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From the Editor's desk

Associate Professor Trace Ollis

We live in interesting times regarding adult education research and, in particular, interesting times for Adult learning Education journals. Recently, editorial board member Professor Stephen Billet and I met with Canadian editorial colleagues from the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (CJSAE). Our journals have a long history of publishing in adult education. They are uniquely housed within their National adult education associations, Adult Learning Australia and the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Their origins commenced with community-based efforts to build their respective national associations, and the journals were established to promote research, practice, and scholarship in adult education. These journals represent and seek to advance the learning communities that their national associations represent, such as adult learners and adult educators. However, they struggle in the neo-liberal publishing environment, which ranks and categorises journals based on notions of elite and quality journals. In an era of globalisation and the massification of journals and publications, these smaller journals have challenges regarding their survival.

The other issue involves university funding and research allocation for academics based on the push for academics to publish with top-tier publishing companies; the larger publishing houses tend to dominate

these spaces and have the resources to maintain their position at their disposal. Naturally, the more prominent publication houses are advantaged in this environment, given they have access to more significant recourses. The financial viability of these smaller association-based journals heavily relies on subscription-based financing from education institutions, individuals, and small adult learning organisations.

Despite these impediments, smaller journals such as these are also advantaged. They can be in tune with community-based practices in adult learning education and theory, with good linkages to adult learning work practices and adult learners and changing government policy regarding adult community education. Enabling a nexus between theory and practice, advancing the scholarship, pedagogy and practices of adult learning across our representative countries. Naturally, the discussion between the editors of our respective journals centred around how these journals can survive and thrive. We aim to continue our conversation on the future of community-based adult learning education journals at the Canadian Association of Adult Education conference, 1-3 of June 2023.

The first article in this edition presents empirical research about young people with disabilities transitioning from school to open employment. Donna Rooney and Kirsty Young, in their article “Whack-a-Mole”? - Ecologies of young adults with intellectual disabilities as they transition from school to open employment” outline the barriers for young people with intellectual disabilities in open employment and use the metaphor of an arcade game “Whack-a-Mole”, to uncover the difficulties associated with this transition. They examine the complex issues facing these groups of young people and call for a holistic approach and understanding of the transition process for young adults with intellectual disability. They draw on the model developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, a theoretical model which appears to have increased uptake across several educational disciplines in the past decade. The model enables the authors to map the ecologies and the proliferation of stakeholders by proposing a new model of practice to reimagine this transition of people with intellectual disabilities from school to employment. The authors argue, due to the complexity of transition, educational interventions alone, cannot assume full responsibility for the underrepresentation of people with ID in open employment.

Katarina Rozyadska's article titled: "Travelling in time via narration: Three types of biographical learning" focuses on fundamental learning aspects of biographical learning observed through the narration of the participants. The author claims, "there have not yet been empirical studies focused explicitly on the learning aspects of biographical learning, as scholars have focused more on the biographical part of the concept". This research draws on interviews with adult learners studying for a teaching degree in higher education in the Czech Republic. This narrative research identified three types of biographical learning, learning by analogy, where experiences are compared with others. Learning by authority examines the influence of past learning experiences on the present day, and learning by audit, retrospectively looks at past experiences about learning juxtaposed with the present. The paper concludes with the proposition that biographical learning is crucial for education students, enabling them to explore and shine more light on how they were shaped by their own educational trajectory, in order to prevent those influences from unintentionally or unconsciously influencing their future teaching praxis.

The next article from Australia, "Learning in multicultural workspaces" by Robert Goodby analyses adult learning in the aged care sector, a sector of current and future growth in this industry, driven primarily by our ageing population in Australia. This mixed methods research proposes a conceptual model for adult learning in multicultural aged-care workplaces. The study outlines that cultural diversity and practices regarding cross-cultural communication, co-workers, and learning are essential in these aged-care workplaces. The paper concludes by arguing, "learning multicultural workplaces is influenced by individual, interactional, environmental and cultural factors".

The final paper in this edition, "Adult immigration learners' perspectives of their language experience", by Merih Ugurel Kamisli, examines adult immigrant learners' motivation and perspective on participating in an English as a second language (ESL) program. This qualitative research study examines learners' experiences through the lens of "McClusky's Theory of Margin". It outlines the challenges these learners face in their daily lives, speaking English, the support systems they have to assist them to speak English and how the program can be improved to better meet their learning needs. The author concludes by arguing adult

educators and program developers reflect on the learning needs of this specific group of adult learners, adapting practices that are learner-centred and more inclusive of the learners' perspectives, backgrounds, and motivations for learning in their program development.

Whack-a-Mole?: Ecologies of young adults with intellectual disabilities as they transition from school to open employment

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This paper addresses the question of why young Australians with intellectual disability (ID) remain underrepresented in open employment despite significant investment by various stakeholders. It uses the analogy of Whack-a-Mole (an arcade game) to draw attention to the complexity young people face during transition, and to illustrate how addressing one barrier in isolation is unlikely to result in successful transitions. In response to repeated calls for more holistic understandings of the transition process for young adults with ID, the paper draws upon the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner to present an adaptation of his model to map the ecologies of young people with ID's as they seek to transition from school to open employment. The model illustrates the complexity of transition, a proliferation of stakeholders, and traces how transition is contingent on much more than young adults with ID's capabilities. It invites further consideration of, and utility for, an ecological model as a basis for imagining possibilities

to increase the number of people with ID in open employment and concludes by raising some questions that stakeholders might ask.

Keywords: *disability, school-work transition, ecological model, Bronfenbrenner, intellectual disability, young adults*

Introduction

Gaining meaningful work on completing compulsory school education or post-school vocational education is a goal for many young adults with intellectual disabilities (ID). While supported workplaces are a common post-school employment option, some young adults with ID are shifting the goal to getting a job in open employment. By this, we mean in organisations where the *raison d'être* is not simply to provide opportunities for people with disabilities. Realising this goal can mean increased participation in economic society and social participation (Laragy, Fisher, Purcal & Jenkinson, 2015), greater self-determination (Donnelly et al., 2010) and improved wellbeing (Meltzer, Robinson & Fisher 2018).

However, the goal of open employment is one that few young adults with ID achieve. Poor employment outcomes for people with disability are common (Gouvea & Li, 2021), and Australians with ID are even less likely to participate in open employment compared to those with sensory, speech and/or physical disability (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Further, if young adults with ID do find a job, they are likely to be in insecure positions (Meltzer et al., 2018). Overall, despite the efforts of individuals or organisations, it remains a dismal situation.

In Australia, as elsewhere, there is significant investment in educational initiatives to support the transition of young people with ID from school to work (e.g., Dunn, Shannon, McCullough, Jenda & Qazi, 2018). On completion of school education post-school initiatives include specialised employment programs focusing on skills development (e.g., Smith, Grigal & Shepard, 2018) and Disability Employment Services (DES) that provide dedicated support workers to advocate and support young people in the workplace. Yet, the under- and unemployment of people with ID belies the significant investment in these initiatives.

This prompts us to ask why is it that young Australians with ID remain underrepresented in open employment? In response, we suggest that educational institutions are engaged in a game of ‘whack-a-mole’. Whack-a-mole is a popular arcade game where a player uses a hammer to hit toy moles that randomly appear. However, the game is characterised by players futile attempts to hit a mole before it pops up in a different location.

Here we use the analogy to draw attention to issues beyond the scope of any educational initiatives arising, despite stakeholders’ efforts to support transitions to employment. For instance a young adult might want to work but their family might be sceptical (Southward & Kyzar 2017); an educational institution might teach relevant work skills but this is futile if there are few willing employers (Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020); organisations may be willing, but maintaining employment can be difficult if employers are not also open to working with support workers, creating appropriate jobs, making suitable workplace adjustments or providing adequate training (Joshi, Bouck & Maeda, 2012; Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020). Overt and covert discrimination and attitudes of work colleagues/customers can make maintaining a job challenging (Meltzer et al., 2018). Broader social structures can hinder educational programs from being translated into employment opportunities: e.g., inadequate/inefficient policy, complex funding arrangements, societal views on disability, labour market demands, and perceived economic imperatives (Leonard et al., 2016).

The whack-a-mole analogy is also evident in research. Tranches of research concerned with these young people’s transition often approach studies with singular foci (e.g., family engagement, employer attitudes or educational interventions). While the spectre of competing issues is noted, recommendations are framed in response to the specific issue under investigation. However, like a game of whack-a-mole, addressing a singular issue does not ensure success. In all, we agree with Trainor et al. that ‘improving secondary and postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities [is] an incredibly complex endeavor[sic]’ (2019, p. 1). This sentiment is echoed by Foley, Dyke, Girdler, Bourke and Leonard, who conclude:

The range of issues related to transition from school to adult life for individuals with intellectual disability are complex and

multi-faceted. Over the past two decades, there have been many initiatives implemented within the developed world to try to facilitate a smooth and successful transition from secondary school, although very few have had positive outcomes. (2012, p. 1760)

In their own way, these authors see transition as a ‘wicked problem’: ‘where there are many decision makers and clients with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are confusing’ (Churchman, 1967, as cited in McCall & Burge, 2016, p. 200). This invites the production of holistic accounts of school-to-work transition for people with ID. We respond by framing the transition of young adults with ID in a manner that sheds light on its multifaceted and complex nature. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems model (1979, 1994), we map the ecologies of young adults with ID at a point in their lives when they are transitioning from school to employment and illustrate the ever-evolving system surrounding them as they enter adulthood. Depending on the characteristics of the individual, this may include final years of schooling as well as post-schooling (pre)vocational education and early experiences in the workplace. Our purpose is not to solve the ‘wicked problem’ of transition but to offer a modest way of understanding the complexities by framing transition in a new and different way. In doing this, we invite stakeholders to consider where innovations might be imagined - perhaps leading to more frequent/successful transitions.

Transition as a time of learning

Transitioning from school to work is a period of much learning. In Australia, this begins at school and is directed by a National Curriculum, which includes Work Studies modules and (ideally) work experience opportunities for all students in their final school years (e.g., Dunn et al., 2018.). Following compulsory education, post-school education provides further opportunities for learning in either specialised institutions that work specifically with people with ID or mainstream providers (with/without specialised programs). Learning may involve developing work skills (e.g., retail or hospitality), employment skills (e.g., resume writing, interviews), soft skills (e.g., communication) and life skills (e.g., catching public transport, personal grooming). Work experience, while desirable,

can be difficult to secure and some educational institutions create alternative opportunities (e.g., microbusiness, institutionally based work experience etc.) (Young and Rooney, 2021).

Learning is not limited to involvement in educational institutions. Once in a workplace (work experience or job), further learning occurs through onboarding, mentoring programs and/or simply as young adults 'find their feet'. It is not just young adults who need to learn either. A resounding finding in research is that families (Leonard et al., 2016), employing organisations (Meltzer et al., 2018) and educators (Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020; McDonnell & Hardman, 2010) require further learning to better understand the abilities of workers with ID and how to support them to succeed.

Conceptual resources to foster understandings

We approach the transition of young adults with ID from a strengths-based position, believing that they possess (or have the potential to develop) skills and capabilities necessary to engage in meaningful employment. We distance ourselves from medical models of disability where potential is viewed solely on cognitive, psychological or physiological states (Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020, p. 392). The latter frames barriers to open employment in terms of limitations and deficits (e.g., the young person does not have the skills/capabilities required). Further, these views can see people purged of personal biographies, aspirations and dreams, social contexts as well as independent of broader structures. To this end, we look towards social and situated views. Merriam and Baumgartner (2020) point out that 'there has always been an interlocking of learning needs with the social context in which they occur' (p. 6) and Illeris (2017) adds, 'all learning is situated' (p. 115). We extend this by adding that, just like learning, the transition period is situated in social and structural contexts.

The concept of learning ecologies has been deployed by those seeking situated accounts of learning. Drawing inspiration from ecologies in nature, ecological accounts of learning focus on the broad context and are attuned to people, relationships, entities, activities, structures and materiality. Like systems thinking approaches, ecological accounts tease out the 'interrelations and interdependencies' of various parts of the system and how these interact 'with other systems and subsystems'

(Gonzales, 2020, p. 3).

Ecological accounts of learning are common in childhood educational research and models have been generated to illustrate influences on learning beyond everyday teacher/student interactions. For instance, Epstein (2011) presents a Venn model depicting relationships between schools, families and communities. Her model emphasises shared responsibility for a child's learning (2011) and convincingly exemplifies the idiom of 'taking a village'. Ecological accounts of learning are not limited to children. They are also evident in accounts of workplace learning (Evans, 2020), higher education (Jackson & Barnett, 2020) and adult life (Jackson & Barnett, 2020).

A common influence underpinning ecological accounts of learning is the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner. Inspired by Lewin and Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner (1979) was interested in the complex environments and relationships that enfold children and how this impacts their development. He established a model consisting of interconnecting systems ranging from children's immediate situation to broader social structures and dominant social norms. The model's explanatory power lay in its capacity to take account of a wider view of context and the interconnectedness of various systems and as an 'antidote to theories that reduced development of the individual to single factors such as genetics' (Quickfall, 2021, p. 96).

The interconnected systems central to Bronfenbrenner's work include the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. These are typically presented as concentric circles that move from microsystems in the centre through to macrosystems on the outer circle. This enables the tracing of the impacts of wider phenomena on everyday relationships, interactions and attitudes. In later work, Bronfenbrenner introduced a fifth system, the chronosystem, acknowledging changes in the systems over time that impact children's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Bronfenbrenner's ideas remain popular among educational scholars, including studies interested in the education of children with disabilities (Anderson, Boyle & Deppeler, 2014; Gonzales, 2020; Laragy et al., 2015). With a focus on school education, Gonzales suggests that model helps 'school leaders to develop a holistic view of the complex layers of

family, school and community relationship’ (2020, p. 82). Anderson et al., concerned with inclusive education, also turn to Bronfenbrenner to understand child development by drawing attention to relationships and connections of various layers through a ‘snapshot of a single point in time’ (2014, p. 9). In this paper, we build on these applications to create a ‘snapshot’ of a different ‘point in time’ where young people with ID are transitioning from school to work.

Deploying Bronfenbrenner’s model

To unpack Bronfenbrenner’s ideas and illustrate them with literature related to the ecologies of young people with ID, Figure 1 provides a snapshot of the layers of a young person with ID’s ecology during transition. Importantly, while it shares similarities with the ecologies of transitioning young people without ID, it draws attention to additional considerations which are specifically relevant to the lived experiences of those with.

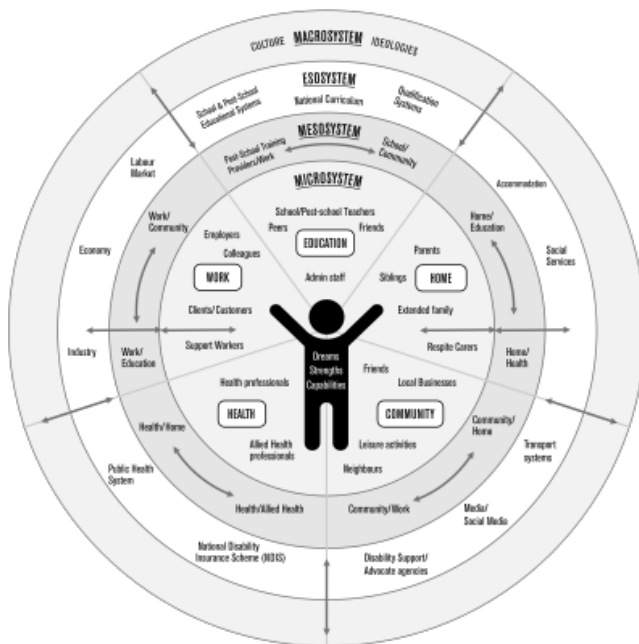


Figure 1. A young person with ID’s ecology during transition.

Unpacking the model

The microsystem

The inner circle of the ecosystem is the microsystem, and central to this is the young person themselves (Quickfall, 2021). This necessarily includes their work dreams, likes and dislikes, beliefs and the experiences leading up to the transition: all critical for promoting self-determination (Maia-Pike, 2021). It also includes individual strengths and developing capabilities relevant to future employment. Surrounding the young person in the microsystem is a network of people who play a pivotal role in their daily lives (Donnelly et al., 2010; Anderson et al., 2014). These stakeholders regularly interact with the young person, although the interactions occur in various physical sites.

Like Epstein (2011), the inclusion of a home, school, and community are visible here. Home is where young people interact with their family. Research on families' influence on the employment of people with ID is widespread and resounding (O'Brien & Murray, 2018; Donnelly et al., 2010). One example is the conversations families have about the future and how these shape aspirations and attitudes towards work as well as formulate expectations for all concerned. Chronologically, these conversations can (and should) occur long before transition begins (Kelley & Prohn, 2019). Transition can be a considerably stressful time for parents too. Parenting any child has its challenges, but challenges are compounded when a child has ID (Kelley & Prohn, 2019; Leonard et al., 2016). As the young person leaves school, the responsibility for securing appropriate support services largely falls to the family. Navigating disability support systems is a source of stress for many parents/carers (Hirano, Rowe, Lindstrom & Chan, 2018; Leonard et al., 2016). Parental anxiety gains momentum during transition and is not limited to employment issues alone; transport to and from work and even future accommodation weigh heavily for families as their young person matures and they themselves age (Young and Rooney, 2021).

Of course, schools and post-school educational institutions are other significant sites in the transition process—thus, teachers, admin staff, peers and close friends become important inclusions in the microsystem. A young person is likely to have daily interactions (pedagogical or otherwise) with these people and these interactions can

shape attitudes to work.

Various people in the local community where a young person engages in leisure, retail, sport, recreational or faith-based activities matter too. Community participation plays an important (often understated) role in the microsystem and is an important transition component (McDonnell & Hardman, 2010, p. 126). If a young person's friendship group consists predominately of school-based friends, there is potential for friendships to wain on graduation (Foley et al. 2012). However, participation in communities can help form new/broader friendship groups as well as help develop social skills that may be of use in workplaces.

Until this point, the microsystem described appears common to most children. However, a notable difference for young people with ID is the number of interactions they may have with health and allied health professionals. Some will be under the care of, or interact with, one or more health and allied health professionals (e.g., physicians, speech therapists, occupational therapists) on a regular basis.

A further significant feature within the microsystems of young adults transitioning is the interactions with employers and work colleagues. Interactions might occur as part of work experience programs, paid or unpaid work. This warrants the inclusion of employers, work colleagues and even customers in the microsystem. Employer attitudes towards disability can influence decisions about employing a person with ID. The employer determines the actual work that the young person undertakes. As does their willingness to incorporate workplace accommodations (e.g., flexible hours, adjusted job roles and modified training and supervision) that contribute to employment success (or failure) (McDowell & Fossey, 2015; Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020). Work colleagues can aid successful transition just as unsupportive colleagues can adversely impact success. Disability-based discrimination in workplaces can (and does) impact the success or failure of securing and maintaining employment (Ross-Gordon & Procknow, 2020) and this includes discriminatory interactions with customers/clients. Various named support workers also play an important role in transition. In Australia, the NDIS fund Disability Support Workers who can accompany the young person in the workplace and their ongoing support can be critical (Certo et al., 2008; McDowell & Fossey, 2015).

Overall, the microsystem is in a state of flux during transition. It is

subject to simultaneous exiting and expansion of stakeholders. As school-teachers farewell their charges, employers, work colleagues, customers/clients and DES support workers expand the system. As mentioned above, parallel exiting and expanding occur as friendships formed at school dwindle (Foley et al. 2012) and new friendships formed.

The mesosystem

Moving outwards from the microsystem is the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner describes this as the ‘interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates’ (1979, p. 25). Importantly, this involves relationships and interactions that may not include the young person with ID but can impact their transition. For instance, teachers and parents’ interactions over the child’s educational progress, individualised learning goals and post-school options are likely. During transition, parental interactions can also involve conversing with post-school education providers about training options or using personal networks to secure work experience opportunities (Young & Rooney, 2021).

At this time, parents must also renegotiate support available through the NDIS. Shergold et al. (2020) call for better collaboration in senior school years so that ‘individual post-school transition plan[s are] put in place prior to leaving school’ (p. 22, emphasis added). In some cases (not all), schools endeavour to make transition seamless by organising parent information events and bringing parents together with new stakeholders.

Parents and health/allied health practitioners’ relationships and interactions, while continuing through transition, can take on new foci. Discussions may turn to specific workplace adjustments required to support the young person in employment and how this can be communicated to employers (McDowell & Fossey 2015). In addition, health practitioners themselves are typically embedded in interprofessional networks involving other health and allied health professionals, and this network can involve professional interactions about people with ID and employment.

Overall, a significant amount of brokering, negotiations and interactions concerning a young person with ID and their transition to employment

is evident in the mesosystem. While there is increasing acknowledgment of the value of including young people with ID in such negotiations, many interactions in the mesosystem (about the young person) continue to occur without them. This works to divest young people of self-determination (Maia-Pike, 2021).

Finally, there are interactions that expand an already burgeoning mesosystem that perhaps rightfully do not include the young person but have the potential to impact transition. For instance, interactions between health providers who are embedded in their own professional and personal networks. Like health providers, other stakeholders in the microsystem are embedded in their own ecologies (or networks): a parent can have a job; siblings have their own friendships; and teachers, employers and work colleagues have their families and friends too. Few of these other people's networks would directly interact with the young person at the centre of the ecology. Yet, each relationship has the potential to indirectly influence it -not least of all through perpetuating or contradicting broader attitudes to disability. One example is that of an employer who knows or is related to someone with a disability. This relationship has been cited as one of the main reasons an employer agrees to employ a person with disability themselves (Young & Rooney 2021).

The exosystem

The exosystem 'refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). Central here are the structures that indirectly impact the experiences of young persons with ID (Quickfall, 2021, p. 89). This includes the educational system, which impacts and influences the everyday activities and experiences of the young person with ID. It is in the exosystem that three tiers of schools are conceived and made available in Australia: specialised school settings, support units in mainstream schools and inclusive mainstream classrooms. Choice of school among these options can impact successful transitions (Joshi et al., 2012, p. 105). The educational system itself also includes a National Curriculum which is influenced by Australia's federal system (Young & Rooney, 2021).

Broader health systems constitute another important inclusion involving accepted knowledge, treatment, management, and classifications of ID that may or may not be consistent. This ‘matters on the ground’. For instance, a medical classification of disability used by health professionals may not be the same classification used by educational institutions or by other support systems (e.g., NDIS). These competing views can filter down to relationships and activities in the meso- and microsystems and contribute to the complexities of transition.

The NDIS itself is also an important feature of the exosystem in an Australian context that significantly influences the daily matters of people with an ID. Not untouched by ideologies of marketisation (macro), the scheme makes available financial support for individuals who must then ‘purchase’ services. This requires personalised planning (ideally undertaken by families in consult with the person with ID), identifying a range of suitable services, and then finding and purchasing them on ‘open markets’. While at school, young people with ID are eligible for NDIS plans to provide funds to access allied health, respite care and specialised equipment. On leaving school, other support for accommodation, other educational provisions, health care services and employment support can be accessed (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2022). However, the NDIS has been subject to much critique with its complexity for those who must navigate often cited (Laragy et al., 2015) and its dedifferentiated nature that can further disadvantage those with ID (Bigby, 2020).

With a focus on the transition to work, some further related systems are also acknowledged: e.g., the broader economy, industry, labour market, social services, housing, accommodation and even transport systems (Trainor, et. al., 2019). Each of these can potentially impact a young person with ID’s capacity to secure and maintain employment. The exosystem also includes disability advocacy agencies and mass/social media that disseminate views on disability. Both can, subtly or overtly, perpetuate or challenge, broader opinions about inclusivity that ‘trickle down’ to potential employers, work colleagues and customers/clients and even young people with ID themselves and how families, teachers and others position them.

The macrosystem

Finally, Bronfenbrenner describes the macrosystem as the ‘consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso- and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies’ (1979, p. 26). This outer layer of the model involves cultural elements that impact young people with an ID and includes dominant societal attitudes towards and beliefs about disability, education, and people’s roles in society, which impact entities, activities and relationships available (or not) in other systems. It is also here that ideologies of neoliberalism, human rights, and democracy also lay foundations, and justify what is possible (or not) at other levels of the ecology.

Across the ecology

This paper began by suggesting that the transition of young people with ID - from school to open employment—is a ‘wicked problem’ where the nature of the explanation determines the solutions on offer (Rittel & Webber, 1973, as cited in McCall & Burge, 2016 p. 200). Here we have highlighted the complexities by deploying an ecological model and drawing attention to interconnected subsystems that influence the likelihood of young adults with ID successfully transitioning from school to open employment. The ecology presented in the model demonstrates the interdependency of various systems and how something in one system impacts something elsewhere in the ecology. Notably, it illustrates how decisions, entities, activities, roles, and relationships, beyond the immediate experience of a young adult with ID (micro), influence successful transitions from school to work (see examples in Table 1 below).

Table 1

Neoliberalism (macro)	influences how NDIS support is made available (exo)	impacts parents' capacity to financially support their child (meso/micro) or an organisation's decision to employ a person with a disability (meso/micro)
Human Rights and cultural attitudes to disability (macro)	influences populous attitudes towards people with disability (micro)	impacts people with IDs' experiences at home, work, school and in communities (meso/micro)
An employer's personal experiences with disability (employers' micro)	influences decisions to employ a person with an ID (employers' micro)	impacts the likelihood of a young person with ID having open employment (young person's micro)
Categorisation of disability (exo)	influences what support is available (micro)	impact on the likelihood of success in securing open employment (micro)
Human rights (macro)	influence education systems' conceiving educational options/ National Curriculum (exo)	impact on the likelihood of success in securing open employment (micro)

Changes and inflections

Transition is, by definition, a time of change, and Bronfenbrenner's inclusion of the chronosystem acknowledges the temporality of transition. For instance, choices made early in life, the curriculum and previous learning of the young person enable skills and capabilities that later be 'put to work'. The interrelated systems are not impervious to change either. Temporal elements are noted in changes in the ecology over time: e.g., changes in broader understandings of disability; the move away from sheltered workshops being the only employment option (Quickfell, 2021; Evans 2021; Young & Rooney, 2021).

But not everything changes. Young people's transition to adulthood is a period involving continuity too. The presence of ID is likely to continue (although this may be more pronounced in adulthood). Family's enduring relationships are another example—as is their ongoing support of their child through multiple life-course transitions (McDonnell & Hardman, 2010, pp. 123–124). Perhaps it is more accurate to think about the ecology in terms of inflections, that is, something that continues but takes new or different emphasis or intensity.

A notable feature of the ecology is the exponential growth in the mesosystem through the transition. This exemplifies how various stakeholders can be 'the village' that embraces young adults with ID and lends weight to calls for shared responsibility for transition (Butterworth, Christensen & Flippo, 2017). Indeed, stakeholder collaborations feature in many educational initiatives that claim successful transitions (Sheppard, Harrington & Howard, 2017; Xu & Stancliffe, 2019). However, the number of interactions happening about the young person but without including them in all levels across the ecology summons much critique (Maia-Pike, 2021). This said, it is also in the mesosystem where possibilities might be conceived.

Possibilities

Assuming general agreement on the need for better/more inclusive employment outcomes for young adults with ID, then this ecological model has something to offer. First, it can illuminate some of the complexities involved in the transition, and perhaps even absolve individuals or individual agencies, of some blame for poor employment outcomes despite their best efforts. As with many social issues, the transition to employment for young adults with ID is a complex issue not solved through a single solution alone. However, there may be potential for stakeholders to join forces. So, secondly, the model provides possible directions for imagining how stakeholders might achieve a shared goal. Thus, we conclude by proposing some questions.

- *Educators might ask:* Are shared programs possible so that the move from school to post-school education is more seamless? Are work preparation programs centred around what young adults can do? Can educational efforts be further supported by stakeholder collaborations?

- *Program funders might ask:* Is realistic acknowledgement given to the significant amount of brokering many already do or see possibilities for doing?
- *Employers might ask:* Who in the microsystem can help understand young peoples' strengths? Are job roles strength-based? What training is available for the existing workforce, and who might you collaborate with to deliver it?
- *All stakeholders might ask:* What are the parallel conversations happening that work with or against what you are trying to achieve? Are there other stakeholders in the mesosystem or microsystem you could link with? Are the young people with ID involved in the discussions that impact them? How are you perpetuating or challenging views on disability?
- *Young adults with ID might ask:* What are your dreams for the future, and who can help you achieve them?

Conclusion

Bronfenbrenner's model helps illuminate the complexities of transition of young adults with ID from school to work. Through presenting the various systems, we hope to make explicit the impact of multiple (and sometimes) competing stakeholders and broader social structures. New considerations of young adults with ID's context as they transition from school to work emerge through this ecological account.

The paper began by likening the transition from school to work for young people with ID as a game of whack-a-mole. This referred to the complexities of transition and how educational interventions alone, cannot assume full responsibility for the underrepresentation of people with ID in open employment. The ecological model presented here sought to illustrate the complexity of transition and trace how young people's transition to employment is contingent on more than young person's capabilities, or an educational intervention alone. While these obviously matter, the model presented here invites broader consideration for imagining possibilities if more such transitions are to be successful. It was never our intention to prescribe possibilities - however, we see some potential in imagining more effective 'whack-a-mole hammers' in the form of collective efforts.

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Travelling in time via narration: Three types of biographical learning

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This is a study of the process of biographical learning and how it can be observed in narration. There have not yet been empirical studies focused explicitly on the learning aspects of biographical learning, as scholars have focused more on the biographical part of the concept – more on the question of what is learned than of how it is learned. This text therefore concentrates on the learning process itself within biographical learning, using data from 29 biographical narrative interviews with mature students studying for education degrees in Czech higher education. The results show that narrators do not present their experiences separately in their narration, one after another. The narrative analysis revealed that their experiences are intertwined. In adding another experience, the narrators discover new meanings. It is therefore possible to talk about the learning process going on in the narration. The narrative analysis identified three types of this biographical learning as reflected in narration: learning by analogy, learning by audit, and learning by authority. In learning by analogy, experiences are compared to one another, creating an analogy between them. Learning by authority involves the influence of a past experience on the present day. Learning by audit is a retrospective movement,

looking at a past experience through the lens of the present. The results presented here have implications for both adult education research and practice.

Keywords: *biographical learning, adult learning theory, narrative analysis, mature students*

Introduction

This study concerns how adult learners learn to understand their lives when they are storytelling them. Storytelling is a social activity by which we deliver stories; it has long been recognized as central to human cognition and communication (Gelman & Basbøll, 2014). The result of storytelling is a narrative. Goodson et al. (2010, p. 2) and other scholars have stressed the significance of those narratives for our learning: “The stories we tell about our lives and ourselves can play an important role in the ways in which we can learn from our lives. Such learning, in turn, can be important for the ways in which we live our lives.” This capacity to constantly learn how to live our lives is referred to as biographicity. It has become crucial in the changing conditions we encounter in societies in which wars alternate with pandemics.

The life course approach involves inspecting lives from a diachronic perspective, which becomes especially relevant under conditions of knowledge societies with their demand for lifelong learning. However, the ways we follow our lives during the life course have become increasingly diverse among individuals in society and can even change multiple times within a single life. Acknowledging the inner tensions between the “instrumentalist” and “emancipative” power of lifelong learning (Hallqvist et al., 2012), Alheit and Dausien place some confidence in the emancipative view, calling for an outlook in which the learning individual “is taken more seriously” (Alheit & Dausien, 2002, p. 5). To this discourse, the biographical learning approach offers a solution by providing an “alternative configuration of lifelong learning, intending to increase knowledge about the relation between individual biographies and institutions of adult education” (Hallqvist, 2014, p. 3). One phenomenon in which the intersections between the individual and the institutional are sharpened is the re-entry of adults to formal

education. This study deals with an example of that phenomenon – the return of adults to Czech universities after reaching the age of 26 years. The Czech Republic is one of the countries with the most significant increases of older students (both 25-34 years and over 35) according to a study analysing the delayed participation of adult students in higher education in fifteen European countries (Souto-Otero & Whitworth, 2017). Adult learners coming to university education at this age are arriving from their work and family life, and they can be conceptualised as "non-traditional students" or "mature students". The broadest definition of non-traditional students is that of underrepresented groups in higher education. Still, its concrete definition depends on the educational system in question, and most countries include multiple criteria within their definition. Narrators in this study were non-traditional in relation to their age and trajectories, which corresponds more to the concept of mature students as one of the groups within the non-traditional student body.

Trajectories are parts of the life course and Schatzki (2022, p. 23) defined them through space and time: "A life trajectory is, first, the space-time path of a life, that is, the path through space and time that it traces as it proceeds." Educational trajectories then refer to the understanding of "how individuals proceed through different educational stages, how they combine them with other life spheres, how they cope with transitions and how they take decisions regarding their educational career" (Cuconato et al., 2016). When studied individually, trajectories in social space can be also framed as biographies (Bourdieu in Alheit, 1992). Biography is conceived as a "social creation" that "constitutes both social reality and the subjects' worlds of knowledge and experience, and which is constantly affirmed and transformed within the dialectical relationship between life-history knowledge and experiences and patterns presented by society" (Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal, 1997, p. 138). To distinguish between life course and biography, Stauber and Ule (2015) explained that whereas the life course points to an institutionalised construction of lives, the biography can be regarded as the "told life," i.e., the subjective meaning-making with regard to one's individual life course. As this study deals with the told life, it will use the concept of biography as central. The life course is the standard biography (Alheit, 2021), but such "biographical

normality schemes are unable to anticipate all the options that appear in a specific biography and there remains an abundance of alternative courses of action that we as individuals have to decide for ourselves” (p. 113). According to Tennant (2018, p. 166), “there is uncertainty and fragmentation in our life trajectories.”

This paradigm shift to paying more attention to individual biographies started with the biographical turn in social sciences (Wengraf et al., 2002). Alheit (1995) asserted that we learn authentically when we involve our biographies, referring to this phenomenon as biographical learning. The concept of biographical learning is useful for understanding the processes in which people are involved when forming their lives through storytelling (Alheit & Dausien, 2000). However, it has not yet been clearly stated how exactly this biographical learning takes place, what its parts and outcomes are, and how it can be identified in the narratives. Empirical contributions using biographical frameworks shed light on the connections of biographical learning with other concepts rather than on the pure process of learning biographically. For example, Bilon (2021) investigated the relationship between biographical learning and agency. Coming more closely to the process of learning, Hallqvist et al. (2012) found types of biographical learning processes in creative action and reflexive identity work. Christensen (2012, p. 409) pointed out that “research into biographical learning as such is rather infrequent.” The research questions addressed in this study were therefore formulated as follows: 1. How do adults learn when storytelling their educational trajectories? and 2. What do they learn when they are storytelling their educational trajectories?

Previous contributions on learning in the biographical and narrative perspectives

To study the research problem of learning from biographies, the term “biographical learning” was introduced into social research. It refers to “the relationships that exist between learning and biography, the influence of biography on learning processes and practices, and biography as a type of learning” (Tedder & Biesta, 2007, p. 3). Even though there are several coexisting conceptualisations of biographical learning, none of them explains how exactly this learning takes place and therefore how it can be captured in storytelling. A significant part of the contributions to biographic learning are aligned with the

emancipatory tradition of adult education (e.g. Alhadeff-Jones, 2019). This paper, in its theoretical contribution, identifies two dimensions within biographical learning that can help to understand the character of the learning processes going on in the narration: biographicity and narrativity.

Biographicity: the content of biographical learning

Biographicity is a key competence in contemporary societies, as “biographies are becoming more complicated, more individual, less ‘normal,’ but at the same time more colourful, autonomous and self-willed” (Alheit, 1994, p. 285). This shift reflects the capacity of individuals to continually re-interpret their lives in the social contexts in which they have new experiences and link these new experiences to what they have already learnt. Thus, they are continually re-interpreting their biography and experiencing their lives as dynamic and “mouldable” (Alheit & Dausien, 2000). Through this competence, individuals can experience some sense of coherence in their lives and manage breaks in educational trajectories and careers in the context of flexible work. This is also reflected in the biographies of adults returning to formal university education.

To further understand the learning process, we can look into adult learning theories. Early learning theorists already pointed to the connections between the life course, its content, and learning. Lindeman asserted that “the whole life is learning” (1926, p. 5). In his theory of andragogy, Knowles acknowledged that learners bring their lifetime experience to the learning situation: “As people grow, they accumulate an increasing reservoir of life experiences that becomes an increasingly rich source for learning” (Knowles, 1980, p. 44). However, those authors did not concentrate on how exactly we learn from those life and lifelong experiences when we are telling them to ourselves or others.

Jarvis was one of those that elaborated more on this issue. He asserted that “while an experience is sub-consciously meaningful, it is not a learning experience” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 167). In this conceptualisation, the experiences do not have meaning in themselves, but individuals assign meaning to some of their experiences. More importantly, only those meaningful experiences are incorporated into the biography. In this way, Jarvis conceptualises learning as “a continuous process

which seeks to give meaning to the daily experience, connecting human conscience with time, space, society and their multiple relationships” (1991, p. 11). In transformative learning, the learning process is linked to meaning-making (Mezirow, 2000). Biographical learning and transformative learning are both change-oriented theories (Illeris, 2014). Transformative and biographical learning frameworks can thus be combined, as some scholars have done. This study does not combine them, as transformative learning captures the transformation in the synchronous moment, whereas biographical learning works with the diachronic perspective.

More specifically, learning is seen as the transformation of experiences into the elements of the biography. Those specific elements can be knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions, the senses – or any combination of them (Jarvis, 2006), which is the input of the learning. However, Jarvis did not mention how we put the relevant elements into our biography in order to learn from them nor what the outcome of this process is, other than biography and learning.

Biography is, in this perspective, seen as the content of biographical learning. Every time we learn, we add another story to our biography; we are both being and becoming simultaneously: “our experience is not a mirror image of the external world; we perceive the world and thereby select from it those things that are relevant to our biographical development” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 72). Stories here are the outcome of learning; the “what we learn” question is crucial for the biographicity dimension.

Narrativity: the structure of biographical learning

From the biographical perspective, learning comes from biography, from its elements and how they are linked together and transformed. Analogically, the concept of narrative learning highlights the role of story for learning and its impact on identity. Narrative researchers see the narrative as being situated “among the most important social resources for creating and maintaining personal identity” (Linde, 1993). In the theories of narrative learning, we can see this emphasis on the self more than on the learning process. According to those theories, people construct the reflexive self – the stories they produce about themselves upon reflection – in the context of a research interview (Bruner, 1996;

Gee, 1999; Roth et al., 2005, cited in Black, 2010).

Within biographical learning studies, Hallqvist and Hydén (2013) located themselves within the narrative approach to biographical learning and explained why: “We would like to argue that some parts of the life stories are more important than others in terms of learning about and from one’s own life” (p. 1). Narrativity therefore stresses the role of the story, thus more the context in which the learning occurs. From a constructivist psychological point of view, when people tell stories, they constantly reconstruct themselves (Bruner, 1994). Also, as Goodson et al. (2010, p. 2) put it “whilst most stories are about something – an event, an experience, an encounter, a person – they always also express something about ourselves, even if it is only our particular perspective on the situation.” Similarly, Tedder and Biesta (2009) offered a narrative perspective on biographical learning connecting biographical learning with narrative theory; the authors found that the differences between the stories people tell “correlate with ways in which people learn from their lives and with ways in which such learning bears significance for how they conduct their lives” (p. 79).

However, there are also holistic definitions of narrative learning that are more similar to the definitions of biographical learning. Similarly to Jarvis’s theory about meaningful experiences, Clark and Rossiter (2008, p. 66) explained the link between meaning-making, narration (the told life), and learning: “meaning making is a narrative process and meaning making is the constructivist definition of learning.” Interestingly, biography is also conceptualized within this perspective. Bruner (1990, p. 119) understood autobiography in the following narrative way:

And I do not mean an autobiography in the sense of a “record” (for there is no such thing). I mean, simply, an account of what one thinks one did in what settings in what ways for what felt reasons. It will inevitably be a narrative, as Polkinghorne remarked, and to pick up Schafer’s point, its form will be as revealing as its substance.

From the narrative perspective, biography is thus seen as a narrative, as confirmed by Goodson et al. (2010, p. 2):

It is not that the story is just a description of the life and the self, a kind of picture we can look at in order to learn from it. In a

very real sense, the story constitutes the life and the story. What complicates the matter further is that the self is also the author of the story. All this means that the construction of the story – the storying of the life and the life – is a central element of the learning process.

Narrative scholars discuss transformative learning, similar to the biographical dimension. Rossiter and Clark (2007) pointed to the difference between Mezirow's modernist and unitary conception of the self and the postmodern and fluid conceptualisation of the self that is typical for narrative learning.

The autobiographical narratives are characterised by a "segmentation of the stream of remembering and description into units of narrative" (Schütze, 1984, p.108). This specific structure matters, as in this perspective narrative learning can be defined as "learning done through the construction and reconstruction of the story of one's life" (Goodson et al., 2010, p.127). Goodson et al. (2010) further specified that "narrative learning can be evidenced in the substance of the narrative but also in the act of narration" (p. 127). This study focuses on how the learning can be identified in the narration and narrativity is seen as the structure of learning. One typical question in the studies of narratives within various fields is "How are stories structured?" When we are interested in the learning aspect of the narration, it can be translated into the question of how we learn in the narration.

Methodology of the study

The study sample was composed of 29 non-traditional students, who are, by the Czech definition, adult students at least 26 years old studying part time or full time and who had had at least one year break in their educational trajectory before coming to Czech universities. Moreover, we narrowed down the choice to only students who were enrolled in education degree programmes, including teacher education programmes, social pedagogy, special pedagogy, adult education, etc. Adult students returning to study social sciences "choose courses in the humanities and social sciences which cannot be regarded as the most obvious or surest route to employment or a better job; factors beyond pure economic rationality seem to be at play" (West (1996, p.4). Moreover, in the Czech Republic, there are no alternative

pathways to higher education: all the higher education students have to meet the requirement of the Matura [graduation] exam, and upper-secondary tracks leading to this qualification, especially the general ones (gymnasiums), are already considered to be selective; this group is thus more homogenous than in other countries. University access programmes don't exist, so it can be assumed that fewer socioeconomically disadvantaged adult students return to university. The sample was also not gender balanced and included more women than men, which corresponds to the gender imbalanced educational professions.

Biographical narrative interviews were based on the biographic narrative interview method (BNIM) that was originally established and developed mainly by Schütze (1992) and Rosenthal (2004) and later on developed by Wengraf (2011). The traditional BNIM consists of three sub-sessions (Burke, 2014). The interview scheme used in this study was in line with Rosenthal's conceptualisation (2004): the interview started with a period of main narration with the initial narrative question; this was followed by a questioning period beginning with internal narrative questions and continuing with external narrative questions. In the first phase, the respondents were asked a broad initial narrative question (inspired by Lieblich et al., 1998 and Rosenthal, 2004) that started as follows:

Please imagine that you would like to write a book about your educational trajectory. A book that describes your educational trajectory from the beginning to the present day. By this, we mean the educational trajectory in the broadest sense, that part of your life that concerns education, study, and learning. Imagine that your book on your educational trajectory would have chapters. What chapters would there be? (...)

In the second phase, they were asked questions coming strictly only from their previous narration, i.e., from what they just said. In the last phase, the interviewer asked pre-prepared questions to clarify aspects that had not yet been mentioned. The biographical narrative interviews lasted from one to two hours. As this study is concerned with the narrative analysis of this data, the respondents will be subsequently designated as "narrators" and have been assigned pseudonyms from mythology.

Following Horsdal's (2011) conception of the main focus of narrative analysis, the underlying presumption was that this specific type of analysis enables researchers to understand how the narrator tries to make sense of lived experiences through narration. The first phase of analysis included the word-by-word coding and structural description documented by Schutze (1984) and Alheit (1994). The structural description is valuable primarily because it can make "systematic use of the very strategies that the narrator uses to structure and develop his impromptu narrative" (Alheit, 1994, p.28). These strategies tend more to unfold the material than to encode it prematurely (idem) and can help to unveil the structural level of the narrative.

The second step of the analysis was the process of theoretical sensitising. Theoretical sensitivity can be defined as the capacity to see relevant data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), i.e., "to reflect upon empirical data with the help of theoretical terms" (Kelle, 2007, p. 163, in Bron & Thunborg, 2017). Within the question of what adults learned from storytelling, two fundamental elements can be identified– the storytelling part and the biographical learning part. In this study, "storytelling" is understood as the process of giving a story of one's life, and the narrative is the result of that, as the biographical interview is an in-depth interview in which the respondents tell their story (Thunborg et al., 2021). The process of storytelling is captured when it is recorded and transcribed in a text – the narrative. The data from such an interview can then be seen not only as narrative data per se but also as the narrative of some specific experience or phenomenon. According to Thunborg et al. (2021, p. 87), "a biographical story consists of several narratives of the past, present, and future." This study has chosen the first part of the interviews – narratives about the educational trajectory in a broad sense, in the way the respondents understood for themselves the narratives of learning or not-learning in various educational settings they experienced before coming to higher education.

The other part of the question, the learning, is more challenging to operationalise. Nevertheless, it can be revealed by dividing biographical learning into distinctive parts. As this study deals with biographical learning, I considered biographicity, narrativity, and learning itself. With the help of the adult learning theory, learning from storytelling can be translated as (A) the transformation of biographical experiences (Jarvis) and (B) the narrative (re)construction of the self (Bruner).

Within the analysis, this distinction was reflected in the attention paid to both the content (A) and the structural level (B) of the narrative. These two levels correspond to the two main types of narrative analysis (Lieblich et al. 1998) and the biographicity (content) and narrativity (structure) of biographical learning discovered in the theory. In interpreting the biographical data, I applied abductive reasoning (Bron & Thunborg, 2017) as “abduction is intended to help social research, or rather social researchers, to be able to make new discoveries in a logically and methodologically ordered way” (Reichertz, 2010, p. 4). The types of learning that are the results of the analysis are ideal narrative types. This technique is used to emphasize the collective nature of the experiences described in the narratives and form each of the narratives identified into a narrative type that embodies the range of experiences of the narrators sharing that narrative type (Honkasilta et al., 2016). The use of narrative types, rather than descriptions of individual life stories, can overcome the possible idiographic character of the biographical research.

Results: Three types of biographical learning

During the process of remembering and reflecting upon their biographies, the narrators are faced with an abundance of material in their memory. The biographicity of the learning is present in the narratives when the narrators anchor the point of view of the narration in the present moment: “And what I remember to this day was just a terrible trauma for me...” (narrator Mnema). The selection of the expression “to this day” connects the past experience with the present.

The memories presented in the narrations are episodes from the narrators’ life stories and contain biographical experiences. Biographical experiences are part of the biographical material – or even the whole, as some scholars claim. From among all the life experiences to which they have access through memory, narrators choose which ones they will talk about. This choice is made in relation to the topic of the interview. The process of storytelling is thus socially shaped and co-created by the presence of other people who listen. Therefore, we can never have a pure, unbiased idea of the content of biography. Because the biography emerges from memory through telling or writing, it always has to be narrated.

First, I identified biographical experiences as events from the biography of the narrators within their narrations. Those experiences were subsequently thematically analysed to find their central theme. In this way, three main categories of biographical experiences were revealed: (1) educational experiences, (2) familial experiences, and (3) work life experiences. This article focuses on just one: educational experiences – the narrators’ memories of education that have a more direct link to the narrative assignment to tell the story of their educational trajectory. In their accounts, the narrators move through different school levels. The structure of their narration about each of those stages depends on how strong the memories are and/or how strong the experiences’ influence on biography was. An example of remembering educational biographical experiences in different intensities can be taken from the following narration:

Then came elementary school. I think I was not able to perceive the time before the fifth grade, the first to fourth grade – we all learn to read and write, but I have no one there who I might miraculously remember. I admit that when I meet a teacher who is still alive, I like to say hello to her, I like to spend some time with her, but it’s more polite like “I’m glad you’re doing well.” Sometimes we reminisce about something, but there’s not much to remember. Then it was the fifth grade, there are some memories of, on the one hand, there were some relationships by then in that class, and I can even name some specific teachers that I remember to this day, who somehow got stuck in my life. (narrator Alectrona)

On the other hand, some narrators refer to their previous educational experiences more indirectly, connecting them with their current study experiences. They talk about them without exactly describing them; they do not start from the beginning but from the end – their university studies:

So that was the field (laughs) that I applied for [to university] because I actually graduated almost during the time of totalitarianism, when we actually had a completely different education structure and other subjects and everything, so it was probably the most difficult for me prepare for those entrance exams at all. (narrator Calliope)

Narrators choose a specific and distinctive way of selecting the experiences from their memories and ordering them in the narration. By doing so, they are transforming the initial narrative question – to imagine a book about their educational trajectory – into a personal story about the experiences that are for them meaningfully related to this trajectory. The selection and subsequent transformation of the experiences can be reflected in the structure of the narration: its form, its flow, and its architecture. In the way the narrators relate to those past experiences selected from their memories, we can distinguish three types of travel via narration; this travelling occurs by connecting the biographical experiences. Various biographical experiences from different times are connected through historical and biographical time and space; we can thus speak of travelling through the time of the narration. The event itself is less important than the new meaning afforded to it. Meaning is given by how the narrator selects and aligns various experiences. This construction can be done in three different ways that constitute three different types of travelling via narration. They are “types” in the meaning of “ideal narrative types” and their names symbolically describe the process that is performed (analogy or audit) or used directly by the respondents (authority).

Learning by analogy

The first type of travelling in time via narration is learning by analogy. It occurs when two different events from a biography, distinct in time, are connected by creating an analogy between them in the narration. The narrator was not aware of this link before and they are thus learning something new about their identity, both biographically (through recalling the experiences) and narratively (by storytelling and reconstructing them). In the narrator Mnema’s story, the analogy was created to understand a specific experience for which she did not initially have a prepared explanation:

They were still admitting students to medical college, so I applied there. I did it quite enthusiastically, but as soon as the rehearsal period was approaching, I backed out...I just couldn't.... I do not know why. To, to.... That was kind of when I had.... I think that I had set myself up – because I never really had to study. Because

I just remembered things and I enjoyed it, and even if I had to buckle down and study for a test, no-o. I just couldn't do it and I got stubborn that I wouldn't be doing it. (...) so I got stubborn and decided to go abroad.

In this part of the narration, two distinct experiences, A and B, are intertwined. In the first experience (A), the narrator talks about her first experience with tertiary education when she applied to a medical college and faced the entrance exams and the fact she could not study for them.

(A) *They were still admitting students to medical college, so I applied there. I did it quite enthusiastically, but as soon as the rehearsal period was approaching, I switched myself out...I just couldn't.... I do not know why.*

Experience B concerns the high school exam period and the fact she did not study for the tests there either.

(B) *I think that I had set myself up – because I never really had to study. Because I just remembered things and I enjoyed it, and even if I had to buckle down and study for a test, no-o. I just couldn't do it and I got stubborn that I wouldn't be doing it. (...) so I got stubborn and decided to go abroad.*

The narrator first stated she did not know why she could not study for the entrance exams. However, as she continued to talk more about that specific experience (A) and linked it with another experience from the past (B), she suddenly discovered the explanation for experience A. In trying to find an explanation for what happened, the narrator actively linked the fact she never had to study in school during the previous educational stages and put it together with the narrated experience of studying for university exams. By creating this new connection between two experiences from different times, the narrator learned something new about herself, about one part of her learning identity. She was not consciously aware of that connection in the biography at the moment she decided to talk about it, as she claimed: "I don't know why." This moment was also a significant turning point in her life, as she chose not to continue studying at that college and travelled abroad to become an au pair instead of studying to become a nurse (at the medical college). This change later created a break in her formal educational trajectory, resulting in her becoming a non-traditional student.

Learning by authority

The second type of biographical learning is when the narrators' experiences are linked to the present day. The narrators become aware of the effect of their past and reflect upon it during storytelling. The influence is intertwined into the biography and their narrative identity, i.e., the presence can also be depicted later on in the narration. The narrators explicitly use the word "influence," as for example the narrator Lethe in explaining how her story was very strongly shaped by her French language teacher at high school even after his presence in her life story ended:

It probably starts with the fact that when I was in high school, I was very influenced by the professor, my professor of French, and ah, in the last year, I was deciding whether to go to study at the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Education. (...). Ah, so my professor told me, and that was probably the key sentence, as it all happens there, that he hoped that I would go into the arts one and not go to the Faculty of Education. And I didn't take it as derogatory at all, not at all, maybe he wanted to let me know that I could do more, or I don't know, but I was 17 at the time and still had no experience and didn't know and listened to the authorities, and so on, so it started when I started applying to the Faculty of Arts and it took me four years to get to the Faculty of Arts in (name of the city), and ah I functioned there for two years, then I couldn't handle it.

The biographical experience is shaped by the influence of a teacher who was perceived as an authority and this influence persisted in other educational experiences in the narrator's life story, i.e., in her whole educational trajectory. We can therefore speak of learning by authority, which creates a red line going from that experience throughout the subsequent narration. This type of learning was also very important in shaping the whole educational trajectory of the narrator Nephele:

Well, basically, so I could, I could start from elementary school, because these are the people who have shaped my educational trajectory in some way. When we had an amazing teacher – who was able to convert also a boring subject, -who taught us civics when I was in um elementary school. (...) And to get up

there, I somehow remarked that I would like to be a teacher too. And that, therefore, my educational trajectory was predicted in advance that I will probably want to be a teacher too.

Here the influence of the teacher's authority was converted into the desire to become a teacher. Later in her story, a similar experience happens with another teacher who influences the choice of the subject of teaching. This study therefore suggests that learning can multiply in the narration and does not appear independently, as shown in the next and last type of biographical learning.

Learning by audit

The third type of biographical learning found in the narratives occurs when the narrator is analysing the past experiences with the current biographical knowledge containing all the experiences that came afterwards. The lens of the present is applied to the past experiences, the movement is thus opposite than the previous type where we were dealing with the influence of the past on the present day.

The narrator Peitha started her story by stating that she always knew that she would become a teacher. But her statement did not stand alone. She analyses all her experiences with this in mind – from her current position as a kindergarten teacher – and interprets all previous experiences through this lens. She thinks that she is a good teacher and compares herself to others she has seen. The narrator attributes the power of performing a didactical analysis of the comportment of teachers to herself in kindergarten – it is not very probable she really had this competence as a child of 3 to 6 years old, or at least not consciously as described in the life story:

So, if I imagine my book, I would definitely start with kindergarten. Where I already knew as a little girl which teacher taught me well and which didn't. Where it suited me and where it didn't.

Then elementary school – second grade, because I don't remember the first grade much. Right away, I knew what was wrong there, too – I understood it exactly as a child, and I still remember it.

Um, I was in second grade when the Velvet Revolution was a turning point, so I experienced the way the teachers shifted there, but it was still the old ways.

And then definitely a high school that didn't give me anything at all, even though it was... Secondary pedagogical school, so I was again in the grasp of teachers who couldn't teach at the time. And then I was so disgusted by the education, and I actually felt it didn't matter at all.

So, I started working, I was a kindergarten teacher, where several people independently (inspectors and principals) told me that I was good at what I was doing and that I was doing it right, even though I was a young beginning teacher.

When the narrator puts her experiences into the narration, it helps her to give them meaning and thus construct the picture of her (professional) narrative identity. This type of learning can bring narrators a deeper understanding of what their biographical experiences are, why the experiences happened as they did, and how they are linked to the identity of the narrator.

Conclusions and discussion

This text showed that the study of narrated biographies in adult education research by applying learning theories to live accounts can help understand how, whether, and what people learn from their biographies. In the theoretical contribution, this article distinguished the biographicity within biographical learning, added the dimension of narrativity as its counterpart, and linked those with different accents existing with the biographical learning perspectives. The argument that biographicity corresponds to the content of learning was also made by Illeris (2007).

Within this biographical learning framework are theoretical studies concerned with describing the placement of this concept among other learning theories or concepts (e.g. lifelong learning, Alheit & Dausien, 2002; Hallqvist, 2014) or concentrating on one of its dimensions – biographicity (Alheit, 2021) or narrativity (Goodson et al., 2010). There are also empirical studies that use the biographical learning perspective

as a conceptual framework. Their results provide knowledge not directly about learning, but about e.g., identity formation and biographical work (Bron & Thunborg, 2017), biographical transitions (Hallqvist, 2012), and biographical ageing (Malec-Rawinski, 2021). There have not yet been studies focused specifically on the learning aspects of biographical learning; previous studies concentrated more on the biographical part of biographical learning. This research has contributed to this previous knowledge with a view of the nature of learning processes – how we learn when narrating our biographies.

There are some studies within biographical research (and also beyond) with which this research can enter in discussion. Thunborg and Bron (2019, p. 36) identified constant transition and recurrent formation in non-traditional students' narrations. Recurrent formation appears when the narrators are "returning to well-known paths in life and learning reactively by reflecting on experiences" (p. 36). This reactive reflection on experiences can be likened to the directions of movement in learning by analogy and learning by audit. Constant transition, on the other hand, refers to "a constant focus on what is next in life and a constant commuting between reactive and proactive learning" (p. 36) and the proactive movement can be compared to learning by authority. Other scholars see storytelling as transformative learning (Tyler & Schwartz, 2012).

If we return to Jarvis's statement that "our experience is not a mirror image of the external world; we perceive the world and thereby select from it those things that are relevant to our biographical development" (Jarvis, 2006, p. 72), we can say that the way the narrators select experiences and give them new meaning in their narration is crucial for their personal development, their educational trajectories, and their lives. On the other hand, Bruner's (1991) concern was not how the narrative as text is constructed, but how it operates as an instrument of the mind in the construction of a reality that was also reflected in the narrative analysis. This study used the structure of narrative to come to the meaning of experiences for the identity of the narrator. It revealed that the learners can reconstruct their identities by reconstructing their biographical experiences and thus learning from them. To sum up, this article showed that the two dimensions, biographical and narrative, are interconnected: biography (the content of learning) is used to learn about ourselves by making new structures in it (the process of learning).

In the setting of a biographical narrative interview, the narrators in this research presented meaningful biographical experiences that were crucial for the development of their educational trajectories. Those experiences were in their nature either educational, familial, or work-life related. For a deeper and more focused analysis, this article concentrated on one: the experiences primarily related to education. Investigating students' educational biographies helps them understand the interdependence of education and biography (Merrill & Alheit, 2004). Dominicé (2000, p. 102) stated that “educational biographies reveal that each adult has a frame of reference, a way of thinking, a cohesiveness that can be understood as a type of structure of interpretation” but did not specify what those structures look like. In another article (Brücknerová et al., 2020) we identified what types of educational trajectories non-traditional students travel before arriving to current university studies. The present contribution has added how they can learn from those educational experiences.

The narrators gave meaning to their experiences when they placed them in a meaningful order in their life stories and interpreted them. However, this study has shown that the narrators do not present the experiences separately, one after another. The narrative analysis revealed that those experiences are intertwined. In adding another experience, the narrators discover new, previously unseen meanings. It is therefore possible to talk about the learning process that was referred to as travelling in time via narration. When it comes to travelling in time via narration, Andrews (2014, p. 3) also used this expression in connection with narrative imagination in our everyday lives, stating that “we constantly move backward and forward in our mind's eye.” Biographical scholars have also noted such movements (Merrill & West, 2009). This study clarified the character of those movements by revealing three qualitatively different types of learning that go on in narration: learning by analogy, learning by authority, and learning by audit. However, this is a typology of learning and not a typology of learners; different types of learning can therefore occur in the same narration.

How do those types relate to each other? In the narration, the first type of travelling can be framed as learning by creating a new connection

between two distinct and distant past experiences. In learning by analogy, the experiences are compared to one to another, creating an analogy between the two experiences. The other two types of travelling go to previous experiences while keeping one foot in the present. However, the directions of the narrator's movements in the second and third types are opposite. In the second type, learning by authority, the direction is from the experience to the present; it is prospective. It involves the influence of a past experience on the present day. The third type, learning by audit, is a retrospective movement, looking at a past experience through the lens of the present.

The results of this study suggest that the use of stories can be beneficial for enhancing learning for non-traditional students in higher education institutions. As mentioned by Goodson et al. (2010, p. 2), "it is only in more exceptional circumstances that we engage deliberately in narrative construction in order to learn from it." However, there are some records of programmes that focus on autobiographical work of adults in education (Dominicé, 2000; Van Houten, 1998; Rossiter & Clark, 2007). Alterio and McDrury (2003) dedicated a text to learning through storytelling specifically in higher education settings. Also, Lohr and Hayley (2018) successfully used and analysed the possibilities of biographical prompts in an online graduate course with adult learners. The present study indicates that the biographical narrative method could be used initially for determining and evaluating the prior experiences of non-traditional students coming to higher education. Next, it can enhance their learning and make their experiences consciously meaningful. In the sample of this study – students in education degree programmes – biographical learning is crucial for enabling them to explore and shine more light on how they were shaped by their educational trajectory in order not to let those influences unintentionally and unconsciously influence their teaching praxis. This can be seen both as an important goal for teaching education programs and as an emancipatory goal typifying adult education and resulting in the liberation from the constraints made by the education system on individual biographies.

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The predicted growth of the aged care sector in Australia, driven by the ageing population, is expected to create an increasing need for workplaces to support the development for all kinds and classifications of workers to undertake their work within multicultural settings. This paper describes and elaborates the necessary and increasing requirement for workplaces to support adult learning in multicultural circumstances. A mixed methods approach was used to collect data from workers undertaking the role of carer in residential aged care facilities across the east coast of Australia. Arising from the collection and analysis of these data are contributions to knowledge including a conceptual model for understanding learning in multicultural settings. This research emphasizes a notion that cultural diversity has a fundamental influence on workplace learning in aged care and identifies practices to support cross-cultural communication, co-working and learning. Further, inter-worker learning is reinforced as a key enabler of performance in aged care work. Such contributions help to understand what influences workplace learning in multicultural settings and how it may be better supported.

Keywords: *adult learning, workplace learning, cross-cultural learning, multicultural team learning, learning in aged care*

Learning in multicultural workspaces: a case of aged care

To be responsive now and to prepare for the future, Australian workplaces need to recognize and address the demands of complex multicultural teams, as these work groups are increasingly becoming common elements of the national labour force (Levey, 2019). This concern is especially the case for aged care, where matters such as meeting the needs of an ageing population and patterns of immigration have led to such teams caring for elderly Australians. This research project aims to identify what influences, and how to improve, workplace performance and learning in multicultural teams and workplace settings. Its unique contribution is to illuminate how working and learning within culturally diverse workplaces can be optimised to improve the capability of individuals and groups to perform their work effectively through collective processes.

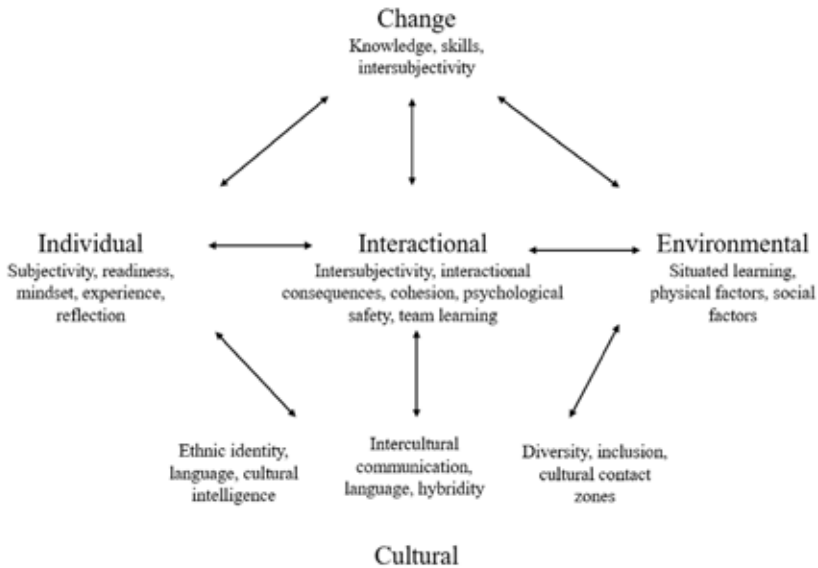
Summary of literary contributions and conceptual model for learning

A range of contributions have been identified in the literature to advance the proposition that workplace learning in multicultural team environments is influenced by four key factors. First, workplace learning is a process that involves individual attributes that include readiness (Billett, 2015), mindset (Dweck, 2015), and reflective practice (Schön, 1983). These personally subjective processes impact how workers adapt their knowledge and skills to respond to new situations. Second, learning is influenced by the environment that workers occupy and in which they are engaged (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Both social and spatial cognition affect how workers learn at an individual and group level (Rutten & Boekema, 2012). Third, learning occurs through interaction with other workers. The shared understanding, referred to as intersubjectivity in the literature (Billett, 2014b), is reached through co-working and is affected by factors such as psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018) and cohesion (Salas, Estrada, & Vessey, 2015). Fourth, individuals' cultural background and premises (i.e., ethnicity and language) influence learning because they shape individual

dispositions (Wyer, Chiu, & Hong, 2009) and cross-cultural interaction (Kroeber, 1963) and create the diverse environment (Triandis, 1996). Workers learn through practices that are shaped by these key factors, causing them to construe, process, and practise new knowledge and skills in particular ways.

These factors are presented in this paper as a conceptual model for learning depicted here as Figure 1.

Figure 1 A foundation for understanding learning in multicultural teams at work



The conceptual model proposes that learning is shaped by three central factors: (a) the individuals, (b) their interaction, and (c) the social and physical environment, placed at the horizontal centre of the figure. These central factors all interrelate with culture, which is placed at the bottom of the model. Ultimately, these central factors and their interrelationship with cultural factors shape the type of change (i.e., learning), which is positioned at the top of the model. This model is explanatory in three ways. First, it informs the responses to the first research question by depicting what influences these workers' learning. Second, it provides a consistent framework for the methodology,

procedural design, and data analysis of this research. Third, it represents a key contribution of this research as a model for learning in multicultural workplaces that may be applied to other contexts. The latter is discussed further in the section of this paper that advances the contributions to knowledge. The main themes from the literature represented in this conceptual model also provide a framework for understanding the workplace context: aged care.

A case of aged care

The aged care sector in Australia is a particularly compelling workplace context for this study of adult learning, for four reasons. First, it is a context in which diverse subjectivities are at play. Literature related to aged care indicates that learning is especially complex because workers represent varying subjectivities, vocational readiness, and cultural perspectives (Almutari et al, 2022; Bonner; 2017; Crozier, 2021; Xiao et al, 2021). Second, the aged care environment is one that is socially and spatially unique. It is a home to residents, a workplace to carers, a clinic to health professionals, and a respite for families, plus it is a cultural contact zone to all. Third, the requirement for workers to interact with both their work and co-workers is especially demanding. They must meet the demands of residents, their families, supervisors, and co-workers, all whilst dealing with a broad spectrum of work-related tasks. Fourth, the aged care sector relies heavily on the recruitment of migrant workers to work and learn alongside Australian counterparts and clients. As a sector, it represents an opportunity to contribute further understanding of learning in multicultural workplaces now and in the future.

Research Focus

There is a growing imperative to illuminate the needs of those working and learning in multicultural aged care environments and how their learning might be improved to meet the growing challenges of aged care. This imperative is addressed by a main aim of this study, which is to illuminate how workers learn in multicultural team environments. Three research questions guided the actioning and realization of this project more specifically:

1. What are the key factors that influence learning for performance

in multicultural team work environments?

2. How do these factors support and/or hinder this learning?
3. How should learning support and guidance be enacted in a multicultural workplace?

These research questions were addressed, in part, through specific contributions from the literature suggesting that learning in multicultural teams is primarily influenced by individual, interactional, environmental, and cultural factors. These factors were further elaborated through the analysis of data collected directly from workers in aged care facilities.

Method

A mixed methods approach is used to gather both quantitative and, to a greater extent, qualitative data from these worksites. There were two main instruments of data collection which gathered three distinct sets of data. These are briefly summarised here in Table 1.

Table 1 Overview of methods for data collection

Instrument	Informants	Data set	Research question focus
Questionnaire	102 carers from 23 facilities across 2 organisations	1. Quantitative 2. Qualitative	1 and 2
Case study	7 carers, and the General Manager from 1 facility plus Group Head of Learning and Development	3. Qualitative	2 and 3

As shown in the left-hand column of Table 1, there were two instruments of data collection used in this research. The first, a questionnaire, produced two sets of data including quantitative characteristics of workers (e.g., age, ethnicity, and years of experience) and qualitative comments from workers (e.g., perceptions of learning and co-working). There were 102 questionnaire respondents from 23 worksites of two different aged care chains: Senior Care and Elder Care. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of these organisations. The second instrument, a case study of one of these worksites, was formulated by capturing general facility information and, more importantly, interviews with its workers. These interviews included seven carers, the General Manager, and the Group Head of Learning and Development.

The two instruments and three data sets presented in Table 1 were analysed according to the evidence-based practices espoused by Creswell (2018), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017), and Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis enabled findings to be carefully identified due to the consistent preparation, exploration, representation, and interpretation of the three sets of data. Primarily, univariate analysis was conducted and, to a lesser extent, some bivariate and multivariate analysis occurred as well. The data analysis approach was similar for both sets of qualitative data (i.e., the questionnaire and the case study interviews) where the open-ended responses were extracted from the survey and the recordings, organised according to question type and analysed using a thematic analysis approach. In this research, coding and categorisation was decided based on repetition of themes, correlations to literature, the learning model, and if the participants emphasised the importance of a certain factor.

Findings

Through the analyses of the survey and case study data, some key findings have emerged about learning in multicultural aged care workplaces. These findings include specific deductions about how learning is influenced by individual, interactional, environmental and cultural factors. Further, this research illuminated how those factors hindered and enabled adult learning, and how it should be supported in these workplaces.

Individual factors

It was found that workplace learning is directly affected by the learners' individual influences such as their readiness (Billett, 2015), mindset (Dweck, 2015), and experience (Kolb, 1984). The notion of subjectivity (Billett, 2010) is illuminated by the quantitative data indicating that, generally, these carers tend to be older (i.e., 40+ years), experienced in aged care (i.e., 3+ years) and highly diverse (i.e. 50%+ born overseas).

Importantly, the data suggest that the positive expression by carers of kindness, respect, patience, tolerance, and empathy for others (i.e., care disposition) supports their individual readiness to learn and practise care work. It is perhaps unsurprising that an enabler of effective care

work is the personal tendency towards a caring disposition. However, an unexpected insight from the interviews and survey was that not all these carers express this tendency. It was also found that ineffective individual attitudes to work, including lack of commitment, effort, openness to learning, positivity, flexibility, and resilience (i.e., co-working values) further hindered their learning. However, environmental factors may have played a role. Such complex, disrupted, and understaffed work environments make it difficult for carers to approach new tasks with an open and positive attitude. So, aged care facilities could consider how to better support carers' resilience to respond positively and professionally to these circumstances. Learning is also hindered in aged care when carers' disposition towards peers is not aligned with effective co-working. The data illuminated instances where prejudice limited an openness to different perspectives. To address this issue, carers require support to learn to be more inclusive. Examples from the data include education focussing on appreciation of the diverse working environment, recognising cultural differences, and adapting to those differences. Such actions are likely to enhance the co-working behaviours in this research as an integral element of workplace learning. These behaviours also point to findings about interactional factors that influence learning in aged care.

Interactional factors

The informants' workplace learning is reported to be directly shaped by the interactional influences of the learner, including intersubjectivity (Billett, 2014b), psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018), and cohesion (Salas et al., 2015). For instance, the data indicated that ineffective listening, bullying, and avoidance of English are key barriers.

A key finding from analyses of the quantitative survey data is that the highly interactive characteristic of this work is a factor that positively supports learning in and through the conduct of aged care work. This support is made apparent by data indicating that the tasks carers find the most collaborative are also the ones they find the easiest to do. The quantitative data also suggest that carers learn more from those in the same role (i.e., other carers) than from anyone else at work. This finding is valuable because it emphasizes the vital practice of acquiring new or enhanced skills and knowledge through observation, guidance,

training, and buddying whilst undertaking work (i.e., inter-worker learning). The qualitative accounts of carers indicate that inter-worker learning is enhanced both when guidance is offered and sought, because it relies on the two-way exchange of information focussing on what the less experienced carer seeks to understand as well as what the more experienced carer intends to explain. To enhance that, aged care organisations could seek to optimise opportunities for buddying approaches, including wider support for carers to practise buddying effectively (e.g., more buddy training) and the introduction of a language buddy system in multicultural teams. The latter initiative would also support English language usage, if the buddy was a competent English speaker and could communicate effectively with somebody who was not.

Another key finding related to learning through interaction is the need for all members of multicultural teams to consistently use English to enable effective communication. Some carers avoid English usage at work by speaking to compatriots in their mother tongue; this was shown to exclude others from important moments of collaborative co-working and learning. Further, accents were found to be a barrier to shared understanding when co-carers learn and practise new tasks. Intersubjectivity (i.e., shared understanding) is further inhibited when carers are not considerate of their clarity, pace, or how they listen during verbal interactions. So, English language usage by all workers, including those who speak it as a first language, is a key element of intercultural working and learning (especially listening).

Beyond language use, interaction is also restricted in these workplaces by a lack of 'cross-cultural habitude'. This explanatory term is defined through this research as the habitual tendency and disposition (i.e., habitude) towards co-working situations with peers or residents in a multicultural setting. This practical inquiry found that inclusive work practices decrease when carers prioritise interaction with same-language speakers over those using other languages. Further, carers claim that some peers are less assertive due to their ethnic background, whilst others are not open to working with people from other cultures. It was found that these factors may lead to instances of bullying, conflict, miscommunication, and impaired psychological safety. Such issues constrain workplace learning, because the interactions and shared problem-solving that comprise key learning opportunities are inhibited (Edmondson, 2018). So, to support workplace interaction and learning,

aged care environments could provide the time, management support, and education for carers to overcome such issues. These affordances are included in the following discussion of findings related to the learning environment.

Environmental factors

This investigation found that workplace learning is directly affected by the environment that workers occupy and engage in due to the effects of social and spatial cognition (Rutten & Boekema, 2012). A key insight found in the quantitative data is that, with over 50% of respondents born overseas, these cohorts are likely to be more culturally and linguistically diverse than the typical Australian aged care facility residents, and much more than the general working environment.

Such diversity presents a range of challenges for workplace learning that may be reduced if greater inclusivity is promoted and practised in these environments. Specifically, this practical inquiry found that the physical and social environment can hinder cross-cultural habitude when shift schedules cause clustering of carers from similar ethnic backgrounds. This practice was reported to cause a decrease in trust and effective communication in the wider team. Such communication is further affected due to the wearing of face masks which were found to constrain accent clarity and comprehension, thus reducing the quality and speed of shared understanding (i.e., intersubjectivity). To address these challenges, a range of practical considerations are advanced in this paper including the kinds of educational affordances able to mediate these concerns. However, first, it is helpful to advance other findings related to the learning environment.

The Covid-19 pandemic occurred during the data collection phase of this research project. Fortuitously, the pandemic provided an opportunity to illuminate how the learning environment is impacted by such disruption. Although quantitative findings suggest that the pandemic generated much new learning for carers, it became apparent that it also hindered how they learnt new ways of working. This hindrance was due to the poor availability of and access to co-workers and time needed to enable effective resident care. Illness and mandated close contact rules caused staff to be absent and shifts to be understaffed. Like other areas of health and social care (Twigg, Gelder, & Myers, 2015), this

understaffing reportedly reduced opportunities for the inter-worker contact that is crucial for workplace learning of carers. Further, the lack of available PPE hindered the ability of carers to engage in new ways of working safely and effectively. This challenging environment impeded learning further due to a lack of supervisor involvement during busy times. The pandemic also restricted access of residents' families who were considered to be a helpful source of new and improved care practices for residents. The carers reported that the important contribution that residents' families make in learning and improving care practices was now largely absent. In addition to ensuring people, time, and resource provision, aged care environments could focus on management and resident support to enhance workplace practices that support learning. Further, additional educational affordances provided by the environment intended to drive the learning and development of carers, including training, courses, and information updates were also found to be necessary here and these are outlined in the practical considerations section of this paper.

In sum, the practical enquiries permitted key propositions about learning in multicultural teams to be identified and advanced and these emphasize how the complex of individual, interactional, environmental, and cultural factors influence learning. They point to some contributions to knowledge that reinforce key themes in the literature, suggesting new considerations about this phenomenon. These contributions are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

There are three key deductions arising from this investigation that are described and elaborated in this paper. These findings relate directly to the aged care working context, which are listed here and then discussed.

1. The conceptualisation that culture is a fundamental influencing factor of workplace learning in aged care due to its higher than average cultural and linguistic diversity.
2. The identification of practices to support communication and cross-cultural habitude for more effective learning in multicultural settings.

3. The reinforcement of inter-worker learning as a key enabler of performance in aged care work.

First, cultural and linguistic diversity is advanced here as a fundamental influencing factor of workplace learning in aged care. As identified in the literature and further reinforced by the quantitative data of this research, the level of cultural and linguistic diversity in the Australian aged care sector is considerably higher than in most Australian workplaces (2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report, 2021). Therefore, learning and co-working are much more likely to be impacted by cultural differences compared to other factors. As was advanced through the review of the literature, there is an interplay amongst culture and the individual, interactional, and environmental factors that influence learning. This interplay has been illuminated in this research by the characteristics, perceptions, and experiences shared by carers. For example, these informants reported that prejudiced views inhibit openness to different perspectives that may hinder effective workplace learning. Further, language use, especially accent and comprehension, has been shown to constrain interactions when carers learn new tasks. The data suggest that, when the environment is not supportive of cross-cultural habitude, workplace learning is restricted. This occurs if there is an absence of role modelling by leaders, cultural training, and scheduling of diverse shift cohorts. So, in contexts as diverse as those included in this inquiry, cultural forces are an embedded and important aspect of how carers learn as individuals (e.g., due to readiness and subjectivity) through interaction (e.g., by reaching a shared understanding) within a diverse and complex physical and social environment.

A second contribution of this research is the identification of practices to support communication and cross-cultural habitude for more effective learning in multicultural settings. These practices are illuminated and advanced through the qualitative data and are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 Practices to support multicultural co-working

Cross-cultural habitude	Communication practices
Appreciating a multicultural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of inclusivity - Benefits of diverse teams 	Communicating in a diverse environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening, clarification, and comprehension - Confidence reticence
Recognising differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customs and traditions - Patterns of work behaviour, e.g., cultural dimensions theory 	Vocabulary and English language usage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation of word usage in a diverse environment, e.g., avoidance of jargon - Common English language expressions in care situations - Health and age care specific vocabulary (vocational literacy)
Adapting to differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural and emotional intelligence 	Communication aides (resources) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apps - pictures/visuals

As shown in the left-hand column of Table 3, practices to support cross-cultural habitude include appreciating a multicultural environment (e.g., its benefits and qualities), recognising differences (e.g., customs, traditions, and approaches to work), and adapting to differences (e.g., with cultural and emotional intelligence). Practices to support communication, as shown in the right-hand column, include communicating in a diverse environment (e.g., listening, clarification, and overcoming reticence), adaptation of vocabulary (e.g., limiting jargon to health and care specific expressions), and use of communication aides (e.g., apps and images). Identifying these practices is a potentially important contribution of this research because they can be incorporated into the design of specific educational affordances provided by aged care workplaces. Central to this proposition is that if training is provided to carers to reflect on and learn these practices, they are more likely to work to achieve the shared understanding (i.e., intersubjectivity) that is essential for collaborative work such as aged care. Educational affordances are further discussed as practical considerations in the next part of this paper.

Third, this research has emphasized the valuable role of what is referred to in this paper as inter-worker learning, that is, the intended or unintended practice of acquiring new or enhanced skills and knowledge through observation, guidance, training, and buddying whilst undertaking work. This research reinforces contributions to the literature claiming that workplace learning is supported by interaction with others due to mimesis (Billett, 2014a), intersubjectivity (Billett,

2014b), and interactional consequences (Filliettaz, Durand, & Trébert, 2015). A consistent theme arising across the three data sets of this research is that inter-worker learning is a valuable, perhaps essential, requirement for carers to acquire and grow the skills they need to effectively perform their work. More specifically, it has been advanced that inter-worker learning can be positively influenced by co-working practices (i.e., behaviours that demonstrate teamwork when working with others, including openness to working with others, the offering of help to co-workers, and the acceptance of help from others) and staffing and time provision (i.e., the availability of workers and allowable time needed to enable effective resident care). So, aged care workplaces should support such practices and provisions.

In sum, through the practical enquiries and consideration of relevant literature this paper advances three contributions to knowledge. These contributions may be applied as concepts within future workplace learning approaches (e.g., training topics for enhancing cross-cultural habitude), and aged care policy (e.g., use of PPE) and practices. To support the application of these contributions, some practical considerations are discussed in the next section.

Practical considerations

The findings and deductions described above point to ways that the aged care sector and other multicultural workplaces can refine existing approaches and embed new ones to enhance workplace learning. These approaches are summarised here as the following seven practical considerations:

1. Assess care disposition as part of pre-employment processes
2. Revitalise inter-worker learning
3. Increase live interactive learning
4. Support learning of cross-cultural habitude and communication processes
5. Provide guidance to leaders of multicultural teams
6. Consider the constraint to workplace learning caused by the use of PPE in future risk assessment and policy revision

7. Increase people and time provision.

First, the care disposition of potential new carers should be better assessed as part of pre-employment approaches. This characteristic was identified as the expression of carers' kindness, respect, patience, tolerance, and empathy for residents and co-workers. It is proposed that care disposition is a fundamental requirement for effective working and learning in aged care, and that it is not a characteristic that is easily acquired through educational interventions per se. Rather, it is something that is learnt and that arises through modelling and personal disposition. So, the readiness of carers to express "care" could be determined before they are required to perform in such roles. This topic might, therefore, have greater focus during recruitment and onboarding activities of new carers.

Second, organisational approaches to inter-worker learning might be revitalised to optimise their impact. Survey and interview data reveal that these approaches are a key enabler of performance in multicultural teams. Carers claim to acquire most new or enhanced skills and knowledge through observation, guidance, training, and buddying whilst working alongside others. To revitalise approaches to inter-worker learning, workplaces could enhance buddying practices by offering them beyond the onboarding period and in multiple sections of the facility and by supporting communication through a language buddy system. Rostering approaches might also be adapted to ensure that buddy shifts are proactively scheduled, that there is a deliberate mix of experience levels, and that guidelines for calling in sick are clear and consistent. Group meetings were shown through this research to be an important source of inter-worker learning, so it is suggested here that the quality and quantity of these should increase. To do this, the data point to a need for longer and more disciplined shift handovers where openness and curiosity are encouraged. A final practical implication to revitalise inter-worker learning is to capture and share peer experiences on video as an efficient way to harvest the high levels of experience possessed by these carers.

Third, consideration might be given to increasing live interactive learning as part of a blended educational approach. Carers in this research described that much online learning is available to them; however, they felt that what they learned from this modality was limited.

The data suggest that face-to-face workshops would have been more effective than the e-learning modules that were heavily relied on during training about pandemic-related changes. So, these workplaces could consider more interactive learning modalities to meet the needs of carers, especially to support learning that relates to interactions with others, such as cross-cultural habitude and communication practices.

Fourth, workplaces could consider how best to support learning of cross-cultural habitude and communication practices. To address this learning, a topical framework for learning could incorporate aspects of these practices. Cross-cultural habitude should focus on appreciating a diverse environment, recognising differences, adapting approaches, and providing culturally appropriate care. Communication practices should include listening, overcoming reticence (i.e., building confidence), English language usage, and situation-specific support (including communicating in PPE gear and with diverse resident cohorts). The development of this educational affordance should leverage the many learning resources made available by official aged care agencies and government such as the CaLD Assist translation app and communication cards.

Fifth, as leadership of multicultural work teams can be quite demanding, greater consideration might be directed towards preparing workers for these roles. Management support emerged as a theme in this research that influences learning in multicultural environments. To help embed new cross-cultural and inter-worker learning practices, the managers of these diverse teams require the support to lead them. Those leaders include Registered Nurses plus the General, Clinical, and Care Managers. It is, therefore, proposed that additional guidance is provided to those roles in aged care, in two ways. First, leaders could take part in the same cross-cultural learning interventions described above, ideally before carers do so, and be encouraged to role model the cross-cultural habitude and communication practices espoused in those learning topics. An important first step in improving the cross-cultural habitude of aged care workers is to support leaders to be able to practise it themselves. Second, leaders could be provided with learning support to facilitate group meetings in a way that allows for social learning. It should centre on encouraging staff to ask questions, raise difficulties, offer solutions, share experiences, and seek feedback. Such feedback is important as it would allow the reshaping of both skills and workplace

practices.

Sixth, this research points to a potentially important practical consideration about the wearing of PPE. The pandemic presented an opportunity to understand how workers learn during disruption. Although carers acquired new ways of working during the Covid-19 crisis, their learning was constrained by the need to wear facemasks and shields. This requirement caused communication barriers during a very challenging and unpredictable time. The differing accents made it even more difficult to understand and be understood. During important workplace learning events, such as the exchange of information between carers, masks reduced the quality and speed at which they reach a shared understanding. Those instances of intersubjectivity are particularly important in health and direct care professions where decision-making needs to be instantaneous (Billett, 2015). Carers claimed there was a need to wear full PPE even when there were no Covid-19 outbreaks or government mandates. Some believed this was unnecessary. This enforcement by the facility, although deemed necessary to protect the safety of residents and staff, hindered learning. So, aged care workplaces, as part of their overarching risk assessment, may incorporate the impact of face masks and shields on learning when revising the PPE policy.

Seventh, aged care organisations might consider how to use their resources more effectively to enable the aforementioned practical considerations to be embedded. This research has illuminated that learning in multicultural workplaces is greatly hindered by understaffing and a consequent lack of time for carers to learn their work effectively. Appropriately staffed shifts will enable carers and leaders to seek and offer the guidance needed to learn new tasks optimally. Inter-worker learning, educational affordances, management support, knowledge application, procedural adherence, co-working practices and, most importantly, resident support are likely to improve when there are enough people and time to engage in such practices. This practical consideration aligns with a major outcome of the RCAC indicating that understaffing represents a weakness in the sector in Australia ("Royal Commission into Aged Care," 2021). People and time provision represents what is, arguably, the most challenging yet promising practical consideration for workplace learning in aged care. The

considerations described in this section have pointed to some immediate practical areas of focus for aged care organisations; however, there is still much to understand about learning in multicultural workplaces.

Limitations and Further Research

This paper has illuminated that learning in multicultural workplaces is influenced by individual, interactional, environmental, and cultural factors. These factors were depicted in the conceptual model for learning and were first identified in the literature and findings elaborated by the data. This model has been a valuable foundation for the presentation of the three contributions to knowledge and seven practical considerations discussed in this paper. So, research presented in this paper has produced insights that may be helpful for those working in and leading aged care teams. However, broader and deeper research is required to address the challenges in aged care and to further illuminate this phenomenon.

The data collection phase of this research occurred during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, there were a range of limitations placed on the method for collection and the available data that could be gathered. Strict facility lockdowns prevented on-site access for intended site observations and multiple interviews. Availability of staff to participate in the survey and interviews was impacted by understaffing issues at this time. However, a revised case study approach enabled the research to progress with a smaller number of informants. So, an important way to extend this research is to incorporate data from more carers and worksites. The findings presented and discussed in this paper may also be extended and compared with additional data collected from workers in other job roles (e.g., registered nurse) and from aged care workers based in other countries. Case studies of other industries also represent an opportunity to further understand the influences of learning in multicultural workplaces. Nevertheless, this research illuminates some important and valuable findings that may help Australian aged care workplaces to be responsive now and to prepare for the future needs of our ageing population and those who care for them.

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Adult immigrant learners' perspectives of language learning experiences

Merih Ugural Kamisli

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore adult immigrant learners' perspectives and motivations for participating in an ESL program through the lens of McClusky's Theory of Margin. Nine adult immigrant ESL students were interviewed about their learning experiences. Creswell's (1994) systematic process informed the data analysis of the study. The findings of the study include adult immigrant learners' perspectives of the ESL program, the challenges (loads) they face in their daily lives in terms of learning and speaking English, the support system (power) that help them navigate through those difficulties, and their suggestions to improve the learning experiences at the ESL program. Implications of this research for policy, adult educators, curriculum, and program developers are explored.

Keywords: *immigrant ESL learner, adult learners, learner perspective, refugee learners, Theory of Margin*

There has been a growing increase in migration flows in the last decades (OECD, 2020). Migration Report (OECD, 2020) highlights that

globally 271 million people have been living outside of their birthplace. The United States has been one of the main destination countries with around 2 million immigrants arriving in 2019. When the aging population and declining birth rate are considered, the increasing immigrant-origin adult population including their U.S.-born children are anticipated to provide an invaluable asset to the economy as a source of talent and almost all labor force growth in the next twenty years (Batalova & Fix, 2015). Immigrants' cultural capital (Lee, 2013) and various abilities benefit U.S. society's social and economic growth (Larrotta, 2019). According to the policy report the U.S. Census Bureau pooled for 2012-2016, more than half of the 44.3 million foreign-born people residing in the U.S., aged 16 and over have limited English proficiency and do not have a high school degree or any degree comparable. However, the reports indicate that fewer than 1.5 million of them used adult education services. Language learning is an essential part of immigrants' integration into various domains of life (Adamuti-Trache, 2013; Chao, 2020). Adult education programs could benefit many immigrants and refugees in that sense, but the existing system can only meet less than four percent of the current need (McHugh & Doxsee, 2018). Community-based initiatives such as libraries specifically churches have been trying to bridge the gap in language programs as part of their social service for immigrant communities (Durham & Kim, 2019). However, there is still a critical need to support immigrants in literacy, degree completion, or adaptation to the host culture.

Persistence and participation of adult learners with access to language support have been also recurring issues in adult English as a Second Language programs (ESL) (Frye, 1999; Kouritzin, 2000), Adult Basic Education (ABE), or programs for post-secondary education or the workforce (McHugh & Doxsee, 2018; Ouellette-Schramm, 2019). Beder (1991) in his review of adult literacy programs suggests that adult learners can overcome challenges to participation if motivated. Adult education programs need to adapt their teaching methods to better suit the motivations and personal circumstances of adult students. A recent theoretical framework "L2 Motivation Self System" developed by Dörnyei (2005, 2009) assumes that when learners see a difference between their present state and future ideal self (what they want to achieve), or ought to self (what others expect them to achieve), they may be motivated to close perceived gaps and achieve desired outcomes. The

theory of the L2 Motivation Self System conceptualizes motivation as a form of personal growth and development and suggests focusing on the learners' perception of themselves to understand their motivation (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013).

When thinking about what drives adult immigrants to participate in language programs, it is important to remember that they are also trying to learn about and adapt to a new culture, set of norms, and obligations, all while attending classes. McClusky's Theory of Margin (1963) emphasizes adults' need to find an equilibrium between such demands (load) and their coping methods (power) (Biney, 2022). This theory applies to the context of adult immigrant learners as they need to navigate between the load and power aspects of their lives to be successful in learning.

The literature indicates that the investigation of adult immigrant learners' perceptions and experiences in language programs is an important area that deserves more attention (Burns & Roberts, 2010; Chao & Kuntz, 2013; Kisiara, 2021). Research on learner experiences would give voice to underrepresented communities, educate us about their unique needs and motivations for studying English, and help adult educators in improving methods and resources that are informed by learner perspectives (Kisiara, 2022; Merriam, 1998). The current study explored adult immigrant learners' perspectives and experiences in an ESL program in the U.S. Resting on its purpose, the following questions guided the study: 1) What are the adult immigrant learners' experiences of the ESL program? 2) What factors influence immigrant learners' motivation to study and participate in the ESL Program?

Literature review

Immigrants need language skills to secure work and sustain their families, manage everyday tasks like navigating the healthcare system (Kisiara, 2021; Larrotta & Adversario, 2022) or participate in political, social, educational, and environmental realms of life (Burns & Roberts, 2010; Dudley, 2007). Language proficiency is also closely related to sociocultural adjustment and successful integration of immigrants (Dudley, 2007; Kisiara, 2021; Masgoret & Ward, 2006) as improving language skills results in more performance in daily tasks and an increase in intercultural relationships (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

English as a second language (ESL) programs are among the instructional services available to adults who lack literacy, numeracy, or English language skills. These programs serve a diverse population of immigrants including refugees, asylees, displaced workers, or incarcerated people (Schaezel & Young, 2010). Immigrants from all around the world with different languages and cultural backgrounds come to the U.S. with varying levels of English proficiency (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Adult ESL classes are essential for providing a social setting where participants may connect socially and culturally, share experiences, and learn from one another (Larrotta & Adversario, 2022). Institutions and organizations providing social services, church-based programs, community centres, and libraries are among the adult education service providers for immigrants (Larrotta, 2017). Church-based ESL programs refer to mostly Christian programs (Durham & Kim, 2019) where learners do not have to share the same faith or preach but take classes in a church. These programs reach out to those who may be hesitant to participate in more formal or state-sponsored programs (Durham & Kim, 2019).

Theories of motivation and adult learning suggest that people are naturally driven to learn. Thus, motivation issues are the result of dispositional, situational, and structural barriers. Adults will naturally want to learn if these obstacles are eliminated (Ahl, 2006). Obstacles such as unpredictable job schedules and family commitments (McHugh & Doxsee, 2018), inaccessible living environments, and residential mobility (Schafft et al., 2008) impact adult learners' perseverance in education programs. Those considerations also include gender and culture-specific needs or structural barriers such as low-income and transportation issues (Cummin, 1992; Frye, 1999; Schafft et al., 2008).

The cultural environment is also regarded as an important factor in defining and fostering adult learning (Merriam et al., 2007). Adult immigrant learners are highly diverse in terms of their age, country, and language of origin. They try to preserve ties to their original culture while building relationships in a new country. Culturally responsive teaching help educators mediate this challenge by valuing learners' cultures and drawing on their cultural knowledge and life experiences (Rhodes, 2017). The Motivational Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching developed by Ginsberg and Wlodkowski (1999) suggests that culturally responsive teaching increases the motivation of under-

represented learners. The pillars of this framework include establishing inclusion in the classroom by creating a respectful environment, developing a positive attitude toward learning by drawing on learners' experiences and knowledge, enhancing meaning by encouraging reflection, and engendering competence by showing the learners their proficiency. This framework is helpful for adult educators to reflect on their teaching and enhance the motivation of learners. As language learning is a highly social activity, it also requires that learners embrace the cultural components of the target language (Dörnyei, 2001). Therefore, it is essential to introduce relevant aspects of L2 culture to learners, increase cross-cultural awareness by showing the similarities in both cultures and establish a safe space to discuss and eradicate prejudgments. According to Dörnyei (2009), one's opinions towards speakers of L2 are related to their idealized view of self. Based on this view, the learner's ideal L2 self motivates them. The learner's perceived social and moral obligations to learn (ought-to L2 self) creates pressure and an urge to succeed. Lastly, one's experience in the actual learning environment considering the factors like the instructor, content, or the setting (L2 learning experience) offers advancement and success. These three components mutually reinforce the learner's motivation.

McClusky's Theory of Margin

While theories of motivation inform us about what makes people engage in learning, they do not provide other variables that impact on the participation of adult learners in educational activities (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). One theory that accounts for the complexity of adult life and motivation is McClusky's Theory of Margin (1963). According to the Theory of Margin, transitions or daily life issues can become both opportunities and hindrances affecting the engagement of adults in adult learning activities (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). Adults need to balance life demands or challenges (load) and the resources (power) they need to address them. Thus, the relationship between load and power is defined as a margin and illustrated in a formula where the load (L) is the numerator, and power (P) is the denominator ($M = L/P$). According to McClusky (1963), the load can be both internally and externally derived. While external loads include community, work, and family responsibilities, internal loads comprise personal plans, goals,

and desires. Power, on the other hand, includes external and internal resources. Family and social support, and economic well-being are types of external power, while personal attributes, resiliency, and life skills are considered internal resources.

McClusky (1963) specifically focuses on the effects of rising expectations and demands on adult learning. By reducing the load or increasing the power a margin can be increased. Margin offers individuals agency, allows learners to explore possibilities, and reinvests psychological capital in growth and development. McClusky focuses on the effects of life demands on learners' learning process over time (Grenier & Burke, 2008). In this study, adult immigrant learners' perspectives and motivations were explored through McClusky's (1963) theory's components of load and power as they relate to the reality and complexity of adult immigrant learners' experiences.

Research design

Method

This study employed a phenomenological research design (Creswell, 2007) to understand the way adult immigrant learners make sense of their learning experiences at a church-based ESL program. These experiences were collected through in-depth interviews with the participants. When explaining a phenomenon, phenomenologists concentrate on describing what the subjects have in common (Creswell, 2007) that, in this study, can be valuable for adult educators, and program developers. Phenomenology's main goal is to limit the experiences of each participant with the phenomenon to a "description of the universal essence" (p.76). Using an inductive approach, the researcher becomes the main instrument for data collection. As the researcher I was aware of my prejudices, and biases and put in effort to set them aside from the interview process by employing the *epoche* (bracketing) concept (Moustakas, 1994) to gain a fresh understanding of the reality of the participants' experiences.

Participants

Participants were selected on a volunteer basis, using a purposeful sampling method through the snowball sampling technique (Patton,

2002) from an advanced-level ESL course at a church-based program in a Southwest city in Texas. While purposeful sampling provided information-rich cases guiding the study, snowball sampling allowed me to locate the key participants who then referred me to others with related experiences (Merriam, 2009). The participants included nine adult immigrant learners (3 males, and 6 females) whose ages ranged from 19 to 60 years of age. Most of the learners were married with children. To protect the confidentiality of the participants, pseudonyms were used in all documents. The nationality of participants included Cuba, Ecuador, Iraq, Nepal, and Sudan. The educational and professional backgrounds of participants in their home country varied (e.g., mechanical engineer, dentist, chemical engineer, health care professional, college graduate, primary school teacher, housewife, and student).

Data collection and analysis

Before data collection, Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was obtained to conduct the research. The data for the study was gathered through semi-structured, open-ended in-depth qualitative interviews. The participants were interviewed on their learning process, motivation, and feelings about participating in the program. The interview protocol consisted of 10 open-ended guiding questions, lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted in English. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews continued until saturation was reached. To ensure triangulation in research, other sources such as field notes and research journals were used as additional data sources. Member checking and peer review were employed to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data (Creswell, 2007).

In the data analysis process, the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed word for word, the transcriptions were read multiple times, and the researcher's impressions were written in the margins. As the participant's responses were analyzed, Creswell's Systematic Analysis (1994) with the following 8 steps were used: the researcher 1) read the transcripts and got a sense of the whole, 2) focused on each conversation and its meaning separately, 3) wrote the topics to the margin, and clustered similar ones by identifying the major topics, unique ones, and sub-topics, 4) coded each topic and wrote them to the segments of the text, 5) created categories from the related topics, 6) used abbreviations

for the topics in each category and alphabetized the codes, 7) grouped the data according to the categories and 8) started analysis preliminarily until no more re-coding was necessary.

Findings

Following the data analysis and interpretation, two key themes corresponding to the research questions and the theoretical framework became salient: Load and Power. Three sub-themes were identified under the first major theme loads: Adjusting to life in the U.S. and meeting survival needs, language proficiency, and cultural differences. Three sub-themes emerged under the second major theme of power: Hope for the future, learning environment and community, and family.

Loads

The sources of load for the participants of this study varied. The overarching loads they experienced were external loads such as sustaining their families and themselves while adjusting to life in the U.S., language proficiency, and cultural differences.

Adjusting to life in the U.S. and meeting the survival needs

Participants had two distinct reasons to learn English. One of the reasons was to adjust to life in the U.S. to meet their needs which put some pressure on them. Aman, a housewife from Iraq mentioned her engagement in the community when she said,

Because I need to learn English. Because I want to speak with you, like you, your English (giggles). But now, I cannot understand something, and I am speaking with many people... [sighs] and I go to a store or supermarket, I cannot speak.

The participants agree that they must learn and master English to communicate effectively, become a member of the community, be accepted, and meet their basic needs in their daily life. Another reason they reported was that the tests required to provide credential equivalency to the high school diploma or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to start college or to complete their studies, they had to leave off in their home. Finding a job to provide for

their families or becoming eligible to do their profession by getting a license in the U.S. are also some of the main reasons they mentioned. Afzal who was a student in his home country Afghanistan emphasized the importance of English and why he is taking ESL classes:

Because first, it is an international language, we are living here it is very important for us. When we go for jobs, and study, when we face some people, we have to speak English because all the people in America speak English. I want to work and study too. Both because we are a big family, and we have to work.

As for Ali, who has recently come from Mosul, learning English is the first thing to accomplish to go to college. My conversation with Ali talked a lot about motivation. When he started to tell me his story, Ali introduced himself and the exceedingly difficult life circumstances he had left behind and the terrific battle he went through right before he came to the U.S. “Food for your family, for my family it was very hard to get. It is hard you get water, not have water, not have anything. This light! First time I see light. I see but we don’t have it”. But then he started to talk about being in the U.S. and how hard he tries to learn English.

I want to learn English until I get [sighs and tries to find the right words], after that, I think I will go to college. But I need time. One year, two years. Until my language is better.

For Nina, a Nepalese woman married with one child, learning English is more work in a job that would provide her enough to pay her daughter’s daycare expenses.

I would like to work. Yeah, my husband; goes to work, and I like to help him. I think so. I like to go to work but my problem, I have a daughter if I go to work, I have to pay for her. So, I study English for her, for our family, to get childcare for my daughter.

As the findings indicate, the external sources of load include the participants’ responsibilities to meet their survival needs and the requirements to adjust to their new lives in the U.S. themselves and their families.

Language proficiency

Learning the language itself was not easy for the participants. According to Aman, learning new words is the most challenging part of her experience in learning English. "Many words I can't understand because it is ... so many things ...(laughs) ..." Second, to Aman, Safiya said learning English was something new for her. She added, "I find it difficult. One word has many meanings. That is difficult." Sana, a senior student with a high level of English proficiency pointed to the need for a more communicative approach in their classes. She suggested that students should be taught towards meeting their survival needs using an interactive approach to teaching.

We here sometimes know something, but some of the students has not ability or background how to for vocabulary at discussion. They do not know how to... They... so we need lesson like speaking, reading, writing not only the teacher explain what she wants what she has, today which subject she explains.

Similarly, Nina referred how she felt about learning and using English outside the classroom when she mentioned her husband's support and encouragement. She said,

Last time I was here I feel shy and my husband said: "you have to speak". I do not shy, If I knew her or if I do not know, how much I know. I try. My country and here is different language, we learn English also some meanings, if you do not know meaning it is difficult, I think so.

Briana explained the biggest challenge for her as the following: "People speak very fast. I do not understand. "What do you say?" all the time I ask I cannot understand". Similarly, Ali was worried about not understanding people when they speak fast. He said,

With English. I am shy! because I do not know. If I am speaking, sometimes they do not understand me, and if they are speaking, I do not understand them. If you speak slowly and clear but sometimes if I go shopping, they are speaking very fast.

Some of them think the teaching methodology needs to be improved for them to reach their desired level of proficiency. For example, Sana said,

So, we need this class, the rules how they speak, how to improve their speaking, accent. Sometimes If I say a word like ‘Whistleblower’ I said ‘Wistlerblower’ and you didn’t understand me, or I pronounce it wrong. We need like this classes [refers to our conversation]. I want to talk to our principal when I see them because we here sometimes know something but some of the students has not ability or background how to for vocabulary at discussion. I want to tell them that we need a class for talking, speaking without paper, pencil, pen. Speak like this!

For Mina, a college graduate from Iraq, learning the language was not easy. She mentioned feeling ashamed when she could not understand people around her, or she could not respond to native speakers. Mina told me it was important to speak English for her to be accepted in the community. She used the word “ashamed” to explain her feelings when she could not respond to people talking to her. “Not just to improve my English, when I go everywhere, my English is important. I will not be ashamed. When asked me, and I didn’t know, I ashamed”.

All the participants agreed that they had difficulty learning English and reaching the proficiency level they aimed to achieve their goals. They reported that it was not easy to remember all the vocabulary and to remember the grammar rules when they want to use them outside of the classroom. They also pointed out that their oral communication practice in class was insufficient for them to become confident and fluent in English.

Cultural differences

Cultural differences were mentioned by some participants as a challenge and source of stress in their learning and integration process as well. Even though they participated in the cultural orientation in their first months of arrival through the resettlement program, they complained that the orientation they received was not comprehensive enough. For example, Afzal mentioned:

Outside, for me, the hardest thing is the culture. I was born in Afghanistan. Their culture is very different than USA. Because of this, I face someone I do not know from what I start. How do I

tell them how are you? What is the good sentences to tell them?

Afzal emphasized that those thoughts created some stress when he wanted to initiate a talk or speak in English to communicate his needs outside of the class. Nina, the sole parent of her 10 year old son going to school in the U.S., helps her son with his homework. She mentioned not knowing much about the culture as one of the challenges that they had to overcome in their adaptation process.

Mina emphasized the importance of knowing about the culture in a host community as an immigrant in these words: "I know many things about America culture. I know many. When I go to the hospital to the community, to the market, to the bank, I know how I can deal with. It is very important".

For Briana being in a different culture is a challenge as well. Briana used to be a healthcare professional, and she wants to do her job in the U.S. once her degree is accredited. She emphasizes how crucial is to learn the culture of the host community while learning English and for her future when she starts working in the U.S. as follows,

I should learn the culture first; it is difficult to learn when we do not know the cultural meanings for what we say. Here, culture is different, people expect different things, and we mean differently when we try to speak. I need to learn more about culture in English class to become good health practitioner.

Participants view a lack of knowledge about the host community culture as a challenge that impacts their motivation to learn and participate and engage in the community. Some participants also expressed feelings of stress about not knowing the culture, and not knowing how to behave on some occasions.

Power

The second major theme was about the sources of power in the lives of participants and included the following subthemes: Hope for the future, Learning environment and community, and Family.

Hope for the future

Each participant comes from a different cultural, educational, and professional background and brings with them a range of heartfelt stories. However, their inspiration to learn English bears hopes not only for themselves but also for the future of their families. Briana who has been in the program for two months hopes to get a license to do her profession. She says, “I would like to work and become a healthcare professional”. Safiya is planning to continue higher education in the U.S. She hopes to get into college and have a good life in the U.S. That’s why she wants to speak English fluently. She described her hope for her future in those words. “I hope to get a job I love and have a family in the future. When I learn English, the door will be open for me. I can be a nurse or work in a hospital”.

Afzal hopes to be able to find a job, study, and live in the U.S. for the rest of his life. He mentioned his dream to settle when he said, “I have a big family here. We will live in America, work, here. We will be safe, healthy, and good life with my family”. Similarly, Aman said, “Because I want to speak with you. Like you, your English!”. Nina also mentioned,

I want to learn English to have a better life with my child. I want to help him with his homework, and he becomes successful. Now he asks me things, I do not know. I cannot help him with school, anything he asks. I want to help him more.

The narratives of the participants indicate that their vision of the ‘ideal L2 self’ (Dörnyei, 2009) is a powerful motivation for their learning. Dörnyei (2009) describes ‘the ideal L2 self’ in language learning as the condition one would most want to achieve. Ideal L2 self would become a powerful motivator when learners have a desired, realistic future self-image that does not contradict the expectations of their social environment and when they keep their vision of future-self alive.

Learning environment and community

The learning environment was another source of power that reoccurred in the stories of participants. Six of the nine participants talked about the encouragement and positive feelings they felt thanks to the support of their community and the learning environment. They also mentioned how the support they received from their teachers and their

program officers affected their decision to persist in the ESL program. Participants all reported that the service providers (teachers and the program directors) were always giving them the courage to learn and that they were placing a lot of emphasis on providing the conditions for their active participation in the activities and the classes. Mr Macit, a former mechanical engineer from Iraq who was participating in the ESL program for one year said, "We are very happy with this organization because this is very helpful for us. They are very friendly. They accept here, anything we want for us. They make things easier". Ms Mina shared her perspective of their instructor when she said,

I really like Mary teacher. We have been in this class one year. It is very good for us. I know many things about America culture. I know many. When I go to the hospital to the community, to the market, to the bank, I know how I can deal with. It is very important.

Ali also pointed out the importance of the community in his learning process and motivation to participate and learn. He said,

Here, I feel okay. I feel I learn things and I can become better. Teachers help us. They care and ask us our questions and help us with everything. I feel more okay at myself in the classroom. They really help. Students help each other. We speak, and chat after class.

Aman mentioned how she was encouraged to learn more and believe in herself.

Another participant said, 'Mary teacher and everybody here wants us to be sufficient for ourselves and become powerful. Their support and encourage help us learn every day, new things here'.

Evident from the participants' thoughts and feelings was that the care and support they received in the program made them feel powerful. The program officers and the teachers encourage them to participate and learn English eventually to become self-sufficient individuals who can accomplish their goals. Some women participants also mentioned that the church provided them with childcare options when they attend the classes. So, during recess, they would check on their children downstairs.

Family

When the participants introduced themselves, they immediately started to talk about their families. Most of them came to the U.S. with their families. Family support is a source of motivation to learn English and overcome the stress related to migration and resettlement. For example, Aman expresses her yearning and hopes for her family.

I am here with my husband and youngest son. Before one year and ten months. But I left my two sons in Iraq. Two of them are married and one of them is single. I want to bring all of them here. I miss them very much. Here we are together with my one son and husband and I feel happy and secure.

Likewise, Macid indicated, “My family is here with me. We are together and I am here to help them for a good future. I need to learn English so I can help them. We are together, and it is important for us”. Nina described her feelings, “I am grateful for my husband, and we are together. He gives me the courage and I feel happy because he can work, he takes care of us.”

The data from the stories of the participants suggest that living with family is a big asset for their psychological well-being as well as socio-economic circumstances. As the breadwinners of their families, they feel the pleasure of being together and feel powerful and courageous in their new lives in a foreign country.

Discussion

MacKeracher (2004) describes motivation as the urge to discover or understand the uncertain, or the desire to meet the needs and to grow (p.132). It is an “all-purpose” term that refers to a person’s tendency to generate organized and controlled behaviour in response to internal and external life factors (MacKeracher, 2004). According to the Theory of Margin (McClusky, 1963), those personal (internal) and social (external) factors and demands on a person are described as the load. On the other hand, the resources and the support system that help a person cope with the load are defined as power.

In this study, the use of McClusky’s Theory of Margin (1963) helped me organize, understand, and explain the experiences of participants.

Even though it is not right to assume adults who are overburdened with responsibilities cannot learn (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 96), the stories indicate that immigrant learners juggle several responsibilities and demands of their time and energy, which in turn interacts with and challenges their learning and motivation to participate. One limitation of this study is the age diversity of participants ranging from 19 to 60.

Regarding the relationship between language acquisition and age, the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) is a widely accepted theory on first language acquisition. CPH suggests that children have a unique ability for language development facilitated by a mechanism that would last until about puberty. The similar developmental path all children follow and the full competency they reach in their L1 is accepted as evidence of a critical period (Andrew, 2012). The variety of second language competency outcomes and not enough neurobiological evidence have caused the questioning of the role CPH plays in the second language context (Andrew, 2012). Studies showing accomplishments of late learners reaching native-like proficiency (Bongaerts, 1999; Bostel et al., 2005) refute the age-related constraints on second language acquisition. A widely held opinion among SLA researchers is that some biological age factors combined with environmental factors cause the variability of proficiency in SLA. A dynamic interaction between learner characteristics such as age and cognitive, social, and environmental factors should be considered in the second language learning process (Ryan & Dörnyei, 2013).

Despite the age variety, commonalities are identified in terms of the focus of this study, which is to investigate the learner perspectives, motivation, and participation. Participants have desires to achieve personal goals and expectations namely their ideal L2 selves. Examples of internal loads included the stress that resulted in not knowing how to navigate in a foreign culture as well as not being proficient in the language. They described the external demands such as meeting survival needs (paying the bills, running errands), having to interact with the community, finding a job, and helping with their kids' schoolwork. Supporting the existing research (Albarracín et al., 2019; Weger, 2013) practical and instrumental reasons such as meeting the language requirements for college and job placement, requirements of daily life, and engaging with the community were the primary reasons listed by the participants for attending the ESL program.

The physical, socio-economic, and mental aspects of their lives, on the other hand, represented power. It included the resources, possessions, personal abilities, and support system that enable them to cope with the barriers. Participants' major support systems were their family and language instructors. They all emphasized the importance of family and linked their aspirations to the ties and hopes they have with and for their families. The data show that teacher assistance is critical to adult immigrant learners' involvement and success. Most of the participants also mentioned that support services provided by the program enabled them to participate in the classes. Childcare at the ESL centre was the most significant benefit of the program for them. On the other hand, the findings of the study also reveal that while some aspects of their experiences could be considered part of their support system as power, they could also be identified as loads. For example, while living with the family is considered major support giving courage and happiness in their lives, the concerns, and the pressure they feel to provide for living and the future of their families could be considered sources of stress at the same time. Since most of the participants are responsible for their families, it is also one of the main reasons why they learn English. They should be fluent in English to be able to get a job and simply make a living for their family in the U.S.

An important consideration should be the role of teachers and program officers in improving the existing programs for immigrant learners. Because of the tight funding, most programs depend on a small unpaid or underpaid staff. Research indicates that volunteer teachers have a strong desire to assist immigrants but lack knowledge of adult second language learners, effective instructional methods concerning adult backgrounds, relevant cultural knowledge (Durham & Kim, 2019), and trauma-informed teaching practices (Kostouros et al., 2022). Teachers of adult immigrant learners need professional development in teaching language skills, training on using culturally responsive teaching strategies (Chen & Yang, 2017), and implementing principles of adult learning, (Merriam & Bierema, 2014) as well as enhancing motivation, language skills, and participation of their students (Durham & Kim, 2019).

Conclusion and recommendations for future studies

The study explored the experiences of adult learners through McClusky's

Theory of Margin. Adult immigrant learners have both external and internal loads they try to balance with the support of their families, learning environment, and their hope to achieve the ideal self (Dörnyei, 2009). The findings highlight the need for long-term, sustainable services to decrease the load adult immigrants experience so that they have a margin available to participate in learning activities. Besides the government and other institutions that are responsible for providing a safe and supportive environment for immigrants' orientation to a new society, educators play an important role in facilitating their learning process (Kloubert & Hogan, 2021). The findings suggest adult educators and program developers re-examine the learning needs of this specific group of adult learners and become more inclusive of the learners' perspective, background, and motivation in their planning and programming process. Immigrant learners need a language program that incorporates cultural orientation at all stages of their integration process, as shown by the findings. Future studies should also consider exploring the teacher experiences and knowledge regarding culturally responsive and trauma-informed teaching practices (Kostouros et al., 2022) for this specific group of learners. Experiences of comparable age groups should be also examined to better understand language acquisition, persistence, and participation of immigrant learners as they mature.

Adult educators can create engaging and pertinent lessons, help learners keep their vision of the ideal self alive, and set realistic, elaborate plans supported by some strategies to achieve their goals (Dörnyei, 2009). Programs may improve learners' well-being by offering tools and implementing mindfulness practices like meditation or mindfulness-based therapies into their curriculum. Adult educators should continue raising awareness of unique lived experiences and needs of immigrants. Finally, adult English language classes can help learners develop an awareness of the social conditions and oppressive structures in society. They can provide a safe space where new ideas and social relations can be produced (Heinemann & Monzo, 2021). In that vein, the study informs curriculum development, teacher training programs, and other service providers for immigrants, as well as policies promoting immigrant integration in the U.S. about the experiences of adult immigrant ESL learners.

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About the author

Merih Ugurel Kamisli is a faculty member at TED University in Ankara, Turkiye. She is an experienced higher education professional with a demonstrated history of international education, curriculum development for teacher training and professional development programs, and teaching diverse groups of learners. Her scholarship focuses on improving teacher training programs, psychology and motivation of learning, and social justice issues in adult education specifically concerning immigrants and refugees.

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Book review

Shoulder to shoulder, Broadening the Men's Shed movement

Editor Barry Golding
2021

Reviewed by Ursula Harrison

This comprehensively researched revision of Golding's earlier book, *The Men's Shed Movement – the Company of Men* (2015), that documented the beginning of the Men's Shed movement originating in Australia in 1993, was assisted by international researchers and activists in the movement.

Reflecting back during the COVID enforced slowdown, Golding realised that much had changed in the decades since the grassroots movement began, notably their establishment in additional countries and the development of women's sheds. Sheds were often hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, forced to close for significant periods of time, this had some impact on the mental health of Shedders and family members. It seemed probable that post-COVID may bring different cohorts to the Sheds.

A reprint of the earlier book would not necessarily lend itself to the comprehensive reflection and evidence needed to illustrate the

growth and adaptability of the movement over nearly three decades. Thus, *Shoulder to Shoulder: Broadening the Men's Shed Movement* documents the story of the broadening of the movement into many more countries, and of its growing relevance to diverse cohorts, for example, younger folk, non-Anglo speaking community members, and women.

The book provides case studies and detailed descriptions of the origin and function of Sheds in a growing number of countries showing that Sheddors' lives have been changed for the better, particularly those who were disconnected, isolated or were adjusting to life as retirees, widowers or with chronic health issues.

Chapter Eleven offers further research evidence and references about the social, psychological, and community benefits of Sheds. Benefits can be attributed to their safe, friendly and low cost nature, allowing men to come together to share their skills, knowledge, stories and concerns. Typically, sheds provide a mix of social activities and workshop production, according to local needs and interests. Sharing and preparing food occurs in many sheds, and health is often a focus.

Gender became an issue in community spaces with the establishment of the Neighbourhood House movement some two decades before the Men's Shed Movement in Australia. Neighbourhood Houses were predominantly focused on women's learning and social needs. With increasing attention being focused on men's health and wellbeing, and growing realisation of the impacts of social isolation, particularly in retirement and ageing, Men's Sheds, similarly, were grass roots localised responses to these concerns.

Within a decade of the Australian Shed movement getting off the ground the innovative model and concept had spread to early adopters in New Zealand, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The book plots the growing international Shed movement and its indebtedness to the Australian model and other early adopters. While the model has become increasingly widely adopted it is also made clear that local contextualisation is necessary for success. The book highlights variation in the governance and auspicing arrangements, financial resources provided to Sheds (some operate on no or very limited funding) and main activities on offer. However, it is apparent that despite this variation, the grassroots nature and agency of the Sheddors remain core features.

While total accuracy of numbers is not guaranteed estimates suggest there are more than 3700 Sheds worldwide with approximately 1300 in Australia. Complete accuracy regarding numbers of Sheds in Australia is not currently possible due to the splintering of relationships, described as ‘Shed wars’ between the Australian Men’s Shed Association (AMSA), and some state-based peak bodies, that in some ways echoes a common federal/state impasse in Australia. Chapter Two comprehensively describes the tensions; it’s complicated, but worth inclusion if you want to understand the complexities of conflict in community settings.

The twelve chapters in the book provide numerous detailed case studies of Sheds in Australia and the four early adopters along with the next tranche of adopters, the United States, Canada, and Denmark. Then follows a chapter outlining fledgling movements in for example Iceland, Sweden, Belgium, Kenya, and South Africa. The case studies are presented as enthusiastic first-person accounts of the origin, aims and functions of the Sheds by local instigators and champions.

Chapter One of this book provides a detailed overview of its contents and what can be found in the earlier book for those new to Golding’s work and wishing to deepen their historical knowledge of this important social movement. It comes with a rider that you don’t need to go back to the earlier book to get a comprehensive picture of the movement.

Chapter Two focuses on Australian Men’s Sheds and provides important information in the context of the development of the model. It outlines the history in various States and includes 36 updated case studies from the first decade or so that featured in the original book. Highlighting the ways they had adapted and changed to 2021 illustrates the responsiveness of the Sheds to the times and their communities.

Chapters focused on country situations follow roughly similar formats – summarising developments, the history and distribution of Sheds, revisiting some earlier case studies and including new case studies. Chapters identify local heroes, history and challenges, COVID responses, and references. Both the updated case studies and the 56 new case studies are evidence of the broadening of the movement. There is less historical and contextual detail provided in this book about the early adopters, but 67 case studies from the earlier book are revisited and updated.

As there is a large amount of detail in the chapters, for those wishing to gain a quick overview, start with the first two chapters, then read the following country accounts (Chapters Three to Nine) according to your interest. Don't miss the final four chapters covering: newly established sheds and start up projects in Kenya, Iceland, and other continental European countries; the Women's Shed movement; research evidence since publication of the previous book; and finally, opportunities for broadening the movement.

Unsurprisingly, interest has grown in the idea of Women's Sheds, and appropriately a chapter is devoted to this. As for men, Women's Sheds are community spaces for women of all ages and life stages to engage in different activities and connect with other women in a predominantly or exclusively female environment. By 2021, at least 124 Women's Shed programs were identified with the greatest numbers in Australia – 61. Golding proposes a shed typology to clarify the diversity in the Shed movement and how gender relations are managed differently in diverse contexts, men-only Sheds, to mixed Sheds – where women and men meet on separate days or participate together – to women only Sheds. Most common is the mixed model, with men and women using the same shed on different days.

Chapter Eleven reviews research undertaken on Sheds, thematically and in different national contexts, and helpfully includes many citations and references. Chapter Twelve brings it all to a comprehensive conclusion outlining the ways in which the movement has broadened and continues to broaden. Along with much of the research mentioned in Chapter Eleven into the impact of Men's Sheds on the lives of men, their families and communities, Golding's two books cement beyond doubt the importance of Sheds in local communities. This book more than adequately fulfils Golding's desire to present a comprehensive, informative, definitive but readable book, complementing the earlier book.

Call for Papers

Special Edition: Australian Journal of Adult Learning

Contributions of workplace experiences to adults' lifelong learning

Guest editors: *Dr Stephen Billett is Professor of Adult and Vocational Education in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University, Brisbane, and a National Teaching Fellow and Australian Research Council Future Fellow. Dr Cheryl Ryan is a Senior Lecturer In Education at the Faculty of Arts and Education, School of Education, Deakin University.*

Across the lifespan, the experiences that adults have within and through their work and workplaces make a range of contributions to their ongoing learning and development. These experiences assist them to identify the kinds of occupations and work that they want to engage in or find inconsistent with their personal goals and capacities. Those experiences also assist adults to develop the occupational capacities and workplace competences to be effective in working life, to sustain their employment and to advance their worklife careers: that is, their employability. Workplace experiences also can assist make decisions about transitions and fresh directions, including those beyond working life. Indeed, beyond paid work, many adults' activities in post worklife are shaped by the experiences they had, the capacities they developed

is adults' sense of self subjectivity that emerges through and across working life. Moreover, through voluntary and community-based work activities, contributions are made to the community, as well as to individuals.

Of course, those learning experiences can also be either positive or negative, supportive and inclusive or marginalising and alienating, and also can either realise or frustrate key life goals for these adults. So, more than simply the acquisition, further development and transformation of sets of occupational capacities, those experiences also do much to frame the sense of self, worth and trajectories of adults. That is, these experiences are central to adult learning and development. Given the duration, intensity and ubiquity of adult learning experiences in and through work and across working life these experiences stand to be far more consequential than those offering is referred to as lifelong education: usually the provision of taught courses.

Consequently, in the context of adult learning and considerations of adult education, this special issue seeks to elaborate on the contributions of workplace experiences to adults' lifelong learning broadly. It welcomes contributions that seek to identify and elaborate the kinds of goals that adults have for their learning, and the range of educative experiences that can be found in and through work activities and the alignment between these and the kinds of learning and development that arises for adults.

It follows, articles are invited that focus on capturing and illuminating are the experiences provided in and through work and how they contribute to adult learning and development more generally, as well as those associated with occupational capacities and subjectivities and workplace competence. In this way, the special issue is not about workplace learning per se, but rather the kinds of experiences and legacies arising from adults' participation in work practice and the activities and interactions that comprise working life.

The questions that might be addressed through this special issue are as follows:

How does participation in work and workplaces shape the sense of self, capacities and understandings of adults across their lives?

What kinds of legacies arise for adults through their workplace experiences that contribute to their abilities to achieve personal, family and community goals?

What are the personal and collective legacies of the learning and development arising across adults working lives?

How does adult learning in community contexts of unpaid work, volunteering or activism contribute to their agency and lifelong learning?

How can workplace experiences be enhanced to achieve positive outcomes for adults in terms of both their worklife capacities and those outside of it?

Types of contributions welcome

Academic papers of 6000 to 6,500 words in length including references, tables, data and figures, blind double, external peer reviewed. Stories of practice of up to 3,000 words in length including references, tables, data and figures, reviewed by editors.

AJAL submission and author guidelines

<https://www.ajal.net.au/peerreview/index.php/ajal/about/submissions>

Timeline

Call for Papers December 2022; EOI due to SI editors by 30 June 2023, by email. Please include a detailed abstract (300–500 words).

Authors are advised in June of the outcome of their EOI. Manuscripts are due by 30 July 2023. Review period August 2023.

Revisions August – September 2023.

Finalisation of manuscripts by October 2023.

Publication November 2023

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Online forum:
Adult learning education on climate justice
Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Context

In recent years, the importance of adult learning education focused on climate justice has gained momentum in Australia and the world. In Australia, we have seen the impact of climate disruption with more frequent catastrophic weather events such as floods and fires contributing to the displacement of people from housing and local communities and the subsequent effects on the environment and non-human species. In 2021, the Australian Journal of Adult Learning (AJAL) engaged prominent researchers in this area, Associate Professor Hilary Whitehouse and Professor Bob Stevenson to edit a special edition focusing on climate justice education and how adult learning education is currently responding to the call for action on climate change. As they noted in their editorial ... “In her recent book *Humanity’s Moment*, Australian scientist Joëlle Gergis (2022), a lead author of the 2022 Sixth IPCC Report, documents the overwhelming scientific evidence of a rapidly worsening ecological crisis” (Whitehouse and Stevenson, 2022). The special edition of AJAL highlights research and scholarship from Australia and a South African-led international collaboration responding to the impact of climate change, from issues related to popular education and social movement activism on climate change to affective dimensions of grappling with the social trauma of the climate crisis and the

need for an emergent curriculum on climate justice education for educators and activists. The special edition includes practice-based papers on teaching climate justice in the classroom and working with discomfort and emotions using pedagogies that engage students and teachers in dialogue on climate justice.

Purpose

The seminar aims to bring adult educators together to engage on matters of climate justice education and to hear about current scholarship and practices from the authors of the special edition.

Participants

- Assoc. Professor Tracey Ollis (MC)
- Professor Emerita Shirley Walters (keynote)
- Dr Lorraine Larri (panel)
- Professor Emerita Annette Gough (panel)
- Dr Tania Leimbach (panel)
- Assoc. Professor Hilary Whitehouse (panel facilitator)
- Assoc. Professor Robert B. Stevenson (panel facilitator)

Time

Wednesday 20 September 2023, 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm (AEST)