion of the complex factors that cause students to feeling abandoned and disengaged ...

Camille emphasized that writing about and reflecting upon powerful texts encourages critical thinking about human rights and inclusivity in our society:

Many of my students find Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* riveting. Alexie shows how trauma is part of the "normal" experience for many Indigenous people. This is a book that can help non-Indigenous students develop greater empathy for the experiences of First Nation youth living "in between worlds" –

the reserve, and the larger city here they need to adapt quickly in order to survive. Students who have experienced hardship and discrimination can also relate to Alexie's character Junior. He is sensitive, witty, and artistic; despite the pain of losing close family member to suicide and tragic events, he pushes on. It is a hopeful novel in many ways and you can examine many specific social justice issues: discrimination, poverty, the impact of alcoholism on the family, the impact of colonial oppression and residential schools, and the struggle of being accepted when you are "different."

I challenge my students to examine phrases such as "free the children" in a context where girls and women are targets of sexual violence. We examine excerpts from N. Kristoff's and S. WuDunn's *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity* as a way of understanding the ongoing plight that girls and women experience. This should be the concern for all. Some of my students reviewed Khalid Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. They wrote about the lives of girls and women in repressive conditions. Why does this repression still occur and what can be done about it? I want my students to believe in themselves and wake up each day with a sense of purpose. My heart has been moved by the students who have to face so many pressures and who succeed despite the odds... Today, I am more confident in taking risks as a teacher. I feel increasingly unafraid of pushing the envelope and opening up conversations with students, parents, and administrators about basic injustices... in our school system."

Transcultural literacies also encourage an understanding of local and global events. Dustin, a teacher in a large secondary school where over 70 languages are spoken, explained the importance of encouraging students to read a range of texts that focus on a social justice theme such as exclusion, loneliness, discrimination, and ostracization. His students then compare the similarities in the patterns and histories of oppression. What are the similarities in patterns of colonialization, for example, that have taken place in large parts of Africa, North America, and Australia? What happened to the Indigenous Peoples when their language, culture, belief system, and lifestyle are dismantled? How does that impact identity and belonging? He believes that discussions and research opportunities can bring to light "disruptive knowledge" so that students begin to challenge accepted beliefs and recognize alternative possibilities. They begin to understand the roots of inequity by looking at patterns of societies organized by unfair hierarchies and unequal social arrangements.

Dustin spoke of a recent book review written by a Grade 12 student who compared the experiences of racism that Ta-Ne-Hisi Coates recounts in his best selling memoir *Between the World and Me* and James Baldwin's (1955) modern classic *Notes on a Native Son*. "There is a passage in Baldwin's work that is just as relevant today. It is beautifully written and it is something that my students can understand at multiple levels. Baldwin wrote that too many youth are growing into a "stunted maturity, trying desperately to find a place to stand, and the wonder is not that so many are ruined but that so many survive" (Baldwin, 1955, p.13). He recounts his experiences in Europe and his sense of ambivalence toward western cultures that oppressed and enslaved his ancestors. Stephen explained: "Coates' memoir is saying that racial injustices and misconceptions are still part of everyday life for many in America. Baldwin, decades earlier, was searching for meaning in a world that held misconceptions about Black people. Students can examine two texts from different time periods to assess the change in racial divisions in our society." We can apply this to minority groups who are stigmatized in Canada as well. What has changed among First Nation people in terms of human rights, access to health care, education, family life, and personal and career fulfillment? There are too many young adolescent First Nation students growing up without a sense of hope; they have known only chaos and

fragmentation. Richard Wagamese's (2012) *Indian Horse* is another novel that links identity, belonging, and family together with the narrative of the tragic experiences of residential school life. Steven emphasized that students find it interesting to examine the way characters (some fiction some real) cope with challenges and tragedies in life. "The challenge we have is to take steps to break down racial barriers and misconceptions." Mezirow (2000) writes that "subjective reframing involves an intensive and difficult emotional struggle as old perspectives become challenged and transformed" (p.23).

Cynthia, an adult educator specializing in media studies, English, and history explained:

Innovation is being original in the way you teach. Learning is taking an idea and turning it in some way into your own creation. History and human geography are very much linked to my idea of transformative thinking. You need to understand the past if you are to move forward in your future. History is not dead. I try to inspire my students to be investigators, ethnographers, and archeologists. I want them to see cause and consequence, continuity and change, and a historical perspective can provide this. In their inquiry based project "Shadows of Manitoba's Past" my students went to the Manitoba archives and found first hand knowledge---letters, diary entries, poems, travel documents, maps, and other valuable artifacts of Manitobans---famous, infamous, and not well known. Each student was responsible for developing expertise about a particular person---often someone that might not have been relatively well known and yet they played an important role in shaping Manitoba today. From these artifacts, the students created an amazing play. I invited an accomplished Manitoban dramatist to mentor the students on writing the play. The students integrated art, script writing, historical biography, and collaborative skills to create a dramatic work of historic significance.

Evan, an English language arts and history teacher at a large adult education centre in Winnipeg, views himself as an advocate and co-investigator. He is always looking for new ways to engage his learners. He has travelled widely and has taught overseas for several years. His students have a wide range of skills but he finds ways to connect with them. He integrated film, art, and current events from the news in his teaching. Evan's classes include students from First Nation backgrounds and many students from war-affected countries. He explained that being a teacher requires "patience and resilience": "I am not prone to despair and I believe I have a commitment to justice. He believes that a larger community effort is needed to engage more adult learners:

The students who are underserved/exploited/excluded/oppressed in our society come from the same groups that have historically been oppressed. Clearly, there's some autonomy within educational systems and institutions, but education is part of our deeply divided society and it is not encouraged, or even allowed, in some cases to challenge the privileges that form sources of power. My answer to all questions like "What needs to change"? involves at least two levels: the one that is more easily influenced by an individual or small group (here it is the type of work I suggested I try to do in my classroom, the schools, and the Manitoba Educators for Social Justice): building critical awareness and other analytical tools; building bonds between disparate exploited and excluded communities; special events like today's lunch program to raise awareness of violence against women; preparing for a healthy welcoming of Syrian refugees, and so on. The second level involves targets like capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy, and this require more intense individual and collective action. We need to work with education policy makers to provide better learning and employment opportunities for newcomer adult learners in our communities.

Discussion and conclusion: Expanding culturally responsive teaching

The teachers' narratives in this chapter highlight the way that literacy can enlighten and enlarge their students' vision of understanding the world in new ways (Freire, 1970/1997; Giroux, 1993). Building on the importance of integrating philosophy, music, and visual in teaching, Frances Kazemak and Patricia Rigg (1997) write that "the imagination is indispensable for knowing the world. It and its often-attendants of creativity, love, beauty and tradition allow us to re-vision the world, seeing it anew." (p.136). Imagination, notes Mezirow (1991) "is indispensable to understanding the unknown. The more reflective and open to the perspectives of others we are, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be"(p.83). These researchers advocate a more "humane, creative and imaginative curriculum" where books of photography, narrative poetry music, collections of novels and non-fiction reflect views of history, biographies, sketches of everyday life, travel diaries, and cross cultural stories. Art work including graphic novels can demystify complex texts. They can encourage concentration, reflection, intuition, and powers of observation. This creative element of literacy learning provides a bridge across cultures. Teaching texts that reflect diverse contexts and cultures can encourage cultural and emotional literacy. Empathy and an appreciation of different experiences are more likely to occur when learners are given opportunities to identify with the struggles that a character is going through regardless of ethnic and racial background, culture, and geographic distance. Nancy Hadaway (2011) writes that "there has never been a more opportune moment than now to use literature as a bridge to understanding in our global village, to reach across the national, cultural, and religious differences that often divide us." (p.5).

Transcultural literacies embrace a diversity of approaches to textual practices that encourage a re-imagining of texts and discourses, identities, histories, and culture (Luke, 2004). The challenges we face as a world today place a greater urgency on educational systems to provide innovative programs and new directions. Learning involves a creative dimension. Personal agency and a positive attitude, self-efficacy, a willingness to appreciate divergent perspectives, motivation, and resilience are all components of creative thinking (Sternberg and Lubart, 2003). The classroom is viewed as a site where new knowledge can be created from both students and teachers alike. Literacy learning is "life widening," multimodal, interdisciplinary, dynamic, and potentially transformative. A reconfiguration or remixing of traditional literary and non-fiction texts can be a catalyst for students to create their own texts. Future studies can further explore ways to encourage greater creativity and cultural inclusion in learning contexts

References Available Upon Request

Below the radar: Understanding the social value significance of informal third sector deliverers and their role in social capital learning networks

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Introduction

Amid shifting socio-economic and political strategies that seek to meet the demands of the welfare state, the third sector faces increasing coercion to deliver what are traditionally perceived as public sector duties, particularly in regards to welfare services (Alcock, 2012; Chapman, Brown & Crow, 2008). Over the last decade the role of the third sector in society is suggested to have transformed from a position of relative autonomy to become a subsumed branch of government policy (Pestoff & Brandsen, 2009).

Influenced by an ethnographic approach, this paper presents findings from a PhD study designed to unveil the social value significance of the Informal third sector groups (ITSGs) using a hybrid model integrating social return on investment (SROI) framework with social network theory in four case study groups. A caveat should be noted that it was not the aim of the research to identify learning value but through unpacking individual and group construction of social value the findings served to highlight the strengths and challenges of these groups as distinct communities of practice within wider informal learning networks in which individuals were both beneficiaries and deliverers of abstract and tangible knowledge. It raises a fundamental concern of the potential impact of pressures of formalisation and service delivery on the trusted relationships and informal learning for the individuals in these groups.

The paper begins outlining the English context for ITSGs including the multiple descriptors that position them as 'other' and outside the system of official support. Next the research design, participants and nature of research is outlined. Findings are presented thematically drawing on empirical evidence gathered from four ITSGs. It concludes asking questions about the extent to which these groups are diverse and the implications for inclusivity.

Informal third sector groups

There has been increasing recognition of the role of voluntary groups for supporting continuing learning (Hollingworth, 2012), although initial policy design centred on the ability of the groups to access hard to reach individuals and provide structured community-based delivery of employability skills and return to work programmes. Hager and Halliday (2006) suggest that voluntary groups have a more significant role by supporting informal learning through their development of trust and shared identity with individuals.

Informal learning encompasses a myriad of learning situations, from its associations with non-formal learning which recognises it to be all learning outside of an educational setting (Hager and Halliday 2006) to incidental learning through life experiences (Field, 2005) what Hoe and McShane (2010:365) refer to as "*spontaneous and voluntary activities for collecting and sharing knowledge*". If the physical or virtual place of learning is discounted, then the range of approaches to informal learning may be viewed on a spectrum including three features or attitudes toward learning: 1) the degree of intentionality (Hollingworth, 2012); 2) the level of expectation to learn (Hager and Halliday 2006); and 3) the extent to which deliverers recognise of the learning provided to the beneficiaries of activities.

The current research centred on Informal third sector groups (ITSGs). The rationale was due to the lack of empirical evidence regarding their significance in society and the potential impact of policy pressures to formalise. Any shift in their position, as an independent trusted broker located between communities and the state towards one between the market and the state has potential implications for the role in society and the communities in which they operate (Mangone 2012).

Informal third sector groups (ITSGs) are referenced under various pseudonyms: below the radar groups (BTR) (Phillimore, McCabe, Soteri-Proctor & Taylor, 2010), community – based organisations (CBOs) (Aiken, Baker & Tarapdar, 2011) or grass-root organisations. They include community-led or voluntary groups which may or may not be registered with the Charity Commission and lack, or do not seek regular income, often taking an informal approach to structure and management of the group. Soteri-Proctor (2011), in a street level mapping exercise of BTR groups, suggests a broad definition should be used to allow flexibility in capturing all potential activities, “*more than two people coming together on a regular basis to do activities in and around (public and third-sector) space for not-for-profit purpose*” (Soteri-Proctor, 2011:6).

The definition, distinctiveness and name for these ITSGs within the third sector is a contentious issue. ITSGs are cited to possess a wide range of strengths, creating conditions for “*stronger, more resilient and sustainable communities*” (ODPM, 2005:36). These organisations are therefore important because they encourage community participation, support partnerships and service delivery (Aiken et al., 2011). Relatively free from the constrictive political relationships of the ‘formal’ third sector, they have greater fluidity than formal groups allowing them to be innovative and adapt to the wide needs of their communities (Phillimore, McCabe, Soteri-Proctor & Taylor, 2010).

Locally-led by individuals from the communities which they serve and the minimal hierarchical group structure combines to encourage and support the development of trusting relationships. These relationships in ITSGs can serve to strengthen shared norms and identity of the group (Arneil, 2003). Influencing connections and the construction of social views, ITSGs are powerful arbitrators of social capital and may enhance individual life opportunities by extending the experiences and connections available to members (Begum 2013; Hollingworth, 2012).

Research design

A multi-method qualitative approach including semi-structured interviews, participant observation and questionnaires framed into case studies was selected as the most appropriate research strategy. Recognised as a ‘bounded system’ (Stake, 1995:2), case studies includes all actors within that system to “*understand complex social phenomena*” (Yin, 2009: 4). It is an approach often undertaken by researchers of third sector groups (see Phillimore, McCabe, Soteri-Proctor & Taylor, 2010) by combining multiple methods, case studies encourage deeper exploration and understanding of the issues and processes at work while supporting the development of a rich narrative around the subject.

Four case study groups were selected as research study sites, located in areas of high deprivation in Blackpool, each case study meets the defined criteria for an ITSG, and provided, at surface level delivery of unique services:

Social group (A)

A social group that has existed for 27 years, it was established to provide games and a social meeting place targeted at individuals over 50 years of age. The group which on average includes 14 individuals meet once per week for 3 hours in a designated

community space provided by a private sector company at no financial cost to the group.

Health group (B)

A health group targeted at individuals with mental health disability has existed for 2 years. The group hold activities lasting between 2 and 4 hours on 6 days of the week, these include crafts, films, drop-in, lunches and gender specific groups, in addition to twice yearly group trips. Activities are held at freely provided shared social spaces. On average 70 individuals attend activities over the course of the week.

Hobby group (C)

A hobby group that has existed for 7 years, designed for individuals interested in arts and crafts, the group meet for 3 hours once per week in a designated community shared space. On average this includes 8 individuals.

Resource group (D)

A resource group that has existed for 15 years, established to support individuals and families in need across the area. It provides 'emergency' bundles, on average 2 per day; hampers and gift parcels, on average 600 per year and holds swap shops once per month.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the self-identified leads of group, these covered topics of: history of the group, purpose, role, connections with others (individuals and groups), resources and perceptions of value. Observations of the groups' meetings were undertaken on a minimum of 4 separate occasions, until findings reached saturation point. Within the wider study, the health and resource groups, which held regular activities involving external beneficiaries that did not have regular contact e.g. swap shops, drop-in groups were provided with surveys to capture perspectives of value from these individuals.

The research involved a critical realism ontology, this accepts that there are both natural and social structures and these are '*co-responsible for the shaping of social lives and trajectories and moreover are also created and modified by individuals*' (Williams and May, 2002:4). Although critics, such as Brown (2014) suggest that in its attempts to understand underlying structures it extracts the subject from the wider context, creating nothing more than a "*Pseudo-systematic approach*" (*ibid*:122). Advocates recognise that layers are interdependent, a creation of numerous effects inseparable from the wider environment (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). This is complemented by a social constructivist epistemology acknowledging that a reality is constructed through interaction of individuals and their environment (Crotty, 1998:42).

If learning is a socially constructed process and the relationships between individuals shape what and how we learn it is therefore important to recognise the role of ITSGs for learning, as well as the layers and time implications for social construction of meaning. Individuals do not join the group as 'empty vessels' but participate at various points in the group's life bringing their own 'autobiographical lenses' (Brookfield, 1983). Studies of individual value and group value of learning in ITSGs could be considered as independent research topics, the aim of this paper is to provide a broad overview.

Research findings

The findings presented are 'flexible generalisations' (Goodman, 2008) across the groups, this reconceptualization of generalisation is one in which recognises that there will be themes or patterns in qualitative research that have application to wider settings with similar traits, "*depending on the degree of temporal and contextual similarity*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982:238).

The case study groups represent unique communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), brought together as temporary personal networks that have replaced the traditionally geographically defined community. At surface level, the groups each serve a range of different purposes and little can be interpreted from their brief descriptors to highlight their informal learning role.

Key themes were identified by a process of continual reflexivity, the classification of data is a living process, themes will be in continual flux affected by the addition of new information that is received (Sandelowski, 2010;). It is recognised while they are, for ease, presently separately they do not operate in isolation.

Connectivity

These groups all showed a range of relationships that supported the inflow and outflow of resources between the groups and Public, Private and Third Sector organisations. Three of the groups A, C and D also have bridging connections of human capital with members participating in activities across groups. It was identified that internal bonding connections were a factor in individuals joining subsequent groups, *"I found out about it [social group] because of Ann, you went first didn't you...because it's not near me, thought I'd give it a go"* (Group C beneficiary talking about Group A).

The internal bonding connections clearly helped to encourage new experiences and participation, *"We like to get together and we try and go on a trip, somewhere we've not been, it's Bournemouth this year."* (Art group beneficiary). In one example from the health group the bonding connections supported several beneficiaries to overcome fears,

I'd never gone anywhere, I don't like the thought of being stuck on a bus, or any form of transport, it's a control thing I think, but I went with Marie, she talked me into it and said she'd be there so we went, it was great (Health group)

In contrast, Mark (Health group) talked about his experience of staff from a formal / official support group

It was horrible they got us both on a tram, they didn't understand us, I wanted to just jump off, they thought it was funny, I haven't forgot it but since then we just take things at a time.

Mark's comments reflect the sense of 'them' and 'us' observed in discussions between individuals in all the groups and during the semi-structured interviews with the key leads.

Shared norms and identity

The creation of shared norms is vital in group formation but it may both serve to increase and restrict learning (Morgan, 2000). All group leads cited life experiences for the development of the groups, from an externalisation of the problem *'they don't know what we want, they just think people our age want to sit round drinking coffee'* (Social group key contact); *'they think we're stupid, they just put us in a room and provided some games'* (Health group key contact), to internal views, *'I know what it's like, I've been there'* (Resource group key contact).

Views which are drawn from individual experience have the potential to become a group view which blurs distinction for individual's to whether their knowledge or experience was 'real' or developed through a hive mind. One example of this is a 'them' [formal third sector or official state funded services] and 'us' scenario. The health group key contact identified that they had been approached to provide advice to 'them' and had refused, the

refusal was based on an underlying resentment informed by individual experience and feelings of being used, as the individual explained, 'they didn't want to help us, I'm not helping them now, they wanted to learn what we were doing, and get us to provide things for them, but I'm not' (Health group).

Expert by default

The subtle change from 'we' to 'I' in the example above demonstrates the danger of the 'hive' mind, first identified in Lindauer's (1961) study of bees, this metaphor recognises the power of relationships in groups to overcome individual views for the benefit of the group. Personal experiences which helped drive the group may also restrict it, and by default limit the beneficiaries from growing. In the two groups that provided services primarily to external beneficiaries, the mental health and resource groups B and D, a shared identity of 'experts by experience' was regularly shared between members. Although this has the potential to consequently restrict groups from seeking external sources of support these groups both recognised limitations, expressed collectively – '*We know we need someone to show us how to fill the forms in, we struggle*' (Resource Group D). There is not space within this paper to explore this theme further but it is worth noting the competing costs and benefits associated with the bonded rather than the bridging social capital, which may result from the distrust some group members had based on their experience of dealing with official organisations.

Barter and exchange economy

Putnam (2000:20) suggests that these groups "*...foster sturdy norms of reciprocity: I'll do this for you now, in the expectation that you (or perhaps someone else) will return the favour.*" The expectation of reciprocity of physical and human resource was observed with all the groups however the extent of *doing for* or *doing with* appeared to be dependent on whether the source of support was internal or external to the group.

Internally it appeared that the bonding ties reduced the verbalisation of expectation and there was greater *doing with* for examples individuals showing each other how to knit, where they had accessed information, how they could fix an item or write a CV. When external sources were sought, primarily through 'bridging' connections between group members and external organisations, there was a greater degree of *doing for*, examples included being shown how to create a poster, or design a website.

The informal exchange economy has a purpose in awarding a perception of value upon goods and services that may normally be seen in traditional financial exchanges. In gathering feedback during a swap shop run by Group D, several attendees suggested that it was better than being given something "*I don't like handouts, but sometimes you have to, here at least I can bring something and then swap it for other things, it's not like charity*" (External beneficiary, Group D). The informal exchange economy was also recognised with regards to learning, one example was a comment made during a conversation between two members of Group C

I was on a CV course this morning, they (job centre) told me I had to go, I've still not figured it out, can you show me and I'll have a look at your computer later, you said you had problems with it...

Conclusion

The apparent informality of these ITSG groups masks the complexity of the underlying relationships and networks which have the potential to both support and limit learning at individual and group level. On the surface one would be justified to question what is wrong with informal groups that freely provide services and are open to all? But the powerful

bonds which serve to strengthen the internal dynamics of the group and are important to maintain group direction could also be viewed as manipulation of individuals.

The research raises several questions for further exploration: the extent to which these ITSGs may serve to exacerbate inequalities by creating shared identity that limits aspiration. Is a community-led approach to learning the opposite of inclusive as groups sought to discriminate against other perspectives? It raises a fundamental concern of the potential impact of pressures of formalisation and service delivery on the trusted relationships and informal learning for the individuals in these below the radar groups.

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***Engendered planting: Critical pedagogy and the tacit knowledge of older black, ethnic minority, migrant women learners* [Paper not available]**

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Self-reflection as a tool for inclusive learning and teaching

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Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, Higher Education has expanded at an unprecedented rate: between 2000 and 2010, global enrolment showed an average annual increase of around 7.6 million students (British Council, 2014). This has resulted in an increasingly diverse range of Higher Education institutions as the student population has expanded (Guri-Rosenblit, Sebkova and Teichler, 2007). National and institutional policies have brought issues of widening access and internationalisation to the forefront, transforming the student population. Thus, teaching spaces have also required transformation, and Higher Education providers must ensure that their teaching spaces are inclusive of difference.

This paper explores the impact of a small-scale project in collaboration with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) which focuses on embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum. The project aimed to develop reflective practitioners in key curriculum leadership roles, where they then could influence and develop others.

Diversity and Inclusion

In the UK, protection from discrimination is provided under the Equality Act (2010), which identifies nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. All such characteristics are present in the student population, and HE providers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the requirements of the Act are met.

Faced with a diverse student body, those responsible for teaching and supporting learning need to not only be aware of difference, but also be prepared to develop an inclusive approach to engaging with that difference. Hockings (2010, p1) suggests that inclusivity 'embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others.' Difference is therefore seen as a positive rather than a negative in an inclusive learning space. To achieve this level of inclusivity, practitioners must be prepared 'to disrupt pedagogised norms and to de-marginalise the pedagogised other' (Hanesworth, 2016, p5). Challenging established norms requires a cultural transformation, which begins by enabling influential individuals to transform their own practice.

Transformation through reflection

A key factor in successful transformation is the development of reflective practitioners, who can systematically evaluate their teaching experiences, and use that evaluation to change their future practice (Ashwin et al., 2015). Fook (2007) suggests that reflection begins with the discovery and unsettling of assumptions. These assumptions can take the form of unconscious bias:

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgments and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our

background, cultural environment and personal experiences. (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013, p1)

It is only by confronting our own subliminal beliefs and attitudes that we can begin to reflect on who we are and challenge ourselves and our behaviour. It should be noted that this moves us away from rational reflection of practice towards a more embodied and emotional process (Ashwin et al., 2015)

Successful reflection requires dialogue: the articulation of our ideas, either to ourselves as an internal dialogue or to others as an external process is an essential element of critical thinking. Therefore the process of reflection cannot occur in the absence of criticality (Brockbank and McGill, 2007).

Reflection 'should be much more than merely individually thinking about experience, but rather it should usually occur through *dialogue in a group setting*, and involve the sort of questioning that assists people in *uncovering deeply held assumptions* and taken-for-granted ways of thinking, in order to *consciously develop* the most ethical and *improved ways of working* with people and communities.' (Beres, 2017, p281, our italics)

Beres's explanation of the reflective process describes the key elements which influenced the design of the project.

Study design

The overall aim of the study was to increase awareness amongst HE practitioners around embedding equality and diversity in the curriculum (EEDC) using reflective conversations. The approach to the research was heavily influenced by the US-based National SEED Project (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) which is a 'peer-led professional development program that promotes change through self-reflection and interpersonal dialogue building capacity for more equitable curriculum, campuses, workplaces, and communities' (SEED, nd). The key objectives of SEED are to 'drive personal, organisational, and societal change toward greater equity and diversity' through training individuals to facilitate ongoing seminars that bring equality and diversity issues to the forefront of discussion. In the UK, SEED has previously been employed as a tool for EEDC at Sheffield University (van Duyvenbode, 2016); although the approach has not been adopted by any Scottish university to date.

In order to develop the reflective conversations, we conducted a preliminary study to identify the key issues around equality and diversity in the context of the specific institution. This identified the current level of understanding on EEDC amongst HE teaching, learning and support staff. This involved a desk-based review of programme materials and interviews with students and staff, the findings of which informed the topics discussed during the reflective conversations.

The approach to the desk-based review was adapted from a similar study conducted by Narayanasamy et al., (2013) who analysed a range of curriculum documents including descriptors, handbooks and timetables with the aim of identifying where diversity was being embedded by teaching staff on a nursing programme. The review identified that the mapping process was beneficial regarding the identification of areas requiring further development. Under a similar guise, this study reviewed curriculum documents from six programmes¹. Materials were evaluated using a matrix to list the number of items related to equality, diversity and protected characteristics.

Interviews were then conducted with staff to gain insight into how practitioners are incorporating equality and diversity into their teaching practice. Interviews were coded thematically using the Higher Education Academy's Framework (Hanesworth, 2015; May and Thomas, 2010). It was evident from the desk-based analysis that equality and diversity language was not clearly visible in module descriptors, learning outcomes and programme specifications. This highlighted the need to raise staff awareness on the importance of using these tools to ensure issues of equality and diversity were visible in curriculum design. Although many instances of good practice were reported throughout the interviews, themes arose that merited further discussion and were incorporated into the reflective conversations. For example, unconscious bias and discriminatory practice.

Methodology

The researchers developed a pilot project to explore and enhance staff awareness of EEDC in curriculum design and delivery. The study adopted a social constructivist approach in that the researchers take the stance that knowledge is constructed by placing meaning on subjective experiences (Dewey, 1938). It was acknowledged by the researchers that in the university setting both staff and students play a role in co-constructing knowledge and that individual experiences would impact on issues around equality and diversity. The study, therefore, was designed to draw out these experiences.

Reflective conversations

The pilot comprised of six sessions which were structured to give participants the chance to reflect on their own practice and used a range of materials to engage participants including videos, participant activities and facilitator-led discussion. These conversations were informed by the findings of the preliminary study and constructed around the SEED project whose unique methodology involves:

- facilitating ongoing, structured, group conversations in which all voices can be heard
- examining how our own stories relate to social systems
- learning from the lessons of our own lives as well as from texts
- turning oppression and privilege into agency and action

The sessions were split into two parts: in the first three sessions, participants explored their own beliefs, behaviours and prejudices; in the second part, we turned our gaze outwards and focused on institutional practices. The introductory session explored the language of inclusivity and diversity in different contexts through group discussion and activity. Unconscious bias was the central theme of the following session before moving on to reflect on dimensions of identity in the third session. The fourth session examined stereotypical injustices within the university setting which allowed for a transition into the fifth session which examined how far the university has come in eradicating inequality. The last session explored the issues overall focusing mainly on the shared ownership of learning.

Participants

Participants were invited from academic and professional services departments, as well as student representatives. The conversational sessions were designed to be intimate with between 8-12 people in attendance. Staff from academic programmes were selected to be representative of the University using the following criteria:

- Programmes levels: undergraduate/postgraduate;

- Teaching delivery: online/face to face;
- Subject variation: the selected programmes represented five different schools

To protect the anonymity of participants the programmes and departments cannot be disclosed.

Evaluation

The conversations were evaluated in two ways:

Firstly, participants were asked to complete pre- and post-session questionnaires to explore:

- what they expected to get out of the sessions;
- the extent to which their knowledge had increased around the various concepts and terminology around equality and diversity;
- how the sessions would be embedded in practice.

Secondly, the sessions were evaluated using participant observation whereby one member of the research team observed the interactions of participants and the facilitator. This data was analysed thematically, to evaluate the impact on the participants of their self-reflection, and its implications for inclusive practice.

Findings

Overall, the sessions were received positively by all participants. One participant indicated that they were *“Quite surprised at how much I learned about how I could be more inclusive”*, a thought echoed by mostly all participants. The sessions were also noted to be *“Very useful to have a safe space to explore ideas of inclusion”*. The findings have been categorised into four key themes which reflect the framework of the SEED methodology, to gain insight into their usefulness as a space for reflection on equality and diversity in the curriculum.

Facilitating ongoing, structured, group conversations in which all voices can be heard

To facilitate ongoing structured group conversations in which all voices could be heard, the research team endeavoured to ensure that individuals from across the university were invited to participate, the aim was to create a safe space for academics, support & professional staff and students, where a confidential dialogue around issues of equality and diversity could take place. Conversations were structured to allow all participants the space to speak: some included personal reflection first; others were timed, and others were a general discussion. Often, more females than males attended each session, although there was a good mix of staff from various departments. The facilitator did not lead the sessions in a traditional sense but rather opened the floor with key questions to challenge thinking around issues of equality and diversity. It was noted that this approach was perceived positively by participants; one talked about the sessions being *“subversive”* in a sense as they provided a platform for views to be challenged. One particular session was populated solely by participants in support roles, during this session it was observed that challenging perceptions became more difficult as almost all participants in the session shared the same position in relation to the issues being discussed. For example, one of the key discussions centred around time given to students with additional support needs in exams, but all views came from the perspective of professional services, with no academic input available. As a result, the main points of this session were revisited at the next one,

when a wider range of voices could be heard.

Examining how our own stories relate to social systems

Opportunities were provided throughout the sessions for participants to provide stories relating to personal experiences around equality and diversity in higher education. Almost all participants were willing to share stories of a personal nature to address points that had been raised during the discussion. For example, during the first session, the discussion turned to how the social and cultural norms of a traditional university impact on students from non-traditional routes. One participant commented on how they had integrated themselves by adapting how they spoke, whereas another felt that they should be accepted regardless of linguistic differentiations; this was despite feeling “*like a fish out of water*” when trying to integrate. The stories shared highlighted how ‘life experiences’ of such personal nature can lead to classroom disadvantage. Another participant shared her powerful story of her struggle against gender-biased adversity in her home country’s culture and reflected on her experiences of coming to the UK as a student. She also highlighted the ongoing tension between her experiences of gender equality as a UK citizen and as an Asian woman. Her story resonated strongly with the other participants, with one stating it “*made me think more clearly about vulnerability in students and the relationship with discrimination.*” and another commenting that it made them “*think about how international students feel in [the university environment]*”. In general, it was observed that the story told by the international student was felt by participants to be a powerful driver for self-reflection.

Learning from the lessons of our own lives as well as from texts

Participants were encouraged to critically evaluate their own behaviours in relation to diversity and conclusion. For example, one activity encouraged participants to consider different situations in which they may be confronted with difference and to assess their comfort level in that situation. This led to a reflective discussion of why discomfort was felt on occasion, and how it could be recognised and addressed. A key issue which arose throughout the sessions related to how practitioners often transmit their own subconscious attitudes into the learning space. One participant explained how they used an icebreaking game with students to stimulate discussion whereby a rolled-up sock, known as the “*sock of death*” was thrown to students who in turn would answer the question specified. On receiving feedback, the participant found that this activity had a negative impact on working class students who did not feel confident in speaking up in class; sharing the story during the reflective session, the participant commented that “*The conversation helped me to somehow surface my own unconscious bias*”. This level of self-reflection was also evident from other participants: “*I enjoyed the session. It was good to be able to stop and think.*”

Turning oppression and privilege into agency and action

Many of the group discussions focused on recognition of privilege, and how that may limit the agency of the disprivileged. This led to “*many moments of self-reflection*”, according to one participant. Another said that “*I felt inspired by the group’s common interest/goal to actually do something*”. The participants were invited to identify the inclusive practice that the institution did well, and where there was room for improvement. One commented that inclusive practice was “*on the agenda – higher profile now, but commitment needed from the top*”. Another suggested that compulsory staff development was the way forward. From an impact perspective, more than one participant stated that they aimed to share their experience with others.

Discussion

The findings support Brockbank and McGill's (2007) position that successful reflection requires dialogue that leads to critical thinking. The sessions offered an opportunity for this to occur by providing participants with a safe space to lead the discussion and share their own stories, thus supporting the framework of the SEED (nd) methodology. Engaging in group dialogue allowed the participants to consciously develop improved ways of working (Beres, 2007). This systematic evaluation of their own beliefs and behaviours enabled them to commit to the transformation of their future practice, demonstrating their development as reflective practitioners (Ashwin et al, 2015).

It should be noted that the participants were self-selecting, and therefore already aware of and positive towards the need for inclusive practice. Given the success of this pilot project, it is planned to run the sessions on an annual basis. However, we recognise that future participants may be less positive in their approach, and will need to address that challenge when it arises. As it is too early to measure the success of the project in terms of changed behaviours, this will need to be re-evaluated at a future date. Further research will be conducted after 6 months to assess the longer-term impact of the project on individual practice.

Conclusion

The conversations were designed to challenge existing unconscious behaviours around diversity and inclusion, encouraging recognition and evaluation of the participants' own practice. The EEDC series was noted for providing a safe space for reflection on practice and allowed for practitioners to challenge thinking around issues of equality and diversity. The sessions had a positive impact on those who attended with participants reflecting on their learning and making a commitment to adapting their practice going forward. The longer-term success of the project will be measured when we evaluate the extent to which equality and diversity have been embedded in their daily practice.

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¹ Samples of teaching materials were also requested to explore the visibility of equality and diversity however no teaching staff responded to the request.

The adult learners' stories

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Abstract

The national lifelong learning agenda plays a major role in facilitating the learning engagement among adult. This study discusses Bourdieu's theories of practice in adult engagement in a non-formal lifelong learning programme in Malaysia. The aims of this study is to explore adult learner disposition and the relation to their participation in learning. This study employs a biographical method to develop an understanding of the adult learner disposition. The biographical method set firmly within an interpretive framework where the thoughts and feelings of learners can be explored and valued. Four selected stories will be discussed. Early findings show that habitus constraints individual horizon of action but not determine their situation. As most previous studies focused on the adult participation in formal learning, this study contributes to the small but growing literature of adult participation in non-formal learning.

Keywords

habitus, lifelong learning, adult learner, biographical method, and learning career.

Introduction

This study will focus on the lifelong learning agenda in the Malaysia setting. As a developing country, the Malaysian government has designated lifelong learning as the third pillar of Malaysia's human capital development system alongside the school system (first pillar) and tertiary education (second pillar) (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011). The agenda is to establish a nation that is self-sufficient and developed encompassing all aspects of life towards Malaysia's vision 2020. The lifelong learning system help to complement the formal education particularly in skills development.

Community College was appointed as a hub for lifelong learning programme in the country. The community college consists of 89 community colleges in 13 states in Malaysia. The distributed location of Community Colleges make it accessible to the local community. The programme that conducted is called a short course programme. The short course programme provides an opportunity for all citizen to enhance themselves. The course range from vocational skills, life-skills to self-development. It is an open entry course so anyone can participate. The participation is voluntary. Accordingly, some participants showed a high participation and willing to invest themselves in the course. The effort of learning by these participants reflected a study by Tough (1971) which he referred to as an adult learning project. Tough further explained the adult learning project as "a sustained, highly deliberate effort to learn" (1971: 7). This study will investigate the participants that show a high participation in the learning activity.

Theoretical framework

This research employs Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus refers to how individuals present themselves in the social world which includes their thought, behaviour, and taste that are shaped by various elements throughout one's life (Reay, 2004). This concept facilitates an understanding of individual pattern of practices. People from different classes or background have a different practice. Furthermore, habitus helps to explain adult's degree of orientation to choose a certain type of skills or courses (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Donaldson & Steve, 1999). Social practices are a complex interplay between the

individual's habitus and the environment (Bourdieu, 1977). Furthermore, habitus is a dynamic concept which has a possibility of modification by the changing of situation (Hilgers, 2009). In this study, habitus helps to illuminate adult learners' decision to participate in a learning programme.

Purpose and Research Question

This article considers the stories of adult's reason in engaging in short course programmes. The participants came from various background. The research aim is to investigate the stories of adults with different level of education and economic status who engaged in learning programmes.

Methodology

This research took place in Community Colleges in Malaysia. Community Colleges were assigned as a hub of lifelong learning programmes in the country. The community colleges that were selected in this study were colleges that had a high rate of short course participation for three consecutive years. This criterion assumes the consistency of the institution in conducting the short course programmes and the learning engagement by the local community. Two different setting were chose which a community college in an urban area and a community college in rural area. The participants that selected showed a high engagement in short course programmes in 2016.

In this research, biographical interviews were employed in giving a voice to adults to highlight their stories about participation in learning activities. The biographical method facilitates understanding on the interaction between the agency and the structure in everyday life at the micro and macro level (Merrill, 2007). Sixteen participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and were mostly done in the local language; Malaysia language.

The stories

This section focuses on the stories of four female participants out of a sample who were engaged in short course programme at Community College. Two of the participants had a low initial education (Farah and Hanny), and the other two participants had a postgraduate qualification (Maya and Ruby). These four stories had been chosen as individual case studies to illustrate a complex social and cultural influences in their motivation engaging a learning (Apitzsch & Siouti, 2007; Merrill & West, 2009). The short course programme is a voluntary programme that focuses on various vocational skills. These participants showed an active participation by attending numbers of short course from twenty courses to sixty courses in 2016.

Farah

Farah, aged 56, participated in a food processing course when interviewed. She is a single parent after her husband passed away in 2012. She is a homemaker and was a local seamstress. She didn't sew anymore due to some health issue. Farah is looking for other skills for her to generate some income. Thus she learned how to make several types of frozen food and process food. For instance, chicken nugget, noodle, and chilli sauce. Farah had limited opportunity to learn about her early life and appreciate chances to learn at the later age. Initially, she was hesitated to enrol in a short courses programme at the Community College since she was old, after a try, she felt comfortable. Farah revealed:

My friend invited me to join a short course at college. But I said "I am shy to learn at this age, I am old. College is only for youngsters" When I entered the college and selected to be of the course, I felt so eager and excited. I do not feel scared. [...] Recently I joined a

beading course. I knew how to make it, but it was my way. The instructor showed the step by step procedure in beading. The technique is that I wanted to learn.

There was a sense of inferiority, and this stemmed from her senior age. Farah admitted there is a right way to do things and her willing to learn. She spoke highly of the many learning institutions that are there today. Farah claimed "I feel so grateful for the learning opportunity provided now. People that ignored this facility will lose."

She described herself off coming from a humble background. She was the first born in a family of eight. Her parents believed in the idea that women are expected to do domestic chores and look after their family. Farah narrated:

I was born in 1961. We were quite poor, and the situation was quite difficult. I wanted to continue with secondary school but...but there was no opportunity. I learned at the state school until standard six (year six). [...] After I had finished my primary school, my father asked me to stop schooling to take care of my siblings. That's why I was not going to school. [...] I did not have many friends in school. At that time, people were not interested in school. But I loved school, that's why I kept going to school. [...] It always brought sad memories to think of it.

Farah described her schooling experience as challenging and sad because of the situation during the time. Farah further explained, during the primary school, she achieved a good result in class and managed to acquire the learning fast. However, it was not her choice to stop learning as she further continued: "All my brothers and sisters were studied until secondary school. I was the eldest...It is fine. Thus, I submitted". Farah sacrificed for her siblings.

Later, she was married off by her father at the age of 17. Farah earned a living through sewing which she learned through her effort. She became a seamstress and received many business orders from her friends and neighbours among others.

I never learnt sewing before. I was just observed my children clothes and tried to make it for my children. Then I made a Malay traditional custom for myself. After that, my neighbours asked me to make it for them. After some time, I received much order. Eventually, I became a home tailor. (laugh) [...] I had four children. I cannot afford to order clothes for them, which is why I tried to make the clothes. The sewing skills became my source of income.

After her children had grown up, Farah had time to participate in learning. She took learning seriously at the later age. She actively participated in learning courses that are organised by the village committee, institutions, and Community College.

Hanny

Hanny, aged 50, was about to retire from Malaysian Army when she decided to participate in short course programme. She was married and had two children. She planned to develop baking skills and started a home-based bakery business. She made the decision since her husband had some baking skills so that they can establish the business. However, she failed to get a place for a baking course in the Army transition training programme. In the course, they (army) were equipped with skills for their second career. There were many ranges of vocational courses provided. She was being given other option of courses, but they were not relevance to her aim. Frustrated, Hanny looking for alternative learning place, and found Community College. Hanny had a definite motivation

for her current learning participation in short course programmes. She described herself as a determined person who had the urge to start her own business. Hanny showed an active learning participation throughout her life trajectories.

Hanny grew up in a rural village. Her parents were peasant farmers. They were mainly involved in rubber-tapping. She was the seventh born in a family of ten children. She explained:

I only learned until lower secondary school. I had an intention to keep learning, but I like to look forward (thinking of job). I stopped learning and came to Kuala Lumpur seeking for a job.

Hanny had an aspiration to learn, but the situation forced her to work. She migrated to the capital city and managed to find a work to help support the family. She started as a volunteer of a national youth organisation. During the time, she also applied for skill development courses at several institutions but was not accepted. Hanny lamented:

It was in 1988, I applied several places for skill courses. I never had an opportunity, even a place for the interview. But now, the government provided many learning opportunities, but the young generation was just ignored it. It was a big loss.

After a while, Hanny joined Army Reserve Soldiers who then led her to become a Malaysian Army. She served in the Army for 25 years before retiring in 2017. During her service in the military, Hanny participated in sewing skills courses that were organised by Army Wives Welfare Association, private tailor company, and Community Development Centre among others. She was always looking for learning opportunities. Hanny managed to make her clothes, curtain, bedcovers, and home decorations from the learning that she participated. Hanny asserted "We need to seek for knowledge". In 2016, Hanny participated in more than 20 short course programmes. When being asked what drive her to keep learning? Hanny claimed, "I was interested in many areas, as long as it is knowledge I would like to participate."

Maya

Maya became a tutor after graduated a master degree in linguistic. She taught a lifelong learning module and young-entrepreneur module for undergraduate students. The transition demands her some preparation and a wider knowledge in the area. Her searching for related courses brought her to participate in short courses programme at Community College. Maya acknowledged:

What I learned here is related to my current need. Instead of being a learner, I asked the experienced educators who had their own business, for instances Cikgu Ani (had a tailor shop) and Cikgu Iza (had a catering business). Both of them had experience about the cost and profit in business.

Maya managed to get many sharing of experiences from educators and some participants that had run their own business. Based on the information that she gathered, she could understand the current demand and trend in the market especially for catering and tailoring area which is practical for a graduate to start a business. Maya showed an active participation and attended 60 different courses in 2016 and managed to acquire many skills. Maya biography explained her tendency toward catering and tailoring skills.

Before Maya entering a bachelor degree in linguistic, she enrolled a Diploma in Performing

Arts in an educational institution in Kuala Lumpur. During her first year, she had a serious fall injury that caused her to defer her study. Maya narrated:

I was badly injured after falling in training. For this reason, I need to have frequent physiotherapy treatment in a hospital which consumed a lot of time. During the time, I felt terrible, disabled, and lonely. I missed my mother. So, I chose to defer my study and moved to my hometown (north part of the country). Since we lived separately, I helped my mother in a restaurant where she worked so that I can stay longer with her.

The treatment period turned out to be a fruitful experience of vocational skills development for Maya. She helped her mother in a restaurant. Eventually, she was offered a part-time job in the restaurant. She accepted the offer and working whenever there was no medical treatment. Maya described the working experience as challenging. She needed to lift up heavy things, handling raw ingredients and assist the cooker. Even though she got a little pay, but she gained a lot of experience, especially in catering skills and restaurant management. During the period, Maya also managed to join six months accredited sewing course. Besides, Maya had a supportive mother who taught her to sew since she was 12. Maya described her engagement in short course as her weaknesses in knowledge. As she spoke out:

The more we learn, the more we realised our limitation. When I enter a Diploma, I realised that much I do not know. After that, when I enter Degree, I was aware that the more I do not now. Then, I enter master, I think that why I am so stupid. The higher stage, the more knowledge to be sought.

Ruby

Ruby [K], aged 41, quit from a lecturer and become a homemaker. Ruby faced a huge life transition and in the process of developing a new career. She had an aim to open a sewing academy. She linked her passion in sewing with her experience of occasional sewing since a child.

I worked as academician for 17 years. After quit, I searched for information to develop my sewing skill and develop a new career on it. Perhaps God gives me a chance to do what I love. Sewing was a part of me. This is a different field from the academic field that I used to.

Ruby had a strong cultural capital in sewing skills. Both her father and mother had the skill. She started learning sewing when she was five. Then, she started to make her clothes when she was sixteen. After that, she used to make her clothes and became more confident. Subsequently, Ruby had five sisters whom all of them practised sewing making their clothes, and one of them had a tailoring shop. When being asked why she chose to venture in sewing skill, Ruby answered:

Firstly, I have a great passion in tailoring. I was exposed to sewing since I was five years old. Secondly, it was a family influence. [...] In my case, I planned to develop a small-scale tailoring class, between 30 and 50 learners. I need to have a qualification of fabric making skill. It was in progress. I am developing my confidence in the skill.

Since Ruby was just learned informally, she needs to have a vocational certification to open an academy. At the early stage, it was quite challenging for Ruby to search for information on the vocational area. Ruby's academic background was not legitimate in the vocational area. There are different terms and procedures. Within three months she

attended all the sewing courses that provided. Despite developing her sewing skill, Ruby took the opportunity to understand vocational education. Gradually, she gathered the information through her interaction with friends and teachers in short courses programme.

Discussion

Participation in learning of particular skills could be explained through the participants' habitus. Habitus ensures the present of 'past-self' to influence the present decision for a secure action. This is called as a principle of the continuity and regularity over time (Bourdieu, 1990). Some of the participants demonstrate a social reproduction of parents' occupation through exposure since childhood as their reason for participation in learning regardless of their level of education. For example, Ruby chose to enhance her sewing skills since she had a strong internal experience in sewing; as the skills passed on in her family. Michel-Schertges (2015) suggests the reproduction as a sibling effect where parents' education and occupational contribution are decisive factors to children although it is not deterministic. Their participation in learning is a central part of their career construction (Hodkinson, 2008). The participants demonstrate a sense of security when choosing a skill that they had familiar.

Adults from disadvantaged backgrounds show a high engagement in learning. The current study findings differ from the findings of the previous studies (Dincer et al., 2016; Desjardins et al., 2006; Gorard & Rees, 2002) by illustrating that adults from disadvantaged backgrounds are likely to participate in a learning activity. In effect, the current study findings are in stark contrast with the phenomenon of Matthew effect in adult education which asserts that advantaged groups are more likely to enrol in adult education programmes than disadvantaged groups (Boeren, 2009; Boeren et al., 2012) (Boeren, 2009; Boeren et al., 2012). This phenomenon is suggested to be developing a large gap in human capital (Knipprath & De Rick, 2015). Similarly, a study by Chang et al., (2012) which investigated the nature of adult engagement in Taiwan, revealed that women from low socioeconomic status were highly engaged in lifelong learning. They further found the reason for the women involved in learning depended on their family concern. However, much as the findings of the current study are similar to the findings of Chang and colleagues' study, the present study focused on giving a voice to the participants, which is a biographical study while the former was a quantitative study. The biographical method facilitates a broader understanding by looking into adult historical, social and cultural (West, 1996) influence on the role and value of learning in their life.

Transitions in life encouraged adults to engage in a learning activity. Previous studies on adult participation in learning have reported a series of a turning point for an adult to return to back learn whether it is a formal or informal activity (Tough, 1971; West, 1996; Gallacher et al., 2002; Ng & Confessore, 2015; Merrill, 2015). In this study, participants' from the urban setting relate their involvement in learning with career transition while participants' from the rural setting describe it as an 'intentional change'. Career transition is a structural turning point (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000); for example, Ruby, who quit and is in a process to develop a new career and Maya who just started a new career. The 'intentional change' is a term coined out by Tough (1997) who defined it as a "conscious choice and intention of which the person is clearly aware" (:21). In the present findings, homemakers from the rural setting wanted to change their life by developing a skill to have their own income. Thus, adult participation in learning is largely related to their present situation as a means of managing change (Merriam & Heuer, 1996; West, 1996; Hodkinson, P., Hodkinson, H. & Hawthorn, 2008). The intertwined relationship between learners and the educational institution structure helps to provide them with skills and knowledge

needed to perform a new role effectively (George, 1993). Hence, it is clear that transition plays a major role in adult participation in learning.

Conclusion

The open entry structure of short course programme facilitates various background of adult to be able to engage in learning programme. The participation of these course is based on self-awareness and motivation of the adult themselves. These stories reflect the need of vocational skill in the local community. Some adults apply the skills that learnt to earn income and some develop the skills to gain experience for a wider knowledge.

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Exploring the adult learning research field by analysing who cites whom

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In this article we report on findings from a large-scale bibliographic study conducted based on the citation practices within the field of research on adult learning. Our data consist of 151,261 citation links between more than 33,000 different authors whose papers were published in five leading international journals in the field of adult learning during the time period 2006–2014. By analysing the composition of the dominating citation clusters we are able to construct a telescopic view of the research field based on an accumulation of bibliographic citations. The results consist of two parts. First we go through the dominating players active in the field, their position and mutual relationship. Secondly, we derive two main structural oppositions inherent in the citation networks, one connected to the research object (studying education or work) and the second to the level of analysis (cognition or policy). We find that the most dominating tradition within adult learning the last few decades – sociocultural perspectives on learning - occupies a very central position in the space of citations, balancing between these opposing poles. We hope that this analysis will help foster reflexivity concerning our own research practices, and will reveal the relations of dominance currently prevailing within the field of adult learning.

Adults in higher education: The story of transformation: The day I got my student card is the day I was given a new identity, I was no longer unemployed, I now had a status, I was a student (adult learner)

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Introduction

This paper sets out to explore and share the experiences of adult learners who engaged in higher education within one Irish university. It tells of their struggles and accomplishments, but most of all it highlights the real life existence of Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory.

Background

Educational theory tells us that adults who return to formal education often experience personal transformations as a result of their engagement with the education process. This can have a profound effect on a person's self-concept, their relationships, work life choices and active participation in society. As a practicing adult educationalist I have many examples of witnessing adults experiencing personal change as a result of participation in a programme of study. Within an Irish context, the difficulty has been capturing these personal transformations in an empirical, validated, and trustworthy manner rather than as anecdotal stories.

The transformational learning theory of Jack Mezirow tells us that engaging in education can have profound personal, social and academic impacts on the participants (Mezirow 1978, 1991, 1998, 2000). The theory of transformation speaks of 'trigger events', 'frames of reference', 'habits of mind' and 'meaning schemes' as aspects of transformation. This paper presents the narrative experience of adult learners who returned to higher education. It explores and relates these experiences to the theory and presents evidence of personal, social and academic transformations.

Methodology

This paper is drawn from structured systematic PhD research which captured such transformations. Through narrative interviews, the transitional and transformative experiences of thirty-two adult return learners, sixteen male and sixteen female, on a degree course were gathered, analysed and referenced to the theory of Transformative Learning. This methodology was chosen as it allowed the participants to self-reflect on their individual experiences as narrative research emphasises the ability of individuals to make meaning from and interpret lived experiences. Josselson and Lieblich (2002) refer to narrative research as "voyage of discovery – a discovery of meaning" (p.260). Elliot (2008) speaks of the interview enabling the interviewee to tell their 'own account of their lives' and that it is important not to 'impose a rigid structure on the interview' (p.31).

Understanding transformation

Transformation theory sets out to explain and understand the processes that take place when adults engage in education and learning. It is interested in how adults understand

their learning and what (if any) the impact this learning has on the individuals. It seeks to elucidate the developmental and thought processes of the adult learner. It speaks of 'trigger events', 'frames of reference', 'habits of mind', 'meaning schemes' as aspects of transformation.

Transformation as understood by Mezirow (1991, 2000, 2009) can begin with a '*distorting dilemmas/triggering event*'. These are often in the form of a personal crisis, or sequence of events which through a process of learning activities will culminate in a change in the person's self-concept leading to a new perspective which then leads to action. Mezirow refers to these various paths towards transformation as the major '*catalytic event*' or as a process of '*incremental transformation*'. Similarly, Cranton (2006) speaks of the transformative process as being '*provoked by a single dramatic event, a series of almost unnoticed cumulative events, a deliberate conscious effort to make change in one's life...*' (2006:57). Whichever way transformation occurs, it is clear from all the theorists that a process of 'reflection' is essential in order for new learning and new understanding of the experience, to be accomplished. It must be noted that while there are recognised elements or aspects to transformation, for even the theorists speak of 'phases' or 'stages', it is not seen as a linear process,. As Taylor (2000) suggests, transformation is more '*individualistic, fluid, and recursive than originally thought*' (2000:291). A more detailed analysis of the elements of critical reflection will be discussed later in this chapter.

Mezirow believes strongly that transformation is achievable when the person progresses through these phases although, it is important to note that Mezirow does not believe that these sequences of learning are necessarily a linear step by step development, but are better understood as 'sequential moments'.

Transformational theory places great emphasis on 'critical reflection' and 'processes'. Mezirow and other theorists draw on the work of developmental psychology – Piaget; Jung; Chomsky and Kohlberg - in helping the reader to understand the concept of transformational change from childhood interpretations of experiences to an adult, more critical, interpretation. Mezirow is building on an accepted goal of adult education which is to help adults discover the meaning of their experiences.

Mezirow (1990) argues that central to adult learning is the process of reflection on prior learning and central to transformative learning is the process of critical reflection. Brookfield (1995, 2005, 2010) the leading theorist on critical reflection, along with Mezirow (1991, 2000), Mezirow, Taylor and Associates (2009), Cranton (1997, 2006) and Cell (1984), amongst others agree that critical reflection and critical self-reflection are central to the transformational learning process. They agree that critical reflection is the process of questioning held values and beliefs, that it is the key concept in transformative learning.

For Mezirow it is reflection on our '*presuppositions*', on the '*how*' and '*why*' of our perceptions, of our assumptions. It is through critical reflection that we '*see through*' our default habitual way of interpreting our world and our experiences. It is the process of critically assessing how we '*perceive, think judge and act*' (1990:6, 1991:23,102-106). It is more than simply an act of reflection, it is reflection with critique, reflection which leads to change, reflection which leads to action.

For Mezirow (1990) and Mezirow, Taylor and Associates (2009) critical reflection is the process of questioning the origin of deeply held assumptions and beliefs '*based on prior experience*' (2009:7). It is the process that enables us to '*correct distortions in our beliefs and errors in problem solving*' that critical reflection involves '*a critique of the*

presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built' (1990:1). Mezirow believes it is central to adult learning, for it is the process of testing our 'taken-for-granted' positions which, in turn, as we noted earlier leads to a change not just in thought but also in action. For Mezirow it is essential that we transform our 'habits of mind', our 'frames of reference' and our 'meaning schemes and perspectives', through critical reflection on our held assumptions.

Mezirow (1990) is in agreement with Cell (1984) when he asserts that the key to transformational learning is contrast; to develop the skills of evaluation and the ability to discover alternatives, to find *new ways of seeing, new questions to ask, new ways to use things...*(1990:369). Critical reflection is essential if transformative learning is to happen, if we are to truly transform our 'meaning schemes', our 'frames of reference' and our 'habits of mind'.

It is through this process that a person can move away from the embedded proscriptions or '*premise distortions*' (Mezirow 1991) and discover what Brookfield (1995) calls the '*authentic voice*', that through critical reflection the individual will come to what Mezirow calls '*perspective transformation*' for central to this process is the ability for adults to reflect on and change their previously held values, beliefs, behaviours and self-concepts, along with previously held perspectives of society. It is what both Mezirow and Brookfield calls a '*fundamental reordering of assumptions*' and what Brookfield (2000) calls a '*shift in the tectonic plates of one's assumptive clusters*'

In order to achieve such transformations Mezirow asserts the need for critical reflection and critical thinking and has placed critical reflection as a central part of transformative theory; critical reflection on one's self and one's assumptions. Otherwise, he warns that people may tend to simply '*accept*' and '*integrate*' only those experiences that fit within our existing frames of reference, thus rejecting ideas, experiences and learning opportunities that do not fit. Furthermore, for Mezirow transformation is never complete unless the new insights have led to a new action.

Critical reflection is at the heart of transformation theory and transformative learning. Critical reflection and the mindfulness are central to discovering that previously held assumptions and beliefs may no longer be helpful. Mezirow (1991) speaks of transforming such perspectives through a reorganisation of meaning, which for him is the most significant kind of emancipatory learning, noting that not all learning is transformative, thus the need for critical reflection followed by action and change.

Transformative learning involves reflectively transforming the beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotional reactions that constitute our meaning schemes or transforming our meaning perspectives (sets of related meaning schemes) (1991:223).

Through this process of critical reflection the learner is empowered to journey from their previously held positions to adapting new meaning perspectives which are more critical, informed and helpful. This is the essence of transformative learning.

Mezirow believes that reflection is central to transformation, for it is through this theoretical/critical reflection that a person becomes aware of their taken-for-granted 'frames of reference' and 'meaning schemes'. Mezirow (1991) speaks of perspective transformation as happening when new interpretations successfully challenge previous meaning perspectives (1991:95).

Adult education in an Irish context

Adult education within the Irish context is still a relatively new concept, with the first governmental paper being published in 1998 (although there were educational acts that included vocational and training aspects for adults). Traditionally adult education was provided through the form of short-term night classes, often focused on basic practical skills or hobby type subjects. These classes were provided through the network of local vocational schools as fee paying night classes. The growth in adult education came about in Ireland through community based, particularly women's, groups.

The chronological history of adult education in Ireland is well documented in the *Green Paper on Adult Education in an era of lifelong learning (1998)*. It sets out the historical evolution of adult education into three phases: (1)1922-1969; (2)1969-1988; (3)1989-1998.

The 1998 *Education Act* provides for the equality of education for all members of society, undertaking to provide a 'quality of education appropriate to meeting the needs and abilities' of people from the diversity of traditions and backgrounds resident in the state. The act also recognises that education can take place outside of formal schools. The *Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999)* provided the setting up of the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) of Ireland. The Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC) were established under this act to provide certification within the framework of qualifications. Later replaced in 2012 by the establishment of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) under the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#).

For many involved in adult and community education, the water mark for adult education in Ireland is without doubt the publication in 2000 of the *White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life*, which promotes lifelong learning as 'the governing principle of educational policy'. The White Paper reaffirms the Government's commitment to a national policy for lifelong learning and specifically to the establishment of a well-funded adult education system.

Two years later in 2002 the *Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning* was published. This report noted the need for lifelong learning across the whole spectrum of jobs and workplaces. It endorses the definition of lifelong learning given by the European Commission as: 'all learning activity undertaken through-out life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective" (2002:6).

Perhaps the biggest single event in adult and further education came about in 2013 when the Education and Training Boards Act was passed, creating 16 ETBs through the dissolution and amalgamation of the 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs). This act also established SOLAS as the national training agency which now has responsibility for further education. In very recent months the Department of Education published the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019.

Adult learners' reflection on their experiences

The degree course that the adult learners, for this research, were engaged with was specifically designed for adults and espoused an adult learning methodology. This was recognised and appreciated by the interviewees as one of the factors that helped them in their decision to enrol in the course. Equally strong in the decision making factor, was the belief that the degree programme valued peoples' life experience, prior learning, certified or not. That people with previous certification could gain credits towards their degree was

a major positive. So too was the fact that people understood they could bring their personal experiences to the course and undertake to do an 'Independent Learning Pursuit' (ILP) to achieve credits. Another recurring theme during the interviews was the fact that the course was different in its approach to learning from other colleges, in its flexibility, content and structure.

From this study there were four over-riding motivations for engagement which emerged through the data analysis; unemployment, the desire to have a degree, career advancement and the idea of doing something for oneself. In his ten phases of transformation Mezirow's first phase is that a disorienting dilemma takes place (1991; 2000). The result of the data from the interviews elucidates a number of such disorienting dilemmas and trigger events one of which was unemployment, primarily from the male interviewees, which is a particular focus of this paper. This distorting dilemma of being made unemployed was described at times emotionally. How the difficulties of coming to terms with being unemployed impacted on the interviewees. They found the term 'unemployed' did not sit with them. They spoke of losing their identity. One interviewee describes the dark place unemployment brought him to:

I didn't realise it until later how down I was and how bad and how impossible I was but I had no work and there was no prospect of getting anything... (Interviewee11)

However, it was also this 'event' which enabled them the opportunity to return to education, and there was a sense of becoming re-skilled in order to find alternative employment. On returning to education one man said:

... in view of the way we lost our job. I found it a great help in handling the loss of the job, it's in your head no matter how strong you are, but it gave me the tools to handle it ... I'm two years unemployed now, well I'm actually not unemployed now I'm a student (Interviewee 7).

Another strong motivating factor for this particular group of men was the fact that being in fulltime education also afforded them certain social welfare rights.

I did realise that I had only three months to go on my dole, and the back to education grant which was exactly the same as the dole would keep me going, so that really is the reason I said I am going to have a go at this (Interviewee 15).

These expressed experiences are in line with existing theory regarding the motivation for returning to learning. For example Dominicé (2000) lists some of the motivations identified by adult learners included: the need to prove to people; the desire to return to study after an interruption due to family commitments; to become recognised in the world of work; the need to be busy and to try something different (2000:105). West offers similar motivations in presenting four major themes of motivation: lifecycle, hierarchy of needs, social needs, and personal needs (1996: 6-10).

Overall, interviewees spoke of liking the fact that they were treated like adults. They appreciated that their previous life and work experience was valued and taken into account. They accepted their responsibility in organising and planning their degree content. They wanted and responded to the self-directive nature of the course.

Interviewees felt they had benefitted at a personal level by virtue of being on the course. They spoke of this personal change coming about as a combination of course

contents/facilitation style along with the supportive environment which enabled them to reflect and learn from their own personal experiences, present and past. They felt they had certainly gained in confidence, were more reflective and considered themselves to be better citizens, with a more developed social conscience.

Conclusion

Through the telling of personal experiences, adult learners are able to identify and critically reflect on their lived experiences. These experiences demonstrate the true nature of transformative learning; the ability to experience change, personal, academic, and social. Adult education in Ireland has many challenges, but when an adult methodological approach is created in the learning environment transformation is real.

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Framing and negotiating the movement from FE to HE: Transitions, metaphors and spaces

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Introduction

Discourses on transitions in higher education (HE) are not new. Field (2010) notes that transitions are now widely believed to be core components of life and that for some, transitions define thoughts on modern living, as change and transition are more frequent for most. Not only are people living longer and so bound to experience more change (Gallagher, Ingram & Field, 2009), but for some the lifecourse has been de-standardised and is less linear than before (Ecclestone, Biesta & Hughes, 2010). For example, a more 'standard' path in previous years would have been going from school to work, adolescent to adulthood etc. (Mortimer & Moen, 2017) and as these were seen as the norm, attention in research was placed here (Field, 2010).

However, globalisation, advances in technology and changes in the labour market (Ecclestone, Biesta & Hughes, 2010) have led to a more fragmented experience for many. There have also been other changes in society such as there being fewer pressures to achieve certain goals by a certain age, e.g. marry, find a career etc. and more people live in the family home for longer (Mortimer & Moen, 2017). These changes may appear to provide an element of freedom as there are fewer time bound pressures, however, this may also mean that there is more distress and less stability for many (Bauman, 2000). For example, it may be more difficult to plan for the future or set goals if life is characterised by change and uncertainty (Bauman, 2000). This uncertainty for Mortimer and Moen, like Bauman can bring negativity and anxiety, with Mortimer and Moen (2017) noting the current lack of job security as a key example of this.

This lack of job security may also be a factor which has contributed to more people spending longer in education, with figures for participation in HE reaching almost 50% in England in 2012 (Office for National Statistics, 2013) and the Scottish sector seeing a 5% increase in participation in the last ten years (Audit Scotland, 2016). Furthermore, the widening access agenda of many HE providers in the UK, which seeks to increase participation in HE, particularly amongst traditionally underrepresented groups (Scottish Government, 2015, 2011) has also seen an increase in participation. Increased uptake, coupled with a widening access remit has in turn led to many new routes into HE. One such route in the UK is the articulation pathways which allow direct entry from further education (FE) institutions to second or third year in HE, depending on qualification level and subject studied. In Scotland in particular, where much of the rest of this discussion will be focussed, Scottish government policy has encouraged the increase of such routes, with set targets and potential financial implications for HE institutions if they are not met (Scottish Government, 2011)

The aim of this paper is to explore how educational transitions are conceptualised in current literature, with a particular focus on the transition from FE to an advanced level of HE. Furthermore, it will briefly outline initial research from an ongoing PhD study in this area.

Articulation, retention & performance


Articulation routes mean that students with a suitable higher national certificate (HNC) can

usually enter the 2nd year of a degree programme and those with a suitable higher national diploma (HND) can enter the 3rd year (SFC, 2016a). There are varying degrees of articulation at the 19 Universities in Scotland (Universities Scotland, 2017), with more students utilising this pathway at ‘post 92’ institutions (which are universities which were previously polytechnic, more vocational, teaching led institutions) (SFC, 2016b). The status of many of these institutions was changed to University status in 1992 through the Further and Higher Education act 1992 (UK Government, 1992). In Scotland, the number of students using articulation as a means of entry to University is increasing. In 2009/10 2833 students articulated into HE and 2016/17 this number rose to 4100 (SFC, 2016b). The SCQF framework and how HNC and HND qualifications align with university levels can be seen below.

Figure 1: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (2001)

THE SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

This Framework diagram has been produced to show the mainstream Scottish qualifications already credit rated by SQA and HEIs. However, there are a diverse number of learning programmes on the Framework, which, due to the limitations of this format, cannot be represented here. For more information, please visit the SCQF website at www.scqf.org.uk to view the interactive version of the Framework or search the Database.



SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	SVQs/MAs
12			Doctoral Degree	Professional Apprenticeship
11			Masters Degree, Integrated Masters Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship SVQ 5
10			Honours Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Professional Apprenticeship
9		Professional Development Award	Bachelors / Ordinary Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
8		Higher National Diploma	Diploma Of Higher Education	Technical Apprenticeship SVQ 4
7	Advanced Higher, Awards, Scottish Baccalaureate	Higher National Certificate	Certificate Of Higher Education	Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 3
6	Higher, Awards, Skills for Work Higher			Modern Apprenticeship Foundation Apprenticeship SVQ 3
5	National 5, Awards, Skills for Work National 5			Modern Apprenticeship SVQ 2
4	National 4, Awards, Skills for Work National 4	National Certificate	National Progression Award	SVQ 1
3	National 3, Awards, Skills for Work National 3			
2	National 2, Awards			
1	National 1, Awards			

Along with the number of students taking this route increasing, so have concerns about drop out and academic performance. Figures from the National Union of Students (NUS) (2014) reinforce this concern as they show that 49.7% of the articulating students in Scotland had to repeat 1 or more years of study in 2014. Scotland also had the highest rate of drop out for widening access students within the UK (NUS, 2014). This is a concern, particularly when institutions are attempting to increase progression and retention rates as outlined in the financial outcome agreements and policy documents of many institutions (e.g. GCU, 2013). There could of course be a plethora of reasons for such statistics and performance varies between HE institutions. Nonetheless, these concerns have led to a number of calls for support to be put in place for these students and others who are considered more vulnerable than ‘traditional’ students.

The general focus in the literature is on how these students are transitioning to the HE environment. Barron and D'annunzio (2009) exemplify the typical discourse on this move as a difficult and negative experience for many. Their study emphasises students' expectations as they transition to HE as a source of difficulty. Along with many other studies, reports and literature reviews (see Bloomer & Hodkinson, 1997; Christie et al., 2006; Leece, 2010; Pike & Harrison, 2011; HEA & NUS, 2013, Wilson et al., 2016) the focus is on the student voice as the main indicator of these issues. Problems are commonly presented as being primarily to do with communication, confidence and motivation, rather than specific learning issues which do not seem to be explored in a significant way. Although the 'voice of the learner' is important, it is a weak theoretical concept as it assumes the students will be fully aware of what their issues are and that they will be able to articulate them. Students may not possess the tools and vocabulary to do this in a meaningful way. Also, issues could be presented in a skewed way and could be manipulated to reinforce the problems that 'experts' already think exist. In addition, this approach does not tend to focus on what the learning issues might be, where and when they are encountered and how they are navigated. As Field (2013) writes, this focus has a more 'consumer-orientation' and it is not always obvious how the issues presented help foster an understanding of learning and transition as issues presented by students are often taken at face value. Furthermore, if policy and literature centres on this voice only, which largely consists of negative experiences, education systems are in danger of being reactive and under theorised in their approach to these students and the learning issues they may encounter.

Rough or smooth transitions

Transitions have their own discourses, language and metaphors which seem to dominate discussions of them. Common representations of the transitions from FE to HE posit the journey as either being 'rough' or 'smooth', with 'rough' seemingly leading to negative outcomes for students and smooth, the opposite (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 1999; Barron and D'annunzio 2009; Richardson et al. 2012). This surely ignores the complexity of the process which will likely have elements of both. The polarised language around transition in HE and from FE to HE in particular, does not allow for a transition to be difficult and 'rough' but also a positive experience in which valuable learning takes place. As the FE and HE sectors are different some discomfort is surely expected and should possibly even be welcomed to help challenge students and present an opportunity for new learning (Ecclestone, Biesta & Hughes, 2010). Also, as already noted, transition to HE seems to be a major consideration when discussing progression, retention and performance of students in HE institutions. This is the also the case despite there being no single agreed upon definition of what constitutes a transition, with many differing accounts of what is involved in a transition (for examples see Colley, 2007; Ecclestone, Biesta & Hughes, 2010; Gale & Parker, 2011, 2014). Definitions vary from the general, where transition is a process in which someone or something changes over a period of time (Colley, 2010) to the more threatening sounding 'discontinuity in a person's life space' which requires a shift in behaviour (Hopson & Adams, 1976). Much of the literature which discusses educational transitions does not define what it means by transition and so appears to rely on taken for granted notions. If the literature in this area does not at least define the parameters of its discussions on transition, there is then a risk that many discussions taking place are fundamentally at odds with each other in the definition of their terms.

Furthermore, as transition is frequently equated with the negative, many institutional procedures, policy making bodies and calls for research are attempting to find practical and bureaucratic ways to deal with the movement of students between spaces to make the

process a 'smooth' one. The high drop-out rate of some groups coupled with concerns about their ability to cope with the transition to HE has led to numerous programmes to support students in their academic endeavours, some of which are influenced by external bodies. For example, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education in Scotland, which has had an important role in how FE institutions have developed, has influenced the support put in place for students in recent years. The reason their influence is worth noting is that they appear to have had a hand in shaping the way transitions have been dealt with in some HE institutions and literature in recent years. For example, their most recent 'enhancement theme' was on student transitions; specifically into, through and out of education (QAA, 2014). This theme saw numerous short term funded projects being developed which, it could be argued, has somewhat diluted useful discussions on transition in HE due to the lack of theoretical positioning, longevity or robustness of many of the studies. Additionally, as Grubb (2009) notes, the prevalence of support mechanisms in place to assist and smooth transition has already led to a 'sporadic, fragmented and idiosyncratic' (p.98) system. Such disjointed support is surely in danger of causing more problems for students, as increasing the variety and number of support mechanisms without theorising what the learning issues might be, threatens to reinforce deficit models of support. Field (2013) notes how this negative approach to transitions neglects that for some, making a transition is a form of 'emancipation'. Thus further highlighting the reductive nature of this rhetoric as not all students are 'vulnerable and fragile' (Field, 2013, p12) as they move between learning environments.

Government policy and its impact

How transitions are dealt with by government and educational institutions is important and has far reaching consequences for groups and for the individual. An example of the reach of government intervention in transitions can be found in the government initiative *Bridging the Gap*. This was developed by the Social Exclusion unit in 1999 and had a significant impact on government social exclusion policy at the time (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001). The stated goal of Bridging the Gap was to support young people through education and the transition to adulthood, targeting those deemed most 'at risk' to improve their life chances (Social exclusion unit, 1999). This support, along with some (prescriptive) financial provision, was to include more 'pathways' for young people and increase participation in education. However, Colley and Hodkinson (2001) note that despite some positives, this influential report located the problems it was trying to address within the individual and that the policy objectives had the potential to make things worse for the group they were supposed to help. The report also suggests that young people were somehow complicit in their own poor circumstances and it spent much time picking out the flawed individual characteristics and 'attitudes' of those who do not participate, focussing primarily on their 'lacks and needs' (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001 p340). Fundamentally, it took a short sighted deficit approach to those it set out to help and located the issues of non-participation within the individual rather than considering the 'deep rooted structural factors in society' (Colley & Hodkinson, 2001 p345) in which numerous inequalities can be sourced. Such government policy is therefore in danger of being a behavioural intervention and of trying to build characteristics such as resilience in those it targets in order to make them more able to deal with the 'risk' involved in activities such as extended education (Ecclestone & Lewis, 2014). This is troubling as promoting normative behaviours and depicting other behaviours as the source of the difficulties experienced is in danger of locating the problems within the person and not considering the system itself as a potential source of issues.

Two influential reports both from 1997 (The Kennedy report and the Dearing report) also

had a notable impact on HE institutions and how they deal with certain student groups. These reports researched participation in HE in the UK with the New Labour government then taking forward many recommendations to help expand HE, stating that everyone should be encouraged and enabled to participate regardless of class, ethnicity or gender (NCIHE, 1997). A national strategy was then put in place to help ensure all over the age of 16 had access to FE and HE. However, despite an increase in access being the goal of much of the policy and widely perceived as a positive, Williams (2011) highlights that the problematic nature of how social inclusion was promoted and that this impacted on education in a significant way. Learning was presented in these policies and reports as a 'corrective' to those traditionally excluded from it (Williams, 2011). Williams' argument is worth nothing as it reiterates an important point; that a psychological deficiency is being located in those who traditionally do not participate, rather than considering how other factors such as the structural workings of educational institutions (e.g. significantly fewer part time programmes than FE) and their location etc. may be limiting participation.

Some more examples of influential policy are noted below, however the focus of policy is extremely diverse and like much of the literature on transition, has different perspectives on what transitions are, how they should be managed and why they are troubling for some groups in particular (Ecclestone, 2010). Examples of policy in the UK include the English plan to increase participation outlined in *Raising Expectations: staying in education and training post-16* (Department for Education and Skills, 2007) and in the Scottish context: *Post-16 transitions Policy and Practice Framework Supporting all young people to participate in post-16 learning, training or work* (Scottish Government, 2012); *New Horizons* (2008), tasked with flexibility in educational provision in HE; *More Choices, More chances* (2006) which was to provide routes back into education for youths; *16+ Learning choices* (2010) to encourage post compulsory learning and *Learning for all* (2016) which is the annually updated strategy of the Scottish funding council to widen access to FE and HE. Many of these documents outline their plans to increase participation by supporting transitions of youths to the next stage in their lives and both show the importance placed on transitions and the management of them by government. However, often built in to these documents is the priority of spotting risk and vulnerability, again potentially equating some kind of deficit in the people targeted.

PhD research study

The aim of the PhD research is to interrogate the current conceptualisations of transition and the approaches taken to students making a 'transition' to HE. In particular, it aims to explore the movement from FE to 3rd year of various HE programmes at a post 92 institution in Scotland. The research will explore a number of issues and areas such as the educational issues experienced in this movement and include a consideration of how one environment prepares students, if at all for the other. The research aims to further bring to light the unhelpful discourse on this transition and challenge the focus on the student voice as the basis for 'support' for the students who are navigating these spaces and movements.

Method & data collection

The study employs a qualitative methodology, using focus groups, individual interviews and visual methods. The intention here is not to show validity or generalisability of experiences but more to consider authenticity and investigate resonances between the experiences of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Focus groups with visual elements were conducted with students entering 4 different

programmes with follow up interviews and further visual tasks after a term at University had passed, in order for students to have enough experience of HE to be able to confidently comment on lectures and assessments etc. The visual tasks were designed to provide students with different tools to explore the transition to HE and articulate it in a different way. As Eppler (2006) notes, visualisation is important as it can help give a tangible representation of what the issues are that individuals may otherwise be unable to communicate. Also, individual interviews allow for different experiences to emerge, be explored in depth and compared.

Initial findings and discussions

Initial thematic analysis has been interesting and has provided a rich basis for discussion and further analysis. It should be noted that any discussions here are preliminary and subject to change.

Many themes are beginning to emerge, however for this purposes of this paper, the focus will be on just 2 of these.

Spoon-feeding

The language the students used was rich with metaphors, with one notable example used throughout when students referred to their learning experience; spoon-feeding. This was a key theme in both focus groups and interviews for all students. Students were either angry that they had been spoon-fed (but had done no additional work to make up for what they see as a hindrance), were worried that there would be no spoon-feeding at university and therefore they would fail, or were extremely proud of their FE qualification and adamant that they had received 'proper training' with no spoon-feeding. Some illustrative quotes from those who felt they had been spoon-fed in college are below.

'They just give you everything, you just spit it back out'

'I'm scared that you don't get as much spoon feeding here'

'(College) never really tested you. Your exams didn't really test you cause see with like (tutor) and that, it was like 'go and read that and spit that back out to me in the exam'.

'you could just memorise literally the sheet that they gave you and you would pass..... that didn't challenge you'

Preparedness and being 'good enough'

There was a distinct concern from many of the students that they simply were not 'good enough' for university. In part, this seemed to be due to how some of the teaching was delivered in FE. It should be noted that this did not pertain to all students and some FE institutions were praised by students. However, there was a concern from many students that they were entering the most difficult educational phase of their life with little or no content knowledge. Many of the students also commented on how the college staff would tell them they would not receive extra support at University.

'Constantly, always saying, oh you're no going to get this (support) at university'

'you won't get this time with your lecturers, they're far too busy, they'll be far too busy to speak to you'

'...they said to us, that we're not allowed to ask any questions (at university)'

This concern with being good enough could also be linked to the pass/fail method of assessment that most of their college work employed. This seemed to have an impact on their attitude towards University and their ability to cope there.

'I'd be interested to see how ... know like how good I am, I don't know how good I am, I don't feel as if I know any psychology and I'm going into 3rd year'

'I might have passed my assessments but I might have passed them with just 1 mark or whatever but they don't tell you'

'That's what I didn't like about it, you never know how well you're doing through the whole year, you're like am I doing ok? Am I doing really well? and you don't know until your graded unit'

As noted above discussions and ideas are extremely preliminary at this point and much further analysis is required before a full and robust discussion of the data can be developed.

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Instrumental, relational, and transformative learning in interfaith dialogue between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim adults [Paper not available]

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The purpose of this study was to explore a community-based interfaith dialogue program to understand the adult learning process as well as if and how perspective transformation of alternative faiths occurs. The researcher sought to develop an in-depth view of what occurs and the outcome of interfaith dialogue sessions.

Sustainable urban-rural learning connections in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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Abstract

This paper reports on the early findings of a qualitative research project that asks: how can universities engage with the assets, felt learning needs and connections between urban and rural communities to facilitate sustainable adult and community learning? The paper draws on a theoretical framework of asset based community development and the capabilities approach as advocated by Amartya Sen. The paper is written in the context of post-apartheid South Africa where the legacy of apartheid exclusions and living conditions on racial lines still prevail in many areas. At the time of writing, findings are tentative and the research is ongoing. Further elaborations will be made at the conference.

Introduction

Settlement patterns in rural and urban areas in South Africa still reflect former apartheid and colonial policies (Hlalele, 2014; DHET, 2014). In relation to this just over one half (54%) of South Africa's children live in rural areas (DOE, 2005), although adult migration to urban areas is skewing normal population ratios. Hlalele (2014) highlights that rural areas are characterised negatively in terms of poor infrastructure, poor schooling, poverty, rural-urban brain drain and child labour. There is limited public awareness of rural diversity and limited rural education research, with insufficient understanding of urban-rural linkages. The Durban University of Technology's (DUT) Indumiso campus is situated in the Greater Edendale/ Imbali urban area where approximately 36% of the Pietermaritzburg City's population live. Imbali is also characterised by high levels of poverty, rapid population growth including in-migration from rural areas, poverty and lack of facilities. The Imbali Education Precinct Development Plan (DHET, 2014) is a government initiative to develop a coordinated learning environment in order to address these issues. However, existing education programmes in the area are poorly articulated and do not reflect local community needs (DHET, 2014). The experience of rapid growth cities in other parts of Africa, such as Dar es Salaam, points to the significance of understanding the layers of urban/rural interconnections as a foundation towards building sustainable and learning friendly environments (Kearns, 2012) which will, in turn, contribute to university programmes for community engagement.

The learning city idea

In recent years there has been growing interest in the notion of learning cities and the role that universities can play in facilitating learning networks in geographical contexts. The notion of learning cities has now spread to an interest in rural learning (PASCAL.org; Hlalele, 2013; 2014) fuelled by post apartheid concerns in South Africa and the neglect of rural life by universities (Mgqwashu, 2016).

The learning city idea has emerged over the past twenty five years as a response to discourses of lifelong learning and the need to respond to globalization demands of a fast changing world (Kearns, 2012). The rationale for learning cities is accredited to the work of the OECD which started in 1992 (OECD, 1993) as an initiative to respond to the major challenges of rapid urbanization, such as growing population diversity, environmental concerns, poverty and inequalities. It has been argued that aspirations for social inclusion

and equal opportunities for all require innovative partnerships 'where all stakeholders are united for joint action for mutual benefit' (Kearns, 2012a: 369). The argument is based on the premise that continuous learning is an essential feature of modern societies and contributes to health and well being and economic sustainability. Of particular significance to this proposal is the argument that:

Learning contributes to the development of social capital ... the social resources that individuals within a community create through their webs of social relations and then draw on as a common resource to improve their community's way of life with regard to its social living environment, economic performance and living standards (Yang, 2012:98).

A learning city therefore is a geographical entity whereby all stakeholders and institutions work together to create learning opportunities, formal, non-formal and informal, which can be accessed by all: 'an overarching strategy to change learning behaviour; harnessing of economic, political, educational, cultural and environmental structures for human development' (Belanger, 2006:25).

The learning cities concept is one aspect of university community engagement (Preece, Ntseane, Modise and Osborne, 2012). Universities have played a key role in the learning cities movement around the world (Kearns and Ishumi, 2012) and are cited as one of the common features of learning cities. Other common features are:

... political will and commitment ... partnership and networking ... assessment of learning needs ... increasing learning opportunities ... all stakeholders as learning organizations ... combating exclusion and enhancing social cohesion ... promoting wealth creation and employability ... celebrating and rewarding learning' (Yang, 2012:106-109).

There have been few successful initiatives on the African continent (Walters, 2009; Kearns and Ishumi, 2012; Biao, Esaete and Oonyu, 2013). Nevertheless DUT's Indumiso campus is at the centre of the recent South African government's (DHET 2014) plan to develop the Imbali Education Precinct that will serve as an interconnected learning resource for the urban region of Imbali where the Indumiso campus is based. This initiative is contextualised within the South African Government's rural education report (DoE, 2005) and National Development Plan (RSA, 2012) to develop rural environments and improve services in historically disadvantaged areas. The National Development Plan places emphasis on the development of a rural economy to address the disadvantages of historical settlement patterns by building on local educational networks of institutions (DHET, 2014).

In the context of urban-rural linkages there is a need to understand how different sectors can mutually benefit from each other, drawing on the strong urban-rural ties of extended family connections and social capital and potential for indigenous knowledge in African contexts (Biao et al., 2013; Preece, 2013). Around the world, the concept of learning cities is being developed, but the additional challenges of rurality have meant that rural learning initiatives are less developed.

Furthermore, within South Africa its recent White Paper (DHET, 2013) proposes an integrated approach to post school education and training in the country. The White paper provides a framework for developing community based learning centres (community colleges) which include a focus on non-formal community education as well as vocational

education and training, with a menu of programmes that would be linked to South Africa's national qualifications framework and broader social development agendas. Such programmes would feed directly into graduate community service training and post school teacher training.

However, although development plans are in place at national and regional levels, there is evidence of limited progress in rural areas (Hlalele, 2013; 2014) and generally in cities (Awumbila, Osusu and Teye, 2014). In particular, Hlalele (2014) has highlighted there is limited research in terms of understanding rural education and rural diversity. In the context of the apartheid settlement patterns there is a need to explore how to facilitate interaction between communities and institutions. In particular, it has been highlighted that 'existing education and training programmes do not necessarily reflect the local community and the broader city and regional development needs' (DHET, 2014: 11).

Among poverty ridden communities, and areas that are largely agrarian, Twine (2013) suggests that the approach should be on building livelihood resilience, drawing on communal activities and areas with a view to diversifying livelihoods and enhancing the multiple benefits of existing assets such as livestock and use of natural resources to generate 'off-farm incomes' (ibid: 40). University support for such approaches has proved successful in small scale engagement activities such as the initiative to build on female farmers' indigenous fertiliser practices in Calabar, Nigeria (Biao, Tawo and Akpama, 2010).

In support of a communitarian approach to building learning environments, Kearns (2015) highlights that there are many versions and approaches to developing learning cities and regions. East Asian models place emphasis on 'a strong research base, with a supportive cultural heritage, and with social objectives linked to the rapid socio-economic transformation of these countries' (ibid: 156). Here development often starts at the local neighbourhood level, spreading outwards into administrative districts and cities. The concept of learning cities for this proposal draws from Asian examples which have emphasized a 'community relations' model as distinctive from the European 'competence model'. So the focus is on addressing social exclusion and conflict as key drivers of inequality. Han and Makino (2013) emphasise that the community relations model 'aims to tackle social problems rather than [purely] economic goals and employment' (ibid: 445).

Equally there is a need to understand the nature of linkages between rural and urban dwellers who often retain strong ties in Africa (Biao et al., 2013). There is also a need for research approaches that embrace a critical, emancipatory paradigm that will help citizens to take ownership over their identified problems and identify their own solutions and conditions that will contribute to making these solutions work (Mahlomaholo, 2009).

Rurality

The concept of rurality is evolving and multifaceted. Marsden (1998) and Twine (2013) have suggested that the traditional activities of agricultural production are giving way to more varied activities which include planning for protecting the environment and enhancing rural amenities. Hlalele has pointed out that rurality in South Africa also means a cultural way of life. Rural development therefore 'is about enabling rural people to take control of their destiny, thereby dealing effectively with rural poverty through the optimal use and management of natural resources' (Hlalele, 2013: 563). Education and learning, including how to adapt indigenous knowledge to a changing world, are essential requirements for such rural sustainability.

Urbanization

Africa's urban development reflects its colonial history. The early rural-urban migration phenomenon in African countries was largely forced and controlled by colonialism (Aryeetey-Attoh, 1997). African cities opened up to all during the post-independence period and, whereas high population growth plays a part in rapid urbanization (UN, 2012), there is evidence that rural-urban migration contributes a substantial element to this phenomenon (Tebogo, 2015). There is also evidence that the existing bi-focal approaches to rural and urban development need re-visiting in the light of current trends and inter-connections (Garrett, 2005).

In order to address these gaps in understanding the study adopted a qualitative and participatory research approach to explore the nature of existing assets and felt needs of rural and urban dwellers with a view to recommending learning pathways that establish a complementary relationship between cities and rural areas and between institutions.

This study, therefore, is a timely intervention for ongoing research and policy discussions. It develops the findings of recent community service-learning research that highlighted the need for more sustained community relationships and networks that focus on grass-roots led engagement initiatives from an asset-based perspective (Preece and Manicom, 2015; Hlalele and Tsoetsi, 2015). The findings will feed directly into the Imbali Education Precinct Draft Development Plan (DHET, 2014) for the Pietermaritzburg area and the discipline based community engagement and service learning programmes for the university. The role of the university campus as a mediation point for learning precincts will be central to the project.

Theoretical framework

This research draws on asset based community development theory (Chaskin, 2001, Vidal and Keating 2004, Walker 2006) and a capabilities development approach (Sen, 1999). In this context capabilities are the real and actual freedoms (opportunities) people have to do and be what they value being and doing (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2006). Unfreedoms are context specific circumstances that might constrain genuine choices among diverse individuals (Walker, 2012). A central question to ask in this respect would be whether some people get more opportunities to convert their resources (distribution of good things in life) into capabilities (freedom to use and access those goods) than others. The study will use the capability to lens to explore how higher education can contribute to educational and other functionings in community contexts. The asset based community development focus is on the concept of assets which are resources or identifiable advantages within a community. '[B]y focusing on its assets, the community as a whole will see its positive aspects' with a view to building on those assets (Phillips and Pittman, 2009).

The study's objectives are to:

- Obtain an overview of existing learning provisions in Imbali and its respective rural linkages of Thornville and Hopewell.
- Understand the connections, felt learning needs, assets and vulnerabilities of citizens in these selected urban and rural contexts
- Identify the desired learning pathways as perceived by the selected rural and urban dwellers that can illustrate how to promote beneficial rural-urban connections and sustainable learning ecologies.
- Gain a better understanding of how higher education institutions can contribute to

the felt learning needs in these selected urban and rural contexts.

Methodology

This ongoing research is framed within a critical/interpretive paradigm (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013) using a case study approach (Rule and John, 2010). It is a primarily qualitative study involving multiple methods. These include a survey of relevant community and institutional leaders, opinion leaders and organised interest groups to establish what exists, where and how. In addition transect walks, focus groups and interviews with grass-roots community members aim to establish existing assets and vulnerabilities and potential learning pathways that may contribute to sustainability and poverty reduction.

The target population is the community members rather than university staff since it is the community voice that the proposal seeks to explore, although key university contacts, such as community engagement leaders and discipline leaders, may be included in the survey. A target sample of 15 key informants for each location (Thornville, Hopewell and Ward 19 of Imbali) was selected, largely through the snowball technique, drawing on names suggested by initial contacts (school teachers and ward councillors).

The findings, as stated, are preliminary and tentative. They are summarised here as follows.

Findings: community assets and liabilities

Even though the township of Imbali and the rural villages of Thornville and Hopewell are all classified as disadvantaged the discrepancies in terms of educational provision are stark. The ward councillor of Imbali highlighted that it was the only 'ward of black people' which possessed education facilities from pre-school up to university level, including a technical vocational education college and special school for physically challenged learners: 'We are rich' he said. But he also reminded the researchers that recent violence between rival political parties had destroyed much of the township's infrastructure including an industrial training area, shopping centre and sports facilities. The ward councillor interacted frequently with the education institutions and confirmed he was a member of the steering committee for the Imbali Education Precinct concept. Noticeably lacking, however, were adult learning opportunities or opportunities for growth. The councillor pointed out that Imbali had potential to be promoted as a tourist site since it housed the building where Nelson Mandela made his last speech before his capture in 1964. Sites associated with Nelson Mandela, and other famous anti-apartheid struggle heroes, are key tourist attractions throughout the country.

In contrast, Thornville had no secondary school and most children dropped out of school after the age of 12 because family resources were not available to send them further afield. A local teacher revealed that existing employment opportunities were owned by outsiders who would bring their own workers in from another province. The farms were owned by white farmers who employed people under oppressive conditions. Some farmers would not even allow the farm workers to plant their own crops. As one resident stated: 'We are all farm dwellers ... we are under the jurisdiction of farmers'. Furthermore, whereas the Imbali councillor was heavily involved in his community, Thornville's councillor was based in Hopewell and rarely seen, except during election time. Generally the village suffered from lack of skills and a sense of powerlessness as to how people could develop any sense of agency.

Hopewell fared slightly better. Although poverty and unemployment were major concerns the village was larger, housed a secondary school and some family businesses where the

owners were making efforts to contribute to the village's development needs. However, the sense of powerlessness was still evident. One shop owner summarised the situation in a metaphor:

You see, when you buy a chicken and tie it with a roll. Even when you take out that roll, it will think it is still tied on, and not move. The same thing applies to people of this area. I am trying hard to ask them to reach out, but seemingly their mentality has been enslaved for too long. They don't realise things that might help them

These preliminary findings reveal that there were many 'unfreedoms' which hindered people's sense of agency. Each community required committed intervention that would mediate on their behalf as well as create new awareness of how to maximise existing assets.

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Learning multiculturalism: In the neoliberal context

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In the wake of the refugee crisis, the Canadian government brought a renewed focus to its private sponsorship program. Private sponsorship creates the conditions for groups of Canadians to sponsor refugees, thereby taking responsibility for the first year of resettlement. My research with Middle Eastern refugees brought me into conversation with many newcomers in the first year of resettlement under the private sponsorship program. A point of interest that emerged from these conversations was the fact that newcomers learned the norms of Canadian multiculturalism from their sponsors as well as their English language classes. In other words, they learned civic and cultural norms through informal and formal instruction. Similarly, many groups of sponsors expressed notions of civic engagement and cultural exchange in their accounts of sponsoring refugees. Preliminary investigations of the private sponsorship program, however, also allude to the fact that the government may be shifting its humanitarian responsibilities to private citizens (Hyndman, Payne & Jimenez, 2017; Lenard, 2016; Tito & Cochand, 2017). The private sponsorship program, therefore, presents itself as a nascent complex of informal and formal learning as well as institutional and interpersonal arrangements, thereby providing a unique point of entry into thinking through the tensions and contradictions among contemporary articulations of multiculturalism and citizenship.

Reflecting upon the case of private sponsorship, the purpose of this paper is to rethink the relationship between practices of multiculturalism and neoliberal models of citizenship. I begin by briefly summarising Roxana Ng's (1995) investigation of Canada's official policy of multiculturalism. Ng's work is important because she outlined precisely how multiculturalism became an ideological, or 'common sense,' frame that conceals the struggles of racialised, ethnic, and working class communities. I then use Ng's framing to consider contemporary explications of multiculturalism. In more recent years multiculturalism has come under fire from both liberal and conservative vantage points. While it is important to not lose sight of conservative criticisms, I have chosen to focus on liberal critiques of multiculturalism because they provide insight into the tensions within (neo)liberal conceptualisation of citizenship and society. Reading contemporary critiques of multiculturalism through Ng's analysis, I argue that multicultural and neoliberal ideologies do not oppose each other, but rather have coalesced to produced a paradoxical form of cultural and economic management that both elides the social struggles that gave rise to multiculturalism and positions local communities as the preferred site of social and cultural development.

Turning to the private sponsorship program the second phase of the analysis considers the learning and education associated with the resettlement of refugees. Situating the private sponsorship program within the restructuring of the neoliberal state, I emphasise the ways in which the Canadian state draws upon the common sense of multiculturalism to reorient humanitarian immigration through the logic of marketization. Bound up with the restructuring of immigration are forms of civic and cultural learning that reflect the broader intermingling of neoliberal and multicultural ideologies. In other words, the interconnected models of entrepreneurial citizenship and self-sufficient newcomers orient both formal language instruction and informal civic learning. The overarching analysis, therefore, considers the extent to which ideologies of cultural management coalesce with economic rationalism to build a neoliberal articulation of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism: an ideological frame

In its initial phases Canadian multiculturalism responded to the growing demands for resources and political representation from diverse ethnic populations and Aboriginal peoples. The official policy of multiculturalism articulated an ideal of national unity through social diversity and cultural pluralism, while officially recognising bilingualism. The social framing that emerged through multiculturalism, however, emphasised notions of social diversity, while simultaneously eliding the concrete inequalities that separate racialised from Anglo Canadians (Bannerji, 2000; Guo, 2015; Ng, 1995). Roxana Ng's (1995) textual analysis of the policy pronouncement provides a detailed account of how policy and governmental discourse created the social conditions for the management of resources along cultural and linguistic lines without destabilising the power of traditional elites. Central to Ng's analysis is the argument that multiculturalism must be understood as an ideological frame. More than simply a set of beliefs or biases, ideology is an epistemological 'trick' that empties ideas of material social relations, thereby positing particular concepts as abstractly universal. In the case of multiculturalism, the militant struggles of Aboriginal, ethnic, and racialised communities were emptied from the official government framework, and cultural management took the place of anti-racist and anti-colonial movements (Bannerji, 2000; Coulthard, 2014; Ng, 1995). Once the ideological frame of multiculturalism was normalised, the debates that the framework referenced became taken for granted or simply 'common sense' (Ng, 1995, p.36). Ng's work emphasises the underside of multicultural ideology, which orients social consciousness by deemphasising the material conditions that aroused a particular social struggle. In this sense, the official policy of multiculturalism *manages* the class interests of the nation-state through a cultural frame, but does not *resolve* the underpinning class tensions that ignited the initial struggle over resources. It is important to revisit Ng's analysis of the policy framework because the contemporary racial, cultural, and class tensions that are erupting today are rooted in the ideological management society.

Moving from the 1970s to present day, we can note that as neoliberal models of political economy began to take hold the class frictions that provoked the policy of multiculturalism reemerged, albeit in a slightly altered form. From a social liberal vantage point, official multiculturalism is conceptualised as an effective tool of social integration and cultural accommodation. Socially supported integration, however, requires a state that is willing to commit resources to social programs for ethnic communities and newcomers. The emergence of neoliberal political economy and the scaling back of the welfare state, emphasised notions of individual responsibility and economic self-sufficiency for both native born and newly arrived Canadians. As such, the ideals of socially supported cultural pluralism and neoliberalism appear as fundamentally at odds with each other. Moreover, the disjuncture between pluralism and (neo)liberalism has played out in the popular consciousness through debates of individual versus collective rights, and is most notable in areas of women's rights and sexual diversity (Kundnani, 2012; Kymlicka, 2001; Ley, 2007). That being said, successive Canadian governments have maintained a stated commitment to the official policy of multiculturalism, while concomitantly cutting funding for cultural and resettlement services (Bhuyan, 2012; Ley, 2007). Viewed as an ideological frame the seemingly contradictory policies that work toward both a lean state and multiculturalism can be understood as reorienting the economic management of cultural pluralism, rather than abolishing it. In fact, as Ley (2007) notes, official multiculturalism is now promoted for its ability to aid international flows of capital and contribute to emerging industries. Thus, the common sense of multiculturalism has not been destabilised, but rather expanded into areas of market formation and international business.

A second friction has emerged in relation to the scale or social terrain of multiculturalism. Noting that the official policy of multiculturalism reinforced racialised divisions and cemented the power of Western elites, proponents of informal intercultural learning, often termed everyday multiculturalism, argue that official frameworks do not capture the lived practices of cultural exchange. Hence, the analytical frame of everyday multiculturalism emerged as a way to emphasise local encounters, and to think through the democratic potentials of multicultural spaces (Amin, 2002; Colombo, 2015; Harris, 2009; Shan & Walter, 2015). Harris (2009, p.190), for example, argues that everyday multiculturalism involves a reimagining of 'how cultural diversity is lived outside of the majoritarian logic at the everyday level.' Harris' (2009, .191) argument, thus, rescales the preferred site of democracy by emphasising interpersonal learning, and pluralism within a localised setting. For Harris, intercultural conflict is not to be denied, but rather should be interpreted as a manageable aspect of contemporary democracy. Similarly, Amin (2002) utilises the notion of 'micropublics' to frame the intercultural learning and negotiation that takes place in neighbourhoods, school, or workplaces. While Amin places greater emphasis on intercultural antagonisms than Harris (2013), their work finds common ground in the argument that nascent forms of pluralist citizenship can be observed at the local scale. Amin (2002, p.974) makes a case for bottom-up multicultural democracies guided by the 'political commons.' Here the political commons emerges through practices of cultural exchange, while assuming individual rights as the bedrock. The turn toward everyday multiculturalism does not deny the importance of multicultural policies, but rather inverts the formative process of multiculturalism by emphasising the community as the preferred site of cultural negotiation.

The inversion of multicultural practice finds an unlikely pairing with neoliberal ideals of civic engagement. The rise of neoliberal political economy was accompanied by theories of democracy that equated so-called local people with popular sovereignty. Sara Carpenter (2015) has argued that the political emphasis on local communities is paradoxically related to the economic strategy of the local, whereby communities are expected to be entrepreneurial and internally manage social problems through public-private partnerships. What is particularly interesting about the symmetry of everyday multiculturalism and neoliberal citizenship is that the local community absorbs the functions of social and economic development. Here again there is an entanglement of cultural pluralism and economic self-sufficiency that builds upon the common sense of multiculturalism. Switching focus to the private sponsorship program, the ideological entanglement of entrepreneurial communities, common sense multiculturalism, and market formation becomes increasingly visible.

The new humanitarian immigration

The various waves of immigration policy in Canada have been oriented by the tensions between labour market demands and ideals national cohesion. The latter part of the 1960s saw the move away from explicitly European immigration, and the introduction of skills based eligibility criteria, known as the points system. The reorganised immigration system also divided immigration into three classes: economic, family reunification, and humanitarian. Refugee resettlement is the only form of immigration that is guided by notions of humanitarian need, rather than explicit national interest. Inline with the rise and consolidation of economic rationalism, the 1980s and 1990s saw greater emphasis placed on attracting more highly skilled immigrants as well as entrepreneurs and business investors. At the very same time low skilled jobs were to be filled by temporary migrant labour, while refugee intake quotas decreased and family reunification pathways were tightened (Choudry & Smith, 2016; Pashang, 2011; Sharma, 2006). As Lange and Baillie

(2015) argue, liberal and humanitarian approaches to immigration have been systematically eroded since the 1990s, as economic interests increasing took centre stage. While Lange and Baillie's observation certainly holds true for the relationship between classes of immigration, the recent expansion of the private sponsorship program suggests that the very notion of humanitarian immigration is shifting.

The private sponsorship of refugees has been possible in Canada since the 1960s, and the Immigration Act was formally amended in 1976 to officially include the program. The first cohort of refugees to enter Canada under the formalised program was 40 000 Southeast Asian refugees fleeing war in the late 1970s. While private sponsorship agreements of the time only required that sponsors provide one year of financial support, many sponsors also assisted with resettlement and provided emotional support (Beiser, 2003). The current program formalises sponsorship responsibilities by requiring that sponsors raise the funds to cover the equivalent of social assistance for one year; provide emotional support and assist with resettlement, which includes finding housing, medical and dental services, as well as schooling and language classes; and locating appropriate cultural communities and activities (Beiser, 2003; Hyndman, 2011; Lenard, 2016). In short, the work of resettlement is shifted to the community of sponsors, thereby providing the Canadian government with a means to both scale back resettlement costs and uphold a discourse of humanitarianism. As such, the expansion of the private sponsorship program should not be understood as a renewed focus on humanitarian immigration, but rather as the reorienting of humanitarianism inline with economic rationalism and the marketizing of community engagement.

The marketization of humanitarianism rests on a particular model of social integration set within the common sense of multiculturalism. Announcing the expansion of the private sponsorship program, the Canadian government emphasised both the need for public-private partnerships and the direct involvement of citizens in the resettlement of refugees (UNHCR, 2016). This statement is consistent with and expands upon the state's more protected discourse of social integration, which assumes the common sense frame of multiculturalism, as well as the trend toward marketized development (Dunbar & Milner, 2016; Hyndman, 2011). Here we can observe the growing entanglement of market formation and humanitarianism, with models of entrepreneurial citizenship and multiculturalism. Flowing out of this ideological formation is the question of civic engagement and citizenship learning at the local level.

Self-sufficient newcomers and entrepreneurial communities

Both formal and informal learning are interwoven with the private sponsorship program. All refugees, government or privately sponsored, have access to the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Created in 1992 the LINC program was central to the federal government's plan for social integration. Tracing the historical transitions in language instruction for newcomers, Guo's (2015, p.44-45) research demonstrates the uneven, and often contradictory, shift from assimilationist policies to language instruction for employment and integration. Her research notes that the LINC program emphasises so-called Canadian multicultural values, informs newcomers about their rights and responsibilities, and teaches 'survival language skills,' rather than a level of language proficiency that would meet the needs of post-secondary education or a professional occupation. Guo, thus, argues that the LINC program aims to assimilate and de-professionalise newcomers, while reproducing the common sense of multiculturalism. Moreover, the teaching of survival language skills is consistent with the ideal of the self-sufficient newcomer (Root, et al., 2014). There is an interesting link here to the private

sponsorship program, which interprets a fast entry into the labour market as effective integration. However, as Hyndman's (2011, p.15) research shows, privately sponsored refugees have incomes that are 29%-45% of Canada's low-income cut off, and they often forgo language classes in favour of securing any form of employment. Thus, the downward mobility of newcomers is hidden behind an ideal of self-sufficiency, which is concomitantly normalised through the cultural assimilationist aspects of formal language instruction.

The common sense of neoliberal multiculturalism is also expanded through the informal learning associated with resettlement. In the months since the private sponsorship program was expanded, a number of media sources have described the intercultural exchanges that are now taking place. The testimonials are diverse and complex, expressing both frustrations and excitement from newcomers and sponsorship groups. In doing so they illustrate the informal learning that has taken place within the context of resettlement. Recounting their involvement with a sponsorship group Tito and Cochand (2017) describe processes of fundraising, enlisting volunteer labour, collecting donated goods, and using their community leverage to secure more affordable rental accommodation. What is particularly interesting about Tito and Cochand's account is that they describe an entrepreneurial community taking up the work of resettlement. Similarly, Kantor and Einhorn's (2016) series of articles detail the intercultural and intergenerational learning among sponsorship groups and refugees. Although the common sense of multiculturalism is clearly articulated by sponsorship groups, it is interwoven with a normative articulation of individual rights. The intercultural learning accompanying resettlement is, of course, uneven and varied; what is noteworthy, however, is that the importance of local entrepreneurial communities seems to be emerging as a form of multicultural (neoliberal) common sense. Indeed, Lenard (2016, p.306) argues that by enlisting citizens in the work resettlement Canada is strengthening its multicultural tradition. Hence, in contrast to the analytical fame of everyday multiculturalism, which inverts processes of cultural pluralism, the learning associated with private sponsorship suggest that community centred multiculturalism cannot be disarticulated from top-down models of entrepreneurial civic engagement.

Concluding thoughts

As I suggested at the onset of the discussion, it is important to return to the analyses of multiculturalism that exposed its ideological function. Ng's work draws attention to the ways in which multiculturalism was employed as a tool to elide racialised class frictions. Viewing multiculturalism as an ideological framework creates the conceptual space to think through current social frictions, not as a disjuncture between neoliberal and multicultural models of citizenship, but rather as imbricated in the broader historical tensions that gave rise to a politics of cultural recognition instead of economic redistribution. In fact, as this paper suggests, multicultural and neoliberal ideologies are interwoven in the broader project of normalising market-based social developed at both national and local scales. The private sponsorship of refugees emerges as a particularly interesting example of civic learning and cultural assimilation. The private sponsorship of refugees, moreover, connects ideals of the entrepreneurial community with the self-sufficient newcomer, while weaving both of these ideologies into the common sense of neoliberal multiculturalism.

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Is it the taking part that counts? Access to lifelong learning opportunities in Germany's regime of dis/ability

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1. Introduction: adult education and the issue of inclusion

Education for all—and especially for some has been a leading leitmotif throughout the history of adult education, referring to its mandate to foster the social inclusion of marginalized or vulnerable groups in society (see in detail Schreiber-Barsch, 2017; Schreiber-Barsch, forthcoming). However, apart from this consistency, societal systems of inclusion / exclusion represent socially (re)produced entities that are permanently under negotiation. Inclusion / exclusion are dialectical processes that, furthermore, do not represent well-defined static groups or a stable societal condition. As Wilson (2000) has pointed out, referring to inclusion / exclusion is hence of no use without a contextual reference. Pursuing this argument, the paper provides the understanding that the term inclusion stands for a normative framework of a desired societal condition (i.e. an 'inclusive society') and, at the same time, describes one part of the ongoing social processes of including *and* excluding across the whole range of social features (be that gender, class, employment status or other).

Significant for this paper is the paradigm shift which has been substantially promoted in Germany (as elsewhere) since the ratification of the United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009. The government's commitment to ensuring 'an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning' (United Nations, 2006, art. 24) claims to finally fully ensure the existing right to education. This political agenda-setting of social inclusion in its focus on dis/ability shakes the very foundations of who's in and who's out in society's lifelong learning system, especially in countries like Germany with a traditionally highly segregated system (Poore, 2009). For centuries, segregation was based on a deficit-oriented categorization of learners into 'normal' and 'special' learning institutions along the 'able/not-able divide' (Campbell, 2009). This has resulted in the ongoing status quo that, in Germany, learning opportunities for adults with impairments or learning difficulties continue to be provided almost exclusively in sheltered workshops or in care institutions without any primary adult education mandate—hence not in public spaces like public adult education centers (Lindmeier, 2003).

For adult education, two crucial points emerge. Firstly, in accordance with the UN Convention, it is indispensable to recognize adults with impairments or learning difficulties as regular clients of, and prospective participants in, adult education and to stop shifting responsibility to Special Needs Education. One of adult education's core principles is identifying target groups that are seen both as capable of *and* vitally in need of learning and that are thus addressed using specific target group-oriented measures; however, historically this status has not been granted to adults with impairments or learning difficulties. Secondly, in acknowledging such a status, research and practice must move beyond the ideology of inclusion and dis/ability (Buckup, 2009; Banks and Polack, 2014).

Against this backdrop, the paper pursues understandings that dis/ability is not an ontological category, but needs to be contextualized according to the *interrelatedness* of being, in whatever sense, individually impaired as well as living in disabling societal

conditions (Rocco and Delgado, 2011). It needs to be deconstructed from a homogenous minority group approach or from referring to a unilateral body of research and discourse towards a multi-factorial account of dis/ability in its interrelatedness with biological, social, cultural *and* psychological aspects, attitudes and norms (Shakespeare, 2013; Riddell and Watson, 2014). Therefore, a glance at Germany's regime of dis/ability and of positioning people according to the existing order as a citizen or 'not-yet-being-a-citizen' (Biesta and Lawy, 2006), a 'lesser citizen' (Kabeer, 2005), explains why a public adult education center is more than a territory shared by learners, professionals and pedagogical material. A spatial approach reveals the inherent symbolic dimensions of expected 'normality' and of the distribution of power and dominion determining who is to what extent able, powerful and considered able to redefine, reorder and, finally, ensure the given ideas about learning.

2. Space is more than place: adult education, spatial theory and dis/ability

Taking a closer look at adult education as an institutional learning setting allows us to understand how the handling of the dis/ability issue is negotiated in the interplay between the macro-political level (UN Convention), the meso-political (public adult education centers as professional institutions with an adult learning mandate) and the micro-political level of individuals' everyday practices.

In Germany, the historical roots of public adult education centers, the so-called *Volkshochschulen*, stretch back to the end of the 19th century and were influenced by Europe-wide developments such as the British university extension movement, the Scandinavian model of folk high schools in the tradition of its Danish founding father N.F.S. Grundtvig, modern society's endeavors to popularize knowledge via public lectures and the establishment of workers' institutes and craftsmen's schools in, first and foremost, urban areas and in the light of industrialization (Süssmuth and Sprink, 2009). Today, 917 public adult education centers exist throughout Germany, operating as independent legal entities, but working under the auspices of the state, the respective federal states and the local authorities (Huntemann and Reichart, 2014). They offer further education, in-house training, vocational certificates as well as literacy or citizenship courses and the whole range of liberal adult education learning offers. About 40 % of their financial resources stems from public subsidies, with revenues from participation fees amounting also to 40 % (as for 2013; *ibid.*). Their traditionally close ties to the public sector and their historical leitmotif of providing adult education for all and especially for some, beyond any particular political convictions, age cohorts, financial situations or learning objectives, explains why their work is entitled *adult education in public responsibility*.

Nevertheless, adults with impairments or learning difficulties have never been recognized as regular clientele. This traditional order of access to adult education in public responsibility has been fundamentally challenged by the UN Convention. However, data on public adult education centers still manifest the traditional order. The share of target-group oriented courses amongst the total number of all courses is 17%; of this, 2 % are explicitly labelled as for 'people with disabilities' (Huntemann and Reichart, 2014). In another current survey (Koscheck, Weiland and Ditschek, 2013), all adult education providers were asked for the first time to estimate (because quantitative data rarely exists and is complicated, if not unethical, to gain) the number of participants with disabilities / impairments in their regular course portfolio; the findings revealed a percentage of less than 5 %. Whether or not it is possible to calculate an 'adequate' participation rate, there is no denying that the proportion of adults with impairments or learning difficulties is low.

What becomes apparent is the cultural and political dimension of the issue, as this low participation rate cannot be explained solely by a lack of wheelchair ramps or insufficient formal rights. Rather, Young's (2002) differentiation into external and internal forms of exclusion appears applicable: External exclusion refers to the a priori exclusion of individuals from the *demos* due to formal rights. But what is decisive is internal exclusion, happening a posteriori:

Though formally included in a forum or process, people may find that their claims are not taken seriously and may believe that they are not treated with equal respect. The dominant mood may find their ideas or modes of expression silly or simple, and not worthy of consideration (ibid., 55).

Thus, even though formal access is provided, voices are not acknowledged and recognition is granted only pro forma.

2.1 Analytical framework: Martina Löw's relational understanding of space

Against this backdrop, using relational spatial theory (Löw, 2001) enables the analysis of the interrelatedness of material, social, and symbolic dimensions of space and opens up an understanding of the spatial order of who gains access to public adult education institutions and, imperatively, why this is not merely a pedagogical issue. It manifests the symbolic framework that public adult education centers are meant for abled adults and sheltered workshops or similar institutions are meant for non-abled adults. This is what Holston (2007) calls the 'know-your-place' rule, re-produced by most of society's members, be that individuals, organizations, professionals or the like, and by explicit facts and internalized attitudes and norms, an interactive *doing disability* (Waldschmidt, 2008).

The so-called *spatial turn* in social science and humanities has brought the phenomena of space and place into the foreground since the beginnings of the 1990s. This paper draws on the work of Martina Löw (2001; 2008), who, with her concept of space, provided one of the most influential German language sociological works in recent years. Löw's aim is, in reference to the work of Giddens (1984), to overcome theoretical dichotomies and understand space as a *duality* of structural order/ing and action (Löw, 2001; 2008). Significant for this paper is Löw's relational understanding of space; defining space as a 'relational ordering of social goods and living beings at places' (Löw, 2001). This order/ing is re-produced by what she calls processes of *synthesis* and *placing* of these elements (see below). Furthermore, her approach allows an analytical differentiation between space and place, as place refers to a concrete, territorial locus, whereas at one locus many social spaces may be produced, re-arranged and negotiated (ibid.). The same territorial public adult education center may represent an everyday learning space for some, but a distant world for others.

Institutionalized order/ings like the aforementioned 'know-your-place' rule are defined by Löw as *spatial structures*. Löw elaborates that spatial structures enable and constrain action and that they are deeply anchored in institutions. The German history of adult education and dis/abilities illustrates the mechanisms and powerful consequences of such spatial structures: in this case of the traditional spatial structure of *segregated spaces for adult learners with dis/abilities* (see in detail Schreiber-Barsch, 2015; 2017), establishing the basic pattern of segregated learning institutions along the 'able/not-able divide' (Campbell, 2009). It is against this background that the policy agenda on inclusion set changes in action.

2.2 Access to a place of learning – insights into an explorative pilot study

The crucial point about the excluding impact of dis/abilities are not the impairments, difficulties or whatever kinds of impediments themselves, but their commonality in being labelled, perceived and internalized as barriers to participation (Bielefeld and Rohrman, 2012). In this sense, a public adult education institution provides a public space for learning, performing and communicating political subjectivities and, at the same moment, influences the way political subjectivities are formed through its specific material, social, and symbolic order/ing.

Such processes of gaining access to and occupying public spaces were at the fore of an explorative pilot study (Silke Schreiber-Barsch & Emma Fawcett; University of Hamburg), focusing, as a first step, on the key significance of adult education professionals and their management and planning activities in processes of transforming public spaces for adult learning. Here, access serves as a hinge between adult education providers and adults interested in learning, even before actual participation occurs. The research project adopted a qualitative research design (Grounded Theory; Strauss and Corbin, 1998) using semi-guided expert interviews (of approximately 90 minutes) with pedagogical professionals from the field under scrutiny: academic / institutional stakeholders working in or with institutionalized learning settings for adults (meaning, mostly, public adult education centers or publicly accessible disabled care providers; n=7). The research question asked how inclusion, in the sense of the UN Convention, is operationalized in institutional learning settings for adults; thus, the professional's perspective was given priority (as the starting point for a follow-up with participatory research, giving voice to adults with learning difficulties themselves). The data were analyzed using selective coding following Strauss and Corbin (1998).

In our research, we elaborated on the spatiality of the professionals' activities, deriving the interwoven processes of spacing and synthesizing from their explanations of how they are operationalizing inclusion. Following Löw, the person performing the processes of spacing and synthesizing, here at a public space of learning, is of key significance in re-/producing societal structures of power and dominion (Löw, 2001, 215). Our findings allow discussion of a conceptual model of the *architecture of inclusion* at public learning places for adults (Schreiber-Barsch and Fawcett, in completion), as it will be pointed out.

3. Re-order/ing the topography of learning and political subjectivation

In merging the issues raised, two provocative questions arise: Why should it be valid to regard adults with dis/abilities as regular clientele of the lifelong learning system with a legitimate claim to participate? And second, would they want to participate?

The answer to the first question may seem simple with reference to the UN human rights framework (United Nations, 1948) and the UN Convention, which both state that the right to education is a human right. However, the arguments and empirical findings presented in the paper convincingly show that the policy agenda on inclusion is one thing, but that the everyday practices in adult education tell a different kind of story. Accordingly, the re-order/ing of the 'normal' topography of learning settings in adult education shifts the basic coordinates of the underlying inclusion / exclusion system: anchoring recognition as an adult education client to individual status (Fraser, 1995) and not to membership of a minority group paternalistically labelled as abnormal, sick or deserving pity, this establishes a parity of esteem of all adults interested in learning in being able to decide whether to participate or not. It is not about ironing out differences, claiming a simple *everything for everyone*, or ignoring needs and shifting them to individual responsibility,

but about removing automatisms of deficit-oriented logics and practices— and about the right to exercise existing rights. Therefore, the negotiation of access to learning opportunities is not merely a pedagogical issue, but in essence a negotiation of citizenship and politics in democratic societies. Formal rights may ensure pro forma inclusion (Young, 2002), but participation, like inclusion, is not context-free (Masschelein and Quaghebeur, 2005). The current regimes of power set the framework of what *quality* of participation is aimed for and in what ways access is granted to political arenas as sites for learning, performing and communicating political subjectivities. Rancière (1999) emphasizes in his work on *disagreement* the objective of such processes of subjectivation: not a (better) inclusion in the current regimes of power, but a revision of the regime itself by those who were previously not granted the right to be seen and to be heard.

This leads to the second question. Rule and Modipa's (2012) research on attitudes and experiences of adult learners with dis/abilities in South Africa derived the transformative force of being acknowledged in public space and of virtually occupying places (in Löw's sense of subjective appropriation processes) that were not meant for them before: 'This movement is a physical movement from the isolation of the home to a public space in which people with disabilities engage in public activities' (ibid., 154). This virtual change of place, also applicable to a public adult education center as part of public space, is not to be underestimated, due to the fact that traditional places in the domain of disabled care are known rather for infantilizing procedures and restricted possibilities for autonomous decision-making regarding if, where and how to participate. Acknowledging adult learners with dis/abilities as regular clientele does, very visibly, re-order the terrain, the procedures and the pedagogical settings of a public adult education center for adult learners of all kinds, its teaching and administrative personnel and its physical premises, and, through this, the current order of public space. However, subjective appropriation processes include the option to reject offers as well.

Summing up, re-ordering access to public adult education centers in the name of inclusion opens up enormous potential in recognizing adults with dis/abilities and interested in learning as regular occupants and respected citizens of public space and learning opportunities. Apart from non-negotiable responsibilities on the policy level and on institutional levels to acknowledge their right to exercise existing rights, this paper further argues for an inclusive system of lifelong learning which means recognizing and establishing a parity of esteem of *all* adults interested in learning in being able to decide whether to participate in what is on offer or not. It renders possible the ability to decide and to act in the most self-determined manner in accordance with personal interests and desires—whether this is *not* to participate or to participate and whether this is 'merely' taking part in courses in the current regime of power or contributing in calling for a revision of the regime itself.

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Collaborating with students in critical thinking and citizenship

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Abstract

Quality education and lifelong learning for all has been acknowledged as being a key element in UNESCO's mission (2008-2013). Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO (2014, p4) further stated that; '...Global Citizenship Education must also be considered crucial elements for well-rounded educational systems.' However, in the era of globalisation, migration and conflict, a holistic methodology rather than the individualistic approach is one that is required and this paper will demonstrate that the inclusion of citizenship and employability can augment the critical learning experience, especially when embedded in the student's own disciplines.

The rationale for investigating the teaching of citizenship and employability originated from a personal perspective of the author being an adult returner. As a student there was little understanding by the author of how to study, and furthermore, the terminology used was incomprehensible. This lack of familiarity with terminology and the world of higher education concur with Lea and Street's (2006) concept re academic literacies, in that the student is expected to understand different genres and also be able to engage and negotiate their way through the institution's multilayers of power and authority with the acknowledgement of the balance of power is weighted towards the institution as it decides on the level of the awards the accreditation and uses specific language.

The academic literacies model requires the student to recognise and engage in the levels of power that have been adopted by the institution and to be able to apply the different learning approaches as required according to the individual settings. By using the academic literacy model, the student can move from one form of discourse to another without either losing their own 'voice' and yet meet the requirements of the institution. This is important as this model sees itself very much as one that is not deficit driven; rather the student is working with the tutor in order to make sense of his or her learning environment. Nevertheless, Hayes (2005) contend a more pertinent question concerning Lifelong Learning (LLL), which is why do some learners disengage with learning or even feel barred from the higher education establishments.

Although the aim of this paper is to illustrate how students can be encouraged to become independent and effective learners, it is acknowledged that the curriculum must be inclusive. Students are encouraged to become critical learners but this is still within the institution's framework as they control the assessment process.

Higher Education has a key role to play in this process, in encouraging critical learning and ensuring that the concepts of citizenship and employability can be included in the programmes, but it can be challenging for students who may feel that citizenship has no relevance to their programme of study.

Thus the paper focuses on one approach that demonstrates how the inclusion of teaching about citizenship and inclusion among students at one higher educational institution has engaged students. The interventions employed recognise that the students are digitally engaged and the 'Real World' is one that compliments their learning that compliments their

learning in the 21st Century.

Introduction

Independent learning and lifelong learning are terms that are strongly associated with learning. This paper seeks to explain why the learning that is on offer should not only be one that is of quality and enrich the learner's experience, but also should engage with the real world. This means, that at times, the learner should be exposed to areas outside their immediate discipline, including concepts such as citizenship and as Barnett (2012) notes we live in times of uncertainty. UNESCO (2014, p25) further stated in their Vision, that the educators have a responsibility to carry out '...problem-solving and creative thinking; understanding and respect for human rights; inclusion and equity; and cultural diversity...' Indeed, their fifth target states that 'By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education...' (UNESCO, 2014, p26)

Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) is a vocational orientated university, and employability skills and citizenship are therefore taught in partnership with the students. This paper suggests that the teaching of employability and citizenship are underpinned by the employment of theoretical models such as academic literacies and in accordance with the 21st century, the teaching and learning experience should also incorporate the application of blended learning. The paper illustrates by way of a case study in one Academic School, in GCU, how blended learning has supported the teaching of citizenship and employability within the students' discipline whilst acknowledging the diversity of students' backgrounds.

Glasgow Caledonian University

GCU situated in the centre of Glasgow, Scotland and has approximately 17,000 students studying in its three academic schools: Glasgow School for Business and Society (GSBS), School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) and the School of Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE). A key element is its commitment to increasing access to study and lifelong learning (GCU, 2015).

The university was formerly the Glasgow College of Technology, and following a merger with the Queens College, the University gained university status under the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992. A major premise is GCU's strong commitment to encouraging improved access to its programmes through widening participation (GCU, 2015). Many of GCU's adult returners have selected to re-enter education via community based adult education or through the college sector. Often these students lack confidence, are unaware of the aspects of independent learning and have challenges to overcome with issues such as time management and motivation (Shapiro, et al., 2016). GCU recognised that these students required additional support and responded to that need by establishing a university wide service to support students throughout their academic studies called, The Effective Learning Service.

The Effective Learning Service and the role of critical thinking

The Effective Learning Service (ELS) first commenced in GCU in 2001. Although the service was originally aimed primarily at students accessing GCU via widening participation (Figg et al., 2006), from its inception, the ELS staff selected to support all of the students through the application of an integrated approach. Accordingly, all of the ELS team worked across the university, irrespective of the student's background or level of study.

The ELS Service operated as a centralised unit, which was felt to be advantageous for the users in that expertise could be shared and students and staff could select to work with specific members of the ELS team. Annual surveys distributed among the students indicated that the students liked that the ELS team were not assigned to particular academic departments and was therefore regarded as being a neutral space for users. The provision included a long thin model of induction activities; individual appointments (up to one hour); a daily drop in service; small group support; context based workshops in collaboration with teaching staff; generic workshops; a website with online information; paper based hand-outs; on line tutorial support; English for Academic Purposes and support that was dyslexia specific (McAllister & Shapiro, 2004).

In academic year 2004/2005, the ELS team undertook research specifically to evaluate user satisfaction, perception and awareness of the service. In terms of level of study, final year and post graduate students accounted for over a quarter of users (26%) suggesting that support was not viewed as an entry level provision. The typical individual user profile showed a high proportion of mature students (70.8%) and significant number of international students (16%) with one in eight identifying as being dyslexic. There was strong gender bias with more females (76%) using the service when seeking help independently than males. Certain schools within the university also recorded higher usage, specifically the former Schools of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, Health and Social Care and the Caledonian Business School (Figg et al., 2006).

The ELS team decided that workshops that were embedded in the students' disciplines were more effective in the support of students in that this system assisted all students. As a result, the service was felt to be more equitable and accessible rather than being a service that was used by those who felt confident about accessing support. This approach was also regarded as being more inclusive in that it further included those who could neither identify nor articulate their requirement for study skills support.

Findings from the research over the academic session 2004/5 also highlighted that few males booked appointments in advance. In response ELS then offered a fifteen-minute drop in slot for two hours, four days a week, which was attractive to many of the male students who tend not to seek assistance until the last minute. This aligns with Woodfield and Thomas (2012) in their report for Equality Challenge Unit. Although the report acknowledges there has been limited research into the topic of gender and support in higher education, they noted that more women appear to respond to offers of support than men. This issue continued even when the male students acknowledged there was a need for study skills support. The report also found that males believed that gaining assistance related to employment was more important than seeking help for academic subjects.

Although the shorter time slots helped some students focus on the reason for the appointment, and have more realistic expectations of what ELS staff could achieve; this type of provision was found not be useful as it was more of a 'sticky plaster approach' and was contrary to Lea and Street's model of academic literacies (Lea & Street, 2006). Additionally, a fifteen-minute appointment does not assist the student in critical thinking and merely approaches surface thinking.

Introduction of blended learning approaches

By 2007, online materials were being extensively used which reflected the increase of academic materials becoming more accessible through blended learning. This further necessitated a different approach by ELS staff in that the relationship between the student and the staff member became a different experience. Littlejohn et al., (2008) wrote about

the association between online resources and users. The key term that appeared was the importance of being accessible and usable by different communities. Accessibility needed to be considered by the users whether they be tutors or students in that all parties should be able to easily access the learning resources. When working with students on line, at times issues can arise if the student uses a different platform from the tutor, or has difficulty understanding the taxonomy in use. Other factors that require consideration when communicating on line is the tone applied in the conversation referred to by Littlejohn, et al., (2008, p768) as 'materials being "contextualised' The learner also needs to be engaged and therefore the learning design requires to be attractive and accessible by the different users, whether they be home students, students with disabilities or students from countries where English is not the first language.

In 2010, together with a learning technologist the author of this paper carried out a GCU action based research project to enhance learning and teaching practices through blended learning approaches (Shapiro & Johnston, 2010). This project was undertaken with a view to embedding materials within the general writing genre and to raise awareness of subject specific academic writing practices. Vidcasts were developed which replicated the experience of workshops in real time. Vidcasts are media that use a blend of narrated audio and on screen images and slides (Traxler 2008 cited in Shapiro, & Johnston, 2010) Shapiro and Johnston (2012) felt that the vidcasts assisted in acknowledging that students were at different stages in their 'long conversation' as well as incorporating elements of the academic literacies model. The project therefore accommodated individual learning needs and made the sessions explicit and accessible, in keeping with an academic literacies pedagogic practice. Four vidcasts on the subject of academic writing practices were then produced for the students across the institution.

The establishment of the Learning Development Centres

Although the ELS team and many of the students felt that the students were being supported throughout their academic journey, in 2010, GCU undertook a major review of its academic departments and associated support services. One of the proposals was that the ELS be decentralised and be devolved into Academic Schools. As was noted earlier in this paper, certain subject disciplines did not avail themselves of the ELS, namely those studying Engineering and Computing related subjects.

Accordingly, in 2011, the university's senior management adopted a model of three distinct Learning Development Centres (LDC), one was placed in each of the three Academic Schools. The author of this paper joined the SEBE's LDC continuing the pedagogical approach of working collaboratively with staff and students in enhancing the learners' experience through the development of critical academic thinking and writing. Additional vidcasts were also developed meet the requirements of SEBE students and these are now available on Youtube and on GCU's internal internet system. Good use has been made of the vidcasts by STEM students with 'Writing a technical report' having been viewed over 24,500 times (Shapiro & Johnston, 2012).

Employability, diversity and citizenship

GCU has recognised that the learning experience should not only be one that is of quality and enrich the learner's experience, but also should also engage with the real world. This means, that at times, the learner should be exposed to areas outside their immediate discipline, including concepts such as citizenship. Indeed, there is an expectation that Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates will be major contributors in knowledge transfer. The Department for Business Innovation & Skills (2016,

p2, Section 2.6) observed that employers still consistently placed a high level of importance on graduates requiring: '... a strong set of 'soft' or 'work ready' skills'...with a large body of evidence pointing towards continued employer dissatisfaction with graduates...'.

This has also been noted by the Confederation of Business and Industry (CBI, 2010, cited in Shapiro, 2015) who had also expressed their concerns in regards to graduates' limited levels of communication, leadership, team working and business acumen. GCU has endeavoured to meet this by offering '...[learning] experiences which equips students with the employability and entrepreneurial skills to succeed as global citizens ... '(GCU 2015). The learning opportunities that have been adopted include the integration of theory and practice including students taking an active role in learning about accommodating cultural diversity. As the author was involved in blended learning and is a member of the Gathering the Voices (GtV) Association (a community based group who were collecting testimonies from men and women who sought sanctuary in Scotland as a consequence of Nazi persecution) it therefore seemed logical to collaborate with students and staff engaged in STEM disciplines on developing outputs for this project.

Gathering the voices

In November 2012, a community-based group, the Gathering the Voices (GtV) Association commenced a partnership with GCU (Shapiro, et al.,2014). An important output is making the testimonies freely available online. In addition, another outcome was to collaborate with young people in the creation of developing digital artefacts. By doing so, it was hoped that this would enhance the students' employability skills as well as enabling young people to learn about the contribution of the Holocaust survivors to Scottish society in an inclusive way. The intention was that the project would be a collaborative venture, reaching out to the learner who would not normally engage in this subject.

By involving students, the intention was that this would support and enhance both the students' knowledge and their experience in liaising with the world of work. The notion of collaborating with undergraduate students in a project focussed with citizenship and employability skills is also consistent with GCU's initiative: The Real World project (Realising Work-Related Learning Diffusion), (McKinnon & McCrae, 2011 cited in Shapiro, McDonald & Johnston, 2014).

With the exception of one project, which was a design brief, the teaching staff gave the students the option of collaborating with the GtV Association. The teaching staff were facilitators together with the GtV Association. However, the role of the self-directed learner was a challenging one for the students. Time management, presenting findings and accepting criticism from the clients were all major issues for many of the students. Some students also experienced challenges in understanding the importance of 'total commitment to the job' and the ability to adjust to changes or criticisms.

Conclusions

The concept of self-directed learning is inherent in higher education and there is a strong emphasis on this being an essential component for the student. At the time of ELS, critical thinking was taking place among the students but there was evidence that students on the STEM programmes were not engaging as much as other students. Although the inclusion of blended learning has encouraged students studying STEM related subjects to interact, it was difficult to find out how many were from GCU.

However, when self-directed learning was combined with real world learning, the staff

noted that the students had gained confidence and that they understood the importance of transferring that learning into the work environment. The students produced concepts that were attractive to the 21st century learner and several of their concepts have been integrated into the website. The students have learned about subjects outside their immediate subject discipline; including working with clients, learning negotiation skills and had the support of staff throughout the project.

The students also engaged with the Gathering the Voices project in accordance with the academic literacy model (Lea & Street, 2006). This model acknowledges the importance of collaboration and power sharing that needs to occur in teaching. Through this model, the students negotiated the requirements of different discourses and shaped their own voices yet met the requirements of the institution, or in this case the GtV project. This is important as this model sees itself very much as one that is not deficit driven; rather students are working with the staff in order to make sense of their learning environment.

All those who interacted with the activities felt that they learned from the process, whether they were the university staff, GtV Association or graduate students. Indeed, it became a community of learning because of the mutual respect exhibited and blurring of roles (Christie, 2014). In a small way by participating in the project, the participants have contributed to enhancing education about citizenship and the participants have increased their understanding about the contribution that refugees can make to their new country.

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'I needed to get my confidence back', stepping back to climb further: Trajectories of adult women learners on VET programmes in the UK FE sector

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Introduction

Vocational education in the Further Education (FE) setting is particularly attractive to adult learners who wish to retrain for a new career or to gain a second chance of gaining a career for the first time. This paper focuses on women learners (over 25) who are returning to education after a substantial gap in education and training to learn vocational skills. It explores the reasons why women return to education, their aspirations are and how they plan to achieve them. The national framework for qualifications (RQF) suggests that learners progress in a linear fashion from one qualification to the next, however this was not found to be the case in this study. In contrast to the assumptions made within policy frameworks, the learners in this research had complex reasons why they chose to study lower level vocational qualifications or repeat previous qualification levels in order to advance. They emphasise the necessity for programmes of study that supported them to develop their skills at a pace that they felt comfortable with. Yet recent rationalisation of provision, especially the reduced number of lower level vocational courses makes initial access for such learners increasingly more difficult and threatens to exclude some learners altogether.

Review of the literature

Until recently women learners in the UK FE sector represented the majority of all learners (58%), yet surprisingly little is understood about what they hope to gain from doing so. Research that specifically focuses on the experiences of women learners has tended to focus on the HE sector (Reay et al, 2010; Merrill, 2000; Marandet and Wainwright, 2010; Skeggs, 1997). The limited empirical research in the FE sector has been biased towards learner experiences specifically on 'Access to HE' courses (Waller, 2010; Brine & Waller, 2004; Busher et al, 2004; West, 1998). These inform us about some of the experiences of women learners and how they navigate barriers in order to be successful within (or for) the HE context. Yet the 'voices' of women learners on the majority of FE programme provision are relatively absent. Whilst there is some understanding of learners in some types of vocational provision (Wright, 2013; Parr, 2000) little is understood about why learners' choose vocational courses at lower levels.

Even though empirical research focusing on why adult women learners engage in vocational education is limited, policy research has claimed that they represent a poor return on investment (Jenkins, 2006). Related to this point, policy makers have deemed lower level vocational qualifications to be of 'little value' and as such they have been rationalised (Leitch, 2006; Wolf, 2011). According to quantitative analysis very few adult learners' progress into employment, more highly paid positions or acquire higher qualifications (Jenkins et al, 2003; Blanden et al, 2012). However, Jenkins (2016) challenged this analysis by using long-term panel data to argue that adults do upgrade qualifications although that this takes time.

These narrow return on investment measures fail to take account of the participation patterns and motivation of adult learners. Empirical research with adult learners by

Crossan et al (2003) revealed that their progress through education is not always straightforward or linear. Using their model of 'learning careers' (adapted from Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000) they highlight the complexity of adult learners' identity. Claiming that it is shaped in relation to previous experiences, which if negative can lead to engagement in learning that is experimental, fragile and tentative. Arguing that multiple factors affect learner trajectories, which are not always followed in the uni-linear direction suggested by the RQF.

This paper provides a contemporary view of why women choose lower level qualifications and how this relates to their complex biographies. There are multiple factors that women learners take into account when choosing their entry point into education, in particular how confident they feel in achieving their future aspirations. This often leads to re-engagement with education that is both fragile and tentative, yet recent funding cuts have restricted opportunities access to lower level vocational courses. In so doing women learners who are hoping to mobilise out of low paid work and back into employment that they find meaningful may well be denied such opportunities.

Methodology

The empirical research was conducted in 2015 as part of a pilot study prior to my PhD; it examined the experiences of nine adult women learners' aged 25 plus⁶ in FE colleges. The sample included learners from on a number of vocational courses including small animal management, hairdressing, beauty therapy, social care and nursing from RQF levels 1-3 (EQF 2-4). The aim of the research was to investigate the values, aspirations and experiences of adult women learners on vocational programmes in the FE sector. Although the research was primarily about the learners' present experiences and future aspirations, it was important to consider how these had developed in relation to their past experiences of education. Semi-structured interviews were used and this was combined with a life history approach. A life grid was completed with each learner at the start of the interview; it was used as a temporal artefact that acted as an aide memoire to facilitate learners in plotting key life events at different points in their education. This formed the basis for the interview and enabled a rich and in-depth of understanding of individual choices, experiences and aspirations. Despite the potential criticism that the study was small scale and therefore lacks generalisability, the data gathered is rich facilitating a deeper understanding of learners' lives and the common experiences they share. Moreover, it provides contemporaneous research about the impacts of policy on the lives of women learners.

Returning to education

A life history approach enabled narratives of past educational experiences in relation to their present lives to be shared. Although the women in the sample were diverse (in terms of class, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation) they shared similar goals for themselves and their families. Learners discussed how they returned to education because their schooling had been disrupted or difficult because they had adopted caring roles as adolescents, been bullied or behaved disruptively. Some of the women learners who had achieved well at school returned to FE because they had not followed or been able to follow their first choice for a number of reasons.

Reasons for returning to education are complex, although they are often rooted in aspirations of gaining qualifications this only forms part of the decision. Frequently

⁶ Learners aged 25 plus – are eligible for funding loans and have reduced access to free courses compared to 19-24 year old (NEETs).

learners spoke of experiencing a 'turning point', an epiphany where education formed one of a number of life changes they were planning to make. Escaping entrapment from abusive relationships, low paid insecure work, poverty and sole parental responsibility were important goals. Although employability was an overall target for many, their aspirations often included being better able to support their children in school, communicate with teachers and in the local community.

Starting points

Learners explained how they viewed FE colleges as natural places to get back into education; FE was viewed as a means for gaining access to university, a new vocation or language skills. FE colleges were chosen on the basis that they were familiar because they were part of their local community and this enabled education to be integrated into their lives more easily. In addition, learners appreciated that in addition to a range of vocational specialisms there were different levels and 'starting points' on offer.

Choosing the 'starting point' was often not as straightforward as implied by qualification frameworks, which suggests that learners start from where they left off on the next rung of the ladder. Rather, in all cases learners' enrolled on programmes at lower levels than they had previously held, sometimes up to two levels lower. There were multiple motives for doing this associated with issues of learner confidence, the career choice or because they lacked vital educational achievements (such as Maths or English). All of the learners expressed that even though they were keen to re-engage with education they had initially lacked the confidence to start at the level that was commensurate with their previous qualifications. Although upon reflection many had found the course easier than they had anticipated, they spoke of how they needed to do that to prepare them for the next stage. Furthermore, the present vocational curriculum frequently starts at level two (sometimes one) and in some cases this requires learners to access courses at a lower level than previously held in order to gain the necessary vocational grounding. This was particularly notable in courses leading to nursing, teaching assistants and hairdressing. Learners on these programmes articulated how gaining these new skills had enabled them to work part time in the care sector, in schools or in salons where they could assess the decision to progress further. To add to this complexity, some learners who were intending to access university courses at a later date did not always have some of the entry qualifications. Frequently learners were engaging in Maths, English and/or Science GCSE programmes alongside their vocational subjects. The reasons that learners start on lower level courses are not mutually exclusive; rather, for some learners they needed to gain confidence, as well as grounding in the vocational skills and basic skills qualifications.

Although learners' aspirations are to gain qualifications and ultimately become employed, choosing to return to FE as an adult with financial, domestic, work and caring responsibilities can be challenging. In agreement with the findings of Waller (2010) with Access to HE (RQF 3) learners, respondents constantly weighed up the risks of engaging with education to their personal lives.

However, I would argue that financial risks of study have become more prevalent since course fees in the FE sector have been significantly increased. Learners who study at RQF level 3 can apply for a student loan to cover the cost of their fees, yet there are no such loans available for courses below level three. Whilst learners in the study sometimes progress to university they describe how they were less worried about fees and loans associated with university study as they had become accustomed to the idea. Yet as learners tentatively take their first steps towards education they describe feeling cautious

about taking a loan to complete level three programmes. Learners who had started on level 1 or 2 courses had related this ambivalence to being concerned about whether they were capable of completing a level 3 programme and not wanting to take a 'financial risk' before they were confident that they were making the right decision.

Reduced opportunities

Having outlined the complexity involved in re-engaging with education, particularly on vocational courses. Learners frequently aspired to enter a particular vocation or profession, which had been a long-held unfulfilled ambition. Adult learners return to education with complex educational biographies, which are not linear and in many cases have been hindered by life events. The women learners shared how choices as young adults had impacted upon their adult lives; not going to university, not achieving GCSEs in Maths and English, inadequate careers advice which often led to gaining employment that had few prospects and little security. Learners were positive about their futures, describing how they had been given a second chance to follow a path that they hoped would be more satisfying and give them better economic security.

Whilst these narratives are very encouraging, cuts to FE funding for adults are likely to make access to learning opportunities increasingly more difficult. There has been a rapid reduction in the number and scope of programmes eligible for public funding in FE. This has disproportionately affected lower and intermediate level programmes of study, which are deemed 'low quality courses' (Leitch, 2006). As discussed earlier, learners appreciated the opportunity to sample courses to determine whether they felt capable of completing more demanding programmes. It remains to be seen how the changes to vocational education proposed in the Technical and Further Education Bill will further impact access for adults. The post 16 skills review (DfE, 2016), was not only critical of low-level courses because they have low value but very much focuses on skills at level 3 and above. It clearly recommends that learners (should) progress in a linear trajectory depending upon their highest previous level of qualification.

In addition to reduced provision of lower level and vocational programmes in the FE sector government financial support is targeted in very specific ways. Adult learners may be eligible for adult learning loans towards the costs of advanced level courses (at level 3 or 4) or for those in receipt of welfare who have not achieved an intermediate qualification previously. This compounds issues of access experienced by adult learners who have negative educational biographies or spent long periods out of education or employment. As discussed earlier, the women in this study articulated how they needed to re-engage with education at a slower pace often repeating previous levels of courses whilst they regain their confidence or in order to gain the necessary skills for the next level course. Without the opportunities to gain funding loans or fee remission adult learners may not be able to access such lower level provision. Although the FE skills plan suggests that bridging courses will be available to some learners who need to develop their skills prior to joining technical and vocational education it is not clear whether it will be supported by more funding than is currently available.

Conclusions

This paper emphasises how further education and VET can facilitate re-engagement in education for adult women learners who have often had difficult educational experiences. More than that, women who have been trapped in low paid insecure work, difficult relationships, as primary caregivers, suffering mental health issues or poverty are hopeful of improving their future and that of their children. Women described how they had felt

excluded from parts of society because they felt that they had low status, were not financially secure or felt unable to support their children educationally. The combination of their educational biographies and their present lives is complex; this I have argued affects what learners consider to be their 'starting point' the point which they feel comfortable with. From the outset women learners need to feel they can achieve, even if this means repeating a level they have already attained previously – meaning that their learning trajectory goes in reverse in order to attain higher levels. Implied within the Regulated Qualification Framework is the idea that educational trajectories should be linear, where learners progressively climb the ladder. However, this empirical research reminds us that this is not always desirable for learners or possible because of the structure of vocational qualifications and their individual requirements. It remains to be seen whether the issues will be improved by changes to technical qualifications, in the short term though the continued reduction of funding has dramatically affected the potential opportunities for adults to engage in lower level education. Their aspirations are often ambitious but cautious, wanting to progress slowly through their education in order to maximise their chances of success.

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Symposium – Mapping the boundary spanning behaviors of professionals: Findings from three exploratory studies

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Discussant: Ellen Boeren
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Introduction¹

For decades, adult education professionals have both used and studied inter-organizational collaborations. This concept is well represented in our program planning literature as one way to acquire scarce resources in our field's ever-turbulent political and fiscal environment. Savvy administrators recognize that there is much to be gained by forming synergistic relationships between two otherwise separate organizations having compatible goals and, in ideal circumstances, complementary resource needs.

In recent years the attention has shifted from the organizational level of analysis to something that is more social psychological in nature. Recent studies have begun to look at the *individuals* who forge the types of interpersonal linkages that can lead to goal enhancement. One promising empirically based framework for understanding boundary spanning was advanced by Weerts and Sandmann (2010). The authors identified two key dimensions to understand boundary spanning in university-community interactions: (a) university orientation vs. community orientation and (b) technical focus vs. socio-emotional focus.

This symposium will include three empirical papers that, taken together, represent the development of the concept of boundary spanning from an idea, through systematic measurement, to a plan for developing the boundary spanning skills of adult professionals.

- The first paper, by Adams, describes an interview-based study designed to enhance our understanding of boundary spanning from the perspective of diverse community members interacting with university 'experts'. It addresses the critical connection between motivation and behavior and introduces the notion of "boundary spanning capacities" as an existing skill set.
- The second paper, by Mull, describes a questionnaire-based study of the boundary spanning behaviors of university personnel working to improve the lives of military families through adult education and other services. Significant contributions of this research include (a) the development of a theoretically based questionnaire to measure boundary spanning behaviors (b) the derivation of empirical factors that ultimately supported the Weerts and Sandmann model and (c) the identification of personal and organizational predictors of boundary spanning behavior.
- The third paper, by Tino and Fedeli, describes a multi-faceted study that was conducted in Italy in response to a recent educational innovation that required school teachers to interact with area employers in a "school-work alteration" program. The researchers began with qualitative work in an attempt to understand the context and challenges inherent in the new effort. One aspect of this study employed the instrumentation used in Paper #2, above. The instrument was

translated and administered to approximately 1000 teachers. Multivariate analyses affirmed the Weerts and Sandman theory with a few refinements. Most importantly, this study employed a variety of empirical data to develop a staff development plan designed to enhance teacher's boundary spanning abilities.

This research is critically important to the field of adult education because:

- Meaningful collaborations, supported by individuals engaged in boundary spanning, allow local adult education agency to adopt a synergistic rather than a competitive stance towards other organizations in the community. This can allow under-resourced programs to leverage needed assistance in meeting their goals.
- The ability and propensity to engage in boundary spanning behaviors opens up promising lines of inquiry into adult workers psychosocial make-up.
- Given the interconnectedness of modern society, many adult educators will be expected, even required, by employers to cross traditional boundaries that define classrooms and program workspace. This will require the development of new perspectives and new skills.

Paper 1: Community boundary spanners in university-community partnerships

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University-community partnerships can be a reciprocal experience resulting in mutual benefits of knowledge sharing, resource building, and generating empowerment. Those who participate effectively through these partnership dynamics could be recognized as boundary spanners.

To create direction, alignment, and commitment across boundaries, boundary spanners work together across differences that traditionally divide them (Goldring & Sims, 2005). Miller (2008) acknowledged multiple themes that characterize boundary spanners, such as having diverse connections, possessing exceptional interpersonal capabilities, and moving freely and flexibly between and within organizations. While community engagement research continues to gain momentum, there remains little research of the community perspectives or motivations of partnerships, and the role of community partners as leaders or boundary spanners.

This research addressed the need for more comprehensive understanding of university-community partnerships through a study of the roles of the community boundary spanner. The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners in university-community partnerships. The research questions guiding the study were: (1) What are the characteristics of community members actively engaged in university-community partnerships? (2) What roles do community members play as boundary spanners in university-community partnerships? (3) What are the motivations of community boundary spanners? (4) What is the relationship between the phases of partnership and the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community partners in university-community partnerships?

Method

The Weerts and Sandmann (2010) framework guided this qualitative instrumental multi-case study (Stake, 2006) to provide a more thorough understanding of the roles and motivations of community boundary spanners in university-community partnerships. The Weerts and Sandmann's conceptual framework of boundary spanning roles built on Friedman and Podolny's (1992) concepts of differentiation of roles understood through task orientation and social closeness of boundary spanners.

In this study, focus groups were held with institutional partners to provide context and identify community members in boundary-spanning roles. Ten identified community boundary spanners were identified and were represented as individual cases. Case descriptions presented the characteristics, roles, and motivations of each participant engaged in the university-community partnerships. A coding frame based on the Weerts & Sandmann framework was developed. In the first round of analysis, all interview transcripts were reviewed for indicators of task orientation and social closeness. The coding for a separate round of analysis was reflective of characteristics, roles, and motivations of the cases as queried in the research study questions. As patterns emerged from the coded data of both techniques, an emergent community framework was developed and community boundary spanners' characteristics, roles, and motivations were identified.

Findings

The foundational findings for this study centered on the characteristics, roles, and motivations of community boundary spanners. The data suggested that the characteristics community boundary spanners possessed were: (a) a habit of seeking and understanding multiple perspectives, (b) communicative abilities, and (c) a visionary ability to comprehend the big picture. Roles that community boundary spanners held were in upper-level positions with civic organizations, related to professional positions, or were imparted by the community or self. Their motivations stemmed from personal reasons; to develop better business relationships, to increase connections to resources, or to maintain competition. Other motivations were found to be more community oriented, often emphasizing a sense of service or generationality. From these findings, and the inclusion of an additional method of analyzing the data, a Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships was offered.

The Framework for Community Boundary Spanners in Engaged Partnerships is a model that represents the community partners engaged in university-community partnerships. The Framework for Community Boundary Spanners identifies four distinct roles community boundary spanners may play: engaged employee, reciprocity recipient, connection companion, and community champion.

The *engaged employee* is closely aligned in their community as a function of their professional responsibilities, relating more to technical task orientation. Close proximity with external partners permits the *reciprocity recipient* increased access to resources and a higher likelihood of being recognized for their practical task abilities. The *connection companion* is aligned with the institutional vertices of the framework because of the increased connections they may employ by being open to relationship building in systems outside of the community. *Community champions* are community-focused and are engaged in the most diverse involvements as a result of taking pride in their communities. Regardless of their quadrant positionality, similarities existed. Each spanner held executive positions on civic organizations, were communicative, wore multiple hats, and valued relationships. Areas of the quadrants that did not share commonalities with any other section, such as how the roles addressed the bounded systems in university-community partnerships, personal role expectations, and how recognition was accredited were distinctions that differentiated the groupings. However and similarly to the findings of Weerts and Sandmann (2010), the engagement efforts are most effective when multiple boundary spanning roles work harmoniously together. While the framework was divided into distinct categories, the roles can be fluid throughout the quadrants; as well individuals may function on different levels across the four quadrants. The strengths of each role are highlighted when they can continue to build off others.

Discussion

Along with the findings towards the Framework for Community Boundary Spanners, analysis yielded three conclusions for further discussion. These conclusions present that community boundary spanners are primarily focused and motivated by their communities, and have been engaged in community work for longer than their partnerships have existed.

The first conclusion is ***that boundary spanning capacities of community partners are derived from motivations over roles*** as previously highlighted in the Weerts & Sandmann boundary spanning model. Faculty participation can be a result of applicability to their discipline or teaching agenda, or of incentives or reward for engagement efforts. For institutional members, reasons for participation are indicative of work expectations or

sustaining competition within their fields. However, community partners engage in university-community partnerships for a series of purposes that go beyond expectations of roles. Community partners may have no explicit motivation for participation with universities other than general interest in collaborating, whereas the university partners may require access to communities as field sites for teaching, research, and outreach. The motivations of participation in university-community partnerships is to engage in activities or objectives to the benefit of the community or systems they lived in, as well as the continued advancement towards the future. The relevance is that those motivation techniques implemented in university settings may not be conducive to those within the community, and identifying such engaged partner motivations and patterns can be a tool for developing and sustaining effective community engagement partnerships through promoting their personal motivations to stay involved.

The second conclusion is that for community partners, the ***institution is represented by the institutional boundary spanner***. When community partners of the university-community partnerships for this study speak of or think of the university, the university is personified as the representative with whom they have been interacting. When they referenced the aspects of the university-community partnership, they focused on direct interactions with the university-based partner and pointed to the benefits of having one acknowledged point of contact who looks out for their interests by protecting them from unnecessary institutional solicitations and vetting researchers and faculty before community exposure. While it was initially assumed that the spectrum of the framework would transverse the community on one end and the university on the other, it was found that a focus on a single university professional—a person rather than a large institution—the community partners to maintain a more focused community orientation.

The third conclusion is that those identified as ***boundary spanners came to the partnership with previously developed boundary spanning capacities***. An aspect of this study was to examine if an individual's phase of participation in the partnership had any impact on the skills, or ability to learn new skills, of the community partners. It was assumed that the characteristics, roles, and motivations might have been more developed for these participants the longer they had been involved in the partnerships. From these findings, phase of partnership had no bearing on any community boundary spanning capabilities, and more so it was found that community boundary spanners already possessed boundary spanning capacities. Possible explanations from the research was that all community boundary spanners had previous experiences working in partnerships prior their involvement in the current effort, as well as being active in civic, professional, and community organizations that required them to utilize skills of boundary spanning. Previous experiences in organizations such as religious or professional affiliations and their educational competencies have built the leadership capabilities of community boundary spanners. Although the specific partnership under study may have been novel to the community partners, their characteristics, roles, and motivations were preexisting.

Implications for practice

This study provides institutional partners with the tools and techniques to better engage and locate community boundary spanners through partner identification and development. This study provides implications related to identification of community boundary spanners to facilitate the development of university-community partnerships, the use of the boundary spanning frameworks for assessment, and then development of skills distinct to the Framework for Community Boundary Spanners' quadrants. These implications hold recommendations for those in adult education, community outreach, and, in particular, higher education partners.

Paper 2: Boundary-spanning behaviors of individuals engaged with the US military community

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Introduction

As noted in the introduction, adult education professionals have both used and studied inter-organizational collaborations for decades. Over the past thirty years, networked governance – involving private, for-profit, not-for-profit, and other public organizations—in developing comprehensive solutions to social issues has grown as well. Parallel to this, a recommitment to societal improvement among higher education institutions has spurred the growth and development of community engagement and engaged scholarship. Each of these terms describes a similar phenomenon—individuals using relationships to work between and among others in a network.

Individuals working within these networks, particularly those engaging with communities in adults and higher education, operate at the periphery of their organizations (Courtenay, 1993). They span boundaries both within and between organizations. These individuals serve critical roles in leveraging organizational resources for their collaborations while also sharing vital information among individuals and groups. Localized boundary spanners form and develop informal and formal networks inside and outside of the formal organizational structure to be effective.

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) classified boundary spanning roles of university employees within university community partnerships at higher education institutions and others (Adams, 2014) adapted their model for use from the community perspective. Community engagement, as a form of an adult education entity, serves as an exceptional location to examine boundary spanners who create and nurture these inter-organizational collaborations.

The purpose of this study was to operationalize the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) model into a quantitatively measurable instrument and investigate the boundary spanning behaviors of individuals employed by higher education institutions working as adult educators with military families and the U.S. Department of Defense. This paper outlines the methods of investigation, including creating an initial instrument to measure these boundary spanning behaviors, findings of this national sample of adult educators employed by higher education institutions, and implications for future research and practice.

Method

Because of the renewed interest in inter-organizational collaborations and the increased focus of unique individuals that initiate, support, and grow these partnerships, a dearth in the literature emerged. Previous scholars such as Williams (2002) described these individuals as boundary spanners, past research had not examined the behaviors these individuals undertook from the cognitive perspective and behaviors of the boundary spanner himself or herself.

Weerts and Sandmann (2010) developed a model through a qualitative approach of individuals working in higher education institutions and their communities to build university-community partnerships. Using their model, a research team undertook the

process of development a quantitative instrument to be used in multiple contexts to examine these individuals. Sandmann, Jordan, Mull, and Valentine (2014) describe in depth the method of development the instrument but the most important steps are detailed below.

The Weerts and Sandmann (2010) framework initially had two axes, social closeness and task orientation, that created four quadrants in which a boundary spanner could be placed. The research team logically derived that individuals could report high behaviors on both ends of the social closeness and task orientation dyads. Because of this, the team split the two axes into four constructs in which to measure.

After reconstructing these dimensions, four orientations of boundary spanning behaviors emerged: technical practical, socio-emotional, community, and organizational. With the identified constructs, the research team exhausted the item pool, refined it, and finalized the 32 items from an initial pool of 194 into the four constructs. The research team tested for construct validity before testing the final questionnaire of 32 items. Through a pilot testing of another group within a similar group to the final population in the research team's higher education institution, a high reliability emerged. Worried about discriminant validity, an inter-item reliability test indicated that thirteen of the 496 correlations were above the threshold, but were reasonable.

With the four boundary-spanning constructs and items finalized and the pilot study complete, the questionnaire was almost ready for its first national use. Previous research in boundary spanning influenced the predictor variables to test including both personal characteristics and work/organizational characteristics. Previous studies examining inter-organizational collaborations, university-community partnerships, or networked governance influenced the predictor variables. They included personal characteristics such as educational attainment, age, gender, and experience with the community. The work/organizational characteristics included proximity to the community, perceived support from the organization, the quantity of communication, and the size of the institution.

This study utilized a questionnaire to collect the self-reported boundary spanning behaviors of individuals engaged with the U.S. military community. Within the military-industrial complex, these types of individuals are called contractors. Contractors are not a monolithic group. For purposes of this study we restricted the study population to those individuals working for a higher education institution and who were engaged with the military family or military social services audience. This definition was broad enough to include those employed full or part-time with military communities but excluded those involved in military weapons and other basic research. Additionally, I chose this population because military family services allow for a wider degree of discretion in behaviors in how the job is performed. This would attempt to account for the relational contract manager role that is critical in networked governance.

A modified snowball sample provided a strong core of potential respondents. The recruitment of potential respondents included three email requests to 413 unique individuals from four publicly known listservs. The request encouraged known individuals to forward the invitation to other known individuals within their and other educational institutions who completed similar work. Of the 413 unique links, 149 were used and 237 surveys were started. After cleaning the data, there were 178 usable, complete surveys.

At the conclusion of data collection, the author determined coefficient alphas for each of the four boundary spanning construct scales. Each scale approximated a normal curve. The four constructs held a theoretical range of 6 to 48 and the means ranged from 34.54

to 38.29. The coefficient alphas ranged from a high of .94 for community orientation to .89 for socio-emotional orientation. Technical practical orientation and organizational orientation both had alphas of .92.

Findings

Four important findings guide not only the implications for future research but also practice for those working with and leading boundary spanners. First, the means of each of the boundary spanning behaviors were high. Item means ranged from 3.29 to 5.44 on a 1-6 scale. Seven of the top nine behaviors included technical-practical and socio-emotional behaviors. No behaviors within the technical-practical orientation were in the bottom eight rank ordered items. No items from the community orientation were included in the top nine. This is consistent with Perrone et. al. (2003) in describing the internal abilities and factors of boundary spanners.

Based on the type of predictor variable, a Pearson Correlation, t-test, or one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine the bivariate relationships between the boundary spanning behaviors and the predictor variables. Of the 37 tested predictors, 20 significantly influenced at least one of the boundary-spanning orientations. While there was some variance within the four boundary spanning constructs, only one personal characteristic predicted any of the constructs: educational attainment. However, several work-related characteristics predicted boundary spanning behaviors. In order to prevent any false positives, we set significance to $p < .01$. Frequency of communications with military service branch components or military family service professionals explained the largest percentages of observed variance in each of the four boundary spanning constructs. Multivariate relations were also examined to determine the jointly explained predictor variables. In each of the four best models, frequency of communications appeared as significantly influential. Multiple types of communications, such as written, oral, and face-to-face, influence boundary-spanning behaviors.

As this was an exploratory study, a final analysis was completed to derive empirically a conceptual structure for the boundary spanning instrument that differed from the logically derived constructs. The exploratory factor analysis found an initial factor reduction to four factors that included cross-loaders and non-loaders. By restricting the reduction to three factors, only one cross-loader was not eliminated. When restricting the reduction to only two factors, each item maintained the simple structure and mirrored the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) framework consistent with George & Mallery (2001) and Harroff (2002).

Discussion

A surprising conclusion was that for most of the dimensions of boundary-spanning behaviors, *personal* characteristics are not major predictor though *work/organizational* characteristics are. This is surprising because so much previous research focuses on individuals' skills, behaviors, and experiences (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011; Williams 2002). With this understanding, organizations have a significant role in supporting boundary spanners. All organizations must be ready for collaboration rather than taking a competitive stance towards other organizations. This may provide additional resources, financial and otherwise.

Organizations are ultimately a collection or association of individuals. Similar to individuals maintaining countless relationships or interconnections to other individuals, organizations have grown to the same expectation. These will provide for adult educators to exploring alternative program spaces and designs as they build new skills and perspectives.

Communication remains a key role and is a catalyst to boundary-spanning activities. Some

define boundary spanning simply as communications (Tushman and Scanlan, 1981) while others see communications as a tool in the boundary spanners toolbox in a global, ever-turbulent political and fiscal environment. This study found the degree and frequency of the communications did influence boundary spanning behaviors which is consistent with Marchington & Vincent's view that "multiple and frequent contacts" (2004, p.1037) aid in decision making in networked governance.

Organizations must be ready to embrace inter-organizational collaborations. While this has been studied for decades, the recent shift towards the individual unit of analysis cannot be examined without organizations and individuals working together. Traditional, hierarchical organizations may not be organizationally ready to embrace high levels of boundary-spanning activities though they may know that their individuals are ready. However, even in hierarchical or functional organizational structures, an organization can embed intentionally a boundary spanner with a specific job role to cross-pollinate ideas and information within an organization. At the same time, organizations must support and value the work of boundary spanners to retain them. Otherwise, individuals may leave organizations for those more supportive of this work where boundary-spanning may be viewed as a competitive advantage for all entities.

Training and development could reinforce boundary-spanning behaviors, or maximize weaker behaviors. Resolving conflict and negotiating power were the two lowest ranking behaviors in the current study. Bachmann (2001) and Williams (2002) indicated these are required skills in effective boundary spanners. Not only are these valuable skills for adult educators to use, but also, they form a content area for which adult educators can influence other organizations.

Important for both future research and practice, the Weerts and Sandmann (2010) model returns as boundary spanning into two constructs rather than the logically derived four. Consistent with other scholars (Richter, West, Van Dick, & Dawson, 2006; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005) that found that a form of dual identity forms in boundary spanners and contract workers, individuals can feel affiliation towards their home organization or institution as well as a second entity or group. The data demonstrates that an individual can have a high community orientation and a high organizational orientation. This type of networking orientation, rather than social closeness, as termed by Weerts and Sandmann becomes the skill, quality, and experience that organizations can support to improve individual and organizational performance. This becomes vital as program planners navigate two otherwise separate organizations having compatible goals and, in ideal circumstances, complementary resource needs.

Paper 3: Understanding and developing boundary spanners in Italian schools

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School-Work Alternation (SWA) is an educational and training practice that has become compulsory for every kind of Italian high school (Technical, Vocational, and High school) since September 2015, thanks to the last educational innovation, introduced by the Law n.107/2015. It requires students of Vocational, Technical and High school institutions to spend, during the last three years of their learning pathway, respectively 400 hours for the first two institutions, and 200 hours for the last one, within workplace organizations.

In this legislative context, the real challenge is make SWA not only an integrated part of the instructional and training course of every Italian student, but also an opportunity for teachers to innovate didactics and the school programs, and to mitigate against the disconnected-ness of the traditional educational system by creating congruence between formal learning and the real contexts' needs. In this complex scenario, in which SWA needs to be built on a strong partnership between schools and workplaces, the role of teachers, as spanners between the two systems, was investigated.

Theoretical framework

SWA is a complex paradigm because it is composed of two intertwined theoretical dimensions: situated learning and partnership (Tino & Fedeli, 2015). The first dimension is really connected to the lived experience of students within the workplace organizations, and based on the concept of *situated cognition*, according to which knowledge and learning can be developed through the participation within communities of practice with their cultural activities and relationships (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). The second dimension is related to the *partnership* (Engeström, Engeström, & Vähäaho, 1999) developed between schools and workplace, in which SWA can represent a shared “third space,” nurtured by new rules, tools and boundary objects, as the results of a new transformative culture (Tino & Fedeli, 2015; Tino, 2017). To design a shared SWA program based on a real partnership requires school professionals to be involved in a process made of two important elements: *policontestuality* and *boundary crossing* (Engeström, Engeström, & Kärkkäinen, 1995) in order to (a) develop a new professional identity as *boundary spanners* (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) that can support them in these challenging tasks, (b) ensure learning experiences for students and above all to be really able to cross boundaries, negotiating needs, aims, cultures between the two systems, and (c) to cross-pollinate ideas (Kilpatrick, Auckland, Johns, & Whelan, 2008; Tushman, & Scanlan, 1981), to create a new shared space (Gutierrez, Rymes & Larson, 1995).

The study

The study here presented was part of a wider research project whose purposes was to explore (a) the characteristics of SWA as situated learning experience, and (b) the model of partnership implemented by schools and workplace organizations. At the same time, the study sought to investigate the role of the teacher-tutors as boundary spanners (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010) between school and work systems. With the involvement of seven high school of northern Italian territory, the exploration of SWA phenomenon was examined through a qualitative approach (focus groups and interviews) and a brief questionnaire,

while the role of teacher-tutors was investigated through a boundary spanning questionnaire administered to a large national sample of teachers. This paper focuses on the questionnaire-based data and includes recommendations for a possible training pathway designed to improve the partnerships and teachers' abilities to fully implement SWA programs.

The necessity to develop a staff development plan designed to enhance teacher's boundary spanning abilities was clearly indicated by the data gathered. During the first phase of research, which used both qualitative and quantitative data, we discovered how different respondents (teachers, parents, workplace tutors, students) underlined the necessity to improve teacher-tutors' skills in order to allow them to become good students' coaches or mentors, and to develop more efficient relationship with students, external partners, and with internal teachers and colleagues. The second phase of research involved the collection and analysis of data from the boundary spanning questionnaire (Sandmann et al., 2014) administered to a large national sample of teachers. In both phase, the pressing need to develop boundary spanning abilities, defined as those skills that allow these key-actors to become travelers across different boundaries, and at the same time, to fulfill their essential roles within the educational systems.

Specifically, this paper seeks to respond to the following questions: (1) What are the prevalent teachers' boundary spanning behaviors?; (2) To what extent do organizational and personal characteristics jointly explain observed variance in the boundary spanning constructs; and (3) What training plan can enhance teachers' boundary spanning abilities?

Context, participants, method

The context of the research was the Italian national territory, where a sample of 1101 respondents of High school teachers was involved in the boundary spanning behaviors survey. Females comprised 57.3% of respondents, while 42.7% were males. The questionnaire used in the survey was the same that Mull (2014) used in his research, and developed according to Weerts and Sandmann theoretical model (2010). After having obtained the permission from the authors (Sandmann et al., 2014) of using the same questionnaire, the researchers translated it in Italian language and administered it to the selected sample.

It is here useful to remember that, according to Weerts and Sandmann theory, 'task orientation' is the level by which the individuals accomplish technical, practical tasks, and socioemotional ones, while 'social closeness' is "the degree to which the spanner is aligned with the external partner [vis-à-vis] the organization that he or she represents" (Weerts & Sandmann, 2010, p.709). The questionnaire development team developed the instrument by reconceptualizing the original two dimensions (social closeness, task orientation) of Weerts and Sandmann theory, into four independent constructs: technical practical orientation, socio-emotional orientation, community orientation, and organizational orientation. Although the instrument used in the Italian study employed the four-construct questionnaire, a factor analysis suggested that a two-construct model was more strongly supported by the data (see below).

Findings

Collected data were subjected to a series of univariate, bivariate, and multivariate procedures, including reliability analysis and factor analysis. The factor analysis supported the use of a two-construct model over the four-construct model. The first construct, *task orientation*, was formed by a combination of technical and practical orientation, and socio-emotional orientation items, and corresponded well with the original theoretical formulation

by Weerts and Sandmann. The second construct, *networking orientation*, combined items measuring community orientation and organizational orientation; networking orientation might be defined as the level of alignment that individuals have toward both the community and their own organization. The data strongly supported the use of *networking orientation* over the second original domain of *social closeness*. In fact, this new construct has a nearly opposite meaning of the original domain proposed by Weerts and Sandmann, which was defined as ‘the degree to which the spanner is aligned with the external partner or with the organization that he or she represents’. According to these first results, and after having checked the reliability of scales (task orientation: coefficient alpha=.93; networking orientation: coefficient alpha=.96), data analysis was carried out on the two constructs above mentioned. The means of two constructs ranged from 62.8 to 68.1; the means of the 32 items ranged from 3.27 to 5.00.

Related to the first research question: “What are the prevalent teachers’ boundary spanning behaviors?” an important result was that the rank list of the items showed how the first ten included 8 items of task orientation construct, and 2 of networking orientation, while the last ten items included 7 items of networking orientation and 3 of task orientation. The first finding is that among teacher-tutors, task orientation behaviors receive greater emphasis.

The second research question asked:” To what extent do organizational and personal characteristics jointly explain observed variance in the two boundary spanning constructs?” The questionnaire measured a variety of personal and organizational characteristics as potential explanatory variables. Personal characteristics, included: gender, years of teaching experience, years employed by current organization, years in current position of teacher-tutor/coordinator in SWA programs, level of highest educational attainment, fields of teaching; Organizational characteristics included: school type, school size, number of teachers with the tutor position in SWA programs, the proximity of external communities, economic recognition, formal recognition, geographic area, support, value given to spanners’ work. To address the question, we first examined bivariate analysis (simple correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA) to determine the relationships between the predictor variables and the two boundary-spanning behavior scales. This analysis not only showed separately the most important personal and organizational predictors for each construct, but above all, it guided a forward loading multiple regression, finding out the best explanatory model for each construct. In fact, a series of multivariate relationships were examined between the significant ($p > .01$) predictor variables and each of the boundary spanning construct. The maximum observed variance for each of the models was: R-square=.339 for task orientation construct and R-square=.421 for networking orientation construct. The findings showed how the most relevant predictors for both task and networking orientations are organizational characteristics. Task orientation’s predictors are: *the frequency of identification of external partner; face to face meeting with work representatives or coordinators of SWA; communication with external partners through technological tools of support during SWA programs; the perception of value recognized for work done in SWA programs; the type of school*. The predictors for networking orientation are: *the frequency of visiting work communities, the proximity work community, the geographic area (south and islands)*. In addition, networking orientation had a negative relationship with an only one personal characteristic (*educational attainment*). These findings suggest that boundary spanning behaviors can be supported by tailored organizational actions.

The third question asked was “What training plan can enhance teachers’ boundary spanning abilities?” From data analysis, we concluded that teachers as spanners who act

the role of travelers along boundaries between systems, not only need to reinforce their *networking orientation* as showed by the general mean attributed to this construct and the ranked list of the items, but also to reinforce some task orientation behaviors such as 'conflict solutions', 'negotiation of power among individuals', 'identification of issues communication', 'supporting others in their accomplishments and challenges', 'designing processes for projects', or 'identifying resources to support projects'.

On the basis of all these results and conclusions, a new professional profile came to light for teacher as spanner between the two systems: s/he needs to be an 'animator' of the relationship and communication as well as internal and external partnerships. Successful teachers in the SWA context must have the ability to do two things:

1. Create direction, alignment and commitment within the groups in which s/he works, in order to achieve a common vision (Kusari, Singh, Cohen, & Marinova, 2005).
2. Serve as a reticulist (William, 2010) able to create sustainable networks useful for realizing effective SWA experiences for students, who need to be supported by teachers as pedagogues experts as well.

Discussion

To sum up, according to these new professional teacher spanner 's profile a training plan to enhance teachers' boundary spanning abilities is recommended in this study. It needs to be focused on four areas of development: leadership area, relationship and communication area, partnership area, reflection and assessment area. Each area focuses on the objective, on the contents and methods. This last one is focused on the full involvement of participants within the knowledge building process, because in every area it is expected that the group of participants will be involved in real activities of discussion, simulations, role-playing, presentations of work, case analysis, problem solving, workshop, receiving and giving feedback, reflection, assessment and self-assessment activities, brainstorming and debriefing, individual and group work, action plans.

The main objective of *Leadership* area is to develop Boundary Spanning Leadership (BSL) abilities. They are related to the abilities to lead the group within the boundary crossing process (Yip, Ernst, & Campbell, 2011), in order to implement goal-oriented actions and move forward a common vision. BSL is connected to the ability to pollinate ideas, to disseminate information, to combine different perspectives (Ernst & Chrobot-Mason, 2011). It exactly corresponds to what it is required to a teacher within SWA projects. The main content of this area is focused on the BSL behaviors, on leadership styles, on teambuilding on organizational boundaries.

Communicative and relationship ability cannot be assumed and needs of a proper training plan. These skills are intentional and goal-directed behaviors that individuals select in order to achieve their objectives (Hargie, 1997; Hunt, Tourish, & Hargie, 2000). For this reason, the content of this second area need to be focused on concepts of relationship, communication, listening, and conflict; conflict management (Kilman, 1974), educational relationship, feedback, technique of communication and negotiation.

The third area is the *ability to develop efficient partnerships*; it includes networking skills that, in a process of boundary spanning between different systems, are the ability to create relationship with internal and external partners. It is related to the spanners' ability to interface themselves with different stakeholders, representing the different perspectives, ideas, perceptions of the parties involved (Shantz, Wright, & Latham, 2016). Networking ability presumes a high level of cooperative awareness, based on shared goals and

processes (Barnes & Liao, 2012). On this perspective, a staff development plan needs to consider as content some important aspects: contexts analysis, parties' needs and perspectives analysis, cooperative project plans development.

Reflective and assessment abilities in this specific context are intertwined, because each of them supports the other leading improvement plans. The reflective assessment supports individuals not only in the knowledge of themselves, but also in the assessment process of their actions so that they can re-orient actions and designs in the spirit of continuous improvement (Pastore, 2008). The importance of this last area rests on its focus on content such as reflective thinking, assessment of process, actions and results, as well as the development of assessment and reflection tools such as rubrics and e-portfolio.

From data analysis came out some important conclusions: for most boundary spanning behaviors organizational characteristics are predictors and not personal ones. In fact, the characteristics that support these behaviors are related to those actions connected to the frequency of visiting, meetings, and communication with the partners as well as the support, and the perceived recognition of value given to the work done within SWA programs.

Those participants who achieved a master degree were less likely to engage in networking behaviors. It suggests that teachers believe that the world of formal education can be independent from external world; it confirms the traditional teaching and learning culture based on theoretical knowledge and the usual certainty that students can learn only within the formal contexts, even though, Resnick (1987) underlined the discontinuity between formal and informal contexts through four factors: (a) individual activities vs shared cognitive activities; (b) mental activities vs handling objects and practices; (c) the symbolic thinking vs contextualized thinking; and (d) general skills development situated skills.

All these elements together with the findings of this study represent a good starting point of reflection on the necessity to innovate didactics, teaching and learning methodologies, through the efficient partnership with the external world. These aspects highlight the challenge proponents of SWA programs must face within the Italian schools. Findings and conclusions led to a new professional profile of SWA teacher-tutors, which can be supported and promoted by tailored training courses. It can represent a way to rethink not only didactics, methods, educational and work organizations, but also to recognize teachers as new leaders (Kilpatrick et al., 2008), communicators, innovators (Giroux, 1992; Mull, 2015), networkers or reticulists (William, 2010).

Considering that, in Italy, SWA programs are compulsory in every school, there is a growing recognition that there must be a change of culture and innovation in terms of group work within the schools, organizational systems, and partnership models. The single most important implication for practice is to rethink the educational and training path for teacher-tutors, including the boundary spanner professional profile development.

¹ Note: Space precludes the attachment of important tables and a full reference list. These will be distributed in paper form during the symposium and, subsequently, made available online along with links to the full studies.

Transitions and the role of community-based learning

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Introduction

How can we, as educators, help young people transition from high school to actively and meaningfully participate in paid work, post-secondary education, and communities? A universal question among governments, universities, teacher associations, and school boards concerned with youth transitions. School-to-work transition includes: 'attending school and not working; attending school and working; working and not going to school; and not working or going to school' (Bowlby, 2000:43). Rather than not working or not going to school, initiatives can help youth transition from high school, and many use a community-based learning approach. I introduce one such opportunity in Alberta, a province in Canada, and a corresponding program designed to ensure implementation by means of educating new dual credentialed teachers. I first describe the conceptual framework and context. Following these sections is a discussion focusing on the literature combined with my annotations from a university faculty programming perspective. Summary statements are documented in the conclusion.

Conceptual framework

Community-based learning consists of three main concepts: Project-based learning, place-based learning, and service learning. Project-based learning makes meaning of the concepts under study by arranging learning experiences around larger questions and projects (Prast & Viegut, 2015). Experiences represent significant content, 21-century competencies, in-depth inquiry, driving question created by the student in consultation with the teacher, student desire to answer the driving question, student choice and selection, student and teacher feedback and revision, and public presentation (Buck Institute for Education, n.d.). Place-based learning happens outside school to help youth make relevant connections and enhance learning (Prast & Viegut, 2015). This approach draws on the local cultural, social, historical, and political environments and situations as the framework for learning (Clark, 2008). Service learning provides opportunities for youth to be contributing and active citizens and to learn how they can change the world. Students engage in service that is organized around community needs and their own educational goals (Clark, 2008).

Community-based learning requires vision, common vocabulary, and planned and implemented learning experiences embedded in goals of sustainability. Explicit steps to assess and improve as needed complete the process (Prast & Viegut, 2015). In Alberta, five core strategies promote high school completion for students: Student engagement, successful transitions, collaborative partnerships, positive connections, and tracking progress (Government of Alberta, 2014). Examples of community-based learning programming are the provincial Dual Credit strategy, Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), and Career and Technology Studies (CTS). These programs are sanctioned by government education policies, executed by school boards, backed by the Alberta Teachers' Association, and assisted by university teacher education degree programs. The following section elaborates one aspect of the Dual Credit strategy. It is firmly entrenched in the part of the high school CTS program of studies aligned with government-mandated adult apprenticeships. A sustainable structure has evolved that also promotes growth. Specifically, this structure is the outcome of a continued and dedicated vision, common vocabulary, and planned programming that begins with sponsored students enrolled in a teacher education degree program and maintained with these same

individuals working as certificated teachers in Alberta's high schools.

Background and context

The Dual Credit strategy is a multi-layered program established by Alberta Education (2017a), the ministry responsible for the kindergarten to grade 12 education system. It has a long history in Alberta. Dual credit provides school boards a programming pathway that can occur in the school, community, or post-secondary institution. Students earn credits that meet their grade 12 high school diploma requirements while at the same time earn transferrable credits or advanced standing towards post-secondary degrees, diplomas, certifications, or apprenticeships. Alberta's high school diploma is a minimum of 100 credits. School boards are reimbursed on a per credit basis. For reference, one credit is approximately 25 hours of certificated teacher instruction time. In their recent 2017 budget announcement, the Alberta Government (2017) allocated \$16.4 million Canadian dollars (approximately 9.5 GBP) for dual credit programs. Monies will be distributed over four years to increase student numbers and initiate up to 40 new programs per year. The ministry of education previously funded 51 partnership projects between 2012 and 2015 (Alberta Government, 2017).

Coinciding with the enhanced Dual Credit strategy monetary infusion is the *Career and Technology Studies (CTS) Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* (Alberta Education, 2017b). It began in 2010. At this time, and even more so today, it was apparent that teachers themselves needed to have, at minimum, dual credentials to provide dual credit opportunities. Certificated teachers with journey qualifications as regulated by Alberta's Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) were essential. Alberta Education's Teaching Excellence & Certification Branch and the University of Alberta's Department of Secondary Education in the Faculty of Education worked together with the Alberta Teachers' Association, school boards, and post-secondary institutions offering transfer credit to the University of Alberta's Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. The purpose was to address the question asked in the introduction: How can we, as educators, help young people transition from high school to actively and meaningfully participate in work, post-secondary education, and communities? It was evident that all stakeholders in the dual credit strategy realm agreed that more specialists with teacher education degrees were needed.

Since the 1960s, journey certifications were recognized transfer credit for the teacher education degree program at the University of Alberta. The *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* uses this transfer credit policy as the starting point for entrance requirements as well as advanced high school English and one other grade 12 subject. Transfer credits count towards the major teachable subject area in the B.Ed. degree. Journey certifications are crucial because they advance dual credit teaching possibilities when these folks are employed. Note that there are students enrolled in the B.Ed. degree program with these same credentials who are not part of this program yet they will have the same dual credentials. The difference between the two sets of students are that the *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* students receive sponsorship money and have formal relationships with school boards prior to degree completion.

A few points about the *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program*: Students are sponsored by their future employers, a school board, that has responded to Alberta Education's annual request for applications, if funding is available. Upon approval, ministry funding is funneled via the school board to the sponsored student while he/she attends university. In the first 12-14 months, sponsored students take education and pedagogy courses that fulfill part of the 120 credits required for the B.Ed. degree. Their sponsoring school board then employs the students who work under an Alberta Education issued

Letter of Authority. This letter gives the students permission to teach as a teacher with two restrictions: Students can only teach in their CTS area of expertise (e.g., welder, cook, cosmetologist) and they are to complete *18 university degree credits during the three-year term of this letter. If the degree is not yet completed after three years and the two conditions have been met, another Letter of Authority is issued. This cycle will continue until successful degree completion. To date, from 2010 to 2017, funding for 110 students was awarded (i.e., CAD \$68,000 each student, a total of CAD \$7,480,000). There are current plans for another group to start in 2018.

From my perspective, as the university faculty member responsible for program implementation and coordination, I work closely with our undergraduate student administration, Alberta Education, school boards, and students. It intrigues me that the *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* is positioned as one part of an overarching community-based learning approach. Prior to entering the University of Alberta B.Ed. degree program, sponsored students have achieved a journey certification. They completed a formal government-regulated apprenticeship with on-the-job employment experience and in-class training. Apprenticeship programs in Canada tend to be three or four year commitments with approximately 20% in class and 80% on the job. Some students will also have Bachelor and Master's degrees, certifications, and/or diplomas. Rooted in the life happenings of the students are project, place, and service learning. Project-based learning, the understanding that what they have previously learned about their content area through inquiry, feedback, revision, and presentations, merges with their newly acquired pedagogical knowledge. In the same way, place-based learning, the learning that occurs in every day living, has forged connections with the local and political, and with nature and person-made systems. Lastly, service learning happens in community as it is broadly defined. As individuals with families, employment, and community, sponsored students have and will continue to weave this learning into their education endeavours and with future students. These folks are in the midst of a community-based learning experience.

Many of the B.Ed. degree, Secondary Education university education courses are modeled on community-based learning. Attention and planning have ensured a degree program that encourages project-based learning complimented by place-based (i.e., practicum and field experiences) and service learning for some (i.e., courses with community-based learning as a component) (University of Alberta, 2017). Sponsored students will continue their community service-learning experiences when they begin their school board employment.

Discussion: What does the literature tell us?

Integrated into this discussion are my observations on the *Study of the CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* activities involving 20 sponsored students. This study is part of the *CTS Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Education* research project (2009-2016) whereby my research assistants and I received on-line survey results from 221 participants representing 39 Alberta school authorities, and conducted interviews or focus group meetings with 70 individuals. Combined, we conversed with 90 participants. Study activities are approved by Canada's Tri-Council ethics guidelines, which governs university-based research.

The literature is heavily weighted on project-based learning with multiple reports and scholarly documents. Further, in many cases, the three concepts of community-based learning, project, place, and service, have fuzzy and indistinct boundaries. These vague boundaries are noticeable when studying scholarly literature about community-based learning itself. Nonetheless, I explore the literature and insert occasional observations on

the *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* and sponsored students' university experiences as they relate to their B.Ed. degree program.

An overarching community-based learning approach has emerged in the *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* since its commencement in 2010. My assertion is evidenced by the continuum that begins with the pre-service teacher education students who become teachers, followed by these same individuals forging connections with community and youth within the dual credit framework. What is striking about this personal observation is that few, if any, of the sponsored students originally intended to become teachers. Some were early high school leavers; they did not have a high school diploma. However, with determination and unwavering support from their families, school boards, and university faculty and administrative staff, they achieved the B.Ed. degree entrance requirements. For a number of sponsored students, the intense, overwhelming fear to walk onto the university campus and begin the first university course was a significant turning point. Through a series of events and life-altering decisions, often decades in the making, including the process to take that first step onto the university campus, folks have successfully completed their B.Ed. degree or in the process of accomplishing this goal. Throughout, situated learning, that is, joining practitioner communities as learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991) remains a founding principle of apprenticeship and is often explained as the novice-expert model. Situated learning through apprenticeship is where the content knowledge and skill acquisition began for these pre-service teacher education students. Pedagogical content knowledge and skill awareness and learning continues in their B.Ed. degree program.

Mohedo and Bújez (2014) prepared a study to examine the shift from a more traditional teaching model to a project-based learning model for university teacher education students. They speculate that the project-based learning model offers students improved class involvement and communication skills and better cross-curricular awareness and understanding. These researchers add that starting with a problem, followed by query and thoughtful consideration, deliberate research and decision-making, and collaboration with classmates will enhance students' learning. Dewey's (1916) philosophy is closely aligned with project-based learning and is seen in these researchers' findings; in essence, learning by doing is where one acquires skills, and also the place where students learn about living and how to live (Fernandes, 2014). Fernandes' study of university students, analogous to Mohedo and Bujez's research, discloses that deep learning and connections to authentic everyday problems are beneficial. According to the university students in Fernandes' case study, the workload is heavier with community-based learning. Group tasks are not always shared equally, which adversely affect student assessment expectations. Sponsored students enrolled in the University of Alberta B.Ed. degree program have a similar response. Although not all courses follow the project-based learning approach, for those who did enroll in such courses, quite a few struggled with the extra workload, more so at the beginning of their degree program. This trend shifted when students acclimatized to university processes and policies, and course content, writing, and assessment practices.

Initial resistance to project-based learning is documented in a study conducted by Roessingh and Chambers (2011). These researchers queried the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach for university teacher education students. Students are more inclined to favour instructor-directed discussions and want express exposure to subject expertise and literature before scaffolding to an inquiry and practice-focused pedagogy. University professors in Lee, Blackwell, Drake, and Moran's (2014) study encountered challenges when implementing project-based pedagogy in their classes, in particular, a) it is difficult to find community partners, and when they do, timing is often unmanageable, b)

faculty and student roles are awkward and hard to clarify, and c) some limit their adherence to the project-based learning guidelines thus making it tricky to determine success.

Place-based learning research in a teacher education setting was catalogued in the field experience and practicum-focused literature. In an article presenting advice on '[h]ow to thrive during your field experiences', Schaffer and Welsh (2014) list seven tips. These tips are: Be professional, stand on your feet, students are why you are in the field placement, teaching is complicated, be in interview mode every day, reflect, and ask why the mentor teacher is doing what he/she is doing. The authors conclude that the practicum experience is a place to thrive and grow as a professional teacher. The *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* students learned from their practicum and field experiences. Students were professional, asked questions, realized that teaching is not easy, and discovered the courage to question their mentor teachers. When they returned to the university, sponsored students clearly expressed their dedication to youth and teaching. It was an apprenticeship experience – novice and expert. Lortie (1975) compares the field experience to an apprenticeship. It is based on observation, and provides an opportunity to scaffold while in a mentored learning space, albeit, at times, there is an abrupt transition from university student to teacher.

Formal service learning is described by Deeley (2010) as experiential learning linking coursework to a volunteer component that contributes to the community. From her research findings, Deeley establishes that students' intellectual and emotional skills increased because of the deeper learning that their holistic experience presented, enhanced critical thinking skills because of the requirement to connect the academic coursework and volunteer experience, and advantages of small classes whereby students could share their experiences in more intimate ways. Comparable to project-based learning and place-based learning, challenges exist for service learning including placements, timing, and assumptions, to name a few. Gallego (2001) examines how pre-service teacher education students engage with the traditional field experience placement, one mentor and one classroom, as well as a community-based field placement. The community-based field placement was at an after-school program in the same community as the traditional placement. The researcher sought to identify pre-service teacher education students' educative experiences, a concept proposed by Dewey in 1938. There are three distinct findings: a) concurrent field placements highlight how physical location, especially when the placement is outside of the school, alters the interactions, routines of school, and assumptions about who is the expert, the child or teacher, b) integration of sincere learning invites student teachers to consider what it means to live, actually live, in a diverse and culturally sensitive learning space, and c) utmost importance to reflect and examine beliefs, biases, and assumptions (Gallego, 2001).

Although sponsored students did not formally engage in a community service-learning course, which can be taken at the university, it was during their practicum that they engaged in volunteer and community-based activities. Along side these activities were practicum placements that challenged their opinions about high school students. Ethnic, ability, and socio-economic diversities were commented on in their subsequent university curriculum and instruction courses, some with distress and confusion while others expressed wonder. Confronting and wrestling with their pre-practicum understandings to ones that ensued, evoked, for some, angst. Conversation and coming together in safe spaces in our university courses helped these individuals learn that they can be an advocate and a source of inspiration for youth. Framing a study around a cultural-immersion placement, Cooper (2007) notices that pre-service teacher education students

are encouraged to consider their future students differently. This study's two goals are to show that community-based field placements can be included as part of the teacher education degree program, and student teachers' beliefs about youth who live in dissimilar cultural and physical spaces can be contested. One key finding was the importance of scaffolding or sequencing the pre-service teacher education students' activities from the traditional school field placement to the learners' communities (Cooper, 2007). As university faculty, we have a responsibility to our pre-service teacher education students to help them transition and scaffold in similar circumstances.

Conclusion

The *CTS Bridge to Teacher Certification Program* is an example of community-based learning, one that presents a viable response to the question: How can we, as educators, help young people transition from high school to actively and meaningfully participate in work, post-secondary education, and communities? Alberta Education, the University of Alberta, school boards, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and post-secondary institutions offering transfer credits have co-created sustainable policy and programming. This program offers sponsored students with previously earned journey certifications an opportunity to become credentialed teachers. These B.Ed. students are located in a community-based learning model. My observation is confirmed by their previous apprenticeable trade skill and knowledge experiences to current and ongoing involvement with pedagogical knowledge at the university. School-based practicum and field experiences, and interactions with youth as teachers further uphold this assertion. These individuals will work in schools and connect project, place, and service learning in significant ways for their students. Dual credentialed teachers can deliver one aspect of Alberta Education's Dual Credit strategy, high school apprenticeship programming housed within the framework of the CTS program of studies. The role of community-based learning is evident here and will make certain that young people transition to post-secondary education, paid employment, and engage in meaningful, healthy, and fulfilling volunteer and leisure endeavours.

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Exploring the motivations of full-time academic staff undertaking part-time doctorates

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Introduction

Doctorates are the pinnacle of academic qualifications and The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Characteristics Statement – Doctoral Degree states ‘that most academic staff in UK universities will have a doctoral degree’ (2015: 4). However, Tight (2012) undertook an analysis of figures collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in respect of the qualifications held by academic staff in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2010-11 and found that only 45.7% of all academic staff were qualified to doctoral-level, rising to 58.4% for full-time staff (2012: 5). Significant differences between pre-1992 and post-1992 institutions¹ were also noted by Tight. A review of the 2015-16 HESA figures indicates that although the percentage of full-time academic staff has increased - with 67.8% now possessing doctorates - the wide gap between pre and post-1992 institutions remains with 75.6% in the pre-1992 sector, compared to 47.6% in post-1992 institutions². Tight forwards a number of reasons as to why the percentages in his 2012 analysis may be so low, especially in post-1992 universities. One is the nature of the subjects taught in these institutions, which are often more vocational in nature and lecturers are often recruited from the ranks of mid-career practitioners. However, he argues that there is an increasing focus on research and scholarly output and this may serve to explain the increase in the percentage in academic staff holding doctorates since 2012. Nonetheless in the post-1992 sector doctoral-level educated full-time academic staff are still in the minority.

Given this, it may be unsurprising that a number of university strategies are stating that it is their intention to increase the percentage of their academic staff holding doctorates (for example Cardiff Metropolitan University Strategic Plan 2012-2017, Glasgow Caledonian University Strategy 2020 and University of Greenwich Strategy Plan 2012-2017) and one method of doing so is to provide their current academic staff with the opportunity to undertake doctoral-level study. This paper outlines the findings of a research study examining the motivations and experiences of a diverse range of academic staff undertaking part-time doctorates at a post-1992 university. A number of themes were explored in the study but this paper will focus on one theme, namely the motivation for undertaking a doctorate.

Methodology and participants

Weaver and Olsen (2006) state that under the interpretivist paradigm the understanding is constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the participants and as a member of staff undertaking doctoral-level study myself this interaction formed a key component of my research design. The methodology therefore adopted an interpretivist, qualitative perspective, and the data collection method was semi-structured one-to-one interviews, of which 15 were conducted between June and October 2016. Thematic analysis is being used to analyse the research data.

A snowballing strategy was used to recruit the participants and all were members of academic staff employed in the same post-1992 institution from a wide range of different subject areas. In addition, to working across a wide range of subject areas, the participants entered academia from diverse backgrounds, including adult returners and

mid-career professionals, and all were either in the process of undertaking, or had recently completed a doctorate. Due to the need to maintain the anonymity of the participants any demographic information provided has been disaggregated and some contextual details such as job titles and subject specialisms have been omitted. Each participant has been assigned a pseudonym.

Eligibility for taking part in the study was that they were completing - ten of which were at this stage - or had recently completed a doctorate. The three main types of doctorates offered were represented within the sample with four participants completing a traditional PhD, seven a Professional Doctorate and four a PhD by Previous Published Works. Although they needed to be employed by the institution at which the research was being conducted it was not a requirement of participation that they were completing their doctorate at the same institution but the majority were, with only four of the 15 completing their studies at a separate institution. The tuition fees of 14 of the participants were being fully paid by the institution and partially paid for the fifteenth.

The average age of the participants was 52 and the average length of employment at the institution was 14 years. These figures would appear to support Tight's assertion that many lecturers in post-1992 universities are recruited from mid-career professionals. However, it should be noted that participants provided their age at the time of interview, therefore the average age at the commencement of their studies will be slightly younger. Moreover, their career history prior to employment at their current institution was not scrutinised.

Motivation

The QAA (2015) state that the traditional PhD remains the main type of doctoral qualification undertaken in the UK, but new forms of doctorates began to emerge in the early 1990s, namely Professional Doctorates and PhDs by Previous Published Works. They claim that most academics in the UK possess a PhD, although Tight's analysis of HESA figures and the 2015-16 HESA figures reveal this to be far from the case. One of the reasons forwarded by Tight for the low percentage of academic staff qualified to doctoral-level is the number of vocational subjects which means that staff are recruited on the basis of their professional experience rather than academic qualifications. Nonetheless, as a number of universities are stating it is their intention to increase the percentage of staff holding doctorates, one method of doing so is to offer existing staff the opportunity to undertake a doctorate.

Type of doctorate

The QAA states that Professional Doctorate students are normally drawn from the ranks of mid-career professionals, so it is somewhat surprising that this type of doctorate is being completed by almost 50% of the participants in this study, given that they are all full-time academics. The reason for the participants' choice of doctorate was not explored in great depth. However, as the PhD is still perceived as the doctoral qualification for those wishing to pursue an academic career it is worth briefly examining the popularity of the Professional Doctorate amongst this cohort, and two main reasons did emerge as to why participants chose that route. The first one was the structured nature of the programme with one participant Margaret stating 'the early modules did actually try and force you to pick a strategic issue that was relevant to practice and that you tailored all of those modules to enable you to develop research question'. Another participant Janice stated that it was 'because it's taught, it's blocks, that's much more preferable for my learning style...'. A second reason given was that this qualification enabled the learner to transition from their previous professional identity to their current identity as an academic, as

articulated by Karen who asserted:

My only concern was...would it have been more beneficial to do a PhD in ... (subject area)? And a colleague was like 'Well that's probably not where your careers going to go now, you're not a researcher in the University for... (subject area)...' and the Professional Doctorate would then have been an educational doctorate for me and so people were saying probably for your career it's better to do the Professional Doctorate.

Other participants who were undertaking a Professional Doctorate also noted that it acted as a bridge between their professional background and their current role as an academic with Katie stating 'I had always wanted to do the doctorate...when the Professional Doctorate came up and you could do it on your job, for your profession, that was just wayhey let's have a go at this'. The popularity of the Professional Doctorate therefore may be linked to both the structured nature of the early stage of the programme, and that it allows those academic staff who have been recruited mid-career to maintain links with their professional background and make a smoother transition into their new academic role.

Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

Scott et al (2004) undertook a large-scale study of Professional Doctorates in three subject areas, namely: Business; Engineering; and Education. They examined a number of areas, one of which was motivations for undertaking a Professional Doctorate. Although Scott et al only considered Professional Doctorates, the categories they forwarded are applicable regardless of type of doctorate and will be used to examine the motivations of the participants in this study.

Scott et al argue that those learners who undertook a Professional Doctorate in their study were motivated to do so by either extrinsic or intrinsic factors. Extrinsic motivation being 'governed by the goals, values and interest of others as they affect the individual, and participation in the activity is driven primarily by the prospect of external, tangible reward' (2004: 114). Conversely, intrinsic motivation is when a person undertakes an activity purely for the sake of doing so and successful completion is the reward. They identified three distinct categories in their study, namely: Extrinsic-Professional Initiation; Extrinsic – Professional Continuation; and Intrinsic – Personal/Professional (ibid).

The category Extrinsic – Professional Initiation is the one to which the authors assign learners who are normally in the early stages of their career and view the doctorate as an opportunity to further their career and are seeking promotion and/or experience. The average age of the participants in this study was 52 years old and the average length of employment at the University was 14 years, so given that the majority of the participants were not starting out in their career at the University this category did not feature strongly in this study. However, it was the main motivation for two of the participants, Karen and Nicola and they were the two youngest members of staff interviewed. Karen stated 'I suppose for me it was looking for a qualification that would help me get a full time job in the university' and similarly Nicola commented that she 'wanted to move into academia' and upon gaining some experience signed up to a doctorate. However, although for both professional initiation was the main driver behind their decision to undertake a doctorate, it was not the only factor and both expressed a desire to do a doctorate regardless of potential career advancement.

The category to which most of the participants in this study can be assigned is Extrinsic – Professional Continuation, which Scott et al argues consists of those who are looking to further develop an already established career and/or explore new opportunities within their

professional life. In this study it was the latter that a number of participants cited, expressing a desire to become more research active. Post-1992 institutions often recruit academic staff due to their industry experience, and although in most institutions all academic staff are expected to produce scholarly outputs, for those who have not entered with a PhD it may not be their primary function. One such participant Janice cited new opportunities as a driver saying 'I think really for myself to maintain a career in academia I'd like to go down more the research path'. However, their belief that doing so was necessary for them to maintain their academic career appears to support Tight's (2012) assertion that research is becoming of increasing importance across the higher education sector. Sean who had undertaken a PhD also stated 'I'd like to be much more research-active and do cross-disciplinary research'.

According to Scott et al professional continuation is underpinned by Boud and Garrick's (1999) concept of 'learning as a social investment' (ibid: 119), in that it provides people with the opportunity to contribute to the development of their profession, and in doing so give something back to their field. This was very much evident in one of the participants John, who had a highly successful career as a practitioner and believed he could make a contribution to his profession arguing '(w)hat I really wanted to do was develop my knowledge and bridge the gap between practice and academia.'

The final category is Intrinsic – Personal/Professional which Scott et al argue is driven by the individual's own goals and values, and those who fall into this category tend to be older and often already hold senior positions within their organisation, and this was the primary form of motivation for a number of the participants. Three participants who already held promoted positions within the University asserted that they were undertaking a doctorate for their own personal fulfilment, with Gemma stating that '...my supervisor looked on it as a way of promotion, but I'm not interested in going for promotion, so that wasn't a key factor'. However, although not driven by promotion, in keeping with those seeking professional continuation, they did express a desire to explore other avenues, but ones driven by personal rather than professional ambition. For example, although Gemma is not seeking promotion she did state that she intended to work on a number of academic papers stating that the doctorate has given her a 'huge lift in confidence'. Another participant Simon, who also held a promoted post, expressed regret at not completing a doctorate earlier in his career, but still had areas of personal interest saying 'I'm getting too close to the P45 stage to actually start thinking about anything more in depth, but there's a number of things I would like to investigate more'.

Scott et al further argue that professional credibility is a significant intrinsic driver and this is not perceived by the individual to have been gained through completing the qualification, but is about 'embarking on an activity that requires engagement of the self' (ibid: 123). They state that these learners seek external validation in order to prove their worth and the 'status of the doctorate is important' (ibid) and this was a strong theme that emerged during the interviews. Examples of these viewpoints included:

Gemma: Nobody has ever said that to me or hinted it, it's me, it's not anybody else, but I feel it's a kind of need to prove and I actually kind of think if you are a...(job title)...you probably should either have carried out some publications if you're in a university or have a PhD.

Tom: I don't class myself as an academic, I class myself as an imposter academic because probably the majority of my experience is in industry. I think that's

why, as you say, you want to go through the PhD and hopefully get it to the end, to give you that wee bit more self confidence and integrity ...

Nicola: I wouldn't be comfortable and I wouldn't feel confident coming in and saying 'This is how you should be writing at Masters level' if I've never done it or 'This is how doctoral students write' if I've never went through the process.

Julie: ... but it's really important to me that I'm able to say 'I've got a doctorate, I'm Doctor...(name), that's who I am' and that will make a difference to me.

Nicola: I bet there's a change as soon as I've got a Dr in front of my name, in terms of how people treat you.

Archer (2008) reported similar feelings to those stated above in her study of younger academics and although Archer's cohort had these feelings for different reasons, such as age and gender, her study demonstrates that being an 'authentic' academic is not an identity that is readily assumed.

Conclusion

This paper examined the motivations of full-time academic staff undertaking part-time doctorates - which was one of the themes in a study exploring the experiences of academic staff undertaking doctorates - and drew on the categories of motivation developed by Scott et al (2004) in their study into Professional Doctorates in three subject areas. Despite the fact that the participants in this study were undertaking a range of doctorates, and had a diverse range of subject areas and backgrounds the work of Scott et al was still highly applicable and the participants' primary motivations could be categorised as Extrinsic - Professional Initiation, Extrinsic - Professional Continuation or Intrinsic - Personal/Professional. Although they identified three categories of motivation they acknowledged that these are '... unlikely to exist in isolation and elements of all three could conceivably feature to varying degrees within an individual student' (2004: 114) and this was true of the cohort in this study. For example, although the primary motivating factors for the two youngest participants were driven by professional initiation, both also articulated strong intrinsic reasons for undertaking their studies. Regardless of the primary motivating factors, one viewpoint that was raised by many of the participants was the academic validity that holding a doctorate would bestow upon them, a sentiment akin to the feelings of 'inauthenticity' expressed in Archer's study. Scott et al argued that some learners undertake doctorates in the pursuit of external validation. However, as the participants in this study were drawn from the ranks of academic staff they appear to be seeking internal rather than external validation and view the doctorate as an application for full membership to a club for which they believe they only currently hold associate membership.

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1 Post-1992 universities refer to those former polytechnic and central institutions awarded university status through the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act.

2 HESA do not distinguish between pre and post-1992 institutions so the categorisation was completed by the author and may not exactly match the categorisation used by Tight in his 2012 analysis.

Multi-culturalism and the decline of public space: Adult education and the building of a common culture

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Introduction

This paper draws on 'psychosocial' and historical research in a postindustrial, struggling 'multicultural' city, beset by problems of racism, radicalisation, and solipsistic ethnic communities barely in contact with one another. It is a city once home to a strong adult education tradition, which has dissipated as industries have gone or declined and working class self-help institutions have fractured. The idea of adult education as a public space for building shared meanings, across difference, and to take time to do so, if relationships across society are to be enhanced and democratised, is largely gone. In fact, adult education, under neo-liberal austerity, is fragile (West, 2016) and 'large swathes' of publicly funded provision have been eradicated (Tuckett, 2017: 230).

Paraphrasing Gandhi, I suggest that multiculturalism in the West, like democracy, might be a good idea if ever tried; and that adult education could be central to such a project. I want, in this context, to examine the alleged failure of multiculturalism (West, 2016), in the light of the recent barbarism in Manchester and other violence. Arguably Britain has flirted with multiculturalism (more so than the French, for instance, with *laïcité*, secularism and inculcation of everyone into a common French culture). But the flirtation remains unconvincing and whatever genuine efforts exist, they are threatened by calls for the total assimilation or evacuation of the other in reaction to slaughter. It is interesting that there are equivalent levels of alienation among Muslim people in Britain and France, as there are projective, persecutory anxieties among many of the white working class, and beyond, in both countries. Tellingly, discussions about the possible role of a recognisably inclusive 'liberal' adult education in building meaningful dialogue across difference are remarkable by their absence.

Narrowing

In fact, the purpose of education has narrowed, as governments mobilise a discourse of economic crisis to re-construct education as the servant of the economy. Adult education now focuses on producing forms of knowledge or skills most easily translated into economic performativity and labour market flexibility. The older world of liberal university adult education and the Workers Educational Association (WEA) has largely disappeared and is still disparaged in some quarters. But in the face of neo-liberalism, and the crisis of multiculturalism, it is worth re-visiting the past and potential future role of liberal adult education with a democratic purpose.

Adult education, historically, sought to create a society of shared meanings and active citizenship. In the work of R.H.Tawney, for instance and his ideas of an inclusive fraternity. Or in the case of Raymond Williams who believed that a central purpose of adult education was to create an inclusive culture of shared meanings in which all might participate in equal ways. Both stressed the importance of a full and liberal education for everyone in which there could be negotiation of diverse meanings and a search to build common values by which we could live together in greater solidarity. Each was concerned with how we learn democratic sensibilities, fraternity and commonality. Both can help us to think about our present crises of multiculturalism. Tawney, the ethical Socialist, and Williams, the humanistic Marxist have more in common, in fact, around these themes, when rescued

from the condescension of certain kinds of Marxist analysis (West, 2017).

I should make clear that a common culture is not one that incorporates the other into a firmly established, unquestionable set of values, while leaving them free to engage with quaint customs. Nor is a common culture one in which everyone believes the same things, but where everyone has equal status and equal opportunities for shaping ways of life in common. This I suggest can only thrive if public space is created where deeper and inclusive dialogue is possible. 'Multiculturalism' has occasionally suffered from a politically correct avoidance of anything that could give offence, preventing people from questioning what might get in the way of collective well-being. We cannot simply accept the domestication of women, for instance, in any culture, or the Holocaust denier, and ways are needed to ensure dialogue and relationship continue, even in the most tension ridden, diabolical situation.

Tawney's idea of fraternity

Lawrence Goldman (2013) argues that we should look to the early Tawney and his work in adult education, and the idea of fraternity, as a guide in our present malaise. Tawney saw adult education as the vehicle to build microcosms of the Kingdom on Earth, according to his Christian socialist ideals. His later more Fabian, statist socialism, of elites handing down prescriptions and solutions from on high, appears less attractive in hindsight. We should remember that workers' education in the UK was uniquely an alliance between progressives in universities and workers' organisations. It was characterised by a mix of Enlightenment idealism, the aspirations of democratic socialism and, for many, a religious belief in the potential divinity in everyone. It was much a democratic and spiritual as an educational movement. Jonathan Rose (2010) argues that it played a key role in creating the welfare state after the Second World War.

Workers' education represented a social experiment open to the marginalised, with equality of status between students encouraging freedom of expression and enquiry, tolerance and respect, and the capacities to manage the turbulence arising from the clash of ideas. Dispute did not, in general, degenerate into breakdown. At their best the classes were communities of imaginative, caring, committed and thoughtful students, in which all were teachers as well as learners. Revisiting the history offers glimpses into how previous generations of working-class people learned inclusive democracy and the making of shared meanings. It might teach us about relevant educational processes and principles in our present multicultural discontent.

Workers education, in the form of tutorial classes, once thrived in the city where I was born, Stoke, in the English Midlands, the subject of my recent work (West, 2016). The first ever university/workers' tutorial class met there in 1908 when 30 or so worker students gathered on Friday evenings, for 2 hours, over a period of years, with their tutor, R.H. Tawney. The classes were free from prescribed curricula and members were encouraged to explore issues in their working lives from the perspectives of history, politics, economics and literature. Fortnightly essays were required, and the standard of some of these was high (West, 1972; Goldman, 1995). There were no formal examinations or qualifications due to a desire to eliminate competition and vocationalism from the classroom (West, 1972; Rose, 2010).

The students were potters, miners, clerks, shop assistants and elementary school teachers, women and men (West, 1972). Many were from non-conformist backgrounds, from families, in short, that encouraged them to think for themselves. The Marxist Social Democratic Federation made up the nucleus of the first class. The Social Democratic

Federation was formed in 1883 under the leadership of Henry Hyndman who was the son of a business man and became a journalist and political agitator (Macintyre, 1980). The Federation was opposed to the British Liberal Party of the time, and its programme was progressive, calling for a 48-hour working week, the abolition of child labour, compulsory free secular education, equality for women and the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Some SDF members held an extremely 'mechanical version of the materialist conception of history' in which the whole of human life 'was controlled by economic forces independent of human volition' (Macintyre, 1980: 17). Education, politics and consciousness were epiphenomena of the techniques and relations of production. The students could sometimes be rigid in their economic doctrines (ibid), that played out in tutorial classes. But we can also observe Tawney's own efforts, and those of some students, to keep dialogue and enquiry alive (West, 2017).

The WEA, through which the classes were organised, was founded on three principles. First, opposition to revolutionary violence. Second, no institution, however perfect in conception, could work effectively with individuals whose morality was inadequate. Third, where a sound morality was lacking, this could be forged in a community of scholars seeking truth and the common good (Dennis and Halsey, 1988). There was an Aristotelian ideal at work, as well as Oxford idealism (Goldman, 1995): of the fully developed person living in communities, building and sustaining virtue, in relationship – communities cultivating not self- but other-regardedness (Dennis and Halsey, 1988). The Oxford idealists influencing Tawney were opposed to individualism, utilitarianism and social atomism and drew on German philosophers, especially Kant and Hegel, to insist that individuals best realise their potential in the collective. People were part of webs of social, cultural, political as well as economic relationships from which they could not be divorced for analytic purposes.

However, as noted, Tawney was aware (Goldman, 1995: 160) that the same spirit of non-conformity driving some worker students could narrow viewpoints and bring the tendency to over-proselytise. Dogmatism and even fundamentalism of a Marxist or religious kind, existed in the classes. But it is interesting that the students admired tutors like Tawney who remained steadfast as well as respectful even when harangued by a fundamentalist. Leftist fundamentalists, sometimes from the Social Democratic Federation and later the Communist Party, though not exclusively so, would quote texts like *Das Capital* with religious fervour. One recalled a particular Marxist – the SDF could dominate the first tutorial classes – challenging Tawney point by point and citing classic Marxist scripture. Tawney took it in his stride but insisted that there were other points of view. The student accused the tutor of hopping around like a bird, from twig to twig, and a sense of bad temper pervaded the room. But Tawney insisted that everyone, including his challenger, take tea together afterwards and tell stories, read poetry and sing songs. A shared humanity and a spirit of fraternity were restored (Rose, 2010: 266). And the class stayed together despite the local secretary of the SDF demanding that his members leave for fear of ideological contamination (Goldman, 2013).

Tawney's contribution to theorising the role and practice of inclusive adult education is in fact being re-evaluated by scholars (Holford, 2015; Goldman, 2013). The tutorial classes sought to make university education available to everyone, in their own localities: different to today's meritocratic assumptions about higher education for individual social mobility. Tawney was committed to a liberal and humane view of education for everyone so that they could acquire civic qualities of reciprocity, mutual recognition as well as intellectual confidence. Communities should not be privileged or discounted because of wealth or poverty. Tawney also represents a more constructivist view of knowledge: the classes

were classes, not lectures, and ideas were explored and developed in discussion. The processes of education were democratised – students engaged in research and discovery through using original source material, like historical documents, rather than simply relying on secondary texts. The fundamental aim was to make university education available to all in their localities, in pedagogically democratic and fraternal ways. And in a revised reading of my own earlier historical analysis, there is ample evidence of the extent to which the spirit of the tutorial classes motivated a wider workers' educational movement across the mining communities of North Staffordshire (West, 1972; 2016).

I am aware that some still regard Tawney and the tutorial classes as being complicit in marginalising other forms of working class knowledge, especially Marxism (Macintyre, 1980: 89-90). In one influential historical reading, the tutorial classes, and the WEA were 'welcomed by the establishment as a bulwark against revolutionism, a moderating influence and a form of social control...' (Fieldhouse, 1995: 123). The difficulty is that there is simply no evidence from Stoke or many other places that the tutorial classes encouraged political quiescence in Marxist students. In fact, Rose (2010) questions whether quiescence applies even among Fieldhouse's own sample of seventy-one students.

We are, in fact, better able, nowadays, to form a more nuanced, psychosocial understanding of the importance of the classes: and of processes of self/other recognition in the stories students tell. They learned, like countless adult students, then and since, something of a democratic and fraternal sensibility, which they describe in their own words (West, 1996; Rose, 2010: 274–5). We can better understand how human flourishing in workers' education, and beyond, required sufficient experience of what Honneth, the critical theorist (2007; 2009), calls self-recognition: of love and experience of self-affirmation, at different levels. This included recognition from significant others, like Tawney and other more experienced students. People, we, need to feel recognised, in good enough ways, in groups, like the tutorial classes, and in wider societies, to flourish. When we feel sufficiently recognised, we are better able to recognise others, from which stronger social solidarities can flow. I have applied these ideas not only to the history of workers' education but also to extend the theory of recognition to encompass symbolic and unconscious processes in various forms of adult education, creating cultures of fraternity and shared meaning among for instance white and Muslim working class women in recent health education projects (West, 2016).

Williams, common cultures, common meanings

Williams was of the same broad tradition as Tawney, although of a later generation and with a somewhat different political outlook. Both understood that the WEA's historic mission was far from over by the 1950s. If 'exceptional minds' from diverse backgrounds now could go to university, wrote Williams in a letter to WEA tutors, the remaining question was what about everyone else? Were they simply to be treated as rejects, suitable only for narrow vocational training? The WEA stood for something that even educational reformers forgot, obsessed as they might be with schooling: 'It stands for an educated democracy, not for a newly mobile and more varied élite', Williams wrote in 1961 (cited in Goldman, 1995: 252). Like Tawney, Williams was critical of those who presumed to deliver answers to ordinary people using ideological texts to shape their minds and actions, without requiring active and critical engagement. Such 'teaching', and the banking concept, were the antithesis of a democratic education, as Williams and Tawney understood it: it was demeaning, infantilising and anti-educational to proffer conclusions – people needed to reach them on their own, in fellowship, over time.

In his writing on 'culture as ordinary' (Williams, 1989), Williams observed how elites of whatever kind – whether advertising men and women or the authoritarian left - held relatedly dehumanised, reductive views of the masses. Expensively educated people were 'now in the service of the most brazen money-grabbing exploitation of the inexperience of ordinary people' (Williams, 1989: 6). 'The new cheapjack is in offices with contemporary *décor*, using scraps of linguistics, psychology, and sociology to influence what he thinks of as the mass mind (Williams, 1989: 7). But his scorn also applied to those Marxist interpretations of culture and education which insisted that people should think in prescribed ways. 'It is stupid and arrogant to suppose that any of these meanings (within cultures) can in any way be prescribed: they are made by living people, made and remade, in ways that we cannot know in advance'. The Marxist interpretation of culture, he argued, could never be acceptable if it retained such a directive element.

Williams, like Tawney, was also critical of militaristic metaphors and the fetish of violent 'solutions' among some on the left. When power is monopolised by unresponsive elites, divisions can constantly open among those who seek to oppose them: some may find violence attractive, whether of the left, racist right or Islamic fundamentalism. Metaphors of assaulting citadels, Williams observed, are the wrong kind of metaphor. Any struggle needed to be slow, democratic, non-violent and fundamentally educational. 'Active reception', Williams suggested, was a living response that real communication elicited, in adult education, as in life, which depended on creating 'a community of experience, of human and intellectual equality'. Adult education was 'a crucial experience', a central way of getting in touch with ourselves and others in new ways (McIlroy, 1993: 6).

Multi-culturalism, avoidance, or inclusion across diversity

These ideas might seem passé, but in the face of the crisis of multi-culturalism and democracy they can help us re-assert the relevance of a renewed inclusive civic and critical adult and university education (West, 2016). Terry Eagleton (2009) notes how multiculturalism, at its least impressive, blandly embraces difference, without wanting to examine too closely what we might differ about. It is in these terms anti-educational. At an extreme, it avoids challenging Holocaust deniers or the troubling treatment of women in all communities. There is a facile pluralism that numbs the impetus to contest other people's views. Eagleton wants to see vigorous opposition to those who peddle destructive views; and challenges the idea of respecting beliefs just because they are beliefs. But I want to add a rider. There were differences and disputes in workers' education – and there were cultural differences too, of class and gender - but ways were often found of dealing with them developmentally. Tawney, for one, and many students, managed this rather well. The point of the paper is to revisit some of this spirit, pedagogy, values and motivation as a guide in our present perplexity.

A final story, to enrich the point: in 2013, a mosque in York was threatened by a demonstration and violence by the racist English Defence League (EDL). The elders were troubled but wanted to avoid knee-jerk responses. They decided to invite the leaders to take tea with them, to share concerns and discuss differences. Mohamed El-Gomati (2013), one of the elders, wrote, 'Tea, like many things we think of as English is adopted from other cultures.' He reminds us that George Bernard Shaw thought 'that if the world's problems were brought to the prophet Muhammad, he would solve them over a cup of tea'. El-Gomati wrote: 'When we listened to each other we realised the EDL thought we supported extremist behaviour and the Taliban.' In the storytelling that day people began to understand, however provisionally, what they had in common, alongside some of the uniqueness and hybridity of actual people. Even the EDL's racism is recognisably human, and can – if with difficulty – be challenged in a spirit of fraternity, through actual

engagement with the complexity of the other. Tawney, like the Prophet, encouraged his students to take tea, after his classes, and to tell stories and sing songs, and thought this essential to building fraternity across difference.

Taking tea and making time for creating good enough space for dialogue, where there is fracture and enmity, can teach everyone about shared desires in all families to thrive, to feel materially and psychologically secure and to be welcomed and valued as creative citizens beyond the caricatures of the tabloid press, marketing or ideologues. Such ways of educational life can, with difficulty, tackle issues like the role of women in different cultures, including their sexualisation in Western culture. Or the nature and effects of neo-liberalism and ugly forms of usury. It might be possible, over time, to think collectively of the values by which we could live together more harmoniously and creatively, and to strengthen living democracy in the process. Multiculturalism, to repeat, too easily involves politically correct avoidance of anything that could give offence, preventing people, in good enough space, from engaging with the difficulties inherent in really meaningful education.

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Witness/eyewitness: Exploring the transformative potential of photography to develop an inclusive view of the world and society

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Introduction

This paper describes a small-scale qualitative research study exploring the use of the arts, particularly photography, and its potential to develop greater awareness of the world and current affairs in adults preparing to work as educators in the lifelong learning sector. The research is part of a wider study into the use of the arts in professional education, and the extent to which they can have a transformative impact. This particular project using photography has been part of an initiative to develop reflective and critical thinking about the world and society, and a commitment to the values of inclusion, equality and diversity.

Background and context

The potential for professional learning through the arts has not been fully realised and 'remains in the margins' according to McIntosh (2012:4), and to work in this area and conduct research is a contribution which extends the field. Inspired by Greene (1995:2), the aim has been for learners to become, in her words, 'conscious of diversity of background and perspective and to attend to and express regard for difference as well as for what is conceived to be common'.

This research project has been carried out over two academic years with adult learners undertaking a one year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Lifelong Learning at a university in the North of England. The 40 learners in the study, (20 each year) have comprised creative arts professionals aged between 25 and 50 from a range of backgrounds with a wide variety of experience prior to undertaking the PGCE. The trainee lecturers and teachers have included artists, designers, photographers and musicians. The wider research has included the design and implementation of a range of arts-based approaches and curriculum interventions, with a research strategy alongside to investigate value, impact and effect.

'Look again, because...': The 'Eyewitness' photography project

In this project, as part of a weekly structured activity, 20 PGCE students have been asked to look at and consider poster-sized photographs of a global event, published daily by *The Guardian* newspaper and entitled 'Eyewitness'. The photographs are high quality photo-journalism often by world-class and leading photographers with subjects including news, politics, war, religious events, festivals, culture and images from the natural world. In one week the daily photograph may range from a 'hard news' image one day to an arts subject the next. According to Roger Tooth, head of photography at *The Guardian*, they are 'slice of life images documenting the daily lives of people from around the world', with 'a tremendous feeling of being there, being an eyewitness' (2014).

The five photographs from the previous week's newspaper have been displayed around a classroom as if in an art gallery every Monday morning. Learners have been asked to select a photograph from their seats and then stand beside it. This has been without looking at the photographs in close proximity and without reading caption information. When learners have made their choice, they have been asked to discuss with others also standing there what has influenced their selection. The room has buzzed with

conversation. Some learners by each photograph have then been asked to share with the whole class the reason for their choice. The next task has been for everyone to 'carousel' around the room as if viewing pictures in a gallery. This time, learners have looked closely at each photograph. They have been asked again to select one photograph to stand by. This generates considerable interest as very often a learner has selected a different photograph; those standing by a photograph can have changed completely. Learners have again shared and discussed. Have their choices been made for similar reasons or not? If they have changed their mind, why? Once again, some learners have been selected to share their choices and reasons in front of the whole class. After this, a review of the whole activity has been held with whole class dialogue and discussion, to 'deepen and make more complex the conversation' (Eisner 2008:10). At all stages in the exercise it has been clearly evident that learners have been very engaged, eager to share, discuss and listen.

The activity has developed into a regular routine, done before the rest of the day's teaching and learning begins. The exercises have developed and evolved to include variations and provocations with questions about 'gaze', presence and absence, what choices reveal and what might happen next. John Berger has inspired sentences to complete next to a photograph, such as 'look again, because...'

'Art can make a difference': Some relevant literature

According to the author Jeanette Winterson, 'art can make a difference because it pulls people up short' (1997:260). Seminal writers and advocates of the arts in education such as Eisner (2004, 2008) and Greene (1995, 2001) have highlighted the value and the potential for transformation when knowledge is constructed through the arts and aesthetic experience. For Eisner, the arts can 'awaken us from our stock responses' (1995:2), and for Greene, they can be connected to 'becoming wide-awake to the world' (1995:3). In Greene's view, the arts can reveal cultural diversity and a place outside the reach of someone's personal experience, providing 'new perspectives on the lived world' and possibly 'the terms of life' (1995:5). In her well-known words, they can 'release the imagination', and offer new lenses through which new perspectives and new connections might be made, and encounters with the world might 'become newly informed' (1995:18). The arts can enable deeper awareness of oneself, one another and the world (McIntosh 2012:4, Clover et al 2013), and according to Desyllas and Sinclair (2014:298) 'effectively enhance the understanding of the human condition and experience'. They can 'enable us to see more in our experience, to *hear* more on normally unheard frequencies, to *become conscious* of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed' (Greene 1995:123). The arts have the capacity, wrote Dewey (1934:46), to 'touch the deeper levels of life'.

According to Jarvis and Gouthro (2015), the arts can be a rich resource in the professional education and training of adults. They suggest the arts can develop the ability to be creative, critical and reflective, and the capacity to work with change and uncertainty. Arts-informed approaches in professional (health) education have been analysed by Kinsella and Bidinosti (2015:1), who report learners becoming more aware of values, experiencing deepening self-awareness and reflection, heightened consciousness and the development of capacities to imagine future practices. In the field of teacher education, Kenny et al (2015) refer to the value of reflective arts experiences to shape emerging teacher identities.

With regard to photography, Berger (2013:67) suggests that it can be, amongst other things, 'a way of explaining the world', with Collier and Collier (1986:99), suggesting that

photographs can 'function as starting and reference points for discussions of the familiar or the unknown'. Berger (1988/2005:38) has also written of the potential of photography to 'let the visible connect'. Sontag with another point of view has interestingly cautioned that photographic images can eclipse other forms of understanding and remembering, and this can be a problem not because people remember through photographs 'but that they remember only the photographs' (2002:94).

'Act differently': The arts and transformative learning

Winterson's view that 'art asks us to think differently, see differently, hear differently, and ultimately to act differently' (2006:3) suggests the power of the arts to transform. However, transformative learning is a phenomena of complexity, and transformative learning theory, originally formulated by Mezirow in 1978, is a theory with many diverse perspectives according to Hoggan (2016:16).

Arts-based practices have been acknowledged for their importance in the role of stimulating, fostering and supporting transformative learning (Hoggan and Cranton 2012). For example, in their discussion of intentional interventions to foster transformative learning in higher education, Kasworm and Bowles (2012:394) include five domains one of which is the purposeful use of the arts, literature, film and drama. In an exploration of how the arts can promote transformative learning in adult education contexts, Lawrence (2012) states that art which is evocative or provocative has the potential to facilitate transformation, and that this may be through the creation of art or the witnessing of art created by others. In contemporary times, argues McGregor (2012:310), arts-informed learning is an 'essential tool' in the education of leaders through which to enable deeper, more reflexive and transformational learning. Writing about the arts, Greene (2008:19) simply states: 'they transform'.

Transformative learning theory explores the kinds of changes that result from processes of examining, questioning and revising perception. Things previously unconsidered or unexamined are questioned and looked at in a new way through critical dialogue and critical reflection and this may lead to transformation. McGregor (2012:321) refers to critical, deep reflection as the cornerstone of transformative learning theory. Although Mezirow originally linked transformative learning to 'disorienting dilemmas' and perspective changes through disrupting or shattering experiences, it has also been argued that transformative learning may be gradual, incremental and cumulative (Mezirow 1997, Cranton and Taylor 2012).

'Never a single approach to something remembered': Methodology

This qualitative research has been within an interpretive paradigm which places emphasis and value on human interpretation of the social world (Ritchie et al 2014:11). I have been in the dual role of teacher and researcher and the tensions and implications around positionality are of course acknowledged as important, although not the focus of this paper. Taking the view of Berger (1978/2013:60) that there is 'never a single approach to something remembered', data to find out the impact of engaging with the weekly photography exercise has been collected through various methods and included informal conversations, class discussion, a 'graffitti wall', learner reflections and semi-structured interviews with individuals. A journal has been kept with observations quickly captured, an 'active record' (Dyer 2013:xii). A general thematic approach has been followed when analysing data (Ritchie et al, 2014).

'It feels like I'm a real person now': Findings and discussion

Looking at the world each week through the 'Eyewitness' photography has had an impact

on the learners in the study which other news media has failed to do. For example, it has been regarded as 'a very powerful and instant method to convey a story', and 'a far more interesting way to find out about the news...I find so many articles bombard with words'. A greater awareness and engagement in current affairs has been developed, and the following statements from three different learners, representative of many, demonstrate Greene's 'becoming wide-awake to the world' (1995:3):

It really helped build my awareness of what was happening in the news and often made me read further into articles / issues I was previously unaware of.

I wasn't really aware of what was going on in the world at all, I only look at Facebook which is terrible I know, but thanks to what you've shown us, there's a whole lot more out there.

If it wasn't for you doing that, I wouldn't have any idea of what's going on.

These comments, while of concern to hear from adults preparing to be educators of young people and adults, do show how the photography found a way to move beyond what Greene (1995) describes as the preoccupations of our own private worlds. Another typical comment further illustrating this was: 'I think we've become more engaged in politics and stuff' further illustrating this.

With regard to personal change, two examples are given here. One learner said in conversation during the middle of her course that:

I've been brought up in a bubble, my Dad's put me in a bubble, so anything in my bubble I keep in my bubble. I've got to come out of my bubble, yeah, it's making me a lot more aware now, looking at the pictures. I think it's going to be really hard for me to come out of my bubble though because it's going to make me, it's started to make me think that I need to start engaging with, (pause) the world.

Engagement with current affairs through photography each week was starting to have an impact on this learner. The activity appeared to be having a gradual, incremental and cumulative effect on her, and some personal transformation was taking place. During an end of course interview, the learner was asked about her earlier reference to her 'bubble' and she reflected that:

I was enclosed. I only wanted to focus on what I was doing, and it's not enough. I'm still in my bubble. But mine isn't the only one.

This comment would seem to be illustrative of a 'disorienting dilemma'. The learner was recognising the change in 'who she had been and who she was now', engaging in critical self-reflection about herself as both a person and a potential teacher.

Another learner said that the photographs 'have brought me closer, closer to the real world' and described the change in her as 'it feels like I'm a real person now'. She gave the example of how she had previously distanced herself in life generally and also in the exercise from what she called 'hard topics' explaining that:

I always used to pick a really beautiful scenic image, and I kind of thought, there's so much going on in the world, and you know, I don't want to ignore that [pause] and I thought I never go to the war ones [pause] what's going on in the world, you can't just

ignore it, you have to acknowledge it, and I ended up standing next to a photo of, I think it was Aleppo.

She linked this change in her to a class discussion, remembering 'there was that time we were talking about how what you choose is kind of like a reflection of you, kind of like who you are'. This appeared to be the catalyst for critical reflection and change and she later wrote that 'instead of avoiding those images I have started to engage more with these tough subjects', also saying she had since watched documentaries about the Iraq war and the Syrian conflict. This learner's story illustrates Eisner's (2008:10) view that through the arts, awareness and humanity can be expanded. The learner's reflection can be described as critical and part of a process leading to transformative change, and what Greene describes as a 'fuller and more adequate experience of what it signifies to be human and to inhabit a multifaceted world' (1981:115).

The photographs opened a positive 'discursive space' (Blom 2017:2), they were a 'good tool to find voice and reflect' said one learner. That this space was felt to be 'safe' was mentioned many times by learners. Comments that it was 'an open and accepting forum', and that 'it was a great activity to look forward to and I oddly found comfort in the routine of it, especially as there were no right or wrong answers!' also support this. It would seem the photographs provided many ways to safely access and discuss things such as politics, economics, equality, society and culture. 'We were able to engage visually on our own terms' wrote one learner. The independent curation and broad subject range of the photographs by the newspaper (not just the 'object as subject' Dyer 2013:xvi) was deemed important by many and facilitated what a learner described as 'areas for debate/discussion/discourse'. On one occasion a learner said of her chosen photograph of refugees being given a home by a UK family, 'it restores your faith in humanity and their dogs are really cute', illustrating the accessibility of the photographs at many levels. Many learners mentioned the challenge to beliefs and perceptions and the 'deeper thinking' promoted through discussion; one person described it as a 'getting rid of pre-conceptions'. These findings support the view of Jarvis and Gouthro (2015:67) that with the arts 'mental space opens up that creates the possibility for deeper, critical thought'.

It is to be noted that any reservations about the Eyewitness project have been extremely limited. One learner commented that sometimes there were more things she wanted to say but didn't, for 'fears of being too political on topics of race, ethics etc'. Another challenge mentioned was a worry of not being able to 'contribute anything deep or controversial', although the range of photographs and activity itself had meant this was not a pressure.

There were many learner comments about the impact on professional life and how the project had already positively influenced and would continue to influence future practice as inclusive teachers and lecturers. Being a 'witness' to the 'Eyewitness' photographs on a regular and sustained basis has clearly been part of the development of their emerging teacher identities.

'No fringe undertaking': Conclusion

The research has shown the potential for high quality photojournalism to raise awareness and interest in current affairs, and to promote rich discussion, dialogue and critical reflection. Findings show greater awareness of social, cultural, economic and political events in the world with evidence of changes in the 'worldview' (Hoggan 2016:9) of trainee teachers. These changes have not been 'just additive knowledge' (Hoggan 2016:10), but 'something more meaningful' (Blom 2017:2) and often a consideration, examination and questioning of power, privilege, ethics, equality and diversity. Considering and responding

to the 'Eyewitness' photographs in class every week has developed into a rich and meaningful experience for both myself, the tutor, and for the trainees with any expectations exceeded; it has become no 'fringe undertaking' or 'frill' (Greene 2001:7).

Kegan (2000:35) has asked 'what *form* transforms?', and the data shows that an educator or trainer does *not* need to be a creative arts practitioner in order to use the arts in their teaching and training, and that students do *not* need to engage in creative processes, as the act of 'witness' itself can have great value. Structured student 'witness' of art can promote a greater awareness of the world, deepen self-awareness, foster critical reflection and influence values; these may be a precursor to change in an individual and transformative learning. The research has demonstrated the potential of the arts, in this case photography, to have a powerful and positive impact when used in professional adult education.

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Neoliberal ideology in reality television: A public pedagogy that normalizes education and income inequality

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'If RT [Reality Television] is increasingly central to the schedules of popular television, and if one of the things it does is to melodramatize all "fates" as ultimately a matter of individual responsibility, while obscuring the structural factors that still largely determine them, then it is clearly a vital site of research' (David Morley, 2009: 490).

The impetus for this study emerged three years ago as I lay bedbound with the flu. One particularly miserable afternoon I began channel surfing in search of some dull TV program to lull my aching head and body to sleep. But, flipping through the channels, I was struck that the preponderance of programming consisted of 'reality' shows with working-class themes. Sleep and rest forgotten, I spent the afternoon watching snippets, taking notes, and enumerating reality television programs (RTV) from my cable provider's program guide. At dusk I perused my notebook and, being a scholar with working-class roots, I was shocked by the sheer volume of such programming. It was a phenomenon I felt compelled to explore; and my findings filled me with a heavy apprehension -- an uneasy consternation about what the neoliberal myths framing these popular RTV shows might be teaching unwary viewers.

I am among the many Americans who, still reeling from the U.S. presidential election, continue to be stunned by Trump's 'executive orders', such as the discriminatory travel bans, the disastrous environmental actions, and the dismantling of consumer protections. In the first four months, Trump has signed nearly 100 executive actions portending untold damage to the planet, to international relations, to labourers worldwide, to public education, and to the poor. It seems surreal to talk about inclusion and diversity when such absurd policies and practices threaten to become the norm. But, of course, striving to expand and promote inclusion is more crucial than ever. And equally important is conducting research to help us understand how we've gotten to this point. How did this happen? Why did so many voters fail to see the nationalist, classist, sexist, and racist oligarchical agenda of the 2016 Republican platform? And what can we, adult educators and scholars, do about it?

According to media scholar Douglas Kellner (2016), 'The Trump phenomenon is a teachable moment that helps us understand the changes and contour of U.S. politics in the contemporary moment and the role of broadcast media, new media and social networking, and the politics of the spectacle' (p.1). He asserts that Trump was a 'reality-TV candidate' who ran 'his campaign like a reality-TV series' (p.5), and who used his celebrity from *The Apprentice*—and his long-practiced social networking savvy—to push a 'neo-Darwinian (a)social ethos of 19th century ultracompetitive capitalism' (p.8). By mastering old media (TV) and new media (Twitter, etc.), Trump launched his campaign of 'vile racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and other hallmarks of Trump's Cacophony of Hate' (p.10). The success of that campaign clearly suggests that adult educators must investigate the learning and identity development occurring when people are enamored with reality TV (RTV) personalities and programs promoting neo-liberal, uber-capitalist, and xenophobic ideologies. My personal interest in the pedagogy of RTV has now merged with what I view as the most important fight for democracy in my lifetime.

RTV as public pedagogy

Public pedagogies include informal sites of everyday learning like commercial spaces (malls, amusement parks, city squares), the Internet, media, and popular culture; cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, parks, and zoos; as well as grassroots social movements and community activism (Burdick, Sandlin, & O'Malley 2014). Scholars who investigate public pedagogy are inter/multi-disciplinary in their approaches and rely heavily on theories and methods from cultural studies. Adult educators must get past modernist notions of individual autonomy embedded in traditional adult learning theories and recognize that adults are *learning* worldviews and individual and collective identities through public pedagogies like television:

Adults . . . are shaped or constructed by the media and popular cultures within which adults live and by the cultural institutions with which they interact. Adults are also, however, not the wholly passive creations of the culture industries ... [They can] learn to resist the dominant ideologies that are perpetuated through various public pedagogies. (Sandlin, Wright & Clark 2011, p.5)

Therefore, the study of the public pedagogies in popular culture offers scholars the possibility of understanding what adults are learning in everyday interactions with cultural products and for developing means of resisting racist, sexist, nationalist, and neoliberal messages. As western nations become increasingly isolated with global (and national) wealth gaps continuing to expand, traditional research into formal learning will be of limited efficacy. We need to understand media messages and their powerful effects on worldview construction before we can begin to adequately address diversity and inclusion issues in our classrooms. Since the U.S. has done what was at one time unthinkable by electing a billionaire, neoliberal, capitalist, oligarchic, RTV star as president, we have to understand the pedagogies of RTV, the most popular programming on television.

Because of the phenomenal proliferation of RTV programming about working-class folk on U.S. television, I first conducted a textual analysis of the most popular such programs on Disney-owned networks (Wright 2016). While space limitation prohibits detailing that study here, the results kindled an intense fear that the far-right would, indeed, claim victory in the November 2016 election. These wildly popular programs promoted an ethos that is distinctly opposite this conference's theme of advancing diversity and inclusion. Rugged individualism, isolationism, meritocracy, White male supremacy, and nationalism oozed from every frame. On Election Day my fears proved to have been well-founded. I felt I had glimpsed only the tip of a mammoth monolith of neoliberal curriculum firmly ensconced within that seemingly harmless and burgeoning facet of popular culture. In what follows, I analyze a selection of U.S. RTV across corporate properties focused on the working-class and poor with respect to these questions: i) What ideology do they teach? ii) Why are they popular? This investigation is still ongoing, but the results so far should serve as a wake-up call for anyone who thinks RTV is just mindless entertainment.

Background and methodology

To examine RTV focused on the working-class across the 5 major corporations that own most of the U.S. television industry, I needed an established schema to help make the task manageable. For that, I turned to media studies and to the work of Diana Kendall (2005). For her comprehensive study of how socio-economic class is represented in newspapers and television in the U.S., she identified major newspaper articles 'with some specific acknowledgment of class location or socioeconomic status' (p.11) and television programs that 'overtly employ the idea of class' (p.12). Based on the Gilbert-Kahl model of the U.S. class system – the upper class, the upper-middle class, the middle class, the working

class, the working poor, and the poor – she separated the media into class-based units for her analysis. After dividing the articles and shows into appropriate class categories, she analyzed the content using *frame analysis*.

Media frames

Frame analysts look for clues to the worldviews through which media stories are framed by their creators or received by their consumers (Jensen 2012). Frames are ‘much more than perceptual or descriptive categories’ according to Jensen (2012), they are ‘cognitive and, arguably, hegemonic constructs’ that serve those in power (p.166). Kendall (2005) points out that ‘we are influenced by the tacit theories that guided the writers of that program, whether we are aware of them or not’ (p.9). Writers and creators frame media content with their own assumptions and beliefs about the world, thereby instilling/reinforcing those beliefs in consumers. Using frame analysis, she developed a list of common ‘frames’ for each of the six class categories. All of the frames in each class category, unfortunately,

either play class differences for laughs or sweep the issue of class under the rug ... [and the writers] involve themselves in a social construction of reality that rewards the affluent and penalizes the working class and poor (p.229).

Since her study in the early 2000s television has changed with this proliferation of RTV about the working-class. Yet I found that her schema describing how writers framed the working class and the poor still held true to the 5 frames:

- 1) *shady framing*: greedy workers, unions, and organized crime;
- 2) *heroic framing*: working-class heroes and victims;
- 3) *caricature framing #1*: white-trashing the working class;
- 4) *caricature framing #2*: buffoons, bigots, and slobs; and
- 5) *‘fading blue collar’ framing*: unemployed or unhappy at work (p.17).

Clearly, stories dealing with the working classes are rarely positive and are filled with stereotypes and neoliberal myths. It is noteworthy that Kendall included the RTV shows *The Apprentice* and *The Simple Life* in her analysis, in particular, because they juxtapose the extremely wealthy with working people. The proliferation of RTV programming specifically about the working-class exploded during the great recession of 2008. Using critical discourse analysis, I sought to find out if these shows contained the same hegemonic messaging Kendall found a few years before.

Here I should point out that ‘reality’ TV is, in fact, scripted. It is not a depiction of anyone’s reality. Furthermore, a Cornell University study ‘found that reality shows accounted for 39 percent of [TV] writing jobs’ in 2005 (Miller, 2010, p.161). Not only that, but the creators

film hours of material and then edit those hours to create 30-, 60-, 90-, or 120-minute programs. By selecting or rejecting materials for the show, the content producer is indeed imposing his/her own definitions or stereotypes on the individuals included in the production (Cooke-Jackson & Hansen 2008, p.191)

RTV is framed by its writers and directors as much as any other genre.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Various types of content analysis may be employed when seeking to understand what adults are learning from media. For this project, I chose *critical discourse analysis* (CDA) because, well, it’s *critical*. CDA is a means to ‘document a close relationship between the

linguistic details of media texts and the production of ideology and, by implication, to substantiate that media ideology contributes to the reproduction of a social order founded on inequality and oppression' (Jensen, 2012, p.115). CDA is overtly political in its focus and facilitates critical analysis of the linguistic choices of media producers. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), every linguistic element of a media product is a choice of the creator(s) and writer(s) and the job of CDA 'is to identify and reveal these choices' (p.9). Central to the process is criticality. Van Dijk (2009) defines CDA as a 'combat unit' working to 'expose and help to combat . . . injustice' (p.63). CDA is mainly concerned with issues of ideology and power. Researchers using CDA seek to understand how 'discourse constructs hegemonic attitudes, opinions and beliefs . . . in such a way as to make them appear "natural" and "common sense"' (p.24). There are many methods used in CDA, but they all involve analyzing semiotic choices. A CDA researcher analyses connotations, overlexicalisations, lexical absences structural oppositions, and audience co-memberships for implicit meanings and indirect associations – 'the kinds of meanings that are alluded to without being explicitly expressed' (Machin & Mayr 2010, p.30). Semiotic choices reveal the hegemony behind the texts.

Methods of CDA of RTV

The use of Kendall's 5 ideological frames narrowed the task of analyzing myriad words since her schema exposed media class representations as ideological types reinforcing inequality. I was eager to learn if these RTV programs also reinforce those hegemonic frames in an era of massive change and increasing loss of power and income for working people. To begin this task, I examined the linguistic choices used to represent working people in 4 of the most popular RTV shows about working-class jobs. I considered each of Kendall's 5 frames as a category for a 'lexical field'. Simply put, a lexical field is a collection of words and images that are all connected, either denotatively or connotatively, to the same cultural discourse or system of beliefs. Each discourse or field 'will signify certain kinds of identities, values and sequences of activity which are not necessarily explicit' (Machin & Mahr 2012, p.30). In this case, the working-class frames implicit in our media and, therefore, our culture. As I explored one season of each of these shows, I made note of words that would fit the lexical fields based on Kendall's frames.

Findings

Discourse analysis is time intensive and requires multiple viewings of each episode. With several hundred RTV programmes running on major networks and cable, Winant (2014) called RTV the 'most significant novel cultural form unique to neoliberal society' (p.66). Current series, reruns of earlier seasons, and canceled programs in syndication are available 24/7. I chose 4 shows using following criteria: they had to be *about* earning a living, be popular with viewers, and ostensibly be representative of traditional labour. Armed with these criteria, I chose to look at *Coal*, *Ice Road Truckers*, *Dirty Jobs*, and *The Deadliest Catch*. I thought this would, by design, limit the framing away from, for example, the caricatures of white trash or buffoons, since there are countless shows (e.g. *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*, *Rat B*stards*, *Swamp People*, *Buckwild*, *Fat Cops*, *Hillbillies for Hire*, *Mud-lovin' Rednecks*) that are openly framed as exploitation, degradation, and humiliation of the working classes. I also omitted the numerous titles that focus on the working-class as shady and often criminal (e.g. *Moonshiners*, *Cops*, *Pitbulls and Parolees*, *World's Worst Tenants*). I have no doubt that these programs, if evaluated, would support Kendall's first, third, and fourth frames. But I was interested in programs that, on the surface, were billed as tributes to working people.

Not surprisingly, CDA analysis confirmed both subtle and blatant uses of all 5 of Kendall's frames. However, one of the frames stood out starkly: Working-class heroes or victims.

This frame, however, was often inextricable from the fading blue collar frame because victims were those who couldn't be heroes, thus either losing their jobs or being unhappy in them.

Working-class hero or victim (unhappy worker)

The words 'hero' and 'victim' are structural opposites, which is an 'ideological squaring' (Van Dijk, 1998) of terms that frame characters as possessing opposing characteristics – not overtly labeled as good or bad, winner or loser, but connoting that. This frame is clearly present in the RTV programmes I examined. For example, words used to describe successful workers could all be placed in the 'hero' lexical field with its related clusters of concepts (heroic-good) while workers who struggle were described with 'victim' words and their related concepts (victim-bad). In the chart below, I list the most common descriptors the narrators or other characters used to describe the workers and the work.

Figure 1

Partial List of Word Choices				
Programme	Hero Field		Victim/Unhappy Field	
	Adjectives/ Adverbs	Verbs	Adjectives/ adverbs	Verbs
<i>Coal</i>	Tough Brave Dangerous Persistent Fearless Hardworking Positive Gutsy	Accomplished Succeeded Challenged (or takes on Challenges) Adjusted Led Delegated	Worried Accident- Prone Resigned	Hesitated Dreaded Gave up Stopped Suffered Dropped
<i>Dirty Jobs</i>	Brave Hardworking Fearless Audacious Undaunted Bold Game Hardworking	Resolved Motivated Accomplished Targeted Succeeded Initiated Wielded	Hesitant Resigned Uncertain	Hesitated Lost Denied Squandered Wasted Fell short
<i>Ice Road Truckers</i>	Tough Fearless Brave Undaunted Heroic Certain Courageous Gutsy Extreme	Navigated Accelerated Orchestrated Resolved Succeeded Surpassed Adjusted Led	Hopeless Resigned Uncertain	Gave up Lost Surrendered Abandoned Surrendered
<i>Deadliest Catch</i>	Brave Fearless Heroic Intrepid Bold Courageous Stalwart Positive Free	Retrieved Explored Targeted Succeeded Wielded Resolved	Dispirited Slow	Lost Missed Denied Capitulated Gave up Suffered Wasted

While these programs seem to be about workers, they are really about promoting the neoliberal tenants of individualism, White supremacy, free markets, social Darwinism,

unregulated capitalism, and meritocracy. Concomitantly, they dehumanize labour and erase the structural inequality that makes class mobility almost impossible. The assumption behind the discourse is a capitalist, American Dream mythology that has never actually existed. Workers are shown as both heroic and happy with their 'career choice' as if all careers had been open to them. Those who cannot rise to the level of working-class hero are failures. Critical discourse analysis reveals that the 'true, if secret, subject of these shows is capital's contempt for labor, and its attempt, through the culture industry, to rouse the working class to join it in an act of self-loathing' (Winant 2014, p.71). Nowhere do the writers mention collective bargaining, failing health, health care, low wages and other constant worries that burden labourers. Instead, workers are 'heroes' who enjoy challenges, laugh at danger, remain loyal employees, and are admired and emulated by youth.

This strategy is clearly working; the 2016 U.S. election is clear evidence of that. Joan Williams (2017) argues that 'elites' have left 'the two-thirds of Americans without college degrees out of [their] vision of the good life' (p.129). They have ignored the growing fury and despair of the White working classes who turned to Donald Trump's promise of 'Making America Great Again'. But the media has, on the other hand, made them heroes. Yet, the *reality* of these 'reality show stars' is far different from what is shown. A good example can be found with *Coal*. After the series ended, the workers at Cobalt Coal tried to unionize, but the company refused to negotiate. Instead, they laid everyone off and contracted the work out to less skilled, more desperate workers (Winant, 2014). Despite their heroism, the workers lost – off camera. In a neoliberal capitalist society, the workers always lose.

Conclusion and hope

This investigation into popular RTV curriculum reveals much about corporate media's long political game. There is a reason that cable TV is saturated with these types of programs alongside shows like *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, *Real Housewives*, and *Big Rich Texas* that are designed to make viewers both envy and adore the uber-rich. Wealth-worship promotes an ideology that supports Trump's budget proposal that provides significant tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations while cutting 3.6 trillion dollars primarily from programs to help the poor. His budget also contains huge increases for the military and \$1.6 billion to build a wall on our southern border. RTV working-class programming assures viewers that anyone who is strong, brave, and resourceful can find meaningful work and take care of their families – unless some 'alien' undercuts them. RTV has embodied a public pedagogy of neoliberal, capitalist ideology with increasing fervor since the recession and Obama election of 2008. And it has been successful.

However, I am not sharing this research, as a modern-day Cassandra, foreseeing a disastrous future and unable to change the appalling course global oligarchs have laid for us. Quite the opposite. Critical scholars have been documenting the growing right-wing ideology in media's pedagogy. Cultural studies, and especially the television studies, began in the discipline of adult education (Wright, 2017, 2016; Wright & Sandlin, 2017). We need to make popular culture a central part of our research and curriculum again. By doing so, we can not only illuminate the hegemonic messaging behind most popular culture, but also provide insight into and support for popular culture products that are resisting those messages. We need to teach doctoral students how to conduct media research and help students understand the impact of their media's pedagogy on themselves and those they teach. Despite the overwhelming prevalence of capitalist ideology in popular culture, there is hope in those creative minds, often in science fiction or fantasy, who incorporate alternative ideologies and openly condemn capitalism. One of my

doctoral advisees recently defended her dissertation on social justice activists inspired by the *The Hunger Games* series (Sandoe 2017). Sandoe's work provides evidence of the power of popular culture to undermine capitalist ideologies and create resistance. If adult educators continue to investigate the curriculum and pedagogy of popular culture, we can not only help our students reflect on what they are learning from popular culture, but we can also learn to use popular culture to resist and rewrite those oppressive messages.

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Retirement education: From the adult education perspective and practices in Korea

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Introduction

Aging, which is a phenomenon leading radical changes in economics, sociology, psychology, and of course, education, is being paid a great attention not only from scholars but also from general publics. Studies on aging have started with the personal change adaptation with aging, specifically for public health and mental health. Among the various issues in aging, it seems that retirement also needs to be paid attention because the longevity and increased post-retirement life lead some critical shifts in the concept of retirement.

Retirement might be a concept that has to be redefined significantly at this point. Life after retirement was once considered as “the period of leisure at the end of life” (Heath, 1996, p.40), even in 1990s, the very recent past. Heath (1996) also defined retirement as “a time of reward for a life of endeavor” (p.40). However, time has changed and the rapid aging makes the length of time after retirement has dramatically increased. In this regard, Heath (1990) also made an insightful comment that the changing economy situation, complexity of benefit plans, and Social Security requirements contribute to the necessity to learn about retirement itself for a successful retirement transition.

Retirement preparation programs, or retirement education programs, have been developed to reduce the retirees’ dissatisfaction and to encourage them to have more realistic expectations for retirement and later life. Hunter (1960) introduced a term *preretirement education* and the concept expanded to have a more comprehensive meaning that included not only planning and counseling for the retirement period, but also supporting for second career after retirement. Additionally, it is on the doubt that retirement education is empirically helpful for the participants to make a smooth transition for retirement, or keep their employability and find a second career after retirement. Kamouri and Cavanaugh (1985) addressed this issue that the effects of a retirement education program have been “overstated due to participant self-selection and lack of control group comparisons” (p.246). It is hardly to find the meaningful retirement education studies from adult education perspective, or using adult education theories even if the main characters in retirement education are older workers or retirees.

Retirement education from adult education perspective

Retirement education, more generally, retirement planning has been studied in the field of finance or health management for older people. The related studies lack of the connection with retirement education, Adult Education, and Lifelong Learning. Retirement education usually has been regarded as a responsibility of employers, therefore, the initiative role of Education field and the necessity of governmental support for retirement education has been a little underestimated. That might be one of the reasons that hinder researchers to study retirement education in the lens of adult education and theories.

Among the diverse theories on adult and lifelong learning, Transformative Learning Theory seems the most notable adult learning theory to explain the overall transitions and adaptations of retirees and, specifically, the Korean baby boomer generation. Transformative Learning Theory is primarily grounded on Freire's idea of empowerment led by adult education. After Freire, Mezirow developed the "cognitive-rational approach to transformational learning" (Baumgartner, 2001). The transformative learning theory is meaningful in that it makes the baby boom generation act as productive change agents in their second life through reflection, critical thinking, and action.

Mezirow (1978) focused on re-interpreting experiences and constructing new meaning from learners' daily experiences. According to Mezirow (1978), transformation happens with each situation and experience, and the learner changes learners' viewpoints towards life and learning. Transformative Learning Theory has three main elements: individual experience, critical reflection, and dialogue (Taylor, 1998). Taylor (2009) also expanded the discussion on the core elements in transformative learning and briefly summarized them into six categories: individual experience, critical reflection, dialogue, holistic orientation, awareness of context, and authentic relationships. Among these three factors, individual experience is the main element for understanding transformative learning. Taylor (2009) noted that the degree of significance of life experience is directly proportional to the degree of engagement in dialogue and reflection. Also, personal experience in transformative learning means not just personal experiences outside the classroom, but also includes the "experiential activities within the classroom" (Taylor, 2009, p.7) to encourage dialogue and critical reflection with other learners. Second, critical reflection, which is a distinctive feature of adult learning, focuses on interpreting problematic experiences and finds new ways of approaching them.

It is also addressed the lack of studies on evaluating the effectiveness of retirement education. Glamser made a study on the impact of preretirement programs for the retirement experience using longitudinal data in 1981. In this study, retirement education did not have significant effect for retirement experiences (Glamser, 1981). In 1996, Brady, Leighton, Fortinsky, Crocker, and Fowler (1996) briefly reviewed the basic designs, overall characteristics, and general participants for retirement education programs. This study is valuable, because all of the necessary components for retirement education programs were reviewed compared with the previous research that focused on specific aspects of preretirement education programs, such as financial planning, health management, or leisure.

Transformative learning for interpreting retirement

Transformative learning is grounded on the assumption that every person wants to make meaning from their daily lives (Taylor, 2008). However, according to Taylor (2009), transformative learning can be categorized by two kinds of frameworks: the first framework emphasizes "personal transformation and growth" (Taylor, 2009, p.5). Various scholars who support this framework, such as Mezirow, Dirkx, Kegan, or Cranton, focus on an individual level of transformation and try to see how transformative learning can encourage critical reflection and self-awareness. The second framework for transformative learning focuses on the relationship between social change and personal transformation. Other scholars, such as Freire, Johnson-Bailey, Tisdell, or Alfred, assume that the two-layers of transformation, which includes individual and social layers, are connected (Taylor, 2009). Therefore, they emphasize that it is important for individuals to be aware of power relations in their society and how it is linked with personal levels of critical reflection, self-awareness, and finally, transformation. Both perspectives have meaningful implications for adult learners, adult educators, and the field of adult education but use a different

framework for understanding the process and results of critical reflection through transformative learning.

In the case of retirement transition, the first framework that emphasizes the individual level of transformation is helpful for retirees to understand themselves as experiencing continuous development. The second framework, which focuses on the interaction between personal and social change, has an implication that retirees are also an influential group in their societies. This framework for interpreting retirement transition is significant for retirees to be aware of their potential for leading social change after retirement through transformative learning.

Transformative learning is imperative for helping retirees to transit and adapt to the life after retirement. The different experiences that retirees have are the primary medium of transformative learning (Taylor, 2009). It is important for baby boom generation, or retirees, to be aware of transformation through their experiences in retirement, because transformative learning is implicative for the baby boom generations to rearrange their values, mindsets, or habits of mind after their career transitions. Career transition, which can be a loss, a movement, or an opportunity, should be reflected on, criticized, and recognized as a transformative incident in the whole life. Additionally, the experience of retirement should be analyzed by transformative learning for retirees to fit into the new roles of family and society. Retirement was regarded as the natural flow of the working lives of aging people in the past; however, demographic shifts and extended later life spans after retirement demand people to reconsider the concept of retirement as a planned stage in life transitions.

Baby boom generations in the world are usually described as a generation with higher educational attainments, different working history with their parents, and pop culture. These kinds of social experiences can be a significant barrier for baby boom generations to making a transformation after retirement, because human beings tend to settle for the status quo and believe that their status will not change. However, the reality is different, and the baby boomers can find themselves missing the past and wondering about the place where they previously worked. They expect to be treated and addressed accordingly, like a boss or a chief manager, even if they are not; this is mainly because they did not have opportunities to envision their change in conditions through a transformed perspective. Critical reflection, which is the second element in transformative learning (Taylor, 2009), seems to be the most critical factor for older workers to successfully adapt to retirement, because the ability to critically reflect on his or her changed situation can inform one about how to react to the challenges and complexities of retirement (Kreber, 2012). Therefore, the career transition experiences of the older workers should be approached using transformative learning to reflect their current situations, assess their previous attitudes, and make new meaning from their experiences to eventually accept changes in their later lives.

Dialogue, the third element in transformative learning, encourages sharing experiences and interacting through dialogue as a main way of reflecting, which can help identify the learners' "edge of meaning" (Taylor, 2009, p.10). Identifying what we know and what we do not know is a basic condition for learning, and dialogue is a primary medium for discovering limitations to our knowing in an adult education classroom. Holistic orientation in transformative learning offers another way of knowing for transformative learning; however, it is also the least discussed element.

Understanding contexts can offer a very practical approach for understanding retirement

and the overall environmental shifts surrounding retirees. Aligned with critical reflection, awareness of one's context is helpful for grasping sociocultural variables at play in the process of transformative learning. It should be noted that context not only refers to personal and sociocultural backgrounds but also the learning environments for transformative learning. A significant issue in the adult education field is how educational institutions can make more appropriate learning environments for adult learners in an aging society. Therefore, establishing a classroom context will be one of the most critical elements for future discussions in transformative learning for retirees and adult learners. The last element in transformative learning is determining how to build authentic relationships between educators and adult learners. In the place of adult learning, it is well known that the adult learners can be adult educators at the same time. This distinctive feature in adult education is critical for encouraging the successful transformative learning of retirees, specifically on the expectations to retirement of Korean baby boom generation. This is because the Korean baby boom generation could have more educational opportunities and better working condition with the rapid economic development in 1980s and 1990s. Korean retirees would show a strong desire to share their skills, knowledge, and social experiences that they bring to the place of learning with younger generations (Son & Kim, 2010).

Transformational learning theory is also meaningful not only for retirees but also for pre-retirees or younger workers, because it can be helpful for understanding group or organizational transformational learning (Baumgartner, 2001). One of the important areas in adult education is workplace learning, and discussions on workplace learning need to be expanded specifically for retirees and older adults in an aging society. For adults, a workplace can be a learning environment where people spend more time than the time they spent in school. In this regard, it is obvious that workplace learning is also

Additionally, transformative learning for retirement transition can be connected with career transition theories to interpret retirement as a process of critical reflection for creating narratives about retirees' careers. Critical reflection in transformative learning is also helpful for people to understand the whole process of career interest development, career choice, and performance in their working lives. Specifically, Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2002) emphasize the development process of changing career roles during one's working life. However, there is a lack of discussion on how people can make practical changes and develop themselves for the next stages of their careers. Previous career experiences, critical reflection on their performance, and self-identification as human resources are meaningful connections between career theories and transformative learning and can offer a solution for successful adaptation during retirement transition not only for theoretical analysis but also in practice.

Retirement education practices in Korea

Korea is one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world. Korean baby boom generation, who were born from 1955 to 1964, started to retire in 2010. Until the mid of 2000s, most of the type for older workers is outplacement service, specifically for the middle-aged workers who prepare job changes. However, the global economic downturn in 2008, lower birth rate, and the beginning of baby boom generation's retirement in 2010 triggered the issue of older worker's availability for sustaining economic development status. Therefore, there are lots of policies for encouraging older workers' participation in labor market.

According to overviews on the literature for Korean baby boomers' retirement, it should be

noted that Korean baby boomers' lives can be described in one word – working (Son and Kim, 2010, Son and Lee, 2011; Phang, Shin, Lee, Han, and Shin, 2010; Seoul National University Institute on Aging & MetLife Foundation, 2011). Korean baby boomers are a generation who has devoted most of their lives to their workplaces during a period of economic development in Korea from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, and “it is not too much to say that their lives center on their working life and workplace” (Seoul National University Institute on Aging and MetLife Foundation, 2011, p.17). However, there is a legal mandatory retirement age of 60 for the workers in public office, but most of the employees in private business begin to prepare retirement in their early 40s. With these backgrounds for Korean baby boom generation, the two public organizations for the retirement education in Korea are introduced; Seoul 50+ Foundation (www.50plus.or.kr) and Job Center for Middle and Older Workers and Life Career Planning Service, which is ran by Foundation of Labor and Management (www.nosa.or.kr). These two organizations are both located in Seoul, and offer a different type of retirement education.

Seoul 50+ Foundation, which has been established in 2016, provides education programs for re-employment, but more focuses on encouraging self-reflection, family and social relationship, liberal education, or volunteer activity after retirement. This organization also concentrates on creating job that is suitable for retirees' health condition, previous working history, and social experiences and share them with other generations and society. There is no age limitation for participating to the education programs in Seoul 50+ foundation, so anyone can participate to the retirement education programs if interested. The education programs are usually designed as a lecture with a large number of audience, or a seminar.

On the other hand, Job Center for Middle and Older Workers is more focusing on offering retirement education that is more like outplacement service. For example, this center offers retirement education, specifically for the retirees and current workers in finance or shipbuilding industry. The program for workers in financial business targets the retirees or pre-retirees who are aged over 40 and helps the retirees and pre-retirees can transit for continuing to work in financial businesses or financial department. There is no age limitation for the outplacement service for the workers in shipbuilding industry, and the procedure for education and outplacement service is similar with the program for the worker in financial business.

Conclusion

At a micro level, one's work may not just mean a way of making a living, but also a way of self-identification. Moreover, the retirement of baby boomers is somewhat different from that of the former generation. Retirement has been defined as a complete discontinuity from work and full-time rest that is unrelated to a job or work. However, baby boomer generations tend to share their skills and social experiences with younger people after their retirement. Retirees also want to lead their post-retirement life as active human resource through continuous employment, part-time job, or voluntary activities. In this regard, retirement education is a field where adult educators intervene with the theories and practices, however, the role of adult education for retirement and retirement education is still untapped.

As stated above, transformative learning theory includes basic elements for designing satisfactory retirement education, because those elements can reflect the characteristics of retirement transition, the shifts in relationship of retirees and society, and the internal transformations of individuals due to retirement. However, it still demands to discuss the evaluation of retirement education, because the efficacy and efficiency of retirement education have not been studied much. Despite of the meaningful findings of Glamser

(1981) or Brady et al.(1996), however, the time difference and social changes in last three decades make the findings less applicable for the retirement education and retirement experience of baby boom generation and the future retirees. The two retirement education organizations in Korea also lack of the studies on effectiveness of their programs for retirees to adjust to the retirement transition.

The accessibility of retirement education needs to be addressed. In case of the Job Center for Middle and Older Workers, there are 13 branches in Korea but four of the branches are located in Seoul and metropolitan area, and the retirement education program for finance workers is only provided in Seoul. With this limitation of physical accessibility, the economic status of retirees or middle-aged and older workers can be a barrier for access to retirement education. Most of the education programs are designed as full-time class, therefore, the retirees who need to be employed as full-time for living would be difficult to participate in retirement education.

Retirement education programs can be a new pathway for encouraging retirees to be proactive about their retirement transition. Retirement education lead the older adults to understand that societal conditions and work environments have greatly changed, specifically in the 21st century, and their capabilities as human resources are also very different from what their parents experienced. Adult education in the form of retirement education programs can be the most effective delivery system for this re-identification of self with transformative learning theory. It is not just due to the distinctive features of adult education – ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivating – that participation in retirement education programs should be promoted, but also they are significant for workers in an aging society to anticipate and adequately plan for more satisfactory retirement experience.

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