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Editor

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Introduction

The 45th SCUTREA Conference: *Adult Education in Austere Times*

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.



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PAPERS

The Contributions of International Organisations in the Development of Adult Education and Distance Education in Nigeria

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The paper suggests some key lessons that Nigeria can learn from UNESCO and OECD activities in its effort of human and capital resources development. Even though Nigeria is not among OECD member countries, still in the good work of OECD in the member countries, can be a good model for Nigeria.

The Contributions of International Organisations in the Development of Adult Education and Distance Education in Nigeria

Introduction

The United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are two important bodies that had a great influence in the development of adult education and lifelong learning right from their inception in different parts of the world. UNESCO was founded in 1945 to contribute in the promotion of peace and security in the areas of education, science, culture and communication (Omoyeni and Ajayi, 2012). In its efforts in promoting its objective of lifelong learning and human resource development in Africa UNESCO collaborates with National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to train manpower through increasing access in higher education (Atabo, 2015).

While on the other hand, OECD is an international organization that plays an important role in education and training policies of the member countries in their resolve of promoting human resources development in many countries in the world. OECD was established in 1961 as a result of the development of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) after World War II. OECD has considered adult education as a primary engine in the maintenance of economic standard of living of its member countries. The introduction of OECD economies and society has made lifelong learning a major goal in education and training policies of the member countries for them to improve man power development (Schneider, 2008).

The OECD believed that education is the mechanism through which countries develop and maintain their economic standard of living and adult education is considered to have a big influence in achieving the economic standard of every country (OECD, 2014). UNESCO has nine objectives which are meant to be achieved by the member countries and they include among others; fostering quality and lifelong learning, empowering learners and shaping education for the future (UNESCO, 2014). Lifelong learning came to prominence in 1970 as a result of the advocacy of the Council of Europe for Permanent Education, recurrent education and UNESCO Report of '*Learning to Be*' from *Faure Report* but the term used from the beginning is lifelong education valued through lifelong learning. Lifelong learning

is considered as learning through life with the purpose of improving knowledge and competencies in every aspect of human lives.

Lifelong learning is considered to be a flexible activity, which can take place beyond the four walls a school settings (Bjørnåvold, 2000; and Delors', 1996). In this respect OECD considered lifelong education as a necessity for the pursuance of human resource development; economic, social and cultural cohesion (OECD, 2014). Therefore, the paper will present some of the influence of these organizations in the development of adult education, lifelong learning and their impacts on human resources within, Nigeria. However, the Human Development Report of UNDP (2008) shows that Nigeria is still lagging behind in terms of human and capital development in comparison with other emerging economies. The paper suggests some key lessons that Nigeria can learn from UNESCO and OECD activities in its effort of human and capital resources development. Even though Nigeria is not among OECD member countries, but still in the good work of OECD in the member countries, perhaps, can be a good model for Nigeria.

The main points to be taken on board are: training the trainers, and reflect upon programmes in achieving their objectives in human resource development; improve practice in building a body of organised education that would develop learners' abilities to enrich their knowledge; mobilize stronger and sustainable support to literacy programme through effective advocacy; making changes in the selection of students in secondary schools; avoid segregation and inequalities in schools, funding strategies that would be responsive to students' and schools' needs and design a comprehensive system of education; introduce new initiatives in education which implies expansion of learning opportunities, qualitative changes in the existing educational system, different learning activities, settings and changes in the timing of learning activities in the life cycle of an individual.

The Contributions of UNESCO in the Development of Adult Education in Nigeria

UNESCO is responsible for helping the member countries achieving free access to education for all (Omoyeni and Ajayi, 2010), in the areas of education, science and culture. UNESCO as an organisation has a medium term strategy which is adopted every six years in their general assembly conference; which set out the major objectives of the organisation across the member countries. The objectives among others include, the promotion of educational system to foster lifelong learning for all; empower learners to be creative and responsible; shape the future educational systems of countries across the globe; promote science, ethics and inclusive development; transmission of cultural heritage of the member countries as well as, freedom of expression and access to information and knowledge (UNESCO, 2014).

The UNESCO 1976 conference held in Lagos confirmed that the development of human potentials in scientific, technical, economic, social change and education will be the cardinal point of promoting lifelong learning globally (UNESCO, 1982). Therefore, the relevance of UNESCO in education is there for all to see in their conferences and activities especially in the research, funding and training of educators. It can be argued that UNESCO in providing its support to the member

countries for them to collect relevant information in achieving their objectives is most concerned with its own aims and institutional procedural issues.

According to UNESCO's (1982) conference title Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States have final report that, UNESCO helps member countries to undertake research for the development of adult education, as well as funding the relevant projects and programmes such as training the trainers, and the reflect programme in achieving their objectives in human resources development, and the areas of quality assurance and maintenance. The conference held in 1976 sets agendas for adult education and lifelong learning for helping member countries such as Nigeria, Algeria, Namibia, and Nepal. The conference of 1976 had recommended member countries to bring the recommendations to the notice of agencies and organizations responsible for adult education; the conference delineated the scope of adult education by giving definition of adult education to include; body of organised education provided at all level whether formal or non-formal to adults in order to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, which is pre-requisite for human development. It was submitted that the process of adult education is tailored towards learning, working and new direction for changes of attitudes and behaviour of individual members of the community (UNESCO, 2013). This provides the scope for adult education and lifelong learning in the development of human resources of a member country.

The specific contributions of UNESCO in Nigeria includes; empowering related governmental institutions, private organisation and individuals to be involved in adult education as part of the strategy for achieving sustainable development in the country (National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-Formal Education, (NMEC), 2008)). The Organisations are obliged to provide funding to specific adult education institutions for the execution of literacy and empowerment activities at local and higher levels to ensure the human resources development in the country. Besides the support of UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank, UNESCO is the fourth donor agency that made the largest contribution in the development of adult education and human resources in Africa and Nigeria in particular (NMEC, 2008). In addition, UNESCO uses its knowledge and invaluable expertise to support Nigeria's renewed efforts and commitment to literacy (UNESCO, 2012). This has contributed to the expansion of adult literacy and human resources in Nigeria, which provide support as prioritize in the objectives of UNESCO:

“Mobilization of stronger and sustainable support to literacy through an effective advocacy and communication strategy; development of framework for literacy and Non formal education; support in the following areas identification gap in literacy policy development and planning, programme designed and delivery, human resources development, data and information management system and quality assurance through assessment, monitoring and evaluation, promotion of multilingual literacy; building effective and sustainable partnership for literacy and non-formal education; innovation best practice and development of comprehensive literacy programme”. (2012, p. 8)

This shows that UNESCO uses its knowledge and invaluable expertise to support Nigeria's renewed efforts and commitment to literacy. Other areas committed by

UNESCO in supporting Nigeria since its inception include; commitment to work in building adult education and lifelong learning structures to ensure the development of human resources in the country. Additionally, UNESCO's (2012) Report has shown that their major activities in Nigeria involved training of the trainers through a programme known for revitalising adult and youth literacy to support the human resource development in the nation.

The explosion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) offers a way of meeting these challenges and holds vast possibilities for the future of distance higher education (UNESCO, 2005, p 151). They also, provide support in the training of adult educators who will train village level workers for the empowerment of local communities. As part of the efforts for example, UNESCO, collaborated with National Open University of Nigeria to provide increased access in education through which many centres were created in various areas in Nigeria to support human development (NOUN, 2012). For instance, as part of human resource development and empowerment UNESCO therefore, ICT programme introduced a competency framework for teachers that emphasises training of students to become collaborative, problem-solving and creative and effective members of the workforce (NOUN, 2013, p. 4).

More recently, Atabo (2015) confirms the UNESCO's effort in providing training to all relevant stakeholders through its collaboration with distance learning institutions. For instance, UNESCO through its workshop with NOUN's education stakeholders encourage the country to embrace Open Educational Resources (OER) policy and to discuss the positive impact of OER on teaching and learning in the country. The introduction of OER in NOUN also shows the significant contributions of UNESCO in promoting distance education, this emphasized the importance of training the required manpower for building national economy (2015).

However, in terms of adult literacy mobilization, the literacy rate in Nigeria between 1970 and 1980 was high but with the intervention of UNESCO in mobilization, literacy and lifelong learning activities the illiteracy rate has dropped by 60.5% (Omoyeni and Ajayi, 2010). In addition, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2013) estimates of the total adult literacy rate based on the ability to read and write in English and/or any language to be 56.9% among Nigerians. The breakdown among males' shows 65.1% while among females shows 48.6%. This indicates effort needs to be mounted in order to achieve human resources development in Nigeria even though the trend has shown an unprecedented development when comparing the two reports above. UNESCO's efforts of sponsoring activities and conferences in the promotion of adult education and human resource development must be acknowledged in Nigeria, notably from the 1976 conference to date.

Statistic has shown the increased in adults' enrolment in adult education from the low 696,367 figure of 1990 and 503,071 of 1991. Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2003, p. 68) Report has shown increased of an enrolment figure of 546,256 in 1991 and 1,143,737 in 1996 (consisting of 603,906 males and 539,831 females). Generally, from 1991-1996, the Comprehensive Education Analysis (CEA) observed increase in enrolment by gender from 310,113 for males and 236,143 for females in 1991 to 603,309 for males and 539,831 for females in 1996". The following table provides details of enrolment in literacy classes from 1997-2000.

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1997	598,166	557,366	1,155,532
1998	666,131	598,130	1,264,289
1999	712,326	605,370	1,317,696
2000	701,798	705,156	1,406,953

Table: 1

These figures show a progressive increased in enrolment from a total of 1,155,532 participants in 1997 to 1,406,953 in 2000. Among the states, the highest enrolment for 2000 came from Edo, which recorded 144,250 while the lowest came from Bayelsa with 400 participants followed by Enugu state with 3000 participants (FME, 2003, p. 70).

Part of the UNESCO and Federal Government of Nigeria's (FGN) commitment to human development have also shown more effort in eradicating illiteracy by mobilizing community enrolment in adult literacy activities, mobilizing instructors, reaching the learners in many locations across the country and making learning to be functional and establishment of adult education departments. Additionally, UNESCO supported a pilot radio literacy programme in over 12 states of the Federation to sustenance human resources development and assist with logistics and funding various programmes in most of the institutions (NMEC, 2008). In view of the above, Nigeria has benefited from the interventions of UNESCO in human resources development through, Basic Education Sector, Adult Literacy Sector, which recorded as an incredible progress in the entire educational system in Nigeria (FME, 2003).

The contributions of UNESCO in Nigeria's literacy activities also, reawakened a number of interested donor agencies and international development partners such as; UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, DFID, ADB, USAID to contribute significantly to the efforts of the FGN in the education sector to fight against illiteracy (FME, 2003). Consequently, FME directed the all 36 states of the federation to enhance mass education programmes for betterment of youth and women through Agencies for Mass Education (NMEC, 2011).

The Contributions of OECD in the Development of Human Resources in its Country Member

The Organization for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) is an organisation established in 1961 as a development of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) after World War II. The expansion of OECD has led to the economic development of European countries and beyond, such as; Australia, Canada, Korea, Mexico, United States and Japan among others (OECD, 2014). Although, there are selected non-OECD members such as Nigeria, India, South Africa, and Argentina among others who, have benefitted from the OECD contributions between 1991 and 1997 (OECD 2001). The inception of OECD has made lifelong learning a major goal in education and training, in their member countries, for them to improve manpower development (OECD, 2007). The

development gives a structure through which OECD play an important role in education and training, in its member countries. OECD places emphasis on adult education it is a first and foremost engine in maintenance of economic standard living of human resource development among the countries involved (Golding and Katz, 2010). OECD believes that the progress in education more especially in the development of technology can help build innovation, improved productivity and adjust the structural changes in member countries (OECD, 2007).

The OECD conferences held in Paris during the 1960s held provided a good ground for promoting policies to achieve economic growth, rising living standards, employment rates and the maintenance of financial stability; all as an attempt to contribute toward the economy and human resources development in its country member (OECD, 2001). In addition the OECD effort to develop a viable economy across the member countries OECD (2012) observed that in every five students in member countries one does not meet the minimum level skills to function in the society and this could be attributed to low socio-economic background of the student. Moreover, OECD provided considerable support in order to recover the economic stand of those countries, therefore lifelong learning activities have turned into the main focus of such growth strategy to promote the situation (OECD, 2012). Observing the situation of the member countries, where the high rate of failures are recorded OECD creates the amount of valuable contributions that can influence the human resources development through adult education programmes. Therefore, OECD made five recommendations in order to support the economy of those countries:

“Eliminate grade repetition; making changes in the selection of students in secondary schools; avoid segregation and inequalities in schools, funding strategies should be responsive to students and schools needs and design a comprehensive system of education to ensure completion rate in the member countries experiencing failures in their educational system”. (OECD, 2012, p. 10)

By implication the OECD is showing how education might affect the economic productivity of a country. Therefore, the heavy investment in education in the form of lifelong learning is what the OECD is embedding in most of the educational policy and structure of the member countries for them to function effectively. In addition, OECD’s (2001) Report, has provide the following objectives; “promotion of policies to achieve economic growth, employment and raising the standard of living while maintaining financial stability to contribute to the global economy; contribute to economic expansion and to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multilateral and nondiscriminatory way” (OECD, 2001, p. 3).

The OECD considered education as the bedrock for the achievement of its objectives. The implementation of its objectives through education plays a vital role in promoting the economic growth of member countries. OECD (2001) suggests that the promotion of lifelong learning has shown the increases in economic output across the OECD countries; improved the standard of living and working conditions amongst individuals; and, health and educational attainment. The OECD meeting of 1996 adopted a mission of lifelong learning that resulted in the promotion of significance of learning throughout their life cycle of individuals. Therefore promoting the design of strategies for ‘learning to be’ in order to make education more

accessible to citizens of the member countries. The OECDs mission was to ensure that the new initiatives in education will imply expansion of learning opportunities, qualitative changes in the existing educational system, different learning activities and settings and changes in the timing of learning activities in the life cycle of an individual (OECD, 2001).

OECD at their 2006 meeting which consisting members of countries from the globe deliberating over promotion of lifelong learning to both public and private industries as a ground for improvement in international economic growth (OECD, 2014). It recommended that China, even though not a member of OECD, should allow more foreign investors into its economy. The OECD analysis is to the fact that more investors in the Chinese economy would increase economic and fostering good foreign relations with other countries in the World. Those member countries attending then returning to their own countries with the discussed recommendations were latterly seen to have significant influences over their foreign policy (OECD, 2014). Nigeria as a country has benefitted from such important development, even though not directly a member of OECD countries.

Contributions for Human Resource Development in Nigeria

The contributions of UNESCO and OECD have shown that they placed more emphasis on the conscious and deliberate enhancement of human resources with a view to harnessing global economy, increase production, control additional dropouts in schools, reduction in poverty and achieve a broad economic growth and development of lifelong learning. The following are major lessons for Nigeria to learn from UNESCO and OECD activities in human resources development across the globe;

Training the trainer, to be reflected in programmes to achieve their objectives in human resources development.

Learn from the 1976 conference to improve practice in building a body of organised education that would develop learner's abilities to enrich their knowledge, improve their technical and/or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour.

The country to mobilize stronger and sustainable support for literacy programmes through an effective advocacy and communication strategy in order to produce more able manpower that would work in all sectors of the economy.

Eliminate grade repetition; making changes in the selection of students in secondary schools to control the increased of dropout; avoid segregation and inequalities in schools, funding strategies should be responsive to students and schools needs and design a comprehensive system of education to ensure completion.

Nigeria to learn from OECDs mission of introducing new initiatives in education which implies expansion of learning opportunities, qualitative changes in the existing educational system, different learning activities and settings and changes in the timing of learning activities in the life cycle of an individual.

Conclusion

A number of member countries have benefitted from OECD and UNESCO's contributions in peace and security building in the areas of education, science, culture and communication (UNESCO, 2014) as well as the promotion of policies to achieve economic growth, rising living standards, employment rates and the maintenance of financial stability (OECD, 2001a). OECD has influenced the economic growth of the member countries through policies and structures in lifelong learning for human resource development OECD (2014). OECD and UNESCO have the specific objectives of promoting lifelong learning in their respective member countries in order to develop economic standard as well as education, science and culture. UNESCO helps member countries in undertaking research for the progress of lifelong learning, funding of educational projects and programmes in the areas of adult education such as reflect programme. The influence of UNESCO in the development of lifelong learning for over forty years is of great benefit on the policy, structure and implementation of lifelong learning in the country. In addition, the expansion of OECD led to the economic development European countries and other countries like Australia, Canada, and Korea Mexico united states, Japan (OECD, 2014). Finally to conclude it can be argued that there has been a significant contribution made by both these Organisations (UNESCO and OECD) to their country members and indeed to non-members. Nigeria being a prime example as outlined in this Paper of a non-member countries adult and distance education systems enhancement and development through consideration of such models.

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Is adult literacy education still on the policy agenda or have the gremlins gone now?

Gwyneth Allatt

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Introduction

This paper considers whether, in times of austerity, adult literacy education is still as high on the government's agenda as it was at the introduction of the Skills for Life strategy in 2001, or is now being marginalised, perhaps in favour of literacy education for younger learners. It also explores the perceptions of literacy presented in current policy with a focus on adult literacy education in England and Wales and compares this with the views of literacy teachers. For ease of reference, it will mostly use the term 'literacy', although the Government has advocated the replacement of the term with 'English' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011b). Adult learners are considered to be aged over nineteen. Much of the policy referred to is that of the UK's Coalition Government (2010 to 2015). There appears to be no new policy in the area of adult literacy education since the Conservative Government came to power in 2015.

Adult literacy has featured in UK educational policy and in the media since at least the 1970s, with a series of initiatives aimed at improving adults' literacy skills beginning with *Right to Read*, launched in 1973, which involved a media campaign led by the BBC and the provision of government funding for adult literacy education in England and Wales (Hamilton and Merrifield, 1999). Hamilton and Hillier (2006) charted the progress of adult literacy policy in the UK from the 'Right to Read' campaign, when there was no standard curriculum and few qualifications available, up to the introduction of the Government's Skills for Life Strategy in 2000 which included the development of the first national standards in adult literacy and numeracy and a core curriculum in the subjects, along with a set of national qualifications at a number of levels. The initiative also featured a high profile government media campaign using gremlins as a metaphor for literacy difficulties (Kendall and McGrath, 2014). Claims have been made that by 2010 the strategy had achieved its aims, and that over two million adults had improved their skills in literacy and numeracy (Hamilton, 2012). It would appear, however, that other than the replacement of Skills for Life qualifications with Functional Skills qualifications for adults in 2012 (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010) there has been little in the way of major new policy with regard to adult literacy since the Skills for Life strategy was launched.

Methodology

This paper has emerged from research into the ways in which literacy is currently perceived by policy makers, teachers of adult literacy and literacy learners, using documentary analysis, telephone and face-to-face interviews with teachers and, at a later date, focus groups with learners. The research employs a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, and is also influenced by the work of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement, and its social practice approach to literacy in which literacy is seen not as a fixed concept or as simply a prescribed set of technical skills, but rather as a

socially determined collection of practices (Street, 1997). Central to the NLS approach is the desire to find an alternative to the 'deficit model' of literacy, which represents literacy as an attribute that people either have or have not. Rather, advocates of NLS suggest that people use different 'literacies' depending on their current context, which might include their 'domains' of work, home and social life, and education (Smith, 2005, p. 321). During the early stages of the research, difficulties in identifying current policy on adult literacy education led me to question the extent to which the issue is still a feature of the Government's policy agenda.

Previous Policy

The most significant policy change affecting adult literacy education in England and Wales since the Skills for Life initiative, seems to be the Government announcement that the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Qualifications that existed under the strategy would be replaced by Functional Skills from August 2012. Functional Skills qualifications were intended to provide the skills both young people and adults needed 'to operate confidently, effectively and independently in learning, life and work' (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010, p.1). They did not make separate provision for adult learners.

Along with the move to Functional Skills, adult literacy received attention in a number of other Government publications, including the consultation on further education reform, *New Challenges, New Chances: next steps in implementing the further education reform programme* (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011a) which outlined the Government's aims for 19+ education, including improvements to the standards of teaching and learning, funding reform and the reduction of bureaucracy within the sector. The document repeats the claim that in England a lack of literacy and numeracy skills was still affecting 'millions of adults' and expresses the intention to provide 'a second chance to acquire those skills.' (ibid., p. 25) by reviewing the way provision is delivered, raising the standards of teaching and increasing qualifications amongst literacy and numeracy teachers, and encouraging the use of new technologies to support literacy and numeracy learning. In the response to the consultation on further education reform, *New Challenges, New chances - further education and skills system reform plan: building a world class skills system* (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011b), reference is made once again to the numbers of adults without functional skills in literacy and numeracy; 15% in the case of literacy despite improvements made in recent years in literacy achievement at level two and above (ibid., p.12). The document outlines a series of actions relating to adult literacy (and numeracy) education resulting from a review undertaken. The actions include the re-establishment of the terms 'English' and 'maths' within adult education and the prioritising of 'young adults' who lack skills in English and maths (ibid. p.13). Prison education and the training of teachers also feature in the intentions for adult literacy education. Adult literacy is, however, only one of a number of areas of policy reform outlined within the document.

Current policy?

The search for current policy on adult literacy education proved problematic, however. It was difficult to identify exactly the current government policy on adult literacy education due to an apparent lack of recent policy documents on the subject. Numerous searches of the UK government website failed to find any comprehensive

expression of policy specifically relating to adult literacy since the introduction of functional skills qualifications for adults in 2012. The focus appeared to be more on younger learners, as in the policy paper on Further Education and Training (published in December 2012 and updated in May 2015) which outlined a series of major policy actions, including the introduction of Study Programmes and the Technical Baccalaureate, plus the requirement for students leaving school without a minimum of a grade C in GCSE English and maths to be funded to continue studying the subjects (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2015).

In a further attempt to identify current policy I asked the literacy teachers interviewed about the policies that governed practice within their own organisations. A number of participants, however, had difficulty identifying the policy that governed adult literacy provision in their organisations. Others highlighted Functional Skills as the most influential policy, while others felt that Skills for Life was still having a significant influence. The Government's drive for more adult learners to complete GCSEs rather than Functional Skills qualifications was also raised on a number of occasions. Some participants seemed quite vague about policy, with one respondent acknowledging 'I haven't got a clue'. Although this did not help in my search for current policy, I felt the responses received were still very significant. While some variation in response was to be expected, especially as some of the participants' roles within their organisations were probably quite removed from policy and curriculum decision making, the different responses and the amount of uncertainty might imply a lack of a current definitive policy for adult literacy education.

Amongst the documents finally selected for analysis, the one which appeared to provide the most current expression of policy relating to adult literacy education was the Government's response to the Department of Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee's inquiry into adult literacy and numeracy. The inquiry was carried out in 2014 and gathered information from adult learners and teachers to try to find out why so many people still struggle with literacy (and numeracy) and what more could be done to help to improve standards. The response, which claims to explain how the Government's intentions regarding the funding and delivery of English (and maths) for adults will address the Committee's recommendations, considered each recommendation but did not agree with them all. In doing so it provides an indication of the Government's current approach to adult literacy education, which involves:

- A pledge of funding for free tuition but no national campaign to raise public awareness of the literacy (and numeracy) support available
- Focus on GCSEs in English (and maths) as the preferred qualifications for adults though acknowledging that for some adults Functional Skills may be more appropriate.
- 'no cross Government strategy for raising adult literacy and numeracy levels' (p.25) or collaboration between Government departments in the implementation of policies relating to adult literacy and numeracy
- Focus on various categories of learners, including the unemployed, members of the army, prisoners, homeless people and 18 to 21 year olds
- The establishment of the Behavioural Research Centre for Adult Skills and Knowledge (ASK) which includes English within its remit

(Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014)

The response suggests a commitment to the development of literacy or English skills but without few specific measures which are particularly for adults or purely related to literacy. It concludes with the claim that supporting English and maths 'continues to be a high priority for the Government' (p.25) though not particularly stressing 'adult'.

Also significant in indicating commitment to adult literacy education is the Government response to the OECD's International Survey of Adult Skills, part of the Programme for the Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) which aims to survey the literacy and numeracy skills, plus the abilities in 'problem solving in technology-rich environments' of 5,000 people in over forty countries between 2008 and 2019 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.). The UK was included in the first round of the survey, the results of which were published in 2013. Analysis of the results has indicated that the UK performed relatively poorly in comparison with other countries (Wheater et al., 2013).

It has been suggested that the results of PIAAC will lead to literacy returning as a significant issue in European policy agendas (Milana, et al., 2014) and certainly the UK Government's response, in commissioning research with the apparent intention of learning from the outcome of the survey and of informing future policy, may suggest that concern with adult literacy is, at least to some extent, still a feature of its policy agenda. A paper published in the wake of this research around the PIAAC results argues for continuing investment in the development of adult literacy (and numeracy) as a result of the poor PIAAC performance and warns that without this there could be a failure to 'build on' the gains made as a result of the Skills for Life Strategy by not 'building capacity in the sector.' It also mentions the 'current policy commitment to fund free training for any adult who wants to improve their literacy and numeracy up to level 2...' (Carpentieri et al., 2015, p.10). However, the further comment is made that the success of this may be hindered by adults' lack of awareness that such support is available to them, along with insufficient advice for people looking for courses to improve their skills. The Government, however, had previously denied that a national campaign to raise public awareness of literacy (and numeracy) education provision was necessary or would be worth the investment (BIS, 2014). The true indication of commitment will be the extent to which the Government acts up on the research it commissions.

A further indication of commitment to adult literacy education could be the Government's attitude towards specialist qualifications for teachers of adult literacy (the Level 5 Specialist Diploma in literacy / English). No evidence is currently available that this is either being actively supported or not, other than in the author's own organisation where the qualification is no longer part of the curriculum offer due to low demand resulting, it is believed, from a lack of financial support with fees. The Government has rejected the recommendation that it becomes more involved in the provision of teaching qualifications in the further education and skills sector, arguing that it will leave this to the Education and Training Foundation (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014) perhaps suggesting that teacher qualifications are no longer a high priority. This issue is beyond the scope of the present paper but is perhaps worth consideration at a later date.

Perceptions of literacy

Earlier analyses of Government policy on adult literacy education, including the Skills for Life media campaign based on images of gremlins, identified the recurrence of a 'deficit' model of literacy, in which the focus is on literacy as something illiterate individuals lack (Taylor, 2008; Burgess and Hamilton, 2011; Kendall and McGrath, 2014). The Government's current approach seems to echo this 'deficit' view, presenting literacy difficulties as a problem or a barrier which must be tackled and overcome and literacy as an attribute lacking in some people (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014).

Current policy defines literacy as involving speaking, listening, reading and writing; skills which are 'essential for learning and for operating in work and everyday life.' (ibid., p.2). The term *operating* is particularly significant in identifying the way in which policy-makers perceive literacy, introducing a discourse of functionality and employability which are even more apparent in the use of financial and economic terminology, such as *returns, investment, market, performance, outcomes, drivers, Net Present Value* and *sustainability* (ibid.). A discourse of employability can also be discerned in regular repetition of the terms *work, employment* and *employers*. (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, 2014, p.4).

Consideration of the data from document analysis and telephone interviews seems to suggest some similarities in the perceptions identified in policy documents and those expressed by participating literacy teachers. The concern with the ability to function and with employability occurred regularly within the interviews, for example, and the need to communicate on a practical, every day level also arose on a number of occasions. Less frequently mentioned was the need for critical awareness and to make informed decisions about one's own future, although one participant added autonomy and empowerment to this which might hint at a rather different, more political, concept of literacy. Being self-sufficient and avoiding isolation were also given as reasons for being literate.

There was, however, a greater frequency in the occurrence of the term 'independence' in the telephone interview responses than in the policy documents and more of a sense of individual, rather than social or national, benefits from improved literacy. Fewer suggestions were made of literacy involving anything other than print-based reading and writing in the policy documents than in the telephone interview responses, but what comes across particularly strongly in both the documentary analysis and the telephone interviews is the association of literacy with the achievement of qualifications.

In response to a question regarding the skills or abilities a literate adult should have, most participants indicated reading for different purposes and with different kinds of text. Some also mentioned writing and a number suggested that computer and digital skills were linked to being literate. When asked about the Government's move to re-establish the terms 'English' (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011, p.11) there were differences of opinion amongst participants. Some felt it had not made any difference to their practice. Others thought it had. Where participants felt it had made a difference their responses appear to link the concepts of 'English' and 'literacy' to particular courses or qualifications; linking literacy to Skills for Life, for instance, and English to functional skills.

Documentary analysis and telephone interviews also identified a number of shared absences in the perceptions of literacy expressed by policy makers and teachers, particularly the notion of reading or writing for pleasure or simply learning for the sake of it. The assumption appears to be that literacy is about gaining qualifications to help people find and sustain employment with little or no consideration of adults who, rather than looking for work, may simply wish to improve their skills to be able to read with their children, help with homework, or play more of a role in their community. The focus is on functionality, with the sense that literacy is something a person uses because they need to, not because they might gain some enjoyment from it.

Conclusion

PIAAC results for the UK, and the Government's response to this, suggest that the concern with the standards of adult literacy is still present; the 'gremlins' have not gone away (Kendall and McGrath, 2014). However, comparison of current policy with the earlier 'Skills for Life' strategy suggests that there is now a less proactive approach to adult literacy education. Current policy, while making a commitment to funding for adults to achieve qualifications in English up to GCSE appears through its denial of the need to publicise this, along with the lack of any other specific measures for adult learners, suggests that the issue is not receiving the focus or urgency that it did at the introduction of the Skills for Life initiative. Hamilton (2012, p.4) identified a change in policy regarding adult literacy education, with the UK 'just emerging' from 'a period of major state funding for literacy, numeracy and ESOL' in the form of the Skills for Life Strategy. However it would appear that no one significant policy is replacing it. Instead adult literacy education features as one of a number of areas covered by several policy initiatives, with an apparent focus on young people leaving school without qualifications in English. Policy seems to be based on a perception of literacy as a set of clearly prescribed skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing which is very functional, leading to the achievement of qualifications which are necessary for employment and coping with everyday life. Adult literacy education seems to be just a small part of a broader skills agenda.

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“Work experience, learning and self-efficacy – why it matters for individual careers”

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Introduction

Enhancing career and employment opportunities is a key aim of European education and employment policies. The OECD publication “Career Guidance and Public Policy. Bridging the Gap” (OECD, 2004) hence emphasises that guidance services for vocational and career orientation need to be improved and better aligned with requirements of lifelong learning. It furthermore underlines the key role of individual and student-oriented services that have a complementary function to career guidance provided at the workplace and by public employment services. In the context of educational policies, vocational and career guidance have been further enriched by a life-course perspective, underlining that guidance services should meet individuals’ varying needs across the lifespan and should, therefore, address young people and adults as well as the ‘third age’.

This approach also takes account of the dynamic and growing complexity of the education and employment system, which have induced the de-standardisation and individualisation of work and employment trajectories over the past decades. As a consequence, individuals perceive their trajectories ever less as linear and progressive, as they are expected to redirect their occupational choices and pathways more frequently. This can be considered both as an opportunity as well as a burden. The same applies to lifelong learning which has become a necessity closely linked to the on-going process of shaping one’s own career and work trajectory.

This contribution delineates individuals’ work orientation and career development across the lifespan, thereby seeking to identify the role of initial vocational choices for individuals’ subsequent work trajectories. It postulates that in the context of lifelong learning, career guidance services could be better targeted by taking a subject-oriented approach based on a biographical perspective. Methodologically, it is based on narratives of students who obtained a University entry qualification by following the so-called ‘third educational pathway’. This pathway facilitates the transition into Higher Education (HE) for individuals who are commonly qualified at skilled workers level and who do not have a University entry qualification. The narratives were developed from 38 interviews with students from German Universities, who were qualified as skilled workers in different vocational domains (i.e. who had completed a vocational or apprenticeship training typically of duration of three years). Data were generated in the framework of the research project “Learning biographies of students following the third educational pathway” (“Lernbiographien von Studierenden des dritten Bildungsweges”) funded in the context of enhancing the permeability of the German educational system and supporting transition into higher education for individuals with a vocational qualification (Heibült and Anslinger, 2012). With Germany being among the countries

with a particularly low level of University graduates as compared to many other industrialised countries (OECD, 2013, p. 26), enhancing the permeability between the vocational and academic track has become a priority of German education policy. With the 2009 decision of the “Kultusministerkonferenz” (KMK) (“Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany”), this approach was politically supported and has, in the meantime, also been legally anchored (for an overview see Nickel and Püttmann, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

Super’s career development theory (Super, 1990) provides a useful conceptual framework to link individuals’ work orientations to lifelong learning. It conceptualises vocational and work orientation as a lifelong process that requires the individual to prioritise and make decisions that need to be integrated into their life history. Thereby, the first occupational choice when making the transition from school to work is particularly decisive as it presents a crossroads, setting future directions of subsequent career development opportunities. However, initial occupational choices can be altered, particularly by identifying windows of opportunity that open up alternative career pathways (Oram, 2007).

The “Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making” (SLTCDM) by Krumboltz (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1990) focuses on the interplay between learning experience, external influences and opportunities. It considers the individual’s perception and cognitive assessment of positive and negative incidents to be the result of multiple learning experiences from planned and unintended situations. Krumboltz identifies four influencing factors that direct individuals’ occupational choices: (i) genetic endowment; (ii) environmental conditions and events; (iii) learning experience; and (iv) task approach skills. Individuals can interpret and rationalise the complex interplay between these four factors in various ways. To reduce the complexity of learning processes the individual uses the mechanism of generalisation when expressing own ideas and opinions. This ability described as generalised self-observation and generalised opinion, enables the individual to relate different learning experiences in a somewhat coherent and sensible way. Krumboltz underlines that this process of career decision making is a lifelong undertaking. It can be considered successful when people reach individual satisfaction (ibid.).

Empirical Findings

The empirical findings from interviews with students following the third educational pathway also show that participants seek to create coherence by making sense of their narrated learning experience and life events. Despite career redirections and periods of transition the participants reconstructed connecting patterns to rationalise why they took up University studies. In the following, this will be exemplified by three contrasting narratives taken from the overall sample. Based on participants’ learning biographies, we will apply the SLTCDM by Krumboltz to delineate how initial vocational choices influenced subsequent career development opportunities and how individuals retrospectively made sense of their work and learning trajectory.

Narrative 1: progressive career: “...this has always been the plan”

Karen, 31 years, has a vocational background in pedagogy. At the time of the interview, she was a first year student in Educational Sciences.

Back at school, Karen's performance was average. For her, learning should have a direct impact in her everyday work: "I am really a practical person. I have to be able to apply what I have learned. I did not consider learning at school to be useful at all" (Z. 264-265). She sees herself as an active person and is interested in sports (genetic endowment). As her vocational interest is socially oriented, she completes a three-year vocational training as a pedagogue specialising in youth work. She rationalises that this initial vocational choice was a result of the positive experience she had with babysitting jobs and that she likes the interaction with children and young people (learning experience). She enjoys the vocational training, which also provides her with a new perspective on school-based learning, as it is an applied field. The training makes it possible for Karen to combine personal and vocational interests which enhances her self-efficacy.

Upon completion of the vocational training, Karen starts working for the youth centre in her home-town, taking care of boys aged 10 to 16 years who live together in a small residential unit. She likes the group and gets support and positive feedback from her colleagues. While she thinks she was a bit overwhelmed at the beginning, overall she rationalises that this was a positive working experience that she could handle (task approach skills).

To be better prepared for new challenges at work, Karen completes a series of additional training courses, including a specialisation of 30 months in experimental education. She considers that these trainings were very helpful to become more self-confident and professional in her work (learning experience). A couple of years later, she is offered to work as a team leader for a group of violent young boys. While hesitating at first, she takes up the task trusting that the trainings she did will help her to manage the new challenge. In this job, she can apply her professional knowledge and skills, but also develop her talents and professional interests as with this group she spends much time on outdoor activities applying experimental methods. She also completes a course on victim-offender mediation, which she can directly apply in her daily work: "For me this has been an extremely valuable training that I think has also influenced my future" (Z. 780-781). Once again, through strategic engagement with learning, Karen broadens her professional skills and can increase her self-confidence. A critical incident in the group gets Karen to her personal and professional limits (environmental conditions and events). Despite her sense of professional identity and trust in being able to handle difficult situations at work, she realises that she does not want to continue with her current job. Based on the former positive learning experiences she moves into higher education to stabilise her professional career.

Karen's initial occupational choice was based on her persuasion that working with children and young people is something she really likes and also corresponded with her abilities and interests. Although she never consulted professional guidance, former babysitting jobs generated an interest in the field and expectations of self-efficacy in relation to this kind of work. Additionally, Karen displayed professional ambitions that were reflected in her continuous engagement with learning and taking up new challenges at work. Her career redirection was initiated by working with a new group. While she first had problems adapting, a supportive work team and her own professional skills helped her to grow into her work. However, with time she was drawn to her personal and professional limits, occasionally feeling burned-out and realising that she was no longer able to align her own professional ambitions with her

daily work. This discrepancy led to the desire to move into prevention and to enrich her work experience with theoretical knowledge. This resulted in the decision to start an academic career.

Narrative 2: Self-realisation: “I am a late developer”

Michael, 53 years of age, trained as a cook and worked for several years as a registrar. When the interview was conducted he was a fifth-year student in History.

Partly deriving from a difficult family situation, Michael has problems in secondary school. He rationalises that this was due to laziness, but also due to lack of support from his parents (environmental conditions and events). When consulting the career counsellor at the employment office at the age of 16, he is advised to follow a crafts-based training (such as toolmaker) given his poor school grades. Michael himself, however, prefers an office job, but is discouraged by the career counsellor: “And then he said ‘well, what about cooking?’ And then my mother said ‘oh, what a nice trade’” (Z. 879-881). So, Michael starts to train as a cook although it is not his vocational preference. He follows the recommendation of the counsellor and his mother (environmental conditions and events), thinking his grades are too poor to realise his own career aspirations.

Michael finds the vocational training as cook okay despite being underpaid and with unfavourable working hours. He completes the training, but does not want to work as a cook. Instead he continues with a technical college to be able to study nutrition science, but has to give up due to his bad performance results (genetic endowment). He is aware that he does not want to work in a job he does not like and that he needs to continue with formal schooling to be able to realise his vocational interests and ambitions, but he is not good enough at school to succeed. He gives up and remains unemployed for a couple of months. Michael then gets a job as kitchen manager in a public children’s day care centre. Although being very young he is given the position which entails great responsibility, thereby affording gives him self-confidence. He considers working for the public sector to be a good option, also for his future professional development as it might be a starting point to move into administration in line with his initial vocational ambitions. After eight years as kitchen manager, he applies as assistant administrator at the civil registry office and gets the job. Despite earning considerably less, he is happy to have moved closer to his initial vocational interests (task approach skills). He is also supported by his partner. Due to staff shortages at the civil registry office, Michael is quickly moving on in his job by taking on ever more challenging work. Supported by his boss and colleagues, he completes a further training course in administration to qualify for the intermediate and upper intermediate service-level (learning experience): “At some point I said to myself ‘okay, let’s see how far I can get.’ And actually everything was quite easy (laughing). Well, I am a late developer” (Z. 1620-1623). The clear job hierarchies and well-trodden career paths in the public sector help Michael to develop an idea about his own possible professional development.

After ten years working as a registrar, a friend tells him about a new University entry regulation that gives people not holding an academic background access to higher education. He consults the Student Advisory Service and starts studying history: “That was really exciting, and there was no other subject for me than history. When I

knew that this was possible, well, I only got to know about this possibility very late” (Z. 2104-2109).

Michael’s case shows that compromising when making the transition from school to work can induce a long search process. However, Michael tried to make the best out of it. Working independently and having a responsible job gave him self-confidence to undergo a career change. Crucial in this process was the support he received from his partner and colleagues. Being able to advance at his job through challenging work rather than formal training in the first place enhanced his self-efficacy, which then fostered the motivation and interest in learning up to the level of making the transition into higher education. All this supported his personal growth and continuing professional development.

Narrative 3: Social mobility: “taking risks”

Peter, 29 years, trained as foreign language correspondent. He studied political science at the time of the interview.

Peter has an indifferent attitude towards school, which during the final years of his education is negatively influenced by the difficult interaction with the teachers. He is not very interested in school, but spends a lot of time playing video games. Through his local peers he develops an extreme right-wing attitude while he has hardly any contacts with his classmates. Today he sees himself as somebody who was drifting then, not knowing what to do with himself. When finishing school, his mother encourages him to go into languages based on his affinity and talents (genetic endowment). Hence, he trains as foreign language correspondence clerk, which he likes. In particular he likes interacting with people from different nationalities and enjoys the learning experience, which is more applied oriented than learning at school (environmental conditions and events). Finding himself in an intercultural environment, he makes new friends and starts critically reflecting upon his extreme right-wing ideas (task approach skills).

After completing the national military service, Peter gets a job in the Sales and Marketing department of a company. Shortly after, he is promoted as authorised officer in the international company branch. This promotion positively influences his self-efficacy. However, he has problems with his boss and feels exploited, criticising the bad working conditions and unfair treatment of employees in the company. He leaves his job (environmental conditions and events) and, after a short period of unemployment, starts working for another company as an accounting clerk. This job involves much routine work which Peter finds boring. Still, he remains with this job for some time, but starts exploring alternatives, including possibilities of further training and moving into higher education. However, based on his perceived low social status and lack of qualifications he does not follow-up on this idea any further. He considers this pathway as too risky, as it involves instability and financial constraints. He also thinks that he will not be able to meet the intellectual challenge (genetic endowment). With growing dissatisfaction at work and the separation from his partner, he re-visits the possibility to study and tries to get more information about it. Still, initiating the transition process is difficult for Peter since it involves experiences of instability and insecurity. Moreover, he does not receive any support or guidance from his friends and social environment. He feels that his social

background is the main hindrance for realising his educational and career aspirations.

By chance, Peter comes across the notification that it is possible to study without a University entry qualification. After the first failure, he re-applies to different Universities and is finally admitted. Retrospectively, he considers the application process as time-consuming and difficult, but he draws from his work experience and administrative competence. Part of his language skills are also being credited against the study programme. When starting the course, Peter is still unsure whether he will be able to meet the learning demands, but with passing the first examinations, he becomes more self-confident.

Peter's learning biography features social mobility based on learning and continuing training. His performance at school was average and when completing school, he neither had an idea nor any ambitions concerning his professional future. His initial vocational choice was mainly directed by his mother. His motivation for learning later in life was fostered by positive learning experience from informal and self-directed learning based on his interest in politics and history. This approach also led him to critically reflect upon his extreme right-wing attitudes and social status. In addition, learning at work enhanced his competence to act and, in turn, self-efficacy in relation to his capabilities and achievement potentials. The decision to study was accompanied by a long process of introspection and consideration.

Discussion

The three narratives demonstrate that initial vocational choices play a crucial role not only for individuals' subsequent professional development, but also for their self-perception and self-efficacy. Further learning experience throughout the life-course helps to substantiate professional aims and career ambitions. When individuals are able to connect their learning experience with expectations of self-efficacy, they are also more likely to pursue their career ambitions more strategically. Equally, it is easier for them to revise former career decisions and realise a career change. This obviously is a chance, but also requires considerable efforts. Continuing training and vocational guidance thereby can support the re-orientation process. Seeking new (learning and work-related) challenges can be interpreted as an expression of high expectations of self-efficacy.

In the case of Karen, we can see that while being purposeful about her initial vocational choice, further training is necessary to support the development of self-confidence and her professional identity. Here, the combination of (positive) learning and work experience leads to a coherent career narrative and high expectations of self-efficacy. When this coherence is eroding due to adverse experiences at her job, she re-orientates her career and induces, through moving into higher education, a reflection process that ultimately enhances her professionalism and personal growth. Michael's biography, by contrast, is structured along vocational re-orientation and career changes. Starting with a misleading initial vocational choice, he is continuously seeking to realise his vocational interests and career ambitions. Realising that his initial vocational choice was based on external influences, positive (further) learning and work experiences help him to stabilise his own career aspirations and to develop different strategies for following a specific professional pathway. This also enhances his self-efficacy, leading into an academic pathway

despite poor performance results back at school. Finally, Peter's biography is structured along an inner conflict related to his social status and political extremist attitudes. His ability to reflect upon his own personal development combined with professional success enhances his self-efficacy and makes him realise that he is able to shape his own future. Hence, he learns to defend his critical thinking and to become more strategic about overcoming the administrative hurdles for realising his educational and career aspirations.

A life-course perspective of learning alters the key influence of initial vocational choice for individuals' subsequent career development. Moreover, further learning experiences may enable the individual to successfully realise a career change later in life. In this context, the concept of self-efficacy can be understood as a process supported by work experience and self-realisation in different work and learning settings. The three narratives exemplified that there may be various influencing variables, including the external environment, the job, the family, colleagues, friends or other social and/or contextual influences. However, all of these variables may also generate new perspectives that can support individuals to ultimately realise own professional ambitions. People qualifying via the third educational pathway are a particularly good example to illustrate the contingency of vocational and career orientations and to explore how individuals are able to realise their professional aims, irrespective of their age and school-based qualifications.

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Parental influence on HE decision making: The continuing power of local culture.

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Introduction

There has been a great deal written about parental influence and whether parents play an important role in individuals' choices when deciding whether to participate in Higher Education (HE) (Archer, 2003; Brooks, 2003). This paper seeks to explore why a group of young adults, with level 3 qualifications, living within traditionally working-class communities in the north of England, choose not to participate in HE, and concentrates on the influence that parents have on such decisions. A number of authors have illustrated how young adults have been shown to rate their parents as the source of information that they would listen to most when deciding about HE participation (McShane, 2003; Dodgson 2004). This paper discusses the continuing importance of parental influence and highlights how objective social structures such as the family can influence values, cultural rules and decision making pertaining to HE participation. This paper indicates that the majority of participants had strong affective bonds with their parent(s) and it appeared that specific dispositions had been formed that endowed a sense of solidarity in both the participants and their parent(s), what Bourdieu (1998) called a 'family feeling'.

Methodology and data collection

This qualitative research draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who suggests that the two orders, objectivity and subjectivity, are "...tied together through actual social practices, wherein objective social relations are produced and reproduced within particular situations" (Layer, 2006, p.194). Therefore, this paper considers the subjective points of view of the young adults, but also pays attention to factors which appeared to have shaped and moulded the 36 participants' participation decisions (Herzberg, 2006). This paper utilises some of Bourdieu's relational thinking tools to interrogate the decision making of the participants. Particular attention was paid to practice, field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence, "...to effect the synthesis of objectivism and subjectivism..." (Wacquant, 2008, p. 267). A general thematic approach was employed to analyse the qualitative data, this allowed the examination of the ways in which events, realities, meanings and experiences impact upon the participants' decision making (Braun and Clarke (2006).

Findings

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: rules, values and expected behaviours; the appearance of initial support; lack of parental information about university and abandoning the family.

Rules, values and expected behaviours

In keeping with Brennan's (2005) work on the influence of local culture which is broadly represented by rules, values and expected behaviours, for the majority of participants (25-36 participants), it appeared to be an expected behaviour that they placed value on the opinions of their parents. The values of the young adults appeared to have been moulded by the parent(s) and this, in turn, influenced the rules and behaviours which were deemed to be acceptable, particularly when it came to employment and their families. As participant 18 contends:

...it shows more initiative if you've gone straight into employment into something that you want to do and want to learn from the bottom up...not many people nowadays will take the lowest jobs and work their way up. My mam thinks that's the best way to go.

Implicit within the interview testimonies was the respect participants had for their parent(s) opinion and how important their family members were to each other. This is illustrated by participants 16 and 21:

Family is important to me... They're really important to me; I trust them. I know if I have any problems about anything that they will sort it out for me. I do what my mam and dad tell me and we all do what my nannan

says.

Whilst participant 21 was discussing the family dynamic in a 'tongue in cheek' manner, a mutual respect seemed to exist within their family. This was also apparent within the families of other participants; they appeared to perceive things in the same way and even express things in a similar manner. The participants seemed to have strong affective bonds with their parent(s).

The appearance of initial support

Whilst ultimately, the young adults chose not to participate, there seemed to be, if taken at face value, evidence of clear, initial support from the parent(s) of the participants in relation to them participating in HE. Significantly, all 36 of the participants cited discussing the possibility of HE participation with their parent(s) and it seems to be clear that the parent(s), in the main, gave the impression that they wanted their children to participate. As participant 5 points out:

Well, my mam she'll just go 'oh get yourself gone' and that's all she'll say –'it'll be good for you.

This is important because whilst it seemed clear that the participants placed great value on the opinions and points of view of their parent(s), they still chose not to participate. In a significant number (13-24 participants) of cases, participants did not seem to believe that their parents really did want them to participate in HE, and this seemed to influence their decision making. Participants 16 and 35 illustrate this well:

I asked my dad if he would really be happy if I went to university and he said so, but he said that he was right worried about the cost of uni and had I thought about getting a job, or even staying at college.

...I'm not sure that I really believe them. My mam is always on about

Tesco's and how I could get a good job there and work myself up.

Interestingly, once the participants told their parent(s) that they did not intend to participate in HE, their parent(s) appeared to have made no attempt to change their

minds, or encourage them to rethink their choice in relation to HE participation - the participants were quickly steered towards employment. To some extent, this backs up the participants' belief that their parent(s) did not want them to participate. The majority of the participants appeared to believe that their parent(s) would prefer them to get a job, earn money and to stay in their locality, rather than participate in HE - this seemed to be a cultural rule. It appears that for the parent(s), the most valuable skills and rewards were likely to be gained in the world of work which is, of course, inextricably linked to economic capital. As participant 4 states:

... when I said that I...didn't want to go to uni they were like, well we don't mind you not going as long as you get a full time job and you're doing something...

Lack of parental information about university

Whilst the participants discussed the importance of parents' opinions, significantly, none of the parents seemed to be able to tell their children much about participation in HE. As participant 30 points out:

My mum's told me some things about university that probably could've encouraged me to go. She says it will help me get a job, but she didn't tell me much about it to be honest...

It became clear that very few of the participants could articulate, with any real clarity or conviction, why they viewed parents as an appropriate source of information regarding HE. Participants did not seem to know what it was they were hoping to glean from their parent(s) and why it was so important that they "...get their blessing" (participant 25). The testimony of participant 33 helps to illustrate this point:

Both my mam and dad want me to go to uni. I don't know why though; they don't seem to be able to tell me about it, other than I should give it a go.

Of the 36 participants interviewed, none of their parents had participated in HE in any capacity and it was clear that parents were not good sources of information when it came to HE, even though the participants appeared to crave their opinions.

Abandoning the family

There is some evidence to suggest that many working-class parents, whilst wanting their children to participate in HE, fear that they would abandon their family and the norms and values that they held (Thomas and Quinn, 2007; Crozier *et al.*, 2010). In trying to explain their thoughts about parental attitudes in regard to this issue, a minority (1-12) of participants, either directly or indirectly, referred to how HE participation might change them and how this impacted on their HE participation decision making as they were worried about what their parents might think. This is illustrated by participants 12 and 29:

I was having a bit of a laugh with my dad about it and he told me, don't be getting all posh on me if you go to uni...I told him, not likely...I'm a Barnsley lad.

I think my mam is worried that I might change and if I go to uni I might, might not live near her and my Dad...that really worries her...

Discussion

Whilst 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 parents can have on HE participation decisions.

As discussed, the influence that parents had on the participants' decision making, with respect to HE participation, was inferred throughout the interview testimony, both directly and indirectly. All 36 participants outlined conversations with their parent(s) but, not surprising, as none of the parents had participated in HE, they did not appear to be able to pass on the information that the participants craved: the tacit knowledge that only really comes when you participate yourself that lets you know what university is really like (Reay, 1998). Whilst the participants had some understanding of what HE participation might involve for them, they would never fully know what to expect until they were able to obtain the information they would have found most legitimate, from their parent(s), or at least this is how it seemed.

For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1989), capital confers a power over a particular field, within the field of HE, the participants' parents have no cultural capital whatsoever. Therefore, it is likely that they were unaware of the rules and the functioning of the field and, whilst a minority seemed to have an idea of the potential profits engendered in the field of HE, the majority of parents seemed not to. Unlike middle-class parents who are likely to be familiar with the field of HE, how it is organised and understand the correct way of doing things, what Bourdieu (1984) called 'legitimate culture'; the participants' parents did not. This is perhaps a reason why the young adults appeared to receive much less advice about HE participation from their parents than was required to make an informed decision about it (Crozier *et al.*, 2010). The majority of the participants' parents did not seem to have extensive resources of social and cultural capital that they could draw on in the pursuit of information regarding HE, which they could then pass onto the participants (Reay, 1998).

As touched upon, whilst it seemed clear that the participants held their parents' opinions in very high regard and whilst the impression given was that parents would support their children should they wish to participate in HE, the participants still chose not to participate. If the participants were to be believed, parent(s) always seemed to have something to say, some advice to give or an opinion. Participants were used to parent(s) telling them what they thought and felt; this appeared to be the norm - a cultural rule. Their lack of advice and guidance, on this occasion, seemed to disorient the participants and make them disbelieve their parents. They appear to have taken a lack of parental information about HE as an indication of their parents not wanting them to participate; this appeared to indirectly influence their participation decision. A common pattern of reaction to this lack of information was non-participation and this seemed to have its own intrinsic logic (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990a; 1990b). It appeared that a particular type of cultural capital and ethos had been transmitted to the participants from their parents and such internalised values appear to have contributed to the participants' attitudes towards HE participation. The impression given was that this was reciprocal, as one of the motivations behind non-participation seemed to be based on the expectation that their family would

suffer should they participate, both financially (Callender and Jackson, 2008) and because of the potential for those who participate to abandon family norms and values (Thomas and Quinn, 2007).

For the majority of the participants, a degree of interpersonal proximity was evident within their lives. It seemed that they lived and socialised in the same place and appeared to have developed similar dispositions and outlooks. The habitus of the participants appears to have been shaped through social interaction within their family with whom they had developed relationships and who also appeared to have the same limited amounts of capital, so it is not altogether unexpected that they could not get the information they required from their parents. Participants listened to and valued what parents had to say there was a common understanding and a mutual respect that was conceptualised in a set of practices that manoeuvred the participants, in this particular instance, away from HE participation and towards the world of work. What could be viewed as a personal decision seemed to have been influenced by social activities within their families (Heath, Fuller and Johnston, 2010; Fuller, 2011). Whilst there is likely to be some variation in the participants' habitus that might be the result of what Bourdieu described as cultural peculiarities that distinguish them from each other, the participants seem to have, nonetheless, collectively developed a sense of what was and what was not for the likes of them (Crossley, 2012).

As a result of the dispositions and values that seem to be present within the majority of the participants, they seem to be responding to the cultural rules that dictate how they should respond to their parent(s) (Cuff *et al.*, 2006; Webb *et al.*, 2002). Their habitus was embodied; it impacted on the way they acted, on what they said and did, thought and felt. It appeared to capture how the participants carried their history and how they brought this history into their present circumstances (Maton, 2012). The participants' habitus predisposed them to behave in a particular manner; employment was much more likely to bestow economic, social and cultural capital. In *Practical Reason* (1998), Bourdieu refers to 'the family feeling' and makes reference to language that families use about the family and that, as an active agent, it is capable of thought, feeling and action and that it is a place of trusting and giving. A sense of family seems to have been inculcated in a majority of the participants because of socialisation with the family and this appears to have influenced and constituted elements of their habitus, both in an individual sense and collectively within the family.

Various pedagogic processes seem to have taken place that appear to have been misrecognised as legitimate by the participants which have influenced their attitudes and beliefs pertaining to HE participation. It was the pedagogic authority of the parent(s), in the eyes of their children, which allowed the informal learning (pedagogic action) that took place to be viewed as being legitimate. It may be that their pedagogic ethos predisposes them towards work rather than HE and a recognition that education is only truly of value if it translates positively into the labour market.

Conclusions

This paper illustrates the continuing importance of parental influence and highlights how objective social structures such as the family can influence values, cultural rules

and decision making. The participants' values appeared to have been shaped and moulded by their parent(s) and as a result, the values they held dear and the behaviours that they deemed to be acceptable. They seemed to be responding to cultural rules that dictated how they should respond to their parent(s) (Cuff *et al.*, 2006; Webb *et al.*, 2002). This paper has proposed that the majority of participants had strong affective bonds with their parent(s) and it appeared that specific dispositions had been formed that endowed a sense of solidarity in both the participants and their parent(s), what Bourdieu called a 'family feeling'. It seemed, to all intents and purposes, that the majority of participants had developed common patterns of reaction that they shared in relation to parental attitudes to participation in HE (Bourdieu; 1977; 1990a; 1990b). This research indicates that in spite of initial support pertaining to HE participation, participants' parents appeared to quickly exhibit collective expectations and socially inculcated beliefs (Bourdieu, 1998) pertaining to employment and the need to earn money and not be in debt. The socialisation that took place in the family made participants believe that non-participation was best and that employment was the right thing to do. It appeared to be the pedagogic authority of the parent(s), in the eyes of the young adults which allowed the informal learning that took place to be viewed as being legitimate. Without them consciously planning the way in which they did things, practices which appeared to have their own built-in and intrinsic logic seemed to steer them towards the world of work. Such decisions seeming rational, they made sense to the participants.

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Avoiding The Clone Wars - The Adult Educator Strikes Back: The impact of homogenisation of the educator's role.

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Abstract

The achievement of financial security is acknowledged to be significant both to the potential student and to the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provider. However the tutor of the course on which the student enrolls, the adult educator, also has needs to be met. Focus on the tutor is significant because of the role that that individual plays in fulfilling the student learning experience and guiding students toward course success. This paper draws on an examination of adult educator profiles published in hard copy advertising material published by a sample of ACL providers; a study undertaken because of the contrast that material provides to digital resources. A perception of homogenisation is revealed through a predominant focus on four factors: occupational interests, where the educator had studied, recent career features and experience details. It is argued that this approach has potential impact in relation to the adult educator's perception of job satisfaction and their role performance.

Introduction and context

There is a need to sell educational provision, just as there is a need to sell other wares. Alexander and Ketkanas (1998: 186) highlight that "no amount of advertising could sell an unwanted product" and there is, therefore, a need to generate the 'product' desire within the target population. However educational provision is not subject to a consistent perception and this is, in part, a consequence of the numerous changes which have occurred in the funding arrangements across the sector. Many of those changes are the result of efforts to respond to financial austerity, what Johnston and Williamson (2014: xiii), albeit writing in a US context, describe as amounting to "a tsunami of budget cuts and retrenchments that have buffeted most, crippled some, and devastated others".

Adult and Community Learning (ACL) is often regarded to be the 'poor relative' within the UK education sector. Over recent years sector provision has reduced as financial administration has moved, in turn, from local education authorities (LEAs) to Learning and Skills Councils (who took over funding from LEAs in 2001) and more recently to, in large part, charitable and voluntary organisations. Some provision has been absorbed by the Further Education sector.

Where ACL provision remains, emphasis has changed from a focus on courses which in many cases fulfilled a social need, to those which place a heightened, and at times exclusive, focus on the development of career related skills (Andersson et al, 2013; Nilson & Nyström, 2013). There is an emphasis on students achieving a financial return on their educational investment through the maintenance of their earning potential. The effect has left the ACL sector trying to sell provision which is

viewed in potentially different ways within the target market, and certainly in a different manner to how it has historically been perceived.

The intention behind advertising educational provision is that that advertising material will invoke action to be taken. In the case of the ACL sector, the initially desired action is student enrolment. Contemporary approaches to selling educational provision appear to be more cautious than the 'half-truth, near deception, exaggeration and suggestion' indicated by Alexander and Ketkanas (1998: 195) as being the language of advertising in the late 1990s.

Efforts to engage prospective students require a focus which is tailored to meeting their emotive needs, with the achievement of financial security taking a heightened profile. However students are not the only ones with needs. There is a significant body of literature relating to motivation of the workforce, with some acknowledgement of this in relation to the education sector specifically (Visser-Wijnveen et al, 2012). The adult educator, the tutor of the course on which the student enrolls, is influenced by the context in which they undertake their role. Focus on the tutor is significant because of the role that that individual plays in generating a positive student learning experience and guiding those students toward course success. However, despite the literature acknowledging this individuality, the way that adult educator profiles are used in hard copy educational advertising suggests a tendency towards homogenisation.

Homogenisation should not be regarded as inherently negative. Tomlinson (1995) identifies, for example, that any such perception is the result of perspective. In this paper the perspective is bounded by an Human Resource Management (HRM) lens wherein standardisation and the effect of identifying sameness is acknowledged as having the potential to influence role performance; for example as a result of the individual's perception of job satisfaction.

Drawing on data from an examination of adult educator profiles published in hard copy ACL advertising material, this paper explains the nature of that homogenisation. It is from this base point that a number of considerations relating to the adult educator's role performance and job satisfaction are raised.

Method

The educator profile data used for the study was drawn from hard copy advertising material issued by six ACL providers in England during the 2014-2015 academic year. There were no criteria for the data apart from the need for the educator's name to be specified and for that name to be accompanied by some biographic detail. The name was used for the purpose of ensuring that there were no duplicate entries in the data, it not being uncommon for adult educators to work for more than one educational establishment. Where duplicate entries occurred, the data was drawn from the source which included the most detail by word number and, where there was no distinction between the sources by word number, on the basis of the source first accessed.

228 adult educator profiles were included in the study. No specific gender profile was sought. Instead the study made use of the profiles which the author was able to access, reasoning that this accessibility reflected the experience of potential

students. Biographic detail codes were derived from the body of data using a process of developmental open coding. Ordering of the profile data was on the basis of when the relevant theme was first mentioned within the profile text.

Findings

Seven themes were identified to occur within the adult educator profiles. These themes were detail relating to occupational interests; where the educator had studied; recent career features; experience; membership of professional or trade associations; awards won; and the location in which the educator had grown up.

Fifteen percent of the profiles provided only the barest of detail, one theme, with occupational interests being the predominant focus. Fifty four percent of the profiles provided two themes and, of these, 55% firstly mentioned occupational interests with 52% of those profiles following up the occupational interest detail with an example of a recent career feature and 21% followed this up with detail relating to where the adult educator had studied. Of the remaining fifty six profiles where two themes were present, 36% firstly identified where the adult educator had studied.

Twenty nine percent of the profiles provided three themes of which 44% firstly highlighted occupational interests. Where the adult educator had previously studied was, in the presence of three themes, the most significant secondary feature representing that secondary factor within 48% of the profiles.

Four was the maximum number of themes in any profile. This occurred on four (2%) occasions. In three of these profiles, where the adult educator had previously studied was the first mentioned factor. This factor was the third of the four themes in the fourth profile; after the adult educator's occupational and experience details.

Whilst seven themes were apparent, just four themes were found to be a regular feature of the descriptors provided by the six ACL providers whose documentation was examined. Of these four, the occupational interest category was identified to be the predominant focus, with recent career features and where the adult educator had studied found to be secondary, but none the less prominent, factors. The fourth theme was detail relating to the educator's experience. Homogenisation was evident as a consequence of the adult educators being introduced using a limited number of descriptive features.

Analysis and discussion

Source of the educator detail

Some caution in the use of adult educator detail is reasoned to be present, with the time taken to produce hard copy advertising material providing one influence. This time factor offers a contrast to where digital resources are used (Beadle, 2015a). Clearly the ACL providers who produced the material will have had a significant, indeed overriding, influence and it is this influence which is the central focus of this discussion. The part played by power and politics, for example, is a significant feature of organisational life and its influence cannot be simply dismissed (Beadle, 2015b). It should, however, be noted that ACL providers can only work with the detail they gather from the individual adult educators, detail which is framed by both the questions asked of those individuals and what the adult educators wish to reveal about themselves.

Much background detail is gathered from prospective workers at the recruitment stage. Whilst the adult educators have influence over the information provided, they do not have influence over the questions which typically lead to that provision. The four popularly identified themes used in the advertising material each typically form part of the recruitment-related detail which a prospective employer might gather. This indicates that the homogenising effect might be significantly influenced by action which takes place ahead of the adult educator being appointed into post.

Standardisation and subsidiary roles

Where there is a financial exchange (an example being when a student makes the payment for their course), emphasis is inevitably placed on the quality of the provision they anticipate receiving. Advertising material has the potential to influence this evaluation. Ensuring consistency where human behaviour plays a significant role is problematic. Efforts to resolve this issue often involve benchmarking processes. The meeting of expectations is typically demonstrated, for instance, through the use of role descriptors and teaching assessments. However this standardisation, as is also exhibited through use of the generic 'adult educator' term, does not inherently reflect the diversity of the occupational groupings typically present.

Just as the sector has been driven towards provision which reflects a heightened focus on the meeting of career needs; so, too, adult educators have employment requirements. The research data identified occupational interests to be the predominant focus but the potential for there to be a chasm between the primary occupation and fulfilment of a teaching role should not be discounted. There are a number of implicating factors, including consideration of why the individual has chosen to use their working time to develop in others their primary interest rather than actively practice that skill. The physical impact of trade roles, particularly those which are construction related, is well reported in the literature (e.g. Noone, 2013). Likewise, and highlighting the precarious revenue generating nature of some craft based roles which might attract the perception of being a dispensable luxury in times of economic austerity, Abbing (2002: 82) outlines a debate wherein artists are placed on a scale which ranges from the 'selfless' to the 'commercial'. Abbing (2002: 85) moves on to draw on the work of Towse (2001), Rengers and Madden (2000) and Throsby (1996) in suggesting that "when artists' incomes increase, artists generally prefer to spend more time making art, and less time working in a second job". Thus it cannot be discounted that where there are financial pressures, teaching may be perceived by the educator as a subsidiary income; an alternative outlet for their occupational skills.

The skills breadth issue

In making an appointment to the job role the provider is likely to have been selective, drawing upon elements of the educators skills base which fitted with their pre-existing provision requirements, for example the need to deliver an established course. Two issues are apparent here.

Firstly, there is a risk that the approach will have precluded a focus on the breadth of the educators skills base and the more the individual is perceived in terms of the limited profile detail, as highlighted in the study, the greater the likelihood that this

narrowed focus will be perpetuated. Education is not alone in having taken a limited perspective. There is a wealth of literature (e.g. Keles and Özkan, 2011; Harju and Hakanen, 2016) which highlights the potential for worker disengagement to result as a consequence of the individual feeling that their skills base has been inadequately acknowledged and/or utilised.

Secondly, the drive towards student achievement of qualification status, colloquially referred to as a 'paper chasing' approach, may not align with the application of the occupational skills which the adult educator has found to be useful in their career to date. There are inevitable constraints imposed where there is a requirement to adhere to a predetermined syllabus over which an adult educator has had little or no control. The perceived absence of control, contextualised by the adult educator who is otherwise being portrayed as an occupation-related expert, has the potential to induce a negative effect.

The risk of occupational practice being shoe-horned into a template of ACL provision, with its focus on retention and completion rates, is thus illustrated. There is a danger that the emphasis the study highlighted as having been placed on occupational interests may not be reflected in the role performance of the individual. This might not be the consequence of a lack of teaching experience, although the impact of experience should not be discounted, but it is one result of an homogenising effect.

Perceptions of excellence

The study revealed seven themes to be present within the adult educator profiles examined, with four of those themes regularly occurring. Potentially long-held perceptions of what potential students, or their sponsors, wish to see being portrayed within advertising material might well have influenced the detail which the providers chose to include within their hard copy publications. Use of where the adult educator has studied, identified to be a popularly mentioned feature amongst the examined profiles, provides an example. Inclusion of this detail might be regarded as being used to convey a perception of excellence, even status, with regard to underpinning occupation-related practice, but this effect appears to hinge on the failure of other providers to provide equivalent detail.

In a constrained financial environment there is a heightened risk of 'safe' behaviours being exhibited. In the field of advertising this approach is not unusual (Crain, 2010). However, it is acknowledged to undermine the effect of any choice being offered (Shirley, 1997), for example by the ACL provider. This failure to be supported in distinguishing between providers inevitably risks suggestion that there are no differences to be found between those providers and this, in turn, risks deterring the engagement of potential students.

The impact on the educator of being portrayed in their teaching role as just 'one of a number' is unclear. However, the significance of this consideration becomes apparent when it is recalled that the educator's success in their primary occupation might well have been drawn upon by the provider in their advertising material. This is illustrated in the study findings where that success has been noted to include evidence of a 'recent career feature'. The link between role performance and job satisfaction cannot be discounted. Indeed, the complexity of this issue is highlighted by research, such as the work of Ziegler et al (2012), which examines the extent to which individuals simultaneously like and dislike their role, for example have a desire

to share their occupation related passion but consider their expertise, as illustrated through their occupational success, to be insufficiently acknowledged.

Conclusion

The role of the adult educator in fulfilment of the learning experience is significant. However, despite there being a sizable body of literature relating to the theory and practice of motivation, there is a risk of insufficient attention being paid to the needs of the individual workers fulfilling the adult educator roles. Furthermore, there is potential for this shortfall to be compounded in the presence of financial austerity. This paper has noted an homogenising approach to be present in the hard copy advertising material published by a sample of ACL providers and argument has been presented that this approach has the potential to negatively impact upon the adult educator's perception of job satisfaction, as well as their role performance. That each can influence the other has been acknowledged.

It has been noted that there is variation between the provision of hard copy advertising, for example in the form of a printed prospectus, and the potential offered by digital resources. The convenience provided by digital capabilities, and the influence of this convenience being put to use, has been acknowledged. However there is a risk that with the greater use of digital resources, the individuality of the worker and thus the extent to which their needs are addressed, may become even less apparent.

Homogenisation of the adult educator data was identified through the focus on four key themes; occupational interests, where the educator had studied, recent career features and experience details. Although distinctive features, an interlinking of job satisfaction and role performance is apparent. The potential for there to be a chasm between the expectations and fulfilment of the primary occupational career, and fulfilment of the teaching role, has, for example, been acknowledged. Here the motivation which sits behind a desire to teach, rather than practice, the primary occupational role is a significant consideration and it is likely that further exploration of this element would highlight the influence of diversity. Beyond individual needs and aspirations, the context in which the teaching practice takes place has been acknowledged, with a question surrounding the capacity for all occupational skills to be conveniently and consistently taught within the context of the ACL provision within which the adult educator is required to work.

The focus on a limited range of abilities drawn from a wider skills base has been flagged up as not being a feature of the ACL sector alone. The sector is only reflecting practice seen elsewhere when it demonstrates a tendency towards adopting 'safe' advertising behaviours in the presence of financial austerity. It has been noted that one ramification of this behaviour is the impact on the potential student's capacity to distinguish between the merits of the various providers. Being swayed by the convenience of an ability to gather data at the point of recruitment, a time in the relationship between the individual and the provider where the applicant for the adult educator role is particularly anxious to convey themselves in a manner conducive to meeting what they perceive to be the provider's needs, has longer term implications. Each party bears some responsibility. However, the risk that compromised role satisfaction will reveal itself in decreased role performance has significant ramifications and therefore should be a primary concern.

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Lifelong Learning Participation as an Interdisciplinary Theory

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Introduction

Lifelong learning participation is unequal, and especially in austere times, we run the risks that the gap between those who have and those who do not have, widen instead of narrow. Participation in adult lifelong learning activities is perceived important as it is believed to be related to a range of benefits, e.g. economic and social benefits, both at the level of the individual and the level of society (Field, 2012). However, knowledge on why certain people do and other people do not is available in a rather fragmented way. This paper aims to bring these separate puzzles together in a comprehensive model. This work therefore aims to move away from Courtney's 1992 monograph 'Why do adults learn' (Courtney, 1992) and introduce a new way of thinking about adult lifelong learning participation.

Lifelong learning: definitions and context

Lifelong learning has changed over the past few decades. While it used to start from a stronger humanistic approach, nowadays, lifelong learning policies are often criticised because they start from a rather economic perspective, focussing on the need for adults to function in the knowledge based economy (Holford & Mohorcic-Spolar, 2012). Key players like the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) all constructed their sets of benchmarks and indicators (Grek, 2009). Progress towards these benchmarks and indicators is carefully monitored and information is being made available on an annual basis, e.g. through publication of the Commission's monitoring reports and the OECD's Education at a Glance reports. These monitoring exercises include participation statistics referring to formal and non-formal participation, but exclude informal ways of learning. Overall, these statistics painfully demonstrate the wide variation not only between countries, but also between individuals from different socio-economic and socio-demographic backgrounds. Trends indicate that participation rates are highest in Nordic – Scandinavian countries, above average in liberal Anglo-Saxon countries and lower in other regions. At the individual level, those who are highly educated, have a job and those who are younger have more chances to participate. While these facts and figures are not new, it remains important to further understand what factors are actually contributing to these inequalities? In order to do so, this questions is first being answered drawing on insights from different angles. Later on, these insights will be integrated into an overarching model.

The contribution of disciplines to an interdisciplinary theory

The behavioural perspective

Psychologists tend to write about attitudes, motivation, confidence etcetera. One of the ways in which lifelong learning participation has been described, is drawing on the notion of the underlying decision-making process in which an intention to

participate has to be formulated (see Baert et al., 2006). This work has been developed after engagement with Fishbein and Ajzen's work on 'planned and intended behaviour', demonstrating that a positive attitude towards a specific behaviour is a precondition for developing an intention to undertake the specific behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). Elements of this explanation also focus on the recognition of certain needs and more specifically an educational need. Drawing on work undertaken by Maslow (1943) one might assume that educational needs are higher up in the pyramid, and will not be formulated unless basic needs have been fulfilled. It is also worth considering whether intentions to participate will be formulated after an analysis of costs and benefits has been perceived as negative. Rational Choice Theory is arguing that decisions will not be taken if the benefits do not outnumber the costs (Allingham, 2002) and expectancy-value theory will argue that the relevance of the course needs to be clear, as well as the belief in one's own abilities to succeed (Vroom, 1964). The motivation to participate can thus be very instrumental and goal-oriented, although a specific interest in the course content or the desire to meet new people can also be recognised as important attributes of participation, already recognised by Houle (1961). Finally, the work by developmental psychologists can also help us in understanding why certain people do or do not participate in lifelong learning activities (Tennant, 1997). In growing older, people's interests change, as well as their bodies and brains. All these elements can have an impact in their decisions to participate in learning activities or not.

The micro sociological perspective

As stated above, participation in lifelong learning activities is unequal. There is a wide literature on social class that can be used in relation to understanding the social inequalities in lifelong learning participation (Nesbit, 2005). References are made to different forms of capital, such as social and human capital, as well as cultural capital, mostly drawing on references like Bourdieu (1986). Again, the idea of a cost-benefit analysis is at play here, mainly because the outcomes of this analysis are different for different people. Those with high levels of educational attainment have been successful in the past and thus feel more confident in attending extra learning activities as they know how to do it (Gorard, in Jarvis, 2009). Those who failed in the past might feel disgusted about learning in general and will often have to start their continuous education at lower levels in order to catch up with the highly educated. The costs for them are thus higher, while the benefits are likely not going to be higher compared to those who are already highly educated. The education gap is therefore more likely to widen. Women are known to participate as often as men, although they differ in relation to reaching higher positions in the workplace, positions that are often known to relate to being stronger in terms of receiving learning opportunities provided and paid for by the employer (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2007). Workplaces are also less likely to invest in the skills and training of older employees as their time in the production process is shorter compared to that of younger employees (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). The costs do thus not weigh up in relation to the benefits. Another level of inequality appears at the type of job adults are undertaking. Those in elementary occupations apply a low range of skills and therefore do not receive training, making it difficult for them to climb the occupational ladder. But also people from different race and ethnicity are known to have to deal with more problems (see Sheared et al, 2010), e.g. clearly visible at the level of higher education in which certain institutes have a very low proportion of certain racial groups.

Institutional barriers

While the literature strongly focusses on the individual variables of participants and non-participants, it is important to keep in mind that participation in adult lifelong learning activities cannot exist if learning offers are not available. This does not only refer to availability per se, but also to the different modes of participation. Schuetze and Slowey (2002) explored this in relation to higher education and distinguished between the traditional mode and the lifelong learning mode. In a lifelong learning mode, both entrance conditions, didactical approaches and ways of delivering course content are much more flexible than in the traditional mode, which is rather seen as a barrier for the adult learner who has to combine his/her learning with other activities, including work and household duties. Institutions themselves therefore creating barriers was already introduced by Cross (1981). Not only educational institutions, but also workplaces can be described in terms of institutional barriers preventing certain groups from lifelong learning participation. Whether industries are more restrictive or expansive plays a determining role, as well as their training cultures, policies and know-how. One way of dealing with the level of institutional barriers, might be within the role of information, recognised by Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) as an additional barrier. Adults might not be aware of educational offers available to them and also not about support mechanisms that can help them in overcoming certain barriers set up by the institutions, such as a reduction of registration fees for those on low incomes.

Country level determinants

Countries differ in relation to their participation rates in adult lifelong learning activities. Based on results of the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), conducted by the OECD, we can distinguish a number of groups (OECD, 2014). The first group with participation rates above 60 percent contains the four Scandinavian countries Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, but also The Netherlands. Participation rates are also high in Anglo-Celtic countries, such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States (above 55 percent but below 60 percent). A group of countries with participation rates around 50 percent includes Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Ireland and Korea. Japan and Spain are just under this group. France, Poland and the Slovak Republic are in a weaker group with participation rates between 33 and 36 percent, while participation in Italy and the Russian Federation is lowest and between 25 percent. All these participation rates are measured on the basis of a 12 months reference period.

At first sight, it seems that the grouping of these countries is not at random, but correlates the more or less with insights from previous research on welfare states (see Esping-Andersen, 1989; Fenger, 2007). An overview of macro level determinants has been summarised and discussed by Dammrich and colleagues and they point out to various factors, such as the characteristics of educational systems in countries, the flexibility on the labour market, the union density, countries' expenditure on research and development and more general measures such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Dammrich et al., in Blossfeld, 2014, p.37). It is e.g. clear that countries with strong levels of stratification and tracking in which young people are sorted at an earlier age, have lower participation rates than those in countries who have more comprehensive systems (Busemeyer, 2015). Countries

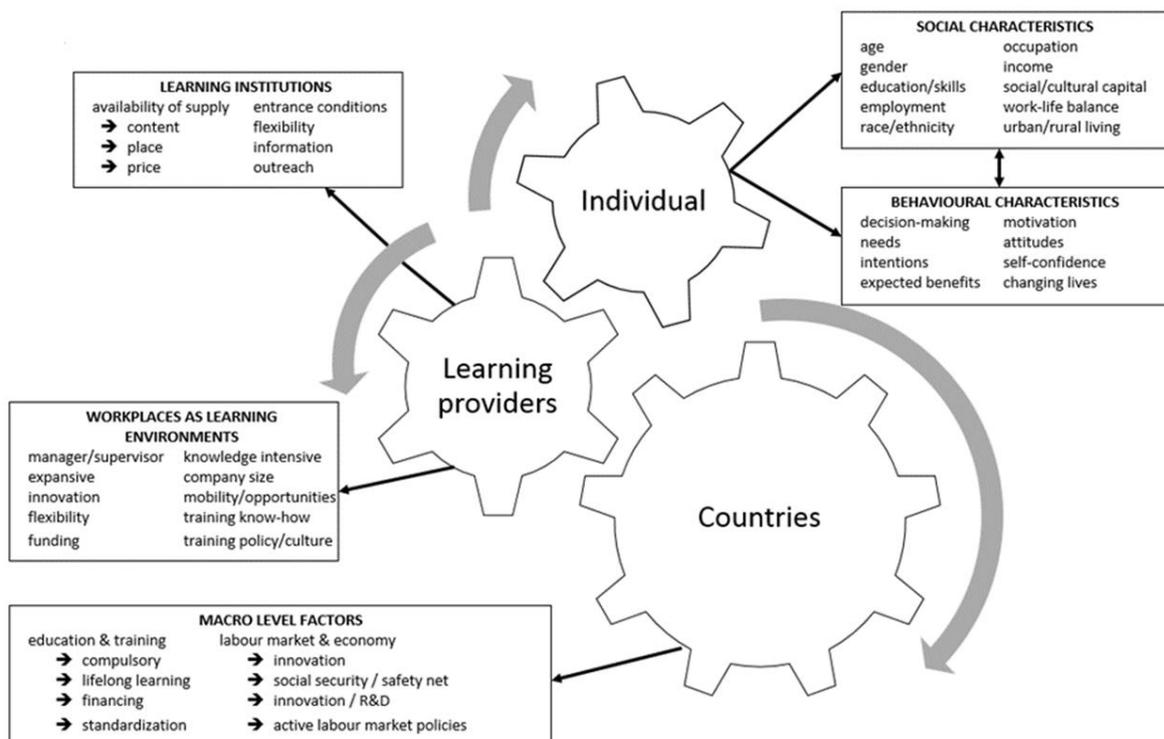
with highest participation rates are also those countries in which the investment in education is highest, although in Anglo-Saxon countries, the investment is more dependent on private investment compared to the stronger focus of public investment in Nordic – Scandinavian countries. In general, a wide range of these social policy indicators correlate with each other and make it therefore easier to group countries into separate clusters or typologies.

The need for integration

The overview of theories above demonstrates that understanding participation in lifelong learning is not an unidimensional tasks, but requires the integration of a number of disciplines into an interdisciplinary theory. Both structure and individual agency are at play it is thus important to think further based on structure and agency approaches (e.g. Giddens, 1998). In the lifelong learning theory, Downes (2014) has worked with the ecological system developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), distinguishing between a micro-, meso-, exo-, macro- and chrono-system. Rubenson and Desjardins (2009) published a paper in *Adult Education Quarterly* in which they presented a Bounded Agency Model, demonstrating the cooperation between individuals and available structures in order to achieve lifelong learning participation. Feldman and Ng (2011) also worked on an integrated model in which they distinguished between individual differences, situational factors and access to learning opportunities.

While certain common features are thus present in these models, it is important to present a new model that tries to incorporate a review of the literature in the field. This model is represented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1



The model starts from the three central players, the individual, the learning providers and the countries. At the level of the individual, a distinction has been made between social and behavioural characteristics. If we could go back to the notion of the decision-making process, we would say that those with different social characteristics, have different chances to go through this process in a positive way. All is shaped in interaction with the availability of learning providers. Both the typical educational institutions, but also the workplaces can act as generators or barriers to lifelong learning participations. The individual and the institution are also embedded within specific countries, who differ in the architecture of their education and labour market policies. In bringing these elements together, it is hoped that understanding the of participation issues in the field of lifelong learning has increased.

Advancing research and practice

Measuring adult lifelong learning participation

While an integrative lifelong learning participation model has been presented, it has to be acknowledged that certain limitations in our understanding of lifelong learning participation exist. Some of these limitations are the result of a lack of high quality data in the field (see Vignoles, 2007). Data on adult lifelong learning are collected by the European Commission's Eurostat, e.g. within their Labour Force Survey and the Adult Education Survey and the OECD, most recently within the PIAAC project (Desjardins, 2015). One of the difficulties is that lifelong learning participation within monitoring reports is mostly presented as one single indicator and any further distinctions do not tend to go further than comparing between formal and non-formal participation rates. In order to increase our understanding of the benefits of participation, it would be interesting for the European Commission and the OECD to develop a longitudinal survey in which adult learners can be followed up. While longitudinal surveys are available in certain countries, e.g. the British Household Panel Survey in Britain, comparative data are much harder to find. Also, too many data are available in a fragmented way and survey data do not tend to be linked to administrative data, which could include more specific data on participants in educational institutions, workplaces and communities.

Implications for policy, practice and research

Improving adults' chances to participate in adult lifelong learning in a more equal way will ask for some different directions to follow in the future. As stated above, the investment in comparable longitudinal data will be important. At the same time, it is recommended that more detailed insights will be become available on the institutional architecture of educational institutions, in order to better understand how to tackle institutional barriers. These institutions could then follow up on a range of actions such as offering courses in more flexible modes, develop new programmes in geographical areas where certain learning offers are not available, pay more attention to transparent information about their learning offers. Researchers could also further increase knowledge on this topic, e.g. through integrating the different levels of the puzzle in multilevel models and to provide more insight in whether there are significant differences in decisions to participate according to the chosen learning activity.

Conclusions

Lifelong learning participation is generally perceived as having a positive impact on both individuals and society, both in economic and non-economic terms. In austere times, support for the weakest groups in society tend to slow down. While the OECD focuses on 'better policies for better lives', my contribution aims to increase awareness on the complexity of lifelong learning participation in order to 'increase understanding for better policies'.

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Impacts of a pilot informal training program for women in the New Zealand dairy industry

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Introduction

Pathways is a non-formal pilot training programme for New Zealand (NZ) Women-in-Dairy which aims to build participants' capacity to enact change and bolster their effectiveness in both their on-farm businesses and local communities. Research has identified the challenges of Women-in-Dairy, specifically highlighting leadership development needs and aspirations for leadership at community and/or board levels. These findings prompted the development of Pathways, which involved two by two-day training modules, placed six months apart and interspersed with three by one-on-one coaching sessions. Learning outcomes were directed at how to lead change in and off-farm; pursue effective acts of influencing and communicating in context; develop a sense of self as leaders; devise goal-based action plans; and secure support for implementing them. These outcomes are important for NZ's dairy industry: to stay abreast of change depends on the effectiveness of all members of its workforce. The dairy industry contributes significantly to NZ's economy. Dairy-based baby formula, for example, accounts for more than twenty-five percent of the country's total export earnings (Blackwell et al., 2010).

Pathways, launched in 2015, was tracked by the lead author who evaluated the impact of the training on participants.

New Zealand's (NZ) neo-liberal education system (Leach, 2014) aspires to meet the needs of learners (Ministry of Education, 2014) through formal education as well as lifelong, and informal learning. Since the mid-1980s learning-for-earning education strategies and policies (Zepke, 2009) have been promoting lifelong learning (Boshier, 2001; Tobias, 2004) alongside formal education. This two-pronged approach encourages innovation and enhances occupational mobility in NZ (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2004; Werquin, 2012).

Definitions of education and learning are generally ambiguous; so, for this paper formal education/learning is associated with schools and training institutions; non-formal with community groups and other organizations; and informal with what is left, e.g. interactions with friends, family and work colleagues (Smith, 2008).

The next section describes the theoretical frameworks informing the intervention (Pathways), followed by an outline of the methodology, findings, a brief discussion, and conclusion.

Underpinning analytical framework

To assess the impact of the training sessions on participants, we adopted two models captured in the acronyms KASA and ORID. The first refers to Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Aspirations, which influence the way practices and technologies allow us to achieve targeted social, economic, and environmental outcomes (Bennett and Rockwell, 1995). In KASA, knowledge gain designates an individual's improved understanding, derived from learning, while Attitudes focus on beliefs, opinions, feelings or perspectives. Skills denote individuals' mental and physical abilities to use new or alternative practices, while Aspirations refer to ambitions, hopes, objectives, or desires. Changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills and aspirations can occur when people react positively to their involvement in programme activities (Bennett and Rockwell, 1995).

The second, ORID, stands for Objective, Reflective, Interpretative and Decisional. These terms refer to four levels of questioning, with each level building upon the previous (Hogan, 2003). The ORID approach promotes reflection because it establishes non-threatening links between facts and emotions. Originally this approach was designed for groups, but has proven equally useful for structured conversations and questionnaires with individuals.

In a post-hoc analysis, we applied aspects of self-efficacy and personal agency (Bandura, 2001) to link the approach to the empowering dynamic set in motion by the targeted women's improved perception of own capability. Specifically, we used four terms, namely, intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness, as meaning-making lenses (Bandura, 1994, 2001) to describe the empowering effect of Pathways, i.e., building participating women's capacity to enact change on-farm and in local communities.

Methodology

Two groups of women participated in Pathways. Table 1 shows the sequence and dates of the training and coaching events for each group, and the corresponding evaluation methods used to assess impacts.

Table 1. Training and coaching events for two groups of women and impact assessment methods

First group (Sept 2014 – May 2015)		Second group (May – Nov 2015)	
Events	Methods	Events	Methods
First training session (Nov 2014)	Observations Participant feedback	First training session (May 2015)	Observations Participant feedback
	On-line survey (Nov 2014)		On-line survey (May 2015)
Coaching sessions		Coaching sessions	

(Dec 2014 - March 2015)		(May 2015 – Nov 2015)	
Second training session (May 2015)	Observations Participant feedback		Telephone interviews (Sept - Oct 2015)
	On-line survey Coaches' reports (May 2015)	Second training session (Nov 2015)	Observations Participant feedback
			Online survey Coaches' reports (Nov - Dec 2015)

Participants' feedback

The evaluator attended all training sessions to observe and document the events, approach, processes and participation. After each training event, participants' feedback on the session was documented by the evaluator. These comments were later captured, mostly as paraphrased narratives, and lodged as evidence that could be used to inform changes made to the training.

During the first training session, the evaluator drafted evaluation questions for an online survey, and after the session enlisted the AWDT and DWN representatives to judge question validity. This questionnaire formed the basis for the four on-line participant surveys. These results are discussed next.

On-line surveys

During all training sessions, participants were reminded of the purpose and method of evaluation. They consistently gave their consent to participate. Using Survey Monkey, a web-based survey instrument, we distributed surveys to all participants. They generally responded over a period of five weeks after the final session, and those who were slow to respond (i.e. those who took more than two weeks) received follow-up reminder emails. Descriptive statistics from Survey Monkey were then downloaded and analysed.

Coaching sessions – online survey and telephone interviews

The two AWDT coaches summarised their coaching sessions in table format, reported verbally to the AWDT trainer and shared the reports with the evaluator.

The plan was to interview all participants about their coaching experiences. However, during the first training session, the first group expressed their preference for reporting online as part of the evaluation of that session rather than participating in a telephone interview. They expressed their concern that they were time poor and too busy on-farm. Ten of the fifteen participants took the opportunity to respond to the online survey. These responses were analysed and reported on.

Fifteen participants remained in the second group when one discontinued after the first training session. These women were interviewed by phone about their coaching session, using interview questions that followed the ORID format. These questions were aimed at obtaining qualitative information about strengths and weaknesses of

the coaching process, and identifying lessons learned. Interviews typically took between forty minutes and an hour.

Findings

In this section, we discuss the findings of the on-line survey for the first group, followed by an outline of the findings of the on-line survey and telephone interviews for the second group.

Training sessions – first group

All participants confirmed that they improved their understanding of themselves and what they needed to become catalysts of change. They felt encouraged to take the next step in their leadership journey, and that they had learned new leadership skills. They all felt more motivated and better equipped to be leaders of change than before. The first training session helped all participants to set personal leadership goals, while seventy-five percent stated that their perceptions of self were challenged in positive ways. Furthermore, ninety-two percent had changed their perceptions positively about leading change.

All participants indicated that the first training session was meaningful, using expressions in their feedback such as “personal and professional growth”, “a clearer direction for me”, “a big step forward” and so on. Bar one, all participants were able to identify actions and / or ideas that were triggered by the first session’s training. Participants’ feedback on the second training session was also very positive; two of the women, for example, said it helped them “become catalysts of change”, equipping them with “skills to successfully manage their leadership journeys”. The training, the pilot women typically asserted, challenged some of their own leadership behaviours, assisting them in setting leadership goals.

Coaching sessions – first group

Participants were very positive about the coaching sessions. A participant commented: “(The coach) *was able to meet me at ‘the place I was at’. I was able to be real...it helped me get things straight in my head...made me think about things in different ways... challenged my thinking and helped me seek solutions.*”

They also described the meaningful impacts of coaching, for example one said “*The coaching sessions were very personal and helped me work on negative personal issues*” and another “*It has given me the belief I need in myself to go forward and lead.*”

Training sessions – second group

The second group also participated in a two-day face-to-face training session followed by three coaching sessions over six months, and another two-day training session. This group started out with sixteen participants, eleven of whom responded to the online survey.

Apart from one, all participants judged the first training session to have met their expectations, allowing them to improve their self-knowledge; understand what they needed to do to become catalysts of change (leaders); feel encouraged to take the next step in their leadership journey; as well as gain motivation to be leaders of change. The first session, the women confirmed, helped them set personal leadership goals, and challenge their self-perceptions in positive ways.

All participants asserted that they learned new and essential leadership skills, challenging some of their behaviours and self-perceptions. They could see that they had begun to develop plans to improve their visibility as leaders and they were thinking differently about leading change.

All participants were able to identify and describe what they learned, for example: *“How to manage change in myself and bring about change/growth in others; What you say/think about yourself impacts on how you feel about yourself; By understanding and developing your own skills, you gain confidence.”*

Participants also reported several skills they developed during the first training session, for example: *“The skill of being aware of where I am in terms of self-development and aspects of leadership and readiness to lead. It starts with my own self-awareness, communication and behaviour. I have been big on personal beliefs but can now pack skills in communication and leadership behaviour around it.”*

The participants also reported higher levels of motivation derived from the first training session, for example: *“Opening governance to me, which can lead to a really exciting personal career. I have had ideas in the past that have seemed pie in the sky, but I realise that AWDT can teach me what I need to realise these ideas; (The facilitator’s) approach in itself was motivating; I want to improve my skills.”*

One of the fourteen women who attended the second training session, dropped out due to new on-farm circumstances. Four other women could not attend the second training event for personal reasons. Directly after the second training session, the evaluator elicited verbal feedback from the nine participants and documented these responses. Here are some paraphrased narratives: *“I have used what I have learned in our farm management team, and made a poster of above/below the line behaviours and put it in the shed”* and *“I approached an off-farm situation with confidence, which I got from the course.”*

Online survey results - second group

Two thirds (six) of the nine women completed the online survey. All six confirmed that the second training session met their expectations and provided them with skills to successfully manage their leadership journeys, challenged some of their leadership behaviours, and they gained personal leadership goals. All of them felt they were better equipped to lead change, and the session improved their visibility as catalysts of change.

They described the most significant personal impacts of Pathways, for example: *“It has turned my life around. I had lost so much of me. Now I see the leader in me, I see my strengths. I see those strengths in other women too, and I am inspired to help them grow too. I have faith in myself, in my abilities; Being able to see myself as a leader is just so amazing for me.”*

The respondents to the online survey also gave examples of what they did differently since Pathways, reporting, for example: *“I feel that I now walk through the whole of my life differently, from the way I raise and be a model for my kids, to the way I deal with my business partner parents, to the way I lead my farm staff. My staff and I are*

developing 'our way' or a documented understanding of the way we work, with the purpose of being able to transfer that system to our next farm. I use tools from the pathways manuals during this process to create a vision of changing to a new farm for my staff and children."

Coaching sessions – second group

The second group of women had two opportunities to provide feedback on the coaching sessions: the online survey and phone interviews. They said, for example *"The coaching sessions were imperative. I would never have those conversations with my friends because they were both very personal and very tedious! Without these conversations and voicing of reflections I would not have moved on; These sessions gave me the ability to make clearer decisions. I also gained very powerful skills around dealing with difficult situations in our farm team environment."*

The women commonly described themselves after the coaching sessions as feeling capable, confident, enthusiastic, 'having clarity or direction', and hopeful.

Only one of the fifteen women felt unhappy with her experience of coaching. She wanted the coach to take more initiative in making and staying in contact.

The second group held the view that the Pathways course improved their self-confidence, helping them to gain self-knowledge and self-belief. It also helped them clarify their actions, both why and how they could pursue their goals. They also found the time set aside for coaching valuable because it allowed them to address personal needs.

When they were asked about applying their learning, most observed that they were already applying the knowledge gained, especially actions based on the coaching which was directed at how to deal with issues they experienced at the time.

Discussion

The findings illustrate that Pathways has had a significant influence on participants. In particular, it assisted them in reconfiguring not only their self-perception, but also their willingness to embrace their roles as change agents. From our post-hoc analysis it was clear that these changes were co-constructed among the participants (i.e. course designers, trainers, coaches, evaluators and participants). These changes, manifested in a directed effort to change and enact their personal plans-of-action, serve as evidence of improved personal agency and self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001).

All participants displayed a reciprocal intentionality to successfully execute their leadership roles (Bandura, 2001). Coaches, facilitators and evaluators pursued intentions rooted in multi-agency accounts of the targeted women's leadership needs, personalising these in the first training sessions. The training and coaching sessions were intended to create conditions that supported participants to develop personal agency. The coaching, we reasoned, created opportunities for the women to make their tacit knowhow as intentional agents explicit (Gascoigne and Thornton, 2013), bolstering their positive self-perception and willingness to devise personalised plans and enact solutions (Bandura 2001, 1994). Participants acknowledged the enabling effect of the intervention, accomplished in collaboration with their coaches,

specifically noting the value of strategies such as KASA and ORID; and State, Explain, Evidence, Connect (SEEC) (Anon., 2016).

Next, Bandura's (2001) notion of forethought allowed us to see that participants anticipated the consequences of their actions and how their future-directed goals would be realised. Their changed perspectives were evidenced in post-intervention online survey results.

Self-reactiveness (Bandura, 2001) denotes participants' effort directed at achieving their personalised goals. The project team and participants planned and initiated their intervention with vigour to address participants' needs. They pursued explicit goals, and structured a process for achieving their outcomes, followed by a significant effort invested in training and coaching sessions. They maintained a reflective feedback cycle, obtaining third-party accounts of how the women engaged with their coaches, as well as first-hand online survey input from both groups.

Pathways was premised on self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2001). Participants' reflections occurred during and after the intervention. For example, the coaches engaged in reflections with participants, followed by post-coaching reports on participants' engagement. Likewise, participants were empowered to plan, reason and decide on courses of action. These interventions were aimed at raising participants' awareness of their own capability: they developed skills and knowledge boosting their perceptions of their leadership ability, followed by post-intervention reflections. These culminated in participants' changed perceptions of own capability as change agents and leaders on-farm and in their communities.

The evaluator noted how the trainer managed to link participants' emotional experiences during training with cognitive learning, modelling a creative and positive reframing of meanings (Bandura 1994, 2001), an important aspect of adult learning (Yorks and Kasl, 2002; Shuck et al. 2007).

Conclusion

Pathways has been a most successful pilot project, ostensibly supporting and empowering the participating Women-in-Dairy. The positive impacts extended beyond the targeted groups of women – the trainers, coaches and evaluation team gained valuable learning, boosting their competencies to implement and track interventions of this kind. The next step is to secure funding to continue the intervention into the future.

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CALAT and Croydon Public Health: Community Health in Adult ESOL Classes

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The current political climate of austerity, and subsequent systematic cuts to community services, has had a disproportionate effect on adult education in the UK, impacting on the availability of classes as well as the skills, employment and health of vulnerable populations. As Croydon has a superdiverse population (Vertovec, 2006), where over 50% of the population are from BAME communities and over 100 different languages are spoken, these cuts have been felt keenly by ESOL learners. This abstract outlines collaborative work between CALAT and Croydon Public Health (PH), where community health has been embedded in adult ESOL classes.

Originating in response to data which identify women who were not born in the UK, and women from ethnic groups, as being at high-risk of maternal and infant mortality (ONS, 2012; CMACE, 2011; Ghosh and Alves, 2010/11), Croydon Public Health began funding bespoke classes in an attempt to assure “easily accessible, reliable and relevant information [was available] in a form” (NHS Constitution, 2015) that could be understood by women who used English as an additional language. The antenatal classes were designed to explain routine medical information and NHS processes, as well as exploring healthy eating and preventative healthcare. Additional mixed-method research (Brooks, 2013) revealed participant difficulties in accessing oral and written information in English, particularly when encountering colloquial or medical language.

In extrapolation, it was postulated that many adult ESOL learners could benefit from health guidance delivered using alternative strategies from the traditional leaflets and posters disseminated by PH. Using the Croydon JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) as guidance to community needs, PH granted additional funding to run a series of bespoke health workshops for CALAT’s 800-strong population e.g. access to A&E and health services, immunisation (adult and child), diabetes and women’s health. Tutors delivered the classes in a variety of formats from workshops and discrete classes to a ‘diabetes week’. Initial evaluations revealed a very positive response from learners, who not only demonstrated evidence of traditional learning aims and objectives (e.g. reading for gist), but also understanding of complex medical information. As a result of the sessions, many learners reported changes in lifestyle and advice-seeking behaviour, identification of underlying health conditions and feelings of empowerment: “I now go to the GP alone”.

Whilst acknowledging that health literacy (Nutbeam, 2000) is a contributory factor to patient understanding in the general population (Rowlands, 2015), it is clear that navigating complex information in an additional language may present a barrier to comprehension, impacting negatively on equality of access and outcomes. Adult education provides a positive learning environment to not only enhance personal skills but also to change community health and begin to redress health inequities. In times of austerity, a holistic and collaborative approach to education and community health can be mutually beneficial: PH funding can boost depleted ESOL funding and

ESOL can help PH communicate with hard-to-reach communities in a purposeful and meaningful way.

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Recognition of Prior Learning: The tensions between the goals of widening inclusion and the limits to its implementation

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Introduction

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL in South Africa, APEL in the UK) has become widely accepted as a means to foster lifelong learning and employment mobility, to widen participation and to deepen social inclusion. However, international research shows that although RPL is embedded in policy in many countries, its implementation has often proved difficult (Harris, Breier & Wihak, 2011, p.4).

In South Africa RPL formed a central part of the discourse of educational transformation in the early to mid-1990s, promising through assessment and certification to redress racially discriminatory labour market practices and offer alternative access routes into post-school educational opportunities for those who had been denied these opportunities under the policies of apartheid. By the late 1990s/early 2000s, notwithstanding its prominence in the discourse of lifelong learning and the construction of a National Qualifications Framework, RPL was proving much more complex and contested than anticipated by policy makers and practitioners, and there appeared to be a growing tension between its inclusive intentions and the limitations experienced in its implementation. So the question was posed: Why has RPL proved so difficult to implement?

Is the problem essentially a political one? For example, Ismail (2014) – drawing on critiques of the dominance of ‘western’ forms of knowledge (Stengers, 2008; Spivak, 1994) - argues that the implementation of RPL is being deliberately blocked by those who seek to act as gatekeepers of what will ‘count’ as worthwhile, academic knowledge. Or does the difficulty of implementing RPL lie in the specific nature of RPL as a pedagogical practice? Or is the problem more epistemic in nature and related to the failure of policy-makers and practitioners alike to acknowledge the assumptions about the nature of knowledge and learning practices in different contexts?

It was with these questions in mind that a group of South African researchers embarked in 2009 on a project to explore under what conditions RPL can afford ‘optimal inclusion’. The first phase involved case studies of pre-existing RPL practices across four sites: RPL into undergraduate university study; RPL into postgraduate professional education; RPL at a Workers’ College; and RPL in a private sector organisation. Key lines of enquiry focused on: the different forms of knowledge valued or excluded in RPL practices; forms of mediating articulation and

recognition of knowledge and competence across different contexts; the impact of institutional context; and the agentic strategies employed by learners as they engage with the RPL process (see Cooper & Ralphs, forthcoming). This paper draws on this research, as well as two other pieces of research: a case study of postgraduate programmes in a South African university that formed part of the above-mentioned research project (published as Cooper and Harris, 2013) and a follow-up study related to undergraduate programmes in a Canadian university (Harris and Wihak, forthcoming).

All three of these research projects began with a social realist epistemological position that recognises the differentiation of knowledge; in other words, we viewed experiential knowledge gained in the workplace or through community engagement as different in character, structure and purpose to formal academic knowledge. We also recognised that different knowledge structures underpin different academic disciplines, their curricula and related fields of professional training, and a key question explored in these studies was: To what extent does the nature of the discipline, knowledge domain and/or curriculum affect the feasibility of RPL? The first premise about the differentiation of knowledge led to a second assumption: if knowledge gained from experience is not readily equitable with codified, academic or professional knowledge, then RPL requires a process of navigating these differences; thus RPL should be viewed not only as a form of assessment, but as a specialised form of boundary pedagogy. And so a further question was posed: what models of pedagogy can best facilitate such boundary crossing and the inclusion of different forms of knowledge?

This paper explores these questions by firstly drawing on Bernstein's (2000) concept of the 'pedagogic device' to present a particular argument of why the recognition of knowledge produced and acquired outside the academy is a contested process. The second section of the paper seeks to identify the disciplinary, knowledge domain and curricular conditions under which workplace or socially useful knowledge can be recognised within academic, professional or vocationally oriented programmes. The final section of the paper presents an argument about RPL as a complex and specialised pedagogic practice, whose key features vary across contexts and purposes.

Knowledge-power relations in RPL

Bernstein (2000) used the notion of the pedagogic device to describe how social power gets translated into power relations within the education system. The pedagogic device represents the set of ideological principles or rules that regulate the production and (unequal) distribution of educational knowledge. Drawing on this theoretical construct helped us to understand the role of education in the reproduction of social power, and thus to better understand 'what is at stake' when implementing RPL.

Bernstein argued that social power gets translated into 'educational power' in three different fields – each with its own set of rules:

1. The field of knowledge production is the primary source of power relations; its distributive rules determine which knowledge will be more or less worthwhile, and what knowledge will be distributed to whom.

2. In the recontextualising field knowledge from the field of research is translated into pedagogic discourse i.e. into curriculum; the recontextualising rules determine what 'counts' as educational knowledge.
3. In the pedagogic field dominant forms of knowledge are reproduced; the evaluative rules determine what knowledge is to be acquired.

We found that in the case of each of these fields, RPL disrupts the normal functioning of its rules. In the field of knowledge production, the distributive rules normally privilege vertical discourses produced in specialised sites (usually universities or specialised research institutes). RPL disrupts this rule by recognising dual sources of epistemological authority: knowledge is seen as being produced not only in sites of specialised knowledge production but also in specific sites of experiential learning outside of the academy. In the recontextualising field the recontextualising rules are normally oriented towards knowledge produced and transmitted through formal education institutions (schools, colleges and universities). RPL proposes the construction of a curriculum that 'looks both ways' – that recontextualises knowledge from both specialised sites of knowledge production and selected sites in the experiential world. And in the pedagogic field RPL attempts to broaden or reset the evaluative rules by mediating between competences and capabilities acquired through experiential learning and those associated with the codified knowledge of formal qualifications, ensuring a learning trajectory in the direction of the latter.

Thus RPL practices – to a greater or lesser extent – unsettle or disrupt the principles of the pedagogic device, contesting the rules regarding what forms of knowledge and learning outcomes will be recognised and assessed. Bernstein argued that the pedagogic device is always subject to and reflects ideological contestation by different social groupings in the field; each of the fields is a site of struggle over who will control the device, and what will 'count' as socially valuable knowledge. RPL inevitably brings these knowledge struggles and contestations to the fore.

In the next section, we show how such contestations are significantly influenced by a number of knowledge-related and contextual factors.

Knowledge and contextual factors that affect the feasibility of RPL

The analytical tools in these studies drew on Bernstein's (2000) notions of hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures, and related concepts of cumulative or segmental curricula and strength (or weakness) of boundaries between different knowledge structures (Young, 2008); on Muller's (2009) constructs of curriculum displaying a conceptual or contextual logic; and on Gamble's (2009) notion of proximity to practice of any given curriculum.

Based on these concepts, we undertook some anticipatory analysis i.e. before data collection. We predicted that RPL would be less feasible in academic subjects/programmes in the natural sciences because of the cumulative nature of the knowledge structure, a curriculum that usually follows a conceptual logic, and which has strong boundaries that preclude easy articulation with other forms of knowledge. Correspondingly, we predicted that RPL would be more feasible in programmes in the social sciences because of the segmental nature of their knowledge structures, the likelihood of curriculum following a contextual logic, and more porous boundaries

with other forms of knowledge. Finally, we anticipated that RPL would generally be more feasible in applied/vocational/professional programmes (Bernstein's regions) because of their greater proximity to fields of practice.

Our findings did offer some support to our anticipatory analysis on knowledge grounds. Generally speaking, RPL seems to be more feasible in relation to the social sciences, with their segmental knowledge structures and more porous boundaries, and in regard to programmes with stronger contextual logic and greater proximity to practice. But discipline or knowledge domain, and related curricula, were not the only determinants. Other factors were also significant, including:

- Firstly, although programmes in the social sciences might be more conducive to RPL, the very weakness of their boundaries makes it hard to determine what is actually required because of lack of explicit, identifiable criteria. Conversely, in science programmes with their more 'stable, clear knowledge bases that everyone accepts' it is easier to make decisions even though those decisions may lead to higher levels of exclusion of RPL candidates on knowledge grounds.
- Faculty and departmental organisational cultures have a relative autonomy of their own and may play a significant role in offering affordances and barriers to the implementation of RPL.
- There are likely to be knowledge niches in all programmes where RPL is more feasible than elsewhere.
- Pedagogic agency on the part of subject specialists in accommodating the different contours of experiential knowledge in a non-deficit way plays a significant role in the feasibility of RPL.
- The nature of the labour market plays a large part in the feasibility of RPL in applied/vocational/professional programmes; those that are less regulated provide more opportunities for people to gain experience knowledge that can then be recognised via RPL.
- The requirements and activities of regulatory and professional bodies and associations can help or hinder RPL depending on the ways in which they exert influence in their respective jurisdictions.

Taken together: discipline/knowledge domain, curriculum plus pedagogic agency, faculty culture, labour markets and degrees of regulation help us to think about where RPL is likely to be a going concern, where energy could be put, and where and how power and ideology can be contested in pursuit of 'optimal inclusion'.

So far in this paper, we have identified a range of ways in which RPL unsettles the conventional workings of the pedagogic device by affording epistemic authority to particular forms of experiential knowledge. We have also shown that issues related to formal knowledge are important when it comes to gauging the feasibility of RPL but so are a range of other factors operating within and around the pedagogic device, especially labour market factors. These are all contested spaces which can be mediated or transformed. This is the terrain within which the pedagogy of RPL has to operate, to which we now turn our attention.

RPL as a specialised pedagogical practice.

Our argument is that RPL cannot be theorised as the conventional assessment of experiential knowledge with reference to a single source of epistemological authority.

It is distinctively a specialised process for mediating knowledge claims that originate from two or more sets of discursive practices, and this gives rise to particular configurations and enactments of RPL curricula, pedagogical practice and methods of assessment.

In our analysis of the four South African case studies we concluded that there are significant differences in the purposes, location and construction of RPL in different contexts, but there is also much that is common and distinctive. The Vygotskian-oriented Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Daniels, 2001) model provides a useful theoretical base from which to describe and theorise the distinctive elements – or inner workings - of RPL as a pedagogical practice. The features of the pedagogy include:

- The purpose (object) and direction of the practice.
- The use of specialised tools (methods, languages and technologies) to mediate engagements with and between specialised forms of knowledge and skill.
- The distinctive identity and agency of RPL candidates and their claim to be knowledgeable subjects.
- RPL facilitators and assessors who exercise a specialised form of pedagogic agency in that they ‘have their feet in both worlds’ as it were i.e. in the world of practice and in the world of science. It is this duality (not dualism) that enables them to understand and engage pedagogically with the hybridised discourses of experiential learning as well as the more or less strongly bounded discourses of the academy or the occupational qualification.
- Finally, the particular rules, divisions of labour and associated power relations that situate and define the social and regulatory nature and purposes of the practices.

Our research showed that, as with some other forms of pedagogy, different models of RPL practice reflect a complex artistry in bringing these different elements together. Drawing once again on Bernstein’s (2000) conceptual vocabulary, what is distinctive in the pedagogy across the different cases, however, is the combination of weak classification (by definition, RPL relies on porous boundaries between different forms of knowledges) and strong framing (relatively strong control of the educator over RPL process); we argue that the latter is necessary to enable learners to recognise, navigate and engage with the discourse and assessment criteria of the qualification at hand.

Using this framework we were able to identify three generic configurations of RPL as a specialised pedagogical practice. These were named and described briefly as follows:

The translational model where the essential purpose of the practice is to facilitate a process of articulation and translation of the specialised experiential knowledge and skills of competent workers, usually in employment, into the language used in the specification of an occupationally based qualification and related curriculum. Variations of this model (emancipatory and human capital) would include those that offered a more critical or instrumentalist translation of the knowledge standards involved.

The navigational model where the goal and methodology of the pedagogy is to provide participants with the necessary tools (cognitive, narrative and text-based literacies) to navigate their own way between the different forms and practices of knowledge and learning associated with work- or community-based experiential learning on the one hand and formal education and training on the other. Again there are variations of this model between those that are grounded in liberal humanist or critical realist principles and practices.

The dialogical model which is characterised by a critical dialogue between academic and non-academic cultures of knowledge within a negotiated curriculum framework that values and is open to being reshaped by the experiential knowledge brought by RPL learners. The assumption is that new knowledge production is not only the product and preserve of scholarly or scientific research, but also occurs in and through the specialised practices of other institutions, such as organs of government, industry and social movements. Variations of this model would be similar to those indicated in the navigational model above.

Conclusion

In summary, our argument in this paper is that socially useful knowledge is produced in a range of sites outside universities or specialised research institutes – within the formal and informal economy, as well as within social movements and processes of community engagement. This socially useful knowledge is not by definition pitted against ‘powerful knowledge’ (Young, 2008) – both are needed, and furthermore the two are not mutually exclusive. Given our concern with the role that education can play in both strengthening the economy and achieving greater social justice and equality, such knowledge needs to be recognised as a valuable resource.

RPL in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, has come to play an important role in affording recognition of socially useful knowledge gained and widening participation. RPL may contribute to the recognition, retention and upskilling of those who are under-qualified and/or face retrenchment but who have significant experience of paid or unpaid work or community engagement. However, we have shown that this process cannot happen without significant contestation around what knowledge should ‘count’ and be included within educational curricula – in other words, without a degree of disruption within the pedagogic device.

RPL practitioners need to understand the range of factors that impact on the design and implementation of RPL as a pedagogical practice including disciplinary or knowledge domain, the curriculum logic, organisational culture, labour market conditions, role of regulatory bodies and so on.

Finally, we suggest that affordances and constraints in terms of ‘optimal inclusion’ are also directly or indirectly related to the inner workings of the RPL practice itself, not least to the pedagogic agency of the RPL practitioners and learners, and the institutional policies and practices in which they are located. Our research has suggested three generic configurations or applications of RPL as a specialised pedagogical practice, each characterised by the purpose and nature of the mediation they enact, and the different tools and strategies they deploy for articulating and recognising different forms of knowledge. It is our contention that the RPL practitioner who understands the complexities of RPL as a specialised pedagogy, is

much better placed to identify, diagnose and resolve the problems and disappointments that arise when RPL fails to meet expectations of optimal inclusion. Our research shows that education practitioners/RPL facilitators have significant room to manoeuvre, and – if aware of the knowledge boundaries and power relations that operate in and around transitions between different contexts – can work strategically within the pedagogical spaces available, to make implementation possible.

Notes

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A conceptual logic organises curriculum according to the hierarchy of concepts within the knowledge field, while a contextual logic organises curriculum according to what is relevant to the 'real world' (usually linked to practice).

Knowledge 'grows' towards more general propositions at higher levels of abstraction which integrate knowledge at lower levels (Bernstein, 2000, p. 161).

Characterised by the co-existence of a number of specialised (conceptual) languages within the discipline (Bernstein, 2000, p. 162).

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Predictors of Nigerian Intentions to Donate Money and Time for Adult Literacy Cause in a University Community

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Introduction

Nigeria is one of the countries with highest adult illiteracy rates in the world (UNESCO, 2015) which may be connected to unfair treatment of adult education in terms of resource allocation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979; Fajonyomi, 1988 & 2015; & UNESCO.2012). However, it appears that the iniquitous treatment of adult education is not peculiar to Nigeria. For instance, the 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report while lamenting that there were no real gains made since 2000 on adult literacy, recognised it as the most neglected of the EFA Goals, most especially in respect of the financial commitment by governments and donors (UNESCO, 2015). The question is: how can the effect of resource deficit regarding adult literacy be mitigated now that the global economic climate tends to be unfavourable? Literatures (Smith, 1994; Turotte, 2010; Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; & University of Notre Dame, 2016) tend to agree that during tough economic times like this, non profit organisations especially secular ones count on donations to fully achieve their goals. That is, adult education organisations and institutions should re-strategise to mobilise resources to achieve their objectives, including widening participation, improving programme quality and ensuring organisational effectiveness. This is so crucial to developing countries like Nigeria where demand for adult literacy tends to outstrip resource supply, a problem exacerbated by increase in internally displaced persons owing to insurgency/terrorism, and communal clashes. This position has been explored in financing higher education institutions, through personal and organisational donations.

Furthermore, studies abound on issues related to donation of money to secular organisations, particularly formal (higher) education institutions (Okunade & Berl, 1997; & Homes, 2009). Most studies have investigated characteristics of the donors, what was/were being donated and how (Smith, 1994; Falkner, Truong and Romanink, 2015; and Mohammed, 2015 to mention few). Nevertheless, few studies (e.g. Lee & Chang, 2008 & Choi & Dinitto, 2012) simultaneously examined determinants of money and time donations. Besides, most of the findings were inconsistent to be generalised and applied to adult literacy. At best replicated studies on donation behaviour concerning adult literacy should be carried out which was the aim of this study. Precisely, the objectives of the study were three: to ascertain the levels of money and time donation intentions, determine the relationships among the variables and identify the predictors of money and time donation intentions.

Methodology

Research Design

A survey-correlation design was adopted to collect information and describe how socio-economic variables, religiosity and attitude related to money and time donation intention of 420 respondents chosen from University of Ilorin community. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. The sample comprised 255 students, 75 academic staff, 60 non academic staff and 30 non-university workers.

Instrument

The instrument was tagged 'Donation Intention of Money and Time Questionnaire (DloMTQ)'. It had five sections: A, B, C, D, and E, correspondingly designated as Money Donation Intention, Time Donation Intention, Socio Economic Information, Religiosity and Attitude. Section A had two items: 'what is your thought about donating money for adult literacy purpose?' and 'what percentage of your income/allowance will you donate to literacy or use to sponsor a learner?' Section B also had two items: 'what is your thought about giving your time to teaching or participating in adult literacy programme?' and 'how much of your time would you give to adult literacy activity?' Section C on socio-economic information contained five items on gender, marital status, age range, highest educational qualification, status in the university community and monthly income/allowance, Section D on religiosity contained three items: 'how often do you attend religious activities organised by your group?', 'how did you feel whenever you missed any of the activities organised for members of your religious organisation?' How much importance do you give to religion in your life?' Lastly, Section E on attitude comprised five positive statements such as 'adult literacy demand resource support of every one' and 'I feel happy providing support to literacy learners'; and five negative statements, for examples, 'it is the sole responsibility of government to provide resources for adult literacy programme' and 'donations to adult literacy are to make some officials rich'. Regarding items in Sections A to D, appropriate options were provided while attitudinal statements were drawn on a five point Likert-type summated rating scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), somewhat agree (SWA), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

The DloMTQ was face and content validated. It was then subjected to odd-even reliability test on 20 subjects each of lecturing staff, non-lecturing staff, students and non-university workers in a sister university, Bayero University Kano, with reliability coefficients of 0.812, 0.744, 0.822 and 0.640 respectively obtained and for all the groups together a reliability coefficient of 0.764 was got.

Procedure for Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents by the researchers and three field assistants. On few instances, the questionnaire was used to interview respondents with low literacy level. Prior to the field administration of the instrument, there was a brain storming session to discuss the procedure and to translate it to the language of the immediate environment. On the average, it took six minutes to complete a copy by a respondent and 10 minutes for the interview through questionnaire. All the copies administered were retrieved on completion.

Method of Data Analysis

The information collected was coded appropriately. Component variables of gender, marital status, and nature of employment were treated as dummy variables (Keller & Warrack, 2003) while age range was coded 1 to 6 points; highest educational

qualification was coded 1 point for no schooling, 8 points for PhD or professional certificate and monthly income/allowance was coded on six increments. Religiosity was measured by three items, each captured on five-point scale and so the maximum point obtainable was fifteen. The index of attitude was determined by a ten-item scale, each drawn on a five-point and the maximum score was 50 points. Money donation intention and time donation intention each attracted eight points summated rating scale. Having coded the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. The results of the statistical analyses are presented in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Results

Table 1: Descriptive characteristics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev
Male	.47	.50
Female	.53	.52
Married	.46	.63
Once Married	.08	.27
Never married	.46	.50
Age (1-5 scale)	2.34	.91
Educational Qualification (1-8 scale)	5.15	1.36
Academic staff	.18	.38
Non-Academic Staff	.14	.35
Non-University workers	.07	.26
Students	.61	.47
Religiosity	11.65	2.42
Attitude	33.80	32.13
Income	2.42	1.78
Money Donation Intention	5.25	1.69
Time Donation Intention	5.24	1.30

Table 2: Paired Statistics of Money and Donation Intentions

Intention	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	r	t
Money Donation	5.250	420	1.689	.387* (.000)	.174 (.862)
Time Donation	5.236	420	1.296		

(...)= Significance Level

*Significant at $p < .05$

Table 3: Bivariate Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Male	1															
Female	** .90	1														
Married	* -.10	.07	1													
Single	.09	-.10	** -.24	1												
Never married	.04	-.01	** -.65	** -.18	1											
Age	.07	-.08	** .52	.05	** -.56	1										
Highest Aca	* .12	** -.14	** .45	** -.16	** -.35	** .27	1									
Acad staff	** .15	** -.16	** .41	-.05	** -.34	** .26	** .60	1								
Non Acad Staff	.06	-.07	** .19	.05	** -.31	** .45	** -.14	** -.19	1							
Non Univ workers	-.07	.06	.06	-.08	-.06	.06	-.02	** -.13	* -.11	1						
Students	* -.12	** .14	** -.48	.04	** .51	** -.56	** -.36	** -.58	** -.51	** -.35	1					
Religion	** -.18	** .20	-.09	.01	* .10	-.06	** -.20	** -.33	** .17	-.07	** .18	1				
Attitude	.01	-.04	* .10	.05	-.01	-.09	.01	.01	-.01	.08	.05	.07	1			
Income	** .16	** -.18	** .53	-.02	** .56	.46	** .65	** .77	** .16	** -.10	** -.67	** -.21	* .01	1		
Money Donatio n	.07	.06	-.06	.07	* .08	** -.12	* -.11	-.05	-.06	-.03	** .12	** .18	-.01	* .09	1	
Time Donatio n	.02	-.03	.09*	-.09*	-.01	.01	-.01	.10*	.03	.17**	.02	-.02	-.01	*-.09	.39*	1

Table 4: Zero – Order Correlations and Standardized Beta Coefficients

Variable	Money Donation			Time Donation		
	R	Beta	B Ranking	R	Beta	B Ranking
Male	-.07	-.01	11	.02	.01	10
Married	-.06	-.03	6	*	**	1
Once Married	.06	.03	8	*	**	3
Never married	*	*	2		**	2
Age	**	*	3			9
Educ. Qualification	*		5			8
Academic staff	-.05	.01	12	*	*	5
Non-Acad. Staff	-.06	.08	4	.10	.18	7
Non-Univ. workers	-.03	-.21**	9	.03	.08	7
Student	**		13	**	**	4
Religiosity	**	**	1	.17	.19	4
Attitude	.01	.03	6	.02	.02	11
Income	*		10	.01	.02	11
Summary				*	*	6
				-.09	-.17	
	F (12,407) = 2.36*; R= .26;R ² =.07			F (12,407)= 4.10*; R= .33; R ² =.11		
Spearman's Rho = .12 > 0.05						

*Significant at p<.05; **Significant at p<.01

Descriptive Characteristics

Table 1 presents characteristics of the sample (420) on fourteen independent variables and two dependent variables of money donation intention and time donation intention. Gender, marital status and employment status were treated as dummy variables and as such each component of the variable was awarded 1-point. As indicated in table 1, 46.7% of the sample was made up of males while 53.3% were females. On marital status, 45.5% were married, 8.1% once married and 46.6% never married. Majority of the sample (60.7%) were students, 17.9% academic staff, 14.3% non academic staff and 7.1% non-university workers as vendors. Educational qualification ranged from 1 to 8 points (M=5.52, SD=1.36) while income was on a-6 point ordinal scale with a mean value of 2.42 (SD= 1.78). Responses on religiosity were summed up to create a-15 point scale with a mean value of 11.65 (SD=2.42)

obtained. On attitude, a 50 point summated rating scale was generated, the responses had a mean number of 33.79 (SD=3.21). In the case of the independent variables of money and time donation intentions, each on a scale of 8 points respectively had mean values of 5.25 (SD=1.69) and 5.24 (1.30).

Mean Difference and Correlation between Money and Time Donation Intentions

Table 2, indicating mean and standard deviation values of money ($\bar{x}=5.25$, $SD=1.69$) and time ($\bar{X}=5.24$, $SD=1.30$) donation intentions, reveals that the participants had high propensity to donate their money and time. The table further shows that the difference between the two related means was not statistically significant ($t=.17$, $p >.05$), an indication of equality in the intentions. Also, correlation coefficient ($r=0.39$, $p <.05$) and standardised beta coefficient ($\beta=0.39$, $<.05$) as shown in the table suggest that the participants who donate money would be ready to donate their time as well. Moreover, it is possible to identify a time donor from the knowledge of her/his intention to donate money and vice versa.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 describes the pattern of bivariate correlations among the fourteen independent variables and the two dependent variables. However, emphasis is placed on the coefficients of the relationships between the predictors and separately with money donation intention and time donation intention. On the correlations with money donation intention, religiosity (.18), student (.12) and income (.09) had positive and statistically significant coefficients while those of educational qualification (-.11), and academic staff (-.08) showed significant negative relationships. Further, once married (.07), never married (.05) and attitude (.01) demonstrated positive but non-significant relationships even as the coefficients of male (-.07), married (-.06) and non-academic staff (-.06) showed negative non-significant relationships with money donation intentions. Also, table 3 illustrates that of the fourteen independent variables, five (married=.09; once married=-.09; academic staff=.10; non-university workers=.17 and income=-.09) had positive or negative significant relationships with time donation intention. The remaining nine variables including male (.02), female (.03), never married (-.01), age (.01) educational qualification (-.01), non-academic staff (.03) student (.02), religiosity (-.02), and attitude (.00) presented non-significant relationships. Table 3 still indicates significant relationship between money and time donation intentions ($r=.39$, $<.01$).

Regression Analyses

Table 4 illustrates the results of regression analyses for money and time donation equations having controlled for strong correlation between male and female variables (Pallant, 2010). Together the variables explained 6.5%, $F(12,407) = 2.36$, $p <.01$, of the variance in money donation intention and 10.8%, $F(12,407) = 4.10$, $p <.01$, of the time donation intention variation. Also, religiosity ($\beta = .19$, $p <.01$), never married ($\beta = .15$, $p <.05$) and age ($\beta = .14$, $p <.05$), made significant contributions to money donation intention variation. Concerning variation in time donation intention, six variables of married ($\beta = .33$, $p <.01$), never married ($\beta = .27$, $p <.01$), once married ($\beta = .21$, $p <.01$), non university workers ($\beta = .19$, $p <.01$), academic staff ($\beta = .18$, $p <.05$), and income with negative sign ($\beta = -.17$, $p <.05$), contributed significantly to the variation whilst the rest seven did not. The values of beta coefficient for all the independent variables for each intention equation were ranked in order of magnitude and importance and Spearman Rank Correlation

analysis was applied. The coefficient ($Rho = .124 > .05$) obtained (Table 4) means that the order of contributions of the variables in both cases was not exactly the same.

Discussion

Despite several studies on voluntary donations (Smith, 1994; Bekkers and Wiepking, 2011 & University of Notre-Dame, 2016), very little or none focussed on who gives or does not give for the cause of adult literacy, how and why. There is no better time for such research than now with the inverse association between demand for adult literacy and resource provision. The present study addressed this gap by identifying factors which predict intention to donate money and time for adult literacy cause in a sample of Nigerians in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

Outlined within the theories of Volunteering and Planned Behaviour, we found that all together, the selected variables significantly predicted the likelihood of the respondents to donate their money (6.5%) and time (10.8%) for the cause of adult literacy. The result was consistent with findings of studies on general philanthropy (Lee & Chang, 2008; Choi & Dinitto, 2012; to mention these two) even though higher explanatory powers were reported in some of such studies; which probably underscores the peculiarity of the present study. Also, the result of the significant and strong, positive correlation between measures of money donation intention and time donation intention affirms that those who donate their money are most likely to volunteer their time (Ellis, 2010 & Choi & Dinitto 2012). On the contributions of the variables to variance in money and time donation intentions, the patterns differ. About money donation intention, religiosity, never married and age, in order of importance, are strong predictors of the propensity to give money for the cause of adult literacy. The position of religiosity is extensively supported in literature (Turotte, 2010; Muhammad, 2015; among others). As the debate on the contributions of marital status and age to the gift of money is unsettled, it is surprising that educational qualification, and income did not make the list as popularly reported in literature. Plausible reason may be found in the associations among income, educational qualification and virtually all of the variables selected. Nevertheless, the results indicated that donors of money for adult education purpose are likely to be religiously active, perhaps older and never married.

In contrast, our findings regarding predictors of time donation intention specified that married, once married, never married, and non university worker made significant positive contributions to time donation intention variation whilst the power of income was negative but statistically significant. The finding on never married was consistent like in money donation equation as variables of married and once married were introduced to time donation equation. The steadiness of never married as a significant factor in both cases may be connected to the fact that pressure on the resources of the unmarried may be less than the one exerted on the resources of the married or once married individuals, especially if they had children. Findings on the relationship between the married and probability of time offering are conflicting as indicated in Van Slyke & Brooks (2005) , Brown, Meer and William (2013) as examples. In a case that married was found to have strong predictive power to volunteering it was qualified as "married with house help" (Kushnirovich & Ribovsky, 2012). The negative significant correlation and explanatory power of income in time donation intention tends to suggest that increase in income would lower the

predisposition to donate personal time for adult literacy programming. Penultimately, that non university worker variable predicted time donation intention uncovers the beauty of being self-employed and having control over someone's time which could be offered as one resolves, in this case in favour of adult literacy. Lastly, the result about academic staff variable implies willingness of lecturing staff to share knowledge which could be assumed they possess more than other groups without fear of any form of inadequacy.

Conclusion

It is incontrovertible that adult education institutions and organisations require the resource support of all to realise their diverse objectives including that of widening participation in adult education programmes, especially adult literacy. A step towards the goal is to identify the sources which could be explored to garner more support for adult literacy which was the purpose of the present study. The study revealed that the two lists of predictors of money and time donation intentions did not follow consistent pattern. Therefore, differential intervention mechanisms are suggested to raise and sustain support for adult literacy. Finally, the explanatory powers of all the variables together of 6.5% for money donation variation and 10.8% for time donation call for further investigation into other factors that constitute the balance in each case..

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Austerity and resilience among seniors in Aotearoa New Zealand: A case study of two programmes in seniors' continuing education

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This paper examines how austere times have impacted upon learning in later life in Aotearoa New Zealand, in a neo-liberal political context. Necessarily, this investigation requires a brief analysis of how neo-liberalism has infiltrated education more generally before specifically locating the discourse in varied modes of learning in which older people engage, inclusive of informal learning, formal and non-formal education (Jarvis, 1985). The paper also locates seniors' education in the wider framework of lifelong learning, given that significant numbers of elders participate in adult and community education (ACE) and to a lesser extent, vocational education. Many, usually middle-class older adults, predominantly women, avail themselves of learning opportunities open to the general public. However, most *kaumātua* (Māori elders) have avoided *Pākehā* (European) style education and have looked for alternative, more culturally sensitive pathways to learning.

The broader socio-economic context

The economic and social policy environment in New Zealand has been similar to other Western countries: little money coming from the public purse for (senior) adult education even though the demographic structure of this nation is moving steadily towards an ageing profile (Boston & Davey, 2006). Examples of government cuts to Adult and Community Education (ACE) include a Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) reduction of 80% in 2011 to community education in high schools and the complete withdrawal of funding to universities for adult and community education in 2012. The effects of these cuts have been significant: in the case of community education offered from high schools, only a few providers now exist (16 out of the original 240). In the case of universities, programmes have been cancelled altogether or heavily reduced in scale and scope. The effects of both these cuts has been to heavily reduce liberal adult education to the general public in which seniors have had a legitimate stake and have participated in significant numbers.

Overall, education in a neo-liberal environment has been subject to heightened quality assurance mechanisms, greater employment of user-pays and increased accountability across all sub-systems from early childhood to higher education (and, in adult and community education) (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill, 2004). However, the funding base for ACE was never lavish to start with, so the reductions/removal of funds by this coalition National -led Government has seemed capricious. The ultimate outcome is for adult education to be more restricted, privatised and instrumental in purpose (Findsen, 2014).

Focus of the argument

This paper investigates the impact of austerity on two programmes for seniors associated with the former Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at the University

of Waikato. (The CCE closed in 2012 after the Government withdrew funding). This is a case study of the 60+ Continuing Education Groups Programme (targeted at *Pākehā - Europeans*) and that developed in conjunction with the Rauawaawa Charitable Trust, a holistic Māori –controlled institution serving the diverse social needs of kaumātua. In many respects the case studies illustrate a bi-cultural perspective on senior education in this country operating out of a mainstream tertiary education institution. As a precursor to understanding the fuller context of the two exemplars of austerity and resilience in this paper, it is important to consider the broader contexts of older adult learning/education and the context of continuing education in universities.

As author I position myself as both a scholar of lifelong learning with a keen interest in later life learning and as a manager/director of practice in continuing education in several universities. I have worked at three universities in New Zealand and one in Scotland within this field and have twice worked in the CCE at the University of Waikato about 20 years apart. (This time interval has enabled me to develop a fuller appreciation of the extent of decline in commitment and provision in continuing education in the 1990-2010 period). My methodology consists of examination of adult education literature pertaining to older people in universities and reflection on practice in varied university contexts, especially focussing on the Waikato environment.

Modes of learning for older adults

It is important to locate older people's learning in the wider framework of varied modes of learning. The well-known distinction between informal learning, non-formal education and formal education is indeed relevant to this discourse (Findsen, 2005; Jarvis, 1985). The majority of learning for older adults occurs in the realms of informal, incidental social interactions (informal learning) and participation in organised learning, albeit not necessarily in educational contexts and not for credit (non-formal education). Older people's heavy engagement in volunteering in societal agencies in which they can be "trained" (e.g. docents in museums; council members of Age Concern) or learn on the job are instances of how non-formal education commonly operates in older adulthood. Formal education, consisting of systematic learning, usually for credit, in hierarchical systems of education, is not as common as the two previous modes but is nevertheless a significant source of social capital (Field, 2003) for significant numbers of elders. For specific individuals, the blending of these three modes of learning usually results in distinctive learning tracks (McGivney, 2003) which may be disrupted in a post-work era.

Seniors and lifelong learning themes

Within the lifelong learning discourse, there are at least four themes that dominate the concerns of providers and policy-makers (including governments): economic imperatives; personal fulfilment; active citizenship; and social inclusion/exclusion (Findsen & Formosa, 2011). Applied to learning in later life, these themes take on a different hue from those of earlier life, given the myriad effects of the ageing process itself and the complexities of historic and societal changes encountered by seniors.

Most nations are in competition for economic resources and for the accompanying benefits that may flow from a nation's economic growth. The drive in most nations is usually to train/educate individuals to become reflexive and resilient through

upskilling and knowledge creation. The assumption is that through making individuals more productive in the workforce, the nation as a whole benefits. However, the life patterns of older people do not readily fit this model. While some people (mainly men) may “retire” according to the norm established in a specific country (in New Zealand at age 65 a person is eligible for a government pension, regardless of gender and this often acts as a trigger for retirement), increasingly, given austerity, many have to continue working either in the same role or in a second/third career to make ends meet. Casual and seasonal employment is quite prevalent in the workforce and older adulthood is no exception. The attitudes and behaviour of employers to older workers’ engagement is particularly significant in sustaining elders’ employment (Beatty & Visser, 2005).

The second theme of personal fulfilment has long been a password for liberal adult education. According to humanistic proponents such as Laslett (1989), the third age is one of creativity and optimism where individuals can at last undertake interests perhaps deferred from earlier life. This theme is undoubtedly important to elders; and some institutions are well-attuned to this agenda, exemplified by the internationally successful, University of the Third Age (U3A). In New Zealand, this primarily white middle-class phenomenon has prospered in urban areas and provides opportunities for seniors to engage in leisure-related activities such as arts and crafts, group walks and studies in the humanities. Unfortunately, as pointed out by critics (e.g. Formosa, 2007), membership is certainly culturally-bound and strongly representative of dominant (ethnic) groups in society.

The third theme of active citizenship is keenly pursued in the New Zealand context, exemplified by elders’ strong representation in voluntary organisations, including sports’ clubs, local body groups and social movements. Significant numbers of today’s baby boomers have engaged in varied social movements such as trade unions (now seriously weakened by Governmental policy intervention), the peace movement as well as indigenous (Māori) and feminist movements. Seniors tend to continue their previous affiliations and provide strong support through active participation in such movements. New Zealand has long prided itself on its social justice practices and some older people continue to agitate for citizens’ rights both locally and globally (as in Greypower, Greenpeace and Amnesty International).

The fourth theme of social inclusion has been especially powerful in the nation’s development and is discernible in continuing education provision. Those people deprived of educational opportunity by dint of age, race/ethnicity, gender, geographical location and other aspects of social stratification have usually had provision targeted to meet their more specific learning needs. In this country, the indigenous movement asserting Māori people’s rights, relating back to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 between the British Crown and mainly North island *iwi* (tribes), has dominated the social justice landscape but women’s rights have also been very high in the public agenda. In terms of education, the bid for *tinō rangatiratanga* (self-determination) among Māori has resulted in the formation of a parallel education system to the Pākehā mainstream in a lifelong learning framework from early childhood through to Māori-controlled tertiary institutions of *whare wānānga*. Proportionately, significant numbers of mature-aged Māori enter these institutions after school-leaving age across the lifecourse (Ministry of Education, 2015). In universities, social exclusion of older people, principally through a lack of

awareness of seniors' continuing learning needs and of their strong potential to contribute to society, is true for both Pākehā and Māori alike. Higher education has been neglectful of older people's learning needs and this attitude is demonstrated openly in the two case studies in this paper (Findsen, 2014).

The context of continuing education in universities

In the earlier days of CCE at the University of Waikato (from the 1970s onwards), provision was generous and attuned to local needs of a wide range of adults, including citizens in provincial cities in the central North Island. Staff were employed as curriculum developers (technically Continuing Education Officers) to work with local committees and other interested parties/stakeholders to establish priorities for a community's programme provision in which the university had a prominent role. The rhetoric of taking the University to the people was real and highly appreciated by diverse communities, both Pākehā and Māori. While most of the programmes were not-for-credit, the CCE conducted, mainly in the 1980s, two certificate programmes: the Certificate in Māori Studies; the Certificate in Continuing Education. The former certificate programme provided opportunities for iwi living in more remote areas to develop competencies in *te reo* (Māori language) and to garner credibility for their already-existing expertise in the language, especially true for older Māori women. Many of these participants were already proficient in *te reo* but needed the stamp of approval from a University. The latter certificate functioned as a key accreditation mechanism for the training of adult educators across the country, partly supported by the then National Council of Adult Education. Both certificates could be "cashed in" for credit towards a full degree, the opportunity subsequently taken up by more than a few.

Into the new millennium, the situation in the country after the global economic crisis became even tighter in implementing education spending stringency and associated intensive monitoring of learning outcomes. A very significant decision made by ACE Aotearoa (the national body representing the interests of adult educators) at this time was to join the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to secure funding for much of the field and to help obviate its "poor cousin" image. This decision followed the report, *Koia! Koia! Towards a learning society: The role of the adult and community education* (AECLWP, 2001). Hence, much of ACE became mainly beholden to the priorities and funding mechanisms of the TEC with the exception of radical adult educators who wished to remain independent of the government. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC, 2012), as the funder of ACE to universities, expected universities to adhere to five priorities, as follows:

- Providing specialised and research informed higher-level learning that contributes directly to the creation of an advanced and rapidly evolving knowledge community.
- Contributing to the knowledge society through the preservation, dissemination and application of university research.
- Promoting the development of critical and reflective thinking, and active and informed citizenship locally, nationally and globally.
- Facilitating pathways into and through university education.
- Building capacity in the wider ACE sector.

All proposals for new courses/seminars required to be assessed against these priorities and at least one of them met to be judged appropriate. These criteria have

changed very slightly since the inclusion of universities in the TEC funding mix but in 2012, the time of closure of the CCE, were expressed as above. Unsurprisingly, the research agenda aligned to university priorities dominated the criteria yet there was still limited scope for participants' achievement of expressive lifelong learning outcomes.

Case studies: Older adult education in a university context

The 60+ Continuing Education Groups Programme

The first case is that of Pākehā provision by the CCE at Waikato for the over 60s. Over a period of around a decade, the CCE worked alongside a Hamilton-city based committee of volunteers to establish a programme of public lectures, akin in ethos to the U3A movement. Originally, the venue was located on campus but as numbers swelled the group moved to a nearby church facility capable of accommodating large crowds off campus. The majority of participants of around 200-300 were female middle-class Pākehā participating in this non-formal provision. A Community Education Advisor from the CCE became a member of the committee to help to develop a programme using both university academics and the general public as presenters on very diverse topics. Given that funding at this stage was still provided through the University, the "curriculum" necessarily was constructed in accord with the five priorities provided by the TEC. In addition, there were eight regional groups in smaller towns of the Greater Waikato region who negotiated similar programmes, reflecting local interests. The CCE provided a small annual stipend and a professional development day where political-cultural trends were identified and issues of later life learning debated. After the closure of the CCE, the Hamilton-based group continued to practice, relying upon fairly enlightened individuals on their programme committee to sustain their involvement without direct university support. The programme was sustainable mainly through increased volunteerism and the imposition of a more formalised fee structure so that full costs could be recovered. As for the regions, those in larger towns and city (e.g. Thames; Tauranga), where there existed a critical mass of seniors' labour and engagement from the communities, survived, while in smaller locations, they self-destructed. This is indicative of the urban-rural divide in the provision of ACE in New Zealand communities.

The Rauawaawa Charitable Trust involving Māori seniors

The second case study involves the Rauawaawa Trust, rather unique in the national context because of its focus on kaumātua (elders) as opposed to youth. This Trust established in 1997 in an inner suburb of Hamilton city is multi-faceted in respect to seniors. It functions as an older Māori community development initiative to help meet the diverse needs of local iwi. According to Thompson and Barnett (2007), evaluators of the programme, its purpose has been to enhance the well-being and quality of life of kaumātua by providing health, social, educational and financial services in a culturally-appropriate manner.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the CCE and the Trust was set up from 2004 to conduct its programme of Māori-oriented learning activities including *te reo* (Māori language), *waiata* (songs), *whaikōrero* (public speech delivery), healthy eating, basket-making and so on. The teachers emerged organically as leaders from within the local iwi (Gramsci, 1991) but needed to be acceptable to the University (and indirectly to the TEC). The learning for these seniors was in accord with local

customs and helped to further build capacity among local Māori people. When the Governmental cuts to ACE occurred, all funding from the University to the Trust ceased, given that the CCE itself was dissolved by the University. Fortunately, the programme is still active though on a reduced basis, again related to a “no frills” approach. An example of financial hardship is revealed in the fact that teachers in the programme provide services at a minimal charge or for free.

Concluding remarks

What do these case studies of older learning demonstrate? In both the Pākehā and Māori cases, the cuts to funding were initially demoralising but the groups have persisted without formal institutional support from the University. This illustrates a strong resilience among seniors, most of whom have considerable social capital (Field, 2003), to self-organise and build on previous knowledge and skills from the earlier era of University commitment.

The two cases involving older adult education in the Waikato region of New Zealand provide insights into what is happening more generally within the wider ACE landscape in which arguably, both austerity and resilience operate in tandem. Austerity is operationalised in this scenario through the impact of broader macro-level economic changes within New Zealand society related to the global economic meltdown and through the Government’s short-sighted vision for the role of adult and community education, particularly in the higher education context. Government’s view appears to be that universities should adhere to a primary mission of providing “educated citizens” (usually of a youthful kind) for the marketplace. Tertiary education organisations’ connections with the wider world are most valued if there are fairly immediate economic benefits that accrue. Resilience emerges through the willingness of members of civil society (in this instance, older adults) to volunteer their time and labour to social movements that do not necessarily have a strong economic rationale; rather, these seniors tend to operate in the realms of the three other lifelong learning themes: enhancing personal development; strengthening the responsibilities of a citizen; responding to the needs of the marginalised in society.

At a policy level, the interpretation of this short narrative of two very different cultural groups of seniors, is rather ambiguous: On the one hand, Government might argue that these groups have become self-sufficient and accordingly, funding to senior education (miniscule as it is) is not necessary. Older adults have shown that they have considerable resilience and can become more self-directed in their learning. Why should government interfere with these individuals’ choices and self-determination? This argument further suggests that older adults seemingly have few economic benefits for the betterment of the nation. On the other hand, especially in the case of the Rauawaawa Trust, Māori elders constitute a marginalized group in society with respect to educational opportunity and this curtailment of funding does not sit comfortably with the rhetoric of social inclusion. In addition, the Government has failed to deliver on its promises to Māori in terms of principles for action (protection; partnership; participation) emergent from the Treaty of Waitangi. It needs to be remembered that the major orientation of Māori is collectivist rather than individualistic; resilience in a Māori context is understood as what can be achieved collaboratively for the benefit of iwi (Smith, 2000). This conceptualisation based on

co-operation should provide a better rationale for future strategies of both Māori and Pākehā in an age of austerity.

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Austere lives: marginalised women gaining a ‘voice’ in the former Durham coalfields

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Background

The role of women in former mining communities in County Durham has undergone significant changes since the time of the Miners’ Strike (1984-1985). The miners’ defeat was followed by the closure of the collieries and the redundancies of 50,000 men (Beynon et al, 1991, p.160), an event which radically changed family life as role reversal took place in the home when work disappeared for men. Cockburn, a decade previously, had recognised that where deindustrialisation occurred ‘capital has actually defined the very shape of the family’ (1977, p. 179). This was certainly the case in mining communities in County Durham.

The demise of the workplace and decline of trade unions also contributed to a breakdown of social and cultural life as it was work in the mines that knitted these communities together. Kinship and solidarity which these communities relied upon was undermined by the Thatcherite ideology of ‘individualism’, of looking after yourself, at the expense of the collective good. People were encouraged to take individual responsibility to seek solutions to problems that had been socially created through economic disorder (Beck, cited in Bauman, 2000, p.50). These communities became places of joblessness and material hardship with large numbers of households’ dependent on welfare.

The workplaces that replaced the traditional industries offered insecure, short-term jobs that were non –unionized and low paid. Some women were attracted to this work out of economic necessity, and they became the main (if meagre) breadwinners in the home. However, many women did not integrate in to these workplaces for ‘being at home with their children and families and friends is better than being at the neoliberal site of the “working poor” on low waged work’ (Skeggs,2009, p.39).

Initially one way in which policy facilitated these communities was through funding the local state to provide community engagement models. A vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) grew out of this funding. In some of these VCS organisations, women only safe places were created and here women were able to seek solutions to their private problems and to return to learn through community adult education. However, these opportunities were not to last due to deep cuts to the VCS when the Conservative – Liberal Coalition Government came to power in 2010 and announced public sector cuts of £120 million (6.7% GDP) which is now estimated at £210 billion (10.3% GDP) (T.U.C.2014, p.13). The closing down of VCS women only spaces that were needed more than ever in times of austerity caused outrage (North East Women’s Network, June 2013p.1). According to O’Hara (2014, p.249) ‘In the North East, the region most hit by cuts and austerity, the impact on voluntary agencies was shattering’.

The women’s VCO where this study took place went into administration with the loss of 1,800 learning places and support services that helped 600 women in 2011-2012.

Two workers from this women's VCO resisted changes and became activists in establishing a new social enterprise that provides a vital community adult education service to marginalised women living in former mining communities County Durham.

The study

Firstly, this article examines the effects of de-industrialisation on the life experiences of two women who had participated in community adult education offered through this women's learning and support centre. Secondly, the study poses the question of whether community adult education has shaped the position, disposition and identity of the learners and changed their lives for the better. The study uses Hirschman's (1970) framework of 'Exit, Loyalty and Voice' for understanding how communities react in times of economic crisis. Exit and loyalty, in his view, was developed to encapsulate individualised responses to the problem of economic recession workers faced in a company or firm. Voice is a collective response as workers attempt to articulate their demands and common interests. The sample focused on in this paper is related to the aspects of 'voice' and 'loyalty', where marginalised women learners are committed to the women's learning and support centre. This provides women only safe spaces for women to challenge their experiences of patriarchal oppression through community adult education. The findings indicate that 'loyalty' is working through a strong attachment by learners to this learning community where women act as a lifeline to each other. In doing so, their loyalty enables them to reclaim their respectability and a reinvigorated sense of purpose. Through this process their often unheard 'voices' are strengthened as they unite with each other in challenging patriarchal oppression to define who they really are.

Participants and methodology

For this article I have selected two of my research participants to represent the experiences of women from a sample of data collected for my doctoral study. The women both in their fifties were born in mining communities that experienced the process of industrial decline. They have participated in community adult education for three to five years. Both have experienced poor mental health and both have a child with mental health difficulties.

Data was collected through semi-structured narrative-based interviews exploring the life history of each learner. These interviews aimed at understanding the views and experiences (past and present) of how social and economic structures and the culture of de-industrialisation had shaped and determined their life course (Dollard, 1935.p.8). Data analysis for narratives was conducted through a grounded theory approach as narratives require a rigorous approach (Crang, cited in Bold, 2012.130). Grounded theory involves 'inductive reasoning' in that it enables us to generate ideas from the data, look for patterns and relationships across the data, and then progress from the data and observation to build theory (not test a hypothesis). (Charmaz, 2006:103).

Theresa's story

Theresa is 59 and divorced with two grown up children. Her son who lives with her has mental health difficulties.

Theresa found the lack of economic opportunities for men meant she became the main 'breadwinner'. She recalls, 'my husband just picked up jobs when he could'. Theresa, like many women of her generation, came to shoulder multiple roles of responsibility as a wife, worker and mother of two children. A major life changing event brought significant change into her life. She recalls:

I had a breakdown... I had really lost all confidence. I mean everything was a mess in me life you know I was getting divorced and I was on the sick from work, I then packed me job in and I handed me notice in because I couldn't cope with work. I had left me marital home and I was on my own and socially isolated and it was probably the worst part of me life really. I was very low and I had no self-esteem and no confidence. I was on tablets and anti-depressants. I was handing a sick note in when I passed the women's learning centre.

Theresa freed herself from her marriage as part of this life changing experience and took control of her life with support from the women's education centre. The centre provided a safe space where she could begin to reflect on her life. Theresa recalls, 'me dad thought I was stupid for going back into education at that stage in me life'. She dissociated herself from this male dominance by refusing to accept his remarks and proceeded to prove him wrong. She explains the main barrier to her participation 'was my educational background'. At aged 11 she was segregated from her primary school classmates by the 11 plus that defined children's ability at a very young age. Theresa explains: 'That was something that scarred me for life in a way but me family did not have aspirations for me it was always me brothers.... I knew I could do better'.

With the support of committed tutors from the women's centre, Theresa was able to identify her learning needs and began to engage in community-based informal learning for personal and social development. In the company of women at the centre she was able to share her feelings and concerns and review what was happening in her life. Theresa achieved long awaited qualifications that have enabled her to take a different career path. She recalls her learning journey:

When I first started I did nothing academic I did all interest courses.

Aromatherapy, the New Me Course and confidence building courses. Therapeutic courses for a couple of years and when I got my confidence back I did Maths and English at 'O' level at Market College to bring me up to some sort of standard. I continued to study at the college and achieved the Counselling level 2 qualification and then I went up there to do my Certificate in Education so I could be a tutor at the centre.

Theresa has found a different aspect of community life in this centre.

She explains:

It is such a community that had given me so much and so I wanted to support it. I did the 'drop in' service through offering one to one mentoring support, listening service as it had enhanced my life. Now I have a job which is satisfying to me as I support other women who have difficulties. I am a tutor and I teach Counselling and Personal Development and I have undertaken volunteer work in the Mental Health Sector.

Theresa's story has been one of loss, but also gain, in a new found freedom that has allowed her to become a loyal and confident learning champion and a role model to women who have suffered similar mental health difficulties. She claims she has a new self-belief, 'I now know who I am [and] I don't feel inferior at all to anybody'.

Cathy's story

Cathy is 50 and divorced and lives with her two teenage children.

Cathy recollects her home life in a mining village during her formative years and how it has had a strong influence on the rest of her life, especially on her mental health.

She recalls:

I did not have a very good relationship with my father he was a drunk ... me mam was like lots of women who were totally dependent on their husbands ...me dad beat me mother up regularly... I was beaten as a child... but my mam killed herself when I was 19... from being about 20 I first went to get help [from mental health services].

Cathy's life has replicated her mother's troubled life of a violent relationship, marital breakdown and mental health difficulties. She explains:

My first boyfriend was very like my father [he was] violent... [he] put me in hospital several times. It was just the norm. I was married [to another man] for 20 years. I had alcoholism [for] about 10 years. My husband did not hit me but he was very emotionally abusive and constantly put me down. When he left me I lost the plot. I have got two children and one of them has Asperger's [syndrome]and it was [a] bad two and a half years so I did seek help [for mental health] then because I lost it.

These circumstances contributed to a 'mental breakdown' and to her becoming a welfare benefit claimant. This position has increased her anxiety, and as she explains they [Job Centre] are always sending letters 'we are going to take it off you... it is in your mind all of the time'.

This crisis caused Cathy to find support through a local women's learning centre. She explains that this was a time when '[I] hated myself and I wanted to love myself, [and] build my confidence that's why [I came]'. She has participated in community adult education at the centre which she describes as a 'capsule' [a safe place] for the last 5 years. Although the centre is a comfort zone it offered a place where Cathy could learn how to move from being a victim to a survivor.

Cathy recalls:

Before attending adult education when I was in conversation with anyone I would think that they would see me as inferior to them but since attending adult education I have been educated to know that I am on a level playing field to everyone I come into contact with and I now recognise that I have value and a reason for being here as I am now valuable in other people's lives which I did not feel before.... it's changed my life. When I came in here... I assumed people hated me....5 years later and I have done a hell of a lot of work [courses]... I know people don't automatically hate me anymore.

Cathy is now a volunteer at the women's centre offering a Listening Service to other women with poor mental health. She claims community adult education a lifeline at a time when she was struggling:

I would have gone under... it has saved my life back then and that's no exaggeration, I believe my children may have ended up in care if not for community adult education... it saves the NHS millions.

Her anxiety increases as she awaits the arrival of the brown envelope in the post from Job Centre Plus to invite her to an assessment interview regarding her welfare payment. She explains: 'I wish they would say this woman is doing her best here she is doing voluntary, she is doing education... but they don't'.

Analysis

These stories require our understanding of the long term effects of de-industrialisation on women's mental health and the need for a welfare state, not austerity measures, when women are in crisis. They also enhance our understanding of the need to provide women only safe places for learning in deprived areas. It is in such sites that women can bring their private problems to share with others in times

of crisis, and return to learning. In doing so, marginalised women reclaim their respectability through community based informal adult education.

In the aftermath of economic decline, the patriarchal culture of oppression that was previously masked by a traditional masculine structure of work became more visible. This visibility was often accompanied by domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction which has been on the rise since austerity measures were implemented in 2010.

The effects for the women in this study impacted on and, in Theresa's case, caused her to leave her family home. These women have lived austere lives in County Durham which offers only a few insecure, low paid economic opportunities for women and a life of domesticity. Their low levels of self-esteem come from a culture of no confidence that is part of the negative historical cultural capital endemic in these pre- and post- industrial communities, and is also a consequence of poor education.

Marriage in both cases was not an escape route as the marital home became a place where patriarchal oppression intensified, causing deterioration in the mental health of both women. Without the financial support of welfare benefits they could not have participated in learning opportunities that offered a recovery pathway. In both cases they needed a safe place outside of the home to review their lives. Kinship had been replaced by the Voluntary and Community Sector that provided a different community model whereby women could begin to reclaim back their lives and their respectability.

This new community model was found at the women's learning and support centre that provided women-only safe places where they can share their past destructive experiences with each other and participate in counselling and listening support services and community adult education. In doing so they have the opportunity to turn their lives around from being victims to being survivors, by reclaiming their independence and respectability and, ultimately, their voice.

According to Hill Collins (2000, p.101):

Safe places are prime locations for women to resist the dominant culture's definition of them ...and provide the opportunity for self-definition which is the power to name one's own reality.

Theresa's story reveals that she challenged not only a dominant working class patriarchal culture of oppression that has caused psychic damage but also poor education which is part of her cultural capital that restricted her life opportunities and left her feeling inferior and demoralised from the age of 11. Little consideration was given in schools to white working class pupils such as Theresa. They were expected to perform with the same degree of confidence as middle class children and aspire to middle class aspirations. When they did not they were cast aside as having no value. For Theresa this experience marginalized her educationally and economically until she reached the women's centre in her late forties. Community adult education has liberated Theresa from her feelings of low self -esteem.

According to Reay (2009, p.24-26):

this lack of confidence and feelings of inferiority were the consequence of over a 100 years of state schooling that did not value the working class and so today the inferior other resonates in the present.

Cathy's story gives testimony to a life of being subjected to domestic violence, both physical and verbal. This contributed to feelings of inferiority, of being of no value, a hatred of herself and the belief that others also hated her. Initially this was a barrier to her participation in community learning as she was unable to share her problems

with other women and learn alongside them. Five years later she has overcome feelings of worthlessness and now sees herself as '*on a level playing field to everyone*'. This healing process has taken place over many years in a 'safe place' which she describes as a '*capsule*' and sees community adult education as having '*saved my life*'. She supports other women attending the centre, but all this is at risk due to changes in welfare reform that seeks to remove Cathy's financial support.

Community adult education has enabled these women to overcome their feelings of inferiority and be restored to the person who they wanted to be. In doing so they have become 'subjects of value' (Tyler, 2013, p.214).

Through a process of 'self- definition, the power to name one's own reality', this has enabled these women to 'journey from victimization to a free mind which enables oppressed women to see life as open to change' (Hill Collins, 2000, p.114). The stories show that it is possible to begin a healing process towards achieving status and respectability that does not require traditional domesticity for women. This emerged through loyalty to the women's centre, and to other women who have experienced oppression. When the traditional role of women disappeared and family life became fragmented they needed to find a new way of becoming respectable. Insecure, precarious employment was not the solution to finding respectability. By proving that they could learn and provide education, care and emotional support to others a new source of respectability emerged that was different to the traditional role of women in the home. By supporting others, the women in these stories were able to overcome their limiting and negative beliefs about themselves and to begin to see themselves as no longer inferior to others. According to Skeggs (1998, p. 1), 'respectability is usually the concern of those who are not seen to have it...it is something to desire, to prove, and to achieve'. Respectability, in this context, is closely related to 'loyalty' in a specific way. In the framework by Hirschman (1970) 'loyalty' is a reaction that reaffirms an individual sense of dis-empowerment, of not speaking out, and not taking the 'exit' route. In these cases, 'loyalty' to the community, to the web of relationships that people have grown into and seek to reaffirm in these changed circumstances, involves a genuinely empowering process of transforming identities through benevolent acts of giving and receiving support. This works to challenge the culture of individualism, that is, the culture of capitalism and the sinews of patriarchal oppression that have oppressed the past lives of these women. Through these social acts people achieve a sense of power and control, of acting individually and collectively in constructive ways to restore what Freire (1972, p.20) might call their 'ontological vocation' to be fully human.

The women's learning and support centre has created a safe space for the spiral of decline to be challenged. According to Sennett (1998, p.138) the 'hostile economic order', is making people yearn for community life, where they can find emotional support from others. These women have internalised the oppression that they have experienced and have come to this centre for emotional support in trying to understand their situations, so they can decide what action is needed to change their lives. It is only through good practice in community adult education that one finds that one is given time to learn to analyse one's life and challenge internalised oppressive experiences so that one can begin to live life to its full potential.

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Adult literacies in Scotland: is social practice being buried alive?

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Introduction

In Scotland adult literacies education is largely delivered through community education programmes with responsibility falling largely to local councils for its delivery. This provision is mostly organised through local council youth and community services, known as Community Learning and Development (CLD), with learning taking place in settings such as libraries and community centres. Scottish policy continues to pursue a 'social practice' approach to literacies learning, geared towards the needs of learners, their families and communities, with learning contextualised to suit individuals' goals through meaningful contexts. Ambitious targets have been set for adult literacies attainment in the understanding that they should be achieved by 2020 (Scottish Government, 2011). These sit alongside a broader aim to establish world class educational opportunities for adults, as set out in 'Adult Learning in Scotland - Statement of Ambition' (Scottish Government, 2014).

However, the financing of adult literacies learning provision is no longer ring-fenced, following changes in funding arrangements between the Scottish Government and Scottish local councils (Scottish Government, 2007). Local councils are also restructuring to accommodate financial challenges where adult literacies may be forced to compete for resources with sectors of compulsory education. These developments raise questions about how the capacity for the delivery of adult literacies has changed in the last ten years in terms of tutor and learner numbers. Related to this is a question about whether the capacity to sustain and develop social practice approaches has also been affected.

This paper will summarise briefly what is meant by a 'social practice' approach and associated policy development in the UK (Hamilton and Hillier, 2006; Tett et al, 2012). I then present and critique the 'midway report' relating to progress with Scotland's adult literacies strategy for 2020 (Education Scotland, 2015) and how this informed the design of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests aimed at obtaining more robust data relating to the capacity of adult literacies education in Scotland. Whilst the resulting data was incomplete, it indicated strongly that there has been a significant decline in learner and tutor numbers across a wide range of Scottish Councils, raising two questions. In Scottish Councils that have protected adult literacies learning from austerity, what strategies were employed and could they inform leaderships in other Councils? Secondly, have significant falls in the delivery of adult literacies learning impacted a decline in expertise relating to social practice approaches, with consequences for programme quality?

Scotland, adult literacy and social practice

Scotland's adult literacy curriculum framework states:

'We are using a social practices account of adult literacy and numeracy...Rather than seeing literacy and numeracy as the decontextualised, mechanical manipulation of letters, words and figures this view shows that literacy and numeracy are located within social, emotional and linguistic contexts.'

Understanding literacies as social practices acknowledges that the use and meaning of literate practices depends on the context in which they are being used. For example, to read a newspaper not only requires the skills to decode symbols, but also the understanding of the conventions by which newspapers are organised and the politics or philosophy of the publisher, which in turn differ from the conventions of reading the information on a medicine bottle, or reading a football programme. This understanding informs a definition of literacy for adult learning that places emphasis on the contexts in which literacies are used, rather than functional skills, where literacy is defined as:

'The ability to read, write and use numbers, to handle information, express ideas and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, as *family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners.*'
(Scottish Executive, 2001, p7, my italics)

The main implication for the practice of adult literacies learning is the expectation that delivery should be contextualised by tutors so that it suits the unique goals and aspirations of each learner. This contrasts with the teaching of one size fits all programmes of learning, where all students study the same set of discrete and predefined skills (such as sentence construction, grammar and spelling) regardless of their life experience, interests or educational goals. The 'social practice' approach sits alongside the Scottish curriculum for adult literacy which is concerned with processes of learning rather than the specification of a set framework of content to be learned (Scottish Executive, 2005). This impacts how literacies learning is delivered, starting with how prospective learners are dealt with when they express an interest in classes, through to the arrangements for administering accredited literacy assessment.

The expectation is that new learners engage in informal conversation where they explain what they feel they want to learn and why, with no requirement for tutors to administer literacy or numeracy tests as diagnostic tools. Instead, the aim is to build dialogue between tutors and learner, allowing goals and aspirations to be identified and set out in a unique individual learning plan (ILP). The ILP represents the basis for an individualised curriculum which is referred to at a later date when the tutor and learner decide together whether goals have been met (Scottish Executive, 2005). There is no compulsion for learners to take part in formal accreditation, but for those who choose to do so, the Scottish Qualification Authority offers a testable definition of literacies as 'core skills', where, summative assessment is permitted through the building of a portfolio of evidence rather than sitting an examination. This allows learners to demonstrate literate skills within contexts that are meaningful to them, such as hobbies or workplace tasks.

There is a body of research demonstrating that social practice approaches serve to empower learners in the identification and achievement of their goals, with strong arguments that alternative skills-based methods for teaching literacies can be counter-productive (Crowther, Tett and Hamilton, 2001, Tett, Hamilton and Crowther, 2012, Ade-Ojo and Duckworth, 2015). There is also some evidence that adult learners prefer classes where literacies are contextualised meaningfully and appreciate tutors who incorporate these approaches (e.g. Coben et al, 2007). Though Scotland's policy explicitly supports a social practice model,

delivery within community learning contexts is uneven (Tett and McLachlan, 2008). It is possible that austerity represents not only the cut back of literacy learning opportunities for adults, but an accompanying decline in tutor knowledge and expertise in relation to social practice approaches to delivery.

Adult literacies in Scotland and austerity

Adult literacies learning in Scotland continues to be delivered through informal community settings such as libraries or community centres, mostly through local council youth and community services (Tett et al, 2012). In the 2000s, there was a planned increase in the financing of organised adult literacies programmes in Scotland, with corresponding developments in England and Wales (under the auspices of the Skills for Life initiative). However, following austerity government, programme expansion ceased in the UK.

In Scotland, the implementation of cuts to adult education budgets was further complicated by a change in the funding mechanism for adult literacies by the SNP led coalition government in 2007. Previously, the Scottish Government had channelled money earmarked specifically for adult literacies education via local councils, for distribution through local strategic partnerships. Following the *Concordat with Scottish Convention of Local Authorities (2007)*, under the guise of reducing bureaucracy, funding allocation for adult literacies was no longer protected. Though there remains a national target to 'Reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems' (*ibid*) and councils must evidence how they are working to meet this aim, there is no legal requirement to deliver adult literacies learning as a service. This leaves the planning and delivery of adult literacies to the individual strategy of the thirty-two Scottish local councils, with the possibility of wide variances between them in terms of both funding and organisation of provision.

In 2016, it is not clear what the impact of austerity, along with lack of ring-fenced funding of adult literacies, has had on the service, both in terms of numbers of learners, or mode of delivery. Education Scotland has provided some indicative information following from two recent reports, both conducted via on-line surveys from self-selecting respondents. The '*Community Learning and Development (CLD) workforce survey*' (Education Scotland, 2015), did not demarcate adult literacies as a distinct area within CLD, or adult learning in general. 7000 workers were accounted for as being engaged with CLD, however the survey was unable to determine what proportion of the overall workforce this figure represents, or to distinguish robustly how the workforce was spread between local council services and those offered by the third sector. However, of the local council departments that responded, 15% described adult learning as the main focus of their work, with a further 57% identifying adult learning as part of their work.

A second report (Education Scotland, 2015b) indicates progress made with respect to the Scottish Government's strategy for adult literacies until 2020 (Scottish Government, 2010). Referred to as the 'midway' report, it summarises the results of a self-selecting on-line survey of the adult literacies workforce in Scotland, which took place between March and May 2015. There were 228 participants, 174 (76%) from individuals and 54 (24%) on behalf of a group or organisation. Again, completeness is not claimed and there is no indication of what proportion of the whole is represented. Key points included how 74% of respondents identified '*employability*' as the primary focus for adult literacy learners with '*improving literacy*' (69%) coming second to this.

When asked why respondents felt that access to literacies opportunities had changed in the previous five years, 37.7% indicated they felt that changes were due to *decreased funding whilst 5.7%* identified differences due to *funding increases*. Almost half of respondents (48%) stated they felt that the quality of learning and teaching had *improved* since 2010, however 62% felt that learners were not sufficiently involved in planning and improving local literacy services.

During austere times, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that ‘employability’ is a major focus for learners who engage with literacies programmes. However, wider issues are at play. For example, it has been demonstrated that employability programmes which are instrumental in their design and enactment serve to ‘churn’ unemployed people around a system that fails both individuals and communities (Forster, 2015). What’s more, in order to receive welfare payments, unemployed people in the UK must prove they are actively looking for work, evidenced by their engagement with an on-line ‘JobCentrePlus’ portal, under surveillance from the UK government’s Department of Work and Pensions (Daily Record, 2015). Anecdotally, literacies workers know that some adult learners seek support so that they can manage these on-line administration tasks and so maintain their welfare payments. This makes ‘job clubs’ organised under the guise of adult literacies learning less about assisting learners into work and more about alleviating individuals’ anxiety over the possible seizure of their welfare benefits. The contents of the ‘mid-way’ report do not contradict this anecdotal information, but there can be no vigorous confirmation either. I attempted to reveal a fuller picture through the release of data via the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act (ICO, 2000), exercising the right of any citizen in the UK to request data relating to publically funded UK institutions.

Freedom of information request¹

Questions were designed with the aim of producing robust figures regarding numbers of adult literacy classes, learners and tutors for each nine years over a 2007-2015 time period. The time period was chosen to reveal the impact of the aforementioned *Concordat* upon the capacity to deliver adult literacies. Questions were also designed to reveal possible movement away from ‘designated’ literacies provision along the lines that I have described above, moving instead towards ‘embedded’ literacies classes such as ‘job clubs’ or ‘employability classes’. For example, a ‘job club’ could be programmed as a literacies class, in the understanding that learners would be engaging with literacies learning in the ‘embedded’ context of job seeking, which can be contrasted with a ‘designated’ literacies class where learners have Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) geared towards their individual experiences, interests and goals. I therefore defined ‘designated literacy class’ within the FOI requests, somewhat long-windedly, as:

*‘a timetabled session with learners for the tutoring/teaching of literacy or numeracy only i.e. **not** an employability or crafts class where literacies are embedded’*

Paired to this an ‘adult literacy learner’ was defined within the Freedom of Information requests as a person in attendance at a designated literacies class, typically working at SCQF Levels

¹ The data supplied in this section belongs to the public. Please contact the author for access to the original sources as supplied by local councils in Scotland.

1 - 3², whilst a 'designated literacy worker' was described as one who teaches or tutors such classes. With these definitions, the following three questions were posed to all thirty-two local councils in Scotland, for each year in the period 2007-2015.

- 1) How many 'designated' literacy or numeracy classes were available?
- 2) How many adult literacies learners completed at least 6 hours of learning in one year in 'designated' literacy classes?
- 3) How many 'designated' literacy or numeracy tutor/workers were employed (full time equivalents)?

The same three questions were posed again, this time requesting equivalent data for 'Literacy embedded' classes. I defined 'Literacy embedded' as classes purposefully designed so that literacy learners may be encouraged to attend, where literacies learning has been embedded within a thematic area of study e.g. employability or arts and crafts. Information was requested about the titles of such classes and the numbers of each that had been programmed.

When analysing the returns from the FOI requests, typically Councils could not demarcate between 'designated' literacy classes and those where literacies had been embedded, such as 'job clubs' programmed for learners with literacy needs. Those who did demarcate reported potentially unreliable data. For example, Shetland Council reported 'mathematics for marine engineers' as an embedded literacy class. But from the title of the course, it seemed unlikely that it was intended for learners working on basic literacy and numeracy. For these reasons, from the FOI requests, no robust data was revealed about whether austerity had encouraged the programming of literacies classes with a greater focus upon learning employability skills.

However, sufficient data was supplied by Councils to indicate trends relating to the capacity to deliver literacies learning, with evidence of significant decline. This was indicated by changes in numbers of programmed classes and figures for numbers of learners and paid tutors.

Numbers of programmed classes

From examining the returns from the thirty-two councils, the count of numbers of designated literacy classes was a surprisingly unreliable indicator of literacies provision. For example, five councils which could not return this data included the largest urban populations of Glasgow and Edinburgh. More understandably, rural areas which had learners distributed over large geographical areas offered one-to-one learning with volunteer tutors. This more of delivered necessitated fewer programmed classes, making class number counts a less reliable indicator of capacity.

For the 25 councils that provided data for at least five of the most recent years (e.g. 2011-2015), only two showed an increase in numbers of programmed classes; Renfrewshire and Stirlingshire. The general pattern across many councils was to demonstrate a peak in numbers of programmed classes at some point in the period 2009-2012, followed by a decline of 25% or more after that. This was the case for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, East Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian. Others, including Eilean Siar, Dundee City, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Falkirk and Orkney were either steady or fluctuating, with no obvious increase or decline.

Numbers of learners

Some doubt could also be cast over the data received for learner numbers, due to difficulties in determining how many sessions learners had attended. A bar of six hours of attendance

² Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) Levels 1 – 3 are equivalent to 'Entry Level' in England or European Qualification Framework Level 1

was requested as a somewhat arbitrary indicator of persistence, aimed at removing data for learners who had dropped out after just one or two classes. Some of the Councils did not hold data about how many sessions individual learners had engaged with, allowing learners who had only attended only one session to be included in returned figures. Typically, Councils could not identify if individual learners were being counted more than once, for example, by attending two or three programmed classes.

Twenty-seven Councils supplied data regarding numbers of literacies learners, including Glasgow (but not Edinburgh). Of these only Shetland reported increases in numbers, with figures for Fife, Highland, Orkney and Renfrewshire holding steady. The remaining twenty-two Councils all showed a peak in learner numbers in one of the years between 2008-2012, followed by declines of between 8% and 75% between the peak year and 2015. Nine Councils showed declines in learner numbers of 40%-70%. These included East Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders, Aberdeen City, East Lothian, Clackmannanshire, East Ayrshire, Moray and Dundee City. A further eleven councils reported declines of between 20-39%, including Glasgow where learner numbers have fallen by 28% since 2011.

Numbers of Tutors

Regarding paid literacy workers, again there were difficulties in identifying data with just fifteen councils returning useful information. Of these, some of the information required adjusting due to tutors being employed on a sessional basis. Another issue was identifying the 'literacies' element for tutors or community workers who undertook literacies learning as a fraction of a wider community education role. For this reason, the data cannot be used robustly to make comparisons between Councils, though it is a useful indicator of trends.

Only two Councils reported increases in designated literacies staff – Eilean Siar and Fife. A further four remained steady or reported small reductions in workforce. These were Highland, Moray and South Lanarkshire and South Ayrshire. The remaining nine showed decreases in numbers, some substantial. For example, Inverclyde has reduced from 9 full time equivalents in 2010/11 to 5.7 in 2014/15, with a corresponding drop in learner numbers over the same period.

Discussion

The data presented above indicates that in many Scottish Council areas there has been a significant decline in capacity to deliver literacies learning, since a peak in delivery around 2008-2012. Whilst Scottish policy towards adult literacies learning remains progressive, it is possible that the decline in the delivery indicated by this survey could also represent a loss in capacity and expertise to enact social practice approaches. Austerity is unlikely to be temporary and long term strategies are required to assist in protecting education for marginalised and excluded groups. The data presented here gives some indication of local Councils that have been successful in protecting literacies education, in particular Fife Council which has stabilised class, learner and tutor numbers. This can be contrasted with Inverclyde, where there has been a steady decline in delivery since 2007. It seems that leaderships in some councils have developed strategies to protect adult literacies learning, whilst other have not. How leaderships and practitioners respond to austerity will continue to be of importance as austere times are set to continue.

This small project also revealed how the release of FOI data can prove to be more complex than first anticipated and there are limits to what can be usefully gleaned without more extensive research. However, in this case, it has been a useful tool to reveal worrying trends in the provision of an education service which serves groups of adults who cannot easily access the formal education system.

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The cost of creativity: adult learning in austere times

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Introduction

Ironically, at the same time as education is being defined according to neoliberal interests, increasing attention is paid to the notion of creativity. Economic and educational leaders raise concerns about fostering innovation (Hillier & Figgis, 2011). Yet how can creative learning thrive in an educational climate that stifles original curriculum and devalues imaginative approaches to teaching?

This paper explores the cost of creativity in two ways: a) by exploring what is needed to support adult learning to develop creative literacies, and b) by assessing the costs to a society that does not find ways to foster creativity amongst adult learners.

In our larger research project, we are interested in exploring how people can learn to be creative by looking at lifelong learning in connection to fiction writing. Using a term shared with us by a key informant from our previous SSHRC grant on lifelong learning, citizenship and fiction writing, we are interested in how “creative literacies” – an idea that we see as being linked with creativity and multiliteracies, can help develop learners who are interested and capable of innovative and creative approaches related to work, citizenship, family, and community, incorporating diversity, technologies, and multimodalities. Our study involves interviews with authors to ask them about their experiences in learning to write fiction, as we believe that these stories can help educators gain insights into the learning processes connected to fostering creativity.

Neoliberalism

Recent downturns in the global economy have resulted in significant cuts to adult education programs and spiraling costs for higher education. Friedman emphasized that individuals should have freedom of choice (especially in relation to the unregulated, free markets). The word “freedom” invariably has positive connotations in westernized, democratic societies. It suggests that people are first and foremost individuals who have the right to various options. The language that surrounds neoliberalism is persuasive. Yet critical educators point out the silence about how factors such as gender and social class affect an individual’s learning opportunities (Jackson & Burke, 2007).

The ideology of neoliberalism is often traced back to the writings of economist Milton Friedman (1962) and Frederick Hayek (1948 [2005]). In the context of lifelong learning, adult learners must constantly invest in a long string of credentials to continually adapt to the fluid market (Grace, 2007). This investment is seen through a neoliberal lens as the product of an individual’s hard-earned personal and professional efforts. The discourse of neoliberalism has encroached on adult education contexts for several decades now, making it more challenging for adult learners to see how personal identity does not necessarily have to be completely

entwined with economic imperatives, which is the underlying message of neoliberalism, that every aspect of life is defined through its relation to economic prosperity. Kopecký (2011, p. 256) observes that

nowadays, lifelong learning is ascribed more influence than it really has, especially if it is expected to largely replace the function of the welfare state...Lifelong learning is expected to make a positive contribution to economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness or social coherence, but at the level of the individual, these certainties are transformed into (mere) opportunities. An example of this can be seen in the term employability – learning does not provide jobs, but it is meant to increase the chances of finding them.

Within a neoliberal context, the responsibility for attaining educational credentials has become an individualized responsibility, and individuals are charged with the responsibility of choosing wisely to engage in education that will provide payback in terms of better career options.

Similarly, creative literacies only have currency if perceived as producing market-driven versions of innovation. As Shaw and Crowther (2103, p. 398-399) surmise, the new hegemony that there is no policy alternative to austerity reaches deep into cultural life, reinforcing its veracity as it goes. The inclusiveness trope that “we are all in it together”, despite vast differentials in power, wealth and agency, can all too easily become internalized by those who have most to lose – and the persistent demonization of the poor acts to reinforce the myth. So it is that neoliberalism hollows out the collective social and political imagination.

The creativity that fiction writing fosters may reshape the collective social and political imagination in ways that might ‘speak’ to society of the heavy silences encoded into neoliberal discourses.

Critical literacies

Creative literacies incorporate critical as well as creative elements. Fostering creativity requires an investment of time, space, and resources to allow learners the freedom and space to dabble in different approaches to learning and to explore alternative perspectives and possibilities. Su (2009, p. 713) describes the sometimes non-linear approach needed when ‘teaching for creativity [that] requires a shift in focus from knowledge content to the learner’s engagement’. Instead of focusing on innovation to address immediate stop-gap marketplace needs, creative literacies as an educational practice gives adult educators strategies to foster critical and creative learning pathways in their students.

Creative literacies allow for growth and failure as part of the ongoing creative process. As Ashton claims in his best-seller, ‘having ideas is not the same thing as being creative. Creation is execution, not inspiration. Many people have ideas; few take the steps to make the thing they imagine’ (p. 51). For creative writers, ‘the steps’ can involve many rewrites; editorial correspondences; additional research; sometimes even throwing out parts or whole manuscripts to start again.

While at times inspirational, many of the authors we have interviewed indicate most often writing is an arduous process. Similarly, in adult learning contexts, creativity is

not just about coming up with good ideas; creative literacies undergird a critical pedagogy that also seeks to establish practices and strategies to help learners develop creative outcomes. As Kopecký points out, 'of course the contemporary obsession with creativity has its own dark side. For instance, it can pressure people to act creatively (Weiner 2000), particularly in domains such as the arts, despite the fact that artists themselves are also expected to develop and stabilise a recognisable style' (p. 5). This 'recognisable style' may be seen as a form of branding, which turns creative forms such as fiction into consumptive objects.

The discourses around creativity have in some ways been coopted by a neoliberal discourse that embraces economic productivity in all aspects of life, including creative projects such as works of fiction. Yet writers, like everyone else, live in a global economic system that shapes many aspects of everyday life and work. Publishing books is a creative process that is also entwined within a larger marketplace that involves concerns around marketing, distribution, and in some instances, funding through arts councils. The analysis of the costs and benefits of supporting creative learning, such as that connected with fiction writing, is a complicated issue to explore.

Research Study

Our SSHRC funded research study involves life history/biographical interviews with over forty successfully published fiction writers. As Halqvist (2014) says, the 'concept of biographical learning is attractive partly because of its holistic character, including both formal and informal learning processes' (p. 499). In addition, we are doing over twenty shorter interviews with 'key informants' from organizations that support fiction writing such as book festivals or arts councils.

Fostering Creativity

We believe that fiction writers, who work in the realm of imagination, can provide us with insights into creative learning processes. As one participant argues, studying English texts is not sufficient to teach you to write because 'you're studying the creation rather than the process.' Fiction writers speak back to the silence that devalues other lifeworlds that a neoliberal discourse would have us ignore or dismiss.

Su (2009, p. 713) discusses a pedagogy of creativity in the following way:

The immersion in associations and creation comes only when teachers let go and give learners time for hazy, pre-conceptual thinking and acting that can unfold in novel forms, liberating them to experience the possibilities in terms of what their engagement might turn out to be. The teacher needs to trust that the learners can and should research their own development of thought and action.

Creative processes here are seen as slow and tacit. There is no linear process, which may mean creativity necessarily requires extended time periods. Su contends that creativity is not the special domain of a few elites, but rather can be explored and fostered in all adult learners.

Canadian literary author Martha Baillie, in contemplating the larger collective pressures writers sometimes experience in their social milieu, argues:

The constraints of social expectation, of the ways in which you fit into a kind of hierarchy that evaluates your abilities can be, I think, very detrimental. However, I also believe that if you really do have a strong creative impulse, at least if it's been nurtured very young, it inevitably will take hold and redirect your life, or at least that was the case for me!

Developing creative literacies, therefore, should be ideally encouraged across the lifespan, with the grounding established during childhood. Neoliberalism at the institutional level (banks, schools, governments) has made a big push for society to actively engage in creativity to jumpstart the economy. Neoliberalism is right on this point, if only it did not limit creativity to the tethers of immediate economic gain. Our institutions *are* often stuck in traditional regimes that respond to any initiatives for change with the response of 'that is the way we have always done it' or 'it's not in the current curriculum' as if that were in and of itself a valid rationale for continuing with a traditional approach. Change is hard. Creativity insists on change. Ironically, neoliberalism has the potential to be successful in some regards at initiating change through creative approaches, but to do this, we need to critically consider how educators themselves engage with creative approaches to learning. Within educational systems, there is often steep resistance to change and innovation, and all too often learners are discouraged by educators from being truly creative.

To exemplify this argument, we turn to Canadian crime fiction writer, Linwood Barclay, whose books have outsold John Grisham's on occasion in the UK. He shares this story about the reaction of his teacher and principal to his interest in fiction writing when he was in elementary school:

I had an elderly English teacher one year, and I wrote a very short Twilight Zone kind of story about a child who digs a hole in a sandbox. He tells his father that the hole goes all the way to the other side of the earth. Later in the story the father can't find the boy, and he ends up looking in the sandbox to see this very deep hole. He wonders if the boy went into the hole so he reaches in, can't feel the bottom, then slips in and is gone. The next scene is the boy coming home and saying to his mom, Hi, I'm home for dinner. Where's Dad? And I showed that story to my father and he loved it. He thought that the hole symbolized the anxiety of fatherhood or something. I handed it into my high school English teacher who responded, "I seriously doubt that a child could dig a hole this deep." So that's a bit of background and my experience with very literal teachers. I remember in maybe grade six, the principal come into my class to have a chat and said, Maybe if you spent less time on writing these stories you'd be better at math.

The costs of creativity

Part of the hegemonic buy-in for neoliberalism is that people realize that creativity is needed to improve how our society grapples with twenty-first century challenges. Neoliberalism seems to provide that answer by encouraging the idea of entrepreneurship and innovation. People are deeply troubled with the economic and social challenges that we face, and realize that our current educational strategies are not working. We would agree that we need to start thinking of how supporting creativity will in the long run most likely also support a more robust economy and more engaged citizenry.

UK crime fiction writer, Ann Cleeves, whose character Vera Stanhope, has been made into a successful television series, explains why it is so essential to provide resources such as libraries, where people can access books and engage with fiction:

Where I live, in the North-East of England, we have beautiful beaches and lovely hills, but we also have a lot of deprivation. We have a lot of ex-pit villages where there aren't any pits anymore. But certainly in my memories, since I first moved there, there weren't working pits, and those communities were so tight and so strong. They looked almost rural, and small houses. And that's important too, and that idea of community too I find that quite interesting. We're lucky because a lot of the villages are still going, still intact, and still fighting, even though there isn't any work for people. But for young people growing up in those areas it's very hard because there's no purpose to the place anymore, apart as a place to sleep and then commute away from....we've lost shipbuilding too, and one of the things I'm most proud of I think, is that they make Vera, the production offices of Vera, in the old shipyard offices of Swan Hunter. Swan Hunter build all these Cunard liners. When I first moved there you would see thousands and thousands of men, this is in the mid-80s, coming out at clocking off time, and now there's nobody. They are making things there again. They're not making ships, but they're making film, and it's not just Vera that is made there, it's lots of other projects. But I'm very proud of that...which is why I battle and battle and battle about libraries, because in the U.K. creative industries is only second after financial services in creating income. We generate 8 million pounds an hour in the U.K.

This linkage between public community libraries and the broader, commercial film industry may seem like a surprising connection. Yet for Ann Cleeves, at the root of the film world is the affordance of public spaces that promote everyday types of creative processes. Basics like libraries, books, public learning spaces, and local communities are integral to how she defines creative industries in the U.K., which in turn is an economic powerhouse driving new markets. The point here is that

economic success and creative literacies do not necessarily represent a dichotomy. At its own peril, economic imperatives through neoliberal discourses infuse, and often suffocate, creative processes by trying to cultivate them only in select, elite competitive environments. Within larger societies, a part of what adult educators (and creative writers alike) need to strategically move toward is changing the narrative in the society to see that creativity done right involves investments in the broader public domain. Out of everyday daydreaming in public libraries and other learning contexts come the seeds of real innovation.

There is a tension between creative and economic imperatives, which often gets interpreted as an either/or choice. Arts councils advocate for the role of fiction and publishing as vital to the country's economic and cultural pulse. Yet, understandably some artists do not want their work tainted with commercialism. Neoliberalism has tried to coopt the terms 'creativity' and 'innovation,' and as part of an adult educators' process, we should rightfully question how creativity is being defined. Nevertheless, we argue that creative and economic mandates can intertwine without necessarily compromising the vision of fiction writers.

Creativity and lifelong learning

Ironically, at the same time as mandated standardized tests are gaining ascendance, there is a realization that in order for people to be successful, they need to be creative. Yet how are we going to encourage creativity in an educational climate that stifles freedom, collapses curriculum, and undermines true innovation?

The neoliberal idea of freedom implies learners can select from a virtual buffet of learning choices, but in reality, an all-encompassing focus on the market narrows educational options. Moreover, socialization is an insidious process because cultural values, which feel like individual preferences, are deeply ingrained components of identity. Clark (2010) reminds us that we are surrounded 'by narratives of all kinds—myths and folklore, popular television shows and movies, social scripts and mores, religious histories and parables—all of which embody our cultural values' (p. 88).

Allowing learners the freedom to engage in learning that they perceive to be meaningful and valuable may mean supporting learning that is not always easily measured, controlled, or assessed. Education that is not perceived to have immediate, practical outputs, such as learning connected to the arts, is a difficult 'ask' in an environment of austerity because of pressures for accountability and cost-effectiveness. Although there is a rather bitter irony that austerity exists in part because so many of the what were already limited resources are now fully devoted to the ostensible purpose of such measurability.

The social purpose tradition of adult education is undermined when education pertaining to active citizenship, community engagement, and social justice is devalued. The type of education that is promoted is linked to the market and is expected to be focused on preparing learners to engage more effectively in the workplace. The credentialization of learning is justified in enabling both individuals and nation-states to compete more effectively in the global marketplace.

There are costs associated not only with providing adult learners with creative learning opportunities, but also with failing to do so. Not only will an economy suffer with a lack of innovation and poor levels of literacy in a society, but there will also be detrimental effects on social engagement, democratic participation, and physical and mental well-being (Field, 2009).

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Professionalising Further Education in a politics of austerity

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Introduction:

The professionalism of Further Education and Training (FET) in the Republic of Ireland in recent years reveals a contested terrain where adult education philosophies and methodologies operate uneasily within an expanding political and institutional culture of neoliberalism. We argue that there is a considerable narrowing of scope in Further Education within the intersection of neoliberalism and austerity politics. As a sector, Further Education has felt the impact of neoliberalism and austerity in different ways to other education sectors. We explore the implications of this for educators, learners and knowledge in Further Education in Ireland in recent years.

Further Education in the Irish economic and political landscape

Traditionally, Further Education was defined in broad vocational terms, locating it as part of the general lifelong learning objectives of adult education (Department of Education, 2000). More recent treatments of Further Education and its relationship to adult education, demonstrate a significant shift towards a neoliberal training and reskilling paradigm. In the Irish context, the shift to neoliberal policies was initially presented as economic opportunity in the Celtic Tiger era of the 1990s and following the financial crash as an austerity-driven economic imperative. We explore the implications of this for Further Education in terms of knowledge production, practice and learning.

Neoliberalism entails a restructuring of the state to align it more closely with the needs and values of corporate power and the marketplace (Mercille and Murphy 2015). It is evident through its 'relatively low level of government expenditure on social programs, light regulation of the financial system, a large dependence on foreign capital and flexible labor markets.' (Mercille and Murphy, 2015: 2). This occurred within the specific dynamics of Irish political landscape, where there has been a constant negotiation between European-led neocorporatist and social partnership approach and the rising neoliberal model (Boucher and Collins, 2003). This was intensified in the context of the global financial crisis of 2008 which led to an economic and property crash in Ireland and a consequent political climate of austerity.

New managerialism became the mode of governance used by the Irish government to promote the neoliberal knowledge economy since the 1990s, which has been experienced in particular ways within education sectors (Grummell and Lynch 2016). New managerialism comprises of three overlapping elements: a narrative of strategic change which promotes new understanding and actions in the world, a distinctive organisational form which inculcates market values and practices, and a technology of change and governance which challenges professional practices (Deem 2004). It is a political project which emphasises the language of choice, competition and measurable outputs and promotes project-led contractual employment (Chandler et al. 2002; Clarke et al., 2000). These processes are neither arbitrary nor insignificant; neoliberalism is a political position which constitutes an attempt to exercise significant power over the field.

In the past decade in Ireland, the reach of neoliberalism has deepened as the post-crash austerity mode of governance legitimates the discourses and practices of new

managerialism throughout public services. Its impact has disproportionately affected certain sectors of the Irish population, especially those who are more vulnerable, marginalised and precarious. This inequality continues to be exacerbated within the socio-political context of austerity following the financial banking and property crash and EU-IMF bailout of the Irish economy in 2008. The bailout itself effectively amounted to an IMF-inspired structural adjustment programme and its sheer scale was formidable -

'In total, the era of austerity has seen some €28 billion removed from the Irish economy....This represents about one fifth of the country's GDP, meaning that austerity measures introduced in Ireland have effected the greatest economic adjustment ever experienced in a developed country outside of wartime.' (Coulter, 2015 : 9)

The impact of austerity has been profound and devastating for many in Irish society and, it can be argued, has been used by some to forward their own managerialist agenda to the point of the '...denigration of a whole host of public sector workers', including the targeting of educators (Coulter, 2015 : 13).

In this context, further Education has been positioned as part of the solution by developing the employability of our labour force and building capacity of a flexible competitive workforce for the global knowledge economy. However, it is also positioned as part of the problem in terms of education being a drain on public spending, with outcomes that are difficult to quantify and potentially low competitive returns on investment. Further Education has been located in difficult terrain during this debate, targeted with educating many of those disenfranchised within Irish society but using the modes of governance and education which alienated many learners in the first place.

The scope of Further Education is constrained by discourses of new managerialism which demonstrate a predominance of operational definitions that focus on outcomes rather than processes; training rather than learning; management rather than leadership and clients rather than learning and learners (Grummell 2015). Definitions of Further Education are marked by their invidious negative comparison to other education sectors ('Further Education is not formal schooling/ higher education...'). This raises interesting epistemological issues about the knowledge, positioning and recognition of the Further Education sector, especially in relation to learning and employment. These changes are occurring in a time of key transition as the Further Education sector in Ireland becomes professionalized (through *Teaching Council* professional recognition, SOLAS institutional structures and *Quality and Qualification Ireland* accreditation systems).

Adult education discourses of Lifelong Learning have developed in specific ways which contribute to this narrowing of possibility for Further Education. This occurs on an international scale in terms of EU discourses of lifelong learning which have shifted "from 'learning to be' to learning to be productive and employable" (Biesta, 2006, 172). Irish national agencies responsible for Further Education increasingly position lifelong learning in terms of developing capacities and skills for work and employability (Murray 2015). These translate into a discernibly narrowed understanding of learner-centeredness which seems to be focused on a consultative rather than participatory approach to learner involvement in their own learning. Further Education needs to maintain the critical stance and ethos of adult education theory and practice. This will ensure that Further Education can continue to explore ways to promote inclusiveness and social justice while at the same time withstanding the growing impetus towards a neoliberal perspective on education where the needs of the economy override those of society.

Discourses of Further Education in a time of austerity

Given this context, it is vital to critically explore the discourses surrounding Further Education in a neoliberal time. As Hunt and Wickham (1994) state 'discourses have real effects'. They inform thoughts, words and actions and also define what thoughts, words and deeds are marginalised

'Each discourse allows certain things to be said, thought and done and impedes or prevents other things from being said thought and done... Discourses have real effects; they are not just the way social issues get talked and thought about. They structure the possibility of what gets included and excluded and of what gets done or remains undone...' (Hunt & Wickham, 1994: 8-9)

Discourses determine whose views are taken seriously and whose views are silenced or marginalised in society. Discourses also determine the content of these views. (ibid) The production of discourse and knowledge in this context, is therefore, 'a major resource of power' (Hunt & Wickham, 1994: 13). Hence, the use of terminology in Further Education must be seen, not just as an attempt at a 'rebrand', but also as an exercise in power and amounts to a method of subjugation (Foucault, 1980: 96). But subjugation can be a subtle process. Accepting certain terminology is not just a case of adopting a new lexicon – it invariably leads to cooption of thoughts and actions

...the modification of the language changes its meaning and its impact. It also means that you quickly forget the point at which you began to adopt the language of the enemy as a strategy to gain acceptance, with the intention of 'working from within'. It soon becomes 'second nature' to you, and the repertoire with which you then make sense of the world. Except that you are likely to be making sense of the world in a significantly altered way, as you become progressively wedded to the concepts and concerns of those whose interests might be very different to your own, and into which you have now become incorporated.' (Thompson, 2007: 33)

Just as importantly, and very significant in the context of recent changes within Further Education, is that dominant discourses are always open to challenge and resistance. While it can be argued that Foucault is decidedly vague on the notion of resistance - '...there are no relations of power without resistances...' (1980: 142), he is much clearer in demonstrating that power is always contingent and contextual.

Interestingly, Further Education in Ireland is primarily defined within policy statements in terms of negation (what it is *not*) or by listing outputs (such as services, training structures and qualifications) rather than in terms of what it actually is – for example, its students, pedagogy or learning. For example, The Qualifications (Education & Training) Act (1999), defines further education and training broadly as 'education and training *other than* primary or postprimary education or higher education and training' (our italics).³ Similarly, the Teaching Council define Further Education as '...education and training which usually occurs *outside* of post-primary schooling but which *is not* part of the third-level system.' (our italics) (Teaching Council 2011: 2) This places Further Education in a vacuum-like position; defined by its absence and lack of being. This negates the learning and knowledge base of Further Education in these constant comparisons with other education sectors. The power displayed in this discursive practice of negation and comparison to others raises key questions about the positioning and knowledge claims of Further Education. As a sector, it is continually defined by what it is not, and hence always reliant and reactive to other sectors of education rather than concentrating on what Further Education is; its actual knowledge claims, learning processes and distinctive characteristics.

Traditionally, Further Education was defined in broad vocational terms, locating it as part of the general lifelong learning objectives of the adult education sector. This was most evident in

³ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1999/en/act/pub/0026/sec0002.html>; accessed 4 June 2013

The White Paper on Adult Education – ‘Learning for Life’ (2000) where further education is framed *within* the context of Adult and Community education and was an integral part of a ‘lifewide’ commitment in the development of an Adult Education system.’ More recent discourses of Further Education – and its relationship to adult education – demonstrates a significant shift in ethos from its vocational roots. Here, the perceived purpose of Further Education would appear to have somewhat narrowed into a training/ reskilling paradigm. For instance, Enterprise Ireland emphasises the centrality of Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs). PLC courses ‘...adopt an integrated approach, focusing on technical knowledge, core skills and work experience. They are designed as a step towards skilled employment and, as such, are closely linked to industry and its needs.’ (www.enterpriseireland.ie) Most significant is that the Department of Education and Skills now views further education within the general framing of Further Education and Training (<http://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Further-Education-Training/> - accessed 26th May, 2013). The emphasis here overall is on ‘providing skills for work’, with no mention of the importance of socio-cultural and political aspects outlined in the White Paper such as consciousness raising, cultural development and community building.

This, it can certainly be argued, demonstrates an attempt to define not just Further Education, but also Adult and Community Education within a new managerial paradigm. In other words, rather than viewing this change as merely a rebranding exercise within this sector of Further Education, we argue instead that there are deeper, more ideological issues at work in terms of attempting to define the activities of Further Education. Crucially, the EAEA state that the concept of lifelong learning itself has gradually moved from its ‘humanistic’ roots towards an ethos which focused on ‘...the needs of the economy for skilled labour with the necessary competence.’ (2006: 8)

As noted above in terms of the power of discourses, it is important to bear in mind that this colonisation of Further Education by the discursive forces of neoliberalism and new managerialism is actively being challenged and questioned. Various attempts at a European level to develop both universal definitions of core terms and to produce benchmarks within the “sector”, have been, up until now, been unsuccessful. One of the key reasons for this is that according to the EAEA –

What is controversial and philosophically objectionable, even repugnant, to many steeped in the values and tradition of European adult education, is the tendency for lifelong learning, as they see it, to be co-opted to serve liberal economics and a global free trade market.’ (EAEA, 2006: 6)

As a result, the EAEA acknowledge the highly politicised and contested nature of adult learning where ‘[d]eep philosophical differences about values and priorities reflect in the use and connotation of different terms...’ (EAEA, 2006: 1). This also has to be set within the specific context and local logics of Irish Further Education where the influences of the Catholic Church, Industry, community development group and other educational representative groups, and trade unions provide counter-hegemonic discourses to the dominant force of neoliberalism (Grummell and Lynch 2016)

Professionalization and Employability in Further Education

The consequences for this fundamental policy shift are significant for Further Education. For example, this new ethos or discourse influences what is learned and crucially, what is not in relation to adult and further education. According to Biesta,

‘This transformation is not only visible at the level of policy; it also has had a strong impact on the learning opportunities made available to adults, partly through a redefinition of what counts as legitimate or ‘useful’ learning and partly as a result of the

reduction of funding for those forms of learning that are considered not to be of any economic value.’ (Biesta, 2006: 169)

The reframing of Further Education comes at a time of key transition as the Further Education sector and staff becomes ‘professionalised’ (through *Teaching Council* professional recognition, SOLAS institutional structures and *Quality and Qualification Ireland* accreditation systems). This reframing of Further Education must also be located within the broader EU-wide discourses of labour activation and employability – which in essence serves to narrow the scope and potential of Further Education learning. For instance, this occurs on an international scale in terms of EU discourses of lifelong learning which have “shifted from ‘learning to be’ to learning to be productive and employable” (Biesta, 2006: 172). This is occurring within the broader global context of a casualised, flexible and precarious workforce. In the Irish context, it is telling that it is now ‘SOLAS’ and not the educational agencies – the Education Training Boards (ETBs) – that will have ‘overall strategic responsibility’ for Further Education in the country, where again, the focus is on economic benefits. (DES, 2012: 3) This has another added impact in terms of epistemological issues around the validity of discourses and knowledge production.

The recent changes in relation to Further Education reflect broader trends at a transnational level where lifelong learning is increasingly equated within the narrow margins of employability. One consequence of this, according to Brine (2006) is the emergence of a two tier system of adult learning – those who are ‘High knowledge-skilled’ learners (associated with higher education and the ‘knowledge economy’) and those who are ‘Low knowledge-skilled’ learners (associated with adult and further education and the ‘knowledge society’). In a system designed to promote employability, it the jobs themselves – the designated outcome – that are punctuated with inequality. Brine argues that the future belongs to ‘High knowledge-skilled’ learners, while the low knowledge skilled learners will continue to work within ‘classed and gendered low-skilled’ jobs, effectively servicing the needs of the knowledge economy. This is viewed as a ‘surplus population’ who ‘move in and out of insecure or temporary employment’ (2006: 661). Further Education provides training an education for these low knowledge-skilled roles, highlighting the fundamental inequality at the heart of the global knowledge and educational economy. Just as crucially, the precarious nature of jobs and casualised employment is also a key feature of those who work within Further Education as well and according to Standing (2014) is becoming a salient feature of contemporary society.

Conclusion

The contemporary drive to redefine and re-orientate Further Education in an era of austerity, along with the impact of professionalization and performativity measures of new managerialism on practice and learning has wider societal and justice implications. We contend that Further Education needs to maintain the critical stance and ethos of adult education theory and practice – including a commitment to social justice and equality. We further argue that the kind of knowing prioritised through education has a direct effect on the quality of political citizenship and democratic participation in general. A danger here is that education becomes an unquestioned and unquestioning tool of the global economy. It will be deprived of its learning role to encourage critical reflection and questioning, critical citizens will be replaced by compliant/ obedient workers who do not or cannot take issue with “common sense” assumptions made by policymakers – we suggest that that the recent history of Ireland underlines the importance of having citizens who will ask the “awkward questions”. Ultimately, as Shaw and Martin suggest ‘[d]emocracy is sustained by the agency of the critical and creative citizen, not the conformist citizen.’ (2005: 85)

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Reflections on Autonomy as a tool for Lifelong Learning from the Perspectives of Freire and Gramsci: Lessons for Community Education Practice in Nigeria

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Introduction

Autonomy, as a powerful liberal ideal, is arguably an important aim of contemporary education because of its value in formal, informal and non-formal education. In his defence of autonomy as a means of lifelong learning Dearden (1975:343) argued that a person is autonomous if what that person thinks and does at least in important areas of his/her life is determined by him/her (self-direction). Autonomy is a 'pervasive ideal', positively valued because of its intrinsic relationship to social justice and lifelong learning. I will argue this should be an important aim of education in Nigeria and I will respond critically to this from the liberal and critical pedagogy perspectives.

This paper reflects on autonomy of learners as a means of learning from the perspectives of Dearden, Freire, Gramsci and Longworth and Davies. It suggests the promotion of lifelong learning values in adult education and formal education institutions as means of empowering learners' to be conscious and out of poverty and illiteracy. Evidence suggest that practical and reflective actions in learning enable learners to learn more, have change in attitude and it also enhance teachers delivery of learning (Walker, *et al*, 2013). This suggests that real learning is not simply memorising facts and learning drills but reflective practices, through which learners produce ideas and the ideas produce reflection, which is lifelong learning (Longworth and Davies, 1996). An earlier study by Walker, *et al* (2011) shows that the achievement of lifelong learning capabilities is subject to initial education and effective quality of teaching and learning to free learners' consciousness. Therefore, the stimulation of lifelong learning attributes hinges around the freedom of learners to learn through active learning teaching methods.

Lifelong learning, though long being contested refers to all learning undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving skills and competencies for learning and working (European Commission, 2009, p.9), which OECD (1996) and Tuijnman and Bostrom, (2002) suggest to be an all-encompassing venture that promotes competencies for learning and employment in all level of human endeavours from infancy to adulthood. This suggests that lifelong learning is not restrictive to formal education as it happens through informal and non-formal situations. For learning to be lifelong learning it has to be flexible, empowering, open and reflective. However, education system in Nigeria was found to be more or less banking education, despite attempts by organisations to make education flexible, reflective and empowering. The situation limits many learners access to education. Freire and Gramsci are both against the use of education to oppressed the ordinary person so that they cannot have autonomy and sense of direction.

This paper, therefore advocates for lifelong learning as a means of reflection and application. It recommends that; our system of education should create a space for effective learning in the community because of the diversity of the target groups; learning should provide autonomy in self-actualization and self-reliability; and learners should be trained to imbibe the culture of autonomy to develop skills of livelihood and social skills that will help break the vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy and lack of freedom; and teaching methods should be empowering and training should be through group discussion to evolve reflection and sharing of ideas.

Background and Context

An analysis of recent statistics has shown that young people aged 15-35 constitutes 64 million across gender (National Bureau for Statistics, 2010). The data indicates 64.1% of young people aged 15-19 have been to school while 21.3 within the age bracket had never been to school. The National Literacy Survey (2010) monitored by NBS, reported that the literacy rate among adults is estimated to be 56.9% with significant variation across gender. An earlier statistics by NMEC (2008) shows the distribution of literacy rate across gender in Nigeria. The following table indicates the literacy distribution.

Age group	Male	Literacy rate %	Female	Literacy rate %	Total	Literacy rate %
15-24 Yrs	12,679,810	81.3	12, 566,870	62.8	25,246,680	71.2
25-49 Yrs	17,885,366	68.8	18,965,389	37.1	36,850,755	52.9
50+ Yrs	6,550,636	40.9	6,238,496	14.6	12,789.132	28.9
Total	37,115,812	68.2	37,770,755	41.9	74,886,567	55.0

Table 1: Literacy rate among adult male and female population
Adopted from NMEC, (2008:12).

This shows that 45.0% of adults are considered to be illiterate in Nigeria. However, the main weakness of this statistics is that the criterion of measurement is the ability to read and write in English language, which is based on western education. The statistics also failed to acknowledge learning can occur through formal, informal and non-formal learning processes. World Economic Forum report, (2011) suggests that effective lifelong learning values grow through combination of training in primary, secondary, vocational and higher education and, informal and outside of school programmes. Therefore, the NMEC statistical figures served as a setback to full implementation of lifelong learning as a life-wide activity.

Moreover, the educational system and methods of teaching and learning at all level of education in developing countries are not empowering and liberating and that constitutes a challenge to lifelong learning. It was argued that the foundation of lifelong learning from the critical pedagogies and liberal point of view is learners' self-consciousness, reflection, self-direction and autonomy in the learning process, whether formal, informal or non-formal (Gramsci, 1971; Freire, 1993; Longworth and Davies, 1996; Tuijnman and Bostrom, 2002). A study of community learning centres in Nigeria by Halliru (2015) revealed that the methods of teaching and learning are mainly teacher-centred with concern on reading, writing and numeracy. This

suggests that the education system is not stimulating critical thinking and reflection to break the vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy, lack of freedom, unemployment, and disengagement from learning.

Nigeria, like many other developing countries, gives a high priority to the banking system of education at all levels of education. My personal experience as a teacher can confirm that students are not educated or expected to be autonomous, but are rather expected to remain passive learners through memorisation of facts and figures. Teachers are guided by a curriculum which they have to follow verbatim and the intention is to educate students who have respect for constituted authorities. The curriculum is the same throughout the country and the teacher is the only person considered knowledgeable (they are like Kant's (1784) Guardians). Students are only concerned with memorizing what they were taught and as such the system encourages them to read and memorize the contents of learning without critical thinking and reflection. This is clearly not an autonomous activity. The major concern of the teachers' is to deliver the content and expect the students to repeat it during examinations. The student just puts efforts to memorize in order not fail the examination; therefore, the efforts of the students always are directed towards winning rather than using the contents of learning to towards independent thinking.

This situation remains consistent, despite the presence of organisations such as UNESCO whose work is the promotion of lifelong learning. This paper serves as a renewed effort by a practitioner in the promotion of lifelong learning from the grassroots. It will draw from practice and empirical evidence of teaching and learning that promotes lifelong learning.

Methods

The paper adopts documentary and empirical reviews, and personal narrative and practices of how education is delivered and the extent to which that affects lifelong learning and critical reflection in Nigeria. The personal narrative method is based on Lundgren and Poell (2016:3), who suggest that "to reflect critically on one's own practice is often seen as a starting point for gaining new perspectives in the daily routines of working professionals".

Autonomy and Lifelong Learning

Autonomy, as defined by Dearden (1975), is the capacity to think, decide, and reflect by oneself devoid of interference. These ideas, were found in the works of Freire and Gramsci on the banking education, problem posing education and the role of informal educators and, thus in the lifelong learning discourse. Kirby, *et al.* (2010) suggests that an autonomous learner is one, who is self-directed, critical thinker, information handler, goal setter and self-evaluator. It is by becoming a lifelong and experienced learner, that we increase the mental resources at our disposal, this relevant because lifelong learning empowers learners through life duration. Hinchliffe (2006) suggests that lifelong learning empowers people by making them self-moving and self-forming rational thinking agents, who interpret their social and economic environments and who also have the ability to choose from a range of possible responses" (p.96).

The major question at this point is how does lifelong learning make learners autonomous and self-rational human beings? The answer to this question could be

found in the works of Freire (1993), Gramsci (1976) and from related empirical research in lifelong learning. As earlier noted Dearden (1975) considers autonomy as a stimulator of self-regulation, which includes 'choosing, deciding, reflecting, deliberating, planning and judging', as well as self-actualization of one's own goals, plans, intentions, wishes, desires that are important to that person's sense and dignity. However, the opposite of these ideas are banking concept of education, which oppresses the learners because the teacher "teaches", "thinks", "knows", "talks", "disciplines", "chooses", "determines" and "acts" on behalf of the learners who just stand as mere recipients of knowledge (Freire, 1993). These attitudes and practices are detrimental to the pupils'/students' autonomy to determine what is good for them, thereby preventing self-reflection and lifelong learning values.

Consequently, banking concept of education does not encourage lifelong learning because "the teacher thinks and the students are thought about" Freire, (1993:2), meaning the learners/students cannot think and determine for themselves how the content of the lesson or programme might look like as they are never consulted by the teacher.

Review on Stimulation of Lifelong Learning and Critical Reflection

An analysis of lifelong learning documents suggests that for effective learning through life to occur, learners must draw learning from experience and problem-solving process (Smith, 1994; Candy, Crebert, and O'leary, 1994; Cornford, 2002). This draws attention on methods of teaching and learning (active learning, problem-posing learning, and experiential learning) in stimulating lifelong learning and development of critical thinking, autonomous and active learners. For example, Freire (1993) suggests that the process of learning should be through dialogue between the teacher and learner, rather than the teacher thinking, deciding and judging for learners. Gauci, *et al* (2009) found that learning that involves dialogue with learners increases their motivation and engagement with learning; and that student that engage actively through dialogue achieved better results than those that do not. However, the process may be more feasible with a small number of learners. According to Freire (1996) and Gramsci (1976), the role of educators in the community learning is consciousness raising and liberation of individuals to have self-direction. In his proposed comprehensive school, Gramsci (1976) suggests that learners should be taken to the threshold of job choice, capable of thinking, studying and ruling on their own without the interference of any nature. These actions imply that learners will develop lifelong learning skills capable of maintaining healthy living in their community.

This follows European Commission (EC) (2006) submission that lifelong learning should involve the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This process promotes self-regulation as a means of directing thoughts, feelings and action with the aim of achieving learning (Schunk, 2001). However, evidence has shown teachers in community learning centres and tertiary institutions hardly employ the teaching techniques that promote self-direction and learners capacity for thinking, deciding and judging (Halliru, 2015).

Part of the process of stimulating lifelong learning skills among students' is the use of problem as a starting point of learning through discussion group, Prince *et al.* (2000) argues that this is critical in the application of PBL as a method of teaching and

learning. Findings of a study by San Tan and Frank Ng (2006) show that problems that stimulate entrepreneurial learning in classroom setting contribute significantly to learners' capacity building. Learning through experience and practice is seen to stimulate lifelong learning values among learners. Kolb (1984) stresses the role of experience in lifelong learning and development of individuals to their full potentials as human beings. Gibbs (1997:19) has found:

...the predominant contextual learning mode in this [small business] environment is that of . . . learning from peers; learning by doing; learning from feedback from customers and suppliers; learning by copying; learning by experiment; learning by problem-solving and opportunity taking and learning from making mistakes.

The procedure as highlighted by Gibbs stimulate lifelong learning because a number of studies have identified learning-to-learn as pre-requisite for effective lifelong learning to occur (Knapper and Cropley, 2000; Cornford, 2002; EC, 2002). With that Hofmann (2008) suggests those learning-to-learn competencies that are built through active learning approaches make learners more effective, flexible and self-organised lifelong learners who will be capable of learning in many situations.

Personal Reflection and Practice as a Teacher

The idea of education is 'conscientizacao', raising class consciousness and liberation of individuals to be autonomous in order to promote social change within the society (Freire, 1993; Gramsci, 1976). These ideas, though not the concept of conscientizacao, adhere to the principles of self-reflection and direction and action, which is lifelong learning. Lundgren and Poell (2016) emphasize of the importance of reflection as a basis of understanding phenomenon in a bid to finding solutions.

From personal reflection and experience, as a teacher, I teach a number of courses whose requirements is that, you dictate notes to students, who in turn memorise and use during examination in what we called 'back to sender'. This is very similar to Freire's concept of banking education. As a teacher, I rejected this practice in an effort to help the learners to become more autonomous thinkers, lifelong learners –to deliberate, reflect, judge, evaluate and assess with my help. As a teacher, I understand that I too have little autonomy because of the nature of our educational system and curriculum. Therefore, I have decided to use different and innovative methods in order to open the hearts and minds of my students, by provoking their thinking to develop critical thinking skills and wider ability to create their own theories in relation to the courses I am teaching. I value learners experience in learning and as result; I introduced a field trip to enable learners experience practical realities of what is being taught in class, as the content of my courses are connected to real life situations.

Lessons

- Education at all level should promote idea that empowers learners to produce ideas, as ideas always produce reflection, which is lifelong learning in nature;
- Learning should promoted for learners to have an input in curriculum, as a basis for creating effective learning space;

- Learning should aim to develop autonomous learners, who are self-directed, self-evaluators, critical thinkers, information handlers, and goal setters;
- Active teaching and learning methods should be promoted;
- Dialogue with learners be an important part of learning through both teachers and learners help education develop;
- Education should aim to introduce learners working, critical and reflective thinking;
- Education should be capable of developing lifelong learning attributes such as learning-to-learn and entrepreneurship skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the works of Freire and Gramsci Dearden, Longworth and Davies and related liberal scholars seems to promote autonomy as the aim of education as the basis of promoting lifelong learning. This is found important because self-reflection, freedom, independence and autonomy of students in learning promote their engagement in learning throughout life (Walker, *et al*, 2013). This implies active teaching and learning methods needs to be promoted and learning should be considered to have occurred at every level of human endeavour. These, I envision, in the context of adult education, formal education, and community development practices as part of the process of promoting life-wide nature of learning. It is understood from Dearden (1975:343) that person is autonomous if what he/she thinks and does at least in important areas of his life is determine by him/herself. This should be seen to have reflected at every level of education in Nigeria. Therefore, the idea of banking education should be discourage because it affects the promotion of lifelong learning. It is therefore not an ideal type of education that promotes thinking, reasoning, self-direction, reflection and criticality learners in learning situation. The review found active learning methods (problem-posing and experiential learning) as effective model for the promotion of lifelong learning because they give learners sense of judgement. Autonomy and active learning methods, it seems to me, as a way of stimulating lifelong learning.

Recommendations

It is recommended that; our system of education at all level should create a space for effective learning at all level of our education because of the diversity of the target groups. It was proved that those lifelong learning values such as autonomy, self-direction, reflection and critical thinking increases learning engagement and motivation. It further recommends that learners should be trained to imbibe the culture of autonomy to develop skills of livelihood or social skills in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty, illiteracy and lack of freedom; the teaching and learning methods should be empowering base on reflection and sharing of ideas.

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Who counts?: Exploring the challenges of widening participation data and the changing profile of adults

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Introduction

This paper addresses challenges regarding use of widening participation (WP) data with particular focus on issues relating to mature and part-time students. We ask who counts and consider the influence of austerity on participation figures, WP policy and the recent White Paper. The paper complements a wider discussion of the challenges associated with effective monitoring and evaluation required by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to confirm targeting and deployment of resources (Holland, et al., forthcoming).

The paper begins with a brief review of three contextual factors: firstly, policy interest in the use of WP data to identify differences in higher education (HE) participation; secondly, the types of data collected at each stage of the student lifecycle and thirdly consideration of the multiple users of WP data. We then discuss some of the challenges associated with deciding who to count when thinking about mature part-time students, accessing and collecting data, managing sensitive data and conclude by asking questions about the possible impact of austerity policy on recognition of mature part-time students.

Contextual factors

Although nearly twenty years ago, the Dearing Report (NICHE, 1997) provides a policy baseline for WP data and signals the importance of considering the student profile in more nuanced ways. Dearing reported progress in mature student participation, stating:

Mature students (those over the age of 21) are well represented: more than half of entrants to higher education are now mature and 30 per cent are over the age of 30. [Although noting] The figures are significantly higher in the 1992 universities than the pre-1992 universities. (Para 7.11)

The overlap between mature and part-time students was also noted: '63 per cent of first degree students studying part-time are over 30 and of those 30 and over, 55 per cent study part-time' (Para 7.12).

Student groups identified as a priority for core or project funding of targeted activity on the basis of their under-representation in HE evolve in response to policy guidance. Currently in England, HEIs wishing to charge £9,000 fees produce an institutional access agreement that includes evidence of progress against institutionally set targets relating to WP recruitment, retention and progression. OFFA note considerable diversity amongst the targets set making direct comparisons difficult. Nevertheless, analysis of Lancaster's access agreement reveals changes over time; whilst mature students featured in the first agreement (2006-07) using data from the Lancaster University Student Information (LUSI) system, the decision in 2011 to set targets using HEFCE WP performance indicators resulted in their removal as a data set. Although internal analysis of mature students continues and age is analysed alongside National Statistics Social Economic Classifications (NS-SEC) and low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) dropping mature students from the list arguably diminishes 'who counts' in the WP agenda.

OFFA guidance issued in 2016 emphasises increased commitment to social mobility and tackling other inequalities has not been helped by the recent period of austerity. For part-time mature students this may be particularly important and as the Universities UK (UUK 2013) suggest the influence of the economy is not straightforward:

the current economic climate restricting employer support for further study, putting pressure on household budgets and changing the shape of the industrial sectors from which part-time students traditionally come (p4)

From the perspective of WP Callendar and Feldman's (2009) literature review of part-time students highlights an interesting anomaly. They note that in HE literature part-time students and barriers to their HE participation are often discussed under the WP banner yet are often overlooked or missing in the WP literature and outreach arena. Before discussing the use of WP data we briefly outline sources and processes of data collection and analysis.

Data may be collected and analysed throughout the student lifecycle during outreach and admissions, as well as to evidence students' success and progression. Gaining access to accurate data is notoriously difficult. Within the UK context the absence of a unique learner number and commercial sensitivity of data held by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), for example, seriously hampers data sharing and limits use of WP data for planning outreach and monitoring participation. White Paper proposals to legislate so that HEIs have a 'Transparency Duty' to provide relevant data (BIS, 2016 para 39) are designed to enhance data sharing and enable greater scrutiny on the basis of value for money and support for social mobility (ibid, para 40).

In 2014 Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), an Aimhigher legacy project, secured HEFCE funding to recruit new members and thereby enhance the collective capacity of the sector to track participants engaged in longitudinal outreach activities (see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/sas/heat/>). Although the current emphasis is on tracking young people, the system has the potential to track mature students who engage in widening access activities designed to raise awareness and support progression into university. Admission data influences the Student Opportunity funding an HEI receives. One of the criteria relates to 'the proportion of 16-74 year olds with a HE qualification by 2001 census ward for part-time and mature undergraduates' and retention calculations are based on age and qualification, with separate calculations for part-time students (HEFCE, 2014/06). HEIs also monitor student drop out, success and ultimately progression, the mature and part-time student population no doubt influencing the extent to which this is prioritised.

Within HEIs WP data is collected and used by a diverse group of staff with different strategic and operational priorities. The division between operational and strategic uses is not straightforward, and often data generated for and by one user group is deployed by other groups, not always with an appreciation of the underlying methodology or caveats that need to be taken into account (see Holland et al, forthcoming for further details). In addition to HEI staff, external stakeholders influence the WP data collected. Through funding activities designed to enhance WP, OFFA expects HEIs to set and monitor targets which will inform design and delivery of HEI WP outreach or post arrival retention activities.

Challenges

Whilst it is clear there are a multitude of uses for, and users of, WP data within HEIs, there are challenges associated with using data to inform decisions about targeting, monitoring and evaluating WP initiatives across the student life cycle. Data challenges vary according to the different user groups; here we focus on issues relating to mature and part-time students from the perspective of WP practitioners and staff involved in evaluation or research. Policy on widening participation has changed over recent years, as the above discussion indicates, and these changes- while inevitable- have important implications for the target social groups and the ways categories are constructed. These shifts present a challenge for users of data (see Holland et al., forthcoming for additional discussion concerning disability, social class and gender).

Deciding who to count

A particular challenge when thinking about mature and part-time students is deciding who to count. The recent UUK report on mature and part-time study notes:

Mature and part-time learners are not the same thing. While most part-time undergraduate students are mature, most mature undergraduate students are full-time. (UUK, 2013: Annexe D p1)

The definitions chosen by UUK draw on Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) descriptions, but such is the potential complexity they outline additional caveats when looking at the national context. For example, exclusion of data relating to the Open

University, and an emphasis on 'UK-domiciled part-time undergraduate students, 92% of whom are mature' (UUK 2013: Annexe D p1). This definitional challenge is a problem not only when considering the data but also for prospective students as a discussion thread entitled, 'How do you define a mature student?' showed (see <http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=152729>).

The executive summary of the UUK report illustrates the variety of angles from which one might approach the data: the number participating part-time, their proportion of the overall population, their age and gender profile, parental status, type of qualification, employment status, and access to financial support from their employer. They note the gradual and then sudden decline in participation rates between 2011-12 and 2013-14 (a 40% drop) which sharply contrasts with Dearing's buoyant and optimistic account. In common with any group of learners these headlines, whilst startling, are only the starting point and as the report highlights the participation rates are complex.

Accessing and collecting data

A primary concern for WP practitioners is how to access, collect and use data to target activities at eligible participants and monitor effectiveness. For young people the data collected falls into two broad categories: publicly available data aggregated at school level and individualised data that may be available via the school or provided by the individual. For mature students data about previous school is unlikely to be relevant or reliable as an indicator of eligibility or disadvantage. Hoare and Johnston (2011) analysis of WP admissions identifies four reasons for educational disadvantage: school, personal circumstances (e.g. age, disability); family household circumstances, and neighbourhood community (ibid, 2011, p25). For mature students the final three reasons are likely to be relevant but may manifest in different ways. (See previous SCUTREA papers, e.g. Houghton 1999; 2001, regarding factors that influence adult learners and family attitudes towards learning).

In addition to these general practical challenges there are questions of accuracy which may be influenced by category definitions (e.g. National Statistics Socio- Economic Classification: NS-SEC and parental occupation), changing definitions or status (e.g. institutional type) and sensitive data (e.g. personal finance).

Attitudes towards NS-SEC vary, however as Payne notes:

although NS-SEC is preferred for its practical utility, the measurement of occupational groups remains problematic, indicating the continued need to improve the tools of class analysis (Payne, 2013 p.3).

McManus (2004) highlights similar concerns regarding the reliability and validity of NS-SEC admission data as supplied by UCAS. Describing the process where applicants record the job title of their parent (or, in the case of mature students, themselves or their partner) McManus argues that applicants are unlikely to understand either the subtleties or importance of accurate entry, giving the example of the ambiguous term 'manager' (McManus, 2004). Meanwhile, Do et al (2015) draws attention to the UCAS instruction asking non-school leavers to record their own or their partner's occupation rather than parental occupation. Whilst for many mature students the question would make sense, for some degree courses (e.g. medicine) where applicants apply directly after a first degree, this could skew the data. In these cases applicants are officially mature, but are likely to be recorded as a student, in a low paid job or unemployed, assigning them to a lower socio-economic group, which may not reflect their experience of educational disadvantage (Hoare and Johnston, 2011). Furthermore, these examples illustrate the complexities surrounding who counts as a mature student and how current data collection approaches can hide or mask how mature and part-time student numbers are analysed.

Managing sensitive data

The disclosure of financial information is a complicated and sensitive issue; consequently, accessing and managing this data is inevitably a challenge. According to McGray, whose paper explores anti-austerity adult education in Canada, 'the impact of austerity measures are far from random. Instead, those who have garnered the least amount of agency from

financialization suffer the most' (2015, p.287). It is beyond the scope of this paper to track the experience and access of mature and part time students to funding. Suffice to say their eligibility has not been automatic, which may be due to their status within the sector, and the fiscal challenges they face, as we discuss below, are not easily counted. .

To determine entitlement to financial assistance at university, HEIs either rely on students' self-disclosure through the student loans companies or establish individual institutional practices for collecting financial data. Decisions relating to disclosure of financial information are complex and previous research suggests differences in attitudes to debt according to ethnicity and religion (e.g. CHERI and London South Bank University, 2005). Whilst the data demonstrates the number of students accessing a loan, it does not explain possible reasons for differences such as reluctance to engage due to cultural or religious beliefs, a lack of awareness regarding entitlement to a loan, or uncertainty regarding the online registration process.

Finance is a particular concern for mature and part-time students. Howard and Davies (2013) report that university poses a greater financial risk to mature students compared with younger students, with many having to reduce the time for paid employment and / or take out a loan in order to support their studies. Research moving beyond the data collected by HEIs highlights the challenges faced by mature students to capture what typical HE datasets neglect. For example, Reay, et al., (2002) found that the majority of students who completed an Access course but did not move onto higher education were lone mothers.

A recent study examining the impact of tuition fees on mature part-time students (Shaw, 2014) provides evidence emphasising the importance of combining data sets and considering the implication of policy decisions. For example, Shaw points to the lack of recognition given to mature part-time students studying on work-related courses, their inability to access loans prior to 2012 and the reduced financial benefits (graduate premium) obtained by mature students.

Based on wide range of English respondents, financial pressures relating to the introduction of fees are also identified by UUK (2013, p24) as one of the factors likely to have an impact on the participation of mature part-time students. Other factors included: the equivalent or lower qualification ruling, fee loan eligibility regulations excluding learners studying below 25% full-time equivalence, limited attractiveness of fee loans and self-funded learners' unwillingness or inability to pay the fee increase. Two of the reasons given relate to access to guidance providing clear and understandable information regarding fees. Details in this report highlight that whereas data at an institutional and national level signal participation rates it is only the starting point.

Disseminating data

Whilst the increasing interest in WP data and evaluative feedback is commendable attempts to use data to establish a causal link between WP activity and changes in student awareness, aspiration, access and achievement is not straightforward. We argue that a more holistic use of data is needed that moves beyond the headline figures to reveal the complex account of mature part-time students whose fate in the past twenty years has changed. Given the diversity of producers and users of WP data working in different sectors and institutions one of the challenges is to improve how data is discussed and disseminated. A longstanding criticism of WP research and evaluation is the dominance of small scale studies often lacking a clear and rigorous research design and sufficient methodological detail to enable further scrutiny of the claims (Gorard et al., 2006). Although criticism maybe justified with regard to the final report or paper, this may be as much a question of space as poor design; the lack of time to prepare additional articles to disseminate novel methodologies is also a challenge as is the emphasis on findings rather than the journey taken to acquire them.

The recent trend to present data visually and in an 'engaging' manner addresses the need for greater transparency; however, this type of reporting inevitably has both advantages and disadvantages. Examples of effective use of visual representations of the data include the Social Mobility Index (2016) which uses a combination of easy-to-read graphs and maps. Importantly, with respect to transparency, the report provides a breakdown of the figures

within additional tables and accompanying text, which sadly are missing from some reports. The inclusion of technical appendices and provision of datasets such as Annexe D of the UUK 2013 report represent good practice and allow readers to assess the rigour and transparency of the data. One issue in the effective use of data disseminated in this way is the experience and skill base of potential users. Usability that depends on the readers' capacity to interpret and evaluate statistical approaches may therefore be limited.

Conclusion

The majority of this paper focused on quantitative participant or student enrolment data that enables HEIs to monitor the profile of participants in WP outreach activities, or students applying and being admitted to study for their degree. This covers the first two levels or stages – monitoring and targeting- identified in HEFCE's guidance to universities (HEFCE, 24/2010 p.3). Another source of both quantitative and qualitative data is the evidence gathered by WP practitioners involved in evaluating their own practice and gaining feedback from participants. More detailed or specific data such as changes in attitude or levels of awareness may be collected when WP practitioners work in collaboration with researchers or commission external researchers to evaluate the influence of specific activities. Although outside the scope of this paper, there is also a growing interest in combining qualitative data gathered via focus groups and individual interviews with participants and staff responsible for delivering WP activities or recruitment. Given the diversity of users of WP data the dominance of metrics based on numerical data is a cause for concern; at best it focuses attention on monitoring the student profile or tracking individual participants. It may be valuable as a basis for further investigation but we advocate that evaluating the effective features of WP activity and identifying reasons for adults' decisions about HE requires greater attention to qualitative research. Understanding the impact of austerity on adults involves more than the analysis of the data and patterns of participation of mature and part-time students; it requires a more holistic approach. The 2016 SCUTREA conference, 'Adult Education in Austere Times' offers the opportunity to enrich our understanding of all facets of learning including that of higher education. This wider perspective is expected to support discussion that moves from who counts, to 'why and in what way'.

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The challenges facing English language program providers and students in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq.

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Significant gaps exist in the academic literature related to the education of adults in Iraq, and more specifically to the education of adults in the Kurdistan Region in northern Iraq (KRI). My presentation will report on the very great challenges currently facing English language program providers and students. Three years ago when I first started teaching English in the KRI, the regional government had a number of schemes aimed at the education of adults from literacy programs for village men and women to the Human Capacity Development Program which hoped to send young graduates overseas to study at postgraduate level. Undertaking an English language course was one way for working adults to access study and work opportunities in the KRI and elsewhere. These programs have now been swept aside, and the KRI gives a whole new meaning to the word 'austere'. The situation for the majority of the population is grim and getting grimmer. All government workers have only been paid 5 or 6 times in just over two years. My focus will be on how one university provider is facing the current challenging situation, and how individuals and families have reacted to the continuing crisis. This paper is based on my own experiences and observations.

Re-constructing a typology of restricted, reformist and expansive narratives of widening participation in higher education in England- and why it may matter

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A study of national and institutional narratives of widening participation provides the context for this paper. The research began with two recurring problems and these were my immediate entry points into the study. Firstly, an apparent 'policy amnesia' (Higham and Yeomans, 2007) or lack of institutional policy memory (Keep, 2009; Pollitt, 2000), about the possibilities of widening participation, is evident in policy texts and particular institutional policies and practices. A consequence is that the complexity of policy is often caught in a 'double bind'. A rational and recurring question that asks 'what works?' is combined with a metaphor that frames widening participation in terms of 'the student life-cycle' (HEFCE, 2001; BIS, 2014). The second related problem is that policies and practices of widening participation are defined and parameters of policies reduced to particular institutional practices. These may marginalise, or even exclude, other possibilities of widening participation.

This paper has a dual purpose. Firstly, it analyses how narratives were 'pieced together' and policies and practices framed within policy texts and interviews with policy actors. Secondly, an exploratory typology that re-constructs these narratives is presented for review. My thesis is that re-constructing a typology from an institutional ethnography, conducted within a specific political era and institutional context, enriches a critical policy analysis of widening participation in higher education. The typology is designed to enhance research on the complexities of widening participation by going beyond the rational question that asks 'what works?' and asking instead 'what's the problem represented to be?': a question that Bacchi poses in work on the construction of policy problems (2012).

The typology, derived from my recurring analysis of policy texts, interviews with policy actors and a research diary, is based on three sets of restricted, reformist and expansive narratives. There were dominant forms of *restricted* narratives in which policy and time were 'organised, regulated, tamed, colonized and foreclosed *now*' (Adam, 2004:142 emphasis in original). However, *reformist* narratives that 'worked around the edges' of the present and *expansive* narratives that may remember and re-construct possibilities of what could be in the future were also evident in my analysis too. Although these narratives may not be distinct, and can overlap with one another, my interest is in which may be dominant and why this matters for widening participation. I ask if restricted narratives form a metanarrative (Garvin and Eyles, 1997). Asking what the places of these and other narratives were within 'organisational stories' (Cortazzi, 2001) enabled me to trace the ways in which narratives were 'pieced together' within institutional contexts and larger power structures' too (Taber, 2010:11).

Smith argues that institutional ethnography 'doesn't begin in theory but in people's experiences' (2006:2). Notions of 'standpoint' and 'entry' were combined in my use of institutional ethnography and narrative analysis. Taber (2010) summarises the entry

and second level data gathered, analysed and interpreted in the institutional ethnography she designed. From my perspective, the first stage began with the two problems I presented and this led to second level data (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). Evidence was analysed to interpret these and the complex interactions between organizational practices, policies and experiences embodied within narratives (Taber, 2010).

Kaplan (1993), Garvin and Eyles (1997), Sutton (1997) and Cortazzi (2001) each highlight why different perspectives on narrative are significant. Their notions of narrative were applied to my analysis of policy texts and interviews conducted with 15 policy actors between March 2014 and January 2015. Whilst Sutton argues that a narrative may describe a specific 'story' (1999:7), Kaplan emphasises the importance of plot. A narrative structured within a prescribed beginning, middle, and end may establish a readable and coherent plot. In this form, a policy plot 'provides the policy analyst with a tool that can 'grasp together' and integrate into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events'(Kaplan,1993:172). However, the plot may be problematic. Garvin and Eyles (1997) argue that a policy plot may embed itself as a metanarrative. Building on the work of Roe (1994), they emphasise the significance of this concept. A metanarrative is a narrative that dominates and frames policymaking despite the complexity and uncertainty of an issue. They propose that

A metanarrative is an agreed-upon 'story' or way of making sense of an issue that makes it more amenable to policy intervention. In particularly conflicting or intractable situations individuals and groups with differing interests and values develop contrasting stories to explain or make sense of the problem. A metanarrative is the dominant story that develops over time (1997:48. Emphasis added).

The following analysis considers the inter-relationships between the concept of metanarrative and restricted narratives of widening participation and the space for reformist narratives too.

Policy texts and framing widening participation

31 different policy texts were cited by the seven national policy actors in my interviews with them between March and July 2014. Four of these texts were cited by more than one policy actor: the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997); Access Agreements, the final report of the *What Works? Student Retention & Success programme* (Thomas,2012) and the *National strategy for access and student success* written by OFFA and HEFCE (BIS, 2014). However, I argue that the narrative, or 'story', within BIS (2014) formed a metanarrative of widening participation that embodied 'the dominant story that develops over time' (Garvin and Eyles, 1997:48). It did so by building on these other three texts.

The overall scope of widening participation, in the foreword to BIS (2014), defines it in terms of 'three broad stages' (2014:3). These represent *particular* notions of access, student success and progression' (2014:9) embodied within the 'student lifecycle' and a particular set of meanings of 'outreach', 'support' and 'representation and engagement'. However, I argue that Greenbank's review of the significance of the Dearing Report (1997), highlighting how three of its features shaped subsequent policy (2006), may also apply to BIS (2014) too. Firstly, what Greenbank calls a 'deficit' or 'victim blaming' model that labels students failing to access HE because of a 'lack' of qualifications or aspirations and a 'fault' in their decision making (2006:145) is evident. Secondly, when gathering evidence, Greenbank argues that Dearing did not engage with 'ordinary university teachers' (Trow, 1998:96). Finally, Greenbank's critique of the implications of the recommendation of Dearing (1997:107), that emphasised the need

for institutions to develop strategic plans for widening participation, has contemporary resonance too.

The notion of strategic planning is contested and problematic. For example, Greenbank notes in his subsequent study (2007) that amongst senior managers within HEIs there is an assumption that an institutional culture is an 'integrated entity' not an amalgamation of competing sub-cultures' (2007:216). In my study, I have extended Greenbank's analysis of the perspectives of senior and institutional middle managers in two ways. Firstly, I asked how national policies were interpreted by national policy actors. Secondly, I explored how institutional practices were not only framed by senior and institutional managers- following Greenbank (2007) - but also by those who head subject areas or academic departments. By doing so I asked whether, and if so how, their diverse perspectives on widening participation differed from other perspectives, including my own, and why this may matter.

'Piecing together' a bricolage of narratives and re-constructing a typology of widening participation

The interviews with policy actors focused, in particular, on how critical policy events on widening participation were experienced and interpreted. My recurring analysis of the interviews identified four themes. This paper analyses the first two of these. Contrasting the narratives, and the different positions of policy actors, I argue that the first narratives emphasise a metanarrative of stability and compliance and are restricted. By comparison, the second narratives are reformist. They combine a critique of risk and compliance with a sense of 'working around the edges of policy.

Stability and compliance? Competing interpretations of national policies and practices

One national policy actor reinforced the dominant metanarrative of widening participation by emphasising the importance of measurement, 'putting in some deliverables and deadlines and targets', and combining this with a normative value of 'partnerships' and (seeking) stability. 'Partnership' and 'stability' were framed by their assertion that:

Widening participation *is* a partnership with a whole host of stakeholders.. Government need to set up a *stable* framework, a *stable* commitment to social mobility and widening participation, and establish a *consensus* for social mobility that lasts across parliaments, because this is a long term process (Emphasis in original).

This assertion was combined by this first policy actor with notions of responsibility and power:

Universities now have the responsibility, and they should be able to better decide. So, yes, there is more responsibility to ensure that students' interests are being safeguarded, but there is more responsibility for institutions, and I think that you can certainly make a case that that's the more appropriate thing to do.

However, another national policy actor not only questioned this dominant metanarrative. They also challenged universities and one of their roles in relation to widening participation. They were ambivalent and sceptical about whether there was a consensus about contemporary priorities for widening participation that all national policy actors shared. This perspective may apply to dilemmas about institutional policies and practices too:

I was expecting more consistency. We need to get behind what's done. We need to think about why we are doing. What does it actually mean. Why? Whether the people are changed. Why. Get behind why. What's really going on? Nobody knows that question. I think at meetings, conferences and seminars everyone says there is a need to talk...But I don't think they know how to do it.

They were also frustrated by a perception that there was a lack of evaluation and research:

You would think that Universities- at the heart of AimHigher- with all their experience could demonstrate and report and analyse – to demonstrate it back. You would think (there would be) some kind of intellectual imperative. People like yourselves- have let us down badly (if I may say so).

Whilst a third national policy actor had a different perspective on another institutional challenge they too shared this reformist narrative that critiqued the metanarrative of stability and compliance. They reflected on how changing notions of 'risk', compliance and marketisation were managed by institutions. Referring back to the early 1990's and their own 'experience in being widened' they remembered that

At that time Capital- and probably a lot of other institutions- were able to take more risks with people. I don't think that would happen today, and they took in about one third of students in that year who were from access course routes, from just whole different routes. After the end of that three years, we were a graduation year that had done exceptionally well.

In a further reference to institutional memory they noted 'I'm sure none of that data, stats, statistics, even exist' and 'the form that widening participation now takes within Capital it's much more, sort of, rigid and formal, in terms of where people are coming from, and so on'. However, paradoxically, whereas they initially seemed sceptical about this formality, in a further comment about current institutional practices, they argued that 'On the upside, though, widening participation has become much more formalised and evidence based'. Asked whether they felt that widening participation in the late 80's and early 90's, and the position we're in now, meant something different they replied, with an ironic understatement:

I think they operate in a slightly different field at the moment because of all the league tables and everything, and I think that that's something that's recognised. Universities feel that they have to keep up their position, and so on.

Comparing these three narratives this juxtaposition of a metanarrative, grounded in a sense of stability, partnership and notions of 'institutional responsibility', in contrast with a more nuanced critique of the implications of risk, compliance and marketisation offers a more complex preliminary analysis of different national policy narratives. It suggests that not all national policy actors frame widening participation within a dominant metanarrative. Likewise, an analysis of examples of institutional practice also suggests that these struggles- between restricted metanarratives and reformist narratives- were evident in an institutional context and particular time and place too. One national policy actor argued that

I think *there's an inevitability about the way in which higher education institutions are going to organise themselves, in order to be able to deliver on targets that they've been set, or deliver on policy objectives that are there (my emphasis).*

However, my analysis suggests that this is a more complex process. Gerrard and

Farrell (2014) in their work on curriculum policy and teachers' work argue that institutional ethnography has enabled them to trace 'the intersections between policy texts and policy-makers' understandings and uses of them' (2014:640). In my study these understandings were contested by both national policy actors but also within the institution too.

Marketisation and 'working around the edges': how restricted and reformist narratives were framed and interpreted within an institution

One of three members of the institutional Management Group interviewed asserted that 'I mean we are one of the best widening participation institutions in the country. Because we take so many students from WP backgrounds'. In the interview this patterning of problems constructed a policy narrative (Ozga, 2000) that framed each issue within a dominant and restricted metanarrative. For example, recurring references to entry qualifications, the labelling of 'support', specific cohorts of students and questions of institutional identity also explicitly framed policy and practices in terms of risk, compliance and marketisation. Entry qualifications were firstly presented as a proxy measure of suitability and 'success':

If you use entry qualifications as a proxy of people's success on a course then you are always going to have – you will have the oft cited person who came in with nothing and left with a First – but for every one of those you probably have ten others who drowned. They weren't ready.

No evidence was provided to support this assertion. Entry qualifications were also 'pieced together' with representations of personal and institutional identity and questions of 'standards'. When the interviewee reviewed entry qualifications it was firstly in terms of their own role and then the identity of the institution:

I mean for instance one of the things that I did was that I championed the increase in entry requirements because looking at the market it made us look as if we had the lowest entry requirements. We were the easiest to get into therefore we had the lowest standards.

This interview contributed to a dominant metanarrative that, in turn, implicitly built on national policy texts. These framings of the 'disadvantaged 'WP' student' and of widening participation acted to obscure the diversity of experiences, range of needs and multiple identities of students (Tamsin-Smith, 2012). However, by emphasising a response to 'marketisation' (McCaig,2010;2015), and offering a sense of 'we' ('the institution') there was another gap too. In their senses of certainty this policy actor did not offer space for either the evaluation, critique nor research that the second national policy actor had called for. However, three other institutional policy actors did respond to that call – albeit implicitly. By doing so they offered the basis for reformist narratives and starting points for further institutional practices too.

When interviewed each of these policy actors had subtly different perspectives on what widening participation had been and what it is. But, in their interpretations of what it could be, they shared senses of frustration but also identified possibilities and spaces for shaping practice and policy within their roles. For one of them, a particular notion and form of widening participation was problematic. There was a paradox. In their affective response they juxtaposed senses of unease about the contested idea of 'aspiration' with an acknowledgement that ultimately widening participation may be a 'positive force for good':

one of the things is that the term 'WP' is a rather clumsy and potentially pejorative phrase. So I don't like the phrase 'widening participation'. I understand again its motivations. Its motives. And certainly in my own school

careers there was pretty much a fairly low level aspirant view of kids coming out. So apart from the clumsiness of the phrase the actual ambitions are a positive force for good.

This sense that widening participation is 'a rather clumsy and potentially pejorative phrase' and not an 'attractive phrase' is a powerful condemnation of a particular form of widening participation. However this critique and memory of aspiration raising is significant because it represents what (for many) is *the* dominant narrative of widening participation - not a meaning of it.

The memories of another policy actor also related to notions of 'aspiration' and practice. They reflected on previous experiences within a different institution too:

I don't know whether we talked about widening participation so openly then. This would be the early 90's. But the fact that we had such a range of students, mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds but the expectations were high and there was a lot of encouragement to look at Uni and to go to a good Uni. I think that was when I began to think that there was something definite – it wasn't just left to chance.

Whilst these two policy actors reviewed and critiqued 'aspiration' their memories were of *a particular form* of widening participation. However a further policy actor remembered other forms of access and widening participation that were not narrowly framed in terms of aspiration raising. This third policy actor also emphasised 'it as a set of issues *in practice*'. However, their emerging understanding of policy was also framed in terms of the significance of key texts on widening participation. These formed part of their reflections and critique:

What it felt like was a gradual evolution erm because as I said I started with a set of ideas around what I was trying to do- which were probably not informed by very much – other than my experience as a practitioner- but gradually obviously you developed a more sophisticated analysis of that as I said. I had started those conversations and I think I think by 97 Dearing and Kennedy I do remember. Both of those reports being published I think by that point I was I (hesitate) I certainly remember reading Dearing at the time where it had become a significant part of what I do (emphasis). And I remember particularly Kennedy in fairly positive ways because what they did do was provide ways of beginning to structure your own thinking on issues in a kind of more strategic way (emphasis added).

Conclusions

Greenbank's earlier critique (2006) of the Dearing Report (1997), a policy actors' memories of this text and of the Kennedy Report (1997), and my analysis of contemporary texts (BIS, 2014), each offer different entry or standpoints in this analysis and critique of metanarratives of widening participation. However, the narratives of policy actors reflected Burke's argument that 'complex, multiple and shifting identities, are produced within educational sites' (2008:134) in which time is not stable but is in flux. Whilst restricted narratives emphasised stability and compliance, and representations of policy and time that were 'organised, regulated, tamed, colonized and foreclosed now' (Adam, 2004:142), reformist narratives 'pieced together' a critique of practice.

The paper has outlined examples of restricted and reformist narratives. The typology presented for review is a heuristic device that may be used by other practitioner

researchers, whose values and practices also extend beyond the recurring question 'what works?', and who want to critically analyse research policy and practice within their own specific context/s as I have sought to do.

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Adult education in community organisations supporting homeless adults: exploring the impact of austerity politics

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Introduction

In this paper I explore the impact of austerity politics on adult education in third sector organisations supporting homeless adults. After providing context and an overview of the methodology of the study from which the data presented are drawn, I will explore how recent reductions in government funding have impacted on the adult education offered and facilitated in these community settings. I argue that 'austerity politics' has impacted education in these contexts in two key ways: first, through reductions in resources organisations are able to access to support such activities and second, through the impact austerity has on the people they seek to support. Before concluding, I consider the extent to which the politics of austerity represent a major shift in the provision of adult education in these settings: it appears to have always occupied a precarious position, due both to poor resourcing and the multiple and complex needs of the people who homelessness agencies seek to support.

Adult education in community organisations supporting homeless adults

Policymakers, academics and practitioners alike have recognised the value that engagement in learning can bring to those experiencing homelessness. From increasing confidence and reducing social isolation to being better able to manage a tenancy and move into (or closer to) work, the benefits of learning for those experiencing homelessness have been well-documented (Castleton, 2001, Dumoulin and Jones, 2014, Luby and Welch, 2006; DCLG, 2006; Homeless Link, 2012). However, as with a range of other public services, many homeless people are excluded from 'mainstream' adult education (Barton et al, 2006; Luby and Welch, 2006; Reisenberger et al, 2010; Olisa et al, 2010; Dumoulin and Jones, 2014).

Recognising both the barriers to accessing mainstream provision alongside the benefits engagement in learning can bring, the homelessness sector provides a variety of both informal and formal learning opportunities for its service users (Homeless Link, 2012; Pleace and Bretherton, 2014). Across the sector, adult education is supported alongside other interventions to address the diverse range of complex and multiple needs that many homeless people have (including a lack of accommodation, isolation, drug and alcohol dependency issues, mental and physical health impairments) (Dwyer and Somerville, 2011). Perhaps most well-known are Crisis' 'Skylight' centres which focus on providing education, employment and arts-based activities at a number of centres across the country (Pleace and Bretherton, 2014). However, it is not just the largest, long-established organisations in which learning takes place: according to the umbrella body Homeless Link: '*the vast majority of homelessness services are supporting people to enter work, training or to engage in other activities*' (Homeless Link, 2012). Although providing education and training opportunities is not typically a primary focus of the work of third sector homelessness agencies, these and other community organisations have long been

identified as important sites for learning, especially for the most 'excluded' groups in society (Reisenberger et al, 2010, Tett, 2010).

Homelessness, education and policy

Whilst not the only factor at play, government policy and funding at both the national and local level has an important impact on the work of many homelessness organisations, including the education and learning opportunities offered within them (Buckingham, 2010; Dumoulin and Jones, 2014). For many organisations, financial support from the government is integral to their operations and, given the diverse needs of the homeless population, several policy domains (for example, housing, health, skills and social security) can impact both directly and indirectly on the services available those who find themselves within it. Support for both adult education and other services offered in these settings can therefore potentially come from several government departments (for example, the Department for Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills). However, within the current context of fiscal austerity, each of these has experienced drastic funding reductions resulting in significant cuts to the public resources flowing into third sector homelessness agencies (Homeless Link, 2015; Fitzpatrick, 2016).

Over the past couple of decades, a number of policy initiatives have been introduced which cut across both adult education and homelessness. For example, the 'Places of Change' agenda sought to encourage homelessness services to do more to '*move service users into appropriate training and sustainable employment*' (DCLG, 2007), and the Skills for Life Strategy identified homeless people as a target group in need of support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills (DfEE, 2001). Most recently, STRIVE (Skills, Training, Innovation and Employment) pre-employment pilots are currently underway in two national homelessness charities, jointly funded by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG/BIS, 2014).

Several authors (Barton, 2010; Bowl, 2014) have criticised an increasingly narrow conception of adult education focused mainly on improving employability in both policies relating to learning opportunities for homeless people and adult education more generally. Whilst the above initiatives may be criticised for a narrow, instrumentalist focus on education for work, they have nevertheless supported the notion that support for homeless people should not be restricted to accommodation alone, and have resulted in the introduction of some new learning opportunities in community-based organisations supporting homeless adults. However, it is important to note that despite policy rhetoric around the value of engaging homeless adults in education, the amount of statutory funding for learning and skills flowing into homelessness agencies has been, and remains, minimal. According to a recent survey of homelessness organisations in England, only one percent of accommodation projects had received any 'employment and education' funding, for day centres this was 7 per cent (compared to 5 per cent for all homelessness services in 2010). Despite this, it is striking that 50 per cent of homelessness day centres reported directly providing 'employment, training and education' activities in-house in 2015. A further 70 per cent provided 'meaningful activities' (Homeless Link, 2015). Whilst typically not in receipt of skills funding, the sector appears committed to supporting learning amongst its service users.

Methodology

This paper draws on new data from an empirical study investigating the education, training and employment support offered by third sector organisations supporting homeless adults. It is based on 27 semi-structured qualitative interviews with staff working in different roles (including support/project workers, volunteer coordinators, chief executives) at a range of levels ('operational', 'managerial', 'strategic') across twelve third sector homelessness organisations operating in the North West of England. The sample comprises workers from organisations of different types and sizes, including accommodation projects, activity centres and social enterprises. Except in one instance, the provision of education and learning opportunities was not a key aim of the organisations from which the sample was drawn. Whilst the focus of the wider study was on the support offered by services which sought to help their service users to move into or closer to work, discussions were wide-ranging, providing an insight into the range of education activities facilitated within each of the organisations and the factors shaping them. Data were analysed thematically using NVivo.

Study findings

This section outlines some key findings from the study. After providing an overview of the sorts of learning activities taking place within the homelessness organisations represented in the sample, it demonstrates the impact austerity politics has had in these contexts.

Interviews with workers from homelessness agencies across the North West highlight the range of education and training opportunities currently (or recently) taking place within their settings. These included opportunities to:

- develop digital and budgeting skills,
- gain new vocational skills through work experience and volunteering,
- participate in reading and creative writing groups,
- access support to improve literacy and numeracy,
- learn about and manage changes in the benefit system,
- participate in gardening and arts classes; and
- attend cooking classes.
-

According to the accounts of interviewees, these activities were developed to respond to their service users' needs and aspirations, and built on their existing skills and achievements. They also emphasised the importance of improving confidence and self-esteem rather than just improving a person's employment prospects. Activities varied in formality and were supported by a mix of external education providers and in-house by staff and volunteers. Recognising the barriers to their service users attending college, interviewees acknowledged the value in hosting provision within their services, and as such had gladly welcomed and hosted external education agencies within their settings. So long as external providers understood and worked well with their client group, they were open and willing to engage with any agencies they felt could benefit or 'strengthen' their service users. To this end, many of the staff working in homelessness organisations also helped service users to identify learning opportunities within the wider community – either because they were unable to offer them in-house, or as part of efforts to help people to expand their social networks and 're-integrate' into mainstream society.

Whilst all interviewees believed that providing learning opportunities within their settings was important, whether or not activities were in place depended in large part on whether or not their organisations were able to access adequate resources to support them. Consequently, some activities were long-term, ongoing projects, whereas others were ad hoc and time-limited. The following sections explore the impact of austerity on the range of activities supported by the third sector agencies.

State-funded adult education for homeless learners: exploring the impact of austerity politics

Reflecting the lack of state-funded learning across the homelessness sector highlighted above, most organisations in which the study participants worked were not direct recipients of any sort of statutory skills funding. Given this, and that the provision of education and learning opportunities is not typically a primary aim of such organisations, recent cuts to statutory adult skills funding may appear to be of little significance to the homelessness sector. Perhaps surprisingly then, interview data reveal that the politics of austerity in adult education is felt in these contexts in a number of ways.

First, interviewees described a notable reduction in engagement and outreach work undertaken by local colleges and other external learning providers. Whilst many had hosted tutors from local education providers in the past, they were disappointed at the recent reduction or withdrawal of such support due to funding cuts:

We used to have the [adult education provider] in. They used to regularly do stuff at [the organisation]. I'm going back several years...particularly literacy classes...but all that funding's gone. (Operational level worker, activity centre)

It is interesting to note that literacy support appeared to be the most common outreach activity previously undertaken – but whilst literacy and numeracy funding has supposedly been protected from the impact of austerity, this protection does not appear to extend to outreach work in these community settings. Relatedly, only one participant mentioned 'Skills for Life', one of the most significant adult education policies over the past few decades, reflecting that:

All that concern with Skills for Life has gone...back then, you couldn't turn a corner without somebody telling you the stats about young male illiteracy levels and stuff like that. I don't hear it anymore. (Strategic level worker, activity centre)

There were some examples where organisations had been able to draw down Community Learning funds to directly provide learning opportunities. However, the specialist learning provider included within the sample explained how accessing funding which recognised the challenges working with their 'client group' was particularly difficult within the current funding climate:

If we go to a hostel and two people show up, and the funding that we've used for that is based on a guided learning hour calculation...we've, you know, we can't...it's not sustainable for us. So we need to find funding that recognises

*how much it costs to do that well and that's a real struggle at the moment.
(Strategic level worker, activity centre)*

More generally, interviewees also felt that opportunities for learning within the wider community were becoming increasingly limited. Where respondents were supporting service users to identify learning opportunities outside of their organisation, several talked about restrictions on the courses available in their local areas. Most concerning was a lack of opportunities for 'older' learners:

If you're under 25, you've got a lot more options...If I've got somebody who's 27, who would benefit so much – they don't get a look in. (Operational level worker, activity centre)

There's a lot of money being spent on the young...and then the older ones are just being put through work programmes, and assumed that with a bit of effort they can be ready for work... well it's more complex than that. (Managerial level worker, social enterprise)

However this is a long-standing issue – according to a survey of the homelessness sector in 2010 (pre-dating 'austerity'), staff highlighted a lack of opportunities for over 25s (Homeless Link, 2010). Despite policy rhetoric around the value and economic necessity of lifelong learning, for those who do not achieve at school or soon after, opportunities for learning and improving skills are limited. This is particularly the case for those unable to fund their own participation in adult education courses - interviewees identified a lack of free or low cost learning opportunities, reflecting trends towards increasing consumerism in adult education and a tendency for lifelong learning to reproduce inequalities through the continued exclusion of those with least access to education (Bowl, 2014; Field, 2000). They also highlighted a decline in opportunities to attend night classes - this was particularly relevant for those homeless people who had volunteering commitments during the day and so were unable to take advantage of concessionary opportunities taking place in their local area at this time. Restrictions also extended to the types (subjects) of learning opportunities available.

[T]here are a number other colleges who...have found money to be able to fund courses but they tend to be the same old same old...Want to do a level 2 in customer service? Want to do a level 2 in cleaning? Well no, we don't really - it's all a bit mundane! (Strategic level worker, social enterprise)

Where there's a will there's a way: supporting education and learning activities through other means

Homelessness organisations draw on a range of resources to support their work. Beyond statutory skills funding, interviewees described drawing on traditional third sector funding sources (for example large grant-making trusts and one-off grants from local authorities) to fund learning activities. Within the context of austerity a number of interviewees explained how they had needed to diversify their funding streams to keep their service running. In some instances new sources of funding had been used to support learning activities – a small minority of organisations sampled were successful in accessing funds designed to improve community health and well-being to provide learning opportunities for service users:

It amounts to maybe two or three hundred thousand quid over the last few years from health sources, that we've been able to use in relation to things around structured activities...like our [gardening] project, activities that will stimulate engagement....It's called health money, but it can be used for learning engagement (Strategic level worker, activity centre)

Interviewees also explained how in the past they had been able to take advantage of free training from the National Health Service (NHS) for both staff and service users who were volunteering and hoping to work in the sector. Although this too had recently fallen victim to austerity:

[The NHS] deliver training to any client that's working with clients in [local authority]. That's going to get cut....it's really good for them to have their mental health level 1, 2 and 3, for their stepping stones, for their learning, but that's not going to be available (Operational level worker, accommodation project)

In many instances though, it was the time donated by volunteers that was integral to the ongoing provision of learning activities. Whilst highly valued by the organisations, a reliance on volunteers to support the ongoing provision of learning opportunities is perhaps at odds with the espoused importance of learning opportunities for homeless people by successive governments (Bowl, 2014).

Responding to welfare reform: exploring the wider implications of austerity on education for homeless learners

The politics of austerity extend beyond cuts to public service expenditure. Interview data show how the wider implications of austerity (most notably, welfare reform) also impact on the services offered by homelessness organisations as they respond to the needs of their service users, many of whom are struggling to adapt to a stricter and less generous welfare regime (Crisis, 2012; Batty et al 2015). Welfare reform impacts on homelessness services in several different ways. Some interviewees described needing to plan course provision around the conditions service users were expected to meet in order to access benefits. For example, provision was planned to allow for missed sessions and lateness in recognition of service users' need to prioritise attending appointments at the job centre. This, it was felt, was not as well catered for in other 'mainstream' adult education settings such as local adult colleges.

We definitely operate on the understanding that that's gonna happen and we have all sorts of things in place to make sure that doesn't derail things (Managerial level worker, activity centre)

It affects the attendance that we do have because they do have appointments on what they need to stick to. (Operational level worker, accommodation project)

Welfare reform also shaped the content of the activities offered by the organisations sampled. Whilst a range of educational activities had taken place in the past, a number of interviewees explained how increasing amounts of staff time were taken up by helping service users to learn about and understand benefit changes, and

advocating on their behalf to challenge decisions made by the Department for Work and Pensions.

There's an element of crisis work that has become a priority at times...the number of people in situations where they've been going for week after week without money...that kind of work has taken a priority over the last year or so.
(Strategic level worker, activity centre).

This also involved putting in place or hosting training around improving digital skills in order to equip service users with the skills they need to navigate the new cost-saving 'digital by default' system for administering people's social security payments.

A significant change or just more of the same?

The above has highlighted the ways in which austerity politics has impacted on adult education in third sector organisations supporting homeless adults. Yet whilst the scale of recent public spending cuts is unprecedented, and is undoubtedly having an impact on the services such organisations are able (or are needing) to provide, it might be argued that the place of adult education in these settings has not changed in any fundamental way as a result. Education in these settings has always occupied a 'precarious' position. Whilst this reflects the fact that adult education is not typically a primary aim of such organisations, this may also reflect established structures of social exclusion and longer term trends of an emphasis on education for employment above all else. As a group, homeless people have consistently been identified as 'hard to help' and to be among those furthest away from the labour market so it is unsurprising that funding for skills support does not gravitate to these settings given the overwhelming focus on education for work. As such, it could be argued that austerity politics amplifies longer term trends towards accreditation and instrumentalism which are hard to marry with the complex support needs of homeless people. Furthermore, a need for homelessness agencies to work around the requirements of a 'conditional' welfare system has long been acknowledged.

Conclusion

This article has shown how austerity politics has impacted on adult education in third sector organisations supporting homeless adults both in terms of the education and learning opportunities they are able to provide alongside the wider support that they offer. It has demonstrated that when considering the impact of austerity politics on adult education (particularly that which takes place in non-specialised community contexts) it is important to look beyond education and skills policy. It is also important to recognise that no major shift has taken place in these 'austere times' - community learning has always been poorly financed, and is not prioritised when homeless service users have more pressing needs to address. Importantly, despite sporadic policy pronouncements about the importance of all adults participating in 'lifelong learning', statutory skills funding is still not making its way into specialist homelessness agencies in any significant way.

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Can nurse mentorship enhance career development?

Catherine Kelsey

Introduction

Nurses who develop high level critical thinking skills, such as those required for mentorship become increasingly employable and receive remuneration based on these attainments (Royal, 2011). It could be argued therefore, that within a neoliberalist society such nurses have become a human commodity or human capital.

Invented by Economist Theodore Schultz in the 1960s, the term human capital was used to reflect the value of human capacity as a measure of the monetary or economic value of an employee's skills (Investopedia, 2016). However, human capital recognises that not all labour is of equal quality or value and that knowledge can be improved upon through investment, including the provision of effective education and training (Investopedia, 2016).

Challenges abound however, of the impact that the term human capital or human commodity has on the nursing profession as a whole and the role of the mentor in particular. Dimon (2014) for example, challenges the dominant political paradigms that exist within society, namely neoliberalist agendas, that have led to the term human capital. Such agendas, argues Holborow (2012) have led to the commodification of human abilities, the term commodification being defined as the process by which goods (or commodities) and services are bought and sold in the marketplace (Encyclopedia.com, 2016). In contrast, human capital or human commodity refers to the knowledge, ideas, skills and abilities of humans and is considered by far the most important type of capital in prevailing economics (Becker, 2006). The challenge to the nursing profession however, is how they view themselves; nurses view themselves as a profession, whereas purchasers view nurses (and the services they provide) as a commodity (Jones, 2001).

Historically, nurses who wanted career progression would develop the skills of mentorship early on in their career, seeing this as an opportunity to expand their repertoire of skills and knowledge and climb the professional ladder. More recently however, most nurses are required to become mentors, fuelling the debate as to whether this generic position should remain or whether it should be a separate career pathway for a few; known as the specialist position (King's College London, 2013).

Nurse education is complex and multi-faceted requiring an eclectic arena of professionals to facilitate professional development and personal growth. The importance of the contribution made by the nursing profession to the economy should not be underestimated and is vital to optimising the success of the healthcare system in the UK (Royal, 2011).

An all-graduate profession

Human capital has gained credence within the nursing profession as nursing has now become an all-graduate profession (Royal 2011) This move argues Fleming (2009) represents a dichotomy, on the one hand nursing has now raised its profile to the level it deserves, on the other has it chimed the death knell for the delivery of high quality person-centred care; condemning many to the indignity of poor professional practice? Nonetheless there are those who challenge this concept and argue that degree level nurse training prepares nurses to provide complex patient care and to ensure that patients, or consumers of care, benefit from its delivery (Hall and Ritchie, 2013). Bernhauser, (2010) argues that nursing is about developing highly knowledgeable and competent practitioners and not simply about acquiring a set of technical skills.

This significant change within pre-registration student nurse training and the previous changes made to the academic curriculum are now firmly embedded within professional nursing practice. Such changes have dictated that student nurses receive support from a highly qualified and experienced mentor, the role of which is defined in the Standards to Support Learning and Assessment in Practice (NMC, 2008). This it is envisioned ensures that once qualified, nurses are able to act as autonomous self-directed heutagogical practitioners. Such practitioners being able to effectively deliver high quality, compassionate care and where necessary confidently challenge the status quo. Equally, nurses who develop the skills of mentorship are considered to be central to the learning process, having the capacity to create purposeful learning opportunities that not only enhances the quality of patient care but also develops the skills and attributes of healthcare professionals.

It is important therefore that the significance of quality nurse mentorship in developing proficient and experienced future healthcare professionals, whilst nurturing personal opportunities for career progression is not underestimated (Fielden et al., 2009). Such prominence on professional development puts experienced mentors at the heart of both clinical practice and nurse education and aligns personal strengths with passion and improved performance. Developing the skills of mentorship can create new opportunities for learning, whilst improving professional prospects and ultimately ensuring the protection of the public (Walsh, 2014).

Professional responsibilities

As a profession, nurses accept responsibility for ensuring the workforce is fit for purpose, the aim of which is to provide high quality professional care (RCN, 2016). Considered the gatekeepers of proficient practice, mentors play an essential part in maintaining professional credibility and trust in the nursing profession (RCN, 2016). They provide support to student nurses (NMC, 2008) as well as being influential in the professional development of contemporaries (Scott and Spouse, 2013). There is however, a significant concern that some mentors lack the professional skills and knowledge to undertake this fundamental role as evidenced in the Shape of Caring Review (Raising the Bar) (Willis, 2015).

The role of the mentor

The professional obligations of the mentor are defined in the NMC (2008) standards. As concerns continue to rise however as to the suitability of current frameworks, the Royal College of Nursing (2016) recommends that new models of mentorship are considered in order to meet the changing landscape of nurse education. A multitude of definitions exist to describe the role of the nurse mentor, including those defined by, Scott and Spouse, (2013), Walsh (2014) and Gopee (2015).

Mentors should not only have the ability to recognise experiences and assessment opportunities, from which student nurses will benefit, but also encourage the development of professional curiosity that aims to put the patient first (Bailey-McHale and Hart, 2013). Graduating students need to be adequately prepared to meet the challenges of an ever-changing, diversifying field of practice and through the ability to problem solve and critically reflect, challenge out-dated ideas and concepts, whilst providing effective solutions to complex problems (Riley and Matheson, 2010). Arguably, these skills cannot be developed in isolation, but through the facilitation of collaborative learning and with the support of highly qualified and experienced mentors.

Quality mentors uphold the principles of the professional code (NMC, 2015). They support the transition of values, skills and knowledge (Banister and Gennaro, 2012); encourage a collaborative learning partnership; nurture strong networks within the broader multi-disciplinary team and inspire innovation (Norman and Roche, 2015). They link theory to professional practice (Gopee, 2015) and facilitate socialisation (Hayes, 2005). Good mentorship programmes are considered fundamental in nurse retention and job satisfaction (Halfer et al. 2008) and they ensure the needs of the patient are paramount (Vinales, 2015).

Changes to the way in which pre-registration nurse training is to be funded, it is anticipated will increase the number of student nurses being accepted onto nurse training (DoH, 2016). This increase in numbers will require an increase in the number of nurse mentors, who are able to adapt to the imminent changes with integrity and professionalism, whilst continuing to ensure high quality patient care is provided.

The importance of continuing professional development

The global economy cannot be successful without substantial investment in human capital by all countries, with an additional requirement for individuals to invest in the acquisition of knowledge throughout their lives (Becker, 2006). In recent years this has led to the increasing phenomenon of lifelong learning. Defined by the Commission of the European Communities (2001) as learning that aims to improve knowledge, skills and competence, it extols the importance of undertaking learning opportunities throughout life from both a personal and professional perspective. Education and learning purports Brownhill, (2001) is considered transformational. It has significant benefits for the individual, the wider economy and the society as a whole (Field, 2009) and prepares people to make effective decisions in times of

crisis or significant change (Tuckett and McAuley, 2005). It also supports career progression by promoting the learning of new knowledge and skills and in the case of nursing encourages the development of nurse practitioners who are flexible, creative and prepared for change, whether in their personal or professional lives (Bailey-McHale and Hart, 2013). In order to maintain and upgrade the skills of all nurses including mentors, organisations must be cognisant of their responsibilities to offer high quality learning opportunities that foster a sense of achievement and professional growth.

In the UK nurses are legally required to be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council in order to practice and retain registration as a qualified nurse. They are also required to abide by a code of professional conduct (NMC, 2015). The importance of continuing professional development and lifelong learning in nursing has been particularly strengthened in recent months with the introduction of revalidation (NMC, 2015a). Replacing post registration education and practice (PREP) a process designed to encourage nurses to maintain professional competence (NMC, 2011), revalidation has been developed following the catastrophic failings identified in the Francis Report (2013) in which patients suffered at the hands of qualified nurses and other healthcare staff within a culture of silence and defensiveness. Revalidation is designed to facilitate a lifelong approach to education for all qualified nurses and is seen as being a step in the right direction in making nurses responsible for their own continuing development, which aims to put patients at the heart of professional practice (NMC, 2015a).

The continuance of professional development is therefore an essential requirement of qualified nurses and is dependent on maintaining fitness to practice (NMC, 2015a). In terms of human capital it could be argued that this process could also be an ideal opportunity to enhance personal economic value. This in turn expounds Covell, (2008) has the potential to contribute to the development of the organisation and increase patient outcomes.

The way forward

As this historical change within nurse education and professional practice is now underway, changes to the way in which healthcare is to be delivered (NHS, 2014) so too is underway. As is evident from this strategy, new skills will be required to deliver care in the community but pre-registration nurses cannot undertake this level of learning without the supportive skills of an effective mentor. The increasing expectations of the mentor also comes with it additional responsibility and accountability and unfortunately not all nurses have the motivation or the ability to undertake the learning required. This it could be argued is where quality mentors become human capital, a commodity, through which they have the greater opportunity to gain career progression. As nursing has now become an all graduate profession, it could also be argued that developing mentorship skills has also become an internalisation stage for professional life-long learning (Chen and Lou, 2014)

Economic growth relies on the synergies between new knowledge and human capital, (Becker 2008), which is why essentially nurse education and training is the foundation for the development of human capital in nursing. Highly skilled

experienced nurse mentors it could be argued are the cornerstone of clinical nursing as they support the application of theory into professional practice (Jones, et al., 2001). They are suitably positioned to build the foundations on which newly qualified graduate nurses can become effective clinicians and healthcare leaders in an ever-changing climate; whilst promoting opportunities for personal development and career enhancement.

Conclusion

Quality mentorship has the capacity to enhance the current healthcare workforce and to develop competent registrants of the future who are able to provide safe and effective patient care in the real world of professional practice (Vinales, 2015). The provision of quality mentorship has been proven to successfully facilitate professional growth and to enable the transition from student to qualified nurse (Nowicki Hnatiuk, 2013). It could be argued therefore that mentors play a pivotal role in shaping the future of nurse education and professional nursing practice. Central to this is the mentor recognising personal responsibility and accountability not only to the nursing profession as a whole but also to the general public.

If we are to ensure nurses are effectively prepared and able to deliver safe and effective care in the 21st century then it is vital that the nursing profession provides access to expert mentors. Such mentors are able to nurture the skills and knowledge required in order to safeguard the provision of optimal care, which in turn supports the continuation of professional excellence (Sines, 2013).

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Adult Immigrants' Deterrents to Participation in Korean as Second Language Courses

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Introduction

International migration is not a historically new phenomenon; however, the number of people moving from country to country and the patterns of migration have dramatically and continuously changed in this globalized era. The Republic of Korea (hereafter Korea) has recently experienced rapid changes in demographics due to immigrant populations.

Migration, in particular, international migration, requires various kinds of learning for immigrants; one of the significant factors that influences an individual's successful acculturation (Berry, 1997) into a new cultural setting is language. Numerous studies conducted in various international contexts have shown that language proficiency positively affects immigrants and sojourners' psychological and socio-cultural adjustment by reducing their anxiety and social distance toward new cultural settings (Ko & Kim, 2011; Li, 2008; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1993). With regard to the importance of language proficiency in acculturation, immigrants in Korea rated communication and language issues as having the highest difficulty in terms of adapting to a new country followed by economic issues in the National Survey of Multicultural Families (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2013).

In recent years, in order to meet immigrants' need for Korean language learning, the Korean government has provided Korean as a second language (KSL) programs for adult immigrants. The program consists of two parts: five levels of Korean language and a final level that focuses on understanding Korean society. The program is not mandatory for immigrants; however, the government has set up some incentives for completing the program. The major benefits of completing this program include exemption from a naturalization written test and an interview when they apply for naturalization, or additional points for the score-based residence visa transfer of professional workers.

Despite the Korean government's effort to provide immigrants with suitable educational opportunities, thereby improving their Korean language ability and adjustment process in Korea, only a limited number of immigrants in Korea have benefitted from this opportunity. The relatively low participation rate in Korean language programs may stem from the nature of immigrants' lives, including high demands from family and work, or it may be due to inadequately designed course contents and requirements or the lack of immigrants' awareness of the program. Or, immigrants' nonparticipation may be a form of resistance against the Korean government's immigration policies and services. Understanding why many immigrants in Korea do not or cannot participate in KSL programs would provide a deeper understanding of adult immigrants, in other words, adult learners who survive, struggle, or thrive in foreign countries.

Literature Review

Adults' life situations often deter adult learners from participating in education; McClusky (1973) argued that adult learners' educational participation may occur when they have a margin in their lives. A margin is determined by the ratio of power (resources) over loads (responsibilities). When an adult has a high level of family and work responsibilities and low support from family or social networks, the person would not have enough margin in his or her life for studying a foreign language. According to this theory, adult immigrants who moved from their home countries to a foreign country with or without family usually have unfavourable life conditions for participating in educational opportunities. If an individual migrated to Korea to financially support his or her family in his or her homeland as a non-professional worker, he or she would have a considerable amount of job responsibilities in Korea and would prefer to work for money instead of spending the time learning a foreign language. If a woman migrated to marry a Korean man, she may not have support from her family or access to a social network for babysitting; this may prevent her from participating in learning Korean. Immigrants generally have less margin in their lives for education, because they have more responsibilities and less power in a new country.

In early studies on deterrents to educational participation, the focus was to identify the biggest constraints of participation, and studies on deterrents were accompanied by studies on motivation and reasons for learning (e.g., Apt, 1978; Carp et al., 1973; Johnson & Rivera, 1965). For example, in Johnson and Rivera's (1965) study on barriers to participation, the researchers asked potential adult learners whether or not each of the 10 listed reasons was applied to their decisions not to attend adult education courses. Carp et al. (1973) also conducted a survey on 24 nonparticipation reasons and reported that "cost" and "not enough time" were generally the biggest obstacles across various demographic groups. Later, Cross (1981) classified these 24 items into three categories: situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers.

An empirical approach to understanding deterrents to adults' education participation and generating typology of deterrents emerged in the 1980s. These scholars (e.g., Hayes & Darkenwald, 1988; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Hayes, 1989; Scanlan & Darkenwald, 1984; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990) argued that previous approaches to the typology of deterrents to participation and the analysis of differences based on respondents' demographics had a limited value and that "[t]he most useful approach is to identify groups based on their perception of deterrents and then to describe the groups in terms of available background information" (Hayes, 1989, p. 50). Accordingly, Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) developed the original Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS) with 40 items that was distributed to health professionals. Then, Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) further developed the instrument into a 32-item DPS-G, which was designed for the general public; based on the empirical data from the DPS-G, six underlying factors of deterrents were identified: lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost, and personal problems.

Additionally, studies on deterrents to participation assume the demand and the necessity of participation in a given educational activity, such as in professional

continuing education and adult basic education. In contrast, studies on predictors of participation tend to deal with more selective educational activities that cannot suppose this demand and necessity to be the case. Beder (1992) made a relevant argument that eligible ABE nonparticipants can be categorized into three groups: the motivated and not-constrained nonparticipants, the motivated but constrained nonparticipants, and the not-motivated “hard core” (Beder, 1992, p. 4), who would voluntarily not attend ABE education even if they have access to and information about free ABE education. In this sense, Quigley (1990, 1997) termed this group of ABE nonparticipants as “resisters” to formal education (Quigley, 1997, p. 195), employing Giroux’s (1983) reproduction and resistance theory. Quigley (1997) suggested three types of resistance and discussed difference recruitment approaches for each type of resister: the personal/emotive resister, the ideological/cultural resister, and older resister. The first two groups resist education due to past schooling experiences, which may have connections to substantiated factors such as a lack of confidence (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985), self/school incongruence (Hayes, 1988), and dislike for school (Beder, 1990). The older resisters, “‘hard core’ nonparticipants” (Beder, 1992, p. 4), have no demand for education.

Purpose of the Study

This research aimed to understand adult immigrants' deterrents to participating in KSL programs for adult immigrants in Korea and to identify the underlying structure of these deterrents to participation. The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What reasons deter adult immigrants in Korea from participating in KSL education programs?
2. Are these identified deterrent variables interrelated enough to form a conceptually meaningful underlying structural pattern?

Deterrent scales that have been developed in the U.S. and Korea provide valuable information for understanding immigrants' deterrents; however, the underlying factor structure of deterrents significantly varies depending on the groups of research participants. Additionally, immigrants commonly have different life patterns from native residents; therefore, it is expected, based on the margin theory (McClusky, 1973), that results from native residents would have limited implications for immigrants to some extent. Consequently, the modification of previous deterrent scales is required, particularly considering current immigrants' contexts in Korea when creating the instrument items.

Method

This study employed a quantitative survey method. Among various ethnic groups of immigrants, Filipinos and Vietnamese were purposely selected for the survey as they rank as the second and third biggest ethnic groups of immigrants in Korea, and they are culturally and linguistically less familiar with the Korean culture and language.

A new instrument specifically tailored for immigrants in Korea was developed based on previous deterrent scales, literature, and interviews with immigrants. In total, 697 deterrents were drawn from these three sources; after a deletion of semantically equivalent items, a cultural critique session, and practitioners' reviews, 39 items remained for the pretest. Respondents' self-assessed Korean and English language

proficiency and demographics were collected. The demographics included age, gender, education, ethnicity, initial purpose of entry into South Korea, employment status, income, number of children, marital status, and so on. The instrument was translated from English into Tagalog and Vietnamese; the quality of translation was assured through back-translation (Brislin, 1970).

A pretest was conducted in July, 2015 with the English and Tagalog versions; then, the instrument was slightly modified based on the responses from the pretest. The full survey was implemented between January 28 and February 17, 2016 with the Tagalog and Vietnamese versions through an online survey tool, *Qualtrics*, and paper copies. The participants, adult Filipinos or Vietnamese who have lived in Korea for more than three months and have not participated in KSL programs in the last six months or completed the six-level program before, were recruited through postings on Facebook and solicitations in Filipino and Vietnamese restaurants and churches in Korea.

Results

In total, 267 responses were collected. Regarding the quality of the deterrent scale, 23 responses with no variances in the 39 scale items were removed from the analyses; 74 responses with any missing values were also removed from the analyses. Consequently, 170 responses were used for the analyses with the deterrent scale. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha estimates in the present study were .924 for the full scale.

Demographics of the Respondents

The total respondents ($N = 267$) included slightly more males (49.8%) than females (45.7%). The average age of the respondents was 35.46 ($S.D. = 8.5$). In terms of educational attainment, one third (33%) graduated after some college or after getting a 2-year degree; another third (31.8%) held Bachelor's degrees; a quarter of them (23.2%) were high school graduates. 80.9% of the respondents were Filipinos, and the others were Vietnamese.

More than half of the respondents visited South Korea with the initial purpose of working (70.6%), and less than a quarter of the respondents came to marry a Korean (21.4%). The average number of years living in Korea was reported as 6.5 years ($S.D. = 5.9$), ranging from 0 to 24 years.

Half of the respondents (51%) earned 1,000,000 to 1,999,999 KRW (approximately 600 to 1,200 GBP) a month. Less than a quarter of the respondents (23.4%) earned less than 1,000,000 KRW (approximately 600 GBP) a month. 82.4% of the respondents were employed in various ways; their average number of working hours per week was 43.5 hours, ranging from 5 to 122 hours.

Half of the respondents (50.6%) are married; among those who reported their spouse's ethnicity ($n = 109$), 40.8% of them married someone of the same ethnicity as themselves, and 20.6% of them married a Korean. One third of the respondents lived with a number of children; and a quarter of the respondents lived with a number of adult native Korean speakers. 60.7% of the total respondents reported that they communicated with native Koreans every day or almost every day.

Descriptive Statistics of DPS

All 39 DPS items showed normal distributions (the Kurtosis statistics were less than |7|), and the means ranged from 1.36 to 3.13. Based on the largest Mahalanobis distances analysis, 30 outliers were identified at the .05 alpha level; however, none of them included a typo error, and thus, they all remained in the data. As for the missing data treatment, a complete case approach was used, based on a listwise deletion.

The following list shows the most highly-rated reasons that made it hard for the respondents to attend KSL programs.

1. I do not have enough free time to attend the Korean classes. (*mean* = 3.13)
2. The Korean language is too difficult to master. (*mean* = 2.74)
3. I have too many household responsibilities to attend Korean classes. (*mean* = 2.57)
4. The Korean classes were held in a location too far away. (*mean* = 2.5)
5. The classes were held at times I could not go. (*mean* = 2.38)
6. I believe it would take too long time to complete the program. (*mean* = 2.37)
7. I prefer to learn Korean in my own way. (*mean* = 2.36)
8. I did not think I could attend Korean classes regularly. (*mean* = 2.34)
9. I am too tired to attend Korean classes. (*mean* = 2.25)
10. I was too worried about taking tests. (*mean* = 2.22)

Factor Analysis

A principal-axis factor (PAF) analysis was performed to investigate latent factors of the deterrents for adult immigrants' participation in KSL programs. The three factor model was chosen, accounting for 36.1% of the variance in the 39 items. The factors were rotated to approximate a simple structure using a Varimax rotation. The high criterion of 0.45 was used to determine loadings that should be retained for interpretation. One cross-loading item was found (Item 39); the item was located in the factor that was highly loaded and more interpretable. Fourteen items did not load on any of the factors based on the salient loading of .45.

Table 1

Negative Attitude Factor Statistics

Factor 1: Negative Attitude	loading	Mean	S.D.	Rank
I do not enjoy studying.	.783	1.67	1.07	30
I did not want to sit in a formal classroom to learn Korean.	.723	1.71	1.07	27
The incentives for completing the government sponsored Korean language program is not important to me.	.689	1.62	1.03	32
I do not need to know Korean.	.609	1.52	0.90	35
The program content probably would not be relevant to my needs.	.578	1.69	1.00	28

I am afraid to begin learning something new.	.574	1.73	0.92	26
Attending Korean classes would not improve my life in Korea.	.558	1.75	1.14	25
I heard that the Korean classes were not very good.	.550	1.49	0.95	37
I feel I am too old to learn Korean.	.527	1.88	1.13	17
I have a personal health problem or disability that made me difficult to attend the Korean classes.	.517	1.36	0.83	39
I tend to feel guilty when I have to leave home to attend Korean classes.	.454	1.49	0.87	36

Table 2

Factor 2: Social Isolation	<i>loading</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
I do not like going outside due to native Koreans' disrespectful attitudes toward me.	.568	1.77	1.06	24
I thought it would be hard to get along with the other students in the class.	.532	1.86	1.07	18
I was afraid to take public transportation alone to attend the Korean classes.	.518	1.62	0.99	33
Available transportation to the Korean classes was inconvenient.	.509	2.15	1.14	11
I did not know that there were Korean classes available for immigrants/foreigners.	.508	2.11	1.30	12
My family did not like the idea of my attending Korean classes.	.488	1.42	0.94	38
I was afraid to go to an unfamiliar place.	.460	1.91	1.14	16
I tried to start classes but they were already full or I missed the registration period.	.456	1.78	1.15	23

Table 3

Competing Demands Factor Statistics

Factor 3: Competing Demands	<i>loading</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Rank</i>
I did not think I could attend Korean classes regularly.	.606	2.34	1.25	8
I believe it would take too long time to complete the program.	.575	2.37	1.24	6

I am too tired to attend Korean classes.	.534	2.25	1.25	9
I do not have enough free time to attend the Korean classes.	.529	3.13	1.21	1
I have too many household responsibilities to attend Korean classes.	.488	2.57	1.19	3
The Korean classes were held in a location too far away.	.486	2.50	1.26	4

As shown in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, Factor 1 is composed of 11 items and labelled *negative attitudes*. Factor 2 is defined by eight items, which are related to *social isolation*, whereas the six items loaded on Factor 3 are characterized by *competing demands*.

Discussions

Negative attitude: this factor includes immigrants' negative attitudes toward learning, learning in a formal setting such as school, learning Korean and their own ability to learn. This factor has been reported in many previous research, in terms of lack of confidence (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985), low self-confidence and attitude to classes (Darkenwald & Hayes, 1988), self/school incongruence and low self-confidence (Hayes, 1988), and low perception of need and dislike for school (Beder, 1990). The attitude may stem from low-expectancy, dispositional reasons, or putting less value on education and learning and low expectation on themselves. The factor consists of relatively low scored items.

Social isolation: this factor is an interesting result from this research. This was rarely found in previous research: this factor may result from the characteristics of sample, immigrants, showing the difference in deterrents between literacy learners (ABE learners) and second language learners (ESL immigrant learners). This important deterrent factor for immigrants is related to their fear of being away from their "secured" areas or familiar spaces; an anxiety of being situated in unfamiliar social setting and unfamiliar people; and the lack of information. The factor is composed of middle-scored items. According to McClusky (1973), this factor is resulted from immigrants' low nominator-power (resources).

Competing demands: This factor is a time related factor; for example, it includes such items as short of time and other priorities, which is the most commonly found factor in previous research. This factor supports McClusky's theory of margin (1973): high overloads (responsibilities) resulting in low margin. The factor includes many highly rated items.

Based on the survey results, further implications for policy development and social actions for immigrants will be discussed at the conference.

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‘People think you need money’: Exploring the needs of former trainee teachers in the Education and Training sector

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Introduction

The position of newly qualified teachers in the Education and Training Sector is characterised by instability and uncertainty. Unlike their counterparts achieving a full teaching qualification in schools, there is no recognised status of ‘NQT’ to support their transition into the role of qualified teacher. Indeed, they are expected to pursue a process of ‘professional formation’ in order to achieve Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS) (SET, 2015, p.1), without the entitlement to support and remission of teaching hours currently enjoyed by NQTs in schools (Department for Education, 2014). For trainee teachers who have qualified via an ‘in-service’ rather than ‘pre-service’ route, where they are in employment (either paid or voluntary) for the duration of their course, this transition to qualified teacher may not even be marked: they may, to differing degrees, already have an established identity as practising teachers.

The removal in 2012 of the requirement for teachers in Further Education (FE) to hold a teaching qualification undermined the significance of holding a formal qualification to adult education. With QTS itself now the target of reform (Department for Education, 2016), the status of QTLS, and of former trainees seeking to obtain it, has become increasingly fragile. This is exacerbated by ongoing cuts in adult education (Association of Colleges, 2015), which pose a threat to the continuing professional development of former trainees, who may find themselves either unemployed or in insecure or marginal employment.

Literature seeking to generate better understandings of teacher development in the Education and Training Sector more broadly is grounded in the workplace learning literature, to which Lave and Wenger’s concept of a ‘community of practice’ (1991) has been central (Boud & Middleton, 2003; Avis, Bathmaker & Parsons, 2002). However, Orr (2012) questions the capacity of FE colleges to provide developmental workplace learning, or communities of practice, for trainees, given the messy, confusing and often contradictory experiences they offer. And although the literature relating to in-service rather than pre-service trainees is sparse, Maxwell (2014) identifies a strong link in the literature between ‘workplace affordances’ (Billett, 2001) and the learning of in-service trainees.

The study

This paper draws on the findings of a project commissioned by The Education and Training Consortium entitled ‘Meeting the needs of former trainee teachers in the Education & Training Sector’. The purpose of the project was to generate better understandings of the needs of former trainees from a range of perspectives and to improve the quality of support given to former trainees based on their identified needs. Objectives of the research included: investigating current practices across a range of teacher education providers in relation to the support of former trainees (both pre- and in-service); and analysing the perceived needs of former trainees from the perspective of those former trainees. Using data generated through focus groups with teacher educators and former trainees, as well as semi-structured interviews with former in-service trainees across The Education and Training Consortium, we focus on findings related to the problematic position of former trainees, and the impact this has on meeting their professional development needs. The paper draws specifically upon data related to the identity and participation of former trainees in the education and

training sector, a key theme from the overall findings. The paper therefore addresses the theme of the career enhancement and development of adult educators in lifelong learning.

Communities of Practice and Legitimate Peripheral Participation

For former trainees in the Education and Training sector, the workplace is a significant site of professional learning and identity formation. One way of understanding the professional learning and identity of former trainees is through Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of communities of practice, and specifically, their concept of 'legitimate peripheral participation'. We use the concept to consider the ways in which different understandings of the identity of former trainees, upon completion of their qualification, affects their continued learning as professionals.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) social theory of learning emphasises the importance of participation in specific practices related to a community of persons engaged in working towards the same or similar goals. Thus, connecting the wider social and historical contexts is central to the development of practice and individuals' participation in them. This theory is particularly useful for understanding how individuals learn in different contexts, as communities of practice constitute "participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities" (Lave & Wenger, 2002, p. 115). They liken the process of becoming a member of a community of practice to that of an apprenticeship, whereby novices become masters through participation in that community. They argue that central to development of novices' learning is the process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Legitimate peripheral participants engage in the necessary practices of the community, and are therefore 'legitimate', however they are given affordances (such as time and responsibility) in order to engage with those practices – they are therefore peripheral to full members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, Lave and Wenger's theory is not without its critics. One of the central critiques is the way in which the theory neglects conflict and unequal power relations amongst communities, and instead are presented as "rather stable, cohesive, and even welcoming identities" (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005, p. 53). By operationalising the concept of legitimate peripheral participation, we will add to this critique in the rest of this paper.

Status, insecurity and (non-)identities

Trainee teachers in the education and training sector can be said to constitute legitimate peripheral participants during the workplace learning element of their training. Indeed, Hodkinson (2005) disputes the distinction in terms of learning between the 'formal' elements of a course, associated with its taught delivery, and the 'informal' aspects of workplace practice, arguing that both offer opportunities for learning through participation. Through the structure of their course, the trainees participate in real and necessary teaching practice within the organisations in which they are placed, volunteer or work, and they are peripheral in that they are given the affordances in order to learn activities effectively. However, once a trainee teacher completes their qualification, their status and identity as a legitimate peripheral participant could be contested. Moving from a legitimate peripheral participant to a full member was experienced differently amongst the former trainees depending on the context in which they worked, and whether that context continued to acknowledge the legitimate peripheral status of former trainee or newly qualified teacher. There was variability between institutions to the extent to which they recognised former trainees as a distinct group with particular needs. Participants from the former pre-service trainee focus group highlighted this variability in the diversity of institutions in which they were now working. Those that were working in schools or sixth form colleges were often recognised as former trainees and structured support was available to them.

In schools there is a specific person who is paid to put training on for NQTs and be their mentor (Former pre-service focus group)

These institutions did not assume that a former trainee was a full member upon completion of the teaching qualification, and therefore continued to support newer teachers to develop their practice.

However, this was often not the case for those that were working in further education colleges, where the mandatory NQT year was absent. This was in part because there was no requirement for such structures to be in place. This could also be attributed, however, to an institution's understanding of the PGCE/ Cert Ed qualification and the extent to which it prepares former trainees for all aspects of working in different institutional contexts. For example, one former trainee explained how there was a lack of recognition that as a qualified teacher she may not be aware of specific institutional practices, although there was an assumption that she would.

I just get asked for stuff ... personal tutor files, teaching files, registers, SMART targets, C4C forms, tutorial specs, profiles, destinations etc. via email from my HOD and I just ask (well shout out in the staffroom) to whoever listens on how the heck to produce this paperwork!! (Former pre-service trainee focus group)

The assumption by institutions that former trainees are able to participate fully in a community of practice upon completion of the PGCE/CertEd is problematic. Whereby former trainees may have been given affordances based on their status as a legitimate peripheral participant in training, they may not be given such affordances when they practice as a qualified teacher. Data from focus groups and the interviews with former trainees indicated that affordances such as time and fewer responsibilities were often taken away quite suddenly upon completion of the teaching qualification; they were assumed a full member.

I feel totally alone and have absolutely no support as or recognition as a NQT. I guess this comes with my chosen career path in HE but it is so hard. It feels near on impossible to get thru first year of teaching, with all the prep that is involved, without support/ time/ recognition as an NQT. (Former pre-service focus group)

However, issues of time and support are unavoidably tied up with issues of funding with regards to the experience of former trainees. Money as a factor affecting support was also identified by all of those that contributed to the focus groups and interviews. There was some indication that full members of communities of practice did acknowledge the precarious position held by former trainees as somewhere in between legitimate peripheral participants and full members, however, an official acknowledgement of this by the institution would be costly.

If teachers are classed as NQTs they must have a reduced timetable and who wants to promote that?! (Former pre-service focus group)

Within the teacher educator focus groups, there was some recognition of how former trainees might be supported in ways that did not involve additional resources, for example through existing online communities, and a rejection of a narrow emphasis on time and resources: 'People think you need money' (teacher educator focus group). However, there was a more widespread acknowledgment that a lack of funding meant support relied on cultures of 'good will'.

Cultures of good will in the education and training sector were often seen as a factor affecting the support of former trainees. However, engaging in practices of 'good will' could also be considered part of becoming a full member. The teacher educators' focus groups all commented that in the context of 'zero-funding' teacher educators negotiated conflicting desires to support former trainees while also maintaining an acceptable work-life balance. Further to this, the former trainees themselves relied heavily on 'good will' for their support, whether that was from former tutors or current colleagues.

I mean my colleague, who's in our area, he was really good with me, he spent quite a lot of time with me showing me, but it was informal (Former in-service trainee interview 1)

For a former in-service trainee interviewed that was not teaching in further education and was now working in a private provider, the absence of a culture of good will meant he relied heavily on the good will of his former tutors and he felt a disconnect from his teaching practice and his colleagues.

I'm completely responsible for anything I do, I have no one guiding me at all, it's every man for themselves (Former in-service trainee interview 2)

However, the idea of 'stepping up to the mark' or proving oneself in the workplace was echoed in the concerns of former pre-service trainees whose precarious identities stopped them seeking support, thus preventing full participation.

With regards to the barriers, partly I agree yes it is time, but for me but asking for help is perceived as a weakness. I am paid to do a job n it is expected I do it! It can be seen that the nature of identity as either full participant or legitimate peripheral participant may affect the support and development of former trainees in the education and training sector. Some former trainees may choose not to be involved in support initiatives, with some regarding support as connoting 'deficit'. This idea was supported by data from one of the former in-service trainee interviews, whereby the participant was reluctant to be labelled as a 'former trainee', as he had been teaching at the college before he embarked on his teacher training qualification. He expressed his support needs in terms of those that would be necessary for any teacher in the education and training sector, thus considering himself a full participant in the community of practice where he worked.

KL: So currently, what does the college do to support you as a former trainee?

FT: I can't think really, cause you say former trainee but it's my 4th year this year, I mean for the admin stuff they do put things in place across the college for everyone to do because some of the stuff is new, but even if you are an old teacher or a new teacher we still move through different specs and stuff but we don't seem to have had any training on how to deal with that or time to develop what we are looking at (Former in-service trainee interview 1)

However, former pre-service trainees discussed issues of asking or receiving support as related to institutional cultures, which inhibited their development as teachers.

I do often avoid asking Qs purely as i don't want to seem a pest, but also seem as though I am not worth my position (Former pre-service trainee focus group)

The quotations above highlight the fragile and precarious identities former trainees may hold and how that may affect the experience of being a former trainee. Whilst most of the former trainees identified themselves as such, there was a certain amount of ambiguity surrounding the official status of a former trainee in the education and training sector. During the introduction to the former pre-service trainee focus group questions were asked by participants as to whether they qualified as an NQT.

If I have worked first term as a lecturer in one college and worked rest of term in another college does that qualify as 1 NQT year? (Former pre-service trainee focus group)

Similarly, some participants also responded with sarcasm in response to a question about the support former trainees received.

What is NQT? [wink emoticon] (Former pre-service trainee focus group)

Discussion and conclusions

It appears that the former trainees in our study perceived themselves to be peripheral participants by assuming the identity of an NQT or former trainee; however institutions did not always recognise this. For those institutions that did, former trainees were given support as a continuing legitimate peripheral participant for full membership of that community. However, for those that did not recognise the legitimacy of this identity, there was an assumption that former trainees were full members upon completion of the teaching qualification. The former trainees in our study often felt marginalised by their lack of confidence and their support needs as full participants. They felt that to assume the identity of a legitimate peripheral participant, would undermine their position, and have financial implications for the communities they were participants of. Given this finding, the development of communities of practice outside of the workplace may be useful in enabling former trainees to access support in the process of becoming a full member that does not undermine their identity as a qualified teacher in the workplace. In austere times, it may be possible to build online communities of practice for former trainees to share and develop practice to bring to the workplace, and may reduce feelings of isolation and marginalisation. However, it is important that these online communities do not contribute to enabling the

structural constraints of austerity in post-compulsory education to remain hidden, but empower individuals with the confidence to actively challenge those constraints. Using a Community of Practice framework, this paper has explored those confusing and contradictory experiences that are exacerbated by the nature of funding of the education and training sector in austere times, and argues that communities that could offer developmental support to former in-service trainees are increasingly fragmented. Whilst a community of practice framework acknowledges the ways in which social and historical contexts affect communities and shape the practices within them, it does not account for the ways in which a person may negotiate the transition from legitimate peripheral participant to full member within those contexts. Our data supports a critique of communities of practice framework as neglecting conflict and power relations within communities and organisation (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson & Unwin, 2005), by showing that conflict and tensions within these communities arise from external pressures (such as policies that place increasing demands on the FE workforce), which in turn affects the extent to which former trainees seek support to become full members 'asking for help is perceived as a weakness. I am paid to do a job n it is expected I do it!'. To this end, this paper argues that there is a need for communities of practice in the education and training sector to recognise the identity of former trainees and legitimate peripheral participants as continuing beyond the completion of a teacher training qualification, and acknowledge that legitimate peripheral participation is a vital stage in becoming a full member, and a confident capable teacher.

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Promoting academics' development in multiple communities through creating an 'expansive' workplace learning environment (Cypriot case study)

Irina Lokhtina

Introduction

This paper as part of a larger study explores the learning practices of a specific group of adults, those working as academics in Cypriot public universities. Drawing on the concept of learning as socially situated within communities of practice (CoPs) (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), this paper seeks to gain a better understanding of the extent to which power inequalities (Busher et al. 2007) and access to resources are critical to academics' development.

The research findings shed light on academics' lifelong learning experiences along with neoliberal economic policies (Leathwood and Read 2013; Teelken 2012) and increasing inequalities in higher education (HE). This paper concludes that the study of the participatory practices of academics with peripheral or boundary roles (James et al. 2015) provides a lens through which their learning needs can be better addressed. Thus, it is argued that researchers need to recognise the complex nature of academic communities as learning sites which may either encourage and assist the development of academics or negatively affect their participation (Fuller and Unwin 2003), resulting in shifting identities.

Background and context of the research

Learning practices in light of changes in HE institutions

As stated in the introduction, learning is operationalised in this paper as embedded in ongoing social practices (Eraut 2004; Fuller and Unwin 2003) as opposed to the standard paradigm of learning derived from teaching in educational institutions (Beckett and Hager 2002; Sfard 1998). Thus, academics' learning outcomes are considered as inseparable from their participatory experiences within workplaces (Lave and Wenger 1991). However, based on the existing critique of Situated Learning Theory, this paper considers a more *dynamic* setting of academic workplaces (James 2007; Fuller et al. 2005) in contrast to *stable* and *cohesive* sites (Lave and Wenger 1991). This argument is based on evidence of enhanced accountability, increased control over performance, and a rapid decline in tenure-track appointments (Davies and Thomas 2002). Notably, coupled with the economic downturn, universities decide on more varied and flexible employment terms, including administrative positions related to research (Castelló et al. 2015), temporary contracts (Davies and Thomas 2002) and adjunct faculty (Wolfinger et al. 2009). As such, it can be argued that an academic career has become a risk-career (Castelló et al. 2015), which no longer includes a straightforward progression. As a result, academics cross boundaries within and beyond HE institutions and position themselves differently from those academics already established in their fields (James 2007).

Although much has been written on the impact of new-managerialist practices on academic work (Leathwood and Read 2013; Teelken 2012; Davies and Thomas 2002), what remains to be understood is how academics reconstruct their identities within the contemporary context of austerity. Thus, this paper seeks to explore the learning experiences of those academics who make lateral moves across different academic communities (James 2007). In so doing, this paper will challenge the notion of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) (Lave and Wenger 1991) as a form of relationship between new entrants and old-timers and a direction towards full participation in shared activities (Wenger 1998).

Similar to other European and non-European countries (Persianis 2000), the Cypriot academic world, which is relatively young (around twenty five years), has been experiencing changes facilitated by globalisation (De Wit 2011) and reorganisation of public institutional structures (James 2007). Even though Cypriot public universities are established by law and financed mostly by the government (Education for All 2015), the Education Committee of the Cyprus Parliament have continually debated the necessity for a stronger regulatory framework through the 'Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in education' (CYAQAAE). In this framework, it is anticipated that the required measures, which will be handled through a close relationship between public universities and the government, are on the way. However, these measures open up a new debate on whether academics will benefit from these new policies or will continue facing tensions regarding their careers.

The research study

This paper draws upon a qualitative study which aimed to gain insights into how academics (20) develop their careers in Cypriot public universities. In-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed a deeper understanding of their shifting identities and the complexity of their learning experiences as told narratives (Creswell 2003). This paper explores the biographical accounts of the four academics who experienced their lateral moves across academic CoPs (Anna, Antonia, Andrea and Demetris – the pseudonyms). As such, the conclusions drawn from this research intended to uncover in-depth insights into participatory practices and the lived experiences of academics as adult learners, but not to make any generalised assumptions.

Discussion of findings

In telling their stories, academics uncovered a wide range of data relating to the origins of participatory practices within CoPs, that signposted the transformation of academic workplaces, including the perceived power inequalities between academics.

Peripheral participation as a lifelong learning process: mystifying reality

Along with the intensification of academic work (widely addressed in this study) and simultaneous participation in multiple communities, academics revealed similarities in terms of perceived isolation and limited collaborative experiences at the edges of academic CoPs. Academics who experienced lateral moves across academic CoPs explained that their peripheral participation was full of challenges and uncertainties. They reflected on the perceived struggle between their constructed academic identities (due to their old-timer credentials) and the demands of a new community in which they participated as newcomers. For example, Anna felt ignored by more

experienced colleagues and her words reiterated Knight and Trowler's findings (1999) regarding the importance of induction in coping with uncertainties and unfamiliar dilemmas of new roles:

I have not got any support. Nothing, zero. It was just me and the courses I had to teach. (...) This was something that has been bothering me for quite some time when I came here, because when you come to a new institution you would expect somebody at least to take you around, to show you the premises.

Even though newcomers did well in learning multiple roles and new responsibilities, they did so with certain constraints since intuition rather than open communication with old-timers (when dealing with unknown practices) prevailed. Newcomers who ended up alone at the edges of departmental communities remained marginal (Wenger 1998) and felt disconnected with the faculty life. Instead of diverse learning opportunities they were hindered and even restricted from mutual involvements into shared practices that resulted in the loss of their status benefits (James 2007).

Antonia evidenced that the process of her adaptation to a new community was problematic and unsafe. She recalled her unmet expectations and disappointment:

I felt that people were biased with me because (...) I was not a 'good' girl in terms of: 'I am going to tell you what you would do' (...). I am not like that, I am a straightforward person.

Her experience challenged Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisation of LPP which gives newcomers access to build up mutual relationships sustained around a relevant practice, starting from passive activities (but alongside old-timers). In telling their stories, academics consistently emphasised the demanding and conflicting nature of their peripheral participation due to the existing power relations with old-timers (Jawitz 2007). Antonia described her interpersonal relationship with more experienced colleagues as insecure and questioned how she could be productive and engaged with the shared repertoire of practices, if she experienced constant anxiety:

I have never had a proper induction and I have never had a mentor at the University. I have to say that was really bad: bad for the University because if I was in a better position, I am sure that I would have given more to the University. (...) Sometimes (the professor) would be also insulting (...). I know that he is not like that with everybody.

Indeed, some old-timers do not spend time and take responsibility to induct newcomers, that otherwise could have ensured the development of CoPs (Viskovic 2005). In other words, instead of supportive interaction, mutual work and collaborative culture (Ng and Pemberton 2013), academic communities nurture isolation and 'competitive individualism' (Yandell and Turvey 2007; Viskovic 2005). Similarly, Demetris admitted that he felt isolated once he joined the department:

It seems that it is rare at least from my experience (...), to have people that have the time or the willingness or the motivation to be there and mentor you. It seems that everyone is there doing their own little thing, they cannot be bothered.

Yet while academics described their lateral moves across different CoPs, their narratives inevitably opened up some of the complexities involved in the situated negotiations with old-timers. Anna reflected on her conflicting feelings about a

transitional period to a new departmental community that did not allow her to feel comfortable participating in common practices with some colleagues:

Even though, orally it was an invitation for us, for new members of the department to approach the older members of the department, (...) we did not really receive any invitation. Maybe they expected us to go to them, but as persons they are not very welcoming. (...), so you do not feel comfortable to approach them and discuss your work and your area of research.

Due to restricted participation, Antonia reconciled her membership and ended up with a protest against limited acceptance by the community once her colleagues expelled and marginalised her, while legitimising her role (Hong and O 2009):

I never felt security in the program and I never felt security with two colleagues of mine.

Her peripheral participation was full of problems in terms of existing inequalities (Jawitz 2007). Similarly, Anna was restricted from getting access into deeper areas of the community, and she widened her participation outside her department:

...because very often within the department what we get is that older people who are trying to influence new ones.

Her experience contradicted the arguments of Wenger (1998: 100) on the peripherality as providing a sense of how the community operates. In contrast, Anna experienced loneliness while performing tasks and had to figure out how to survive on her own that transformed her identity:

...because sometimes you get overwhelmed, disappointed and you feel like you want to stop but you cannot because of the pressure of the University and, of course, your own pressure.

As a result, Anna was simultaneously undertaking the roles of a novice and of an experienced academic while functioning in *in-between* spaces between different CoPs (James and Busher 2013). Lave and Wenger's explanation of LPP limits our interpretation of such lateral moves that may make experienced academics renegotiate their participation by redefining their identities (James 2007). In this study it is argued that such forms of participation in academic communities can be better understood in light of the externally imposed changes which have been internally developed in HE institutions (Bleiklie and Kogan 2007). As Andrea explained, the mismatch between the demands of her disciplinary community and the University negatively shaped her identity and learning experiences:

In Greek Universities we are able to decide about the way and the time we feel ready to continue. Here, in Cyprus things are different. For me after 3 years, the HR will send a letter (...) that now, after three years I am obliged to continue for my progress. (...) If I were in Greece, I do not think that I would be very interested in continuing in a very fast way.

In this way she expressed her worries about the obligations for a continuous upgrade. Such experiences challenge Wenger's (1998) theorisation of power which cannot explain adequately how the wider dynamic institutional context shapes practices and identities of the participants. However, belonging to different communities within one sphere of activity may cause congruence (Edwards 2007) or

lack of congruence in identity formation that may provide rival interests between individuals and communities (Castelló et al. 2015):

I disagree with having any kind of quota in how many papers you need to publish; publishing just because you have to publish. It is like having a policeman saying 'I have to give 10 tickets today, 10 speeding tickets today, because it is my quota', but this does not make sense. (Demetris)

Andrea was also disappointed about the existing obligations to produce in order to comply with an enforced ranking system. She highlighted that the decision on whether academics want to be upgraded is likely to be a personal matter rather than an organisational issue. Otherwise, her academic life was a constant struggle for resources:

It is important for us to publish in 'good' journals, (...) that someone has decided to count as good journals. (...) We are members of a factory. (...) We are obliged to quantify everything. I want to resist (as much as I can) to that way of working.

Conclusion

The academics' narratives, reflecting their practices as adult learners, explicitly described their peripheral participation in academic communities. They perceived their transitions between academic CoPs as challenging processes because they ended up working from positions at the margins due to existing power inequalities. In this context, the interviewed academics experienced uncertainties in self-identification that caused difficulties in explaining the meaning of what it means to be an academic.

Power inequalities in academic workplaces

The study showed that academic CoPs do not always embed collaborative and harmonious relationships as set out by Lave and Wenger (1991). Even though the interviewed academics were treated as members of the communities, they remained peripheral participants that triggered their feelings of lost status benefits (James 2007). Instead of building up mutual relationships sustained around a relevant practice (Lave and Wenger 1991), there were instances when old-timers disabled the peripheral participation of the academics with boundary roles (Busher et al. 2007; Hughes et al. 2007) by manipulating, discriminating them that directly restricted their academic autonomy. This finding questioned the theorising of peripherality as involving a deepening participation within a community (Wenger 1998).

Moreover, this study added new insights into Wenger's (1998) considerations of power by considering the influential role of the wider dynamic context of HE (James 2007) that is significant in shaping academics' forms of participation and their identities. Such influences, mainly in the form of external control over academic work (Kolsaker 2008), were translated into pressure that academics encountered in workplaces. As a result, the interviewed academics recognised that task mastery (due to developed old-timer credentials elsewhere, before entering a new CoP) on its own could not be perceived as a prerequisite for their full membership in new departmental communities. Instead, regular feedback and mutual discussions with old-timers about the community itself could have allowed them to gain a shared understanding of the domain of community knowledge in order to continue acquiring competence (Eraut 2004).

Based on evidence of academics' isolated practices and power imbalances, the provision of more coherent and consistent guidance about departmental life could enhance academics' situated learning experiences, and thus add value to the continuity of departmental CoPs. It is evident from this study, that it is timely to nurture academic CoPs through cultivating an institutional climate of enhanced citizenship and cooperation. This is because HE involves knowledge development, which is likely to be achieved through the participation and negotiation of old principles of disciplinary communities through new perceptions and practices across departmental CoPs.

Recognising the significance of a more intense involvement of academics in core practices across CoPs to their learning, widens our understanding of the importance of *expansive* working environments (Fuller and Unwin 2003) to the formation of academics' disciplinary identity. Indeed, *expansive* forms of participation can encourage academics to develop their sense of belonging to their CoPs, broaden the repertoire of practices (while they encounter new situations in *in-between* spaces (James and Busher 2013)) and become better prepared to the challenges imposed by new-managerialist ideology.

This study has provided a framework in which policymakers and academics can explore the challenges academics (as adult learners) experience when joining new communities. However, more studies should be conducted at the local level in order to better understand academics' participatory practices and the formation of their identities, especially with the establishment of the unified CYAQAAE for HE institutions.

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Creative and Transformative Pathways and Possibilities: Adult Literacy Educators' Conceptions of Social Justice

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Abstract

This completed empirical study explored the conceptions of social justice of 20 literacy educators working with linguistically and culturally diverse adult learners in secondary schools and adult learning centres (ALCs) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. The study compared the educators' conceptions of social justice education with elements of transformative learning theory and the literature on peace and social justice education. By tapping into psychological, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive learning processes, educators can work toward a process of transformative learning.

Purpose of the Study/Theoretical Framework

Transformative education within a context of social justice involves teaching for personal, social, and global change. Learning involves experience, discovery, reflection, perspectives taking, relationship building, and potentially, a significant shift in one's beliefs, values, and actions (Miller, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2002; Taylor and Cranton, 2012). A transformative approach to education challenges the narrow content of authorized curricula, hierarchical forms of power in the educational systems, and the preparation of individuals to be consumers in a society where materialism, competition, and technological advancement take precedence over spiritual growth, compassion, and the development of cultures of peace.

As an educational researcher, I wanted to investigate the way adult literacy educators conceptualized teaching for social justice and peace education. Kelly and Minnes-Brandes (2010) write that "teaching for social justice involves a vision of the society we hope to create but it also necessarily focuses attention on material social inequities, winners and losers, the painful legacy of colonialism, and so on" (p.18). I wanted to explore the teachers' perspectives on working with adults from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. What values and beliefs inspire them to teach from a social justice lens? Which adult learners continue to be underserved? Why? What hopes do educators have for their students as potential agents of change in a globalizing world? Greene (1997) writes about the "transformation, openings, and possibilities" for teachers to be catalysts for positive change and "new imaginings" of a world that is peaceful and accepting of diversity. Along similar lines, Hill (2008) views learning as a "lifelong adventure" that is situated as a "quest for truth, authenticity, and what is right" (p.89). Future studies of literacy educators' perspectives on teaching for social justice and peace education could inform and enlighten educational program planning (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014).

Linking Social Justice and Peace Education to Transformative Learning

Transformative learning describes the way individuals interpret, construct, validate, and reappraise their experiences. A fundamental shift takes place in the way they

see themselves and the world (Mezirow, 2000; Taylor and Cranton, 2012). Life crises such as the death of someone close, divorce, a move, trauma, conflict, or war, and the rebuilding one's life in an unfamiliar culture can create conflict, self-examination, reflection, and a change or revision in perspective. Mezirow (2000) posits that transformative learning can be viewed as "an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of one's assumptions and particular premises, and an assessment of alternative perspectives"(p.2). This deeper level learning involves an exploration of the way our own values, feelings, and meanings have been influenced by social and cultural forces. The creative dimension of learning is eloquently stated by Freire (1997) who wrote that "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention; through the restless, impatient, continuing hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p.53). Educators can play a crucial role in helping learners work toward transformative learning (Cranton, 1994; 2006).

Themes that emerge consistently in the various strands of transformative learning theory include critical reflection, creativity, self-knowledge, a reverence for life, democratic discourse, and the balance of attaining collective and personal goals (Taylor and Cranton, 2012). Cognitive, critical, affective, intuitive, and imaginative dimensions of learning are explored (Dirkx, 2008; Lange, 2012). In recent years, studies applying transformative learning to individuals living in an urban setting have advanced our understanding of the contextual nature of learning and the way learning is influenced by factors such as population density, cultural diversity, the presence of financial resources, and access to quality education. A key difference among the applications of transformative learning theory is the emphasis placed on psychological and individual change in comparison to transformative social activism, political change, and critical global awareness.

Teaching from a social justice stance highlight both the teachers' and students' roles in imagining and creating a positive, diverse, and equitable vision for a just society. Kelly (2010) emphasizes that anti-oppression education builds upon an "asset" model of learning; multiple perspectives from diverse student populations are an essential part of teaching for social justice. "As educators and citizens, we need to be concerned about the effects of persistent poverty, cultural imperialism, racism, heterosexism—and the list goes on."(p.135). While teachers alone cannot solve persistent social problems, they are catalysts, challenges, and cultural guides who can assist students as they explore pressing issues of our time.

A Spiritual Focus in Learning

Encouraging students to envision a culture of peace, notes Goodman (2002), "frees their imagination" and empowers them as they see that they and others are working toward a world that values diversity, equity, and sustainability (p.182). Goodman draws upon the work of Martin Buber and Elise Boulding to make her point. The "culture of peace" as Buber wrote, is a vision of "what should be...inseparable from a critical and fundamental relationships to the existing condition to humanity" (p.15). Goodman explains cultures of peace have historically existed alongside and in opposition to "cultures of violence" which are defined by all forms of violence, intolerance and a view of the "other" as the enemy, authoritarianism, propaganda and the exploitation of individuals. In contrast, a culture of peace is a vision is rooted in the reality of suffering and the need for change and transformation. Hall (2002)

and O'Sullivan (2002) emphasize that alternative lifestyles are needed to counteract the negative impact of planetary devastation and rampant globalization.

Transformative learning is described as “a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions” that involves understanding power dynamics and the intersection of race, gender, class, and ethnicity. An “alternative approach to living” that involves “the possibilities for social justice and peace joy can emerge.”(pp. 10-11). Reinforcing this perspective, Miller (2002) suggests that a “meaning-centered curriculum” would not only address the needs and aspirations of students, but it would examine ways to reduce problems like poverty, conflict, mental illness, homelessness, racism, and social injustice. Learning cannot be compartmentalized and viewed solely from a cognitive process.

Research Design

This qualitative research draws upon phenomenography and narrative inquiry. Merriam (2002) writes that “in the same way that ethnography focuses on culture, a phenomenological study focuses on the essence of the structure of an experience. Phenomenologists are interested in showing how complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience” (p.7). Groenewald (2004) explains: “the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts” (p.43). There is also a dynamic and reciprocal nature to the interview process. Kvale's (1996) concept of the “inter view” which emphasizes the interchange of views between two individuals regarding ideas of mutual interest best reflects my intent of the research process in this study. The interview process was not “formulaic” but rather, I viewed it more as a discussion exploring the challenges of teaching social justice themes in today's classroom. Van Manen (1997) emphasizes that there is also the potential for interviews to be transformative in that new ideas and perspectives can emerge for both the interviewer and the participant. In addition to tape recording and transcribing the interviews, I collected field notes which recorded my thoughts, insights, and impressions of the ALC and the educators. The teacher-participants also provided me with examples of their students' work.

In this study, the phenomena related to the thoughts, expectations, and experiences of 20 adult literacy educators in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The participants were experienced educators who had a minimum of 15 years experience in teaching. The interviews lasted 1-2 hours and included questions such as: I am interested in exploring the way race, culture, language, and social class impact teaching and learning. Can you describe your thoughts about how these factors influence your teaching and your students' learning? How hard (or how easy) has it been for you to match your teaching practice to your vision of what social justice education should be? How are pedagogical decisions shaped by your understanding of who your students are? What does teaching for change look like in your classroom? Common patterns and themes that evolved in the interviews included: literacy learning should inform, uplift, and inspire and that raising awareness about human rights and planetary sustainability enriches learning.

Research Findings

The adult literacy educators who participated in this study emphasized the importance of helping foster connections between the adult learners and the larger community—not only in Winnipeg, but nationally and globally. A “transformative”

education encourages insight and empowerment. Learning also involved helping adult learners respond in meaningful ways to the economic, technological, political, and social changes that have taken place in recent years. When I asked the participants to describe their role in the school, they identified themselves as a “problem solver”, “artist,” “visionary,” “cultural guide”, “advocate”, a “researcher,” “challenger,” and “mediator”. They are, as Morrel (2002) notes, using “creative approaches that both disrupt old boundaries and integrate disciplines in imaginative new configurations.” Qualities associated with creativity include an openness to new experience, curiosity, the examination of a problem from multiple vantage points, optimism, and an intrinsic motivation to learn. These characteristics are reflected in the participants’ narratives (Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, 2009).

Transcultural Literacies

Dagnino (2013) and Spivak (2003) emphasizes that more than every, scholars are interested in “writing across cultures” as a way of understanding the intersection of experiences that traverse diverse social, geographic, and cultural contexts. As social, cultural, and literary boundaries have expanded, “a genuinely transnational and transcultural perspective that is capable of encompassing both the literary practice of writers who can no longer be related to one particular ‘national literary space’ and complex articulations that link linguistic, and cultural constellations, but also to the world-wide field of English-language literatures and specific forms of communicative interaction and political conflict engendered by it” (Schulze-Engler, 2009, p. Xvi).

Anna, an English and world issues teacher at a local college in Winnipeg, created a text of “International Short Stories” which featured contemporary writers from Turkey, Egypt, China, Afghanistan, and Brazil as a catalyst for her students to explore and value the perspectives of writers from international settings. How are selfhood and identity, for example, shaped by one’s geographic and cultural surroundings? In a “Perspectives of War” unit, Anna’s students examine the nature of war from different voices that include the voice of a child, a soldier, and a mother whose son and husband were killed in war. Anna explained that reading memoirs like Ishmael Beah’s *A Long Way Gone* or I, Rigoberta Menchu can encourage a greater awareness of human rights and democracy voices of children in war, soldiers, the struggle against oppression, and the concept of “freedom fighters.”

Jerrold, a world issues and English language arts teacher in a secondary school in Winnipeg where over 50 languages (other than English) are spoken, conceptualized his role as challenger. Literacy is a dynamic practice that challenges learners to investigate different experiences, histories, cultural backgrounds, and spaces. Jerrold uses excerpts from Ta-Nehisi Coates’ *Between the World and Me* as an exploration into “racial profiling” and the ongoing discrimination of young African American men in the United States. Texts like these are linked to Lawrence Hill’s *The Book of Negroes* as a way of exploring racism and discrimination across different historical contexts. Reflective thought and active inquiry are highlighted in his classes:

Social justice to me involves identifying the hypocrisy and contradictions in our society. As a teacher, you are helping individuals understand their world. Teaching English language arts has the potential to be transformative if teachers are

knowledgeable and are willing to take risks. There is a depth and richness in that is ideal for exploring social issues such as crime, poverty, and marginalization. We still live in a have and have not society. Why? I want my students to investigate this question. I teach books that appeal to young people; the protagonists in novels like Wiesel's *Night* and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy involve young adults facing a society with arbitrary rules. The young person in these novels is the outsider. These texts are disrupting, but in a positive way. The word is a microcosm of the human world. We use language to express emotion-- I encourage writers' notebooks, technology, debates, and creative writing as a way to encourage self-awareness.

Jacqueline, a resource teacher at an ALC emphasized that museums, community centres, health care facilities, nature reserves (e.g., Oak Hammock Marsh Learning Centre, Lake Winnipeg Resource Centre), and art galleries are all untapped spaces where adult literacy initiatives can emerge. She emphasized that alternative spaces and contexts for learning are needed to engage more adult learners:

School architecture is of interest to me. We need to consider new spaces for learning that provide students with more freedom to design their own schedules of learning. They need to be able to move from a smaller class to a larger forum with greater ease. Teaching is learning and we need to personalize learning more. In my view, effective teachers have multiple ways of engaging learners. Mixing art, screen writing, literature, and inquiry projects that link English language arts, history, religion, and the sciences together will result in greater creativity.... Adult literacy educators are leaders but they are not always given the time, resources, and tools needed to lead.

Martina, a history and English teacher at an adult learning centre in Winnipeg encouraged her students to read international short fiction. They are then asked to write about race, class, and gender as these categories related to issues of personal and global concern. Using biographies such as *Unbowed* by Wangari Maathi, Martina is helping her students integrate linguistic, emotional, artistic, geographic, and ecological literacies. Her ideas and approaches to teaching are consistent with Heather Bruce (2011) who emphasizes that English language arts teachers need to reimagine and redirect the focus of teaching classic and contemporary texts in a way that promotes "empathy for both human and nonhuman species, for the soil, water, and air in which all of life depends" (pp.13-14).

Emotional, Social, and Cultural Literacies

While the teachers did not directly state that they were integrating "emotional intelligence" into their teaching, many of the teaching and learning strategies that they applied reflected, in essence, themes that highlighted self-awareness, empathy, cultural intelligence, and an appreciation of social and global issues. (Goleman, 1995; Magro, 2009; Mezirow, 2000). As Taylor and Synder (2012) note, working toward transformative learning depends, in part, on "educators who helped learners as learning companions to recognize their own expertise and experience" (p.46).

Emily, a literacy educator in Winnipeg, shared her approach to teaching from a social justice stance. "The quote that best sums up my approach is reflected in Mahatma Gandhi's words: 'Become the change you want to see.'" Emily's students read interdisciplinary texts that bridge literature, psychology, sociology, and history. While

students have their choice of project work, she uses “anchor” texts that form the basis of exploring topics such as racism and stereotyping. For example, she explained that Sherman Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* can be used to challenge negative cultural stereotypes and racism toward First Nation People. While set on a reservation in Spokane, Washington, she tries to make connections between the American and Canadian cultural contexts. Her students explore the cultural and historical factors that forced First Nation people in North America to live on a “reserve.” The loss of one’s language, culture, and lifestyle, and the escape of desperation through alcohol and other substances can be explored through a complex if the novel is in a way that integrates aboriginal studies, psychology, history, and literature. As Shilling (2002) observed, “the constant energy of poverty, violence, sadness, family breakdown, abuse, death, assaults, accidents, chronic illnesses, unemployment, and intergenerational trauma paralyzes a community”(p.154). *Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story* by David Alexander Robertson became a catalyst for her students’ research into murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Manitoba. Texts like Wiesenthal’s *The Sunflower* to explore essential questions about the possibilities of forgiveness and compassion. The students were asked to write about a personal situation where they had forgiven someone for betraying or hurting them. Alluding to William Wordsworth’s insight that poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,” Anna’s students wrote about powerful personal experiences: fleeing a war-torn country and navigating a new culture, living in foster homes, financial hardship, and the desire to build an optimistic future. These expressive ways of knowing can encourage self-awareness and personal empowerment. Canadian writer Deborah Ellis’s (2013) *Looks Like Daylight* and *Children of War* include personal narratives of First Nation youth across North America; while many of the narratives are heartbreaking, many examples courage and resilience emerge as young people strive to find a sense of purpose amid chaotic environments. While the journeys detailed in the texts discussed above include many common reference points, it is also important to highlight the uniqueness of each person’s challenge. “Our lives—just like our cultures—consist of many overlapping stories”(Adichi, 2016 p.114).

Erin, a world issues teacher, emphasized the value of historical research with her students. Literacy learning, in this context, involves “reading the world in spaces and social relationships constructed between themselves and others” (Giroux, 1999, p. 287):

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 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 documents of Manitobans-famous, infamous, and not well known. Each student was responsible for developing expertise about a particular person. Often, someone that might have been relatively unknown, and yet they played an important role in shaping Manitoba today. The

students created amazing projects that integrated art, photography, historical biography, and dramatic scripts.

Transformative creativity disrupts “old boundaries and integrates disciplines in imaginative new configurations (Morrel, 2002, p.233). Juanita Johnson-Bailey and Mary Alfred (2006) developed a framework for transformative teaching that is rooted in teacher self-awareness, social justice, consciousness raising, and developing a safe classroom climate that encourages “connected ways of knowing”:

Each class we teach has varied instructional modes (printed materials, audio, WebCT components, video presentations guest lecturer, collaborative and individual projects) and a range of other ways in which students can participate....Perhaps the most often used and most successful building block of our transformational teaching is the use of dialogue, an informal conversational approach for verbal exchanges and discourse—a more formal, linear, and directive methodology. It has been our experience that multiple voices, whether ordered as discourse or free flowing dialogue, produce a symphony of ideas and lay groundwork that supports an environment where change is possible.”

Empowerment (whether it be in the form of helping students develop greater self-confidence or helping them gain the academic and social skills needed to succeed in college and in a career), self-direction, and lifelong learning are overall educational goals.

Conclusion

The world challenges we face today places a greater urgency on educational systems to provide new direction and focus. We are living in a time, notes Hill (2008) of “contradiction and complexity and hybridity” (p.27). Complex problem solving skills, creativity, and compassion are needed as adult learners navigate 21st century challenges. How can individuals help “evolve” the cosmos? (Montessori, 1989).The participants in this study indicate a strong interest, intentionality, and commitment in bridging ALCs with wider communities of learning. The teachers thought “globally” and acted “courageously” in their endeavors (Kelly, 2012). Alternative learning sites could include museums, art galleries, field trips, service learning opportunities in other countries, and neighborhood revitalization projects are all potential new spaces for transformative education. Creative, cognitive, and artistic ways of knowing can be facilitated through poetry, media studies, art, photography, storytelling, and the study of transcultural literature. Self-directed and collaborative learning strategies are encouraged. As a result, discussion pathways examining the intersection of socioeconomic class, gender, culture, identity, and ethnicity within a framework of social justice and action can emerge.

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Addressing gender imbalance in adult education, training and careers: analysis of attitudes in UK school students to studying psychology

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Introduction

Females consistently make up the larger proportion of Psychology students in undergraduate adult education with the UK national average at 79% in 2011/12. This gender imbalance is a long-standing issue in Psychology that continues beyond undergraduate to postgraduate level. Gender bias has gained interest across the Psychology community as illustrated by articles (Cynkar, 2007; Willyard, 2011) in the American Psychological Association's psychology publications. Widening access for both genders within psychology has implications for applied professional practice (e.g. Educational and Clinical Psychology). For example, Murphy and Monsen (2008) report a small and diminishing number of male Educational Psychologists and detail a putative aetiological explanation of gender stereotyping.

That difficulties arise when gender imbalances become pronounced in subject choice has also been noted in other disciplines. In 2012, the Institute of Physics, UK produced a report on gender bias and subject choice and presented the possibility that systemic differences in the presentation of subject choices in the media and schools may prejudice aspirations for girls and boys differentially and act as an aetiological factor for gender polarisation. In discussion of the report the Institute presents a 'woeful picture, with the majority of schools failing to counter whatever external factors drive school children to make such gendered choices'. Addressing synonymous concerns of gender polarisation, recent research with UK pre-tertiary males has identified the importance of raising awareness of Psychology as a 'STEM plus' subject and dispelling myths purporting Psychology to be predominantly about 'feelings' and 'areas of interest to females' (Mercer et al., 2013). Furthermore, according to Equal Opportunities guidelines, any subject demonstrating a gender imbalance ought to adopt strategies to ensure the underrepresented gender is not excluded. In line with all of the above, the primary aim of this empirical project was not about steering adult education choice and associated careers between the genders but rather to mitigate against an under-represented gender being excluded.

Across the adult education sector there are increasing concerns about students' preparation for independent learning and what a particular subject actually involves (e.g., see Rowley et al., 2008). This is pertinent for Psychology which, as a subject changes markedly between A2 and undergraduate level / beyond. For example, Psychology can be studied as either a BA or BSc degree at university, reinforcing the debate of whether Psychology is a 'real science' subject. It is agreed that Psychology is a broad discipline, however in our opinion science is fundamentally at its core and training in scientific methodology (and associated statistical analysis) is essential to the educational process. We believe prospective students need to appreciate these aspects to make a fully informed decision about their adult

education choices. Despite adult student cohorts reporting that they enjoy studying psychology, teachers are frequently faced with feedback that students did not realise Psychology would be 'so scientific' or involve 'so much maths'. A second aim of this project was therefore to promote awareness of the scientific and mathematical content in Psychology with a view to improving retention and performance in adult education.

The primary purpose of this project was to work towards addressing the gender imbalance in adult education in Psychology through raising awareness/changing stereotypes of the subject in the upcoming generation. UK school students were invited to a Discovering Psychology day to promote Psychology as a STEM subject (by virtue of science A-levels being dominated by boys this effectively targets the underrepresented gender in Psychology). Specific aims of the day were to: (i) promote Psychology as a scientific discipline to school students and teachers; (ii) promote Psychology as a gender neutral discipline to young males; (iii) encourage students from science backgrounds into Psychology; (iv) enable school students to gain 'hands on' experience of the process of scientific enquiry; v) promote the Psychology pathway leading to training/careers which welcome applications from males as under-represented in the profession (e.g., Clinical Psychology <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/chpccp/>).

A mixed-methods approach was adopted during the day to investigate students' attitudes toward the study of Psychology and whether these attitudes differ according to gender. This paper aims to address how the findings speak to previous literature discussing pedagogy and (i) inequalities (Davis, 2015; Harman, 2015); (ii) economics (Bailey, 2015; Forster, 2015; James, et al., 2015; Simmons, 2015); and (iii) catalysts and triggers in lifelong learning (Graves, Payne and Saunders, 2015). Furthermore, the paper will look to discuss further the relationship between Government policy decision making, minority groups and STEM subjects within the current economic climate. The paper will finish by examining whether gender-based inequalities that characterise adult Psychology study in the UK (and resulting career choice) are fundamentally affected by the relationship between education and the economy and, if so, similar to most facets of inequality in regard to pedagogy, will likely be disproportionately affected by austerity.

Methods

Participants

Students from years 10 and 11 (aged between 14 and 16) from four schools participated in a 'Discovering Psychology' day. Schools were recruited via open invitations sent from the University of Leicester's existing database of school contacts. Schools were selected on the basis of ability to attend the specified date and those with a quota of approximately 10 students per school. Up to a maximum of 10 schools were able to participate but eventually only four schools attended the date, each bringing between 10 and 15 students. Informed consent and completed questionnaires were obtained for a total of 23 students (11 male, 12 female).

Design

Students completed a pre-questionnaire at the beginning of the day and post-questionnaire at the end of the day. Repeated measures t-tests were conducted on

the questionnaire scores (dependant variable) with the independent variable being time (2 levels pre-post activities). Between group t-tests were conducted on the change in scores across time for males and females. Students also participated in focus-group discussions.

Materials

Two questionnaires were developed for the research to investigate student's attitude toward Psychology (appendix A). A pre-activity questionnaire contained six questions that probed ideas about career choices; what studying for a Psychology degree entails; the gender that Psychology appeals to and likelihood to study for a psychology degree. The post-activity questionnaire replicated the pre-activated questionnaire and included three additional questions as regards the effect of the day's activities on: (i) interest in the subject matter; (ii) perceptions of what they want to do in the future; and (iii) aspects of the activities that they found most interesting.

Five focus groups questions/themes were also created for the day (appendix B). The five themes addressed: (i) interest in Psychology; (ii) opinions of Psychology as a scientific subject; (iii) views on Psychology as a soft/easy option; (iv) opinions on Psychology as a gender neutral discipline; and (v) views on career options after studying Psychology.

Procedure

Four schools attended the Discovering Psychology day (9.30am to 3pm), with each school bringing between 10 and 15 students and accompanied by at least 1 teacher. The day consisted of a number of activities allowing students to gain insight into the discipline of Psychology. Students were required to complete pen/paper pre and post-activity questionnaires immediately upon arrival and at the very end of the day. The Discovering Psychology activities included a discussion activity (at the beginning of the day, immediately following completion of the pre-activity questionnaire); attending a mock undergraduate Psychology lecture; guided tours of the campus – i.e. the library and student union; interactive demonstrations; poster session (undergraduate work); conducting a mock cognitive neuroscience experiment and analysing results; and a 'drawing a brain' art/design competition. Focus groups were conducted for five groups (four being comprised of students from each school and one group comprising students from two schools). Focus groups were facilitated by teaching staff from the department of Psychology (one leader per group) who assisted with the day.

Data analysis

All quantitative analysis were planned, 2-tailed and with alpha at 0.05. Themes in regard to career expectations were identified from written answers within the questionnaires. For the qualitative analysis, emerging themes were identified and collated onto A2 sheets by focus group leaders. Due to consent not being obtained for all students who attended the day, identified themes from the focus group aspect have not been included in this paper/research. Rather this aspect of the day provided an experiential component for all students rather than contributing toward pedagogic research.

Results

T-tests revealed a significant increase in perceptions of the quantity of scientific content in Psychology ($p < .05$) between pre-post responses to Question 3 (Studying Psychology consists of scientific content) (Table 1). Analysis of Question 4 (Studying for a Psychology degree can involve the following) also revealed significant increases in participants understanding of the extent to which Psychology involves using advanced technology ($p < .01$); using mathematics ($p < .01$); using statistics ($p < .01$); designing experiments ($p < .01$); brain imaging ($p < .05$) and study of how our memory works ($p < .05$) (Table 1).

Further t-tests revealed that change in response before and after activities (DV) between genders (IV) was significant for Questions 3 (studying Psychology consists of scientific content) at $p < .05$ and Question 4 (Studying for a psychology degree can involve the following) using mathematics ($p < .05$); using questionnaires ($p < .05$) (Table 2). Increase in perceptions of the quantity of scientific and mathematical content in Psychology across the day was greater for males than females.

Table 1 Mean Scores before and after activities for Q3. Studying Psychology consists of scientific content and Q4. Studying for a psychology degree can involve the following

	scientific	technology	maths	stats	lab	experiments	imaging	memory
before	4.13	3.27	3.21	3.83	3.48	3.52	4.04	4.30
after	4.45	4.00	4.36	4.60	3.911	4.32	4.50	4.64

Table 2 Change in score before and after activities for males and females for Q3. Studying Psychology consists of scientific content and Q4. Studying for a psychology degree can involve the following

	scientific	maths	questionnaires
females	-0.36	0.82	0.18
males	0.64	1.45	0.10

Content analysis of question 2 (Can you identify three career choices for Psychology graduates?) revealed that boys suggested a wider variety of possible careers than girls (Table 3). Both groups included answers of stereotypical psychology professions (e.g., psychologist; medical related (e.g., counselling, clinical)). However, boys included more diverse answers (sports psychologist, criminal psychologist, magician, professional gambler) and girls' answers were more focused on caring and educational professions (nurse, counsellor, therapist, teacher).

Table 3

Question 2 Can you identify three career choices for Psychology graduates?

	Before Discovering Psychology Day			After Discovering Psychology Day			
Females	lawyer	therapists	police	therapist lawyer	lawyer	police	
	therapist	counsellor	police	Law	police	therapy	
	police	therapists	counsellor				
	psychologist	psychiatrist	lawyer	Psychiatrist	psychologist	lawyer	
	psychologist	nurses	therapist	lawyer	psychiatrist	psychologist	
	sports psychologists	therapists	doctor	medicine	psychology	university lecturer	
	Psychologist	profiler	therapist	Psychologist	profiler	therapist	
	Psychologist	therapists	marketer	Advertising	researcher	counsellor	
	psychologist	therapists	in prisons	Psychologist	therapist		
	criminal psychologist	children's psychologist	medical related jobs	teachers	psychologists	nursing	
	lecturer	counselling people	teachers	teachers	counsellor	lecturer	
	nursing	counsellor	doctors	nursing	psychiatrist	counsellor	
	Males	sports psychologists	NHS psychologist (clinical)	psychiatrist	Magical	detective	sports psychologist
		gambler	criminologist	sports psychologist	sports psychologists	magician	criminologist
Poker player		sports psychologist	criminologist	poker player	sports psychologist	magician	
sports psychologist		clinical psychologists	psychiatrist	neurologist	mental rehaber	psychiatrist	
sports psychologist		criminal psychologist	clinical psychologist	magician	detective	gambler	
sports psychologist		criminal psychologist	clinical psychologist	therapist lawyer	sports psychologist	criminal psychologist	
sports psychologist		criminal psychologist	therapist	neurologist	sociologist	magician	
mental psychologist		sports psychologist	psychiatrist	sports psychology	neurology	gambler	
sports psychiatrist		clinical psychologists	psychiatrist	neuroscientist	psychologists	sport psychologist	
psychologist		lawyer	doctors	psychologist	lawyer	school teacher	
lawyer		psychologists	doctor				

A final result of interest is that whilst perceptions of content of degree changed in students, and more for boys than girls, this did not impact on whom Psychology is

thought to appeal to (Q5 Can you mark on the scale below which you think Psychology most appeals to, $p > .05$, mean before 3.53 after 3.40) or whether Psychology will be considered as a career choice in the future (Q8 How likely are you to choose to apply for a BSc Psychology degree after today's activities, $p > .05$ mean before = 3.14 mean after = 3.23). There were no specific gender differences identified for these questions.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that perceptions about the discipline of Psychology can be changed in pre-university students through engaging students in educational outreach activities. Importantly, understanding that Psychology at undergraduate level will involve both scientific and mathematical content increased in students following participation in the Discovering Psychology day. The implications of these findings are that by promoting awareness of the science and maths content in Psychology, retention and performance in adult education will be improved. These findings correspond to the discussion by Rowley et al. (2008) that understanding of the nature of scientific subjects, especially Psychology, ought to be developed in schools (see also Graves, Payne and Saunders, 2015; Osbourne et al., 2003).

Changes in perceptions of the science and maths content pre-post the day were significantly greater for boys than girls. This would imply that girls already have a relatively better understanding of Psychology as a STEM type subject that incorporates science. Hence discussion in the media/literature of Psychology being a soft science/feminine subject appears rather outdated. It would seem rather that girls choose to pursue Psychology with existing recognition/understanding that the discipline contains science and maths. A further point to note is that changing understanding of science and maths content across the day had no impact on either i) whom it is viewed that the degree appeals to (i.e., consistently weighted toward females at both pre and post day) or ii) on degree choice (same likelihood of applying to a Psychology degree at both pre and post day).

Descriptions of career choices that purportedly follow a Psychology degree appear to differ according to gender. This is an interesting finding as it may help explain the gender imbalance in the study of Psychology. A number of putative explanations stem from this finding. The first is that girls understand the career choices after Psychology and are attracted to these careers (e.g., caring and educational professions) and tailor their degree choice accordingly with these careers in mind. Another explanation is that boys are either not attracted to the usual career pathways following Psychology study or that boys are not fully aware of the obvious career choices after university. Another possibility is that boys are aware of evolving career choices (e.g., rise of professional gamblers /internet) but are still not attracted to the study of Psychology. Whilst conclusions cannot be drawn from this study for the reasons for differing career explanations, this certainly looks to provide an area for future study as regards addressing the gender imbalance in the study of Psychology.

Implications for adult education in austere times

Widening participation strategy to heighten participation from under-represented groups in higher education is a key public policy issue. Previous research directly addressing catalysts and triggers in lifelong learning discuss how the application of

appropriate pedagogy impacts on student engagement and retention (Graves, Payne & Saunders, 2015) validating the aims of the current study. The same authors (p. 211) further discuss a disproportional impact of decline in HE provision on students who 'rise above the odds' and the 'closing of doors for such learners' underpinned by reduced funding and subsequent provision (and running counter to important social justice and social mobility agendas in policy). This sentiment is echoed in discussion by Davis (2015) who discusses how rising inequalities have a lasting social and financial cost, and also whether adult education in its current guise can even begin to appropriately address such matters of social inclusion collectively for the common good.

The findings of this current study can also be considered within the parameters of this discussion. That is, gender-based inequalities that characterise adult Psychology study in the UK (and resulting career choice) are fundamentally affected by the relationship between education and the economy and, similar to most facets of inequality in regard to pedagogy, will likely be disproportionately affected by austerity.

A number of recent papers more directly address matters of economics and impact on widening participation. Bailey (2015) discusses how judgement and decision making process underlying choice to pursue university education include factors such as debt aversion and motivation to make money. They highlight in their paper how a general fear of debt in working class backgrounds can work toward prohibiting a university pathway, even in the face of a purported lucrative career benefit. However in other populations, the balance of these two factors might also be considered. In the context of this framework a tentative conclusion might be drawn from the current study that if girls are seeing Psychology as more scientific / mathematical in the first place, with the projected STEM (financially lucrative) career pathway in place, then this might increase motivation towards a Psychology degree even in the face of mounting debt in some participants. Crucially, girls might be more amenable to the substantial outlay in undertaking a Psychology degree with the expectation of more 'financially viable/determined/clear' career pathway.

In the above discussion we extrapolate from findings of studies addressing social inequality to inform understanding of findings of studies addressing gender inequality. We believe it would be further beneficial to learn from studies addressing social inequality in a more generic sense. An interesting point raised by Simmons (2015, p. 354-355) while examining class-based inequalities characterising education in England, describes how the exclusion of "working-class learners from knowledge which allows them to challenge inequality and oppression is problematic in many ways" and that, "it is perhaps helpful to remember that education systems are not just related to economic need, they are also a reflection of a country's broader culture and values and should not be considered entirely within the context of economic need'. As such, the same sentiment could be considered in regard to understanding the aims and findings of the current study.

Future research could include consideration of the impact of WP projects on mature learners and/or part-time provision. Government policy has changed substantially in recent years in relation to welfare-to-work government programmes (Forster, 2015). Arguably, these may undermine social mobility through 'forced' educational programmes. Forster, (2015) reports two mature (male) case studies that illustrate

how mandatory attendance at different government initiatives does not necessarily meet individuals' learning needs or the needs of a depressed labour market. Forster (p. 174) summarises both case studies as examples of people being "churned through government programmes which means, in reality, going nowhere".

Where there is evidence that under-representation in the Psychology professions from males is impacting negatively on education and health professions, any follow on study could perhaps look to engage Government policy makers in understanding how and where mandatory training of under-represented genders might be more fruitful in 'going somewhere'. Along a similar vein, James et al., (2015, p. 274) discuss how adults at a more mature age are 'proactive, highly motivated and committed' to lifelong learning and that part-time higher education should be a key element of the UK's education policy. It would be of interest therefore to see if any expansion on the current study might look to inform widening participation in mature learners in part-time education with a view to addressing gender inequality; engagement and retention in Psychology degrees; and informing policy making.

Further consideration in relation to the theory underpinning widening participation practice and intervention needs to be additionally addressed in more depth in any follow-up study. Inequalities in adult education in specific regard to emancipation are discussed by Harman (2015, p. 232) who consider different approaches to widening participation and present Ranciere's argument that 'equality must be the starting point rather than the end goal of pedagogical relation' (see Harman, 2015 for further discussion). Whilst such ideas were not addressed within the scope of the current study, it is noted that Harman's paper questions the direction that can be taken for how we 'do' Widening participation. As a direction for future research this is perhaps something that should be considered further in regard to gender inequality as contrasted with existing widening participation class inequality projects. Specifically, whether indeed it is the 'responsibility of academics to draw attention to inequality and oppressions as the oppressed are often unable to speak for themselves' (McNay, 2014 cited in Harman, 2015, p232) and to adopt this approach accordingly; or alternatively, whether to adopt the alternative approach which would be by challenging institutional and departmental cultural and social values rather than retrospectively applying remedial (corrective) approaches (see Harman, 2015 for further discussion). Taking this latter approach further, equality in pedagogical widening participation projects might best evolve from learning together with prospective students. These latter 'performative' approaches look instead to embed implicit good pedagogical good practice in order to instigate social change and transformation (Harman, 2014).

In summary, this paper has attempted to discuss further the relationship between Government policy decision making, minority groups and STEM subjects within the current economic climate. It is concluded that gender-based inequalities that characterise adult Psychology study in the UK (and resulting career choice) are fundamentally affected by the relationship between education and the economy and, similar to most facets of inequality in regard to pedagogy, are likely to be disproportionately affected by austerity.

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Appendices

Appendix A

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Appendix B
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Subjects in formation: women's experiences of Access courses and entering Higher Education.

Sherene Meir

Introduction

This paper will outline the theoretical framework and methodology for my research on the ways in which studying on an Access courses can impact on adult women's interpersonal relationships beyond the classroom, exploring subject formation through the process of returning to study. At the time of writing I have only just received ethical approval for my research so am drawing on interviews conducted by previous studies into the experiences of mature female students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds entering academia as a basis for discussing the rationale for my research. Penny Burke and Sue Jackson argue that despite increasing access to higher education (HE), social inequalities based on class, race and gender continue to be reproduced within the system, partly through HE cultures that still 'privilege masculinist epistemologies and legitimise the values of and assumptions of middle-class and white racialised dispositions' (2007: 17). Through analysing the personal impacts of inhabiting institutional spaces that privilege academic forms of knowledge and require knowledge to be performed in particular ways, I will consider the relationships between knowledge gained by women through their lived experience, and knowledge validated through and within academic discourse, looking at the psychosocial impact of disjunctions or separations between these epistemologies and associated ways of being.

In studies of female mature students from working class backgrounds, women frequently allude to tensions between the identities that they are required to develop and perform within HE and those that they inhabit within existing social networks or contexts (Merrill 2015:1865, Reay 2003:306, Skeggs 1997:11, Edward and Ribbens 1997:7). Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalism and the binaried modes of thought it perpetuates can offer a useful way of analysing the mechanisms by which normative epistemologies within HE (and more broadly) impact on subject formation and will inform my theoretical framework. My research aims to explore how inhabiting institutional (and social) spaces that privilege middle-class, white, masculine epistemologies impact on women's subjectivity, looking particularly at any changes that may occur in their personal lives as a result of participation in HE. My broader aim is to explore whether analysing tensions that emerge between identities performed within HE and in women's personal lives is a useful route to beginning to articulate an ethical imperative for the acknowledgement of different epistemologies and ways of being within HE. Focusing on Access courses allows me to look at a particularly transitory educational phase within a non-traditional academic route; during an Access course students' self-perceptions may be partially shaped by discourses around what a student 'worthy of university entry' is and the sense that the course is a means by which they can prove their capacity for university level study (Burke 2007: 87).

Deleuze, Guattari and Subject Formation within HE

Deleuze and Guattari's work posits capitalism as a structure that forms subjects so effectively within, and for, its purposes, that their subjection is partially hidden from

them. Similar mechanisms can be seen to be at play in the privileging of middle-class, white, male epistemologies within HE which may tacitly control what are perceived as valid forms of knowledge and ways of being. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that capitalism controls subjects through the creation of a market economy that shapes desires and needs 'amid abundance of production' but ensures that 'lack' remains central, so 'all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied' (2004:30). Capitalism's capacity to 'secure social organization' through this management of scarcity (Holland 2003:5) also requires subjects to behave in particular ways; 'You will be organized, you will be an organism...otherwise you're just depraved...You will be a subject, nailed down as one' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a:177). This imperative to 'be organized' forces humans to conform to particular modes of being in order to be recognised and included within their social context, thus repressing that which does not fit the whole, coherent 'organism' they are required to present.

Burke and Jackson suggest that widening participation rhetoric renders the notion of aspiration neutral, when in reality it functions to pathologise groups whose desires do not accord with notions of success that include university participation (2007:19). This presents participation in HE as a mechanism which can similarly obscure and repress that which is not socially legitimated. The persistence of particular epistemologies despite changing demographics within HE positions certain learners as 'deficient' (Burke and Jackson 2007:20) and hide their role, alongside normative cultural values, in constructing 'ideal' learners in their mould (Beverley Skeggs in Burke and Jackson 2007:20). This can in turn lead to individualised notions of failure for working-class, mature students that attribute struggles to progress within HE to personal deficiencies rather than the unequal practices of social institutions that favour particular groups of students (Diane Reay 2003: 313). Assimilation and success within HE, as under a capitalist system, appear to be predicated on compliance with the assumption that 'organised' or 'middle-class' ways of thinking are superior; whether consciously or unconsciously these notions shape the way subjects think and behave.

Deleuze, Guattari and Feminist Methodologies

Interrogation of the processes by which certain forms of knowledge and ways of being are legitimated and inhabited or resisted by individuals is central to my research, both in reflecting on my own academic practice and in analysing the experiences of others. I am conscious that in seeking to produce 'knowledge' about women's experiences of Access courses, writing and researching within the academic tradition as I am, I risk forcing women's experiences into predetermined sociological, educational frameworks that diminish the complexities of the social positions that they inhabit. Some female researchers have been concerned with the way 'academic production affects the knowledge produced' (Edward and Ribbens 1998: 5), questioning their own role within the research process. Deleuze and Guattari's work offers ways of understanding how normative epistemologies operate, and their limitations, as well as positing some alternatives which can be seen to echo the intentions of methodologies used by female researchers.

Deleuze and Guattari position 'arborescent' epistemologies against 'rhizomatic' ones. Whilst the 'arborescent system' is structured like a tree, in which a 'hierarchy of meaning and essential truth is implicitly established' (Mansfield 2000:141) and there

is a pre-determined place for individual subjects, the rhizome is able to push 'in a number of directions at once' (Mansfield 2000:143) and avoid being 'overcoded' or categorised into 'pre-allotted identities' (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:10). The arborescent model is stated as the dominant model favoured by capitalism, which controls the way we behave and think, as well as our capacity to interpret the world around us. Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic mode of interpretation, which favours rhizomatic thinking, offers a means of recognising the 'myriad of discourses which intermingle in a given text or event' (Beighton 2015:119) and that are occluded by arborescent patterns of thinking. Learning to interpret the world through rhizomes requires new considerations of the 'kinds of information we assemble and use – the voices to which we listen and the experiences we account for – and...how we craft our explanations' (Biehl and Locke 2010:318). Lorraine Code's discussion of 'epistemic responsibility', in the context of rhetoric used to talk about women, highlights the ways in which listeners 'listen through available narratives, stories, character possibilities, stereotypes', and positions the need to think 'collectively [about] how to produce and circulate new scripts' as an ethical imperative (1995:78).

These shared concerns about our interpretive capacities present the importance of reflexive research methodologies that address gaps in the way particular groups or individuals are represented and emphasise the ethical importance of letting voices from outside academia 'in on the conversation' (Skeggs 1997:2). Skeggs posits this as necessary for 'transforming theory' (Skeggs 1997:2). She alludes to the difficulties of balancing an academic desire to produce coherent, ordered work with the reality of her findings, which unveiled contradictory responses and multiple differences between working class women studying on the same course (1997: 31-32). In their application of schizoanalysis to anthropology, Biehl and Locke attest to the limitations of imposing ordered theory onto individuals lives through recognising that 'in the field, the unexpected happens every day, and new causalities come into play' (2010: 317). They offer a framework for beginning to understand and interpret lived experience as an ongoing process without fixed significations, by reading people's narratives for their 'efforts to exceed and escape forms of knowledge and power and to express desires that might be world altering' (Biehl and Locke 2010:317). In referring to the women in her study as 'active in producing the meaning of the positions they (refuse to, reluctantly, or willingly) inhabit' rather than as 'ciphers from which subject-positions can be read off' Skeggs (1997:2), too, suggests that 'possibilities of mobilization' may already be produced on the basis of 'existing configurations of discourse and power' (Butler 1992:13). Schizoanalytic modes of interpretation can offer ways of interpreting women that demonstrate the myriad of 'possibilities' and desires that their lives contain.

Methodology

As I am primarily concerned with women's accounts of how their experiences of studying have impacted on interpersonal relationships, my research will be collected through semi-structured interviews with women who are currently taking part in or previously undertook an Access course. These women will be self-selected and recruited to participate via contacts working in HE or FE colleges. I intend to pose open questions that invite narrative responses in the hope of eliciting answers that reveal as much through the 'manner and detail of the points emphasised [and] the morals drawn' as the specific content (Hollway and Jefferson 2013:32). I will aim to use language that doesn't infer positive or negative connotations on studying or

managing studies alongside personal life, and seek to avoid assumptions about women's experiences, learning from Janet Parr's discussion on the risks of objectifying women through placing pre-existent categorisations upon them (1992:97). Whilst her original interviews with mature female students were based around questions of 'barriers' to learning she noted that the women rejected this word and perceived themselves as successes for returning to and staying in learning (Parr 1992:97). By asking women to reflect on their participation in class and the way they think their teachers and classmates see them, and comparing this with how they think their friends, colleagues, children or partner perceive them (dependent on specific personal circumstances), I intend to analyse the way women's self-perceptions are constructed within and by the different spaces that they inhabit. Through inviting longer narrative answers I hope to be able to listen for 'contradictions, elisions, avoidances' (Hollway and Jefferson 2013:34) that may imply a narrative straining to move in many directions at once and efforts to 'exceed and escape forms of knowledge and power'.

Although enabling alternative voices to impact and shape theory is important, as discussed above, Beighton notes with reference to Deleuze and Guattari that 'the idea of a subject endowed with its own voice' is problematic as often 'just at the moment when we believe we are most autonomous...we are most subject to the order words of the dominant culture' (2015:123). Through using a modified version of the voice centred methodology proposed by Mauthner and Doucet to analyse my data, I hope to consider the complex networks and relations within which women exist (1997:125), the way epistemologies validated within HE impact on the ways they interpret themselves and the extent to which their narratives can be read as rhizomatic and moving in a number of directions simultaneously. Mauthner and Doucet advocate four readings of interview transcripts; an initial reflexive reading that seeks to understand how the plot or narrative told by the speaker is shaped by the researcher's social positioning and emotional responses (1997:217), a second reading for the way the speaker refers to themselves, examining points where the speaker is hesitant or shifts from 'I' to 'we' or 'you' (1997:218), a third for the language they use to speak about their interpersonal relationships (1997:131) and a fourth reading to identify connections between speakers' narratives and broader political, social and cultural contexts (1997:132). This multi-faceted analysis will allow me to consider the way women's voices are constructed whilst remaining receptive to my role in interpreting their interviews. It will hopefully enable me to offer readings that allude to 'the intricacy, openness and unpredictability of individual and collective lives' (Biehl and Locke 2010: 318) which move beyond notions of essential truths.

Mature Female Students Between 'Two Worlds'

Analyses of mature working class female students' experience in HE often describes it as a contradictory experience, characterised by a feeling of having to negotiate an existence 'between two cultures' (Merrill 2015:1865) or attempt to 'mesh two worlds' (Edwards and Ribbens 1997:7). This binaried experience can be read as characteristic of both the narrow epistemological framework validated within HE and of the dominance of arborescent modes of interpretation. For Julia, being 'included' within academia necessitated fully immersing herself in her studies which was experienced as 'important to her sense of self' but also distanced her from other women on her estate; the development of an 'academic identity' precipitated a process of 'distancing' from the social network she was part of prior to her studies

(Merrill 2015:1865). Although Merrill suggests that Julia retained 'some of her past', by positioning the campus as a 'safe space where she could temporarily forget her problems and develop her academic identity and self-respect (2015:1866), academic inclusion, for Julia, appears to be predicated on disidentification with other aspects of her life and identity. Although articulated as positive, this experience can also be seen as indicative of a normative understanding of 'self-respect' being aligned with academia.

Edwards interpreted the tensions that arose in her moving between being with her family and being at university as based on the 'differing socially constructed value bases of 'family'(for women) and 'education', and of what constitutes 'knowledge' and 'being' in each sphere (Edwards and Ribbens 1997:7). This interpretation explicitly refers to an inability to bring alternative forms of knowledge to bear on epistemologies that are privileged within HE and indicates a drive to categorise oneself into 'pre-allotted identities', following Deleuze and Guattari's arborescent model. Although tensions are described as a product of the different ways Edwards was positioned in the two spaces, an additional interpretation could explore whether these social positionings occlude ways of 'being' and 'knowing' that are latent but unable to be acknowledged because they don't fit with socially legitimated categories.

Moving Beyond Binaries?

Beighton, in his discussion of rhizomatic forms of thinking, suggests that we 'understand disorder as a form of order which lacks something'; in fact the presence of multiple discourses intermingling and perhaps in tension with one another holds creative potential and illustrates the 'essential positivity of things' (2015:118). Rather than perceiving the two spaces in tension with one another, it may be possible to explore ways in which women exceed the 'knowledge' and 'being' constituted by each sphere. Whilst important to recognise the power structures that shape binaries such as the separation between public and private, and their impact on women's subjectivities, an approach that seeks to explore and validate subjectivities beyond these boundaries may open up new spaces for mature, female students that challenge the current order. Code suggests the differentiation between public and private is false and upheld by patriarchy (Code 1995:13); perhaps interpretations that move beyond binaries can begin to articulate women's lives beyond available socially legitimated readings and consider which kinds of 'new scripts' we can circulate to support this.

Although mature women participating in HE may experience shifting subjectivities that challenge their sense of stability, their experiences are also often characterised by a sense of resistance and can contain possibilities for 'reworking that very matrix of power by which we are constituted' (Butler 1992:13). Articulating experiences that challenge the deficit model often attributed to older students (Thomas 2015), and positioning their success in broader terms than those articulated in dominant HE discourse, perhaps has the potential to shift epistemologies traditionally privileged within HE. Hoult interprets Jane's account of HE as a mature learner as split between two semantic fields, one that posits a straightforward association of success within HE as representative of 'the natural order' (2012:110), and another less explicitly articulated sense that HE supports an elite, hierarchical social structure (2012:111). Jane's difficulty in disrupting the first narrative, that operates on the

basis of positioning particular subjects as deficient or lacking, demonstrates the power of institutional discourses, yet her oscillation between the two perspectives also suggests an attempt to begin to position herself differently and challenge dominant narratives. Jane's conflictual relationship to HE is shared by 'non-traditional learners' in Weil's study, whose experience in HE are described as 'personally painful' (1986:229). These experiences, however, are also described as contributing to students' abilities to be more critical of institutionally sanctioned forms of learning and develop greater 'socio-political awareness' (Weil 1986:229). Both accounts suggest that adult learners' experiences of HE, whilst challenging (Jane talks of detrimental effects on her self-esteem (Hoult 2012:111)), can also be marked by resistance and a capacity to undermine 'deficit' models of mature students.

Concluding remarks

Whilst I have offered some tentative suggestions of the ways in which schizoanalytic readings of mature women's experiences on Access courses may challenge their positioning as deficient, my conclusions will be dependent on the data that I get from my interviews. I am wary of using experience to validate theory (Biehl and Locke, 2010) and will ensure that, whilst seeking to explore aspects of women's subjectivities that may evade clear definition within existing categories, I may discover women who are 'characterised by a lack of mobility' (Reay 2003:308). I hope, however, to suggest that interpretive modes are fundamental in shaping women's sense of their own subjectivity and explore the extent to which they may be able to subvert dominant epistemologies.

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Pedagogy and Place: What can a place responsive approach contribute to pedagogical practice in Higher Education?

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Introduction

It is proposed that conceiving of pedagogy as a place-responsive practice which takes account of the relational nature of places, humans and other socio-material entities of which places comprise could open up new pedagogical paths enabling more sustainable innovation in the relationships between universities and the wider communities of which they form a part. This could enable Higher Education Institutions to play a more effective role in supporting the sustainable development of communities and making Higher education provision more accessible, inclusive and relevant to participants from diverse community backgrounds. This is considered to be especially important in economically 'austere times' where the diversity of the student body is especially under threat from the marketization of Higher Education and Neo-liberal educational policies.

First, this paper reviews the relationship between communities and Higher Education Institutions. Second, it outlines what is meant by a place-responsive pedagogy from a socio-material theorisation of place and space. Third, it considers how an attention to place and the development of a place-responsive pedagogy may enable more sustainable relations between HEIs and communities. Finally we consider what a place-responsive pedagogy may contribute to widening participation and the enacting of more inclusive pedagogies for those from non-traditional and diverse backgrounds.

Relations between Higher Education and Communities

An analysis of recent widening participation documents suggests the on going prevalence of a social mobility discourse in the widening participation literature (Harman, 2015). Harmon (2015) argues that an underlying cultural hegemony in HE Institutions remains unchallenged as widening participation appears to be conceived as assimilation into mainstream academic practices of HE rather than the broadening of current institutional values and practices.

Access in itself is not a straightforward issue and there are many factors that need to be considered for students from varying types of non-traditional and diverse backgrounds. Research carried out by Bailey (2015) points to the importance of a general fear of debt amongst a group of working class qualified potential students in the North of England. This in conjunction with their expectation that the costs associated with HE participation should lead to a guaranteed job, and a sense of value for money, influence participation decisions and shape some complex attitudes towards participating in Higher Education. Another diverse group of non-traditional students with concerns for access are part-time students. The Higher education in facts (2015) report identifies the problem of decreasing number of part-time students

across the UK accessing Higher Education as a result of policy and the wider socio-economic environment.

Current retention statistics demonstrate that many non-traditional students who articulate into Higher Education (HE) do not find this process easy and there is a large body of literature which has shown that the transition into HE for non-traditional students is experienced as problematic (Hatt & Baxter, 2010; Roberts, 2011). There is also evidence that many non-traditional students who do succeed in Higher education suffer from a sense of dislocation from their communities as a result of this success (Field and Morgan Klein, 2013).

The issue of retention and achievement of non-traditional students is rarely framed as one of needing to change the fundamental practices of Higher Education. The emphasis tends to be more on providing adequate support, this feeds a deficit discourse of non-traditional students who seemingly just need extra help in order to achieve similar results to those students who come from more academic backgrounds with all the associated social and cultural capital (Roberts, 2011).

The way in which HEIs are assessed and receive funding inevitably impacts on practices of teaching and learning. The 2016 HE white paper informs us that the three core metrics to be used for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) are to remain the same: student satisfaction scores (National Student Survey), graduate outcome data (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education), and continuation rates. It seems that the more the economy is seen to be failing, the bigger the emphasis on using a market model in education. Universities are situated as providers of education with the purpose of: firstly, improving economic gains for those with a university qualification and, secondly, improving the wider economy. This marketization of Education does little to strengthen the wider benefits that communities can gain from Higher Education Institutions. The alternative White paper (2016) in defence of Public Universities outlines the considerable benefits that communities gain from having connections with Higher Education Institutions and the importance of the University as a public good. It also outlines the dangers of reinforcing the marketization of Higher Education and the negative impacts this could have on access and participation for those from non-traditional and diverse backgrounds (Holmwood, Hickey, Cohen and Wallace, 2016).

There has been some innovative progress made in relation to collaborative design of learning environments that afford change and new knowledge making practices better able to connect higher education institutions with communities in new and innovative ways (Cannell, 2013; Macintyre, 2016 (b)). However, there is as yet little research that explores what a socio-material analysis of pedagogy can bring to this wider endeavour of better connecting Higher education and communities with the aim of improving access and participation for diverse groups of students and their communities.

It is proposed that a re-theorisation of pedagogy moving from conceiving of it as a fundamentally human activity to viewing it as a more-than-human socio-material practice (Henderson, 2015) could address these issues. This entails a move from an epistemology of social constructivism that is fundamentally humanistic to using an onto-epistemological approach (Barad, 2007) that is practice based and founded on

the assertion that realities are enacted through the practices in which we engage and that these practices are always social and material.

Place and Space

Changing understandings of place and space in human (socio-cultural) geography have accompanied globalisation processes (including political and economic changes), technological advancement via global networks and changing understandings of identity politics (Fenwick et al. 2011). Early Kantian ambitions emphasised space as a container and Place as static and bounded (Duncan and Ley, 1993). After the 80's a cultural turn, and subsequent material (re)turn, in the wider social sciences invigorated place/space debates. For example, Massey (1994) conceived a new notion of place and space that emphasised place as a dynamic, fluid configuration of sociocultural and political 'flows'. Massey (2005) argues that things do not travel 'through space'/'in space': rather, as things move, space changes according to the relations which constitute it (often as precarious achievement).

In anthropology, notions of place as fluid have also been proposed by practice-based scholars such as Ingold (2008a; 2010a), who emphasises the role of perception to theorise knowledge as a creative entanglement of things with/alongside the environment. Ingold (2000) draws upon Deleuze and Heidegger to explain how people and place are entangled in assemblages in a contingent unfolding interacting process. He argues that people and places are relationally emergent through the activities of both people and many other entities and processes that allow life to unfold (including the weather, the activities of animals, the changing physical environment etc). Ingold suggests that all living beings act within a unified field of relations within which agency is not located 'in' a person or other entity, but is afforded through the connections between the assembled beings. This view of agency highlights the importance of an awareness of these connections and the socio-material assemblages which constitute the students life worlds.

'Environment' is defined by Ingold (2008 a) as productive in the sense that it provides the boundaries for the 'threads' of life of a thing, but also enables such threads to comingle and discharge into other places. Lynch and Mannion (2016) in their work on place responsive research methods emphasise the usefulness of the term 'more-than-human' in that it encourages researchers to notice that any account of people and place cannot be merely a product of solely human actions since we and our environments continually co-specify one another (Lynch and Mannion, 2016:4).

If we take this view then an analysis of place and how agency unfolds through the relationality of **place, things** and **more-than-humans** can help to shed light on pedagogical practices that may enable more sustainable relations between communities and Higher Education.

Place-Responsive Pedagogy

Place-responsive pedagogy, for Mannion et al. (2013), is based on a dynamic relational view of place and people/place interactions and can involve highly educational encounters with the 'more-than-human' elements. The lineage of the term 'place-responsiveness' they trace back to John Cameron (2003), who defined

this as the development of ‘a deep connection with place as an integral element of the culture, enabling us to live sustainably within the environment’ (p. 180). Cameron writes: Place is not the mere passive recipient of whatever humans decide they wish to do upon the face of it. The land is an active participant in a very physical sense . . . it [sense of place] includes a growing sense of what the place demands of us in our attitudes and actions (2003, p. 176).

If we consider the traditional model of Higher Education where students are displaced from their home communities to study within the confines of Higher Education Institutions it is not surprising that many have struggled to adapt and if they do manage to adapt sufficiently to meet the demands of the environment, they may struggle to remain a part of the communities from which they came. This model is changing fast in many respects. For example, now many more students attend local universities so they can remain at home to save costs. Many students study part-time or flexibly on blended or online programmes. However, often pedagogical practices have not caught up with the implications of more spatially dispersed forms of learning and have not realised the potential of harnessing the diversity of socio-material places of learning. When Pedagogy is conceived as a purely humanistic endeavour we miss the richness and potential of the socio-material environment to be noticed and taken account of when considering our pedagogical practice. Wattchow and Brown (2011) identify that if we are to harness place pedagogically, then as educators we are required to have ‘a sense of timing and a feel for the possibilities in our immediate surrounds’ (2011, p. 185).

How can a place-responsive pedagogy enable more sustainable relations between HEIs and communities?

Mulcahy (2012) addresses this issue when she describes how thinking of pedagogy as a socio-material assemblage opens up the responsibility of pedagogy to be more collective and distributed:

“Thinking pedagogy as an assemblage affords a sense of collective responsibility. Pedagogic relations are not the exclusive concern of the teacher. They are embedded in distributed, heterogeneous and specific practices, so responsibilities for developing and maintaining them are similarly distributed and heterogeneous. This opens up a range of processes that form possibilities for a variety of elements to participate and create effects. The workings of bodies, technologies, texts and teaching desire come into view” (Mulcahy, 2012a: 21).

Social constructivist and humanist theorisations of pedagogy lay great responsibility on the teacher. Individual responsibility of the educator can be overwhelming and demoralising. In addition, Biesta (2009) argues the value of education seems to be reduced to what can be easily measured. For example we measure the number of students in useful employment after completing their studies, we don’t look at whether students return to work in the communities from which they came.

A solely humanistic interpretation of pedagogy also misses the opportunity to consider and investigate the effects of harnessing and /or interfering with socio-material assemblages as an essential aspect of pedagogical practice. This only becomes possible when pedagogues are able to notice and take account of the

varying environments that students inhabit and how these environments are constantly in making.

It is proposed that important lessons can be learnt in this respect from community-based projects such as a project carried out by the Open University in Scotland (OUiS) in partnership with the Trust for Conservation Volunteers Scotland (TCVS, a conservation charity). This project explored the use of participatory design methods in engaging older people in Citizen Science (Brown and Martin 2015; Gregory 2003; Bjongvinsson et. al 2012). The role of the OUiS and TCVS was to enable and support community volunteers to design and test solutions to Citizen Science that worked for them. The idea was to draw on and build participants social capital (Bourdieu 1986; 2005) by placing lay voices within professional discourses (Fenge et.al 2011). Macintyre (2016 c) describes how the project team had to learn how to embed design thinking in a wider participatory process that came from the participants and the environment they inhabited:

‘As our relationship with participants developed, talk about design became hidden, embedded in the process. We became confident and comfortable enough to stop talking and let things unfold (Macintyre, 2016 c:4).

The process involved allowing the participants to negotiate the language, forms of participation, technologies and ‘things’ they were comfortable with and that they believed would be useful for the perceived purpose. It meant allowing the participants to work out together how they would intra-act (Barad, 2007) with their environment, what resources they would draw on and what discourse they were comfortable with. Macintyre (2016) describes how the socio-material assemblages changed over the course of the project as participants became more confident with taking risks and experimenting with the previously unfamiliar. For example they started with choosing notebooks for recording data with a proforma inside the cover. This was elaborated on by including pictures and photographs in the notebooks and later some chose to buy tablets and use the OU app ‘ispot’.

Similarly the participants started with familiar places and the everyday which gradually expanded through participation in the project:

Mobility was a concern, so we asked people to “tell us what you see” in your everyday life, to draw these over their personal maps recording the locations and the species they encounter.....For the more mobile the network of paths within town and a local loch were everyday, for others it was their back garden. However, over the course of the pilot most did make “special trips” and got more confident about ranging further from familiar routes (Macintyre, 2016 c:5).

The approach of the project team of focusing on what was accessible and sustainable for the participants drawing on their familiar everyday practices and personal and community spaces promoted a confidence in the process that later enabled some of the participants to expand and extend the places they inhabited through their participation in the project. The participants as more-than-humans were undergoing change but it was a change they felt in control of and rooted in their local environments where the connections were familiar and evolving.

Macintyre (2016 c) reflects on the learning of the project team and In particular the role of researchers (and participants) tacit assumptions in framing approaches, and the need to be open and flexible, to frame and reframe as process and outcomes shift. Arguably these are lessons that would be equally important for moving towards implementing place-responsive pedagogies that can be more inclusive of diverse student populations and responsive to the needs of evolving communities.

Conclusion

Place responsive pedagogy, Widening Participation and Inclusion

A place responsive pedagogy that takes more account of the socio-material nature of the assemblages that constitute learning environments could transform the practices of Higher Education. It is argued that this process could enable individuals from diverse backgrounds and communities to set the agendas for their own learning enabling a greater responsiveness to places of learning rather than a dislocation from communities.

For this to happen pedagogues must be aware of the many elements that make up these assemblages, which can be physical, social, discursive, material, imaginative or cognitive (Renold & Iverson, 2014). Pedagogical processes themselves are inevitably another form of assembling too. Because pedagogical assemblages and those found in the learning environments are changing and unstable, they are continually in a state of becoming different. How we know and what we learn must, therefore, accrue through reciprocal response-making by all of the entities found within assemblages (see Mannion & Gilbert, 2015). It follows that place-responsive pedagogues working with this theoretical framing need to find ways of noticing when and how these assemblage relations shift and what the effects are on learners and learning.

New pedagogical approaches are needed to be open to registers of meaning that are not limited by the dominance of the human or merely cognitive processes. Whatmore identifies a challenge, and requirement, of research orientated towards the more-than-human is to be able to experiment and take risks—especially in methods. She calls for a breakaway from humanist methods of talk and text and a move towards those ‘that amplify other sensory, bodily and affective registers and extend the company and modality of what constitutes a research subject’ (Whatmore, 2004, p. 1362). This paper suggests that the same applies to a place-responsive pedagogy orientated to the more-than-human learner. It is proposed that in this manner widening participation can be reconceived not as assimilation of those with diverse backgrounds into mainstream academic practices but rather the remodelling of current institutional values and practices that include place-responsive pedagogies sensitive to the everyday environments of more-than-human students in all their wonderful socio-material diversity.

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Examining the role and impact of Young Mothers as learners and community builders.

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Young mothers have the potential to contribute substantially to their community's development, yet they are often ignored and stigmatised. My research as a doctoral student at the University of the West of Scotland will explore the potential impact of young mothers in their community and their role as community builders while carrying out their roles as mothers. I aim to highlight and build on the role of 'motherwork' (Hart 2002) and consider how the learning processes involved in becoming a mother can impact on the community. This will also highlight the activities that young mothers carry out which constitute educative work and community cohesion but are not always recognised as such.

Women's own voices need to be heard in the context of shaping their learning experiences and opportunities. In particular, the learning processes that occur when women become mothers should be understood as an educative process that incorporates an awareness of family and broader community relationships (Hart 2002). This important educative aspect of young mothers' potential as change makers will be a focus of my research project. The impact and importance of the educative process of becoming a mother does not seem to be acknowledged in institutions, educational establishments and government policies. My research project aims to explore and build on Daniels' findings that women are 'less visible in research publications and policy documents' (Daniels 2008 p94).

The notion of motherwork is a concept developed by Mechthild Hart as a way to explore women's invisible contributions to society, and to change how we think about education, work and labour. There is a lack of acknowledgment and understanding of the value of the work that mothers do that makes it difficult to be acknowledged in institutions and educational establishments. Hart describes motherwork as a form of subsistence labour in relation to paid and unpaid work, as subsistence work is directly oriented towards creating and maintaining life, motherwork is a form of invisible and unrecognised work. Hart also states that there is a social devaluing of this work which needs to be challenged. Penelope Leach, acknowledges the roles involved in being a mother as 'at least as creative and professional as any high-status job' (Leach in Devlin p4 1995).

Hart also researched the differences of income in relation to societal views of motherwork. Hart's research while not carried out in the UK highlights the differences in many countries in attitudes to mothers living in poverty raising their children and those more affluent mothers who were to be admired for staying at home with their children.

Young mothers provide learning opportunities for their children through their roles as mothers and therefore complement UK Government policies which are aimed at

early intervention strategies, encouraging more parental involvement to encourage social mobility, reduce poverty, and enable young people to reach their potential (Whitfield & Carter-Wall 2012).

Learning has historically been focussed on preparing for employment rather than in its much broader sense as described by Tett;

[Lifelong learning]...is also used widely to blur the boundaries between learning for work (vocational) learning for citizenship (political) learning for personal development (liberal) and learning that encourages participation in education by previously excluded groups (social) (Tett 2010 p35).

UK Government policies past and present have highlighted the importance of learning in the home and early intervention strategies, yet mothers learning roles are not recognised as an important process in lifelong learning.

Gouthro (2005) recognises the importance of the roles in the homeplace and their effects on lifelong learning and notes the 'value of learning experiences that are not connected with the marketplace (i.e. nurturing children, caring for elderly parents) could create a broader focus for lifelong learning' (Gouthro 2005 p15). This is an important concept that educators could take into consideration in relation to acknowledging the roles involved in mothering that contribute to learning experiences for children, mothers themselves and the wider community. Lifelong learning through these roles focuses less on employability and more on life experiences to be valued. There are also valuable skills acquired through the process of becoming a mother which could be transferable into vocational and educational settings.

A national strategy by the Labour Government in the UK promoted learning by stating that it 'enables people to play a full part in their community and strengthens the family, the neighbourhood and consequently the nation' (DfES 1998 p1). The roles and learning involved in becoming a mother can be seen as strengthening family and therefore impacting on the community, but the role of a mother has not been termed as educative in any formal capacity.

A Scottish executive policy document 'Working and Learning Together', emphasises the importance of community development as 'central to social capital - a way of working with communities to increase the skills, confidence, networks and resources they need to tackle problems and grasp opportunities' (Scottish Executive 2004 p8). What is not recognised in this document however is the impact of learning through becoming a mother, another way of increasing skills, confidence, networks and resources.

The Scottish Office identified community learning as 'a number of different types of learning activities, involving a wide range of providers and agencies, and a huge diversity of learners and settings' (Scottish Executive 2004 p7). Perhaps the learning process of becoming a mother could be identified as community learning on these terms.

It will be interesting to explore young mothers' experiences of learning and to find out if any importance has been placed on lifelong learning, or if there is any recognition of the learning inherent in Hart's (2002) notion of motherwork. The Lifelong Learning policy document in Scotland states that lifelong learning 'is about personal fulfilment and enterprise; employability and adaptability; active citizenship and social inclusion' (Scottish Government 2003). Some Government reports have ignored informal learning, (Coffield, 2000) and focus on traditional curriculum based qualifications.

Young mothers can be seen to contribute to their communities through informal peer support to each other, this will be explored further throughout my research project. McGivney looked at routes of progression from formal to informal learning in community settings, her 1999 research focused on delivery of community based adult learning and states that often the location proved more important rather than its actual focus, this highlights the difference that learning in the local community can make to individuals. My research aims to consider the real life experiences of informal, formal and community based learning and forms of community engagement of young mothers and further explore Veronica McGivney's idea that community learning often leads to more active community involvement (McGivney 1999). Previous experience in community work highlights that many people are uncomfortable accessing services and resources in areas unfamiliar to them, McGivney recognises the importance of local provision for all in the community. In the town of Paisley, in Scotland, access to local provisions have decreased due to austerity cuts to local funding.

The area these young mothers live in is in the top 5% of Scotland's most deprived areas (Scottish Government 2012). Current and extensive previous experience of working and researching within areas of poverty has highlighted that many people had often felt let down by their peers and community and had negative experiences of school and low educational attainment (Gallagher et al, 2000; Hirsch, 2007; Cassen & Kingdon, 2007).

The Scottish Government indicates that poverty is not only about lack of income, but the absence of opportunities to access jobs, quality affordable childcare, education opportunities, regeneration of local communities and improvement for access to health and public services (Scottish Government 2012). As this research is being conducted in an area of poverty, and an area affected by austerity cuts, it will consider Freires' views of learning and social class (Freire 1973). In taking a critical feminist viewpoint, UK Government austerity impacts could be seen as a deliberate political strategy to try to return women to a domesticated, disempowered role in society.

In order for young mothers to access local services and combat the cycle of poverty for their children surely it would be beneficial to a community's development to acknowledge the role of becoming a mother as an educative process and a valuable learning experience in itself. This would benefit community development, and contribute to future generations of the community, by highlighting the learning process as an important development to mothers, children and community. This research aims to explore how the modern young mothers of Paisley continue to contribute to their local community.

Research Design

Narrative inquiry was used in Daniels' 2008 research to explore women's experiences in the context of further learning. My research aims to build on some factors outlined in Daniels' research paper, in which 'the main sources of information were to be the learners' and that their 'Stories would be used as data; and learning was understood within the context of everyday life'. Daniels used this form of data collection, in order to ensure 'the diversity of women's experiences can be made visible, and understood' (Daniels 2008 p94).

Using narrative inquiry in my research will enable young mothers to share their experiences of learning in the context of everyday life. This takes into account the

many experiences which young mothers may have each day in terms of relationships, family, leisure activities and within their community.

In order to ensure young mothers stories are heard, focus groups will be considered to facilitate discussion surrounding learning experiences and opportunities. These groups will also enable me to explore what 'community' means to young mothers and gain some insight into participant's perceptions of the topics. Themes and topics coming from these focus groups will be used to shape questions for semi-structured interviews on an individual basis with participants in order to gather each mother's story. Semi structured interviews will enable me to be further explore individuals perceptions and experiences for this research project. This process may challenge their own perceptions of how much they have contributed to their own learning and development, their family, their community and wider society.

The importance of individuals gaining knowledge through interacting with others is one of the principles of social constructivism. Social constructivism views learning as a social process where learners make meaning from experiences (McMahon 1997) this is an important process when relating the process of becoming a mother as a learning experience.

In order to explore how young mothers perceive themselves in relation to their community and peer groups, interpretivism could be a useful framework. Coburn & Gormally (2013) describe this framework as 'an interpreted *representation* of a constructed reality' (p6) their research also notes that 'constructivism and constructionism define reality as social constructed by people' (p6). Constructivism and interpretivism therefore are both useful frameworks to explore young mother's meanings of learning experiences and their own perception of themselves in relation to their community.

Coburn and Gormally's work into connecting youth work and research practices, found that when conducting research with young people there was an 'epistemological stance with interpretivism, constructivism or constructionism' in that people who are 'learning about themselves and their identities' are also part of a 'social group' (p6). A constructo-interpretive epistemology (Coburn & Gormally 2013) was found to be a beneficial approach in their research and may be useful to explore how social interactions and experiences shape young mothers' understanding and meanings of the world around them in relation to their identities as learners and their experiences and perceptions of their community.

Summary

Young mothers work is not acknowledged, the responsibilities of mothering could be a valuable community asset if understood as a form of learning and as an educative process. Hart's concept of motherwork will be used to explore this claim in relation to the experiences of young mothers in Paisley, Scotland.

If lifelong learning encompasses *lifelong learning* then becoming a mother, raising children, self-development, promoting child development and managing the roles involved in motherwork can be seen as lifelong learning. Could there be an opportunity to incorporate these roles into lifelong learning terminology? Could educational establishments acknowledge these roles as accreditation of prior learning if mothers choose to proceed into formal learning or employment? Could policy documents and employment guidelines recognise and value these roles for future families to benefit from?

Young mothers have capacity within their community as change-makers to challenge some of the issues affecting them. These issues need to be acknowledged in current

work and educational policies and will be explored in the content of this research project.

My research in the Paisley area seeks to establish how young mothers roles in the area contribute to community cohesion in the present day. Young mothers in this community are raising future generations in challenging times, as their mothers and grandmothers did before them. The learning involved in becoming a mother and the importance of motherwork (Hart 2002) deserve to be highlighted and valued in all policies. Young mothers' capacity as lifelong learners and community builders should be brought to the fore of current research.

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154 years of transformative learning at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning.

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Abstract

Previous studies on transformative learning continue to employ a qualitative approach often capturing a single often retrospective account of an individual's learning experience. We present a qualitative account of transformative learning of part-time adult learners who have taken/are taking a first degree, foundation degree or a certificate of higher education at the University of Leicester's Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning. The project comes at a time when there are "catastrophic falls in part-time student numbers". Given that England's ageing population has increased, demographic pressures seem unlikely to be a driver of this decline. The decline began before the £9,000 fees were implemented, so is not wholly due to finance (HEPI, 2015). The economic impact of engaging in lifelong learning such as earnings and employability play an important part on the individual and the wider economy. Higher incomes or steady employment lead to better health, well-being and sociability. Other indirect outcomes lead to more engagement with the local community and an interest in political issues (Field, 2012). This paper aims to further this discussion by extending findings presented at SCUTREA 2015 (James, Harrison, Pinto & Syedda). We previously demonstrated that innovative delivery methods such as part-time evening provision results in learners who are proactive, highly motivated and committed. The narratives from these non-traditional students reflected the diversity in their experiences and ambitions compared to the narratives of the younger, more traditional students. The current paper will focus on qualitative data from N= 135 part-time evening adult learners who had graduated or were currently studying on certificate, foundation degree and degree level programmes. Results highlighted a lack of cultural capital often resulting in a barrier to accessing HE at a younger age. However, our results show that once these previously marginalised students are accepted and study at HE level, they reported high levels of personal growth measured by having the confidence to explore new ideas and pushing limits. This is consistent with Mezirow's (1997) theory that transformative learning creates a more autonomous thinking style in the individual and is a driving factor for living an authentic life. All of which is the cardinal goal of adult education. Our results also showed that part-time evening mode of study had a positive effect on social mobility and career decisions. Thus the current trend to ignore this group of students by subsuming them under discussions of widening participation often leads to fewer people transforming their lives. This is having a negative impact on our economy (Hillman, 2015). This paper presents the goal orientations, positive learning experiences, perceived academic stress and quality of tutor-student interaction that currently occurs at the Vaughan centre for lifelong learning. We reveal the nuances in motivations to study at HE and barriers such as support and confidence in ability in this cohort. We also discuss the impact that open access mode of study have on an individual to challenge the undifferentiated assumptions embedded in the concept of the part-time adult learner. The research also aims to

raise the profile of part-time adult evening provision. We expect to provide insights to enable traditional HEIs to find more effective ways to support older, more mature students to engage in HE by acknowledging the beneficial outcomes to both the individual and the wider economy. Overall, findings suggest that context and power effect transformation learning.

Introduction

The Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning

Vaughan Centre for Lifelong learning, previously known as Vaughan College was primarily founded by Revd David Vaughan in 1862 to provide education for under-educated males situated in the heart of the city of Leicester. It quickly grew into a facility for broader adult education and transformative learning for both men and women of Leicester (Brown, 2012). In 1908 Vaughan College obtained its own premises in Great Central Street, then in 1929 Vaughan merged with University College Leicester. This move enabled Vaughan College to offer more part-time certificate courses at undergraduate level, as well as a part-time degree course in Arts and Humanities. In 1962, a new purpose built college within the city centre was erected which integrated with Jewry Wall Museum and an archaeological Roman site on St Nicholas Circle. In 2013 the University of Leicester removed Vaughan College from the city centre onto its main campus where it continued to develop its portfolio under the name of Vaughan Center for Lifelong Learning. Its mission statement remained the same; to broaden access, encourage more widening participation and maintain its focus on open access, part-time, evening provision. This provision initially for the people of Leicester, soon opened out for the people of the East Midlands (due to the demise of similar courses). This activity lasted until June 2016 when plans were announced to shut down the Vaughan Center for Lifelong Learning. This announcement was made in the light of meeting the aims of the University of Leicester's strategic plan. This paper will highlight how the University of Leicester's strategic plans threaten transformative learning such as, social mobility, autonomy and authenticity of adult learners by highlighting the positive impact of adult education at the Vaughan Centre for lifelong learning. This paper builds upon the study conducted by Pinto, Harrison, James, & Syedda (2015). We present a qualitative account of transformative Learning of part-time adult learners who have taken/are taking a first degree, foundation degree or a certificate of higher education at the University of Leicester's Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning.

Transformative Learning Theory

There are three dimensions to transformative learning: psychological changes in the understanding of the self; Convictional revision of existing belief systems; and behavioural changes in lifestyle (Clarke and Wilson, 1981). Mezirow (1997) postulates that a defining condition of being human is a desire to make meaning of our experiences. For some individuals, accepting external influences such as an uncritical explanation by an authority figure is adopted and embodied. This facet of inauthenticity can lead to feelings of self-alienation and maladaptive behaviours such as anger and aggression (Pinto, Maltby, Wood, & Day, 2012) and psychopathology (Pinto, Maltby and Wood, 2011; Wood et al, 2008). Mezirow argues that in contemporary societies there is a need for individuals to make their own interpretations rather than accept the beliefs, judgements and feelings of others. What Mezirow is calling for here is for an individual to develop autonomous thinking and live more authentically. All of which is the cardinal goal of adult education.

However Mezirow suggests that transformative learning usually results from a “disorienting Dilemma” such as a life crisis or major life transition or an accumulation of transformations in personal schemas over time. This results in a change in an individual’s frame of reference by critically reflecting on their assumptions and beliefs and consciously making decisions that bring about new ways of defining their worlds. Thus an important aspect of adult education is to teach critical thinking and critical evaluation all of which underpin transformative learning in lifelong learning. Although Mezirow’s (1997) theory accounts for individual differences in motivation such as self- directness, assertiveness, self-confidence and self-esteem, it fails to consider the role of context in shaping transformational learning (Clark & Wilson, 1991, Taylor 1998). Previous studies have suggested that prior personal life experiences and sociocultural contextual factors as significant in transformative learning. For example students developing an awareness of inequitable power in romantic relationship through studying romantic fiction (Jarvis 1999), or the importance of boundary setting in a Higher Education Certificate in Counselling , or the concept of posttraumatic growth in the aftermath of trauma in a HECert Psychology course (Pinto, in preparation). These are just three examples of the unique context in shaping a transformative experience at the Vaughan centre for lifelong learning. Suggesting that context has implications at both the personal and the social level (Taylor, 2007).

Another dimension of context is the role of national community organisers and social action. Scott’s (2008) social constructivists’ view of transformative learning revealed that transformation occurs in the psyches of the individual as well as in the structures of society. Collard and Law (1989), Cunningham (1992) and Hart (1990) suggest that the context of transformative learning emerges through the exploration of power and social change.

The experiences of part-time adult learners during austere times

Although part-time adult learners have been recognised as a significant section of the HE student population, there is limited research about part-time adult learners’ experience of higher education and more specifically part-time undergraduate students (Callendar & Wilkinson, 2012; UUK, 2013). The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) have voiced concerns that provision for part-time students is often seen as ‘the least resourced, least valued and least well understood’ (NIACE, 2005). There are a wide range of economic and social benefits associated with part-time study, such as enhanced employment prospects, increased labour market mobility, improved self-esteem and greater confidence, which underpin transformative learning. The economic impact of engaging in lifelong learning such as earnings and employability play an important part on the individual and the wider economy. Higher incomes or steady employment lead to better health, well-being and sociability. Other indirect outcomes lead to more engagement with the local community and an interest in political issues (Field, 2012).

Given that 70% of the future working-age population in 2020 has already left compulsory education, lifelong learning and part-time higher education (HE) should form a key element of the UK’s future skills strategy (HEFCE, 2014). The lack of awareness of transformative learning that occurs in this cohort of students is that discussions of lifelong learning are often subsumed under discussion of widening participation which predominately focus on targeting younger students from

underrepresented groups. However in this current climate of austerity, where university leadership teams engage in strategic planning it is important to not only highlight the motivations for lifelong learning but also the benefits of transformative learning that occur in an older student cohort. This paper will include data from part-time adult learners' experiences at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Leicester.

Drawing on quantitative data, this paper reveals the experiences of lifelong learning. We uncover the nuances in motivations to study at HE and barriers such as support and confidence in ability in this older population. We also discuss the impact that part-time, face to face, open access, evening provision mode of study have on an individual. This paper will highlight the value of differentiating more clearly the varying modes of delivery and pedagogical needs and trajectories of this group of learners, and will use this knowledge to challenge the undifferentiated assumptions embedded in the concept of the part-time adult learner. The research also aims to raise the profile of part-time adult evening provision. We expect to provide fresh insights to enable traditional HEIs to find more effective ways to support older, more mature students to engage in HE by acknowledging the beneficial outcomes to both the individual and the wider economy.

Method

Participants

One hundred and thirty five part-time adult learners who have taken/are taking a first degree, foundation degree or a certificate of higher education voluntarily took part in the online questionnaire. Participant ages ranged from 23 -77 years ($M = 46.49$, $SD = 11.32$), 80 females and 55 males. Of the sample 56% were White British, 13% were Black African Caribbean, 8% dual heritage and 13% responded as other. 80% of our students were first generation students, defined by the fact that neither parent had attended university.

Measures and procedures

After giving informed consent participants completed an online questionnaire. Each question was measured using a Likert scale. Questions were designed to measure the following: Motivations for going to university; Experiences of Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning; Barriers to Learning; and positive outcomes from learning.

Results and Discussions

Motivations for going to university:

Motivations for studying at HE level were explored as a key factor for student recruitment. We looked at both intrinsic motivations (subject interest) and extrinsic motivations (improve job prospects). In this study, both current and past part-time adult learners were asked why they decided to go to university. 'To study a subject that really interests me' was the statement that most respondents agreed on (94.3%), 'personal growth reasons' scored 90.2%, followed by 'to gain more skills' (89.3%), 'for myself' scored 88.5%, 'I enjoy learning and studying' (83.6%), followed by 'I wanted to use my mind' 77.9%, which was closely followed by 'To achieve something in life' (73%). All these variables are self-referent and relate to goal orientation and personal growth. Items that relate to career decisions and aspirations such as 'improve job prospects' (68%), 'study topics relevant to my career' (58.2%), 'To train for a job (55.8%), 'to complete my education' (52.4%) 'to earn more money' (38%) and 'bored of my job'(22.2%) are not seen here as high motivating factors, neither are 'for my family' (23.8%) or 'recommended to me'(20.5%). These results are in stark contrast to Higgins et al. (2002) who found that social mobility and career aspirations were goal orientations for younger traditional students.

Experiences of Vaughan Centre for Lifelong Learning:

In total 81% said that they really enjoyed their studies at VCLL and 93.4% of respondents agreed that they found their course interesting, 84.4% said that studying at VCLL was a positive experience and that they 'enjoyed being part of a group of adult learners (66.4%)'. 73.7% of our respondents said that 'the lecturers stimulated my interest in my subject' and that 'the lecturers were good at explaining things (68%) and were approachable (72.9)'. Most students felt that the 'workload on my course was manageable (72.1%)'. The good news is that the data did not reveal the presence of the 'strategic student' which is emerging among the more traditional cohort. The strategic student in this case is one that minimises their own effort for maximum gains, contributing to rising levels of dissatisfaction of academic staff (Lopes & Oudeyer, 2012). For instance only 7.4% of our adult learners admitted to 'only doing the minimum of work that was required of them' and only 19.6% said that 'they often found it difficult to get motivated to work on my course'. An interesting finding was that 72.9% said that they needed to know how 'well they were doing in order to feel motivated to work'. 93.5% were 'keen to learn new aspects of my subject and to explore new ideas'. 86.8% received 'satisfaction from meeting intellectual challenges and pushing my limits.'

Other positive outcomes of the Vaughan centre for lifelong learning, are that part-time adult learners did not feel that 'the university prioritises full time learners over part-time adult learners' as only 37.7% of respondents agreed with this statement. Only 24.6% agreed with the statement 'the university gets money from our loans but does not provided us with specific facilities. As some of our course are open access only 9,8 % of respondents agreed with the statement 'university is only for the privileged'. We also offer distance learning course, however only 32.8% agreed that 'distance learners are not considered real students'. Only 14.8 % of our adult learners which we have aptly named 'the evening campus' feel intimidated on campus when studying in the library with younger more traditional students. Overall 81.2% of our students agreed with the statement 'I have really enjoyed my studies at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong learning.

Barriers to learning:

We also looked at whether students had thoughts of dropping out of university. Our data showed that as much as 22% of respondents had thoughts of dropping out of their course. Out of these 55.5% (which equates to only 6 people) said that they 'couldn't manage time commitment'. 44.4% of respondents said that they could not afford to pay for their course (perhaps because they had already received funding for an earlier course). This has implications for the way that adult education is funded. 'I didn't have support at home' and 'I didn't have sufficient IT skills' both (22.2%) were the third reason for dropping out. 'It wasn't the course for me', 'I failed the course' and 'I couldn't get any funding' were rated equally in their responses (7.4%).

These same respondents were then asked about their motivations about reconsidering and staying on the course. 'My career aims stayed the same', 'I became more confident', 'I began to enjoy my studies more' and 'I got support from my family and friends all scored around 39 %. Followed by 'I got support from my tutors' (34.8%) and 'I began to enjoy the course more' (30.4%) were all fairly moderate contributing factors to student retention. These factors were then followed by variables such as 'I passed my assignments' (26%), 'I was supported by my peers on the course' (17.4%), 'I couldn't decide on another course' (13%), 'I received support from student services' (7.4%) and 'I was able to get funding' (4.3%).

Outcomes of studying:

When asked about what our Part-time adult learners gained from their studies, 77.9% agreed that they 'write better now' and that they have gained more skills (89.3%) and that they feel that they have achieved something (86.8%) these all contribute to feeling of assertiveness, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Conclusion

Many of the respondents from this study came to HE in the hope of transforming their lives. During admission interviews, when adult learners are posed with the question of "why they would like to study at the Vaughan Centre for lifelong learning" many applicants delved back into their personal histories and related periods of unrest, pain and trauma. Many interviewees narrated life changing events and major life transitions as a driving factor for studying at the Vaughan Centre for Lifelong learning. The present findings are consistent with Mezirow's conceptualisation of transformation learning, its relationship to the development of the self and pursuit of growth, authenticity and autonomy. This paper is a simple summary of transformative learning that occurred at the Vaughan centre for lifelong learning. The findings from this paper should be taken into consideration by university leadership teams when faced with making difficult decisions during times of austerity; It is highly recommended that a more holist view is adopted to foster lifelong learning in austere times.

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Austerity and NYC Adult Literacy: At What Cost and to Whom?

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Adult literacy has always been surrounded by issues of access, politics, and power (D'Amico, 2003; Freire, 1970/1993). It is no different in the United States. Currently, visions of emancipatory literacy fade even further in the distance as adult literacy public funders have embraced stricter, quantitative guidelines to measure student/program success. These measures are increasingly aligned with a “college and career readiness” model that is disengaged from realistic pathways to economic advancement and collective empowerment for adult learners, the majority of whom are of color (e.g., African American, Latino), women and/or poor (Isserlis, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 2013). In this landscape, literacy can become a weapon, severing and slicing opportunities/basic human rights of its poorest people, primarily people of color (Martin, 2010; Stuckey, 1990).

This paper shares testimonials of emancipatory literacy from two adult education programs based in New York City: the Open Book, a former adult literacy program in Brooklyn, NY and the Adult Learning Center, an adult education program located in the Bronx, New York. Both programs represent examples of liberatory practice and at their core, a critique of dominant ideologies.

One of the main purposes of this work was to document, through participants' voices the history of two programs grounded in participatory models, in order to support the field towards a sustainable dialogue centered on fostering pockets of resistance. This is especially urgent since the connections between adult literacy and social justice/change/movements have become increasingly frayed in the past two decades (Ramdeholl, 2012). Furthermore, both programs had student bodies of primarily women, with a strong sense of community and commitment to student-involvement in decision-making that shaped program structures. We explore how gender, race, and class intersect to inform the following principles: (a) the importance of nurturing sustainable student spaces in adult literacy programs as sites of resistance, (b) the conscious efforts to build community within the school, and (c) efforts to develop/implement authentic and participatory democratic spaces.

This research seeks to further a dialogue that doesn't reproduce existing inequities but instead argues for a democracy for/with marginalized/racialized populations. It will also explore societal factors that must change if adult literacy policy is to stop further marginalizing students through supporting status quo policies regarding funding/practices. Ultimately, programs like the two documented in this study, have

the power to collectively change adult literacy public policy/practice in sustainable ways by highlighting systemic connections between literacy, race, gender and economics.

Questions Guiding the Analysis

This paper acknowledges the importance of social inclusion and teaching, and learning environments/spaces by exploring whether, under current political climates, there is space to support meaningful student participation in programs' decision-making and instruction as well as the larger field. Using the New York City literacy community as a context, the following questions guided our analysis:

1. *How do neoliberal efforts to shape adult education impact funding, instructional structures and democratic practices in culturally diverse literacy communities?*
2. *What are adult educators, students, and allies doing to resist shifts in literacy policy that minimize literacy's emancipatory and revolutionary possibilities?*

These questions helped us analyze the lack of support for literacy programs and systematic connections between literacy/race/economics and issues of power, space, and voice in New York City.

A Critical Theory Framework: Race, Gender, Values & Education Policy

Critical Race Theory/Critical Theory (CRT) provides a foundation for analyzing how adult literacy, neoliberalism and funding shifts interface. Essentially, CRT acknowledges racism as being a toxic condition in the social fabric of our society, directly challenging ideas regarding race such as color blindness and neutrality (Bell, 1992). Because literacy programs so often serve people of color it is appropriate to use CRT as a lens for analyzing literacy policy. CRT also illuminates how the ethic of capitalism forces societies into dehumanizing ways of living that perpetuate multiple oppressions. This allows us to unpack connections between adult literacy funding policy and the perpetuation of institutionalized inequities that further shift blame onto the shoulders of poor communities of color.

Adult literacy students in US adult literacy programs are primarily poor black and brown people. The paucity of funding is linked to who students are and the fact that they are considered disposable and expendable in the eyes of the dominant culture (Isserlis, 2008; Peterson, 2008).

In the US young black males are 22 times more likely to be killed than young white males. By seeing black and brown bodies as disposable in the United States, there is an invisibility that is rendered upon their fates (Alexander, 2010). Glaude (2016) speaks to the value gap that currently exists in the United States. This gap is predicated on the belief that the lives of white people matter more than others. Though material conditions continue to differ, white people still matter more. The value gap has distorted the characters of black/brown people and is sustained in the ways certain habits get played out every day. For example, in the US criminal justice system which has criminalized blackness.

The integration of the Common Core standards in the adult education field in the United States has happened alongside a similar movement in the K-12 system which reinforces models of inequity and disenfranchisement. In adult education, in

particular, this has meant a heightened emphasis on strategies that help adult learners become “college and career ready,” which has resulted in a restructuring of the High School Equivalency (HSE) examination. An emphasis on preparing learners to work within a traditional economic structure has led to greater stress on informational/non-fiction texts, helping learners gather and analyze text-based “evidence” and utilize academic language, and write persuasive essays using this evidence (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). This has meant a movement away from a critical literacy-based model of adult education that centered (a) culturally relevant and diverse literatures, (b) the writing of personal narratives, (c) situated analyses that honored adult learners’ prior knowledge while embedding their experiences in a socio-political context and (d) democratic educational practices (Freire, 1970/1993; hooks, 1994). As instructors increasingly feel the need help students learn language that will help them write about or “argue” in support of concepts aligned with conventional understandings of social studies or history, critical engagement and oppositional reflection are silenced.

The Impact of Funding Shifts: Embracing Capitalism

Most publically funded programs in New York City have mostly been under the auspices of NYCALI (an initiative of federal, state, and city funding). The federal stream of this funding is through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) which been reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In the upcoming fiscal year (2018), adult education funding in New York State will be completely managed through the US Department of Labor (at the national level) and Workforce Investment Boards (at the state and local level). This structure more explicitly integrates adult education within a capitalist framework that aligns education with employment demands, and also assumes there are living wage jobs readily available for students. This ignores the enduring realities of the ways in which capitalism and racism have operated in the United States.

As one of the principal architects of NYCALI, Vincent, an adviser of the Open Book (Ramdeholl, 2012) illuminates the how data and funding are linked and how they marginalize democratic educational practices:

Data collection has come more to be seen as an accountability measure as opposed to informing policy and developing quality practices. The students’ voice at the table and active participation has been totally lost or marginalized. Now there really is no organized access to funders. Welfare reform also shifted things enormously. Literacy programs were forced to shift their focus from education to employment. Be on time, listen to your boss, and respect authority (as opposed to a model of community development). Popular education, as practiced by the Open Book, without sufficient funding will be marginalized forever. Currently, all of the program’s work get translated into a report card with only four outcomes and only one of them has to do with education. WE need to push for more meaningful information that really expands the dialogue-otherwise we’re left with no ammunition to support the education work that we do and counter welfare reform, immigration policy, and national security priorities. Combined with the ongoing marginalization of the field through inadequate funding and a part time workforce, the field is disabled from even advocating. Basically what’s left are individuals who are very much on the margins

John, the teacher/director of the Open Book adds:

Everything is being squeezed. Teacher time is devoted more and more to collecting data of dubious value which in any case have little to do with educational progress. There is less time to talk about what is going on inside the classroom...asking students questions like, "how can this class be improved?" "What kinds of things make sense to do next?" "How have things gone this week?" "What would you like to learn about next?" These are not designed to bring out yes and no answers, but thoughtful responses, in which, in which students take increasing responsibility for the class and for their own learning.

In New York City, the main advocacy at the moment centers on attempts to solidify relationships with funders in order to gain more funding. There is limited critique of the underlying structures of this issue which is capitalism which forces poor people into dehumanizing ways of living (while blaming them for being a burden to society). Moreover, by in large, the field is unable to challenge systems beyond superficial levels because those who advocate also work in the field and, apart from being unwilling to jeopardize their programs in which they work, they also survive on the wages from the system they critique. Through no fault of theirs, any critique is therefore rooted in band aid solutions instead of structural, sustainable change.

Islands in a Sea of Austerity: The Open Book and the Adult Learning Center

The Open Book was a community based adult literacy program in Brooklyn, New York that was committed to student involvement at all levels. John, the teacher/director described the program the following way:

This is how we work at the Open Book. When we have important decisions to make, we bring them to the students. It's not always easier that way; sometimes it would be a lot quicker to have teachers make the decisions or to make the decisions by myself. But we believe that in the long run decisions we make as a community will be better ones.

The way the Open Book enacted this collaborative decision-making came through efforts such as: town hall meetings where students discussed general directions of the program and a student-teacher council where smaller groups of students who were less comfortable in speaking at larger group gatherings such as the town hall meetings might find it easier for their voices to be heard. Also, the hiring committee which consisted of two staff members and a group of students who would interview potential teaching candidates. Committee members received copies of resumes and would meet (if possible) to go over each candidate's resume, as well as discuss questions to ask candidates. There were also retreats with various student led workshops.

As Earle, a student at The Open Book says about the hiring committee:

Staff and students come together as one entity to make a decision on who we think would fit in our community. I was never involved in a process like that before in my entire life in all the schools. I've never even heard this being done before. Each student got a chance to ask the candidate questions,

different scenarios, etc. Once the person left, we would go back and talk about it.

By co-creating more egalitarian spaces, students and staff could struggle together towards more democratic processes. This in itself was an act of resistance against the shrinking spaces that can offer critiques of dominant culture.

At the Adult Learning Center (ALC), Women Reading for Education Affinity & Development (WREAD), a reading discussion group for female adult learners with self-defined histories of trauma provided content-based instruction, within a participatory, critical literacy context. WREAD was grounded in relational-cultural, critical literacy, and feminist/womanist theories that highlighted culturally aware, emotionally responsive learning practices (Jones, 2012). Central to WREAD was the facilitation of a collective sense of awareness around the impact of trauma – psychic, interpersonal, cultural - on the lives of women of color and critical reflection on how women did/could resist demeaning interpretations of their experiences, their desires and their bodies (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1984/2000; Horsman, 1999).

The seven women who participated in WREAD came from a range of backgrounds - Afro-Caribbean, African, African American and Latina – but they connected with the text that structured the group: *The Warmth of Other Suns*. A work of literary non-fiction, *The Warmth of Other Suns* provides a history of the African American “Great Migration” through the stories of three black families who migrated within the United States from the south to the north, east and west between 1916 and 1970 to escape racist oppression (Wilkerson, 2010). The content and historical range of the text meant that that subjects like World Wars I and II, the Great Depression and the Civil Rights Movement could be integrated into the class, alongside topics like immigration, poverty, and gender-based subjugation within communities of color.

Art, poetry and creative literatures provided additional understandings of content that also encouraged students to explore how narratives of experience/oppression are both constructed and represented within American culture. A culminating visit to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) specifically allowed students to experience a series of artworks chronicling the migration by artist Jacob Lawrence. There were also a range of auditory, literary and documentary presentations on the circumstances of families and communities that chose to seek better opportunities under “other suns.”

Following the MOMA visit, Kim reflected on how an exhibit that examined the growth of public housing and the influx of African Americans into central cities in the east and Midwest enlightened her:

...88,000 people filled the public housing [then]...it's double or triple that now...it was spoke about a long time ago – these projects and stuff that's here but we [didn't know]. So when I seen that [the exhibit]: reality check. This been spoke about and people are filling these public housing buildings a lot...and they still building them and placing people in them...they all over now...

Kim lived in public housing, and spoke about how crowded, impoverished conditions contributed to stress and increased crime, and her own sense of marginalization as

she disengaged from people around her to protect herself and her family. Gaining a historical perspective on the growth of public housing illuminated how urban planning decisions were not neutral, but linked to racialized systems of surveillance, segregation and management. The place she and many others called home was seen in a new light.

Bringing in what she had learned from the text about the longstanding and entrenched nature of racism (the black migrants still had to deal with oppressive conditions in their new homes), she added:

They call[ed] it lynching and Jim Crow back then. We give it a different name [now]...cause people beatin' up people now...they called it lynching...it's still going on but not in that same name category...They [white people] were doing [racist] things to black people because they had the authority – now the cops are the people who have the authority...

Kim's analysis links an ideology of black racial inferiority and state violence, and illustrates how changes in manner do not diminish racism's devastating impact. Her vision is strikingly similar to that of Michelle Alexander (2010) who in her groundbreaking book, *The New Jim Crow*, outlined how mass incarceration has become a signifier of the segregation and disenfranchisement wrought by racism in earlier eras. Through a process of reading, witnessing and collective discussion Kim crafted a counter-narrative grounded in historical knowledge and her own experience with poverty, isolation and racial oppression.

A Vision for the Future

If society truly believes racial groups are equal, when there is inequity, it must be because of discrimination. But if the reality is otherwise, then racist policies will get defended and rationalized based on the self-interest of dominant groups.

We need to change our view of the government which means we need to change our demands. We need to change how we view black people which means we need to change how we view white people (and only white people can do that). In many ways, we need to create a civic power outage in order to reboot. This requires a radical imagination. We also need to think about how black people can achieve genuine power and self-determination. This becomes a question of anti-imperialism. If society were able to close the value gap and organized around assumptions that proximity to blackness doesn't equal precarity and disposability. The commodification of black lives gets contained and this needs to be interrogated. The intersectional nature of oppression experienced by black women/women of color complicates this further and highlights the need for multi-layered analyses that incorporate the "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2000) that shapes their existence.

This interrogation is facilitated by participatory education, and the creation of spaces that contest neoliberal regimes that devalue black and brown aspirations, knowledges and bodies. Education in this country does not occur in a vacuum but under the structures of capitalism. As a tentacle of capitalism, it exhibits all of traits of exploitation targeted at marginalized communities (while blaming them for failures/inequities that reside in that particular system). For this to begin to change, adult literacy policies cannot be tied to standardized testing or other dominant

schooling measures. Furthermore, a failure to critically examine how capitalist models of employment maintain and reinforce precarity and poverty puts adult learners at risk of being funneled into exploitative and limiting employment markets.

Adult literacy programs can be places where more hopeful possibilities and where students' best interests are truly at the center of all decisions and processes. In other words, where students are truly the subjects (Freire, 1970/1993). Creating these spaces are both political acts and promises. In these smuggled spaces, finding ways to subvert the further domination of marginalized populations are possible, if only temporarily. When engaged in academic practices that facilitate consciousness raising, students begin to envision opportunities for collective action; they begin to see how they can contribute to systemic change. Finding ways to create and sustain more of these spaces is necessary if real change is seen as urgent and essential.

Adult literacy programs can provide a model for practicing more humane versions of society that reflect more compassion, love, and dignity. However these cannot exist while larger realities of capitalism go ignored. Efforts to chip away at the exploitative structures of capitalism must be enacted while simultaneously envisioning more democratic practices for/with adult literacy students.

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'Drop and give me 3,000 words!' The introduction of a 'Writing Boot Camp' to foster a productive, supportive writing culture for undergraduates

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Abstract

As part of a two-year, blended learning degree in Education at a UK University, undergraduates need to develop the confidence and expertise to write convincingly about their own educational research. Many students struggle to meet this challenge and request help with their writing. However, support for academic writing in the institution is predominantly remedial in character, coming as aid from academic skills tutors for struggling writers or as feedback and feed-forward on problematic aspects of finished work. The need to establish proactive cultures that model and foster good writing as the writing is taking shape has been convincingly argued for at doctoral level (Kamler & Thomson, 2006) but scant attention has been paid to the potential benefits of such a culture introduced for undergraduates. A two-day, writing 'boot camp' that sought to initiate such a culture is the subject of this paper. Using a phenomenological approach, the paper reports participants' perspectives on this event, including its effects on their identities as scholarly writers. The findings reveal a sense of liberation from an overly anxious 'internal editor,' so that assignments are drafted earlier and quicker, with more time to polish the final work. They also reveal a productive shift in participants' relationship to the supervision process and to the text itself. The paper argues that this kind of approach has a range of attendant benefits that make it worthy of further development and wider take-up at undergraduate level.

Introduction

The BA Honours Degree in Education which is the subject of this study attracts educators working within a range of Adult Education settings. Accomplished writing helps them achieve their academic goals. It also enables them to contribute to the field of educational research. This is particularly significant in the current conjuncture because research conversations have the potential to foster solidarity and empower educators in embattled sectors. The continuing climate of austerity in the UK in 2016 mean that deep and sustained cuts are biting across all sectors and a small but powerful state continues to exert enormous pressure to control the discourse around education (Adams, 2015; Burns, 2015; Coughlan, 2015; Harding, 2016; Vaughan, 2015). Within this climate, it becomes all the more vital that education professionals develop a confident and convincing voice; as Jeannie Herbert puts it - 'owing the discourse; seizing the power!' (2005)

Whilst undergraduates on the provision that forms the focus of this study have generated some good research outputs, it has been identified as an important area for curriculum development; a need also identified in wider literature (Wisker, 2005). This is difficult to achieve in the context of austerity. The degree in question was previously delivered over three years, with three-hour, weekly evening classes running in sixteen different Centres across the North of England. In order to make

the provision sustainable and also attractive to hard-pressed, busy professionals with limited time to attend class, the degree is now delivered as a series of sixteen Saturday Day Schools that take place in two regional hubs over a period of two years, with online support between sessions. Face-to-face contact time is therefore at a premium and the Day Schools are packed with content to develop knowledge and understanding of the subject itself, leaving limited time to foster good academic writing.

In common with findings amongst doctoral students (Cotterall, 2013), feedback from the BA students reveals that their writing is often the source of difficulty and anxiety, which slows down or entirely stifles the writing process. This is particularly problematic in the context of the multiple and conflicting demands of home, work and study that adult learners typically face (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Writing is tortuous and time-consuming or hurried and angst-ridden as deadlines approach. However, outside the discipline of English Language teaching, little attention is paid to training teachers how to teach academic writing. The pedagogical expertise is often assumed rather than addressed and is of uneven quality. Just as writing is a solitary pursuit, ways of teaching it are tacit and individualised. One potential solution centres on the notion of a 'writing culture' that seeks to model and foster good writing. Working within tight funding constraints and making clever use of existing resources, a writing 'boot camp' that sought to initiate this kind of culture is the subject of this paper. Adopting a phenomenological approach it reports on what participants in this two-day event say about its effects on them as scholarly writers.

The writing boot camp

The boot camp was offered as an optional, two-day workshop run on a University campus on Saturday and Sunday, 16th and 17th January, 2016. It was timed to coincide with the students' drafting of their Major Study; a 9,000 word research project, due for submission a month after the event. The format and materials were heavily indebted to a Thesis Boot Camp previously delivered at the same University by Dr Peta Freestone and similarly supported by the online resources of Freestone and her colleague, Katherine Firth (2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014b). Emails sent prior to the event explained how to engage in 'generative' writing and the 'pomodoro' technique, (Firth, 2013b). This constitutes writing continuously without editing for a sustained period in a rhythm of four cycles of twenty-five minutes, interspersed with five minute breaks and ending with a longer break of fifteen minutes after four iterations. The goal is to enable sustained periods of writing whilst avoiding burn-out to create a rough first draft for later editing. A quiet room with plenty of space for people to spread out was provided. The weekend timing enabled use of otherwise unoccupied rooms, creating an affordable 'third space' in which it is argued that tutors and students become free, perhaps only momentarily, of the power-plays that are normally embodied in the educational environment (Bhabha, 1994; Maniotes, 2005; Zeichner, 2010). Writing and reflecting together in this quiet and studious space was a vital feature of the event. Each time a participant wrote five hundred words, they collected a coloured magnet as a reward for hitting their target.

Research Methodology and Methods

A phenomenological, participant observation approach was adopted; the researcher taking part as both tutor and writer during the event. In order to ameliorate potential bias, and given that there were inevitable hopes and expectations associated with the boot camp, a deliberately open approach to data gathering was adopted, not

framed by anything other than the broad question of what the experience was like for participants. To facilitate this, at the close of the first day, participants were invited to take a mini-action figure from a diverse selection, choosing the one that they thought best represented their experience of the day. The group then sat in a circle on the floor, taking it in turns to explain why they had chosen their figure and what it represented. This approach was informed by the notion of 'clean language' (Sullivan & Rees, 2008) which argues convincingly that metaphor enables participants to articulate complex, nuanced or personal commentary on their own experiences in a more authentic way, relatively untrammelled by interviewer mediation (Karolia & Burton, 2012). Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Gove (1996) and Geary (2011) all argue persuasively that this plays to participants' natural tendency to describe their experiences through metaphor rather than in concrete terms. Sampling was purposive, including all twelve of the boot camp participants. The reflective session was recorded and the audio was transcribed, anonymising by removing reference to particular institutions and assigning a pseudonym to each person. The transcript was subject to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings

There were twelve participants; eleven female and one male, which translates to 92% female in the group. This is broadly representative of the cohort as a whole. The ages of participants ranged from twenty-seven to sixty, with the following backgrounds: Anna and Charlotte are BA tutors at the University where the provision is centred. Lottie is a BA tutor at a residential College which forms part of the network of colleges who also run the provision. Daisy is a learning mentor at an Inner City College. Samantha works as a learning support assistant in a primary school. Georgina is a nurse trainer. Corrine is a tutor with a work-based learning provider. Gabrielle is a pastoral manager at a High School. Maisie teaches childcare. Michael is currently not working in a teaching role but has worked for a private training provider until recently. Chloe is a self employed Educational consultant and an independent researcher.

Three main themes emerged from their discussion: the importance of **rules, structures and rewards**; notions of **escape, rescue and repair** and issues of **identity and voice**.

Rules, structures and rewards

The framing of the event as a highly structured and rule-bound event with a clear system of rewards was highlighted as being significant by a number of participants, including Daisy:

I've got this, it's kind of like a policeman and I just thought he represented something orderly, regimented and in sequence and that's kind of what I've done today... So I'm happy.

Samantha and Gabrielle also commented on the structured nature of the rewards:

Samantha: Can I just say the incentives really helped as well. I was like, "Oh I can't wait to get my five hundred words!"

Gabrielle: I was so happy when I hit a thousand!

Escape, Rescue and Repair

Notions of rescue, repair or escape from a perceived threat were also a feature of the data, as in this comment from Michael:

I kind of chose two. The first one is this fellow that's in black and part of that was to remind me that things aren't quite as black as they seem. And also he seems to have got some, sort of like video camera - something that he can use to record and focus. And then the other one was somebody who's a nurse, which I think is kind of what today has done. I was feeling very lost and quite sort of black and I'd done bits of reading but not really anything much at all with my Major Study and I've been feeling very much that it was getting away from me. It feels like it has just brought me back on track.

This idea was also echoed by Lottie:

I picked this one up ... he looks like Super Mario, you know the plumber. My Dad was a plumber so I like plumbers and I do feel that it's been a really unblocking experience! [laughter]

The humorous tone of this contribution is representative of the tenor of the feedback session and also of the break-out conversations throughout the day. Despite the strict rules of the writing space, exchanges outside were relaxed and collegiate. Tutors worked on a par with students; facing similar challenges and sharing similar successes.

Chloe also used humour to comment on the theme of rescue or repair, albeit using a different analogy:

There are two things about this little figure that I've realised actually. If you take the hat off the heads, their heads are empty [laughter]! But I think the thing for me, this figure looks a bit like an A&E man and somebody who's going to come and kind of rescue you, sort things out a bit. So it's been a bit of a 'sorting-things-out' day.

Georgina's 'escape from threat' metaphor carries similar connotations of an impending problem ameliorated by the boot camp experience:

Mine, I think is supposed to be Indiana Jones, so [it's] the film where he's ... running away from the boulder - that's kind of how I've felt really. I feel like I've done the reading, I've done the gathering of the information but I've been putting off actually ever putting pen to paper and making a start and I felt like it was just a massive weight on my shoulders and I've spent more time worrying about it than actually doing it, so today I'm really happy that I've had this environment to just sit down and write ... it's just there and it's on paper and that kind of boulder has now disappeared and I don't have to worry about starting anymore. It's made a big difference.

The potentially paralysing fear of failure amongst adult learners has been well-documented (Brookfield, 2005; Knowles et al., 2005), making this sense of liberation and escape an encouraging finding.

Identity and Voice

The final theme which emerged very strongly in the data was that of identity and voice. Anna described her action figure as her Supervisor, with whom she was beginning to identify more closely:

Anna: Well, this is my Supervisor and I feel today that I've become more *like* this sort of quite powerful being...

Charlotte: So has your supervisor shrunk - is that what you mean?

Anna: Well I think I'm moulding into somebody that can deal with him ... He's got all these scars on him. They're war wounds! The scars show what you have to sort of go through to get there.

Gabrielle also described a shift in notions of her own scholarly identity:

Mine ... looks a bit like a dodgy character. He's got an eye patch and a knife [laughter]. But I think for me I'm, since leaving school I put up a perception that I'm not very academic and that I'm not very good at writing, when actually, I am and I know I am and I think all my friends and my family and stuff always are gob-smacked that I've carried on with this because all I do is moan about work [laughter.] But I think that mine represents me as like a dark horse today that I have actually come, I've got my work out that I wanted to do and I'm happy with what I've written. I feel like I'm blushing and I never blush!

Gabrielle's closing comment on blushing here indicates perhaps that claiming a scholarly identity amongst peers was still a novel and slightly unsettling proposition, but her emphasis on 'I *am* and I *know* I am' indicates the confidence to strongly affirm this perception of self, despite some long-held reticence.

Maisie also shows developing confidence, describing a sense of liberation from the perceived need to *start* with the voices of others rather than one's own:

I haven't actively put in any references and on a normal occasion, if I'd have written that many words and not actually put in a reference I'd be having a heart attack because all that effort and not a single reference in there but there's another day to do that so I'm not worried about it. I've achieved a lot today.

This idea of recourse to one's own voice was then drawn out and developed in conversation with Anna and Charlotte:

Anna: I think I'm surprised with that actually. I haven't read it properly but I think what I've got is more me talking... because I've already sort of looked at this thing before and I'm just trying to redo it but it has made me write more like me, I think.

Maisie: Usually I've been using somebody else's voice first and then I'm adding my own bit in afterwards whereas today it's all me and I've got to add in somebody else's later.

Anna: Yes!

Charlotte: But that switch is a significant one, perhaps. And that you now know you can make that shift when it's appropriate and when you want to...

Finally, participants commented on how unusual it was to have chance to talk in an immediate, in-depth and personal way about the writing process and about their own achievements, hearing at the same time what this was like for others. This set the boot camp apart from the norm of writing as a lonely pursuit, carrying the delayed gratification of final marks only if successful. Moreover, those marks inevitably relate to the quality of the final output rather than the writing process itself and one's achievements or learning about that process. Instead of seeing writing as transcription of a finished project, the boot camp enabled participants to re-imagine writing as *part* of that project, formulating their ideas through the writing process as it unfolded. This was an entirely new conception for the majority of the participants and it freed them from the pressure of creating something perfectly formed in the first draft.

Conclusion

This study responded to undergraduate students' struggle to write well and confidently in ways that are compatible with busy working and family lives, free from the anxiety, difficulty and paralysis that many report. It explored cost-effective ways of fostering productive writing cultures, borrowed from doctoral supervision strategies, as an important adjunct to the remedial or uneven support typically offered to undergraduates. Participants reported that the rules, structure and rewards

of the event were productive and that it enabled them to escape from or repair a stalled writing process, developing a more confident voice and sense of scholarly identity. They reported a new conception of writing as thinking, replacing existing notions of writing *about* thinking and this enabled them to produce what they saw as promising drafts with plenty of time to develop them into final assignments. All of the participants had an extensive draft ready for submission for formative feedback by the due date and a number of them have attended subsequent events because of their positive experience of the first iteration. There have been four of these in the three months following that described here, including some that have been initiated and led by students rather than tutors. In conclusion, the paper argues that developing a 'writing culture' through the use of writing boot camps has a range of attendant benefits that make it worthy of further development and wider take-up at undergraduate level.

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Youth as Theory, Method and Praxis: Unpacking the category 'youth' in the context of neoliberalism

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The category 'youth' may, on the surface, appear as a stage in the natural progression of an individual's life. There is, however, a deep and expansive politics that gives meaning to the category 'youth'. Within contemporary debates the struggle to define 'youth' has positioned young adults at the centre of policy frameworks, state-led initiatives, and international development discussions, which are concretising various distinctions between emerging and established adults in terms of a range of characteristics, including their social and economic participation. Contrasting policy frameworks and academic literature I began to notice that dominant formulations of 'youth' are underpinned by a theory of individual development that is bound to human capital theory and a method for naturalising liberal ontology, which then delimits the bounds of civic participation and elides more critical forms of praxis. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to argue that the theory, method and praxis constituting dominant formulations of 'youth' are bound up with the social reproduction of a neoliberal form of capitalism.

Within the adult and vocational education literature there is general consensus that social forces, such as deindustrialisation, and state rescaling, have reshaped the school-to-work transition, thereby reconstituting 'youth'. Implicit in the transition metaphor is the notion that young adults have not yet reached the status of full citizen/worker, and that the transitional period can be smooth, prolonged or interrupted. Following the logic of 'youth' as a transitional stage the primary role of education, training, civic engagement, and preliminary labour market participation is to aid the process by which one reaches the endpoint known as adulthood (Davis, 2014; Furlong, 2006; Lawy, Diment & Quinn, 2010; Wyn, 2014). Within the discussion of the school-to-work transition there has been a significant focus on whether the experiences of young adults can be adequately described through either a structural or cultural approach (Furlong, 2006; Rudd, 1997). In order to reorient the terrain of the debate I argue that concepts from both structural and cultural approaches have been picked up and expanded upon in the quest to define 'youth' from a neoliberal vantage point.

The latter phase of the discussion takes a closer look at how the category 'youth' is defined and deployed by *Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed*, which was commissioned by the Ministry for Child and Youth Services (MCYS), Ontario. Situating *Stepping Up* within the broader global trend toward redefining 'youth' development highlights the neoliberal political economy that is operationalized by the category. A close reading of *Stepping Up* suggests that the process of defining 'youth' is simultaneously a process by which the meaning of economic, civic and democratic participation is defined within the neoliberal period. Hence, the meaning of 'youth' development and participation must

be understood as temporally specific, and bound up with the dominance of neoliberal ideology.

Framing 'Youth' and Ideology

To say that neoliberal ideology orients the lived experience of young adults is to call forth a particular understanding of the relationship between ideology and praxis. Following the work of Dorothy Smith (1990), I understand ideology as a practice of knowledge production that renders less visible the social relations of ruling that organise and inform lived experience. Ideological discourse within liberal capitalism often attempts to build a coherent articulation of the material world without transcending the atomised ontology bound to the Enlightenment tradition. Liberal ideology, and thus by extension neoliberal ideology, attempts to conceal its atomising view of the world by naturalising the separation of the individual from society, and then reconstituting the social whole through a democratic contract articulated as legal rights (Bannerji 2015; Smith 1990). I understand the practices naturalising neoliberal ontology to be simultaneously a form of thought and action that reproduce existing social relations, which Paula Allman (2007) has named reproductive praxis. Read collectively the analyses by Smith and Allman create the conceptual tools to think beyond marketization and austerity as merely policy frameworks, and to question the ways in which neoliberal ideology organises the praxis of young adults.

Within the expansive discussion of neoliberalism there are a number of points of convergence between the social formation 'youth', and the theorisation of neoliberal citizenship, austerity policies, and marketization. As Sears (2003) notes, austerity policies have reorganised, rather than weakened, the role of the state. The model of a lean and flexible workforce is mirrored by the state, in terms of a self-sufficient citizen, and operationalized through the restructuring of social welfare policies (such as the reduction of unemployment benefits for young adults), and school curricula that emphasise notions of individual economic responsibility. The broader rationale that education is an individual investment in the human capital of the future worker illustrates the expansive reach of marketization as a logic orienting individual experiences beyond the confines of the market per se (Bessant, 2002; Furlong, 2006; Sears 2003; Wyn, 2014). In a similar analysis, Mojab and Carpenter (2011, p.551) outline a typology of contemporary citizenship including the entrepreneurial citizen and the racialized migrant citizen. While the entrepreneurial citizen is disciplined, self-sufficient and flexible, the racialized citizen remains a project of naturalisation, integration, and re-skilling. Expanding upon their analysis, I will argue that more recent approaches to 'youth' development are premised on the naturalisation of the entrepreneurial citizen, and position racialized and Aboriginal 'youth' as the object for integration and re-skilling.

Approaches to The School-to-Work Transition

The metaphoric transition into adulthood articulates the idea that young adults move through a set of stages, attain predetermined markers signalling independence and then arrive at the status adult. As such the transition metaphor describes an abstracted process that will be influenced by the contextual particularities of a given milieu. In her discussion of adult learning in the twenty first century, Wyn (2014) notes that shifts in the global labour market have increased the time spent in formal education and precarious employment, which reshapes and diversifies the character

of the school-to-work transition. Similarly, Furlong's (2006; 2009) research in the United Kingdom suggests that austerity policies targeting those under twenty-five, deindustrialisation, and the rise of service sector jobs have coalesced with contemporary epistemological trends to build a view of 'youth' transitions today as fundamentally more complex than the so-called single step transition associated with the golden age of capitalism. As Furlong (2009, p.349) argues young adults are now being encouraged to view their transitional path through an individualised lens and to seek opportunities on an individual, rather than collective, basis rendering the structural constraints associated with class and gender less visible. Contrasting changing labour market demands with a new diversity of consumptive opportunities for young adults, Wyn and Furlong, Woodman and Wyn (2011) note that, since the 1990s, structural approaches to 'youth' transitions have been decentred by cultural or agency centring approaches. Following the cultural approach to 'youth' the break down of traditional social and cultural norms has opened space for a multiplicity of pathways for young adults to traverse.

Although the cultural approach appears to negate the usefulness of the transition metaphor, the category 'youth' at-risk, which is deployed in a vague and expansive manner, continues to be a target for state-led interventions. In fact, the discussion of risk factors affecting 'youth' is so broad that authors, such as Bessant, have queried the political purpose underpinning the category 'youth' at-risk. As Bessant (2002, p.35) argues:

Casting a net far enough to include all young people makes a corrective response not only a 'necessity', but a responsible solution; it sanctions any interventions as long as that response is justified in terms of 'reducing' the risk factors.

Unemployment, lack of class mobility, or delinquency is cast as an individual deficiency resulting from a lack of responsible choices, and professional proficiencies (Bessant 2002, p.38). Hence, notions of individual risk and choice work in tandem to both critique the normative model of a single step transition, and, at the very same time, state-led interventions rely upon a prescriptive model constituting the transition to adulthood. The larger point to be emphasised is that it seems neither desirable nor accomplishable to suggest that culture and agency can be neatly separated from the institutional relations that organise the school-to-work transition.

In a somewhat similar analysis Furlong, Woodman and Wyn suggest that there is an interdependent relationship between changes to the social organisation of work and contemporary articulations of choice, flexibility, and 'youth' culture. Proposing a generational approach the authors emphasise the benefits of understanding 'youth' experience as both uneven and interconnected. While I agree that centring both cultural agency and structural constraints would engender a more insightful discussion, I contend that the point of pivot for the 'youth' debate in general needs to be realigned. Aspects of both cultural and structural approaches have, where they are consistent with theories of human capital and austerity, been picked up and expanded upon by governments and international institutions alike. In other words, I intend to shift the object of analysis away from the experience of being a young adult to the ideological formulation and deployment of the category 'youth'.

The Political Economy of 'Youth'

Centring the political economy of 'youth' Sukarieh and Tannock (2008) have argued that the rise of the so-called positive or ecological approach to 'youth', which has been propagated by the World Bank, coevals with neoliberal political economy. The World Bank (Fares et al., 2006) describes 'youth' as an important transitional period of intense learning when the human capital necessary for thwarting the intergenerational transmission of poverty can be acquired, which will in turn encourage the private investment of capital. The skills learned and developed by young adults are placed at the centre of an economic development model, which reduces the role of learning to the acquisition of human capital. In Sukarieh and Tannock's assessment, the World Bank's framework for 'youth' development, explicated through two linked models titled youth lenses and key transitions, must be understood as the process by which young adults are to be incorporated into the political economy of neoliberalism on a global scale. Importantly, Sukarieh and Tannock note that the interconnected lenses and transitions are oriented toward universalising a linear model of individual development within a theory of human capital. At the local level *Stepping Up* builds from the ecological approach and mirrors the World Bank's analysis. The MCYS aims to draw young adults into to the social relations of neoliberal capitalism in general, and in particular targets racialized and Aboriginal 'youth' as a project for integration.

From the vantage point of the Government of Ontario 'youth' focused policies emerge as a necessary response to the economic strains of an aging population. As the MCYS (2014, p.5) argues:

Educated, healthy, creative and resilient young people are critical to support the economic and social future of our province. We already know how important it is to invest in youth. Wiser, more informed investment choices in youth services will lead to a stronger overall economy and thriving society. By supporting positive youth development today, we are minimising costs to our health care, justice, child protection and social assistance systems in the future.

The characterisation of young adults as resilient has been picked up by the ecological approach, and ostensibly argues against a deficiency model of 'youth' development. Viewing young adults as naturally resilient, rather than in need of protection, is said to encourage young people to bear their share of social responsibilities, and to be adaptable to changing labour market demands (Damon, 2004; MCYS, 2014). Linking resilience and adaptability in the labour market, the MCYS (2014, p.56) then suggests that the current global economy requires young workers to be 'highly qualified' and 'prepared for employment across many industries'. Bound up with the complementary logics of austerity and marketization the MCYS's articulation of resilience has a dual function. By depicting 'youth' as resilient *Stepping Up* builds a justification for minimising socialised services, and simultaneously positions the acquisition of human capital as the logical alternative to social assistance. Hence, the future of the province and young adults are theorised through a development model that works toward naturalising the entrepreneurial citizen.

Both the entrepreneurial citizen, and the ecological approach to 'youth' development are underpinned by an atomised ontology. Although the ecological

approach rejects the universality of a so-called single step transition from school-to-work, material social relations serve only as a context to be navigated and brought under control, and as such the model is oriented by a universalised outcome, which is articulated as a successful transition into adulthood. Positioning the young individual at the centre of the development model the MCYS (2014, p.21) suggests that young people start out with a small field of awareness and close personal ties. As young people develop into adults they are said to move toward greater levels of social and economic participation and 'grow to become members of the broader community'. The status adult is, therefore, linked to material independence (in terms of housing, finances etc.), as well as economic and civic participation, thereby creating an implicit connection between natural/biological human growth and the entrepreneurial citizen. The model presented by the MCYS is linear, graduated, and premised on an ontological separation between self and society. Universalising successful outcomes for 'youth' in terms of economic and social participation then obfuscates the political orientation of the developmental model. The theory of ecological 'youth' development conceals a method for propagating liberal ontology and neoliberal political economy.

The particularities of social context are initially externalised from the ecological model of human development but are then reintroduced through the category 'youth' at-risk. Consistent with earlier articulations of risk and personal agency the MCYS's categorisation of 'youth' at-risk is expansive and applicable to almost all young adults. Utilising notions of challenges and barriers to participation the MCYS (2014, p.19) specifically targets racialized, Aboriginal and newcomer 'youth'. For example, the MCYS notes that racialized and newcomer 'youth' face challenges in gaining employment, accessing education, and have higher rates of poverty, which 'can have a negative impact on their development'. The MCYS (2014, p.12) also argues that racialized youth 'face risks of racial profiling and discrimination in their daily lives, which can lead to disengagement and mistrust of public institutions'. Although the MCYS's has correctly identified a very real form of racism, the social basis of racialization is reduced to a barrier preventing social participation, and the acquisition of markers associated with adulthood. Racialized young adults then become a targeted group for integration and re-skilling. Expanding the logic of the MCYS's analysis, if racism is constructed as an individual barrier to social participation, then the racialized individual can overcome the so-called barrier within the timespan of their working life. The MCYS's formulation of racialization elides the social historical processes that organise the relations of racialization more generally. The work of anti-racist praxis is then limited to overcoming the contextually specific challenges to social integration.

A similar point can be observed in the articulation of integration for Aboriginal young adults. The MCYS (2014, p.13) notes that Aboriginal 'youth' face challenges 'resulting from the inter-generational effects of residential schools', which include 'cultural disconnection, mental health issues and addictions'. Canada's colonial history is, thus, reduced to a temporally contained moment with a cultural legacy that engenders feelings of disconnection, and individual health challenges. The same passage then argues: 'Aboriginal youth are working to support local social and economic growth, and want to lead their communities into a bright and successful future' (MCYS 2014, p.13). Here the MCYS depicts Aboriginal 'youth' leadership as furthering the economic and social goals of the Government of Ontario, and as such

'youth' leadership becomes tantamount to furthering the process of integration. Further, for racialized, Aboriginal and newcomer 'youth' the MCYS confines the terms of 'youth' leadership to a project of integration rooted in the archetype of entrepreneurial citizenship. Thus, articulations of 'youth' leadership and voice must be understood as ideologically orienting praxis toward a reproductive form.

Providing young adults with a predetermined and normative model of society reduces the role that young adults can play in defining the trajectory for future social relations. Both the World Bank (Fares et al., 2006) and the MCYS present liberal democratic institutions and highly institutionalised non-government organisations as the mode by which young adults learn the meaning of civic and democratic participation. The roles played by young adults in organising historical and contemporary social movements, however, are notably absent from the discussion. If 'youth' leadership is reduced to a model for reproductive praxis, then the future is simply something to be inherited rather than actively created by the consciousness and praxis of emerging, young and future adults. Although the 'youth' debate sits at the margins of the adult education literature, the burgeoning interest in young adults by state and civic society actors suggests that the struggle to define 'youth' will encompass a struggle to delineate the meaning of democratic, economic and civic participation, which will have a profound impact on the meaning of citizenship learning and education.

Concluding Thoughts: Adult Learning and the Ideology of 'Youth'

In their discussion of citizenship education and imperialism Mojab and Carpenter demonstrate that democratisation projects have included a form of dispossession that strips learners of their own experiences in a broader process of reproducing and normalising capitalist social relations. As they argue, learning within global capitalist social relations produces alienation and fragmentation of self and community, as well as skills and knowledge. Learning becomes a process by which individuals and communities are simultaneously dispossessed of knowledge, and drawn into the relations of capitalism and imperialism. My investigation of 'youth' development frameworks highlights a similar process. Young adults within neoliberal democracies are now at the centre of policy frameworks that stretch out the period prior to established adulthood. The ideologically constructed distinction between 'youth' and established adults dispossesses young adults of their right to actively determine the trajectory of social relations. As my analysis has argued the trans-local trend toward a universalised model of 'youth' development, which devalues the consciousness and praxis of young adults and externalises social historical context, prescribes a model of social and economic participation that is oriented toward the reproduction of neoliberal capitalism. The question that arises for citizenship learning and education is how to understand the interrelation of the ideology constituting 'youth' and the transnational pedagogical practices of neoliberal capitalism and imperialism?

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Reaching the unreached – mission possible for adult education

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Introduction

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. The association represents the interests of the approximately 930 Adult Education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest further education providers in Germany. The organization provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for Youth and Adult Education. As the leading professional organization in the field of Adult Education and development cooperation, DVV International has committed itself to supporting Lifelong Learning for more than 45 years. It finances its work with funds from institutional and private donors.

Austere Times for implementing the SDG'S

Taking a look at the world of international development policy in adult education from the inter-junction of ended but not successfully completed EFAs and MDGs and looking at implementation processes regarding a (formal) transformation of global society towards sustainable development and a sustainable educational Goal 4 in which lifelong learning and adult education should be ensured for all, we note that since the signing of Agenda 2030 in September 2015, nothing very different can be expected from the various efforts and the current pace in implementing this agenda, when there is no adequate financial commitment. We refer for example to the EU insisting on not to adapt its Agenda 2020 to the Agenda 2030.

In Germany, for example, the Development Cooperation budget was adopted which has increased by 0.52%. This increase is, for among other things, to finance German courses for the many refugees who have come to Germany, for their integration, but also to finance literacy courses. However, the development policy budget for education, for non-formal education and adult education has stagnated for years. Despite the agreed and adopted Goal 4 in Agenda 2030 for inclusive and lifelong learning, worldwide we see no changes in international or national education budget allocations.

The current international economic order and Agenda 2030 still must prove themselves to be coherent and compatible. The litmus test is the reconstruction of the global framework for decent life and work for all, a human rights-based approach which integrates everyone. But, how will it be done, and who is committed to this agenda? And how and by whom will the monitoring be carried out?

Overall, the international financial conferences in the last years – inter alia, in Addis Ababa – brought clear results: neither additional Official Development Assistance (ODA) resources, nor increases in bilateral commitments or other tax collection mechanisms were agreed for financing of the Agenda, including the Education Agenda 2030.

The Ministry of Education in Ethiopia refers to the fulfillment of Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG) on gender parity, Education for all (EFA) and education figures for Ethiopia. However, the country is fighting one of the biggest droughts in over 20 years. National short and medium term priorities for the education sector are currently therefore differently prioritised.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in half of all countries for which there are statistics, adequate data analysis on funding in education is impossible. These states do not know whether the national educational system is balanced and fairly funded, nor which education sectors, or in what amount. Therefore it is impossible to establish the effectiveness of the (formal) education system. Adult education and non-formal education tends to be even more rarely reflected in the statistics or adequately addressed, neither in the financial requirements nor in the financial expenses.

In many countries around the world it is still unknown to what extent the people perceive Government performance in monitoring as well as in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, or what place it may and must have in the development of national indicators for the sustainable development agenda.

In addition, in the context of Agenda 2030, a self-evident question of power of interpretation and the “right” economic as well as socio political path also arises. National and international approaches by themselves already point to paths which have been embarked on – flight and migration, or TTIP, or the effects of global economic trade, or selected climate policies.

DVV International fighting for the Mission possible

Impact is something that we understand as constituting the changes in people’s lives which result from our project activities. These may be short-term or long-term, positive or negative, planned or unplanned, direct or indirect impacts. Furthermore, the impact had by a project may relate to a variety of different groups: The direct target group; intermediary organisations such as education-providers in both the state and the non-state sphere; indirect target groups such as the family members or communities of the direct target group.

Impacts can come about through a project or a number of projects at local level, in social, economic or for instance also health or environmental areas. Extensive research has been done in the last years on using a specific framework of argumentation that acknowledges a broad concept of the impact and contribution of Education on the development and poverty reduction in different sectors of society.

Impact Hypotheses as Basis for strategic Programme Planning

On the basis of the many years of work in its specialist and regional focal areas, DVV International has drawn up hypotheses on the impact contexts within which this work is implemented. In order to contribute towards achieving the goals at different levels and – depending on the country context – along impact chains which are orientated according to different themes, programme planning and evaluation are based on the following example.

- Improved access to high-quality education services providing second-chance basic education and vocational education promotes gainful employment and income creating activities. This furthermore exerts a positive influence on the economic independence of the target groups, as well as combating the causes of flight and of poverty.
- Information and educational services regarding human rights, especially the human right to education, have a positive impact on individuals' perception of human rights, as well as on how these rights are safeguarded by those in government.
- Equal access to education for women promotes their equality in society and on the labour market..
- Access to educational and psychosocial services for displaced people has a positive impact on their integration into the host society. Such services help refugees gain a foothold in the country in which they have become exiled and generate their own family income. The inclusion of the local population into these activities helps pacify the overall situation in the transit and host countries.
- Political education activities and dealing with the past promote critical thought in general, enhance attendees' political awareness, and hence contribute towards their social involvement, thus helping them to develop a concept of active citizenship and to democratise the project country.
- Activities focussing on reconciliation, as well as on historical and contemporary witness work, are successfully applied in conflict contexts, and hence make a long-term contribution towards overcoming conflicts and achieving reconciliation.
- Organisations and networks operate more efficiently and more effectively where their knowledge and skills are expanded. Organisations and networks continue to exist beyond their promotion phase; they can continue to develop according to their own standards and goals, whilst helping to ensure that well-adapted adult education services are established in their countries.
- Global learning can promote understanding and help shape the way in which different social groups in Germany live together in tolerance and integration.

These and other impact hypotheses form the basis of our strategic programme planning, which in each case takes place in three-year cycles, together with the partners in the countries, as well as at regional level.

Establishing social Structures by working on three Levels: micro, meso and macro DVV International works at three levels in order to establish social structures enabling sustainable impacts of adult education and lifelong learning to be achieved: firstly, at target group level (micro level), secondly at the levels of the partner organisations and of the network structures of the adult education sector in the project country and target region (meso level), and thirdly at the level of frameworks related to adult education such as policies, legal frameworks and budgets (macro level).

Structure-forming measures are planned at all levels of society – at micro, meso and macro level – and are interlinked in terms of their implementation in order to achieve impacts through synergy effects which are relevant to the system, as well as being sustainable and holistic. Our experience shows that it is only when all three levels

are combined that, in the long term, quality is improved and the needs orientation of adult education is improved and its quantity is expanded.

Our project ideas are then generally developed in planning workshops, together with the partners and stakeholders in the country. Once the implementability of the project ideas and the synergy with the country concept have been analysed, the concrete project planning commences along participative lines, and at three levels according to the underlying impact model. Impact chains are developed in the process in which goals and indicators are formulated at the levels of outputs, use of output and outcomes and impacts, based on the impact observation and evaluation of the project. A baseline study is for instance carried out before a programme is commenced, and makes a major contribution towards the management and steering of the projects, as well as supporting both the strategic orientation and the drafting of the overall country concept. The baseline study is intended to describe the starting situation and to provide data on the needs of the target groups. No satisfactory goals and indicators can be formulated without these data, and the impact observation cannot provide the information that is needed on the changes that are to be made in the project. Whilst the activities are being implemented, monitoring data are collected and analysed both by the partner organisations and by the DVV International country and regional offices.

The reflection Cycle – drawing Conclusions from Evaluation Results

It is not sufficient to examine the short-term outcome of project activities in order to be able to answer the question as to the impact of project work and to evaluate the project successes. In fact, the envisioned impacts need to be evaluated and the right conclusions drawn for practical work. This is achieved through evaluations. DVV International carries out three kinds of evaluation:

- self-evaluations in which the responsible project staff from different levels meet to use monitoring data in order to analyse the progress made by the project;
- internal evaluations where staff of DVV International, either from headquarters or from another region, evaluate a project;
- external evaluations in which external experts are commissioned to implement project evaluations according to defined criteria, including on the basis of impact indicators.

The results of the evaluations are discussed with the partners and with everyone who is involved. This is an important step in the learning process. The implementability of the recommendations is also examined, and a decision made as to which of these recommendations are to be implemented in the work moving forward. This decision is documented and communicated to all concerned.

As a specialist organisation in the field of adult education and lifelong learning, DVV International attaches considerable significance to institutional learning. The Institute combines the efforts of the monitoring and evaluation unit at headquarters, the responsible colleagues at home and abroad, as well as with the staff of the partner institutions, to continually improve and refine impact observation and evaluation.

Examples from our Work in Ethiopia

The Background of the Project

The reason for the initiation and implementation of the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEPP) was the fact that DVV International knew of the disproportionate burden of poverty for women in Ethiopia. It is the women there who are responsible in most cases for helping in agricultural production, looking after the cattle as well as shouldering the household chores. An overwhelming number of poor Ethiopian women only has a limited chance, or no chance at all, to benefit from formal or non-formal education. This fact has certainly made a considerable contribution towards poverty in the country.

DVV International's regional office in Eastern Africa/Horn of Africa launched the IWEPP in accordance with a bilateral cooperation agreement with the Ethiopian Education Ministry. It was financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The IWEPP promoted an integrated approach combining three traditionally-separate components: instruction in reading and writing skills for adults (via the functional literacy promotion or the REFLECT approach), non-formal vocational training services as a precondition for creating a livelihood, and the support of entrepreneurship (imparting commercial skills and economic support via savings and credit programmes). At the same time, the newly-established models and structures were to form the foundation for an adult education system particularly focussing on women in Ethiopia.

Project Goals

Overall Goal:

The poverty situation among women and their households in poor areas improved and vulnerability reduced.

Project Purpose:

A comprehensive nation-wide approach to empower women and their households in selected poor areas of all regions of Ethiopia is developed, tested and implemented.

Project Outputs/ Results:

1. Strategy for linking financial and institutional strengthening with literacy and skills training for women is developed, piloted and available.
2. Staff from partner organisations and intermediaries are oriented and/or trained.
3. Appropriate curricula, training, teaching and learning materials are developed, translated into relevant languages and available.
4. Women are enabled through livelihoods skills/non-formal vocational training to become more productive.
5. Poor women have acquired skills in reading, writing and numeracy, integrated with practical knowledge and skills (FAL)
6. Economic conditions of women and their households are improved through financial support.
7. Monitoring and evaluation system is established and functioning.

The Actions of the Project

The integrated approach necessitated an innovative implementation method for the IWEPP. The key principles for this approach and the corresponding activities include the following:

- building capacities and applying participative approaches in all aspects of the programme, achieving sustainability from the start of implementation,
- expanding best practice by developing models and learning activities,
- supporting institutionalisation and the assumption of responsibilities by ensuring that the Government and NGO partners embed the activities of the IWEP and the implementation approaches into their work, and into their existing strategies and plans.

In order to impart the three key components of the IWEP to the target group, the programme was based on “clusters” of partners at municipality, district, regional and national level in order to cooperate and integrate their implementation activities. These clusters of partners were composed of local NGOs and sectoral governmental offices (e.g. for women’s affairs, education, agriculture, technical and vocational education and training, etc.). The coordination and implementation structures were formed with the technical teams (experts), by means of which all programme activities were jointly planned, budgeted, implemented and monitored. Each partner had a specific role to play and a responsibility to assume. The management of the sectoral governmental offices and NGOs formed steering committees which were to monitor the programme and provide strategic instruction.

The central programme implementation work carried out by the IWEP and by the regional coordination units provided professional support in the shape of train-the-trainer workshops for the various methods and approaches which the IWEP used, and provided technical support and advice for the partner organisations. A number of materials were developed within the IWEP which were provided to the partner organisations in several local languages.

Impacts

According to the final evaluation report of the IWEP, it can be generally found that the programme led to tangible positive changes at individual, municipality and institutional level. The specific results and impacts which are worth mentioning include the following:

- Mechanisms were tested within the IWEP to implement the national strategy for adult education in practice. For instance, the approach of the IWEP steering committee and of the technical teams was adjusted and taken on board by the Government of Ethiopia.
- The integrated approach adopted by the IWEP was used as input for the conversion of the Ethiopian Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme into the Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAE) programme, which enables a more integrated approach to be taken in literacy promotion for adults and development.
- The knowledge that was gathered in reading, writing and arithmetic enabled the women to document their commercial activities, write their plans down, keep accounts of their expenditure, etc. Most of these women have savings accounts and understand their transactions.
- Roughly 90-100 percent of women were able to repay the credit which they received from their group. They have also developed a culture of saving.
- The majority of the women from the target groups has implemented sustainable income-generation activities which have helped them to create a livelihood for themselves and their families.

Visits to IWEPP women's groups two years after the end of the programme have shown that many of the groups are still in operation, saving and working together. They are continually expanding both the initiatives of their groups and their own commercial initiatives. The imparting of reading and writing skills, as well as of technical and business knowledge, by the IWEPP partner organisations is of inestimable value in this context.

Lessons learnt

The current status of technical and vocational training in different countries shows that many countries have undergone promising reforms, and the need to link skill training to employment (either self or paid employment) is observed as best practice and strategy world-wide. It has to be noted, though, that globalization has created a tension between developing skills for poverty eradication and skills for global competitiveness. The lack of skills and the demands of poverty alleviation imply that for example African countries must pursue the development of skills at all levels of the spectrum (basic, secondary and tertiary), with each country emphasizing the skills level that correspond best to their stage of economic development and the needs of the local labour market.

When exploring opportunities for marginalized target groups it emerges that these target groups are often illiterate and lack basic life skills. Vocational educators are aware that without sufficient mastery of literacy and numeracy, learners can only take limited advantage of possibilities to enhance their skills and capacities. When taking the context of Africa and marginalized populations into consideration it also emerges that it may be better to talk about skills training for improved livelihoods rather than employment only because a large number of the target groups derive their living from mainly subsistence agriculture and from exchange of goods and services. The context and circumstance of marginalized groups matters, and to address these multiple issues an integrated approach that involves a variety and combination of skills, role-players, structures and systems is needed.

Conclusions

These are indeed austere times for Adult Education, but in light of the gigantic challenges and the new SDG'S, this is not the time to give up. DVV has been successfully making adult education a global topic for more than 50 years. These have been 50 years in which a lot has been done and much has been achieved. Years in which approaches, methods, questions – as well as assessment and evaluation systems, have changed. What has remained constant is the conviction that education is a central key to combating poverty and for development. This has led to our efforts for life-long learning and to our worldwide support in establishing and expanding sustainable youth and adult education structures.

To promote further efforts DVV International is publishing its first impact report in 2016 that will contain the example from Ethiopia and other examples from its work in the different regions.

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Why Formal Rights are not Enough: Second Chance Learners and Gate-Keeping Policies of Higher Education Institutions.

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1. Introduction

The policy agenda of increasing and widening participation in higher education seeks to enhance permeability of its institutions for non-traditional students. Following the BOLOGNA process and the Europe 2020 strategy (EUROSTAT, 2014), most national policy agendas in Europe – and beyond – agree that economic arguments as well as leitmotifs of social justice demand a quantitative increase of students and a qualitative widening of the traditional student body via alternative access routes into higher education (see e.g. Slowey and Schuetze, 2012; European Commission / EACEA P9 / Eurydice, 2012; Watson, Hagel and Chesters, 2013; Orr and Hovdhaugen, 2014). The overall logic is to maximize the full potential of the population:

The objective to increase the number and diversity of the student population goes hand in hand with the need to create an institutional environment that values the recruitment of non-traditional learners and pays particular attention to student retention in the higher education system. [...] In the current policy context, promoting the idea that no talent should be left behind, the theme of non-traditional pathways into higher education gains particular attention. The objective is to extend admissions criteria so that all those who have a capacity to follow higher education studies would be provided with the opportunity to do so, regardless of their prior formal learning achievements (European Commission/ EACEA P9/Eurydice, 2012, p. 83).

These goals are operationalized nationally and, moreover, in institutional settings that translate formal rights into gate-keeping policies, setting the boundaries regarding the quality (who should get in?) and quantity (how many?) of the student body. The question of the paper is not whether such agendas of increasing and widening participation are implemented, but how the redistribution of access to higher education is negotiated between institutions and individual learners – taking the individual learner's perspective as primary lens of research.

In order to elaborate and to illustrate the ambivalences and challenges of this issue, the German higher education sector serves as an example. Particular attention is given to the case of second chance learners with vocational qualifications and experience who are required to participate in an entrance examination process before being allowed to follow the usual application route for a study place. Thus, according to Milburn's (2012) differentiation into four stages of the student life-cycle, namely 'getting ready', 'getting in', 'staying in' and 'getting on', the paper focuses the part of 'getting in'. Empirical research on a group of such students at Hamburg University (Germany) allows insight into the contested terrain of institutional gate-

keeping and its interplay with the multilayered decision-making processes of second chance learners.

2. The case of Germany: Alternative entry routes to higher education

Historically in Germany, the arguments for opening up alternative access routes to higher education have changed from the leitmotif of first and foremost 'individual talent' in achieving academic merit to policy measures in favor of a higher institutional permeability in the education system (Wolter, 2012, p. 95). Nevertheless, the idea of achieving academic aptitude first and foremost through completing the traditional school leaving examination (Abitur) has remained prominent and is highly interwoven with a substantial antagonism between the vocational education sector on the one hand and the general education sector on the other. This has, of course, significant consequences for the issue of acknowledging vocational experience to be equivalent to traditional formal entry qualifications. A milestone in 2009 was the decision by the Standing Conference of Education and Culture Ministers (KMK, 2009) to launch new regulations opening up access routes to higher education for vocationally experienced learners without the traditional formal entry qualifications. Today, second chance learners may apply for a (sometimes subject-bound) entry qualification or a general entrance admission and, in doing so, can enter higher education via the so-called third educational route.

2.1 The third educational route in the German higher education system

The third educational route points to the significance of access to higher education for adults holding VET qualifications and awards. For Wolter (2012), the group of adult learners coming via this route represents the 'core of non-traditional students in the German understanding' (ibid., pp. 91–92). What distinguishes this group in and amongst the diversity of second chance learners?

Although the question has to be raised as to whether such differentiation is still valid looking at the increasingly heterogeneous student body in European societies during the last decades, the distinction of so-called traditional students, of the one part, and non-traditional students, of the other part, remains constitutive in the academic discourse. Non-traditional students are, according to Freitag (2010), basically defined by age (older than 24 years at the point of first higher education registration) and by social background (mostly from families with low-educational level) (p. 6) (see also Wolter, 2012, pp. 89–90). This group of non-traditional students comprises inter alia 'second chance learners' (Slowey and Schuetze, 2012) who (a) are lacking the 'traditional formal entry qualifications', (b) 'who enter higher education via special entrance examination or assessment', and this (c) usually 'later in life on a second chance basis' (p. 39). Wolter further specifies:

Those without the Abitur who are admitted by one of the special admission procedures at university level are subsumed under the category 'third educational route' (Dritter Bildungsweg). They are also 'second chancers' but via an alternative non-school route. Different to the second educational route ... that has been regulated by school laws, the third route is subject to higher education legislation (Wolter, 2012, pp. 91–92).

This last point, being subject to higher education legislation, points to a significant feature: The higher education institutions are bound by Basic Law, yet Germany's

federal structure entitles the Länder (federal states) to substantial power in the area of education and lifelong learning, which strongly influences public decision-making procedures and the respective implementation of lifelong learning infrastructures. Due to this, the concrete regulations of the entry routes to a higher education institution are not only subject to the national legal framework and the level of the Länder, but furthermore to regulations of the higher institutions themselves – an extraordinary challenge for prospective students in fulfilling diverse requirements according to applications to a range of universities, possibly located in different federal states.

In absolute figures, of all students enrolling at German universities in 2010, a total of 2 per cent gained access to higher education via the third educational route; that indeed triples the numbers within the last ten years, yet, it still represents a small number of persons (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2012, p. 127; BMBF, 2008, pp. 35–37). The Bologna Stocktaking Report (2012) groups Germany with those countries having adopted systematic policies and having a substantial share of non-traditional students via alternative access routes (meaning between 2 per cent and 15 per cent of all admissions; European Commission/EACEA P9/Eurydice, 2012, p. 86). Nevertheless, as Orr and Hovdhaugen (2014) pointed out in their comparative analysis of second chance entry routes into higher education, Germany can be identified as a ‘late starter’ (ibid., p. 58).

Zooming to the overall higher education system, the European comparative analysis EUROSTUDENT IV (2008–2011) clearly labels the German higher education sector as an ‘exclusive system’ (Orr, Gwosć and Netz, 2011, p. 51), referring to the outcomes ‘low education group underrepresented’ and ‘high education group with relatively high overrepresentation’. Other figures support this, e.g. by relating social background and age bracket: Germany belongs to those countries that have – in European comparison – a below average quantity of older students (30 years and older) who have, at the same time, a below average social background; thus the older the students, the lower their social background.

2.2 An exemplary insight: the case of the University of Hamburg

This highly scattered field of regulations, entrance criteria and, finally, study programs has an enormous impact on an adult lifelong learner taking a decision to enter higher education via the third educational route. The case of Hamburg University, one of the biggest German universities and situated in Germany’s second-largest city, serves as a vivid example.

At the University of Hamburg, the opening of access to second chance adult learners without the traditional entrance qualification (Abitur) via their VET awards and qualifications – a possibility first introduced in 1992 – corresponds to the regulations made by the Standing Conference of Education and Culture Ministers (KMK, 2009) and is defined in the Hamburg Higher Education Law (HmbHG, 2014). Hamburg represents a city state, constituting a city and a federal state at the same time. The Hamburg Higher Education Law specifies that, in contrast to other Länder regulations, the choice of a specific study program is not subject-bound to the former profession or VET award (Universität Hamburg, 2016). In overall numbers, the percentage of persons having gained a study place via this route corresponds to the low German-wide share of around 2 per cent third educational route students of all

students enrolled in Hamburg. Due to this low percentage embarking via the third educational route, the University has recently introduced a quota: Since the winter term 2014/2015, between three and ten percent of the total study places per faculty has to be given to students applying according to the so-called § 38 (and a similar entry route, the § 37).

Widening access to adult learners in the Hamburg case breaks down into three different entry routes. However, for the issue under question, one specific entry route is of particular interest, because taking this route requires of the prospective students a considerable amount of decision-making processes and aspiration – taking the challenge in passing the formal requirements while trying to achieve a precarious balance between being in work, yet planning to re-enter student life with fewer financial resources and less security (especially due to the fact that standard student loans are usually limited to applicants until the age of 30). This entry route is regulated in the § 38 of the HmbHG: According to it, adults are entitled to apply for a study place who have (1) completed a professional apprenticeship or equivalent training, (2) have been active professionally for at least three years and (3) have succeeded in proving their ‘ability to study’ by passing an entrance examination in their chosen study program (Universität Hamburg, 2016).

The entrance examination represents a multi-stage process. Offered once a year in spring time, it comprises (besides the usual submission of certificates) a motivation letter; two written exams (one on the chosen subject of study, one on current issues); one oral exam (with representatives both of the University and of the vocational sector); proof of having taking part in a guidance and counselling meeting with an academic advisor of the chosen study program; and the payment of 204 € and 50 Cent fee (Universität Hamburg, 2016). Passing this examination is, however, no guarantee of a study place: the applicant is then merely eligible to join the pool of all university applicants. The new quota recently adopted at the University (see above) aims, at least, at improving this competitive situation in favor of second chance learners.

Interestingly, the entrance examination is explicitly targeted on serving to ascertain whether prospective students demonstrate an ‘ability to study’ or not. By this, it uncovers the underlying features of the idea of an academic culture of learning and of the kind of capabilities and competences that apparently are needed to join it. This logic of examination provides a clear link back to traditional criteria of academic merit and the unique position of the Abitur (the school leaving examination) in gate-keeping the entrance to the higher education system – institutional structures that rather re-confirm inequalities in access to lifelong learning than substantially widen its entrance procedures.

3. Empirical research: learner’s perspective on gate-keeping procedures

The research conducted focuses adults who hold vocational qualifications and experience, but not the general entry qualification and therefore have to participate in an entrance examination process before being allowed to follow the usual application route for a study place. Second chance learners in our case are thus defined by the lack of the school leaving examination (Abitur) and the entry route of § 38.

An empirical study on such access procedures at the University of Hamburg in 2014-2015 (Silke Schreiber-Barsch, Ute Meyer) allows for an analysis of the multilayered decision-making processes of second chance learners and their individual views on the gate-keeping mechanisms: Are these mechanisms perceived as a hindrance or a door-opener in deciding to enter higher education? The study is based on a between-method triangulation in data collection and analysis, using qualitative methods (group discussions, participant observation) with the sample of non-traditional students (Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1996)) and quantitative methods (online questionnaire; SPSS) with a sample of academic advisors.

The findings, firstly, broaden the scope of existing research on e.g. socio-economic characteristics of non-traditional learners (see e.g. Orr, Gwośc and Netz, 2011) by gaining a subjective perspective on how these learners deal with gate-keeping procedures. Interestingly, gate-keeping procedures like the entrance examination are not perceived as per se negative; successfully completing this procedure may also serve as an enormous boost to self-confidence and an inner feeling of now indeed having been awarded an ability to study (whether this will match at later stage reality or not). Overall, the findings confirm an understanding of educational decision-making processes as not only subject-bound and biographically relevant (Miethe and Diercks, 2014; Stauber, Pohl and Walther, 2007; Kristen, 1999), but, at the end of the day, highly embedded in questions of equal participation in society (Ahmed, et al., 2013). Because, secondly, it becomes evident that higher education institutions are much more than passive executors of strategic agendas. They are also shaped by socially accepted patterns of access, teaching and learning (Schmidt, 2005; Schüßler and Thurnes, 2005), which legitimate the undermining of existing formal rights by complex institutional barriers and gate-keeping mechanisms (e.g. testing 'ability to study'). Struck (2001) uses the term 'transition policy' in order to describe that transitions in learner's biographies are influenced by powerful gate-keepers who, as institutional representatives, generate chances or risks for individual life-courses. Therefore, gate-keeping mechanisms complete an intermediary role between institutional structures and logics, on the one hand, and individual life-courses, on the other hand.

4. Are formal rights enough? Lessons learned.

At this point it becomes clear that granting formal rights is indeed not enough to achieve a substantial share of widening access to adult learners via the third educational route. Granting formal rights remains in this sense "a half-open door" (Watson, Hagel and Chesters, 2013). What are the lessons learned for rendering access routes to higher education truly more permeable and not even more exclusive?

Besides the level of regulations, higher education systems should place priority on aspects of broad recognition procedures of prior learning of today's heterogeneous student body; on flexible and tailor-made study programs that suit individual obligations and allow a balance between family, private life, work and studies; on transparency of and access to relevant information and regulations; on providing target group-oriented educational guidance and counselling for (potential) students (as established in the Hamburg University context since 2012); as well as on a long-term approach to transforming the tertiary sector's culture itself (Hanft and

Brinkmann, 2012). The latter objective refers to a point made in the latest communiqué of the BOLOGNA governmental meetings held in Bucharest 2012:

We will support our institutions in the education of creative, innovative, critically thinking and responsible graduates needed for economic growth and the sustainable development of our democracies” (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2012, p. 1).

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Researchers' responses to post-compulsory education policy in recent times: A provocation

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Abstract

This paper examines some responses by adult and vocational education researchers to policy developments in post-compulsory education and training. The paper focuses primarily, but not only, on the United Kingdom and Australia. Governments in these countries have been pursuing policies which increase access to training and to further and higher education. These policies, known in the UK in relation to higher education as 'widening participation', have been designed with a number of rationales which have included, from time to time, emphases on social justice, economic participation, national productivity and so on. But, sometimes at the same time as 'widening participation' initiatives, and sometimes at different times, governments (especially as a result of the Global Financial Crisis) have pursued policies which reduce available funding for education providers, and/or open up the availability of government funding to private providers in attempts to marketise the systems of training and education as part of what might be termed a neo-liberal agenda. At times these policy interventions have been clumsy and dysfunctional (e.g. Guthrie & Smith 2015). This paper argues, however, that such policy errors do not mean that widening participation (in VET as well as higher education) is in itself an unworthy goal. One might expect communities of VET and adult education researchers to be broadly supportive of attempts to make education and training available to more adults and young people. One might further expect that with their long and broad experience in the sector they might offer suggestions about how to contribute to policy initiatives so that broader access to education and training can be achieved without dysfunctional outcomes. However this has often not been the case. Frequently, academics in VET and adult education have argued against increased qualification levels in the population, against extension of training to industries and occupations which have previously had little formal training attached to them, and against extension of formal training to jobs which women traditionally undertake.

This paper uses examples of literature over the past thirteen years, across three countries, to present examples of these tendencies. The paper sets out to identify the trends in academic commentary on widening participation across post-compulsory education, and explores some possible reasons why academics in the VET and adult education area seem to be focusing on critique, and sometimes at face value seem to favour restricting rather than widening participation, rather than on improvement. The research uses these debates to question what the moral stance of researchers might or should be in relation to policy developments and implementations. While it has often been argued that 'It is becoming increasingly common for public policy that exploits and undermines disadvantaged groups to be badged in social justice terms for sale to the public.' (Thompson 2015), what, however, is the response that should occur for improvement to be made? These are not easy issues to explore.

Introduction

This paper examines texts from both scholarly work and newspapers, primarily in Australia and the UK, to analyse and critique a common trend in academic commentary that seeks to influence public policy to restrict access to educational opportunities in vocational education and training and in higher education. This paper is more personal than is normal for a scholarly paper and more personal than my normal writing; hence the title 'A provocation'.

Access to further and higher education is a topic about which I feel strongly.

A very recent intervention in the Australia debate about widening participation to higher education, by influential English academic Alison Wolf (recently elevated to 'Baroness Wolf

of Dulwich') serves as an initial example of the responses I refer to in this paper. An Australian newspaper article states:

Visiting British higher-education expert Alison Wolf from King's College London this week described the uncapping of university places as highly inequitable, capturing disadvantaged students in a debt time bomb with poor job outcomes.

"The fact that governments put up money for anybody to go to university has the impact of asking students to take on debt that is real and also produces a huge ballooning debt for the future taxpayer," Professor Wolf said.

(The Australian newspaper, May 28th-29th 2016)

Some factual inaccuracies in this statement are forgivable, as it is difficult to understand the intricacies of another country's higher education funding and taxation systems; however the implied wish to deny disadvantaged people access to higher education requires more explanation. Wolf has been arguing against widening access since at least 2002 (see Wolf 2002); but other commentators who are generally champions of disadvantaged people also take a similar position. A 2015 statement from an Australian commentator on vocational education, in an article in *The Australian TAFE Teacher* (a left-wing union-run journal) arguing against funding for certain types of traineeships (a form of apprenticeship) provides an initial insight into reasons for opposition to widening participation:

'It is becoming increasingly common for public policy that exploits and undermines disadvantaged groups to be badged in social justice terms for sale to the public.'

(Thompson 2015, p. 26)

The use of social justice arguments to argue against widening participation, by commentators from what on face value appear to be at opposing end of the political spectrum, suggest that these arguments are as specious as the motives that Thompson attributes to 'public policy' officials in widening access to apprenticeships in Australia.

Background and literature

In both the U.K. and Australia, governments have been actually pursuing policies aimed at increasing participation in higher education. The U.K. led in this respect, naming the policy as 'widening participation'. Australia followed later, from around 2009 onwards with implementation of components of the 'Bradley Review' (Bradley et al. 2008), and there was a specific focus on what in Australia are known as students from 'low SES' (socioeconomic status) backgrounds. This imperative, which included low-SES targets, was accompanied by a system moving from 'capping' of places to 'demand-led' places. The debate about 'too many graduates' therefore began earlier in the U.K. Bowers-Brown and Harvey (2004) reviewed British literature on the topic, from the period 1997-2003, with a particular focus on whether there were enough 'graduate jobs', connected to the more general issue of 'over-qualification' propounded by Ewart Keep and his colleagues (e.g. Keep 2014), which is not a feature of the Australian scene.

Bowers-Brown and Harvey (2004, p. 244) classify people's positions on higher education participation into the following categories:

- Elitist perspective. There are too many graduates and not enough graduate jobs. The benefits of education are seen purely in economic terms.
- Democratic perspective. The more educated people there are, the better. Graduates are of social benefit and there is no such thing as a graduate job: what graduates do is a graduate job. Besides, graduates 'grow' jobs.
- Vocational education advocates' perspective. Irrespective of how many graduates there are, there are not enough skilled crafts/technical people. There are too many people doing degrees who should be learning a trade; hence the need for foundation degrees.
- The business investment perspective. There is a lack of commitment to lifelong learning on the employer's part. Employers do not use graduates effectively.'

The literature cited from each of these perspectives illustrates the arguments mounted by each 'camp'. The authors summarise the arguments of the 'elite perspective' as follows. There are not enough 'graduate jobs' and graduates displace 'lower-skilled' people because of this. Also graduates' skills are under-utilised. The 'graduate advantage' is being eroded. Too few people go into skilled trades. University entrance requirements have been 'dumbed

down'. Newer universities, where 'non-traditional' applicants typically apply, have lower standards and offer 'soft subjects'. The needs of the economy must take precedence above social imperatives. (summarised from Bowers-Brown & Harvey 2004, pp. 244-246)

There is a strand of 'elitism' which applies to vocational education. The expansion of the apprenticeship system in the U.K. and Australia beyond traditional trades, where they were really only available to young men (apart from hairdressing), to include other industries and occupations, has been proceeding alongside higher education's 'widening participation'. In England, it has gathered speed in the past decade through the work of the now-defunct National Apprenticeship Service, and is now accelerating due to the Conservative government's commitment to three million apprentice places. 'Modern Apprenticeships' were introduced in 1994 to cover a wider range of occupations and also they were targeted at higher levels than traditional apprenticeships. However, as might be expected, these programs experienced many teething troubles as they were in industries without apprenticeship traditions, and from their early days were subject to robust critiques from academics (e.g. Fuller & Unwin 2003).

It is notable that critiques of the scheme did not propose improvements, but rather argued that it was an inappropriate scheme. Moreover the criticisms, such as those of 'deadweight' – that employers were carrying out training that would have been done anyway – were not also applied to traditional apprenticeships (nor, indeed, are they applied to 'professional' jobs such as nursing and engineering). A specific criticism raised by Fuller and Unwin (2003) was that Modern Apprenticeships were more likely to be in service sectors, which they argued was a problem, despite the fact that service industries are expanding more rapidly than other industry sectors. They also criticised the scheme specifically for its social inclusion aspect. The campaign against apprenticeships in non-traditional industries has continued since then, exemplified by articles such as one in the Daily Telegraph by David Hughes (2015), then the CEO of NIACE, a body which one might expect would support access to education rather than opposing it. In the article, Hughes continually re-iterates the need for 'high quality' apprenticeships as opposed to current 'bad practice'. No evidence is cited for either. But we know what he means, because the article has a picture of a young waitress carrying coffee cups, and links from the article are provided to other articles by Daily Telegraph writers as follows: 'It's time to tackle Mickey Mouse apprenticeships' and 'George Osborne must lower the apprenticeship levy and focus on engineers not hairdressers'.

Australia has replicated the apprenticeship debates in the U.K. through its traineeship system. In fact the traineeship system in Australia is older than Modern Apprenticeships in the U.K., having begun in the mid-1980s. Traineeships were introduced to extend the benefits of apprenticeships beyond the traditional trades to be inclusive of more occupations and a more diverse workforce; there was an ancillary motive of helping to ameliorate youth unemployment (Smith et al. 2009). After a rocky start, and justifiable criticisms about some training providers milking the taxpayer, traineeships began to gain momentum and improve in quality, and contributed to the situation at the turn of the 21st century in which Australia had a comparable proportion of the workforce in apprenticeships (including traineeships) to the Germanic countries. However, the term 'apprenticeship' was never explicitly expanded to include 'traineeships' as it had been in the U.K. to include 'Modern apprenticeships', leaving traineeships vulnerable to attack. An ongoing campaign against traineeships was mounted by a number of academics, including John Buchanan. A review of apprenticeships by an Expert Panel (Commonwealth of Australia 2011) which was heavily dominated by male trade union viewpoints, contained an explicit attack on government funding for traineeships and over the following five years, cuts to various sources of funding led to around 100,000 traineeships disappearing (Smith 2016 forthcoming). A rise in youth unemployment ensued, by 3 percentage points (Smith 2015). The advent of traineeships had helped to rebalance the apprenticeship system in favour of women, since many traineeship occupations were feminised. The removal of funding for traineeships has meant that the proportion of women in apprenticeships overall fell from a high of 35% in 2011 to 30% in 2015 (Smith 2015). An article by Thompson (2015) on the equity aspects of this drop described what she saw as three areas of low paid feminised occupations: those in the 'caring' industries; those in

administrative roles; and those in the service industries of retail and hospitality. Only the first group retained funding under the new traineeship funding rules. The article explicitly singles out retail and fast food as being unworthy of the receipt of funding for training. In a deliberate insult to one of the biggest employers particularly of young women in Australia (which offers great support for women in pursuing their studies and family lives while moving into management) a sub-heading in this article is 'McTraining: would you like a pathway with that?'

Strong arguments are proposed by those who prefer apprenticeship to be as it was decades ago (e.g. Galvani [2015], in a conference presentation), arguing against its 'dilution', or 'stretching' (AELP 2011). In his presentation, Galvani (2015) referred to tradespeople whom he knew personally, who were 'insulted' by apprenticeships being available to older workers. In fact, apprenticeship varies considerably among countries, some having a 'mass' apprenticeship system which covers most 'VET' occupations – including retail and business - that might be undertaken by school-leavers (e.g. Germany, and especially Switzerland) while it is only a restricted number of countries that have a more restricted system typically confined to the traditional male trades (e.g. Canada, United States) (Smith & Brennan Kemmis 2013). Those who prefer apprenticeship to remain as it was before the expansion of the past twenty years in England argue for 'high quality' or 'selective' apprenticeship using much the same arguments as the 'elitists' (Bowers-Brown & Harvey 2004) argue in higher education.

A final issue that is mentioned from time to time is that people who ought by rights to be undertaking vocational education are now going into higher education. In other words, people no longer know their place. In the Germanic countries, this issue is known as 'tertiarisation'. A conference presentation by Deissinger and Gonon (2015) on this topic mentioned that young people were increasingly aspiring to higher education and the threat that posed to the VET system and raised the possibility of employers losing access to 'highly skilled' employees because of this. The audience discussion following his presentation including statements about the insufficiency of what people called 'graduate careers' and an expressed concern about 'raising people's expectations' when the labour market might not deliver 'suitable' jobs.

Discussion and implications

It should hardly be necessary to make arguments for educating the population of a country. Wider access to increasing levels of education, regardless of ability to pay, social class, or occupational choice or status, has been a feature of human progress over the past two hundred years in advanced, and more recently in developing, countries. Bowers-Brown and Harvey describe the 'democratic' perspective on the expansion of higher education as follows: Higher education is a collective and individual good, and a more educated population will improve many aspects of society including developing a greater understanding of citizenship. Social harmony is improved, as well as the country's economic performance. While grades may well enter jobs previously performed by non-graduates they will be able to upgrade their jobs and ultimately the occupations. Employers prefer employees who are educated rather than trained. (Summarised from Bowers-Brown & Harvey 2004, pp. 246-247)

A series of reports by bodies such as the OECD (2009) have indicated that investment in education by governments reaps economic and social benefits and adds to the life chances of individual people; although Wolf (2002: xi) dismisses these arguments as 'clichés', arguing that investment in education should extend only to secondary education, primarily basing her arguments on economic justifications. There is a need for further scholarship in his area to research the arguments made against extending secondary education in the 19th century in England and Australia, and compare the arguments with those made against extending further and higher education in the 21st century.

What about the arguments that expansion of a system leads to lower quality? This is a common theme in Australian literature and newspaper commentary on the expansion of higher education (e.g. Slattery 2016). There is an implied belief that universities must be lowering standards because inferior students are entering the system and that this

'threatens...the training of a small cadre of first-rate researchers and innovators' (Wolf 2002, p.249). The Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University states, in the article by Slattery, a journalist with *The Australian* (2016), 'The demand-driven system has opened universities up to a much larger number of young Australian – with the attendant risk to standards.' The measures of quality that are believed to be declining are not articulated in most commentary. Instead, Wolf (2002), for example, makes a number of assumptions, seemingly unsupported by evidence, to argue that 'it is very likely that in the UK we are now producing 400,000 graduates a year who have, on average, been considerably less well and intensively educated than the 200,000 a year who were produced just a little while before'. Her concluding chapter is peppered with phrases such as 'Can there possibly be?' 'How could it?' and even, honestly but tellingly, 'Suppose (and I am pulling numbers out of the air here)...'. She concludes her argument in this section by saying, 'We can't know [my italics] whether we are getting a huge bargain'.

There has been no empirical research into (as an example of one potential measure of quality) the skills and knowledge of graduates of university courses under the now-expanded higher education system, comparing them with the skills and knowledge of the more restricted system of twenty years ago. It is surely important that such research is undertaken, and that it includes examination of whether students who enter with lower scores in their secondary education are likely to do worse – although the latter does not seem of much concern to those opposed to widening participation.

A similar case could be made for research into the supposed degradation of quality in apprenticeships. There is a dearth of empirical research into quality in newer apprenticeships, i.e. traineeships, in Australia, with the exception of Smith et al. (2009), which, however, focused on good practice rather than a comprehensive audit. It would be timely, before traineeships disappear entirely, to examine quality in both traineeships and traditional apprenticeships. The quality of the latter has often been assumed to be high, as with the reputedly 'high quality' apprenticeships in the U.K. in companies such as Rolls Royce, but this assumption is based on little evidence.

Those who argue against the extension of apprenticeship in the UK explicitly argue against allowing older people and those already working for an employer in a job that has less training attached. These arguments seem to fly in the face of social justice and equity. In Australia, arguments are mounted against the latter but not the former. In both countries, women are explicitly disadvantaged by those wishing to narrow the system, because the apprenticeship system in both countries was set up to train young men in trades that were important in the mid-20th century that were undertaken by men, and the privilege of apprenticeship has been guarded by male interest groups such as trade unions who do not want privileges and funding to flow to occupations that are feminised (Smith 2014).

At least the positions of these interest groups are honest. They, or those whom they represent, wish to retain privileges and funding. The same applies to the arguments by Deissinger and Gonon (2015) (in relation to higher education expansion), who fear for the future of VET in Germany and Switzerland if the 'better' young people are all attracted to university rather than apprenticeships. Similarly, universities like Melbourne (a 'Group of Eight' Australian university) support an elitist approach to higher education because elitism is their 'brand' and because they fear the possibility of losing their current proportion of government funding.

But, to return to the argument of the paper, what is the reason for others' opposition to expansion of opportunity to a wider population? And specifically of those who might otherwise be said to hold (and might believe that they hold), views that are left-wing and progressive and who generally champion the cause of disadvantaged people? Here are some possible reasons; I would be interested in hearing more:

- The government is behind it, so it must be bad;
- Employer are participating, so it must be bad; and, what's more, they must be seeking 'business welfare'.

And, what should be the moral stance of researchers? Specious comments such as ‘wasting taxpayers’ money on people working on the checkouts at Tesco’s’ are unlikely to be underpinned by a real concern for taxpayers’ money, nor on an understanding of the knowledge and skill involved in retail work nor the opportunities for rapid career advancement in this sector . [See Smith & Teicher (forthcoming) for an updated account of social construction of skill in certain service industries, including retail.] Similarly, what I see as a faux concern for university students’ debt (which at least in Australia is generally not large, and is not paid back until earnings reach quite a high level) is embarrassing because it is so transparently fabricated. If the real concern is for quality in higher education and in apprenticeships, where is the serious research into these matters? Where is the research into how students manage paying back their student loans? What about international students who, together with their families, go to extraordinary lengths to raise money to study in England or Australia? Where is the concern about their debts?

To return to the quote in *The Australian* from Alison Wolf which began this paper, the comments by readers beneath the relevant article on the newspaper’s web site provide a frightening example of what happens when public intellectuals make statements which invite prejudice and provide permission for people to make derogatory comments about the worth of higher education qualifications and those who undertake them, particularly ‘non-traditional’ students. One such example from the web page (punctuation not corrected) is:

Ahh, don't you all love socialism under Labor/Greens. This was their system. Everybody equal. Equally crap that is. When I've had job applicants mention their degree to me my first impulse now is to ask "what am I supposed to do with that? Wipe my backside with it?"

Degrees are worthless now as every dummy and their dog has one.

If we are not to be complicit in the formation of such attitudes, we need to do better. Many academics in adult and vocational education are beneficiaries of a free tertiary education and some, at least, of us come from working-class backgrounds. We should use our advantages and the careers that they have led us to, to help not hinder those who wish to be educated to a similar level.

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Themes

Widening participation, social inclusion, skills and employment, second chance education, lifelong learning and mobility.

Digital technologies, adult learning and the enactment of austerity

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Introduction

For the past 2 years I have led an ethnographic study of adult digital learning in a free weekly public computing centre called the 'Digital café'. The Café is located in a Neighbourhood House with a mandate to respond to the evolving educational and social needs of the community. In response to a sharp rise in housing prices, stagnated salaries and cuts to adult education programs, these community needs increasingly include food security, childcare, free adult language and literacy programs, as well as Internet access and digital learning support. As a result of adult education program closures, there is very little public technology education that is accessible to low-income adults in this community, in spite of the fact that government agencies and potential employers are pushing people online to access an ever-increasing range of employment and government services. Employment agencies that are not contracted to support the digital literacy needs of job seekers, and government social service agencies that no longer provide in-person services, regularly refer people to the volunteer-run Digital Café at the Neighbourhood House for help learning to use their online forms.

The study reported here is located in a nexus of austerity governance, which has led to widespread cuts to literacy and adult education programs, including digital education, even though the very resources people need for daily life have moved online in the name of 'greater and easier access to government' and 'operational efficiency, flexibility and cost-effectiveness' (Industry Canada 2015). Many adults who attend the Digital Café for help with e-government tasks, do not experience 'greater and easier access to government' as they negotiate a repository of poorly designed sites and online government forms that are proxies for face-to-face services that no longer exist (Gilbert 2010). This prompts questions about the relationship of austerity, e-government and digital learning that I pursue in this paper: How do new users of computers experience e-government in the context of austerity governance? How does technology design materialize the socio-technical arrangements of austerity (Ruppert, Law et al. 2013)? What do the challenges of e-government and its design suggest for approaches to digital literacy instruction?

Austerity, adult learning and e-government

A concise definition of austerity is "severe cutbacks of social services" (McGray 2015). But austerity is also an ideology with roots in neoliberal orthodoxy that low-tax regimes, and so low government spending, stimulates corporate investment and so economic growth (Blyth 2013). The 'great recession of 2008 – 2011 produced high levels of national debt around the globe; the neoliberal solution was austere cuts to government programs to reduce these debt levels and stimulate investment and growth (Major, 2015). Blyth (2013) argues that these 'tough medicine' policies vary across jurisdictions but in general have intensified since the 'great recession' of 2008-2011, and target groups unequally at the intersections of race, gender, income, age and geography (Blyth 2013; McGray 2015).

McClain (2015) has observed the effects of austerity in education in Canada in declining provincial budgets for public education, and the privatization of education whenever possible. In British Columbia, the province where the present study is located, government funding for private education has increased by 61.6% since 2004 (British Columbia Teachers' Federation 2015). In 2014, the British Columbia Provincial Government, which is responsible for the jurisdiction where this study is located, announced cuts to funding for adult basic education. Previously, adults enrolled in free or low-fee English, Math and Science courses to improve their reading and writing for employment, and to upgrade their academic qualifications to pursue post-secondary training. The cuts resulted in the imposition of tuition fees for basic education up to \$550 per course, which are comparable to university tuition fees and far out the reach of most adults who require these courses who already struggle in low wage employment or with unemployment. The precarious status of this group means that they rely upon online government services, which brings them to the Digital Café and into the network of e-government (also known as online or digital government).

Although the aims of the Digital Café are to provide a setting for digital access and digital learning, much of the digital activities we observed and in which we participated involved helping people to navigate a repository of poorly designed online government forms that are proxies for face-to-face services that no longer exist (Gilbert 2010). Completing these online forms require a variety of resources and specialized knowledge that penalize new computer users and those with limited digital access, for example, high speed Internet, adobe reader, a printer or scanner, a mobile phone number for password retrieval, and the capacity to accomplish high-stakes multi-step verification protocols including password verification and storage, 'capchas', secret questions and so on. A complaint to the provincial ombudsperson by advocacy and anti-poverty groups in British Columbia entitled 'access denied' (BCPIAC 2015) captures well the situation for adults who attend the Digital Café to access essential government services such as income assistance, disability stipends, child support, pensions and employment insurance (in the case of employment termination):

Requiring completion of a lengthy and complex online form as the first step to apply for income assistance creates a number of barriers to access. First, many of those applying for assistance do not own or have regular access to a computer, and those with a computer will not generally have internet access. This means that those applicants will have to use a computer in a public place (such as a library, community agency, or kiosk. Some applicants are uncomfortable dealing with matters as deeply personal and private as applying for income assistance on public computers. (p. 21)

The nature of these complaints and the difficulties people experienced with e-government drew our attention in the study to changes in governance, education and citizenship brought about by digital governance, but also to the materiality of devices and their design in enacting these socio-technical arrangements (Ruppert et al. 2013).

The socio-materiality of technology design and digital literacies

A growing body of research in design anthropology (Gunn & Løgstrup 2014, Gatt & Ingold 2013) digital literacies and socio-technology studies relations (Bhatt 2012; Ruppert et al. 2013) suggest that politics and ethics are embedded in technology's design in ways that re-organize social relations. This works prompts us to attend more closely to the mundane and everyday uses of technologies as they are practiced in socio-material contexts. Thus, rather than approach e-government as an inevitable by-product of the affordances of digital technologies, a 'new mode of efficiency', as the Canadian governments would suggest, we may ask how e-government's designs materialize austerity in the mundane practice of filling in an online form.

Deleuze (1992) has noted that in Foucault's disciplinary society, the signature on a form indexes the individual; a number places the individual with a population. What is at play is the recognition of the individual as present and identifiable through her physical mark on the page and her place among the masses. In Deleuze's (1992) control society, the individual, her signature, her number, is supplanted by the 'dividual', 'a human agent that is endlessly divisible and reducible to data representations' (Williams 2005) a code re/activated through algorithms, user-experience histories and other automated mechanisms of tracking, surveillance and control. 'What becomes important' explains Deleuze, 'is no longer either a signature or a number but a code: the code is a password [...] that marks access to information or rejects it' (1992, p. 5).

Entering a password thus becomes a material practice through which humans are authenticated or rejected as legitimate 'users' of government services. In thinking of passcodes in this way, it is perhaps no coincidence that the practices surrounding subscribing to and authenticating online government accounts, were the most emotionally wrought and difficult for some participants in the Digital Café.

Doing with: Side by side participant observation

Scholars of digital literacies and learning have commented on the complexities of the research endeavor, particularly when the research goals and apparatus involve the observation and documentation of digital technologies-in-use (Johri 2011; Bhatt, et al. 2015). We needed a research apparatus that corresponded to rapid and simultaneous flow of screens, talk, typing and clicks. Screen-capture, ubiquitous audio-video and other forms of documentation for digital-literacy-in-practice (Bhatt, et al. 2015; Johri, 2011), but our apparatus was also entangled in the public nature of the Digital Café. Because people using these machines came and went and not all had agreed to participate in the research, it was not possible to install screen capture software. Ubiquitous videotaping was problematic for similar reasons. To this end, we adapted Attar's (2005) contextual inquiry approach, which is similar to a 'think aloud' protocol: 'a technique of coupling close observation of whatever users might 'normally' do with questioning [which should be] seen as engaging in conversation with the user' (Attar 2005, p. 501).

This mode of contextual inquiry was also necessary because we could not 'observe' participants struggling to launch a browser or entering their password incorrectly, knowing the consequences of getting locked out of their accounts. When people asked for help or when we saw things going awry we worked with them side by side through the activity at hand. We learned about the design of online government forms as we worked through these with people, or observed closely the volunteer tutors doing so. Ingold (2011) captures the sensibility of this side-by-side learning as 'joining with [adult learners] in the same currents of practical activity, and by learning to attend to things – as would any novice practitioner – in terms of what they afford in the contexts of what has to be done' (Ingold 2011, p. 314). We took images of the screens when possible, recorded these conversations and took field notes during and after the two-hour Digital Café sessions. We documented over thirty-five 'difficult moments' that involved subscribing to government and job search (employer) accounts. One such event is described below. This is an excerpt of my field notes of a 1.5 hour interaction between M, a participant in the café, and I, as we try to register M for an account with Service Canada. The excerpt begins when M presents a print letter he received in the mail from Service Canada directing him online to subscribe for an account he needs to access services for which he has recently become eligible. The transcription is woven together with my reflective memos following the event, as well as examples of the screen information, transcribed from photos and re-visits to Service Canada website. I recognize the limits of this linguistic rendering, enacted within the confines of a print-based journal, that does not adequately engage the complex socio-material assemblages of this encounter with M, the Service Canada website, the letter, the mouse, his head in his hands and much more.

M's letter is on the table next to us and I show him the web address written on it: <http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/msca/index.page>. We arrive at the website address provided by Service Canada. It is actually a sponsored site for Services Canada.

Then we get to another site where M can create an account, called a “Personal Access Code” (PAC). But the letter he brought in directed him to create a “Government of Canada” or GC key. Are these the same? We scan the screen.

M asks, “What is important for me?”

I reply: Let’s click on “Request a personal access (PAC) code.”

But once he clicks on this we realize that he already has a PAC. The instructions are now that he should use this PAC to register for the ‘My Services Canada Account’. We go back to the ‘register’ button. Here a list of banks and he must select one. His bank isn’t among them and M doesn’t do electronic banking anyway. We keep looking for a keyword or link to get us to where he can register for the ‘My Services’ account. I am pointing to the screen as M holds the mouse: ‘click there, try here’. Malek is confused and has relinquished the mouse: ‘I don’t know. I don’t know’.

M is getting agitated. At this point it is guesswork as we are 5 clicks or pages into the process and still no field to access the ‘My Services’ account. It is not clear from his Service Canada letter that the GC key is the key (or account, the words are used interchangeably) that he needs. I click on the button “continue to GC key” just to see what would happen and we are asked to enter a user name and password, but M doesn’t have one. We read through more options and get to ‘Create a GC Key’. Here we land on a page of disclaimers and information about privacy in tiny print that M cannot begin to read or understand. ‘What do I do?’ asks M. ‘Press Accept’ I suggest. Indeed he has very little choice if he wants to proceed even though he has already had to share with me much of his personal information already.

We are now on Step 2 of 2 and the task is to create “your user ID” and password. We think this user ID may be the GC Key he was sent in the letter. It is not. It must be created from scratch. I read and paraphrase the instructions for M. from the screen:

“Your User ID must contain between eight and sixteen characters, no special characters (for example: %, #, @) and may contain up to seven digits. When creating your User ID, we recommend that you:

- make your User ID easy for you to remember and hard for others to guess;
- avoid using personal information such as your name, Social Insurance Number (SIN), mailing address or email address;
- always keep your User ID secure and do not share it with anyone.”

There is a “USER ID Checklist” that appears in the margin in green below the field. It is not immediately associated with the ID field so we don’t notice it at first. This is the User ID Checklist:

- User ID criteria required 8-16 Characters
- User ID criteria required No Special Character(s)
- User ID criteria required No more than 7 digits

I coach M to enter no more than 7 digits and we miss the idea that characters and digits are not the same. There is no way to know if we have created the ID correctly until we progress through all three ‘recovery questions’. Each question must be selected from a drop down menu, answered and verified. One recovery question from the menu is ‘a memorable teacher?’ and the others are ‘a memorable person’ and ‘a memorable date’. Creating legitimate answers takes a long time, the questions assume knowledge M does not have or perhaps cares to share. I explain

memorable. What does this really mean? Someone important to him? Famous? It's ambiguous. I suggest as 'a teacher who is important to you' He right away says R (the Neighbourhood Outreach worker). Then he has to choose another 'memorable person. 'No one, I know no one,' says M. Then he points to himself and laughs: 'me!'. So we put in 'me. The memorable date is his birthday and we must enter it according to XXXX MM DD. M is writing all this down in his notebook. Now he must create a password and again there is a list of instructions or criteria in a margin to the side disconnected from the password field. We are 45 minutes into the whole affair. Up pops a checklist for making an acceptable password:

- Password criteria required 8-16 Characters
- Password criteria required Lower case letter(s)
- Password criteria required Upper case letter(s)
- Password criteria required Digit(s)

These instructions are hard going for M especially as his keyboard skills do not allow him to make the upper and lower case codes accurately. The instructions are revealed only when an error is made (not using a digit for example), and we re-construct a legitimate password by process of elimination, like a cipher. M is sighing. I reach for the mouse and enter the password for him. Then we are kicked out, 'your session has been inactive too long'. M drops his head into his hands.

Discussion

Service Canada directed M online to subscribe in what is ostensibly a more secure, private and efficient approach to government service delivery. Yet the experience described above materialized 'by design' processes of exclusion that impacted M 'vastly unequally' (McGray 2015, p. 255). His access to services was made precarious due to his inexperience with keyboarding, a skill he has little opportunity to learn. Responsibility for access, and accountability for the consequences of poor design, is shifted onto M (and volunteer tutors and researchers)!

A reconfiguration of learning also seems to be at play in these interactions. The aim of the Digital Café was to provide a setting for people to learn new digital literacies. But the experience described above was clearly not an appropriate context to engage in the play and experimentation that can contribute to this learning. M did not have the luxury of time to integrate the various tasks and instructions, or to practice keyboarding. He relinquished the mouse to me to facilitate the task at hand. This digital engagement was emotionally stressful and rife with potential for high-stakes errors that can discourage digital participation.

Such design practices also have the effect to limit user's access to services and information that are consequential to everyday life. Denny Taylor (1997) observed this in *Toxic Literacies*, where she carefully documented the deployment of bureaucratic print literacies to control lives. These offline practices can be traced to new online practices of government, so that austerity emerges not only as an economic policy, but also a re-configuration of citizen-government relationships materialized in the strategic use of passcodes and accounts.

The busy digital café, with its anxious but persistent participants is also an effect of austerity. However, side-by-side digital learning that is collaborative and oriented to the critical analysis of design practices can shift the tedium and alienation of e-government literacy practices, to acts of advocacy and resistance. Each successfully completed form subverts the austerity politics of e-government.

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Mature students and social isolation: feeling excluded or choosing to be alone.

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This paper focuses on experiences of social isolation and the retention of mature students in Higher Education (HE). Findings from an English university case study highlight the different causes of social isolation experienced by different aged students, during the first year of their undergraduate degree. This research was designed to assess how age effects experiences in Higher Education. Findings suggest that the older an undergraduate student is, the more likely they are to fear, and experience, social exclusion at this university. Younger mature students did not experience exclusion in the same way but were found to actively choose social isolation as a coping mechanism. These findings are considered alongside literature on mature student retention and the changing landscape of university enrolment. This paper will discuss the recruitment and retention of mature students, as well as the research findings.

Mature students' position in H.E.

Mature students appear to have slipped from UK widening participation agendas in recent years. Since the late 1990s, policy changes to Widening Participation (WP) funding detracted attention from mature students, towards younger students from lower socio-economic groups (Smith, 2009). The previous coalition government's social mobility strategy 'Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers', underlined this shift by focussing on better chances for children: *'ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to get a better job than their parents'* (Her Majesty's Government, 2011). However, a year later, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS, 2012) claimed that they were committed to widen participation to everyone able to study in HE, prompting scepticism about the perceived value of adult learning (Smith, 2009). With education seen to be so intrinsic to the success of the UK economy, focus once fell on older learners, hoping that they could help sustain the expansion of HE (Richardson, 1994). In 1979/80 full-time UK students over 21 comprised 13% of new undergraduates (Squires, 1981). Gorard et al (2007) noted that a 55% increase in the participation of older learners was visible, between 1981 and 1989. But the withdrawal of the older students' allowance (Gorard, et al., 2007) and the introduction of variable fees in 2004, presented a rather bleak picture for the recruitment of mature students, due to their financial vulnerabilities (McGivney, 1996). Further difficulties were feared by the tripling of the upper limit fee cap to £9000 per year in 2012, which threatened to price many students out of HE participation (Burns, 2012), and unravel Widening Participation gains in equalising access into HE (Hinton-Smith, 2012).

But despite the odds, mature students have continued to apply to university, seemingly unperturbed by fees. HESA data confirms that the rate of mature students, nationally, has remained fairly static at around 20% (2011-12 20%/2012-13 21%, 2013-14 21%). Recent figures highlight a drop in enrolment across Higher

Education in the UK (HESA, 2016), which may signal a returned focus on mature students, to make up the shortfall in numbers.

The success story ends, however, when you consider what happens to mature students once they start at university. The numbers of mature students who enter HE and fail to drop out, is at around twice the rate of younger learners (HESA, 2012). In 2012/13, whilst only 6% of traditional aged students dropped out, mature students dropped out at a rate of 12%. Whilst comparisons are difficult, due to fee differences, Welsh Higher Education Institution's figures give us a hint of the time-sensitive nature of drop out, with mature students more likely to fail to continue beyond the first year of a full-time degree (12.4%) than younger counterparts (6.8%) (Welsh Government, 2013). So filling up the predicted traditional-age student short-fall with students who appear to be more likely to fail, presents a risky strategy.

Factors leading to failure

A well-established body of literature provides a range of explanations as to why mature students continue to drop out in such proportions. For example, well recognised barriers causing mature students to drop out, are financial responsibilities (González-Arnal, 2009), caring responsibilities (Mannay & Morgan, 2013) and problems adapting to study in HE (Foster, 2009). The proximity of HE providers is also underlined as important for many mature students (Elliot & Brna, 2009), often because of the complexity of personal and financial responsibilities (James, et al., 2013).

Despite literature highlighting these issues, non-continuation patterns from HESA suggest that little progress has been made in helping to reduce the impact these barriers have on mature students. The body of research on strategies tackling barriers is often from small scale, case study research, though it is suggested that recognised barriers for mature students can be counter-acted or may change over time. For example Burton, et al. (2011) found that financial barriers were not significant when bursaries and grants were available and students appeared well prepared and organised in gaining childcare support from extended family. Although the case study is limited by its subjectivity to HE courses in care in just one FE setting, it demonstrates that significant barriers causing mature students to drop out, may be reduced or eliminated.

Successful strategies in helping mature students adapt, are also becoming evident in the literature. The results of a university e-mentoring scheme, was seen to help Access students' transition more confidently into HE (Edirisingha, 2009). It is acknowledged that adaptation remains a difficult hurdle for mature students to overcome, but one that might be overcome by informal institutional support (Foster, 2009; Burton, et al., 2011) both before and during study. The scarcity of research on successful strategies to tackle this, suggests that more could be done in this area.

Many students have fears about adapting and fitting in, regardless of age, as many of the factors associated with starting university are seen to cause loneliness and isolation (Rokach, 1988 cited in Doman & Roux, 2010): leaving home, starting a new career, being separated from loved ones, moving house, poor academic performance, a lack of feelings of belonging, intimacy and support. However, Doman & Roux (2010) maintain that young people aged 18-25 appear to be more prone to

loneliness, suggesting that adaptation problems should be more evident for traditional-aged and young mature students.

So whilst isolation is not just mature student problem, the time it takes to adapt and for isolation to subside may be significant here. For many students, feelings of isolation subside as they quickly adapt to their learning environment and become familiar with peers and the wider student community. With a gap in their educational career, and often with different layers of responsibilities, mature students may often feel this fear more acutely than their younger peers, placing more importance on their need to feel that they belong (Reay, 2004; Read, et al., 2003).

Adaptation can also be affected by factors relating to background (Bourdieu, 1986), the practicalities of attending (Elliot & Brna, 2009) and the risks they have taken in returning to education. The dominance of traditional-aged students can also mean that mature students may feel unable to integrate socially, due to the design of university life, the attitudes of their peers (Foster, 2009) and as well as their own deep-seated concerns about being different. Difficulties in adapting and being isolated as a learner are largely viewed in the literature as having a negative impact (Ryan & Glenn, 2004; Doman & Roux, 2010), though research detailing this issue is limited.

Methods

The observations in this paper are drawn from an active piece of longitudinal research on undergraduate student experiences. The research focuses on a single cohort of full-time undergraduates who started their degree at one English university in the 2015/16 academic year. The main aim of the research was to explore whether age matters in higher education, specifically looking at whether motivation, barriers and adaptation differed according to the age of students. Mixed methods were chosen so that experience could be viewed across the breadth of this student cohort as well as at the level of individual experience. Whilst the research will eventually cover the first two years of these students degree, this paper reports on one of the significant preliminary findings from the first year.

A large-scale questionnaire survey was conducted in the first two weeks of the academic year with 828 students. Amongst other questions students were asked what worried them the most about starting university. Twelve departments were invited to participate, selected according to the age profile of their new students. Courses were selected where there was a good cross section of ages and other courses where there were very few mature students in the cohort. It was hoped that this would demonstrate if there were differences in experiences depending on the spread of ages of students. Subjects with different sized cohorts were also targeted, to understand whether the group size had an effect on students' experiences. A diverse range of academic subjects was selected, from both science and arts disciplines, so that these differences could also be considered.

Nine of the twelve departments invited, took part in the survey phase of the study: Biology, Computing, Criminology, Engineering, History, Law, Natural Science, Psychology and Sociology. For seven of these departments, a first impressions questionnaire was handed students when they entered introductory lectures and completed before their lecture started. All students in attendance completed these

questionnaires (n.795). An online version of the questionnaire was made available to the two other departments, due to concerns about restricted time. The response, following a departmental email, was low, with only one of the two departments generating responses and only 33 of a potential 200 students completing the online questionnaire.

Students completing the questionnaires were invited to take part in a second phase of research, which looked at individual students' experiences through semi-structured interviews and diary entries. As this phase used quota to control for age, students who declared an interest in taking part were selected according to their age, but also controlled according to discipline, to see if this had any effect on experience.

228 expressions of interest were received in relation to the qualitative, second phase, from survey questionnaires. Only home students were included in the sample and participants were recruited as detailed in figure 1:

Figure 1

Age group	Interest	Contacted	Agreed to participate
18-20yrs	150	19	4
21-24yr	13	13	1
25-29yr	4	4	1
30-39	2	2	1
40yr+	5	5	3

Participants were all interviewed midway through their first semester and most were interviewed again towards the end of the second semester. They were also asked to use an on-line diary on a regular basis. This data was coded according to themes from existing literature and additional codes were added as other themes became apparent.

Quantitative Findings

The survey demonstrated that mature students felt more worried about fitting in than their traditional aged peers, particularly those over the age of 40. In addition, interviews and diary entries from a small sample of these survey participants, revealed that mature students were more likely to experience continued social isolation during their first year, than their traditional-aged counterparts.

The survey revealed that mature students were more worried about fitting in than other age groups (figure 2). This was particularly marked for those in the 40+ category. Almost all mature age groups expressed more concern about this than traditional-age students. Traditional age students were more worried about the standard of work required than the mature students.

Figure 2

Age Group	What worries you most about university							
	Accessing support (e.g. academic /personal)	Being able to attend lectures & seminars	Fitting in at university	I have no worries about university	Managing my finances	Organising my study time effectively	Other	The standard of work required
17-21	2.2%	3.4%	11.9%	4.0%	11.6%	25.8%	3.0%	37.5%
22-24	4.5%	4.5%	18.2%		18.2%	18.2%	4.5%	31.8%
25-29			8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	33.3%	8.3%	25.0%
30-39		14.3%	14.3%		28.6%	42.9%		
40+			33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	22.2%		22.2%

Qualitative Findings

In both interviews and diary entries from the second phase, social isolation developed as a key theme. Age appeared to be a key factor in whether this isolation dissipated, continued or was magnified during the course of their first year. The traditional-aged (18-20) students in the sample reported feeling isolated in their first few days, but most explained that once they had attended their lectures, classes and fresher's events, they found they quite quickly developed a new social network. These networks were seen to be supportive, both academically and personally. They also seemed to be an integral part of their enjoyment at university. Conversely, the mature students in the sample, who also felt isolated in the first few days, were more likely to continue feeling like an isolated learner and less likely to assimilate into social networks on their courses. Their search for someone 'like them' is a feature of all the mature students in this study. Discussion of isolation was varied, however. For some mature students, particularly the younger ones, social isolation was actively chosen initially as a coping strategy. For others this was expressed as a result of how their younger peers made them feel, alongside other institutional factors.

Some of the mature students suggested that they chose to isolate themselves from other students. For one student, who had caring responsibilities for young children, isolating herself from other students, socially, was a necessity in order to cope with competing demands:

I am here primarily to learn and not to socialise...my focus is, once I have finished my lectures, getting back home to my family really. It is difficult enough trying to schedule enough reading time and revision without anything else, like going out and being able to do the workload anyway (Female, aged 35).

However, even those without caring responsibilities felt that they needed to isolate themselves from peers on their course and flatmates, so that they could make the best use of their time at university: *'I just want to focus. I need more time to process things. That just means I have to sacrifice going out and stuff a little bit more'* (Male, aged 28). This was also acknowledged by one of the traditional-aged students, but very much as a temporary coping strategy and one which she did not intend to continue, whereas all the mature students discussed ongoing isolation.

I haven't been as social due to university work, but also an ounce of laziness. But I have promised myself to change this attitude in 2nd semester because sometimes it's easy to feel lonely, and I don't need to be lonely because there are people I could spend time with, but I choose not to most of the time (Female, aged 18)

When asked about going to fresher's week activities, both younger and older mature students implied that they didn't want to go out drinking with other students, because they had 'done it all before' when they were younger. Also, in keeping with Foster's findings (2009) all mature students expressed annoyance at the way in which their younger peers behaved both whilst in university and outside of it. This formed part of many mature students' disappointments about university. For those who had chosen isolation, it appeared to be something that they felt positive about, having no regrets about making this choice.

In comparison, mature students in the 40yr+ group did not choose isolation, but felt forced to accept isolation as a result of feeling socially excluded by their peers:

if you open the conversation, I don't know if they think you are invading their privacy, or they don't want... In my heart I know I could sit here and not speak to anyone for three years, get my head down and get my degree, but that is not the point... I think it must be an age thing, it has got to be an age thing. I don't know if they don't want to or don't feel the need to (Female, aged 40).

I am not going to be an active member of my cohort... they are all aged 19, they all do their own thing together. I've tried to make inroads in terms of setting up a study group in our free time and they turned up once for a chat, and have not really engaged since. So I have really set my mind not that I come in just attend my seminars, extract what I need from the library (Male, aged 50).

So, in this respect, isolation was seen as a negative, unwanted position to be in.

It was evident that the exclusion felt by these mature students, came not only from peers but also from institutional sources. Examples of this included cultural illustrations lecturers would use in lectures and seminars, such as references to childhood characters like Harry Potter, or 'things that (students) wouldn't remember because they were too young', but because these students did remember them, they were reminded that they were different. These age-related reminders made them feel invisible; like they did not belong in the body of students.

Discussion

The findings discussed in this paper give a more detailed picture of the role of isolation in mature students' learning experiences at university. Whilst difficulties adapting to the university setting are often viewed negatively (Foster, 2009; Ryan & Glenn, 2004), it is evident that for some mature students, isolation can be positive in terms of success and retention. When isolation is the result of choice it appears to have an emancipatory effect, helping students cope with the demands of university. While for others, the general lack of belonging and the mismatch of culture, between themselves and traditional-aged students, leads to an isolation that is negative. These findings also confirm that isolation, which results from feeling socially

excluded can be very harmful in terms of developing learner identities (Doman & Roux, 2010; Reay, et al., 2009), which could contribute to mature student drop-out. The development of effective strategies for combating this, such as those detailed by Burton et al (2011) and Edirisingha (2009), should become a priority for widening participation departments, to support students' successful adaptation and develop a sense of belonging. In addition, recognising that mature students are not homogenous, in this regard, is essential in designing appropriate support to help improve retention.

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Exploring Adult learners' relationships with Maths using a narrative ethnography approach.

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Introduction

Mathematical competence is considered to be a vital tool to get access to higher education as well as skilled jobs. Basic knowledge in Mathematics is also essential for the smooth functioning of everyday life. However, in UK, a large number of students leave school with little or no qualification in Maths (National Numeracy, 2012). The mathematical ability of nearly 80% of adult population, that is 4 out of 5 adults across the country, is below Level 2 which is equivalent to GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) grade A* - C (National Numeracy, 2012). A Low level of numeracy skills not only limits people's chances of progression in life but costs the nation a huge sum of £20.2 billion every year (National Numeracy, 2012). Further/adult education colleges in England offer adult Mathematics courses at different levels to provide a second chance to adult learners to return to education and improve their chances of employability. This research is based in an adult education college in the East Midlands of England. The purpose of this research is to understand how adult learners develop their mathematical identities over time and to explore the key factors that influence their relationships with the subject. This research can give an insight into learners' perspective regarding learning Mathematics and can help in understanding their affect, cognition and experiences. This study is in the early stages of data collection. In this paper, the conceptual framework and methodology of the research will be discussed and some initial findings from the pilot study will be shared.

Conceptual framework

Mathematical identities can be seen as 'the relationship people form with Mathematics and importantly, with other actors and processes in the environs of Mathematics' (George, 2009, p.201). The concept of identity with respect to Mathematics has been used to convey many different meanings by different researchers. McFeetors and Mason (2005) equate mathematical identity to self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs. Thus, according to them, identity with respect to Mathematics is a personal attribute and people construct their identities on the basis of their own perception of their abilities in completing Mathematical tasks and problems. However, Grootenboer, Lowrie & Smith (2006) view it from a different angle. For them mathematical identity is 'how individuals know and name themselves,... and how an individual is recognised and looked upon by others (Grootenboer, Lowrie & Smith, 2006, p.612).

Thus, they combine the 'self' with 'other' and maintain that identity is not only the self-perception of individuals about themselves but is also affected by the opinions of other people, for example, teachers and peers in a classroom. Identity, in these definitions, appears to be a permanent and immutable characteristic which stays with a person for a lifetime. This constant view of identity is in conflict to the slippery and

shifting notion of identity proposed by sociocultural theorists like Lave and Wenger, (1991).

The work of Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) suggest that the notion of identity is temporal and the process of identity construction involves continuous progression and evolution. Identity is a function of engagement in different communities. People develop a sense of who they are and realise their individuality by getting involved and participating in a shared learning experience. They also develop shared and collective identities with communities or groups of people in the form of a sense of belonging. People may hold and display several different identities in different situations (Lave and Wenger, 1991); however, they also hold a 'core identity' based on their 'internal state' which is long term and stable and remains uniform across contexts (Gee, 2000-2001, p. 99).

Identity formation is an essential part of learning (Wenger, 1998) as learning is a journey of becoming (Lerman. 2000). Wenger (1998) maintains that 'who we are lies in the way we live day to day'identity is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities' (p. 151). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is not something that takes place 'within' an individual; learning is a social process that takes place through interaction, participation and experience sharing. As a result of this social process, people define and identify themselves. Thus, identity acts as a 'pivot between the individual and the social' (Wenger, 1998, p. 145).

Learners' relationship with Mathematics can be demonstrated in the form of 'affect' (McLeod, 1992). Affect encompasses the affective and cognitive attributes which a person experiences while learning Mathematics and includes emotions and beliefs (McLeod, 1992). 'Emotions are social in nature and situated in a specific socio-historical context' (Op 'T Eynde, Corte & Verschaffe, 2006, p.195). Emotions are the positive or negative mental disposition or feelings that a learner holds towards Mathematics and can be exhibited through a favourable or avoidance attitude towards the subject. The emotions may be short term which arise while tackling a mathematical task or can be persistent for a long period of time. Ingram, (2015) terms these states as micro and macro feelings. Beliefs, on the contrary, take a considerably longer period of time to develop and involve rational thinking and reasoning (McLeod, 1992). Beliefs are cognitive in nature and are relatively more stable than emotions (Hannula, 2006).

The concept of affect emanates from the theories that consider learning, 'thinking and reasoning as a product of social activity' (Lerman, 2000, p.23). Lave and Wenger (1991) also agree that learning is a social and cultural activity which takes place through communication and participation. Learning Mathematics is a process of developing mathematical identities which depends on the relationship between the learner, the discipline of mathematics and the community of practice which includes the teacher, curriculum and other students (Grootenboer & Zevenbergen, 2008; George, 2009). Students develop a distinct sense of identity as learners in their context which is different to all other students in the Maths class. Also, their image of themselves as learners with respect to Maths is unique and different to how they view themselves in other subjects.

The purpose of this research, as mentioned earlier, is to understand the construction of mathematical identities in adult learners and the factors that influence learners' relationship with Mathematics. For this research, learning is considered to be a social activity which takes place through participation, engagement and interaction in a social environment. 'Mathematical identities' is a multi-dimensional concept which encapsulates the personal and shared aspects of learners' relationships with Mathematics. For this research, mathematical identities will be used as a framework to study the affective and cognitive elements of learners' relationship with Mathematics and their lived experiences as narratives.

Methodology

This research is situated within the domain of interpretivism and takes a social constructivist approach for knowledge construction. It is based on the premise that truth and reality are not absolute or independent and can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. This study will draw on 'common sense thinking' (Schutz, 1962, quoted in Bryman, 2012, p. 30) of the learners to understand the logic for their actions and behaviour in the Mathematics classroom. This research will view the world from the angle of its research participants and will try to interpret it from their perspective.

This study adopts a narrative ethnographic approach and will use participant observation, narrative life story interviews and mind maps as data collection instruments. For this study, I will observe the learners studying on Maths courses (or work with them as a learning support assistant) in their natural learning environment i.e. a classroom. Informed consent of the learners will be obtained beforehand. The purpose of the observation is twofold: first, to learn and make field notes about the learners' habits of participation and engagement in the class activities and their interaction and communication with each other and the tutor. Second, to spend time with the learners in the class and develop a relationship of trust with them. If the learners know me and are comfortable in talking to me, they are more likely to express themselves openly about their experiences in the interviews.

This study relies on narrative life story interviews to capture the lived experiences of the learners at present and in the past. Some of the learners from the same cohorts which are observed will be recruited for interviews. A narrative approach will be suitable for this study because identity is closely linked with narratives. In fact, identity is viewed as a narrative or life story which develops in tandem with the flow of life (McAdams, 1993). Giddens (1991) maintains that identity is not a set of attributes but a 'narrative biography' (p.53) of a person. Identity construction is a continuous process of reflection and storytelling which enables people to explain events from the past, appreciate their position at present and anticipate the future (Giddens, 1991). People make sense of their lives by narrating stories about their experiences, therefore, narratives are useful in understanding their storied experiences (Clandinin, 2013). Narratives are human centred (Webster & Mertova, 2007) and inform the listener about the perspective of the narrator. The narrator has the power to reflect and choose what they want to share with the listener as per their own subjective judgment and relate the contents of the story in their preferred sequence. Thus, it is not necessary to find out what actually happened but how the narrator perceived it and how it affected his/her life (Bryman, 2012).

Visual data in the form of mind maps drawn by the research participants will also be collected during the interviews. Mind maps are quite effective in extricating nonverbal data (Bangoli, 2009) which can complement and add richness to other forms of data collected. Mind maps can be drawn in many different ways, for example, flow chart, timeline or relational map.

Context

This study is based in an adult education college (pseudonym: Alpha college) in the East Midlands of England and involves adult learners studying on Mathematics courses. The cohort of adult learners studying on Mathematics courses at Alpha College is very diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, previous education and work experience. Learners in this cohort come from different parts of the world and have varied experiences of learning Maths at school and college level. Majority of these learners are women.

The first phase of this research (piloting) has been completed. For the pilot study, two groups of adult learners studying on level 1/ level 2 Mathematics courses were selected. I worked with these two groups of students as a learning support assistant for over two months. During this time, I observed the learners, collected field notes about their activities and behaviour in the class and conducted four life story interviews.

The interview data was transcribed and a brief summary of the narrative of each interviewee was prepared. The interview data was also analysed thematically and emerging themes and patterns were identified. This paper will focus on two learners only (pseudonyms: Sarah and Sanam). A brief summary of their narratives is given below followed by a discussion on the data.

Brief summary of Sarah's narrative:

Sarah, 45, was born in France. She recalls and talks about her earliest memories of learning Maths in Primary school fondly. It was 'fun and games' and she was discovering new things. She enjoyed solving problems and drawing shapes. Her experience of primary school remained good and she had a positive relationship with Maths.

When she moved to secondary school, the situation changed. The Maths teacher was not very helpful and did not appreciate the students asking questions. Sarah had a lot of questions that remained unanswered and she could not develop a deeper understanding of the subject. Despite this, she was an above average student and scored better than many of her class fellows. In the final year of secondary school, a new teacher came who taught well and explained the importance of Maths to the students. Sarah's relationship with maths improved but a lot of time had been wasted so Sarah had to work very hard to obtain a good grade in her exam.

In college she had a teacher who liked to prove maths 'by logic and technique' and included learning activities for the students in his lesson. She liked Maths in college, however, she thinks she would not have chosen to study Maths at college level but it was compulsory so she had no choice.

After college, Sarah studied for a degree in Law and later worked as a teacher in France. She moved to UK about five years ago and is now studying on a level 2 Maths course after passing her Level 1 Maths exam.

Brief summary of Sanam's narrative:

Sanam, 42, was born and educated in India. Recalling her past experience of learning Mathematics, she mentions the names of two of her favourite Mathematics teachers. Sanam was a very good student in Maths in early school years and scored high grades. However, she never liked Maths. She attributes her good performance in exams to her extraordinary ability to memorise everything. Her teachers were very encouraging and praised her ability of solving Maths questions in front of other students which boosted her morale. She relished the applauding remarks of the teachers and was stimulated to work hard and maintain her top position in the Maths class.

In later years of secondary school, Maths was much harder and Sanam did not enjoy theorems and Geometry. It was too abstract for her to understand. She still relied on her sharp memory, learnt everything by rote and managed to produce good grades in exams/class tests.

After 10th grade (equivalent to GCSE) she did not want to continue studying Maths (pure science) in college. However, due to peer and societal pressure she chose the science group with Maths as a core subject. After college, she changed her course and studied for a degree in Economics and later completed a teaching qualification. She worked as a history teacher for a few years before giving up her job for her family and to care for her ailing grandmother. She moved to UK a few years ago and is now studying on a level 1 maths course.

Discussion

Sarah and Sanam belong to roughly the same age group (between 40-45 years), however they represent two completely different geographical and cultural worlds. Their narratives show similarities as well as differences.

Relationship with the subject:

Sarah liked Mathematics in primary school because she found it exciting. As a child she was curious to learn and Maths gave her the opportunity to explore and discover new things. She enjoyed the learning activities in the class (e.g. drawing a square or triangle) and taking the challenge of solving Maths problems. Thus, Sarah seems to be deeply engaged with the subject in early school years, developing a relational understanding of mathematical concepts.

Sanam, on the other hand, was never much interested in Maths. For her, Maths was just a set of operations like addition, multiplication and division which could be learnt by repeated practice. However, she used to work hard to secure good grades in tests and exams in order to get appreciation from the teachers. She thoroughly enjoyed herself when the teachers praised her in front of the class and was encouraged to work harder. For her, social appreciation, and the opinion of others about her, matter a lot.

Sarah's relationship with Maths declined after she moved into secondary school. She wanted to explore the subject in detail and appreciate the logic behind using certain methods for problem solving. But the teacher did not have time to explain and satisfy her queries. 'I am a person who has lots of questions, what is this? Why is this? But the teacher says to me 'it is like that'. Thus, she could not identify with the subject and developed negative affect.

In the last two years of high school school (year 9 & year 10), Sanam found Maths to be very difficult. 'I hated theorems, geometry, algebra...' because it was boring and complicated. She was required to learn a fixed set of rules to solve Maths problems and there was no room for imagination. In other subjects, for example History, she could read a passage and visualise the scenario in her mind. But Maths was different, it was too abstract. She developed a feeling that she did not have the calibre to understand Maths '....it didn't come naturally to me'. Thus, Sanam developed a sense of negative belief and low self-concept about her abilities in Maths.

Role of teachers

Sarah and Sanam both have talked about their teachers and their impact on their relationship with Maths in different ways. Sarah has not mentioned any teacher from primary school when she enjoyed Maths. However, she has said a lot about a teacher from secondary school, who taught her for four years. Sarah's relationship with the subject deteriorated during this period as she could not understand maths. She holds the teacher responsible for it, 'if you don't have a good teacher, you can't.... you don't like the subject'..... '*I don't like maths becauseI did not have a good teacher*'. She also referred to this teacher sarcastically as 'that famous woman' later in the interview.

Sarah has also mentioned two more teachers in her story. One of them is the teacher who taught her in the final year of secondary school and stressed upon the importance of Maths to motivate the students to study. The other is her maths teacher from college who played a part in restoring her interest in Maths. '*.....in the college I had a teacher who is very improved with his teaching, he liked Maths, he liked to.....you know, to prove by technique, by logic, you know, did more activities in the class so from college I like Maths*'.

Sarah's narrative suggests that instructional factor, i.e. pedagogy or the way Maths is taught in the class has played a major role in the development of her identity regarding Maths.

Sanam, on the contrary, has talked about her teachers very positively. She started her story by naming two teachers from her early years in school whom she really admired. She liked them not only because they were competent teachers but also because they 'loved' and 'praised' her which made her happy. In later school years (grade 9 & 10) and college, she struggled in Maths. However, she does not hold the teachers responsible for it but her own lack of aptitude for Maths, 'the subject was too hard for my IQ level'.

Concluding Remarks:

Sarah and Sanam seem to have contrasting opinions about the nature of Maths and hence apply completely different methods to learn it. While Sarah likes to explore and discover meanings, Sanam prefers to gain knowledge by 'mugging up' to reproduce in exams.

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Older Adult Internet Super-Users

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There is evidence that digital technologies including the Internet have the potential to improve older adults' social participation and inclusion. This in turn is said to improve their quality of life. Yet, these benefits may be less evident for some older adults, as the digital divide appears to remain. For these older adults they are continuing to experience lower levels of digital technology and Internet use compared to younger people. Two significant groups have emerged from studies of older adults' Internet use: older adults who are highly educated and affluent, who have technology assets, skills and positive views of going online, and there are the less affluent older adults who are largely disconnected. Older Internet super-users are in a unique position to inform us about what it takes to be a successful "silver surfer". But we do not know how they achieved this position, nor how their expertise can be deployed to help others.

This paper reports on a study exploring the digital experiences of older Australian (65+) retirees who are Internet 'super-users'. Super-users are defined as those who effectively use many Internet applications as part of the normal rhythm of daily life. The data gathering methods of this study were (1) photovoice (participants take photos that visually represent aspects of their everyday lives followed by an interview to discuss photos), (2) a diary of Internet use, and (3) a semi-structured telephone interview.

The project identified what makes a good Internet experience for older adults. This was then translated into a set of guidelines to improve Internet use for other older adults who are yet to fully realize the potential of the Internet to enhance daily life and wellbeing. This project also explored how the expertise of older Internet superusers can be deployed to help others develop Internet skills. The results are considered from the perspectives that older adults' digital participation is best conceptualised by incorporating self-efficacy theory, digital competence and personal learning environments and demonstrates a pathway toward digital participation for older adults through the development of digital self-efficacy. The results are also considered in terms of the support of older people in the community and how the development of digital self-efficacy can enhance daily life and wellbeing for older adults who have yet to realise the potential of the Internet to improve social participation and inclusion.

Introduction

It is estimated that by 2050 there will be 2 billion people over the age of 60 worldwide (WHO, 2002). In Australia in 2011, 14 per cent of the population was over the age of 65, an increase of 350 per cent since 1901 (ABS, 2012). Australia's ageing population is projected to increase to approximately 24 per cent of the population by 2061 (ABS, 2013). The Active Ageing Policy Framework (2002) developed by the World Health Organisation proposes three pillars for successful ageing: participation, health, and security (WHO, 2002). Digital literacy has been identified as a means for

all citizens to engage with society (Martin, 2009). The internet is a medium through which information is created, shared and social patterns develop and evolve (Martin, 2009). However, numerous studies have identified the negative relationship between age and Internet use (Paul & Stegbauer, 2005; Chung et al., 2010; Van Volkom, Stapley, & Amaturio, 2014). Social isolation amongst older people has been identified as one of the major issues facing the industrialised world and the resultant negative impacts on health and wellbeing (Independent Age, 2010). Digital technologies present the opportunity for older adults to access services, continue learning and generally improve the quality of their life. Ageing is a heterogenous phenomenon which is experienced differently by those who are financially secure and educated than it is by those who are poor and uneducated (Richeson & Shelton, 2006). Digital consumption amongst older adults is also divided by conceptions of digital 'haves' and digital 'have nots' (Norris, 2001; Rasanen, 2008; Nasi, Rasanen & Sarpila, 2012). The study of older adult Internet 'super users' (defined as those who effectively use many Internet applications as part of the normal rhythm of daily life), presents an opportunity for researchers to glean the mechanisms by which older adults have attained Information Computer Technology (ICT) competences and how their expertise can be deployed to help others. The aim of this study was to investigate the conceptualisation of digital participation by older adult's using a super-users concept. Super-users, particularly in the +65 age bracket, were defined as those who effectively use many Internet applications as part of the normal rhythm of daily life. De George Walker and Tyler (2014) suggested that older adult's digital participation was best conceptualised by incorporating self-efficacy theory, digital competence and personal learning environments which serve as pathways toward digital participation for older adults through the development of digital self-efficacy. What follows are qualitative findings, shaped by the above conceptualisation, that emerged from the use of photo-voice, personal diaries and semi-structured telephone interviews with older adult Internet 'super-users'. This revealed the mechanisms by which these participants attained digital participation. A review of the conceptual framework and methodology section now follows and the results and conclusion offer considerations of the pathways by which these older adults attained digital participation, and broader implications in relation to how older adults in general might be enabled to put to work digital solutions to the issues of older age living.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework deployed in research was a model suggested by De George-Walker and Tyler (2014). This model put forward a position that the digital participation of older adults was influenced primarily by self-efficacy and was built on the relationships between these adults digital competence, or lack there of, their personal learning environments, and their personal sources of efficacy. Self-efficacy is the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3), with efficacy beliefs therefore centering on the self-regulation of thought processes, motivation, affective and physiological states and control over actions (Bandura, 1997). De George-Walker and Tyler (2014) notion of digital competence, was derived from the idea of having the "necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in information management and communication as well as being good technical operators" (p. 211). They put forward the position that an increase in the degrees of self-efficacy results in increased motivation, which prompted sustained digital participation. Personal

Learning Environments (PLE), the third element in the model, was considered as the technology used for learning- tool and resources (Buchem, Atwell & Torres, 2011). PLEs are the contextual environment in which self-efficacy and digital competence is learnt and enacted.

Method

Participants were recruited purposefully through direct emails to senior groups, opportunistic through using advertising posters and using snowballing technique (Creswell, 2012). Nine males and two female self-identified as Internet 'super-users' and agreed to participate in the study. Their ages ranged from 59 to 82 years of age with the median age being 73.27 years. Individuals were geographically located across three states of Australia; Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. There were six participants from rural areas, three participants from regional areas and two participants from metropolitan areas. The educational attainment of participants ranged from Year 7 through to tertiary qualifications. Data were gathered using: a daily diary (Jacelon & Imperio, 2005) using a checklist of daily computer and internet use (Eurostat Model Questionnaire, 2012); photovoice (Berg, Lune & Lune, 2004), where participants took photos to visually represent aspects of their everyday life using ICT, and semi-structured interviews by telephone (Creswell, 2012). An example of questions asked during the interview component included: "Tell me about your Internet use and experiences?" and "How do you learn about the Internet - what is helpful and unhelpful in your learning processes?" Participants were also encouraged to make meaning and draw implications from their experiences, with questions like, "How do your tools, experiences, successes and challenges illuminate what makes a good/successful Internet experience for older adults?" Generally, one can see that this project drew on the elements of an exploratory, qualitative case study (Yin, 2014). Thematic analysis (Joffe, 2011) was deployed to structure the interpretation of data.

Results

In this section of the paper, the data is analysed through the lens of the model for digital participation as proposed by De George-Walker and Tyler (2014). The themes of self-efficacy, digital competence, and personal learning environments are explored.

Self Efficacy

Previous Accomplishments

Bandura (1997) states that perceived self-efficacy is essentially "what you believe you can do with what you have under a variety of circumstances" (Bandura, 1997, p. 37). Participants ranged in working backgrounds from a plumber to an Information Technology professional. The results suggest that the cognitive appraisals of previous mastery experiences and translating those to be relevant to using a computer which enabled participants to venture forward and make the transition to connecting online. Each participant had previous accomplishments which laid the foundation for understanding the necessary effort required to be successful in undertaking any new endeavour. The following quote is reminiscent of the participant's responses. "I trained as an engineer and you tend to think about building blocks ... you started from the bottom and worked up, you didn't jump in." Participant 10.

Observed or Modelled Experience

Through their behaviour and by verbalising their thought processes models transmit their knowledge, teach observers new skillsets and model how to manage situational demands (Bandura, 1997). In the context of developing ICT competencies, model/mentors provide new learners a glimpse of the necessary competencies required to complete tasks. This is reflected by the comments made by one participant of observing a computer technician work on her computer:

...I've had him out here once with a blip on my computer, it just totally crashed, he came out he totally restored everything and he frequently mentions things that I lap up like a cat drinking out of a saucer of milk,

Participant 5.

Interestingly, the Internet itself was also a source of modelled behaviour: I persevered and finally found out by looking at other people's blogs and experiences on the internet that it was my anti-virus program that had clashed with Windows and blocked the internet connection and all I did was delete that anti-virus program and switch to a new one and everything's fine, Participant 9.

Verbal and Social Feedback

Older adults represent a stigmatized group, especially in western youth obsessed culture (Richeson & Shelton, 2006). Older adults also often endorse negative stereotypes of ageing (Heckhausen, Dixon, Baltes, 1989). It would seem that by virtue of being older adult Internet 'super-users' our participants are able to exploit age norms thus enhancing their sense of self-efficacy when making same age comparisons (Bandura, 1997). This is demonstrated by the fact that the older adult Internet super-users were currently or had been the 'go to' person within their workplace or home environment for computer issues. Bandura (1997) claimed that efficacy beliefs rest on self-regulation of thought processes, motivation, affective and physiological states as well as control over action. This was well the case with these participants as they struggled to optimize wellbeing (Kennedy, Mather and Cartstensen, 2004) through passive control of their emotions through choosing situations that produced less negative emotions (Blanchard-Fields, Stein, & Watson, 2004). In effect these super-users offered exemplars of practice that were less devoted to the detail of practice and more associated with just practice. This sentiment can be explained through the following statement from Participant 11:

"I would say don't be frightened of it... You cannot break it, if you do make a mess it's fixable and nothing to panic about." This could be described as a 'just do it' mentality. Nevertheless, participants did note the frustrations associated with connecting online and having to keep up with evolving technologies or those that appear to be designed for younger users (Haukka, 2011). Yet frustrations for this group were dealt with through the ability persist in the face of aversive emotions.

Participant 8 remarked on her *modus operandi*, "...if there's 9,000 ways of trying it I won't give up until the 9,000th one has been done."

Digital Competence

Martin (2009) suggested that digital competence is a requirement and precursor of digital literacy. The participants in this study were asked to record their daily Internet

activities. Ten of the eleven participants were classified as high skilled (engaging in at least 4 of the 5 basic internet activities) whilst 1 participant was classified as medium skilled (engaging in 3 of the 5 domains). De George-Walker and Tyler (2014) contend that aside from the requisite technical skills of using a computer, digital competence refers to having the knowledge, skills and attitude required to successfully navigate digital participation. Evidence of how one's attitude results in sustained digital participation is supported by participant's remarks with regards to persisting with a problem until it is resolved:

So I tend to keep at a problem until I can find a solution for it. And that's how I achieve success on the internet if I can't do something one way then I will go and Google it and find it and search it and read all sorts of stuff ..., Participant

Whilst another participant when comparing digital successes to his friends lack of digital development commented; "But my attitude is I'll do it again and I'll do it again and I'll do it again", Participant 10.

Further, De George Walker and Tyler (2014) proposed that digital literacy parallels the construct of personal competence in self-efficacy theory and therefore is a precondition of digital self-efficacy. This view is supported by the sense of satisfaction that was derived by participants when describing their digital experiences which serves as an impetus for deeper and sustained development of digital competencies:

"I find that I've worked something out I feel a real sense of satisfaction with myself and I often sit there and say well there that's good you've done it", Participant 11; and "So there are two lots experts, I solved it myself, and I felt pretty chuffed about that", Participant 9.

Personal Learning Environments

Using the construct of Personal Learning Environments offers the opportunity to investigate the social and contextual environment in which these participants are situated and how his mediated their development of digital participation. Their tools, community and rules of engagement (Buchem, Atwell & Torres, 2011) are examined next.

Tools

Tools mediate the activity of digital participation the constantly updating of hardware and the continuous requirement to update skills were constants in these data. For example:

I mean I'm on my fourth computer at the moment...but I mean I started off with towers but now I've got laptop because I can take that with me and I can't travel without computer access ... I feel that I can't operate without a computer now, Participant 5.

Participant 7 is an example of the consensus held by participants that a successful digital experience was mediated by the tools that one used. She reported:

Okay in my experience the most successful Internet experiences is highly dependent firstly on having a good tool, in other words a good clean fast and reliable Internet connection and a basic understanding of its capabilities... It's no good having a good fast, clean reliable car and not understanding how to drive it okay... so, you need an understanding of how to use it but the tool has to be successful.

One example of a comprehensive engagement and application with digital tools was demonstrated by Participant 9 'Portable Maintenance Kit'. He stated:

It's my portable –I call it my portable Internet maintenance kit. Because really that's what it is, it's a series of half a dozen programs on that stick that I think I could plug into anybody's computer that's having a problem and get it going again.

Figure 1: Participant's Tools



Community

The community is the larger group in which the subject is situated and can support the development of digital competencies. This is demonstrated through the example 7 of the story recounted by Participant 6 of a gentleman who joined his ukele group and as a result of his engagement and the encouragement from the ukele group; the gentleman was motivated to connect online. He reported:

I'm in a ukele group, we have a guy there who's 84, who recently picked up a ukele for the first time in his life. Now he is downloading music from the internet to play on his ukele...we're all saying hey we found this song on the internet isn't it great and

we'll play this. So he's had some tunes that he would like us to play so he's gone on the Internet and downloaded them and brought the sheet music along to us so we can look at it, Participant 6.

Division of labour is related to the organisation of the community and how this may assist the learner move towards digital participation. Each older adult Internet superuser was accepting of the fact that they may require assistance at some stage with online activities. Participants suggested that other older adults would be best suited to teach other older adults wanting to learn digital competencies as younger teachers often seemed to assume that older learners had pre-existing knowledge; frequently would teach material too quickly or seemed unaware of the challenges facing older adult users. An example of division of labour in action was when struggling to solve an IT issue on her own, Participant 5 shared her problem at a friendly gathering and was assisted in finding a solution. This gathering is depicted in Figure 2. Participant 5 reported her airing her frustrations and “and the next minute the whole lot joined in and they were coming over ... and saying well perhaps you could try this or I've got the name of so and so...”.

Figure 2: Labour shard: One Participant's community of ICT users



Rules

The rules that relate to PLE involve the norms and conventions that affect how the subject may move toward attaining the outcome. The main rules which were cited by the older adult Internet super-users were to have someone in place that you could go to for advice; to have a purpose for connecting online; (whether it was to connect with others or to research a hobby or new interest) to ensure that you had the right tools to do the job; and for users to understand that the computer is a tool which may require maintenance by a professional. Participant 7 offers comment:

You don't need to be a motor mechanic to drive a car, you don't need to be a computer technician to use one, but when your car fails you then need the mechanic and you expect to pay for it.

Of interest is the fact that all of the super-users were early adopters of digital technology. Rogers (2003) suggests that early adopters of digital technologies feel confident and less anxious about innovation compared to late adopters who seem skeptical of the benefits of technology (Jung et al. 2010).

Conclusion

As older people are representing a larger proportion of the population and therefore bring with them accompanying pressure for increases in social service expenditure, an often forgotten fact is that older people are also a growing market, particularly for digital services. If older people are to continue to contribute to our diverse society as capable and confident consumers, digital participation should be available as an alternative option to articulate their goals, needs and aspirations. In this research, access to digital participation through capacity and capability has been explored with a small group of older adult Internet super-users. What can be gleaned from the data are a series of principles that can be used to guide initiatives that prompt low and new older Internet use. Ideally, any initiative should:

1. Provide cognitive appraisals to participants that reduced the anxiety associated with the uptake of computer use, this includes the use of previous accomplishments that were self-efficacious.
2. Build tolerance to frustration, particularly that which can pre-ceeded mastery experiences. This tolerance is enabled through effective feedback, especially from a supportive community that has a network of ICT mentors embedded within it. The communities of the participants in this study appeared as holding the resources that led to satisfaction and the experience of positive affective emotions whilst using ICTs.
3. Provide access to the tools that most effectively enrich digital participation, along with added opportunities to build on the skill and capacities already demonstrated or requested.

Further, by virtue of being older adult Internet 'super-users' these participants were able to exploit age norms thus enhancing their sense of self-efficacy when making same age comparisons. Increasing successful digital participation for all older adults will also put greater pressure on the broadening of age related norms to include one of digital competence.

This qualitative study is not generalizable. What has been provided is a rich account of the experiences of a small number of older adult super-users, whose experiences formed the basis of a set of guidelines for digital engagement initiatives for older adults.

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An austere future for older people's learning?

Jane Watts

'We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water.'
(Freire, 1997:8)

Introduction

Responding to the theme of austerity and adult learning, and through the lens, particularly, of the impact of 'austerity' policies on older people's learning, this paper focuses on three key areas; which older people gain access to learning, who pays for older people's learning and what kinds of learning might be available (Findsen and Formosa, 2011, NOLG/NIACE, 2015 Withnall, 2010). The paper is in part a review of literature and reflects empirical evidence from the work of the National Older Learners Group including my own policy and research role at NIACE (now the Learning and Work Institute), including the Mid-life Career Review project (NIACE, 2015) and forms part of my ongoing attempt to make sense of some apparent senselessness.

Context - austerity and demographic change

'The austerity policies that have been rolled out in many Western countries have brought all the pain of economic stagnation but hardly any of the promised benefits of debt reduction, renewed growth and prosperity (Schui, 2014:1).'

Austerity is a highly contested concept in terms of both its necessity and its effect. Governments and others, claim that austerity is the inevitable consequence of the banking collapse and the subsequent recession. Until relatively recently few voices put the counter-argument but now we observe challenges to the efficacy of austerity policies (Chakraborty, 2016, Dorling, 2015, Ginn, 2013, Graham-Leigh, 2015, Macnicol, 2015, Schui, 2014). Austerity has been a convenient hook for successive governments to hang ideologically driven policies so as to blame 'outside' factors for 'cuts'. Adult learning has been seriously affected by these cuts and I would argue that learning opportunities for some older adults have been particularly restricted. Chakraborty (2016) suggested that austerity is merely a synonym for privatisation, and, while he did not cite older people's learning as an example, he could well have done.

In considering how austerity measures have particularly affected older learners we need to examine, I think, three particular areas: intergenerational tensions; the learning offer and its purposes; and, access to learning, including its funding.

In the UK, one person in three is over 50, and the numbers are rising. People are spending living longer, and while some of these years are healthy active retirement, some are spent in poor health. In both cases, learning can make a major contribution both to the wellbeing of older people, and their contribution to society and the economy. However, the potential is often wasted, because few older people participate in learning, and what is available to them is poorly coordinated (NOLG/NIACE, 2015).

The risk of poverty in later life affects the likely take up of learning amongst older people. Age UK (2016) suggest that 14% pensioners live below the poverty line, with 7% of the total living in severe poverty. 8% of pensioners aged 65+ (about 900,000) in the UK are materially deprived. That is, they do not have certain goods, services, or experiences because of financial, health-related, or social isolation barriers and these services include education.

Who are older learners?

Older learners are considered either to be 50+ or post-retirement, still commonly defined as 65+, despite rising retirement ages. This paper refers to both categories of older learner. Schuller and Watson (2009) divided the life course into four quartiles; while they particularly pointed out the inequalities in provision in the 75+ quartile, there is a need to look again at retraining and different learning opportunities in the third, 50-74, quartile.

The participation of older people in learning is low. Successive participation surveys carried out by NIACE, show that there is a decline in participation in adult learning in both third and fourth age quartiles and is also determined by social class (McNair, 2012). A similar survey in 2005, before the recession, showed similar findings (Aldridge and Tuckett, 2007); they showed that the yearly NIACE surveys consistently report that 'not quite one in five of the population over 65 see themselves as learners' (5). However, both 2005 and 2012 surveys revealed changes; for example, more people in mid-life were taking up work-related learning as people stayed in work for longer.

Intergenerational tensions

Policy-makers have assumed that society must focus on education for younger people, given the high rates of young people's unemployment and low levels of attainment (SFA, 2016). Simultaneously, we have growing numbers of older people, some with insufficient resources. The baby boomers did not all 'run off with the money' as successive government ministers suggest. These intergenerational tensions may damage multigenerational concepts of inclusion and in turn they influence the provision of learning for older people, whether that is learning for paid work or learning for any other purpose (Hyde and Phillipson, 2014, Macnicol, 2015). These intergenerational tensions are as contestable, socially constructed and ideologically driven as the concept of austerity.

The shape of learning in later life

Rather than Schuller and Watson's quartiles, I would prefer to consider three major transitions; the potential transition in mid-life; the more certain retirement transition and the move towards much older age. The retirement transition takes place at a different time for everyone, since the ending of the compulsory retirement age.

Later life learning could also be divided into four phases across the 50+ age group: learning during working life which, like any adult learning, can be used vocationally or otherwise; learning around the 'retirement transition' when we know that little learning is available for the majority of people (Watts and Robey, 2013) and that the patterns of work are changing as more people stay in paid work in later life (Coleman, 2015, DWP, 2015, McNair, 2012, Watts, 2015). The third phase occurs

between 'retirement' and whenever fourth age commences and, finally, there is a phase of learning in the fourth age, including within care settings.

The benefits of learning in later life are well-documented (NOLG/NIACE 2015, Jenkins and Mostafa, 2012); but little funding has emerged as a response.

The work of the National Older Learners' Group demonstrates the opportunities and challenges for older people's learning offered by current policy concerns and some apparently contradictory funding strategies (NOLG/NIACE 2015). For example, despite the current policy focus on keeping people in work for longer, funding for vocational learning for older people is not generally available. Informal learning for older people in the fourth age is praised, while funding for community learning decreases. Similarly great concern is shown to keep the mid-life workforce in work, but experience tends to show this workforce is discriminated against and sometimes unable to continue in work or training.

What do older people learn?

Learning for work is just one of the many types of learning older people do. A wide range of learning opportunities are available - of course the general range of adult classes is widely able to be taken up. In the post-retirement world those opportunities, if anything, increase as people engage in a new range of activities. Online learning, volunteering, new interests and groups, supporting and caring for young and older people and all other activities can lead to learning of many kinds. In addition to publicly provided courses, or those in the voluntary sector, there are a plethora of private 'courses' from day workshops on bread-baking to long term retraining programmes which are available to anyone, young or old, who can afford to pay.

Firstly, I will focus on people aged over 50 who want or need to continue to work. During Sept-Nov 2014, there were 8.42 million people aged 50-64 and 1.13 million people aged 65 and over in employment in the UK; together, this was 29% of 'economically active' people (Age UK 2016). The governmental motivation for encouraging people to stay in or gain work is made clear; 'it is estimated that there are 1.2 million people in the UK, aged between 50 and State Pension age, who are currently unemployed or inactive but would like to work. If just half of these were to move into employment, this could boost GDP up to £25 billion a year (DWP, 2015)'.

Learning and working in later life

While Macnicol (2015) has contested the raising of the state pension age, the fact that successive governments have done so has given rise to the policy of Fuller Working Lives (DWP, 2014); although its implementation will require considerable retraining for many workers, little consideration has been given to how this will be achieved.

The Mid-life Career Review (MLCR) was a ground-breaking pilot project led by NIACE and supported by the UK government which tested, not for the first time, the provision of career education opportunities for people in mid-life (approximately 50+) to see if career review would support their ability to stay in work for longer (NIACE, 2015). This pilot was a response to the raising of state pension ages, the ending of a compulsory retirement age and the risk that these changes might bring of increased

rather than decreased poverty in old age. During the MLCR project, I wondered about those people who just don't want to work for longer, and what about people who are excluded from the workplace; these may well be the people who, for reasons of relative poverty, need to work the most. As Smeaton et al (2009) highlight, many measures 'have been introduced over recent years to facilitate and prolong employment. Yet evidence suggests that there is some resistance to the [extended working life] agenda among older workers and that both cultural and structural barriers remain strong (v).'

The MLCR project chimed with the government's aims of keeping people in work for longer (Altmann, 2015) and career reviews are now available through the National Careers Service, unionlearn and others. Altmann (2015) aimed to encourage employers to 'retain, re-train or recruit' older workers, stressing that the easiest of these to achieve with retention. Recruitment is the biggest stumbling block. Training availability is mixed (Carmichael and Ercolani, 2014).

Training is difficult to achieve; Hyde and Phillipson (2014) stated that: 'Older respondents reported that they were less likely to want work-related training but that they were also less likely to expect to be offered it. However, situational barriers such as financial and time constraints have been consistently shown to be the most important reasons why people do not participate in learning and/or training later in life (4/5).' Gosling (2011) highlighted the mixed responses to training for older workers but stressed the risk of discriminatory attitudes and encouraged employers to look anew at the positive attributes of their older workforce.

Smeaton et al (2009)'s conclusions point to some key considerations when looking at later life working, and by extension, learning: '[...] a class and gender based imbalance of power and control later in life prevails, with men and more advantaged occupational groups better prepared financially to exercise choice. Implications arise in terms of the long-term health of older people who may be 'forced' to continue working to avoid poverty. [...] The policy impetus towards extended working lives and delayed retirement may therefore be associated with quite distinct consequences for different socio-economic groups. [...] (xiii).'

Learning in later life - beyond work-related learning

A range of community and other learning options are on offer to people aged 50+. The Workers Educational Association reports that over 50% of its learners are 50+ and City Lit reveals that there are increasing numbers of learners aged 55+, though numbers decline from 65+¹. Jenkins and Mostafa (2013) found that; 'it was non-vocational forms of learning such as music, arts groups and evening classes which were significantly and positively associated with changes in subjective wellbeing, rather than other types of learning such as formal, vocationally-oriented, education/training courses. Policy-makers tend to focus on vocational learning but these findings emphasise the importance of non-vocational forms of learning as a contributor to the wellbeing of older adults (19).'

There are signs of optimism in the expansion of U3A and Men's Sheds² but there are limiting factors both within and outside of these networks, not least that they are unlikely to be suitable for or accessible by everyone who wants to learn. Neither is

potentially the most inclusive way forward. The availability of a wide range of private courses continues to be a major route to learning for those who can afford to pay.

Learning in the fourth age/phase

The benefits of fourth age learning are legion (Aldridge, 2009/NIACE, 2014). Despite this, much learning on offer is unsupported by public spending and is reliant on the voluntary/social enterprise sector. Individuals are often expected to contribute to the costs, potentially limiting participation to those who can afford to learn. Some contributions are made from health and other budgets but these tend to be for smaller projects. The Big Lottery and other charitable funds are also widely used.

Access to learning in later life - public funding or self-payment?

Although access is a much wider topic than merely payment, the focus in this paper will remain with issues of funding. In common with the rest of adult learning, older people's learning has suffered from cuts. Increasingly adults are expected to be able to pay for their own learning and for everyone over 25 there is little publicly funded education available. Policy has favoured younger people in terms of both the availability of and payment for education and training and current public funding from the Skills Funding Agency is weighted accordingly. However, there are other public funders of adult learning, including health and local government. The assumption that older people can pay for their vocational learning does not necessarily prove true in a low-wage economy and where increasing demands are made on people aged 50+ in every aspect of complex lives. (Phillipson, 2013; Watts, 2015.)

The reduction of state funded local and community provision of learning and the de-prioritisation in policy terms of learning for adults other than young people. Participation in learning amongst older people has been low for a range of reasons but reductions in funding means that there is little opportunity to learn, particularly for those groups traditionally facing barriers to participation (McNair, 2012). For affluent people there is a wide choice but little means for assessing quality.

The state is in fact not contributing greatly to adult learning for people aged over 25 with the exception of the learning of basic skills (English and Maths). For example, recent research on ESOL funding (Sterland and Watts, 2016) revealed that while older people are not excluded from ESOL, because of the focus on learning and skills for vocational purposes, the only older people likely to access 'free' learning would be those seeking work - and even then, providers might be reluctant to accept eligibility if the individual was over state-pension age. Since the Equality Act of 2010, anecdotally some providers gloss over eligibility on the grounds of age for older people. Older people therefore tend only to be able to access learning which they, or less frequently their employers, pay for. Policy responses have often seemed weak, with little regard for the non-homogeneity of the people who are older (Withnall, 2015).

The continuing growth of self-organised learning as one of the responses to the learning needs of older people, but there are limitations as well as positives in these learning opportunities.

Government and voluntary sector responses to older age rarely mention learning at all (e.g. CfAB, 2015), and some of the 'new' organisers of learning, such as health-focused voluntary organisations, do not necessarily see themselves as providing education, thus undermining the practice experience of years of community learning by failing to connect across the range of expertise.

Conclusions

From a policy perspective the focus needs to include fully learning for work in later life, while broadening the agenda to wider learning; this should both address the need of older people to continue to work and to enable them to critique their later lives and learn to make the necessary transitions and to live life well. Contradictions are at play when it comes to later life learning policy. Learning is seen as a 'good thing' which brings benefits, but there is little or no funding for it; this is not necessarily problematic for people who can afford to pay but does nothing to promote inclusion. We are encouraged to stay in work for as long as possible, but will need to fund our own retraining, and employer discrimination against older people in the workforce is not diminishing in tandem (Altmann, 2015). Older people's learning was never a funding priority but demographic change requires new approaches.

Despite the demonstrated benefits of learning, older people are much less likely to undertake any kind of learning than those in middle age, and this is especially true for those with less money and less previous education (McNair, 2012). In practice, older people's learning should be further developed as an area of expertise as it is likely to be more rather than less necessary over the coming years. The mixed economy response to costs could deliver results.

While narrow and functionalist agendas appear to be driving the current policy responses to older people's learning, but they do not go completely unchallenged; through initiatives brought about through community and university partnerships, community learning offered by local authorities, learning provided in and through some voluntary organisations outside the usual learning providers and new partnerships. In the spirit of hope there appear to be some options for older people's learning in austere times from both policy and practice perspectives.

Notes

¹ Presentations at National Older Learners Group meeting 14/4/16

² Presentations at National Older Learners Group meeting 25/2/16 and 14/4/16

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The Politics of Austerity: Working Class Students Take on the Conventional Wisdom

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Introduction

As New York teetered on the edge of bankruptcy in late October, 1975, the New York *Daily News* blared a now infamous headline: “Ford to City: Drop Dead.” For years the city had borrowed to fund capital projects; but from the 1960s, the municipal debt ballooned as short term bond sales were used to meet daily costs. Sensing trouble, Wall Street banks turned away from the business of underwriting city debt. The story accompanying the headline outlined why then US President Gerald Ford refused to help the city with loans backed by the federal government. The spending entailed by New York style liberalism, Ford said, was like an ‘insidious disease’ (Phillips-Fein 2013).

Embedded in Ford’s metaphor of disease was a seemingly common sense interpretation of New York City’s fiscal woes. By providing overly generous welfare benefits, social services, and compensation for the municipal workforce, the city had lived beyond its means. Lest others find themselves in the same trouble, New York had to be made an example. How this would happen was starkly prefigured by Ford’s Treasury Secretary and former Wall Street bond dealer William Simon. Simon’s issue, writes historian Joshua Freeman, ‘was the city’s social policies, not its financial practices’ (2000, 259). The remedy, Simon told the US Congress in late 1975, would be to make any deal for federal aid ‘so punitive, the overall experience so painful, that no city, no political subdivision would ever be tempted to go down that the same road’ (Quoted in Freeman, 2000, 259).

New York City did not go bankrupt, but the words proved prophetic. In a kind of bloodless coup, the state legislature created the Emergency Financial Control Board, made up of unelected corporate elites, to see to it that spending cuts were implemented so that the city regained access to the bond market and creditors were paid. (Tabb 1982; Moody 2007; Freeman 2014) Public sector wages were slashed, hospitals defunded, clinics and firehouses shuttered, cops fired, parks abandoned, and free secondary public education at the City University of New York abolished (Wells 2007). What remained was a devastation that in 1976 led the New York journalist Jack Newfield to “proclaim . . . that a collection of corporate leaders, real estate developers, lobbyists, and government officials . . . had seized power, ‘made a desert, and called it New York’” (Wells 2007).

Today, few question that the ‘tough love’ of dramatic cuts to public services was necessary. Indeed, the taming of the municipal welfare state in New York kicked off a trend toward neo-liberal governance on the national and international stage (Tabb 1982; Harvey 2007; Moody 2007; Phillips-Fein 2013; Freeman 2014). As the more recent global financial crisis has upended economies in the US and

Europe, we have seen—on a much broader scale—how austerity, as a guiding principle of economic ‘reform,’ rules the day.

The politics of austerity has a seductive logic. When public accounts are in the red and creditors come calling, naturally the way out of the mess is to slash spending so as to return to balance. The only issue, as Mark Blyth describes it, is that austerity doesn’t work to revive an economy. It actually makes things worse, especially for the majority of us that depend on the public services that take the hit. Worse, says Blyth (2013, 10), it ‘relies on the poor paying for the mistakes of the rich.’

Teaching about austerity

The practical constraints of sustaining educational programs as budgets are cut are certainly daunting (Hiltonsmith 2015) As they pursue an education while hanging on to one if not two or three jobs, our students perhaps know the precariousness of these austere times more intimately (Wells 2013). But given the deeply set assumptions that shore up austerity as an idea and a political project, the challenge is also ideological, and therefore educational. Therefore, rather than explore how as educators we may adapt in the context of austerity, in this paper I explore how to *teach this context* to working adult students in ways that promote critical understanding and engaged discussion of alternatives.

I teach in a public university based labor studies program in New York City that serves workers from New York based unions. The students I work with come from the building trades unions, whose leaders provide scholarships to cover tuition because they see the education our program provides as a means to empower the institution of trade unionism. Our program, in other words, is not about educating individual workers so that they then ‘move up’ by leaving their trade to join the ranks of management. It is about providing the space for rank and file workers to understand and critique the political and economic context of their lives, more fully identify with the labor movement, and develop as leaders within their own locals (Szymanski & Wells 2013).

For six years I have been running a course called “The Political Economy of New York” for Bachelors level students who are apprentices of Local 3 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Initially, the goal was to pose an historical contrast between the rampant inequality of today’s neo-liberal ‘luxury’ city (Brash 2011; Roberts 2013; Moody 2007) and the period from the 1940s to the mid-1970s, a time when a strong labor movement led a unique experiment in urban social democracy (Freeman 2000; Moody 2007). Students discover a much different New York, which while far from perfect, was more economically dynamic and democratic than the city they presently experience. Just as important, they have the opportunity to ponder the power and influence workers and worker based institutions like trade unions can wield for the greater good.

Over the last two terms, I have kept to the labor history. But given the international prominence of austerity in policy discussions and political discourse more generally, especially since the financial crisis of 2008-2009, I have encouraged a closer analysis of the Fiscal Crisis of 1975. For one, the crisis was the hinge that swung the city away from social democracy. Second, it is a case study in the class

based ideological and political maneuvering that poses austerity as the right course in times of fiscal difficulty. By unpacking how this worked in New York, we can begin to create a worker centered alternative to this conventional wisdom.

Challenges

The stock explanation of the Fiscal Crisis (Auletta 1980) relies on a hegemonic “common sense” (Gramsci 1971; Williams 1977, 108-114) that should sound familiar across the developed world (Blyth 2013). Facing a debt crisis, the only ‘real’ choice the city had was to cut public spending. Of course the story is more complicated, involving broader shifts in the local, national, and global political economy, and a corporate elite that found opportunity for enhanced power in the disruptions those shifts entailed (Tabb 1982; Shefter 1985; Moody 2007). But coming to terms with this more complex version can be difficult for non-specialists, and even more so for non-traditional college students like those in our program. It is an overwhelming male, ethnically diverse group. They work long days on construction sites before attending labor focused, liberal arts classes at the labor center (Szymanski & Wells 2016). Like other workers in the US, many students feel the game is rigged, and that the government has something to do with it all. They are not wrong about this, or at least their instincts are right. But this lack of trust in political institutions and in government more broadly makes the conventional wisdom about how a spendthrift liberal state brought New York to its knees difficult to resist.

How then do we create an *alternative* historical and analytical framework, one that is empirically grounded *and* accessible for hard pressed, often frustrated working class students?

Labor and the social democratic city

At the start of every term, I gather students into small groups and ask them to list the characteristics that they think makes a city a good place to live and work. What emerges is a set of expectations: good jobs, housing that one can afford, safe streets, good schools, markets, parks, good and cheap restaurants. The lists present no big surprises. But they open up conversation about what might make these things possible: an organized working class, a lively public sphere, a balanced economy, a strong public sector, a state that is responsive to the interests of working people.

Today these forces—the structural foundations of a social democratic society—are by and large abstractions. By identifying them, we can then consider a period in which they were not merely theoretical. While we do this through a monograph, Joshua Freeman’s *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War Two* (2000), the process is not so much about drilling labor’s past triumphs into the heads of new unionists. It is more about discovery, about parsing Freeman’s detailed narrative for elements of urban life in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s that seem out of place in the present (Freeman 2000).

From here the class makes connections between these unique elements and structural conditions and forces. For example, Freeman’s account nicely describes how the ‘non-Fordist’ nature of the city’s economy enabled a highly diverse and militant labor movement which, in the 1950s, numbered between ‘a quarter and a

third of the city's workforce' (41). Unions did not always work in concert, and many were parochial and exclusive. But through sheer numbers and the political dynamism that infused the movement as whole, a left progressivism came to characterize the city's politics and culture. As Freeman put it (56), the 'New York labor movement led the city toward a social democratic polity unique in the country in its ambition and achievements.'

The Political economy of blame

Freeman (2000, 143-176; 228-287) also provides an account of how the foundations of social democracy weakened. Unions scrambled to fight off automation, and as early as the 1950s, firms left the city in search of cheaper real estate and labor. Importantly, the outflow of investment and jobs occurred just as a large scale demographic shift took place, with African-Americans from the US south and Puerto Ricans coming to the city and increasing numbers of white New Yorkers moving to the outer boroughs and beyond. Again, labor struggled to adjust, gaining through the unionization of public workers, but losing to de-industrialization and suburbanization. In the city this meant a municipal budget deprived of critical tax revenue, and a more racially polarized and less politically confident working class. As the students in the course work through these trends in presentations and class discussions, the stage is set for the Fiscal Crisis.

We first rehearse the basics: the practice of heavy borrowing through the bond market to cover day to day expenses of the city; persistent and ever growing budget shortfalls; more borrowing; Wall Street says no more; 'Ford to City: Drop Dead.' The party is over, time for austerity's harsh medicine. But then students take a closer look at some of the details. For this, we rely on a study—William Tabb's *The Long Default* (1982)—that offers an empirically rigorous alternative explanation. One string of facts presented by Tabb (1982, 5-67), which he presents to counter what he describes as an ideologically based 'political economy of blame,' really resonates with the students. Tabb argues that, though the city budget was mismanaged, the critics of New York's social policies essentially exaggerated their claims for political effect.

A revenue problem, not a spending problem

Students are first asked to draw out some of the claims of the city's critics. William Simon, the Secretary of the Treasury, said the city's per capita spending on social services and support for the poor far exceeded the average of all other major cities. 'Only New York,' he said, 'spends more than \$20.00 per capita on welfare and related social services' (in Tabb 1982, 56). Simon also complained about the 'absurd' salaries of municipal workers and their 'appalling' pensions (In Freeman 2000, 59).

We then look at the numbers marshalled by Tabb (1982, 56-65). While Simon was right that per capita spending on welfare services in New York was high, what he failed to note was that in comparable cities the state government had helped defray costs more so than in New York. What's more, in New York City 'actual public assistance payments--\$94 per capita per month in 1974--were lower than those in Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, or Milwaukee' (56). New York also had a lower percentage of its residents actually on assistance than other sizable cities, and those getting payments were not getting much. Furthermore, the notion put forward by President Ford that one out of ten were cheating the system in New York was

largely fiction. If anything, the ‘system’ was cheating the poor rather than the other way around (Tabb 1982, 57). In New York, a firefighter made an ‘absurd’ salary of over \$15,000 a year in the mid-1970s, while in Los Angeles and San Francisco one made over \$21,000 and \$17,000, respectively. Public school teachers in New York didn’t fare any better, earning less than teachers in Detroit and Chicago, despite dealing with a cost of living that was 13 percent higher! (Tabb 1982, 61)

Getting the facts right opens up the conversation in productive ways. Like many Americans, our students often understand poverty or joblessness in an individualist frame, in which good or bad choices are seen as sole determinants of destinies. And indeed, gaining membership in a powerful craft union like Local 3 is understood as a personal triumph, rooted in hard work and determination (Szymanski & Wells 2016). For complex reasons, then, students are wary of welfare, just as they are wary of the politicians that control the purse strings of public life. But armed with analysis that challenges the official story, students can identify as ideology the claim that New York’s overgenerous social spending almost bankrupted the city. Working from Tabb and other sources (Moody 2007), we examine how different kinds of welfare—generous programs of subsidized private real estate development, for example—deprived the city of revenue just as de-industrialization and global recession did the same. Importantly, students can then reframe the crisis as the result of a revenue problem rather than a spending problem.

Conclusion: austerity and the ‘strange reverse’

While this course is historical, we aim to use understanding of the past to explain a present day city that is increasingly short on good paying jobs and affordable housing. In 2014, the top five percent of households in Manhattan earned eighty-eight times more than the bottom twenty percent (Roberts 2014). The current Mayor, Bill DeBlasio, has had some success with a progressive agenda. But it remains to be seen what he can accomplish in a town where private interests, especially in real estate, have dominated city government and planning policy since the 1970s. (Moody 2007; Paul 2014).

Using the fiscal crisis as case study in austerity politics goes a long way toward explaining how this came to be. It comes out as class discussions evolve over the semester. It also comes out in student writing. In reading their work, I see students wrestling with the details of what happened. Received notions about extravagant social spending sometimes co-exist with explorations of fresher terrain. But a new narrative is emerging, one that captures the social democratic possibilities of the post-World War Two period and traces out the rise of a different, less generous polity.

‘Through their struggles, hard work, and social support,’ wrote a student in *Labor Writes*, the labor center’s student magazine, ‘the working class made New York into a reformed society of their own.’ This society included, he added, ‘the non-for-profit City [Opera],’ for the working class believed they should ‘enjoy the same pleasures, such as arts and entertainment, that the wealthy enjoyed and at a reasonable price’ (Smith 2015, 57). After noting the fact stretching of the ‘political economy of blame,’ the ‘steep cutbacks in the ‘social wage’” that followed from it, and the neighborhoods ‘recycled’ through gentrification, he concludes: ‘As time progresses, the quality of life standards in New York change with each new social

class that calls it home' (59). Another student noted how 'Freeman's presentation of the past shows how committed this city can be to fighting for our rights.' To her, the more upscale city of today represents a 'strange reverse' (Cunningham 2014, 112). What to do? After reflecting on the reading and discussions of the whole semester, another student suggests 'that the basics for quality of life all boil down to a fairly governed economic platform,' one that includes 'good jobs,' 'affordable housing,' and 'a tax scale not slanted so heavily in the direction of the wealthy and businesses' (Gramazio 2014, 115).

Some of best writing comes when students reflect on a field trip we take to the High Line, a visually striking, world renowned park constructed on an out of use elevated rail bed on the west side of Manhattan. We go there every term, precisely because it captures that 'strange reverse' in the political economy and culture of the city since the fiscal crisis. One student recalls its beauty, and the images of a bustling industrial past that it conjures. And yet, surrounded by the glassy condo towers and high end boutiques that now dominate the area, he 'almost *immediately* felt out of place in my own city' (Antonetty 2015, 61. Emphasis in original). Because of the luxury development that has sprung up all around the High Line, another student warns that 'behind the stones and a stainless steel railing is a message of mockery from the ranks of the wealthy elite' (Leonard 2015, 60).

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Raising the performance of vocational teachers through industrial placements

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In most countries, including Brunei, improving the performance of teachers is one of the priorities in education policy. One of many initiatives in achieving this improvement is to increase teachers' job-related learning. For vocational teachers, their prior occupational experiences are seen as important to provide high-quality training in vocational education. Hence, maintaining and developing both occupational skills and teaching pedagogy, through continuing professional development (CPD) is, therefore an emerging priority in improving these teachers' performance, especially in Brunei. In Brunei, most vocational teachers are usually recruited without prior occupational experiences, which could be viewed as a limitation when considering they need to be knowledgeable and skilled in their specific vocational subject. Hence, this lack of experience could be addressed through continuing professional development for these teachers. One of the CPD initiatives, is to provide opportunities for these teachers to be attached at the industry, in the hope that they will be prepared and equipped with vocational knowledge and practices. Drawing from empirical data from a longitudinal study of a group of vocational teachers, this paper reports the preliminary findings of vocational teachers' learning experiences whilst moving between their workplaces and the industry placements. It also sought to gain a deeper understanding of learning in multiple communities as it has been recognised as an 'expansive' experience for individuals compared to those who are confined to a single site.

Introduction

Vocational teachers, in many countries, unlike other teachers, are normally recruited after they have several years of occupational experiences. They are usually expected to have occupational knowledge about the subject that they teach. Changes in work structures place changing demands on vocational teachers' occupational competence. This inevitably implies that vocational teachers must possess knowledge and skills which are up-to-date to provide high-quality training in vocational education. One of the many ways for teachers to maintain currency to teach their occupational skills is through continuing professional development (CPD), where they are given opportunities to be attached to the industry. Teacher placement in the Industry is usually supported by an educational institution and a hosting organisation. In this study, teacher placement within industry is a period of time for the teachers to voluntarily spend in a host organisation where they observe and participate peripherally in the community of practice of that organisation. These workplace learning experiences aim to increase teacher occupational knowledge and experience of and in industry.

There is a burgeoning field of inquiry into teachers' learning, not just within the workplace but also beyond the workplace. In the literature, there is a trail of research on teachers' development which runs parallel with an extensive literature on workplace learning. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) assert that there is still limited studies which connect the two bodies of literature. At the same time, I argue that

teacher development literature has yet to consider the significance of working practices in other workplaces for teachers' learning, in this case, the industrial placements. This article discusses the preliminary findings of a study, which is part of a bigger qualitative project, to understand how individuals learn in industry placements.

Learning at the workplace

Workplaces can be a site for learning. There are different types of workplace environments for learning. The extent and type of opportunities available for individuals to participate in workplaces have been of interest to researchers (see *inter alia* Fuller and Unwin, 2003, 2004, Billett, 2001, Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004a). In recent years, these workplaces have increasingly been seen as important locations in which learning occurs. The emergence of research in workplace learning revolves around questions of what, why and how individuals learn at work, for example, focusing on how individuals learn in informal settings. Most of these research studies draw upon social and situated theories of learning, which build on Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice. There is potential in drawing on socio-cultural perspectives on learning to provide an approach to understand learning at work as it provides the framework for capturing the informal learning through everyday participation in the social work practices at work (Stasz, 2001). Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation have been used widely as analytical tools to understand learning in a social context. It draws on the participation metaphor (Sfard, 1991) which focuses on learning as a process rather than a product. Although these concepts have been used widely within the workplace learning theory and research, it has received criticisms (see Hughes, Jewson and Unwin, 2008) which require further development. One of the criticisms is the concept of communities of practice tends to be overly focused on learning within the context. This inadvertently overlooks the previous and future learning through participation in other locations and what happens beyond the learning context (Osterlund, 1996). Following this, we need to deal with the fact that individuals move between learning contexts. The movement of individuals across and between communities of practice has exercised researchers like Fuller and Unwin (2003) and Osterlund (1996). Cairns (2011) affirms that there is still a serious need to account for how individuals learn when they move around in their learning and particularly in relation to workplace learning.

Understanding learning as a social process is useful as it can account for learning which takes place in many different settings, not constrained to learning in formal education settings, but also any informal settings. It also provides a basis for understanding learning at a collective level, which is useful to study how workplace learning is influenced by the social practices of an organisation, which is usually (re)produced by the organisation. It is apparent that learning theories which draw on the participation metaphor (Sfard, 1991) tend to overlook the importance of individual learners within the learning context. Billett (2004) and Hodkinson et al (2008) seek to include individuals as reflexive agents into the community to overcome the dualistic approach of an 'either or' model of learning which is flawed. There is also a danger of just focusing only on the context of the workplace learning as the learning environments, are shaped by the individuals within them, just as much as those individuals are shaped by the workplace.

Individuals should also be considered when understanding learning within a workplace. The practices of individuals in the workplace will be partly influenced by their biography, prior experiences before entering the workplaces, and also their life beyond the workplaces (Hodkinson et al, 2008; Goh 2013, 2015). However, it is not just these practices and biographies which we need to focus on, but equally important are their positions and dispositions in relation to these practices. Hence, this will in turn influence how each individual exerts their agency, in terms of the extent to how far they are willing to engage or participate in the opportunities offered in the workplaces (Billett, 2004; Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2004b).

Most vocational teachers in Brunei, are recruited without any occupational experience. Due to the recent implementation of competency based training, there was an impetus to encourage teachers to be attached at the industry to gain occupational competence. These vocational teachers are required to arrange their own placement with the industry. This paper draws on data from an ongoing study understanding how vocational teachers learn in the industry placements. This is an interpretative qualitative study based on a case study of a group of vocational teachers who had done their placement in industry. I conducted an in-depth interview with a group of vocational teachers, who were selected based on the duration of their placement and the subject that they were teaching. The interview questions largely focused on questions about how they learn on the industry placement and how they saw their own workplace upon returning from the placements. Most teachers were attached to one placement. However, there was a teacher named Meredith who was attached to two placements. In this paper, I focus upon Meredith, in order to look in detail how individuals learn in different placements.

Meredith

Meredith is a Malay female teaching in one of the vocational colleges in Brunei. She has been working in industry for several years before embarking on her teaching career. She was attached to two different placements and chose her own placements to improve her own subject knowledge which she felt could help enhance students' learning:

'I feel my teaching skills is okay. But I feel the subject matter is more important. I am currently teaching about the [topic of the module] at the moment and I asked the students this one question, how many forests are there in Brunei... in reality not a lot of people know about this, there are 7 types of forests in Brunei. The only reason why I knew about this, was because I was attached to [name of research organisation]... [I was] being immersed in those kind of information which helped me to describe to students what the different types of forest really is, instead of out of the textbook...it was more enlightenment, so it was more interesting to show that you were passionate about the same subject and transfer to these students and they would want to know more... I have to be proactive in order to enhance students' learning.'

At the first placement

At the beginning of Meredith's first placement, she had to understand the organisational practices:

'I have to understand this is a company. It is not like here [her own workplace] where I have to get up and I have to teach. I have to respect the things that they do, and how their routines are, so I have to observe, and be immersed in their environment.

So for [name of organisation], it was quite different for me because it was a real office-based environment and most of the time what they do was research first...'

She saw herself as a teacher at the beginning but she had to view herself as one of them in order to be a part of the team:

'Initially I saw my role as a teacher, I would ask myself "how am I going to grab this information and make it useful for students and be able for them to utilise the information to work in the industry?", and on the other hand, "how do I immerse myself in the office so that I do not create any politics which I thought I have to be the neutral one no matter what happens as I was there only for a short time, but no matter how short I was there"...you want to be neutral at all times, try to be like one of them'.

The officers in the first placement knew that Meredith was an instructor and she was the first instructor to be attached there. Due to this, they weren't sure what kind of activities they should involve her in. Meredith had to ask questions if she wasn't sure about certain things:

'...so if you don't know anything, ask. I asked so many questions about certain things, because I wasn't sure with the terminologies as these were scientists, so I wasn't sure how to explain and try to fit that into, in my mind while I was there, how would I explain this to students, what would make it more interesting...'

Meredith was given the opportunities to be involved in the activities of the organisation where she was able to work with other professionals: (team building)

'At the last month of my attachment, we did something completely different. We went out to [another town] where we stayed there for two weeks which was completely a whole new environment. We went there with researchers, professional photographers, animal photographers, tour guides. I saw from different aspects how things work together, how the tour guides brought us out in the night, night tour looking at the different animals, looking at the different skills that they had to do and looking from the perspective of the scientists what type of equipment that they would need...scanning the grounds to see the safety and health, so everything was completely new to me and I was like wow about that...it was very interesting.'

Although she was an instructor on placement, she was involved in meetings, where she was able to observe how the scientists and researchers presented their work. She was able to be involved in tasks which she has never done before.

At the second placement

In contrast to the first placement, Meredith was working alone most of the time:

'At the [name of second placement], it was self-taught...I was hoping that one of the attendants to assist me with more in-depth detail about artifacts or pictures or stories behind all these things but unfortunately I was only shown once on the areas but the other time I ended up going along writing my notes down and a few times I was able to talk to visitors because they didn't understand a few of the stuff, I ended explaining to them in detail which was a different side of things'

She had no one who could answer her questions when she was in doubt:

'I was self-guided so because of the time limitation that I had, and the type of notes that I was researching on I was basically guiding myself ...there were a few questions that I raise and I don't know who I could ask...'

When asked about how she felt about the two placements, she said she felt she was part of the team in the first placement where she was involved in the practices within it. She felt that she was alone most of the time during the second placement where she had no one to ask or discuss about any issues she had.

Discussion

Meredith's story illustrates the different practices within the two placements. These practices influence Meredith's learning. In both placements, she was considered as a newcomer to the workplaces. In order to become legitimate participants, or in Lave and Wenger's term, a full member of the community of practice, she must possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge (Johnson, 1993) about the field that she was entering. This would help her to recognise the type of information she needs to improve herself. In the first placement, she participated in most of the activities. She was given the responsibility to work with the team and engage in the projects of the organisation as they knew she was an instructor, and not a student doing an attachment. Meredith's role as an instructor, helped her to be accepted as a legitimate player (Johnson, 1993). In another study of teacher trainees, Goh and Zukas (2016) found that the role of an individual in workplace, has a profound influence in the way individual learn. At the second placement, she felt like she was an observer in the organisation. Her position was peripheral to the community of practice. She felt alone and were not supported by the officers. In both placements, Meredith had to be proactive in her own learning. For example, at the first placement, she would ask questions when she didn't understand. Similarly, in the second placement, although she felt alone, she tried to search for the information she needed. I concur with Billett (2004) that there is a difference in the way workplaces afford opportunities for learning, and the extent to how individuals 'elect to engage' in activities through the exercise of individual agency.

Meredith's approach to the learning in the two placements was influenced by her dispositions for learning. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) assert the extent to how an individual elects to engage in the practices within a workplace is influenced by individual dispositions for learning. In both placements, with differing affordances, Meredith continued to learn through being proactive. As an instructor, she felt she was lacking in the subject knowledge to teach her students. In Bourdieu's term, she lacked the cultural capital in terms of the subject knowledge to succeed in the field. Hence, partly because she wanted to improve her own subject knowledge, and partly she was proactive in looking for placements to gain experience.

Hodkinson et al (2007) prefer to understand the practices that influence learning as the learning culture of the workplace. Differing learning cultures provide differing opportunities to learn, to anyone participating within them. At the same time, Hodkinson et al (2008) argue that 'for a learner, it is the horizons for learning that sets limits to what learning is possible, and which enable learning within those limits (p. 40)'. Through participating in two learning cultures, Meredith was able to extend

her horizons for learning. Fuller and Unwin (2004) prefer to use the concept 'learning territory', where they suggest that participation in multiple communities of practice, which is one of the features of the expansive approach, can help extend an individual's learning territory.

In the first placement, Meredith saw herself as an instructor and a 'worker'. She knew what she had to do in order to get the information she needed. For example, she tried not to get involved with the office politics, or in other words, 'strategic compliance' in order to get the information she wanted. We need to understand the norms and practices within both organisations. In the first placement, the nature of work involved conducting projects which require Meredith to work with others. Whilst in the second placement, the work practices did not involve conducting any projects. As Billett (2002) puts it 'the norms and practices often structure how individuals participate in work (p.51).

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ROUNDTABLES

What is the Value of Adult Education? An Empirical Roundtable Discussion

Alex Stevenson, Learning and Work Institute

Speaker 1: Dr. Tom Schuller – Progress Since ‘*Learning Through Life*’

Speaker 2: Alex Stevenson – A Citizens’ Curriculum

Speaker 3: A Pilot Provider (Helen Chicot) – Assessing Value in Adult Education

Against the ideological backdrop of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) Professor Tom Schuller and Sir David Watson led the independent Inquiry in the Future of Lifelong Learning, resulting in the landmark publication of *Learning Through Life* in 2009. Building on the earlier UNESCO report, *The Treasure Within, Learning Through Life* ‘set out a framework of opportunity, structured around investment, incentives, and capabilities’ (Schuller and Watson, 2015, p. 215).

In 2010 the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition Government instigated ‘an array of cuts and retrenchments in public spending’ that maintained a dual focus upon ‘encouraging paid employment and achieving cost reductions’ in social security (MacLeavy, 2011, p. 357; 356). Reforms to the Further Education sector from 2010-2015 resulted in a greater emphasis upon 16-19 year-olds and their progression to higher learning or employment through Study Programmes, and culminated in the Conservative Government’s more recent pledge to create 3 million Apprenticeship places by 2020.

The combined austerity measures put in place by the current and previous Government have resulted in generalised reductions in Government spending on adult education. While funding for 5-15 year olds has been protected, the European Commission’s *Education and Training Monitor* (2014) reported a 33% reduction in spend-per-student in post-secondary non-tertiary education, and a 12% reduction in spend-per-student in tertiary education (p. 2). The Association of College’s Funding Survey (2014-15) similarly reported reductions in adult skills funding (outside of Apprenticeships) of up to 23%.

The current policy landscape confirms the Government’s continuing focus upon learning for work but refutes a number of the recommendations put forward by *Learning Through Life*. Schuller and Watson highlighted an education system that was no longer meeting the changing lives and needs of the population. The UK education system, which Sterling claims is ‘largely built on the assumptions and epistemology of a previous age’ (2009, p. 105), has become unresponsive to the requirements of contemporary learners. This is seemingly exacerbated by a policy focus that casts education as a utilitarian industry for the production of an effective workforce.

The iterative results of the *Skills for Life* (2003) survey and the OECD *Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies* (PIAAC, first release 2012) show that approximately the same proportions of adults struggle with literacy and numeracy across the decade (one in six and one in four adults respectively), indicating a lack of progress in basic skills education. Yet education is often seen as a transformative medium. Indeed, evidence from Learning and Work Institute's Citizens' Curriculum pilots demonstrates that alongside achievement of learning aims, 67% of adult learners improved their self-efficacy, and 87% of learners increased their self-confidence as a result of engaging in adult education (Stevenson, Robey and Pagett, 2015).

This roundtable discussion will address the dichotomous relationship between the economic and social impact of adult learning in order to reconceptualise adult education within the discourse of socioeconomic sustainability. The panel will examine the qualitative and quantitative value of lifelong learning through exploration of the Citizens' Curriculum pilots. The panel will thus outline the context for adult education and explore the tangible value that learning can bring to prudent local and national governments in an effort to resituate education as both a transformative process and a medium of socioeconomic contribution.

Tom Schuller – Progress Since ‘Learning Through Life’

Published in 2009, *Learning Through Life* made ten key recommendations ‘for a lifelong learning strategy which will mark out the UK as a true pioneer in this field’ (Schuller and Watson, 2009, p. 3). Along with structuring lifelong learning around four key life stages, Schuller and Watson proposed that emphasis in adult learning be shifted from volume to quality. Situating learning offers in local contexts, and allowing those localities more control over what is delivered would support the creation of a curriculum framework for citizens' capabilities. Thus, the recommendations of *Learning Through Life* work together to redefine an adult learning sector that is learner-led and adaptive to individual, local and national needs.

In 2015, ‘in a context of post-crash austerity’, Schuller and Watson revisited *Learning Through Life* for the *European Journal of Education* and surmised that, despite high levels of interest nationally and internationally, the key recommendations had largely gone unrealised. In many sectors progress, if any, has been slow and Government policy appears to be remain focused upon specific age groups or skills gaps.

Within this context Prof. Schuller discusses the social and economic benefits of lifelong learning and explores the ways in which education can support the UK economy. Furthermore, he will outline the key questions that drive current research and development within adult education: what are the wider social and economic benefits of adult education, and; how can the sector support and enhance the UK both in terms of social cohesion and economic performance?

Alex Stevenson – A Citizens' Curriculum

The Citizens' Curriculum taps into what makes adults learn and helps them to experience learning that is relevant and useful to their lives. Evidence from the first two phases of piloting reveals that the Citizens' Curriculum approach leads to statistically significant increases in employability, attitudes towards learning, social

and civic engagement and self-efficacy that have an estimated social value of £87,390 (Stevenson, Robey and Downes, 2016, p. 6).

A key feature of the Citizens' Curriculum is the co-design of the curriculum with learners, resulting in flexible programmes of learning that meet individual needs. In allowing learners to take control of their journey, the Citizens' Curriculum provides a model of education that is adaptive and responsive to the stresses and challenges of contemporary life. Exploration of pilot programmes that have worked with some of the most disadvantaged cohorts will demonstrate how the Citizens' Curriculum can be used to bridge the distance between learners with specific socioeconomic challenges and the traditional education system.

Evaluation evidence from two rounds of piloting activity will demonstrate the tangible effects of the Citizens' Curriculum in a range of adult learning contexts. This evidence will be used to explore three key questions: what benefits does the Citizens' Curriculum bring to learners and providers; how can evaluations of adult learning incorporate economic measures, and should they, and; what is the qualitative benefit of adult learning?

Helen Chicot, Rochdale Borough Council – Assessing Value in Adult Education

Since 2013, twenty-six pilot sites including FE Colleges, voluntary community and social enterprise centres, local authorities and independent training providers, have designed, implemented and assisted with evaluating the Citizens' Curriculum. Phase 1 piloting activities uncovered a host of beneficial impacts for both learners and providers ranging from increased self-confidence and progression onto further learning to a tangible reduction in inappropriate emergency service call-outs. Phase 2 piloting activities extended and enhanced the Phase 1 findings by looking closely at how the Citizens' Curriculum operates within workplace and for-work learning. Rochdale Borough Council has been a Citizens' Curriculum delivery partner since 2013, trialing area-based approaches to delivering locally-contextualised but learner-led programmes. Helen Chicot, Skills and Employment Manager for Rochdale Borough Council, will provide an overview of how the Citizens' Curriculum works in practice and how it has helped Rochdale Borough Council to make considerable socioeconomic savings.

Along with a detailed breakdown of the outcomes for learners, tutors and the local community, Helen will also explore the ways in which their Citizens' Curriculum pilots demonstrate a projected net present value of £3 million over a five-year period (2014-2019). In this way, the case study of Rochdale Borough Council's pilot programme will explore the fundamental questions: what is the social and economic value of adult education, and how can this value be repackaged in order to gain the support of government in a time of continuing economic challenge?

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Keeping going in austere times: the declining spaces for adult widening participation in HE in England

Kerry Harman

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Lindsey Fraser

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The aim of this workshop is to encourage discussion on and develop tactics for keeping going in the field of adult widening participation (WP) in higher education (HE). As a part of the widening participation agenda in UK higher education, adults/mature students are marginalised. Current policy discourse around WP in the UK's four nations is focussed on standard age applications. This is replicated in the research arena where there is a growing body of macro research (funders include the influential Sutton Trust) concentrating on standard-age WP recruitment, different aspects of the student cycle and equality issues.

However the Office of Fair Access in England responsible for monitoring WP access states that mature students, aged 21 and over as well as people studying part-time (over 90% of part-time students are mature) are more likely than younger learners to have characteristics associated with disadvantage and under-representation in higher education (OFFA, 2015).

- have non-traditional qualifications
- 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.

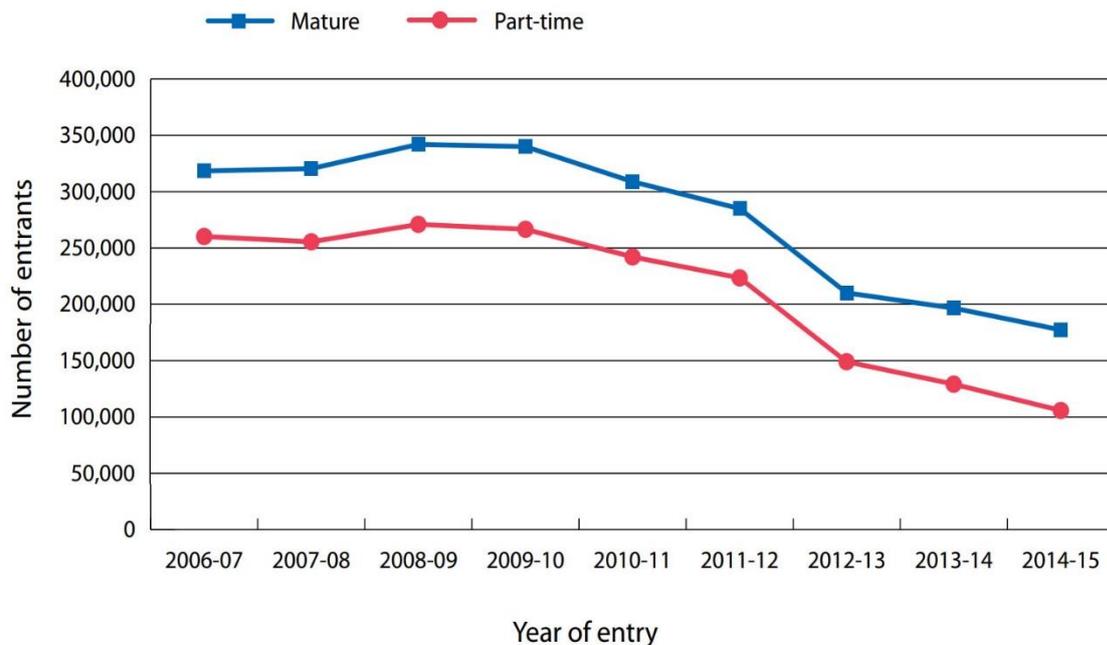
The ongoing decline in enrolment on part-time undergraduate programmes demonstrates the failure to engage with this issue in the policy arena. The fall in part-time student numbers is clearly partly – possibly mainly – associated with the changes to student finance, it is not the sole cause and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data indicates that part-time and mature student decline are an issue UK-wide (HESA, 2014).

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, there was a 55% decrease (143,000 fewer entrants) in part-time enrolments in HE in England, with a 10% drop (13,000 fewer enrolments) between 2013/14 and 2014/15 (Higher Education in England, 2015). While not all part-time students are mature age, and not all mature students (21plus) are entering HE for the first time, many are. HESA data reveals that in the 2010/11 academic year 95,720 mature students with no previous HE entered part-time study in HE, and 16,965 were from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3). In 2013/14 this had decreased to 49,775 entrants with no previous HE, with 9,110 from low participation neighbourhoods (HESA, 2014). A similar decline can be seen in the decrease in numbers of mature students without HE qualifications enrolled on other

undergraduate programmes. Moreover, the decline in enrolment of mature students is also evident in fulltime degree study in England. In 2013/14, 41,360 mature students with no previous HE entered the first year of fulltime degree study and of these, 7675 were from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3).

The table below from the recent OFFA monitoring report (OFFA, 2016), demonstrates clearly the declining trend in both mature and part-time numbers. ‘With substantial drops in the number of mature and part-time from 2013-14 levels’.

Number of UK domiciled mature and part-time entrants in English institutions



(Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency: Widening participation performance indicators (Tables T2a and T2b))

A close up analysis of work undertaken in similar adult widening participation programmes at the Universities of Birkbeck and Leeds examining trends, differences and similarities will provide a springboard for broader discussion. We will be exploring what are the possible ‘triggers’, ‘hooks’ to communicate with policy-makers in the context of their claimed commitment to social mobility and social justice. OFFA has indicated that there is a clear correlation between mature students and under-represented groups and has outlined concerns about inclusion, equality and diversity in relation to declining numbers (OFFA, 2015). Although OFFA offers guidelines to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the key benchmarks of interest to Governments (and therefore HEIs) are all associated with standard age students. Monitoring signifies, in the 2014-15 English institutional Access Agreements (statutory for HEIs charging £ 6,000 plus fees), only 12% of HEIs had a target relating to part-time student recruitment (OFFA, 2015).

The final part of the session provides the opportunity to discuss the following questions:

-how might communication with HE policy makers, at national and local level be opened up? Are there ways to encourage them to conceive of widening participation

in HE more broadly (or what policy agendas could encourage WP mature student recruitment?) Not just as an issue affecting 18-21 year olds.

-what widening participation spaces are being opened and what is being closed down (either deliberately or otherwise)? If spaces are being closed down, is this the intention of HE policy makers?

-how can we utilise the models of good practice promoted by policy-makers to enhance standard-age WP recruitment e.g. long-term outreach in low participant areas, collaborative activity? Can a greater emphasis in monitored adult WP targets support HEIs to increase their outreach in communities? As well as supporting recruitment, could this model also enhance the ever-reducing local adult learning services and provide a way of re-invigorating university-community education partnerships?

We hope to make use of this roundtable space to develop a plan for ongoing action. Exploring ways to be pro-active in keeping open, what at this moment seem like precarious spaces for low income adults without standard qualifications wishing to engage in HE. Identifying synergies between this agenda and education for social change.

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The impact of financial support on part-time learners

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The University of Leeds Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) has 122 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) part-time undergraduate students on sustained programmes such as Certificates of Higher Education, Diplomas of Higher Education, Foundation Degrees and Honours Degrees (2015-2016 academic year). Most (84%) are taught within the Centre, on variety of bespoke part-time programmes; a smaller number (16%) are studying full-time degrees on a part-time basis elsewhere in the University. In recent years, the number of part-time students studying in English higher education has declined steadily (a 58% decrease in entrants to part-time undergraduate study since 2010-2011, according to government statistics) but recruitment of part-time learners to the LLC, though challenging, has continued in a reasonably steady state. LLC part-time student FTE numbers:

2012-2013: 157

2013-2014: 134

2014-2015: 154

2015-2016: 122

The LLC mission is 'widening opportunity'. This includes 'ensuring that the University is genuinely open to mature and part-time learners and those of any age from under-represented communities who need focussed support' through 'programmes that address the needs and interests of our target constituencies and provide an outstanding and flexible learning experience' ... including 'bespoke provision up to degree level for part-time and mature learners'

Leeds is unusual, at least in the region, in giving bursaries (under its Access Agreement) to all low-income part-time undergraduate learners *pro-rata* of the full-time award. The LLC has been researching the relationship between its part-time students and the financial support they receive from the University; in particular, what role financial support plays in individual decisions made by learners to join and/or remain on their course. Is there is a relationship between recruitment and retention of part-time learners and finance? If so, what is the nature of this relationship and does it help to support widening participation to higher education through part-time study?

An earlier study in 2014-2015 started to explore this issue by surveying part-time LLC students about the relationship between the financial support they had received and significance of this in their experience of higher education. It discovered that financial support was important in students deciding whether to join a part-time programme, but even more important in their ability to remain on their course.

In 2015-2016, students have again been surveyed but with the focus specifically on the means-tested financial support provided by the University under its Access Agreement and its importance to students in terms of recruitment and retention. The research was broadened to find out about students' knowledge and perceptions of student finance and how/when they were informed about this, including the role of information, advice and guidance (IAG) in 'demystifying' the issue of student finance and enabling students to make informed decisions about participating in higher education.

Methodology

The survey covered all part-time students on sustained programmes in the LLC who had started their degree from 2012 onwards (this was the year undergraduate fees of up to £9K were introduced and universities charging the full amount were required to submit Access Agreements detailing how money would be spend to support widening access to their institution). Students who were in at least the second year of their programme were invited to complete an online survey about the issues being explored (first years were not surveyed because at the time of the survey they had only just received the first instalment of their financial support and it was assumed it would be too early for them to judge its impact. Additionally, surveying first years would only yield information about recruitment, not retention). 140 students were eligible and asked to complete the survey, of which 55 did so (39% response rate).

Response

Responses were received from students on 13 different programmes; only one of the LLC's bespoke part-time programmes was not represented. 51% of respondents were in year two of their course; 33% in year three, 11% in year four, 5% in year five.

Selected results

Context

83% of respondents had a household income of less than £25K and therefore qualified for the maximum financial support from the University

Pre-entry knowledge of finance

71% of respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' concerned about the costs of studying
44% of respondents knew about the University's financial support before they accepted the offer of a place; 56% did not

Respondents found out about the University's financial support from a variety of sources, most commonly from LLC staff (68%)

Effect on recruitment

20% of respondents said that the availability of the University's financial support was 'very important/the deciding factor' in their decision to take up a place

Effect on retention

85% of respondents said that the University's financial support was 'very important' (44%) or 'quite important' (41%) in helping them remain on their course

Use of financial support

Respondents spent their financial support on the following: travel; books; academic consumables (paper, printer ink etc); hardware; utility bills; food and other household consumables; child care; software; as a substitute for lost wages; Council Tax

Effect of financial support

3% of respondents said if they hadn't received financial support it would have had no effect on their lives. The other 97% thought that the following effects would have been felt:

pressure on personal finances; pressure on household finances; difficulties buying course resources (consumables, books, hardware, software); difficulties in travelling to/from university and/or work or voluntary placements; difficulties in paying for childcare.

The results of the research are similar to those found in 2014-2015: the financial support provided by the University is an important factor in students' decisions to take up a place (recruitment), but more significant in their ability to remain on course (retention).

Next steps

In April and May 2016 the LLC will hold focus groups with part-time students to explore this issue in more depth. In particular the groups will explore the issue of attitudes to debt amongst learners from low income backgrounds and the role of information, advice and guidance (IAG) in supporting individuals' decision-making about part-time higher education study.

POSTERS

Youth Work Education Across the World since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

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Abstract

The impact of the GFC on youth work education across the world has seen two important changes affect what is delivered to incoming students. The first is the decline in the number of educational offerings available to prospective youth work students as has been witnessed in the United Kingdom, for example, as university administrators determine the viability of youth work programs against the necessary return of sustainable numbers and graduate outcomes. The second impact is the change to the programs themselves as austerity cuts at the university administration level flows down to the program level and the fight to secure funding through research and other income streams takes precedence. Cost cutting measures at the delivery level are seen in what is offered to students and leads to programs changing shape as a greater reliance on online courses evolves and the extra-curricular activities of study tours and practicum are reshaped to fit the 21st century finance model.

Outside influences upon youth work study options are also important to note, the main one being the decline in the number of work placement opportunities available to students, an important aspect of a youth work student's studies. The severe austerity measures taken at the Local Government Authority (LGA) level in the UK and elsewhere, has resulted in the closure of many direct service programs that students previously had access to for completing this important aspect of their education, as well as employment opportunities after graduation. The result has been students competing for suitable placements and a reduction in the number of hours completed, leading to graduates who are under-prepared for the work they will take up upon graduation and leaves employers with the onerous task of filling the gaps evident when they take on new graduates as employees.

While closure has been the outcome for some programs others have successfully navigated this new space by exploring opportunities directly with the youth sector so the identified emerging gaps in students' learning which have evolved can be successfully addressed and overcome. Exciting new initiatives, such as university departments working together to support students to achieve their study requirements, have been created. Others are addressing the need to add subjects in mental health, digital literacy and case management to the curriculum in an effort to give students the upper hand upon graduation.

Imposed changes made to programs in the form of a greater emphasis on online delivery and e-learning where possible, an increase in enrolments to help meet financial commitments, an increase in tuition fees and modifications to payment arrangements that are not always to the benefit of the student.

The Research

Based on research conducted for my PhD research, *Youth Work Training in Historical and Contemporary Contexts: Developing a New Pre-Service Model for Australia*, the overall aim of the study was to develop and assess a model for youth work education for contemporary Australian context that was informed by an historic and current comparison of similar programs in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA. An in-depth study of the Australian 2011 census data and various youth surveys provided a demographic profile of young people and identified current issues important to young people and society. Semi-formal interviews with youth work program coordinators, recent youth work graduates and youth work agencies occurred over four years in an effort to determine if they believed graduates are work-ready upon the completion of their studies.

The research methodologies

Five research objectives were divided into three preliminary objectives - historical perspective, international comparative perspective, demographic perspective – which provided the data upon which the model was fashioned, and two core objectives - developmental phase, appraisal phase – which related to the creation and appraisal of the new model. Investigated through the mixed methodologies of action research, the gathering of the necessary data and the exploration, development and appraisal of the historical, international and demographic objectives that were the basis of the main task of developing the youth work education model, were conducted. Utilising (i) document and data analysis, (ii) fieldwork, (iii) in-depth interviews of training providers, recent graduates and industry representatives, (iv) questionnaires, (v) a survey and (vi) statistical analysis of census data aided in the discovery and exploration of the data.

Highlighting significant changes over time and across the globe in regards to delivery, curriculum, practice focus and frameworks, eleven higher education youth work programs and three vocational training options from across the five nations - Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the USA – provided an overview of each program. This included the articulation/pathway possibilities, assessment, curriculum content and rationale, delivery – distance, face-to-face or Recognised Prior Learning (RPL), distinguishing and innovative features, duration of each course, level of qualification, job expectations/outcomes, number of hours dedicated to the practicum aspect of each course, selection processes, skills/competencies base for learning, staffing and the associated student cohort.

The Decline in The Number Of Educational Offerings

In 2016, the number of youth work education programs available to students varies from country to country. Such programs are delivered by one of three options:

HE institutes such as universities and polytechnics
Vocational education (VE) institutes or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Australia, Further Education (FE) in the United Kingdom, polytechnics in New Zealand and Community Colleges in North America
Private training organisations.

The total number of programs available, however, is changing constantly, currently decreasing rather than increasing due to external pressures impacting upon the sector which flows directly back to the education opportunities available to those who aspire to work in the youth sector. In the United Kingdom, for example, 39 undergraduate Honours programs were offered in the 2015 – 2016 academic year, giving students plenty of choice. However, the impact of cuts seen in the youth sector following the Global Financial Crisis and the election of the Cameron government in 2010, has led to many university administrators questioning the value of offering such courses. The result is that a number of long-standing programs are being, or have been, taught out. One example is Stirling University which stopped taking students into its undergraduate program in 2010 despite strong enrolment numbers and in the face of stiff opposition from all quarters in the sector and ending by the 2013 - 2014 academic year. This was replicated at Strathclyde University between 2011 and 2015. Coventry University enrolled its last student cohort in September 2015.

Additional cuts are expected with rumours throughout the United Kingdom that the 24 universities which make up the Russell group will stop delivering youth work as a course option in the near future because it is not deemed 'economically viable'. Of those who make up this group, the University of Edinburgh would be the most likely to 'buck the trend' and continue to deliver a youth work undergraduate degree, maintaining its 50 year history of provision.

The uneasiness this is producing amongst training providers and the sector has been created by the United Kingdom government's continuous austerity measures over the past six years which have led to severe cuts to the sector (Davies 2013, Unison 2014). The closure of many local council youth programs, as high as 100 per cent in some boroughs, has meant fewer jobs overall and employment increasingly set for a fixed term rather than permanent positions. As expected, the impact is the severely decreased number of placement opportunities available to students who must complete 800+ hours in the work place during their three year degree as well as the lack of jobs they can apply for upon graduation.

Canada appears to be more stable in the number of educational offerings with more than 30 study options available across all provinces and territories, each with a number of pathway options that allow students to carry on studying at the next level. Continuing to provide education for all who wish to work in the sector, this contrasts markedly with its neighbour, the USA, where, despite the population to warrant the need for educated workers, only a dozen HE programs are offered at varying levels. If workers want to complete the full range of tertiary study options, they need to study at a number of sites, for example, beginning their pre-service training in Wisconsin with a move to Minnesota to complete their bachelor's degree, then head to Pittsburgh for their masters before finishing up at Harvard for their doctorate (Curry et al 2011, Schneider-Munoz, 2009).

Australia has seen the opposite occur with the return of Edith Cowan University's (ECU) *Bachelor of Youth Work* in 2014, so that there are again four undergraduate degrees available to students as previously outlined. A number of tertiary institutions, such as Queensland University of Technology, also offer subjects in youth studies while 84 VE providers are registered to offer *CHC40413 Certificate IV*

in *Youth Work* (Training.gov.au 2016a) and 54 training providers have *CHC50413 Diploma of Youth Work* (Training.gov.au 2016b) on scope in Australia.
Changes to Youth Work Educational Programs

Although emphasising a slightly different aspect of youth work, each of the eleven undergraduate degrees and three vocational examples of youth work education investigated for this study had the common goal of graduating youth workers who are able to work successfully in the field at the end of their studies each program. The changes historically identified noted that in the 21st century, the youth sector sees a greater emphasis on the completion of paperwork and the meeting of targets for a "... focus on services for youth rather than (a) youth service" (Smith 2013: 10). Recent youth studies literature, together with the content of funding applications, represents young people more often from a deficit perspective, reflecting the belief that young people require urgent help to normalise their wayward behaviour so they can eventually become effective citizens. This contrasts with the positive development practice the majority of youth workers employ in their daily practice (Belton 2009, Ord 2012).

The substantial narrowing of youth work programs over the past 30 years has resulted in the removal of courses such as recreational activities, administration, leadership and management skills, and youth counselling, all integral subjects of every program delivered since training began in the 1940s. For example, the one-year *Youth Leaders' Training Course* offered at the University of Melbourne from 1944 to 1947 comprised of a curriculum structured around three areas of study over three terms (T):

Lectures and discussions on:

Community – *Social Psychology* (10 lectures), *Social Organisation* (20 Lectures), *Special Problems* (12 discussion groups)

The Individual - *Biology and Hygiene* with special reference to childhood and adolescence (10 lectures T1), *Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence* (15 lectures T2&3), *Mental Hygiene* (5 lectures T3), *Study of Abnormal Types and Case Studies* (3x T1 and 3x T3)

Leadership – *Modern Problems of Education* (10 lectures T1), *Psychological and Physiological Significance of Work and Recreation* (7 lectures T3), *Principles and Teaching of Group Work* - lectures and discussion on practical work and the practical application of special skills (54 periods throughout year).

Practical work – conducted in a club or recreational facility

Religious Education (University of Melbourne Social Studies Board Minutes 1944:90 - 91)

In 2016, the focus of Australian pre-service education and training tends to be either very strongly theoretical, emphasising the sociological aspects of youth work that Australian universities shifted youth work curriculum to when they gained control from the 1970s onwards, or it is vocationally orientated competency-based learning.

Based on programs delivered in the 2014 – 2015 /2015 academic year offered in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of

America, the curriculum content and rationale for each can be divided into four categories:

Theoretical studies emphasising the theoretical aspects of youth work a graduate requires to gain full understanding of *why* they will work in particular ways with young people, these can be split further into two categories:

Academic studies related directly to the theory associated with youth work

Professional studies are related to professional aspects of the role of a youth worker. Delivered as theoretical and/or practical subjects that may feed directly into work-integrated learning opportunities, the emphasis given by the educational provider varies.

Practical studies reflecting the strong industry connections every program possesses, the amount of emphasis placed upon this aspect of a program is often determined by outside factors, primarily a professional body responsible for determining what is appropriate for students to complete so they can be deemed competent and work-ready upon completion of their studies.

3. Academic support studies - designed to teach students how to read academic texts, write an essay and other relevant documents for the program so they will succeed as a tertiary student.

Similar subjects and topics are offered at every level of qualification; however, the sophistication of the title and focus increases as the qualification level increases as does the emphasis given to each. Beginning with foundation courses, a greater emphasis is placed on professional practice as the qualifications move from a certificate to undergraduate degree which also increases with each year of study. Research is the only course offered in every undergraduate degree and variations emphasise each country's adopted practice framework. For example, in England and Wales, each program includes subjects entitled *Formal and Informal Education* (Coventry University) and *Critical Analysis of Informal Education* (Glyndwr University) which reflects the importance of youth work as an equal partner to formal education.

In New Zealand, remembering that every program has government approval and been written against the national youth strategy, *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA), the emphasis is youth development practice which is evident at every level of the qualification offered. Consequently, starting at the Certificate level where one third of the subjects include youth development in the title, students at all levels learn about the YDSA and how to implement that successfully as part of their daily youth work practice.

In Canada, therapeutic care practice is clearly evident with relevant subjects spread throughout each program. Working with those aged from four years of age onwards, child and youth development features heavily in Canadian programs and is spread across all years of study in every program although not always obviously. Studying the family is also evident within each Canadian program, emphasising that contemporary youth work practice in Canada "... meets the needs of children, youth and families within the space and time of their daily lives" (Stuart 2009:47). The importance of the family in a young person's life is important because it is here that they achieve their most positive outcomes when provided with support by confident, capable parents. There are strong links between poor family functioning and child

behaviour: both impact negatively on a child's development and advocates for support to strengthen the family (Fisher 2011, Graycar 2011).

Outside Influences

The major restructuring of Australia's tertiary education sector during the late 1980s created a division between higher and vocational education that continues 30 years on. The resulting differences in the curriculum structure, funding providers and compliance regulations is evident and includes differing graduate outcomes where HE graduates 'know what' (capable) as opposed to VE graduates who 'know how' (competent) by the end of their studies. This is contrary to overseas offerings where the concept of capable *and* competent graduates are assumed to be complementary and built into every tertiary program's curriculum as a matter of course by higher and vocational education providers alike (Emslie 2009, Gabb & Glaisher 2006,).

Critics argue that Competency-Based Training (CBT), the basis of vocational education (VE), reduces the role of the teacher to that of someone following the prescribed formula of the Training Packages (Waters 2005). This has been countered with the reciprocal criticism of HE degrees where knowledge continues to reside primarily with the lecturer who imparts the information deemed important to the passive student in teacher-led learning that has insufficient skills development (Burke et al 2009, Daniels & Brooker 2014, Waters 2005).

Although CBT has been widely criticised for its primary focus being on the needs of the work space the introduction of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) into Australian HE courses highlights educational institutions' awareness of their inability to provide all of the necessary experiences that represent modern learning in the 21st century. Placing a greater emphasis on undertaking authentic practice, not possible in the traditional learning spaces of old, has led to HE incorporating what has been a central premise of vocational education and practice – the utilisation of the workplace as a major centre of learning (Chappell 2004, Costley 2007).

The quality and selection of students entering the current undergraduate youth work programs identified a variety of selection processes between Australian HE and Australian VE and overseas programs. Moving youth work education from private providers to the tertiary sector during the 1960s (Canada) and 1970s (Australia) led to a change in the student profile from practitioner to pre-vocational student. A dramatic increase in student numbers coincided with this change as more opportunities to study eventuated which continues to the present day. Current world events, such as the GFC, are again impacting on youth work education though detrimentally as has become evident in the United Kingdom where educational offerings and work opportunities are in decline.

In Australia, the continued reliance upon the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score, a practice in Australia that has not changed in over 20 years (Ministerial Review 1995) contrasts significantly with methods employed elsewhere which includes rigorous interviewing and the expectation that those applying have significant prior working experience within the sector.

As a result, Australian students are less likely to have an understanding of what the sector involves when they enter their various programs. This places a greater pressure upon the educational institution to provide significant and realistic involvement with the youth sector throughout the student's study time through sufficient WIL opportunities. That current Australian HE youth work programs schedule less than ten per cent of their degrees to this important area of study, and American undergraduate students may do even less, is a serious concern. In Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom youth work programs schedule between 33 – 50 per cent of each program working to students working in youth agencies to ensure that students gain the practical experiences deemed necessary for working in the field. Strong, national professional bodies support this, bringing the youth work sector and the tertiary educational providers together to ensure that students receive sufficient exposure to the youth work sector during their formal studies.

Conclusion

Youth work education has been impacted upon by the external influences of the global financial crisis. The resulting reshaping of educational programs over time offered to students reflects historical events which includes the restructuring of the youth sector as cuts to funding and changing priorities and perceptions of young people continues in a time of austerity caused by the financial insecurities of the early 21st century.

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Software Supported Learning for Elderly Laborers: Wellbeing & Health At The Workplace.

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BACKGROUND. Shifting towards an information society, the integration of older adults into information and communication technologies (ICT) poses a major challenge. Information-exclusion among citizens aged 50+ years results in a digital divide which intensifies social inequalities between European countries, genders and age groups. Reasons for this divide lie in the unequal distribution of access, competence and usage of ICT.

METHODS. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) assesses the proficiency of adults in key competences for participating in information-rich societies, including problem solving in technology-rich environments. Complementing PIAAC data with 15 qualitative interviews conducted with older adults in Austria, different ‘bottle-necks’ of the digital divide are being analysed in-depth.

RESULTS. Results show that ICT-use and competences decline with age in all participating countries. This attends to external (i.e. costs, age-insensitive design) and internal (i.e. technological scepticism, security concerns, lack of competences) barriers and therefor to several “bottle-necks” of the digital divide, such as social stratification, lack of competences but also lack of simplicity of technical devices. However, data suggests that life transitions (e.g. lifelong learning) can both form and transcend age-related exclusion from ICT. Lifelong learning and age-sensitive pedagogical models appear as one approach to entangle the digital divide in Europe.

IMPLICATIONS. Following empirical results of both qualitative and quantitative data, the authors introduce a software solution that aims at supporting ICT-usage for older employees. Levelling off barriers to ICT through low-threshold ICT solutions can counter-act negative age-related stereotypes and grow ICT skills. The software comprises four dimensions particularly tailored to fight older employees’ work strains - stress management, nutrition, workplace ergonomics and physical exercise – and thus also aims to enhance older employees’ wellbeing and employability.

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Continuing Education Provision in Western Canada

Thomas William Johnston, University of Warwick

Continuing Education provision helps us to cope with the constant challenges we face in an ever changing workplace environment and it is also an enjoyable way to enhance our leisure time experience. The current funding arrangements for part-time students in England have caused a decline in take up of around 40% in the past five years. This reduction will have an ongoing impact on the skills of the workforce in the years ahead and will deny adult learners the chance to experience university life that they were unable to pursue when they were younger.

The situation in Canada is completely different to that in the United Kingdom. The major universities in the Western Provinces of Canada are admired because of their successful continuing education units and visits to the University of Regina and the University of Calgary were arranged to understand how they operate and to recommend any initiatives that could be implemented at the University of Warwick.

At the University of Regina the Flexible Learning Division administers 600 courses using a variety of methods of delivery and flexible timetabling. The Career & Professional Development unit provides courses and seminars to develop new employment skills to enhance work performance. The two most popular courses were Project Management and a Local Government Authority qualification.

At the University of Calgary the principle focus is on flexible programmes to support the part-time learner. Over 45 non-credit Certificate Programmes are available and the 12000 students can enroll on around 1200 courses. This academic year a record number of 843 students successfully completed their courses with many of them attending the Celebration evening in June. At the University of Calgary the two most popular courses were Business Management and Human Resource Management. They also offer Travel Study courses, foreign language courses and Single Saturday at Calgary courses.

Studying the methods of the two Canadian universities suggested three potential areas for the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick to consider implementing – greater use of flexible delivery methods and times when the courses are taught, career and professional development courses to be considered and a One Day at Warwick initiative to be developed to increase the university's presence in the community.

The findings of the research carried out in Canada are summarised in a poster.

SYMPOSIA

Marginalized Women, Learning, and the Struggle for New Lives: Findings from Three Interview-Based Studies

Thomas Valentine (chair), The University of Georgia, USA

Juanita Johnson-Bailey (discussant), The University of Georgia, USA

Kathleen DeMarrais (discussant), The University of Georgia, USA

Jihyun Kim (presenter), The University of Georgia, USA

Jamie Caudill (presenter), Georgia Gwinnett College, USA

Tatyana Pavluscenco (presenter), Georgia Highlands College, USA

For many women throughout the world, austerity can be a way of life. Their personal worlds are characterized by economic and social deprivation, and only by taking dramatic action can they achieve the lives they desire. In this symposium, three women scholars—originally from three different continents—will present and explore empirically derived themes of learning and adaptation as told by women who have taken bold steps to change their lives.

Study #1 (Caudill): The Impact of Children on Women Enrolled in Developmental Education in the USA

Women who decide to return to college after having children are often susceptible to higher dropout rates, or, at the very least, periods of time when they have to withdraw from college in order to deal with competing demands. Research suggests that women who have additional roles outside the education often have to put their education on hold as they deal with family demands; thus non-traditional female students experience slower progression towards graduation (Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010; Johnson, Schwartz, & Bower, 2000; Grimes, 1997) and higher dropout rates (Home, 1998; Vaccaro et al., 2010). Lack of support from family members can make attending classes difficult or even impossible, especially if family members feel that college attendance alters the family structure (McGivney, 2004; Laubach, 1993). Women dealing with these strained family relations may have to make the choice between continuing their educations and accepting the disintegration of their families (Malicky & Norman, 1996; Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seamy, 2006). While authors such as Thomas (2001) find that women students in higher education are constantly torn between their education and their families, other researchers have reported that women students consider their families to be their greatest sources of strength and inspiration (Carney-Crompton & Tan, 2002).

In the USA, women are often the primary caregivers to the children in the home and if these women decide to further their education they must learn to strategically navigate their two worlds without compromising their commitment to either institution. These pressures can cause inordinate amounts of stress in an effort to meet the expectations of both school and family (Edwards, 1993; McGraw & Walker, 2004).

Recent NCES data (2011), shows that the number of adults twenty-four and older, enrolled in developmental education classes has increased to 65.4% within the last

ten years. Mandatory developmental studies courses, which focus on skill enhancement prior to taking for-credit courses can increase the amount of stress placed upon these non-traditional female students since it can lengthen their time to graduation by several semesters. Women in learning support classes have between a five percent and a twenty percent chance of ever graduating due largely in part to their commitments and roles outside of the classroom (Maddox, 2002). A woman's commitment to family responsibilities and family roles greatly affect her chances of ever graduating college and an unsupportive family can lead to the abandonment of educational goals (Home, 1998).

This study was an attempt to understand the impact of children's support, or lack of support, on a woman's experiences in higher education, with particular emphasis on women in developmental education courses.

Method

A qualitative research design was used. Interviews were conducted with a group of women who were enrolled in at least one developmental education course at a four-year college. From February 2013 through April 2013, 22 full-time undergraduate freshmen from a four-year college in the southeastern USA were interviewed. These students were recruited from developmental education English, reading, and math courses.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews during a two-step process. The first interview was conducted as a focus group in which all participants met with the interviewer for an in-depth discussion around open-ended questions. Participants used their own words to discuss how their children either support or do not support the participants college studies and how this support, or lack thereof, affects their education. All participants were encouraged not only to respond to the presented questions, but to also add to the discussion based upon their own experiences.

The second part of this interview process was completed using one-on-one, follow-up interviews with each of the participants. The semi-structured interviews were based upon themes that revealed themselves during the focus group interview. The reason for doing private interviews is the benefit of added frankness. Some people are constrained by discussions of a personal nature, such as discussing problems you may be having with your children, in a public setting.

Data were analysed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This systematic procedure allowed for coding of the data, which revealed important themes in the participants' responses. Commonalities found in the participants' wording and phrases revealed experiences that these women shared when trying to successfully fulfil both the roles of mother and student.

Findings

During the analysis of the data, several distinct themes were uncovered, including themes related to the positive influence of children's support and themes were related to the negative influences that children's lack of support have on these women.

One of the most prevalent positive themes shared by a vast majority of the women in this group is the idea of *making their children proud*. These women want their children to look up to them both on their authority as a mother and their abilities as a student. One participant told the group that she felt as though her son would “look down on her” as he grew older if she did not get her college degree. It is also important to these women that their educational journey be a point of pride and that their children respect their efforts. Mandy, a 25-year old student with two children, stated that:

With my oldest child starting school, I started thinking about how it would make him feel knowing that mom only had a high-school degree. I always planned to go to college, but just got lazy after I graduated and then life happened. I want my kids to be proud of me and be able to tell their friends that mom’s gotta a good job...it’s like I wondered if they would respect me as much when they got older.

An important negative theme that presented itself during the interviews is the idea that these *women must make choices that often have dramatic consequences for the atmosphere at home*. All of the women interviewed divide their time between their families and college. The effort required to maintain the balance between these two institutions requires often takes a toll on these women, and they often feel that, even with the best choices, something always suffers. Several of the women participants are single mothers who are raising their children on their own, which can make the pull between family and college seem even more dramatic. Flo, a 33-year old woman who is raising her two children on her own, described the following dilemma to her group:

My little girl got sick the other day so she couldn’t go to school and I didn’t have anybody to watch her so I had to miss class. I missed a test review that day and ended up with a D on the test. But what could I do? My family has to come first.

According to several of the women participants who are single mothers, the struggle between home and school can be extremely stressful and can be an impetus to delay or drop out of college until such time that the children can either take care of themselves or until the children have moved out of the home.

Many of these women also discussed their frustration with their professors in relation to the struggles they face. Due to financial and family constraints some of these women had to miss classes or turn in late assignments because they had to care of their children, which resulted in bad grades. They were often faced with their professors’ irritation and scepticism in response to their explanations. Many of the women voiced embarrassment and aggravation over their professors’ lack of empathy to their plight. Layla, a 26-year old mother of two, told the group that:

I wish my professors would understand more when I have to miss class because of my kids. I mean I can’t help it if they are sick or out on a break from school. I always get my work done but some professors are so difficult and look at you like you shouldn’t be in college if you have little kids. Not all of us could go to

college right after high school and some of us have important responsibilities. Why can't we do both?

Finally, the women discussed the importance of support, both familial and institutional, to their success and emotional well-being. Most of the participants expressed the desire for more support from both their families and the college while stating that they often felt alone in this journey. During the group discussion of support the participants often became emotional as they voiced their frustration and anger over the feeling that they are often left to drown in the overabundance of items on their to-do lists.

Discussion

The positive and negative themes identified in this study, taken together, show that the level of support from important family members, such as children, step-children, grandchildren, and other children living in the home, can be a significant factor of success or failure in a woman's academic world. Women who experience a supportive environment in the home are more likely to experience reduced stress in the college classroom (Bradshaw, Hager, Knott, & Seay, 2006, p.24). On the other hand, women who experience more conflict or discouragement at home may experience more overload and stress over their academic commitments (Home, 1998; Vaccaro & Lovell, 2010).

McClusky's Theory of Margin may help us to understand the importance of family support as it relates to a woman's success in her higher educational pursuits. In this theory, McClusky (1963) discusses the interplay between Power, which is the amount of energy a person has available to her, and Load, which is the amount of energy a woman needs to survive and thrive. According to McClusky, adults are constantly striving to balance their energetic needs. Load is the amount of energy we expend on daily lives, including family responsibilities and college coursework, while Power can be enhanced by the support we receive from our families and friends, and our internal resources such as our coping skills and motivations (Chao, 2009). As long as the amount of Power we sustain either meets or exceeds the Load that we carry, we will have enough resources to meet our demands, but if our Load begins to exceed our Power levels, then we can begin to have trouble meeting our goals and deadlines (McClusky, 1970).

During this study, it was obvious that several of the participants were suffering from an imbalance between their Load and Power. As the need of children and families increased, their abilities to attend class and complete assignments on time often decreased. Alternately, as the requirements of school increased, their abilities to effectively deal with their families could decrease.

Implications for Practice

Colleges and educators can play an active role in helping female non-traditional students who are returning to college with lives that are already busy with homes and children. Colleges can help by providing flexible class scheduling, which would allow for additional evening and weekend classes. They can also help these women by providing access to women's counselling centers and support groups, which could help to alleviate some feelings of isolation and frustration as these women

navigate between these two “greedy institutions”. Finally, colleges could help by providing access to local low-cost daycare.

Educators can help these students within their own classrooms by creating space and activities so that these women have a place to express themselves freely without fear of judgment or ridicule. Educators can encourage dialogue, both through classroom discussion and journaling, which allows these women to express their joys and sorrows in an atmosphere of comfort and support. Educators can also encourage an open dialogue with the students that would allow them to discuss problems that they are having both inside and outside of the classroom.

Study #2 (Kim): Living as a Marriage-Immigrant Wife in South Korea

Since the 1990s, international marriages, particularly between foreign women from third world countries in Asia and older Korean bachelors, have dramatically increased in South Korea. The ratio of international marriages compared to the total number of marriages in Korea peaked at 13.5% in 2005 and has continued to hold steady at approximately 10% since 2005. Among this increased number of international marriages, a considerable number of the cases could be regarded as so-called *mail-order brides* who are found with the assistance of religious agencies or international marriage brokers.

International immigration, or more specifically, women’s international immigration through marriage, is not a new phenomenon in a globalized society; there have been many cases and studies about this population. However, in addition to the cultural and linguistic difficulties that immigrants usually experience, marriage-immigrant women’s experiences of acculturation tend to differ from the previously reported acculturation processes of immigrants as described in American literature in two significant ways. First, the bride migrates to the foreign country by herself without her family—unlike family immigrants. Second, the homogeneity of Korean society creates a unique set of challenges for the immigrants.

This study aimed to understand the experiences of marriage-immigrant women’s acculturation process in Korea and to analyse these new adult learners’ learning experiences in the cultural context of South Korea. Acculturation contexts for these marriage-immigrants in South Korea are much different from family immigrants or international students who migrated alone in that acculturation has to occur not only outside the home but also inside the home, as they have to live with their Korean husbands and, sometimes, with some other in-law family members.

Method

This study employed an interview-based qualitative methodology. Inductive qualitative research methods were a good fit for this study, because the specific context of the research did not permit the ready application of existing western theory required by more deductive approaches. In-depth interview data, coupled with constant-comparative analyses, provided the unrestricted yet rigorous analytical framework necessary to understanding the world of marriage-immigrant adult learners.

In this study, marriage-immigrant wives were defined as non-Korean women who married Korean husbands and migrated to South Korea to live with their husbands. For cultural and linguistic reasons, I purposely selected marriage-immigrant wives

from the Philippines. Unlike ethnic Koreans from China or Chinese, Filipinas do not share the Northeast Asian Confucian culture. The fact that many Filipinas are able to speak English (one of the official languages used by the government and the educational system in the Philippines) enabled the shared language communication necessary for in-depth interviews. According to a recent report published by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2013), Filipinas are the fourth largest population of marriage-immigrant women in South Korea.

Participants were recruited by network sampling (Roulston, 2010). Through the researcher's personal network, a Filipino priest was identified, and he helped the researcher to recruit research participants. Also, the first interviewee introduced a Facebook page to the researcher that was widely used by marriage-immigrant Filipinas in Korea; the researcher asked the page administrator to post a research flyer, and she posted the flyer twice on the page. Additionally, after each interview, participants were asked if they could recommend other Filipinas for the research, and they shared their friends' contact information upon gaining their friends' permission. Interviews were conducted in cafés, in participants' homes, and at a church.

The researcher interviewed 20 Filipinas until no new ideas or themes emerged, which made the researcher consider that saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was achieved. Most participants were interviewed once; however, four participants were interviewed twice. Each interview took 40 minutes to three hours. The participants first met their husbands at work or through friends or relatives, the Unification Church, or international marriage brokers. Five cases were love-marriage, and the others were arranged or brokered marriage. Their number of years living in Korea ranged from half a year to 20 years.

The interviews were primarily conducted in English; however, because they lived in Korea, many Korean proper nouns and Korean expressions were also used. For example, when they referred to their mothers-in-law, they used the Korean word, *shee-uh-muh-nee* ("mother-in-law", in Korean). Interviews that were partially conducted in Korean were first transcribed in Korean and then translated into English.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then analysed. The constant comparative method guided the researcher in finding reoccurring themes and coding them accordingly.

Findings

Numerous themes have emerged from the analysis, with most of them dealing with some forms of oppression. This section shows the difficulties and oppression that these marriage-immigrant women have faced while living in South Korea as a foreign wife.

Women learned from their husbands and parents-in-law about the role of daughters-in-law in Korea; given their lack of knowledge and information about the current family model in Korea, they were encouraged to accept the same oppressive roles that many modern Korean women also find oppressive.

Most research participants were living with their parents-in-law or had lived with them at one period. Even though living with parents after marriage was not very common in the Philippines and even though living with a husband's parents is controversial among native Korean couples and is less expected now than it was in the past, these Filipina immigrants accepted the fact that they needed to live with their in-laws for various reasons. For example, one participant who met her husband at work and had lived in Korea for three years told me that she had to agree with her husband and parents-in-law's decision to live together for two years. In fact, the participant still lived with her parents-in-law when I interviewed her.

My husband already told that we would live together [with his parents] for two years. So, my shee-uh-muh-nee [mother-in-law] teaches me some Korean food or culture...It's quite hard [to be a daughter-in-law in Korea. People, they never stand up to get plates, no. My shee-uh-muh-nee is traditional Korean style. So, it was very difficult, really; I felt like I was [going to] cry. 'I want to go back to Philippines.' I cry like that.

While these women live with their in-laws, they also found that their parents-in-law very often meddled in their marital lives. For example, another participant who had been married for more than 10 years and had no children had received a small amount of allowance for years from her mother-in-law, because her mother-in-law controlled her husband's finances. She said,

I got sick, because my mother-in-law kept forcing me to go to the fertility clinic. And then ... they gave me shots. I had to take a lot of medications that I wasn't able to take. When I took it, suddenly, my liver was damaged. I was in the hospital for two weeks, because I had stomach pains at the time.

The mother-in-law's interference was made with the husband's collusion, because in traditional Korean society, children should obey their parents even after they become adults. Also, in the past traditional Korean society, a daughter-in-law was contemptuously treated as imported labour, and only her reproduction role was highlighted, which is not compatible with younger generations of women now and is not expected among Koreans anymore. However, what these marriage-immigrant women experience in their homes is, from the researcher's perspective as a young Korean woman, obsolete traditional Korean patriarchy.

Additionally, these women had to learn to accommodate native Koreans' perceptions about Asian marriage-immigrants and how to deal with some Koreans' disrespectful attitudes and discrimination.

My eldest daughter, she doesn't look like me: [she has] really really small eyes. She looks more like her dad. . . . We were in the subway. Then a lady asked me why I was with these kids. "They're my kids." She didn't believe me. She asked me if they are my kids, "Why? Why are you with these kids?" "Why? They're my kids!" She was surprised and didn't believe me. And she asked my eldest daughter, "Is she your mom?" "Yes, she is." She wouldn't believe they were my kids. I don't look like them.

Participants reacted to negative characterizations of marriage-immigrant wives in different ways. Some tried to be more like Koreans, and some worked to demonstrate that they do not fit the stereotype of marriage immigrants.

Once when they [Koreans] looked at me from head to foot, I looked at them like that, too, from head to foot. It's unfair sometimes – the American people, the white people sometimes – they are very high person [while we are not]. . . . Especially the old people, when they see foreigners [they stare at them]. I think white skin foreigners are okay with them, but like you know, the Asians, they're like that. So I don't know. I cannot blame them because, you know. I just maybe think they don't have the right knowledge yet. . . . It's just their personal problem. It's not my problem anyway.

Being a mother in Korea is generally hard due to Korean culturally-based oppression when it comes to motherhood; being an immigrant mother is worse. They have to fight against native Koreans' discriminations against their children; additionally, they have to fight against their own children, as the latter seek to develop culturally comfortable identities.

My kids ask me, "Mom, why can't you be a Korean?" They say, "My friends can read books very well, and I cannot." I explain, "Your mommy's Filipina, and just give me time. Just give me time. Do you want your mom to become Korean, and your Filipina mom will be gone?" . . . That's the most difficult thing.

Discussion

Generally speaking, those who benefit from an existing system have little reason to initiate changes. Therefore, feminist movements in South Korea, as well as in other countries, have been initiated by women. In addition to these activists' endeavours, women's social status has been promoted in South Korea by changes in the family structure. Resulting from the government's promotion of population reduction in the 1970s and 1980s, the Korean family structure changed from an extended family, valuing sons as well as burdening them with responsibilities, to a nuclear family with one or two children regardless of their sex. In nuclear families, daughters are treated more equally and educated with sons, resulting in women's popular social and economic participation.

Unfortunately, this rapid promotion of young women's social status was not accompanied by this same progression happening within their families. Specifically, this younger generation of Korean women, especially those born in the 1980s and after, including the researcher, were rarely taught to be good traditional daughters-in-law. Rather, they were taught in school about an equal society, democracy, and gender equality, and in their families, they were treated fairly, if not equally, to their male siblings and educationally and financially supported by their parents. However, when they get married, with the absence or underdevelopment of a standard or ideal model of modern daughters-in-law, most daughters-in-law in Korea have to choose either to follow the traditional values or to fight against the oppressive expectations

forced on them. In short, these daughters were raised as having equal status, but now, they are expected to play the daughter-in-law role in very traditional ways. Due to this huge gap in expectations in each family role, Korean women have resisted the traditional norms and have tried to develop a better family model; therefore, a new model of in-law relationships is currently under development in South Korea.

Given this background, foreign daughters-in-law who entered this patriarchal system through marriage are situated in a significantly disadvantageous position. Due to their lack of understanding of current Korean culture on in-law relationship, these women are compelled to accept this oppressive form of “traditional family” as genuine Korean culture, which they believe they cannot change, but must accept and learn how to tolerate. In other words, when this oppressive position of a traditional daughter-in-law is imposed upon a dislocated foreign wife, who has little choice but to accept the system as Korean culture, the other family members, parents and her husband, who have been benefiting from the existing system, can continue their privileged positions in the family.

Another situation that makes marriage-immigrants’ family status more disempowered is their lack of support from their own families. In many native Korean couples’ cases, the socioeconomic status of a woman’s family plays a considerable role in her relationship development with her husband’s family, by financially supporting her, physically helping her with childrearing, and assisting her resistance against traditional burdens. The existence of her parents and family who raised her as equal to a man contributes to promoting her position in her new family - her husband’s home family. Compared to native Korean daughters-in-laws’ situations, marriage-immigrant women have little support from their families in their homelands. Her parents may physically reside overseas and be less informed about Korean society, where their daughter is situated. Worse, in many cases of marriage-immigrant women, these wives are financially dependent on their husbands, while their families in their homelands are financially dependent on these women. In conclusion, the lack of cultural understanding and the absence of homeland family supports result in situating the marriage-immigrant women in more oppressed and powerless situations.

Study #3 (Pavluscenco): Post-Soviet Marriage Immigrants in The USA: Building New Lives Through Adult Education and Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Since the 1990s, international marriage agencies have inundated the Internet with the endless offers of profiles and photos of post-Soviet females. A large number of Russian women immigrated to the United States on so-called fiancée visas to marry American men and start new lives in a new country.

A common reaction to this situation was recently shared by a highly educated colleague: “I myself cannot wrap my head around the fact that Russians would sell their daughters like that!” This opinion that an international marriage is a shady wives-for-sale business, where the women are being sold by their families or ordered over the Internet by the men abroad, is widely spread among the academic community as well as in the society at large.

The existing literature on international marriage dealt with a variety of issues ranging from the general overview of the women’s motivations to marry a foreigner, and

potential situations of trafficking and abuse (Glodava, 1994; Narayan, 1995; Bowes, 2011) to global feminism (Constable, 2003; Johnson, 2007) and legal and immigration issues (Simons, 2001; D'Aoust, 2009; Sims, 2009) as they referred to international marriages. In addition, the Asian side of the international marriage market appeared to be the primary focus in the majority of the studies (Simons, 2001; Constable, 2003; Kim, 2011).

However, a significant gap exists when it comes to exploring the aspects of the learning and adaptation strategies specific to the marriage immigrant women in the United States from post-Soviet Russia. Osipovich (2004), Johnson (2007), Begin (2007), Ryabov (2013), and a few others explored different aspects of the post-Soviet involvement in the matchmaking industry while only touching on the issues of the post-immigration learning and adaptation of this immigrant group in the United States. These studies called for further research using the women's lived accounts on the ways they engaged in cross-cultural and transformative learning as it related to the women's acculturation experiences, patterns, and strategies.

The purpose of this study was to give voice to post-Soviet marriage immigrant women with particular emphasis placed on the learning and adaptation to a new culture as they move to the United States. The specific research question guiding this paper was: What are the common adaptation and learning experiences of the post-Soviet women who immigrated to the United States through international marriage agencies?

Method

Data were collected through 10 face-to-face individual interviews with Russian-speaking marriage immigrants from former Soviet countries who came to the United States through international brokered marriages. The interviews with each participant differed in length and ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. The interviews took place in a mutually agreed setting that was appropriate for audio-recording and note-taking. Most interviews with the women took place in women's homes or at Starbucks cafes, with the exception of one interview that took place at the researcher's house. Participants were given the opportunity to indicate their preference with regards to English or Russian language and to choose a pseudonym for anonymity purposes.

Preparing for conducting the semi-structured open-ended interviews, I created an interview guide consisting of a limited set of questions that would lead my participants to share their stories of surviving and navigating a new culture. I decided on the sequence of questions and each interviewee was asked the same set of questions. Nonetheless, the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed me to bring up new questions during the interview to clarify and expand participant descriptions, depending on what the woman was talking about. This approach gave me the freedom of adjusting my topics to the interview context and participants I was interviewing.

I did not test any preconceived theories or ideas but rather asked participants to reconstruct their experiences or support their opinions. As a native speaker of the Russian language, the researcher was able to conduct some interviews in Russian whenever the participants chose that option. The Russian was then transcribed into

English for the bilingual quotations to be used in the study. In my data analysis I employed the constant comparison method.

The present study was exploratory in nature with the goal of giving voice to the participants without locking them into a preconceived theoretical framework. However, certain frameworks (cross-cultural adaptation theory [Kim, 1988]; transformative learning theory [Mezirow, 1991]; and empowerment theory [Rappaport, 1985] proved very useful as sensitizing concepts during the construction of the interview guide and the analysis.

Ultimately, 10 people were identified for the interviews. My participants met the following requirements:

- Russian-speaking women from the post-Soviet bloc countries
- Came to the United States after 1990
- Used various matchmaking agencies and internet sites

The researcher contacted her potential participants by phone or in person, explaining the nature of the study and asking if they would be interested to participate in an interview. This study has a variety of limitations, including: 1) it explored a small number of cases, as is often the case in qualitative research, 2) all of the cases were confined to a certain geographical, Metro-Atlanta area, and 3) all of the cases were drawn from the same, middle social class

Findings

Four salient themes developed with relation to our research question which asked: What are the common adaptation and learning experiences of the post-Soviet women who immigrated to the United States through international marriage agencies?

- 1) The women demonstrated agency in making the fundamental life transitions.

Nora: I was working in one of the biggest Moscow banks for the department of international currency. It was a great job. Good salary. ... The problem was the economic situation in the country, in general. ... I have worked three years after graduation and, you know, the common perception around was that immigration may be the right move at that time. There were opportunities to do it. Numerous international marriage agencies started opening their doors to those who wanted to marry abroad. ... I thought it was a good idea maybe to start a new life abroad.

Olga: It was difficult for me to understand myself at the moment ... as to whether I was running away from the problems and pains or if I was looking for the opportunity to create a new family. ... Again—at 33 and with a child, it felt like I did not have much time—so I resorted to Internet communication. ... I put an ad but mostly to be able to meet new people and talk to them freely ... like you would open up to stranger on a train. That is how we met. He was alone there, I was alone here—we talked a lot—it made us feel close.

- 2) The women developed resilience in the face of adversity.

Katya: My spouse did not realize that we would cost him money and his expenses would increase significantly ... but the real tension has started when in two months

my husband lost his job. Hence, one day he came home and very calmly broke it to me as follows: "As soon as I get my last salary, I will buy you two tickets and send you back home. If you don't agree with this plan, I cannot promise you anything."

3) The women pursued better cultural fitness in the new society.

Marina: The first small steps out of that miserable state of mind I was in were the courses of English language. ... You see different people—you can talk to them in your own language ... and not just on the phone. ... I talked to my parents on the phone ... but it was not enough. ... Skype, of course, did not exist then. It is different when you communicate in person. ... My friends are mostly Russian-speaking. I express myself in Russian much better than in English. I can speak ... but it is always a strain. ... Maybe in 20 years this will change.

4) Extensive personal transformation has accompanied each phase of the women psychological and cultural adaptation.

Katya: I thought when I was coming here that everybody was successful, everybody had everything. I was not ready for the financial difficulties I ran into here; I never experienced them back in Russia. ... They did not exist in my family. ... We always had money— my Dad was an army colonel, plus later, I worked in environments where money was flowing freely around me. ... I could afford anything there, but here it appeared I could barely afford anything.

Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings tied to the research questions one and two, the following major conclusions emerged: 1) The post-Soviet marriage immigrants in this study represent a heterogeneous group, whose adaptation trajectories in America were found to be shaped by the many ways, in which these women expressed agency and resilience; and 2) Continuous transformative learning has accompanied each phase of the women's psychological and cultural transition.

Implications for Adult Education

This research may have implications for adult education as the women in the study represent an important and growing population that possesses valuable skill sets and a pioneer attitude and thus, has a potential to greatly contribute to the society and the nation. This may inspire adult educators to facilitate creating and tailoring of the various language and professional programs to fit this particular immigrant group, thus, helping the women to integrate faster into the new society.

In addition, this study may add to the knowledge base of adult education as it explores the link between the women' experiences, learning, and identity transformation – the concepts that lie at the core of adult education (Lindeman, 1961; Dewey, 1980). It was through the act of telling that the women in the study learned what the experiences of immigration, international marriage, and building a new life in America meant for them.

In addition, the current study will contribute to the body of literature in adult education that for some time has been concerned with analysing links between the theories of transformative learning and cross-cultural adaptation. This is because the two previously mentioned bodies of literature share a common thread—the notion of an unexpected phenomenon that influences individuals residing in an unfamiliar culture.

From the perspective of Mezirow's (1981, 2000) transformative learning theory, this is called a trigger event. It is closely connected to a key tenet of cross-cultural adaptation theories called culture shock (Lyon, 2002, abstract). This study's findings echo the notion that that cross-cultural learning involves some aspects of transformation.

Most important, this study strongly defies the negative stigma and stereotypes commonly associated with Russian marriage immigrant women in the United States propagated by the media and some scholarly articles. The women in this study made an independent decision to seek a foreign husband as an opportunity to better their chances for a happier and more prosperous life and, like in any marriage, they considered material aspects along with non-material ones such as love, romance, compatibility, children, and opportunity for personal growth.

The findings of this study will make social workers and mental healthcare professionals more aware of the unique social, cultural, and economic characteristics of Russian marriage immigrant women and thus may help them tailor their services in accordance with the women's unique needs. Continued stigmatization and prejudices related to this specific immigrant population as well as to marriage immigrants in general should be taken into account by counsellors and educators to ensure well-being and successful cultural integration in the host society. The unique experiences of the immigrant women in this study will be pertinent to legal representation services, shelters, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, and other resources. Their common and unique ways of navigating the new cultural environment can contribute to the larger body of immigration research.

About the Symposium

In addition to the two presenters, the symposium will include two discussants, each approaching the work with a unique lens. In her critique, Johnson-Bailey will employ a transnational feminist framework, a position that accepts the universality of gender oppression, advocates gender equity, posits that globalization is the new face of colonialism, and is embedded with an understanding of women as a non-monolithic and diverse group. DeMarrais will explore methodological issues pertaining to the three studies, with emphasis on the "veracity" of interview data and to the presentation of self.

The three studies described below were all completed as dissertation work at the University of Georgia. Because of space limitations, only synopses of the research are presented here. The full dissertations are (or will soon be) available at:

http://dbs.galib.uga.edu/cgi-bin/getd.cgi?userid=galileo&serverno=16&instcode=publ&_cc=1

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