AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF ADULT LEARNING

Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Book reviews

Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

From the Editor's desk

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The July editorial for the Australian Journal of Adult Learning (AJAL) is being written at a time when we find ourselves living in the second year of a global pandemic, which has changed the nature of how we live, work and learn in Australia and the rest of the world. We write this editorial at a time where many of us are again locked down, working from home and having limited face to face contact with others. We note the economic and social consequences of the pandemic on adult learners, many of whom engage in insecure work or require retraining after being furloughed due to the pandemic. The social and economic vulnerability of many groups in the community has come to the fore, highlighting social inequalities that continue to be faced by certain marginalised groups including those who access adult education. As some adult community education providers in Australia are forced to close their face-to-face services, hard to reach learner populations are affected by further social isolation (Boren, Roumell & Roessger, 2020). Since COVID-19, the nature of how education providers including Adult Community Education deliver education has changed significantly and dramatically, exposing some learners to rely more heavily on digital technologies. For some learners the lack of appropriate or reliable internet services, often in regional parts of the country, or for those who lack the necessary digital literacies to stay connected and engaged with education face further isolation.

As we write this editorial approximately 60% of Australians are locked down and many of us working and learning from home, the impact of the virus on our health systems and on our daily lives including how we work and live is taking its toll, particularly on mental health and wellbeing across the country. The impact of the pandemic on individuals and families and their economic viability is also important to note as small businesses close, industries and businesses try to adjust and reshape, and new industries emerge as a result of the pandemic's impact. With significant job losses workers will need to upskill and reskill, placing the importance of community-based adult education at the forefront of reskilling learners for post-pandemic Australia. The need for strong policy raising the important role of lifelong learning in this period of adjustment has never been more critical.

Currently in adult education, as noted much of the learning is now taking place in online environments and through digital technology classrooms, which poses problems and contradictions for what we know about good adult learning pedagogy and practices. Building relationships with learners is critical to the work we do, knowing who the learner is, their prior knowledge, assessing and understanding their prior learning experiences so that teachers can adjust and adapt their teaching pedagogies accordingly is fundamental to adult learning. A student-centred approach to learning is crucial in the work that adult educators do as it takes account of the whole person and their learning needs and their place in the world (Jarvis 2010). We also know the best way to prepare adult learners for work, and for learning in life in general, is through some type of social learning, apprenticeship or community of practice because learning is an inherently social process situated in our daily interactions with one another (Gonczi 2004). Research into adult learning has shown many adult learners in the Adult community education sector have had prior negative experiences of learning (Duckworth and Smith 2017, Harrison 2018, Ollis, Ryan et al. 2018). Assisting adult learners to change prior negative self-perception of their ability to learn is a part of the deep education work that takes place in adult community education. Importance is placed on the relational nature of adult education and the interactions with teachers, tutors, and their peers. These relationships are vital in enabling these learners to remain connected and motivated to continue their education. Whether deep education work can occur virtually as adult learners participate through new technologies via

video platforms is yet to be known. Certainly, we do note significant work in the area of Therapeutic Landscapes (Gesler & Kearns (2002) that lend themselves to the notion of an embodied and fluid space where communities of practice can engage and where learning and wellness can take place. The therapeutic landscape can be framed through outdoor spaces such as gardens and parks, or indoor spaces like schools or hospitals or community learning centres and can be located through virtual spaces like adult learning spaces. A therapeutic landscape that is physical or virtual has been identified as a place where connections can be made, and learning can take place. Whilst the pandemic highlights and exacerbates existing inequalities in society, the change to online learning has the potential to expose some inadequacies in the quality of adult and higher education and schooling (Stanistreet, P., Elfert, M. & Atchoarena, D, 2020) and at the same time can open up opportunities to rethink and reposition virtual learning spaces to be incorporated into the adult learning repertoires of a post-pandemic learning landscape. Certainly, further research is needed to investigate the impact of the pandemic, ongoing lockdowns and of learning with new technologies and the benefits and disadvantages of learning in the post-pandemic world.

On the other hand, we note that COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of adult education on a number of levels. It will be needed more now than ever before in this time of disaster management, especially in terms of communicating the health messaging about COVID-19 and vaccine hesitancy, in a country such as multicultural Australia, a nation-state of diverse cultural communities. In Australia, the Adult community education sector including Neighbourhood Houses and Centres, Universities of the Third Age, Learn Locals, Migrant education Centres, Community Colleges and others have an infrastructure of place-based community services that employ community development practices and community education strategies in this important time. They have the capacity in the post-pandemic recovery to promulgate communication about the virus in multiple languages across local communities in rural, regional and urban areas. Undoubtedly, their reach in local neighbourhoods is far and wide. Their local knowledge about urban, regional and rural communities, migrant and refuge communities is widely known. They can use adult education practices to communicate messages about health and well-being to local communities. This was evident in the bushfire recovery phase after black Friday in Victoria, and more recently in NSW where adult community

education centres were able to facilitate local community education and messaging, food packages and financial relief. They are integral in providing retraining and reskilling of workers in local communities who had lost jobs, housing and livelihoods. No doubt ACE will continue to play an important role as the virus continues to circulate, but also in the post-pandemic, recovery phase connecting people after more than a year of social isolation and physical distancing and proving solidarity and support to local communities as we emerge from isolation to a different and significantly changed world, we will be living in.

Feature article: 'Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for lifelong learning'

It's timely that our *feature article* for this special edition examines how we can learn from our experiences of living within a global pandemic The article, written by Professors Veronika McKay and Henrique Lopesis appropriately titled 'Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic for lifelong learning'. They outline two significant global agreements in their article the United Nations (2015a) agreement for the Sustainable Development Goals and the framework for Disaster Risk Reductions (Untied Nations 2015b). They set their argument against the framework of lifelong learning and adult learning education which they claim are two significant tools that can be used in disaster management. They claim that guiding principles of disaster management framework rely on the participation of communities through public education awareness of disaster risks. The authors note the use of existing formal and non-formal education strategies and learning to promote a culture of 'disaster resilience' can assist to promote and generate an understanding of disaster risk, support and mutual learning. This whole community response would mean a dialogic engagement in adult education from families, local communities' government, industry, business, activist groups and local, state and federal governments. However, the authors argue there is cause for hope in celebrating the strength and resilience of the Adult education sector in the face of COVID-19 and note that in times of crisis Adult Learning and Education (ALE) had been invaluable for the social and economic well-being of communities, providing education for dealing with challenges that persist often among the people who are the hardest to reach.

This July edition covers articles across the diversity of sites of adult learning in social movements, on an international study tour, in

communities of practice for social entrepreneurs, in universities and in family caregivers of people living with dementia. The international reach of the journal continues with articles from Europe, Taiwan and China.

Our first refereed article on The Women's Shed movement: 'Scoping the field internationally' by ***Barry Golding, Annette Foley & Lucia Carragher***, is focussed on scoping the intentional women's shed movement, which has emerged in Australia, Ireland and the UK. The article reflects on the origins of the emergent Women's Shed movement that might be located within the field of community development as well as their relationship to the Men's Shed movement. They argue the movement's activities have been curtailed largely since the advent of the pandemic in 2019. Nonetheless, the article identifies some similarities and importantly some differences between the Women's and Men's movements. The authors propose a typology of the Men's and Sheds movements and the way that the two movements collaborate (or not). They argue that women's sheds have been created to provide a 'positive female gendered space' for women who want to pursue hands on practise or applied learning activities.

George Lafferty & Francis Lyn in their article 'Echoes of the Grand Tour: Shared international experiences in nursing education'. The article articulates some of the complex education work that occurs with students on international study tours. The authors argue, whilst there has been significant literature on the student experience this article focusses on the educator's role. The paper draws on a first-hand account of a nurse educators experience of student supervisor relationships in overseas settings that are unfamiliar. As the authors argue at times international study tours have drawn considerable critical scrutiny, ranging from their 'global citizenship' and social justice possibilities to their neo-colonial associations. Whilst the benefits for students are great in terms of medical and health knowledge and experiences through seeing poverty in villages and assisting with health issues in a local area. The work is risky and complex. The paper which is grounded in nursing ethics and the goals of public health explores the theoretical and strategic implications which arise from working in this interesting space of adult learning.

The next article from Sweden written by ***Morteza Eslahchi & Ali Osman*** and titled 'Becoming a social entrepreneur: Individual and collective learning in Communities of Practice'

The article uncovers learning to become a social entrepreneur in the field of social integration. The organisations they chose for the research had an approach towards integration called 'two-way social integration'. They state, "Two-way social integration refers to activities that involve both newly-arrived immigrants and refugees to Sweden and persons who are established in society—mostly, but not necessarily, ethnic Swedes". The activities offered by the organisations are based on a relationship of equality and focus on developing friendships between newly arrived immigrants and refugees and people established for some time in Swedish society.

The authors interviewed the founders of five social enterprises, they draw on Lave and Wengers (Lave & Wenger, 1991) theory of situated learning in communities of practice to examine the data for the research. The authors argue learning processes can be understood in different ways such as social, cognitive and emotional dimensions. The findings from the research revealed that the entrepreneurs' prior experience was critical in generating new ideas for activities. It also found the network of individuals and organisations enabled them to learn knowledge and skills to develop their social enterprise. Learning to become a social entrepreneur is embedded in both individual and collective learning processes. Participation in a community of practice enabled the social entrepreneurs to see the diversity of practices across other organisations, what needed to be changed, and how it could be done more effectively or innovatively in their own social enterprise.

The international reach of this edition of the journal continues with an article situated in a Chinese university. ***Nini Zhang, Huijun Zhao & Karen Guo's*** article 'A deep active learning approach to exploring young adults' learning in a picture book elective'. The paper explores early childhood undergraduate students' learning in an elective. Using Deep Active Learning (DAL), the research identifies how the students adapted DAL throughout the progress of the unit. With reference to national guidelines, the course aimed to nurture 'students' interests, choices, and explorations. The course is focussed on how students were using DAL in their meta learning in the classroom. The findings from the research identify the tensions and discontinuities, between students' DAL capabilities and their actual DAL experiences. The authors note the difficulty in making reforms in a single course, because of the diversity of learner needs, the learning environment, and the career plans of students.

An article from Taiwan by ***Chia-Ming Yen,*** 'Learning to change: Transformative outcomes of participation in programs and activities among family caregivers of people with dementia in Taiwan', outlines the transformative outcomes of activities and programs for caregivers of people with dementia. The author draws on Mezirow's Transformative learning theory to examine the relationship between participation and the positive outcomes for participants. The findings of the research were a combination of family support, self-adjustment, the ability to cope, and coordinated intervention in accordance with individual preferences, facilitated caregiver transformation.

The final article for this edition of the journal, titled 'The influential factors of university teachers' lifelong learning in professional development' by ***Hongyan Zhou & Chia-Ching Tu*** investigates what influences university teachers' lifelong learning and professional development. This draws on a framework by Jarvis whose lifelong learning definition is embedded in the constructivist paradigm, arguing adult lifelong learning is a process of constantly constructing and reconstructing individual experiences. The authors argue this study provides a new perspective in promoting university teachers' lifelong learning and professional development. The empirical evidence provided by the data and applied suggestions for professional development proposed in the study would be useful for higher education administrators.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for lifelong learning

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After more than a year of living with the COVID-19 pandemic, much experience has been accumulated by countries around the world. There have been many failures, and there have been some things that have gone well. Adult learning and education in some form has played a significant role in public health since, without the ongoing continuing educational interventions mainly via the mass media, the number of doctors and hospital beds would likely have been insufficient.

In this paper we focus on the role of group behaviours in relation to the risk of contagion and we argue that any attempts to define a strategy to combat the pandemic must include a strong commitment to information dissemination and to the training of the populations in order to encourage behaviour change necessary to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Against the backdrop of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, this article argues for commitment by governments to use adult

learning and education as a tool for health prevention and health awareness and to prepare populations for whatever pandemics and national disasters that might emerge in the twenty-first century, the "century of pandemics". We therefore argue that populations must have at least a basic level of literacy and numeracy as foundational skills essential for enabling citizens to receive and act on vital information during a pandemic or disaster in order to engender greater resilience[i].

Keywords: *COVID-19; adult education; lifelong learning; health literacy; Sustainable Development Goals; disaster; resilience*

Introduction

Two significant global agreements were concluded in 2015, both with a lifespan from 2015 to 2030. The first is the United Nations (2015a) agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 integrated goals, each of which is linked with a number of sub-goals. The second is the Sendai[ii] Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (United Nations 2015b) which is intended to focus on the increasing frequency and intensity of disasters that impede progress towards sustainable development, and which calls for a people-centred "disaster response, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and to use post-disaster recovery and reconstruction to 'Build Back Better'" (United Nations 2015b, p. 7).

This article focuses on the interface of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), disaster management and lifelong learning (LLL), arguing that adult learning and education (ALE) are essential tools in the disaster management toolkit and points to their role in community learning as engendering collective agency and resilience.

The guiding principles in the disaster management framework rely on the participation of communities and also on increasing public education and awareness of disaster risk which in turn rely on the use of existing formal and non-formal education learning to promote a culture of disaster resilience and to generate an understanding of disaster risk, support and mutual learning.

Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has set health services and national economies under stress, resulting in national disruption within a few months. In many westernised countries, such as in Europe (OECD/

European Union, 2020) and the Americas (Blumenthal, Fowler, Abrams, & Collins, 2020), the health services have been driven to deplete human, technological and financial resources with developing countries showing all the fault lines of their fragile health and social infrastructure.

The extent of the pandemic as a social disaster is well documented. Over two million people have officially died of COVID-19, and more than 100 million have been formally diagnosed (https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/; Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, 2021). Despite not being affected by high COVID-19 incidences (Woyo, 2021), many countries were affected by the impact of the pandemic on the economy resulting from the decrease in world tourist activity arising from the prohibition on sea and air travel (UNWTO, 2020). The rapid and drastic changes brought about by the pandemic touched on all domains of life – family, work, leisure, education – and had an impact on all aspects of societies around the world in unforeseeable ways (James and Thériault, 2020).

Likewise, the world economy was structurally affected by rising unemployment (ILO, 2020), rising public debt (OECD, 2020c), and decreasing GDPs (Cutler & Summers, 2020). Populations saw their financial and earning capacities diminish (OECD, 2020b), and even rich countries saw a reduction in the average life expectancy (Andrasfay & Goldman, 2021); something unprecedented in the last half-century. Over the past year, COVID-19 has exacerbated social inequalities – including, but not limited to, disability, employment status, nationality, income, language, race, gender and social class (James & Thériault, 2020); numerous negative consequences will have an impact on the achievement of all the SDGs, which will leave a mark on humanity for many years (Ottersen & Engebretsen, 2020).

It can be argued that the serious consequences of the impact may be attributed to the unexpected arrival of the pandemic, the unpreparedness of nations, the slowness of their responsiveness and the absence of alternative possibilities. However, we argue that much could have been different.

The current pandemic was predicted as far back as October 2007 (Cheng, Lau, Woo, & Kwok, 2007). The notion of the increasing risk of incursion into epidemics and pandemics had been studied for at least a decade (Bennett & Carney, 2015; Ross, Crowe, Tyndall, & Petersen, 2015; Schuchat, Bell, &

Redd, 2011), and was assumed by the scientific and defence communities (DARPA, 2017; Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, 2020).

It is interesting to note that it was the wealthiest countries that mostly collapsed in the face of the pandemic (Schellekens & Sourrouille, 2020), the result of having invested the bulk of their resources in traditional solutions: believing in the immense responsiveness of their health systems, the ability of science to formulate solutions to new challenges quickly, and the gigantic dimension of their economies and industries.

Almost all of these solutions failed. Even in the biggest financial capitals, health systems collapsed as a result of critical moments of the pandemic (OECD/European Union, 2020) and economies showed hefty falls as not seen for years (Mosser, 2020). With the emphasis on science, the focus on the human subject was lost, ignoring the "attention to the urgent need for each citizen to be equipped to become a health security vector" (Lopes and McKay, 2020a, p. 578). Even if the smallest details of the virus are known (Ortiz-Prado et al., 2020), we still lack knowledge of the human factor and its role in the pandemic. Little attention has been given to the sociological and psychological dimensions of the pandemic and to the two-way relationship between the individual and society which has an impact on health and illness. For a response to a serious threat to the health of a population to be systemic, it needs to be conceptualised as the organic response of a country's entire society and all social institutions in which citizens are active participants (Lopes and McKay, 2020a, 2020b).

The relative disregard for what is human and the sole focus on material resources have placed countless countries on the verge of rupture (Sasangohar, Moats, Mehta, & Peres, 2020). This situation led to political drift and a shift from governance towards populations, a shift which has often been expressed in contradictory guidelines for controlling the pandemic (for example, what happened with masks), and with the invasion of fake news (Van der Linden, Roozenbeek, & Compton, 2020) that perfectly served the goals of some of the most sinister groups on the planet (Van der Linden et al., 2020). Both resulted in the creation of passive and active behavioural resistance of millions of people (Van der Linden et al., 2020).

What failed then? Adult Health Education! It is only by ensuring a health-educated population that it will be possible for citizens to correctly assess risks in the various contexts in which they find themselves.

The brevity with which ALE could be set in motion and the flexibility of adapting its content, mode of communication and vehicles for delivery make it the single most important state tool and an inherent component of every national emergency strategy, with the capacity to support the evolution of guidelines by health authorities.

Methodological considerations

Although this article is conceptual, it nevertheless uses a "multi-methodological" approach – gathering and mixing various sources of data and integrating these to offer a more nuanced understanding of the role of ALE in the context of the pandemic. Creswell & Garrett (2008) point out that research that merges, links or combines sources of data within a single study is able to draw on the strengths of mixed data sources to gain an enriched understanding.

A multi-methodological approach suggests that the variation in data collection methods enables one to answer the research question from a number of perspectives and has the advantage of limiting the gaps which occur specifically when one methodology does not provide all the information required.

In following a mixed-methods research approach in this article, we draw on the data sources as discussed below.

We draw on our practical and research experience through our engagements as the pandemic unfolded, more specifically through the following activities:

- Participation in a study by eight Commonwealth countries (across Africa and Asia) aimed at determining national responses and challenges in the education sector. This comparative study surveyed the responses to the challenges of the pandemic from the vantage point of teachers, parents and officials in Ministries of Education. The study was conducted for the Commonwealth Secretariat[iii].
- Presentation of training for mayors and/or their representatives from over 200 cities on determining local needs in knowledge management and health literacy during the pandemic.
- Participation in the area of literacy and health promotion as part of the Senior Board of the European COVID-19 Taskforce for the

Association of Schools of Public Health in the European Region.

- Engagements with national authorities on prevention and public health action in the context of COVID-19.
- Participation in groups on public health governance and extracting lessons for future pandemics.

In addition, the article draws on the content analysis research conducted by Mabunda & McKay (2020) aimed at determining responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in South African education.

Theoretical considerations

The article also draws on theories of health literacy against the backdrop of a life-course model. It focuses on relevant health learning needed across the LLL continuum and specifically as part of ALE within this continuum. The theories of literacy and LLL show how health literacy and literacy are intertwined. Sørensen (2013) shows specifically how health literacy is contingent on what she refers to as "general literacy".

Health literacy is linked to literacy and entails people's knowledge, motivation and competencies to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information in order to make judgements and to make decisions concerning healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion to maintain or improve their quality of life during their life course (Sørensen, 2013, p. 32).

The theories of public health proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) are all underwritten by literacy competencies. The UNESCO (2010) CONFINTEA VI report resolved that Health Literacy be incorporated into basic education and literacy programmes. This was again ratified in Suon during the CONFINTEA midterm review (UNESCO, 2017). In the specific COVID-19 context, the WHO and the Centre for Disease Control have been making repeated calls for the strengthening of health education and literacy to prepare the citizens to respond appropriately to what is termed "new challenges" of denialism through fake news. The ability to read and to critically reflect on the news is a necessary skill to enhance the ability of citizens to engage with health messages.

Health literacy offers many benefits for improving understandings of health. In this sense, literacy in general and health literacy specifically can

be seen as being akin to Bourdieu's (1986) notion of cultural capital which improves people's access to health information and their ability to use it effectively. This form of social capital is critical to mitigating COVID-19. Originally, Bourdieu (1986) used the concept of cultural capital to explain the unequal academic achievement of children from different socio-economic backgrounds and children who have the cultural capital[iv] and who are therefore better endowed to excel in the education system (in a more deterministic sense). Abel (2008) acknowledges that class-related cultural resources interact with economic and social capital in structuring people's health chances and choices. In this regard, cultural, social and economic resources translate social disadvantage into poor health. When applying this to health outcomes, we argue that health literacy endows a "cultural capital" that might improve health outcomes. We thus argue that the introduction of ALE in a life-stage approach could transmit the "cultural capital" to mitigate poor health outcomes.

Understanding the pandemic

It is essential to understand that a pandemic due to respiratory transmission is essentially a social manifestation insofar as contagion from A to B only occurs if A and B have some degree of social interaction. Even if we contracted the worst infectious diseases but were isolated, we would not be able to transmit them.

The foregoing condition was first studied in cereal fields in the 1950s. One cob only transmitted a disease to another if it was close enough under adequate conditions. This knowledge is now universally accepted as the fundamental foundation of the "epidemiological triad" in all epidemiology handbooks.

This triad consists of the infectious agent, the host and the environment in which it occurs. In the COVID-19 pandemic, the triad is represented by SARS-CoV-2 (Hu, Guo, Zhou, & Shi, 2020), the population and close social relationships.

Effecting control in a pandemic relies on eliminating the agent (in the environment) or if the host is acted on (for example by vaccination) or by interfering with the agent's mechanisms of propagation in the ecosystem where it is found, making its diffusion difficult through the use of masks, physical distance, and repeated hand washing, among other things.

While this is seemingly simple, how is it that over 100 million people could be affected? (The official statistics are certainly below the real value?) Had societal responses been prepared at community and individual levels the outcomes would have been very different from what has been recorded by countries across the globe. And while it may be argued that the unexpectedness of the pandemic made it impossible to have coordinated national and international responses, it may be argued analogously that people learned to drive while minimising accidents by creating a road traffic code; they were able to work in relative safety, with the development of health and safety regulations, and to use the Internet with some security through the development of protection mechanisms. Clearly, for each global risk, humanity has had a tendency to develop preventive mitigation strategies against physical and economic damage.

In this line of tradition, we could (and should) as a society have learned in a timely manner to deal adequately with health risks (Košir & Sørensen, 2020; Lopes and McKay, 2020 a,b).

One of the few certainties in life is that we all end up getting sick and dying. Therefore, health education and health literacy should be clearly conceptualised, using a life-stage model that considers the stages in life with various health challenges and, in contexts of epidemics and pandemics, the way in which citizens need to respond to harness their collective resilience. This form of learning would need to be structured across the education system and more especially across the LLL continuum. This includes the post-school and ALE systems, aiming at the individual and collective and ensuring a state of readiness for chronic and acute situations, such as epidemics.

All people should be able to defend themselves with precautionary measures at the first sign of an epidemic outbreak. This requires that individuals have adequate knowledge to enable an effective response to limit the progression from an epidemic to a pandemic. For example, the early compliance with the protocols provided by public health authorities can extinguish the outbreak of an epidemic at the initial stage. Once again, it seems like a simple idea, particularly because the countries most affected were those where the average level of education is among the highest (OECD, 2020a).

Unfortunately, the divergence has been evidenced between theoretical probability (people being able to understand and react to simple

behavioural changes, considering their immediate benefit) and the progression of the pandemic. It was precisely the wealthiest countries, with more education and other resources which registered the worst COVID-19 incidence and mortality rates (Schellekens & Sourrouille, 2020). These countries have older populations; in the current pandemic, the age factor is crucial in the hospitalisation and mortality rates (Goldstein & Lee, 2020; Hoffmann & Wolf, 2020).

Knowledge and well-being

Part of the issue about the populations' inability to have adequate knowledge to deal with the new pandemic problem lies in the almost total dependence of the educational systems on what is learned in the childhood and adolescence phases and its separation from an "education-for-health" knowledge. Without the habit of permanently renewing and updating knowledge according to the assumed health responsibilities, it becomes challenging to quickly integrate new knowledge and even more difficult to transform it into behaviour. Without knowledge, it is less likely that citizens will have the agency to act in ways appropriate for mitigating the spread of the virus and we argue that the lack of health literacy is one of the greatest global health threats. The absence of programmes for health literacy may be partially attributed to the budget for ALE and other non-formal programmes needed for updating knowledge (OECD, 2020d).

The foregoing inability had its counterpart in the vast number of denialists, even among those with higher education (Miller, 2020), and some linked to the health sector (Hoffmann & Wolf, 2020). Instead of defending themselves and those who depend on them, these individuals denied the obvious information and built alternative realities (Miller, 2020). Others less intense in their denialism simply exhibit passive opposition behaviours, which have led to the strengthening of political denialist movements. This resulted in open spaces that were mostly used for the generation of fake news that proliferated into the alternative reality that citizens had to decode (Piller et al., 2020).

Clearly, there was an inability by the health authorities in almost all countries to inform, educate and communicate appropriately with citizens. In countries with more than one official language, there was the problem of multilingual information transmission.

The need for health literacy to at least be able to quickly deconstruct the most obvious information and to receive information that protects from disinformation was urgent in this pandemic and was clearly shown in countries with low levels of literacy, fragile health, and poor health communication systems.

Increasing digitisation in the digital divide

Another sphere of life deeply touched by the COVID-19 pandemic was the need for teleworking, by countless governments during lockdown times (Manokha, 2020). Within months, the digitisation process progressed with a rapidity that was unthinkable in a normal situation. The pressure for digital work provided a catalyst for the digital transition, for Society 4.0. Notwithstanding this, the digital divide also meant additional barriers to learning, bringing about stress and anxiety as the education sector digitally upskilled, and leaving those on the wrong side of the digital divide without education and work. The digital divide is essentially a socio-economic divide, which was exacerbated by the pandemic.

James and Thériault (2020) also refer to the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic brought about rapid and drastic changes that, they state, have shaken all aspects of societies around the world impacting on all domains of life: family, work, leisure, education and exposing the societal inequalities. They point out that the inequalities have also deeply affected access to, and participation in, LLL education across the continuum with disadvantaged people having little or no access to equipment or connectivity to engage online with digital learning at a time at which education and ALE are critical.

The pandemic and social vulnerability

As happens in pandemics, the issue was that the most vulnerable groups are always the most sacrificed (ASPHER, 2020). The greater the degree of vulnerability:

- the greater the impact of the pandemic (Greenaway, Hargreaves, Barkati, Coyle, Gobbi, Veizis, & Douglas, 2020);
- the greater the exposition to job loss (Santos, De Cássia Pereira Fernandes, De Almeida, Miranda, Mise, & De Lima, 2021); and

- the less one understands the instructions about hygiene and protection (Paakkari & Okan, 2020).

The situation is exacerbated by the additional issue of linguistic understanding for migrant groups and refugees (Kluge, Jakab, Bartovic, D'Anna, & Severoni, 2020).

For all these reasons, pandemics are real machines for deepening social vulnerability, while the most privileged groups have the advantages of lower levels of contagion (Sasangohar et al., 2020), increased wealth (Davis-Faulkner & Sneiderman, 2020), and socio-economic and healthcare advantages (Berkhout, Galasso, Lawson, Morales, Taneja, & Pimentel, 2021).

The infection rates seem to be higher among economically disadvantaged people as a result of the less favourable and often cramped living conditions (Waller, Hodge, Holford, Milana, & Webb. 2020).

Another consideration is that to be defined as an epidemic or pandemic, the following criteria must be met:

- There is a communicable disease for which there is no immune response.
- People can carry the disease from one place to another.
- Infectious agents can be deposited on surfaces that are moved from one location to another.
- There are ecosystem conditions for the aggression agent to survive the arrival to a new location.

As for the first condition, each individual in each zone of the planet has an immunological profile more or less adapted to its place of residence. An example of this is when Europeans arrived in the Americas, they spread diseases (Sciencemag, 2015) such as flu and syphilis to which local populations had no resistance, thus causing genocide.

The second condition, the exponential growth, occurs as an increasing number of people travel to more distant places, more often (Tuite, Bhatia, Moineddin, Bogoch, Watts, & Khan, 2020). Tourism and the globalisation of business move billions of people each year, making it possible for an epidemic outbreak to spread from one continent to

another in a matter of days (Emergency Operation Center, 2020). The rapid spread of COVID-19 can be contrasted with the worst pandemic described in history, the Black Death, which took four years to transmit from Asia to Europe (Cesana, Benedictow, & Bianucci, 2017).

The third condition relates to globalisation. Never before has human consumption been so globalised, which allows for an infectious agent to spread within days or weeks across the planet, the necessary time for the cargo logistics (Hanson & Nicholls, 2020). The only requirement is for the agent to survive the transport conditions and to find a place on arrival with an ecosystem to thrive.

Finally, climate change in itself is a huge menace to human health and the animals that accompany humans. Many pathogens need a specific ecosystem to live, with the potential to prosper for decades or centuries, even if there is no contact with humans or animals (Almond et al., 2020).

Climate change, the associated deforestation, the consumption of wild animals, and other contacts with wild areas place humans and the animals that accompany them in much greater contact with microorganisms previously stabilised.

Another consequence of climate change is that it allows microorganisms to survive outside their traditional zones, which has already happened with many different diseases such as Rift Valley fever (Nielsen et al., 2020), the chikungunya virus (Gossner et al., 2020), and dengue fever (Salami, Capinha, Do Rosário Oliveira Martins, & Sousa, 2020).

Finally, global warming will soon pose challenges that are at this moment still unknown. For example, parts of the tundra (the largest ecosystem on the planet) will melt (Feng et al., 2020) and bring microorganisms that have been frozen for millennia into contact with humans that might have or might not have immunisation (Goudarzi, 2016).

Once all genesis conditions are met for the spread of epidemics and pandemics, these contexts will likely return with greater frequency and severity than until now. There have been four pandemic declarations in this century (Da Costa, Moreli, & Saivish, 2020); an average of one every five years, the current one with centurial expression. Keeping this pace, there would be 15 or 16 more pandemics by the end of the twenty-first century, some with a severe manifestation for the world population.

Learning through the pandemic

What lessons are there to be learned from the global experience? From the educational point of view, the framework described above expresses the essentialness of education to play a central role in the toolkit for all disaster management programmes. The pandemic has shown that despite the guidelines of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (United Nations 2015b) disaster management plans on the ground were thin and that virtually no people-centred preventive approaches were readily available both for dealing with the challenges of the pandemic or for "Building Back Better" that requires a focus on the collective human response.

The unfolding of the pandemic has had an impact on the entirety of the United Nations (2015a) agenda for Sustainable Development across its 17 indivisible goals, more especially Goals 3 and 4.

The interface of the SDGs and disaster management conjoins SDGs 3 and 4, and we argue, the LLL approach with ALE must be an essential component of the disaster management toolkit (Lopes & McKay 2020) as a means of engendering collective agency and resilience, including the use of ALE to promote a culture of disaster resilience, support and mutual learning.

We have argued elsewhere (Lopes and McKay, 2020a, 2020b) that the importance of ALE is central to risk preparation. We argue for basic training throughout life stages to enabling health knowledge and preventative behaviours of infectious diseases. LLL is essential for this to happen because health literacy requires updated content that can make real contributions to the various social groups by age, gender, vulnerability, education and learning in the context of a pandemic or in the context of any other disaster that may transpire. We admit that there may be other dimensions that have to be integrated into the solution in addition to the elements mentioned above but we nevertheless argue that ALE as part of the LLL has the immense possibility and flexibility of being able to adapt its content to the enormous differences in message and form that society requires.

Williamson, Eynon & Potter (2020) point out that emergency preparedness as a form of public pedagogy is needed. They refer to the way in which a wide range of materials can be used in public

preparedness for emergencies including leaflets and public information films, interactive websites, audio and video materials, and family and community learning activities. Materials need to be both lifelong (aimed at all ages, from young people to older citizens) and life-wide pedagogies (aimed at communities, businesses and the public sector) which can be conceived to be part of LLL (being socio-culturally embedded).

English & Mayo (2019) refer to the importance of dedicated education programmes, including ALE in contexts of disaster, advocating broader access to quality learning for disadvantaged people or those at risk such as those with low or no levels of literacy and numeracy, ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, individuals with disabilities, prisoners, older people, people affected by conflict or disasters, migrants, refugees, and stateless or displaced persons. In this way, they show a concern that LLL opportunities for all reach those who are "unreached" or let down by formal education systems.

Similarly, Wilson, Osborne & Guevara (2018, p. 300) advocate LLL as essential to the achievement of the SDGs, pointing to the important role of affiliative or collective learning which relies on mobilising people around development challenges. They underscore the role that adult education, particularly in developing contexts, offers to supportive networks of solidarity and community when building resilience to tackle the challenges that individuals and collectives face. Research published elsewhere (Lopes & Romm, 2007, 2008) refers to the critical need for basic literacy skills as a precursor to health literacy. The studies conducted by these authors on behalf of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) aimed to determine the knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour of high-risk populations in relation to HIV/AIDS. They found a high correlation between those people with low levels of information on HIV/AIDS or health education and those with low levels of literacy; the risk was enhanced among refugees and internally displaced people, and mobile populations whose living circumstances made them particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS (Lopes and McKay, 2020a,b).

We argue elsewhere that social capital through support networks afforded by ALE is recognised (particular in African culture) as being critical for strengthening the social infrastructure at a community level and is essential for offering reciprocal support during social disasters,

providing a means of coping and navigating crises. During the pandemic, the "reciprocal communalism" was replaced by the rapid expansion of communication channels, with interaction via the media thus excluding those who lacked the digital means (Lopes and McKay, 2020b).

Agency and resilience in the face of disaster

James and Thériault (2020) refer to the importance of learning and actioning together as a "resource of hope". We argue for ALE within an LLL paradigm which offers one "such resource of hope" particular when countries face disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic and contend that basic and health literacy and health knowledge are essential for disaster management and for strengthening community resilience in order to deal with disasters that might face the world population. Community-based learning has an added dimension insofar as it enables the development of essential "networks of resilience". Communal learning groups have shown to engender trustful and mutually supporting relationships alongside the development of the "hard" skills of content, contextual and practical competencies that can be applied to the social contexts in which people find themselves (Fullick, 2009; Author 2, 2018). Communal collectives provide the basis for the development of agency and resilience by enabling communities and social collectives to gain control over decisions and resources that determine their quality of life and catalyse human agency to collectively tackle the many associated problems.

The development of social capital and community connectedness builds pockets of resilience needed to enable individuals and communities to deal with the negative pressures that have an impact on them (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014, p. 2) and to successfully cope with and navigate around or through crises that have an impact on their health and well-being. Fullick (2009, p. 35) points out that "people in poverty need learning that supports all aspects of their lives and develop capital that enhances personal identity and social solidarity as well as human capital."

Following on from this, McKay (2018, 2020) shows the way in which collective learning contributed to the general humanness and ubuntu[v] of people in poverty.

She refers to learners who participated in the South African Literacy Campaign who, beyond the classroom, worked together to achieve

communal goals such as establishing communal vegetable gardens or helping a neighbour who was ill. Their working together through the pandemic, as the enactment of ubuntu, gave rise to the service-driven activities, reducing isolation and supporting their networks and solidarity, sharing food and providing socio-psycho support to those with health or other issues.

James & Thériault (2020, p. 129–131) in fact celebrate the strength and resilience of the adult education sector in the face of COVID-19 pointing out that during this time of crisis, ALE had been invaluable for the socio-economic well-being of communities, providing critical foundational components for dealing with challenges that persist among the hardest people to reach. They argue that ALE can contribute to equipping citizens with life skills that are critical to their health and well-being more especially at times like this when citizens had to rapidly learn a new language essential to self and communal protection.

Lopes and McKay (2020b) further refer to the "new language" requirements emanating from COVID-19 stating that in addition to understanding the complex disaster management requirements for the various levels of the pandemic, citizens had to learn about viruses, social distancing, flattening the curve, immunity, vaccinations and of late the new COVID-19 variants. This learning has relied on multimodal communication which would have been more effective if populations had received even the least amount of education and health literacy.

Following Nutbeam (1998), Grey & Coughlan (2009) consider health literacy as comprising both cognitive and social skills, arguing that these underlie motivation and ability of individuals to comprehend and respond appropriately in terms of their individual and their communal well-being. They refer to the following foundational domains of a health literate person:

- fundamental reading, writing, speaking and numeracy;
- fundamental comprehension of scientific concepts;
- civic awareness of public issues in order to become engaged; and
- the cultural ability to understand and use the collective to interpret and act on information.

Much of the information has been communicated via social media which has been a prominent tool during the pandemic. Its use has ranged from

disseminating health information to the organisation of "demonstrations and protests at a moment's notice through to offering mutual aid and practical support at individual, community, and organisational level" (Campbell, 2020) as well as for disseminating misinformation and fake news.

Learning, social justice and the pandemic

Lastly, this article draws attention to what English & Mayo (2020) refer to as the social justice dimension that is starkly revealed by the pandemic. The socio-economic fault-lines in the global South have been glaring, with food security being at crisis level. Turok and Visage (2021:130) point out that the main focus of the COVID-19 emergency planning in South Africa (and much of the world) was on readying the health care sector with less focus on the economy. As a result, poor communities have borne more of the burden due to their "precarious livelihoods, fewer resources to withstand shocks, and their neighbourhoods are likely to have weaker social infrastructure and safety nets" with households unable to buy food (2021, p. 131).

While much needs to be done to redress these challenges at a political level, we argue that ALE can serve as a platform for those who fall through the socio-economic cracks by providing knowledge, supportive learning networks and solidarity. This article calls for role players in the health and education sectors in pursuit of SDGs 3 and 4 to recalibrate their roles to become involved in providing health literacy within their own learning communities. Indeed, during this time of crisis all who have access to constituencies, whether through trades unions or political parties and across the education sector, are called upon to hone their disaster management mandate, and to reach out to those people who are marginalised and socially isolated.

Torres (2004, p. 22) sums up the many ways in which adult basic learning can be used to have an impact on personal and communal development especially at times of crises. She states that it improves the quality of life of people by

- giving hope, dignity, self-esteem, empowerment, enhanced self-expression and communication skills, positive attitudes, a sense of the future, better overall objective and subjective conditions for livelihoods and for improving the quality of their lives, and

- enhancing community and civic participation with adult learners increasing their concern about social, environmental and health issues, and citizenship.

ALE is thus regarded as a public good that is catalytic in improving the quality of life.

Conclusion

Therefore, five lessons can be drawn for the future:

1. Epidemics and, more broadly, pandemics have been part of the human path since the primordial times. Despite all the developments, both contexts will continue to follow and, will surely be part of the future of the human being and its accompanying animals: food production, and company, among other things. For this reason, they are infrastructural phenomena and endogenous to the human being, which should be reflected in the processes of learning and citizenship.
2. As the basis for the spread of pandemics is essentially a social phenomenon of knowledge and behaviour management, populations should have access to health education since its genesis, in the broadest sense of the word, can be transversal to the various epidemic threats.
    a. Such education should be broad, LLL, from the beginning of schooling, and follow the citizens' life stages according to their skills and responsibilities.
    b. Such learning should include the ways to care for oneself regarding specific risks one incurs and one's learning of health responsibility towards other people. Education should have a strong focus on adulthood with care for others, in particular children, young people, and older people.
    c. In the COVID pandemic, this is one of the points that has failed the most and therefore needs urgent correction, regardless of more structured and sophisticated actions later, so that the systematic irresponsibility of high-risk behaviours for oneself and the community is not verified again.
    3. The ALE and LLL system must have prior preparation of content

and support infrastructure so that, before each particular threat, the production of specific and efficient formative and informative content is generated (measured by the degree of understanding and adherence of the populations).

4. There should be a communication axis for each social group, emphasising the degree of vulnerability of the target group. Therefore, it is necessary to produce specific training content by social group and education level by providing an ALE approach that encompasses all these characteristics.

5. The digital literacy effort should be greatly increased to include those who have now been most sacrificed by digitalisation in the current pandemic: health workers who are not digitally prepared, people who are not equipped with computer material, older people, and individuals in vulnerable groups. For these individuals, ALE actions have to be developed in the event of a new pandemic.

The approach to improving preparedness for disaster responsiveness, rehabilitation, reconstruction and "Building Back Better" relies on the interface of the SDGs, disaster management, LLL and engendering collective agency and resilience. It is necessary that ALE be regarded as a public good that is catalytic in improving the quality of life.

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i Resilience is defined as "The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions" by the UNDRR (2009).]

ii The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 was adopted at the third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on 18 March 2015.]

iii The study was undertaken on behalf of the Commonwealth Secretariat to examine the impact of COVID-19 on education systems. This research also forms part of the #OpenUpThinking Research Bootcamp which aims, through the establishment of cross-cutting partnerships, to benefit the broad education community by feeding the emerging findings from the thematic streams into the relevant debates and the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in 2021. The research was aimed at providing real-time inputs education processes. The second author was the theme leader specifically in Kenya, India, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. Mabunda and McKay (2020) focused specifically on the impact of the pandemic on South African education.

iv It is recognised that the cultural reproduction theory has been challenged by resistance theories and theories of voluntarism (Claussen & Osborne, 2013). However, we refer to cultural capital in this article as constituting essential health knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour that are necessary to mitigate health and pandemic risks.

v Letseka (2016, p. 113) mentions the African philosophy of ubuntu as referring to a communal interdependence and of being rooted in one's community. It implies an interactive ethic "in which humanity is shaped by our interaction with others, as co-dependent beings, offering key values of group solidarity, compassion, respect and human dignity". As a philosophy, ubuntu privileges "we relationships" in contrast to Western individualism, hence the assumption "I am because we are; we are because I am" suggesting a constructivist ontology in which a person's sense of being cannot be detached from the social context. Ubuntu stresses reciprocity and collectivism. It expresses the values of collaboration, cooperation and community guided by the ethos of care and respect for others and the importance of solidarity in the face of adversity (cf. Mabunda & McKay, 2021).

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

The Women's Shed movement: Scoping the field internationally

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Our paper focuses on delineating and scoping international Women's Sheds, a movement that has emerged within the past decade, mainly in Australia, Ireland and the UK. It addresses two main research questions. Firstly, what is the origin, distribution, nature and intent of Women's Sheds internationally to March 2021? Secondly, how might Women's Sheds be located within a typology inclusive of Men's Sheds and a range of community development models? We employed a systematic search via the internet in 2020-21, followed up by attempted email or phone contact to publicly reported Women's Sheds and like organisations internationally. In the process, we created a publicly shareable blog including a database of 122 existing, previously active, developing or planned Women's Sheds and like organisations to 13 March 2021. We identify four nations where self-identified Women's

Sheds have operated or commenced within the past decade: Australia (61), the UK (30), Ireland (28) and New Zealand (3), particularly during the five years between 2014 and 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic seriously curtailed this previous momentum and development after March 2020. We identify some similarities but also important differences between Women's and Men's Sheds. We propose a typology that accounts not only for the different ways in which Women's Sheds operate and women participate within their communities but also the different ways in which they locally collaborate (or not) with Men's Sheds in different countries. We conclude that Women's Sheds have largely been created by women in order to claim the shed as a positive female gendered space, in order to create an alternative community of women's hands-on practice.

Keywords: *women, shed, history*

Introduction

More than a decade ago Golding, Kimberley, Foley and Brown (2008) explored the genesis and growth of neighbourhood houses and Men's Sheds in community settings. Our paper does similarly in relation to Women's Sheds, which have developed 'below the radar' over the past decade, mainly in Australia, Ireland and the UK, but also in New Zealand. These are the same countries in which Men's Sheds movements have had the most traction over the past two decades. While the number of Women's Sheds measured by the total number of successful and attempted start-ups internationally remains relatively small (122: approximately 4% of the total number of Men's Sheds), there now is a sufficient number and range to begin to map and scope the field.

The history and development of the now international Men's Sheds movement that goes back at least two decades is reasonably well known (Golding, 2015). Golding noted in 2015 that a small number of organisations in the UK had already been operating as Women's Sheds. Our current research suggests that at least six Australian Women's Sheds were operating before 2015, by which time 1,325 Men's Sheds were open (Golding, 2015, p.28). Golding (in press, 2021) identifies that approximately twice that number of Men's Sheds (2,650) were

open to March 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to approximately 120 Women's Sheds.

Barry Golding's (2015) The Men's Shed Movement book includes four pages (pp.364-367) summarising data on the critically important role of women in creating and supporting individual Men's Sheds as well as the now international movement. In Australia where the first Men's Sheds opened over two decades ago, decisions about women's involvement in the shed as participants had typically been made at a local level. Whilst in most Australian Men's Sheds it is solely or mainly men who participate in the shed-based activity, a small number of Men's Sheds have included women as equal members and participants. Quite a number of Men's Sheds have separate programs and days for women but seldom call these programs 'Women's Sheds'. Some 'Women's Sheds' operate out of pre-existing Men's Sheds. A small number of Shed-based organisations are badged as 'Community Sheds' or 'Community Men's Sheds' in order to be more inclusive of women.

Early history of Women's Sheds

Whilst it is too early to write a definitive history of the emerging Women's Sheds movement, there is evidence that both the idea and the practice evolved within the past decade and accelerated in the past five years to 2020. The oldest Women's Shed start-ups that we were able to identify were in Australia: in Forster and Karuah (New South Wales) and Mount Martha (Victoria) during 2010. The Women's Shed, Forster operated between 2010 and 2014 in the New South Wales coastal town of Forster (population 14,000) approximately 300km NNE of Sydney. Set up under the auspices of Forster Neighbourhood Centre (FNC), its original stated intention was:

> *… to support women of all ages and backgrounds. A meeting place – a giving and receiving place. … Representatives from various Great Lakes district organisations and services visited the FNC's Women's Shed to share information about the services that they provide to the community. Some of the group activities included: Free health checks – Blood Pressure & Blood Sugar Check, Catering for community events and the soup kitchen, Fundraising for women, children and families in crisis, Self-defence classes, Local History Walks, Singing and Poetry.*

The current 'Women's Shed Mount Martha' commenced around 20 years ago as 'Kit Kat', seeking to provide 'time out' for mothers with pre-schoolers around Mount Martha, a seaside town of around 17,000 people approximately 70km south of Melbourne on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. Its name was changed when the organisers realised that the name they had chosen as a play on the words, 'Time for a break, time for a Kit Kat', effectively as 'time out for women of all ages', had been patented. The organisers ran a competition among the women to come up with an alternative name, that still represented its image, hence the name Women's Shed. The organisation reported that their image underwent a big change around a decade ago when they found out that the mothers of pre-schoolers had a lot of other options. As more couples were retiring around Mount Martha, the need changed to be more inclusive of older women. The Women's Shed Mount Martha in 2021 meets each Wednesday from 9.30 am to 11.30 am during the school term. Their program is planned for the whole term and includes speakers on relevant topics and a range of crafts. Participants average about 20 women each week, ranging in age from 50 to 90 years. One of the Women's Shed's main aims is to offer friendship and a support system for women that includes speakers and workshops to deal with issues women are perceived to be facing.

In April 2013 at least two other Women's Sheds commenced in the state of New South Wales, Australia: the Narromine Community Women's Shed in the small (population 3,500) rural town of Narromine, and also the Inner West Women's Shed in the inner Sydney suburb of Dulwich Hill. The Inner West Women's Shed slogan, 'Working to Honor and Empower Women' resonates with many of the more recent Australian startups. These have included 'Building confidence, capability and connection' (Port Macquarie Women's Shed, NSW) and 'Empowering women of all ages with practical and creative skills' (Fix it Sisters Shed, Arnclifffe, NSW). The 'Sheila's Shack' also commenced in 2013 in the Gold Coast suburb of Nerang in Queensland.

The earliest Women's Shed to open in Europe was the Ennis Women's Shed in Ennis (population 25,000), the largest town in County Clare, Ireland. It claimed to be one of the world's first Women Sheds running alongside a Men's Shed and a European first. It was set up by a small group of women in January 2014, first opening its doors on 3 April 2014 (Quinn, 2014). According to their Facebook page, Ennis Women's Shed

was set up *'... to promote social interaction and to increase the quality of life and help out in the Community ... a free facility to all women to get out and be active'*. Using the same facilities as the Ennis Men's Shed but on different days or times, women attending the Shed participated in a wide range of activities, including woodwork, sewing, cookery, gardening, painting and arts and crafts. It is unclear how long Ennis Women's Shed remained open. The last entry on their Facebook page on 17 August 2017 noted that *'... the Ennis women shed isn't reopening with the original people [adding] if you would like to restart it I'm happy to walk you through it, but the original people don't live in Clare anymore. I was hopeful when moving back to Ireland to restart but unfortunately, that wasn't to be. I would love it if one or two of you amazing women would take on the Ennis Women's Shed'*.

Despite our best efforts as researchers, we were unable to locate any of the women involved in Ennis Women's Shed, but according to sources from Ennis Men's Shed, the Women's Shed was open for less than one year. It was reported that after a few months, the men 'moved out of their premises to give it to Ennis Women's Shed'. While our source was unsure why they closed, it was believed the reason was most likely due to lack of funding. More recently, a new Women's Shed opened in Ennis, Mná Ag Gaire [Irish for 'women laughing'] Women's Shed, in June 2020. Mná Ag Gaire Women's Shed was born out of COVID-19 when a call for help went out to the local community for help to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff in the local care facilities. It was reported that 50 women responded to the call for help, with 13 care facilities in the area subsequently supplied with PPE.

On completion of this challenge, the women agreed on the need for a space where they could continue to meet, share skills and combat loneliness. One of the founding members observed how many women in Clare struggled with understanding and accessing information, including public health information and employment supports. For those with unmet digital skills, this was seen to be especially challenging. One of the aims of Mná Ag Gaire Women's Shed is to give such women more equal access to technology, resources and digital skills. It was reported these inequalities left many women isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown. Indeed, even now many continue to experience this isolation.

The UK has seen a similar number of Women's Sheds open up across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. According to our records, the first of these in the UK was Porth Women Shed, in Bromley, Wales. It was set up in February 2016 by SHEDNET, a local charity launched the same year to help valley people establish Men and Women Shed facilities and activities. Like most cooperative models, groups met separately. Porth Women's Sheds originally met on Monday and Friday from 9:30 am to 12 noon and 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm, and Porth Men's Shed on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. This arrangement seems to have changed at some stage, with evidence suggesting Porth Men's Shed now occupies a large warehouse on the Rossmore Industrial Estate based on two floors with a dedicated machine shop and a workshop area. In addition, the upper floors consist of a gymnasium and a pool table, and a computer room, which doubles as a music room. On the ground floor are the kitchen and adjoining social area. Despite enjoying such large premises, evidence suggests Porth Women's Shed is now separate. Their work pre-COVID focussed on materials produced in a craft room, selling a range of handmade gifts, vintage clothes, and jewellery in their shop in Porth.

Other 'umbrella', charitable community organisations managing Shed-based community organisations in the UK, such as Age UK and Brighter Futures, operate with the assistance of local development officers who work with the community to develop strategies in line with local needs. The creation of Women's Sheds is seen by some to be a natural development of Men's Sheds. Opening their first Women in Sheds programme in 2018, Age UK noted that:

> *'Building on the success of the [Men's] Shed and in response to local demand, we also offer a Women in Sheds project to open up this creative space to women who would like to share tools and resources in working on projects of their own choosing, at their own pace and in a safe, friendly and inclusive venue. Our Shed is a place for skill sharing and informal learning, of individual pursuits and community projects, of purpose, achievement and social interaction. It's a venue for women to get stuck into hobbies old and new, get creative and make new friendships.' (Age UK, 2019).*

Just two New Zealand Women's Sheds were open pre-COVID in 2020. The 'Sheila's Shed' in Kawerau (Bay of Plenty) was created in 2017 '…

to not only be a creative hub, but also a place where people can learn to make life easier for themselves by learning new skills'. The 'Women's Shed Rotorua' also opened in 2017 but was later renamed the 'DIY Shed' because of perceived unhelpful comparisons that could be made between Women's Sheds and Men's Sheds.

Method

During late 2020 and early 2021 Barry Golding and Lucia Carragher employed a systematic search of Women's Sheds and like organisations via the internet, followed up by attempted email or telephone contact with all reported Women's Sheds and like organisations internationally. We identified the reason for our interest and our intentions both as researchers and community activists for this scoping study. The information we sought was:

- *When was your Women's Shed started, and is it still operating?*
- *Where and when do you meet, and what are the main Women's Shed activities?*
- *Who is the current key contact person for your Women's Shed and how might we contact them?*
- *What are the main aims of your Women's Shed and what is the profile of women who currently participate?*
- *Please share any other information you think is interesting or relevant to us and others about your Women's Shed.*

The shared public database we created with the permission of our informants has not only enabled us to delineate and scope the nature of this rapidly evolving field internationally but has also been of interest and use to Women's Shed organisations, members and supporters in a previously uncharted and unreported field. Barry Golding undertook a similar scoping study to create and circulate a Men's Shed database to inform and support early Australian Men's Sheds between 2005 and 2007. Since blogs were then only just becoming mainstream, the information was updated and regularly distributed mainly to Men's Sheds organisations by email or post. Since 2007 the Australian Men's Shed database has been maintained online by the Australian Men's Shed

Association (AMSA). Since the creation approximately a decade ago of other peak Men's Sheds organisations in the UK (UKMSA), Ireland (IMSA) and New Zealand (MENZSHEDS NZ), searchable 'Find a Shed' pages have been available online via each of these peak bodies that have enabled the sharing and maintenance of information about Men's Shed organisation locations, programs and contact details. While no other reliable or regularly updated Women's Shed database aside from our own has been created internationally, several community organisations and Facebook sites have begun taking up that role nationally.

At least one half of Women's Sheds that were open or developing internationally before the 2020 COVID-19 enforced shutdowns had a publicly available email address on the internet, and most had an active Facebook page or website. Around one half of the rest had a publicly accessible contact name, phone number or physical location identified via an internet search. By March 2021 we had confirmation that a sufficient number of Women's Sheds were open or active before the COVID-19 shutdowns in four nations: Australia, the UK, Ireland and New Zealand, to undertake this quantitative and qualitative scoping study.

Our database has enabled us to identify the scale, scope, spread and diverse nature of Women's Sheds that we regard as timely and potentially valuable. We were aware from our previous research into the impact of Men's Sheds on communities and individuals (Golding, Brown, Foley et al., 2007; Carragher & Golding, 2015), that governments and not-for-profit organisations make funding decisions that rely on rigorously collected quantitative and qualitative evidence and research about participants as well as anticipated and achieved outcomes. While some Women's Shed Facebook sites have shared partial lists of some Women's Sheds (for example Facebook Women's Sheds, Contact List, 3rd Draft, Nov 2018), no reliable evidence or research had previously been available for Women's Sheds. One small, in progress case study of a She Shed in Barnsley, England was underway in 2020 (Lam, 2020). We anticipate our current scoping study will lead to and encourage further field-based international research and critical analysis during 2021.

Women's Sheds defined

Women's Sheds, mostly being grassroots community organisations, are all different. Aside from those with the words 'Women's Shed' included in

their organisation or program titles, we have included other shed-based organisations for and by women in our Women's Shed database that have a similar function (being run by and specifically for women) but which operate under different names. These names include 'Ladies Shed', 'Hen's Shed', 'Her Cave', 'Sheila's Shed' and 'She Shed'. For the rest of our paper, the term 'Women's Shed' is taken to be inclusive of all such like organisations. In almost all cases, the location of the Shed is included in the Shed title, for example, 'Albury Women's Shed' is in Albury, New South Wales, Australia.

While only four community-run Shed-based organisations for and by women call themselves 'She Sheds' (all in England), we are told that some others are colloquially called 'She Sheds'. Evidence online otherwise suggests that the term 'She Shed' popularly refers mainly to personal and private shed-type places and spaces in the house or backyard. A Google search of the term in October 2020 suggested that a 'She Shed' was *'… a female man cave. It is a dedicated space in the home set aside just for the woman of the house. It can be a place for recreation, rejuvenation and enjoying personal activities. Most of all it is a female sanctum dedicated entirely to the woman.* Consistent with the above, a 179 page, full-colour book by Erika Kotite, *She Sheds: A room of your own* published in 2018 (Kotite, 2018) encouraged women to:

> *… Create your very own hideaway for relaxing, crafting, reading, or just to have a private place just for you. She Sheds provides the instruction and inspiration … They've got their man caves, and it's time for you to have a space of your own.*

It is evident from internet searches that many commercial businesses are riding the personal 'She Shed wave', particularly in the US, offering products to help construct or enhance personal or backyard She Sheds.

The notion that there are just two distinct Shed organisation types in community settings based on the gender of the participants is not borne out by the observed range and participation patterns within either Men's Shed or Women's Shed organisations. While men-only or women-only Sheds are most common, in some cases an existing Men's Shed has been reorganised such that men and women can run separate programs on different days, sometimes with separate and parallel Men's Shed and Women's Shed organisations. In order to categorise this diversity that we have observed in the field, we propose a typology by gender, summarised in Table 1, which acknowledges and is inclusive of the observed continuum

in our data between standalone Men's Sheds organisation, exclusively and located separately for men, and standalone Women's Sheds organisations, exclusively and located separately for women.

The Yeoval Shed (in the tiny village of Yeoval in central western NSW, Australia) sits in the centre of this continuum in Table 1, with 'Yeoval & District Men's Shed & Women's Shed' on the sign outside, as does the Frome Shed, incorporating the Frome Men's and Women's Shed in England. Dereel Men's Shed in Victoria, Australia is an example of an organisation called a Men's Shed (immediately to the left in table) but where men and women participate together and equally. Without wishing to unnecessarily complicate the typology, it is possible (indeed likely) that some future Women's Sheds might be asked to offer men some men-only sessions, sessions shared mainly with women, or with men and women participating equally together. Finally, it is important to acknowledge that an increasing number of new Sheds have decided not to gender the space, instead calling the organisation a 'Community Shed' or simply 'The Shed' but running a gendered program on separate days or at different times.

Table 1: A typology of Men's and Women's Sheds by gender

Organisation Names	Men's Shed	Men's Shed	Men's Shed	Men's Shed & Women's Shed	Women's Shed	Women's Shed
Participants	Men only	Mainly men, some women	Men & women together	Men & women separately	Women only day(s)	Women only
Locations	Men's Shed	Men's Shed	Men's or Shared Shed	Shared Shed	Men's Shed	Women's Shed

The implication of this typology for what follows, is that while any group that self-identifies as a 'Women's Shed' is included on our database, it may be a women's program operating within or out of a Men's Shed, perhaps but not necessarily operating as a separate Women's Shed organisation.

Results

We included all 122 Women's Sheds in our database blog (to 13 March 2021) that claimed online to be open or preparing to open at some stage pre-COVID-19. However, we have limited the detailed quantitative analysis that follows to a subset of 80 Women's Sheds (35 from Australia, 25 from the UK and 20 from Ireland) which responded to our request for further information and for which we have a validated and relatively complete data set.

Location and year of opening

The following provides a quantitative overview by location and opening year of all Women's Shed organisations on our database.

Australia

Of the 61 Australian Women's Sheds on our database to March 2021, there is evidence that 58 were still open to March 2021. Of those, more than one half (32: 57%) were in New South Wales, eight (14%) were in Victoria and also in Queensland, five (9%) in Western Australia, four (5%) in South Australia and one (2%) in Tasmania.

The first three Australian Women's Sheds opened around the same time in 2010. Of those 51 Sheds with confirmation of an opening year, 36 (71%) were opened in the four year period between 2016 and 2019. Three were opened a decade ago in 2010 (June: Karuah, NSW; July: Forster, NSW & Mount Martha, Victoria). None were opened in 2011 or 2012. Three were opened in 2013, increasing each year to 2017 when 12 were opened, but dropping off since to just two opening during 2020. Just one was confirmed as closed (Forster) in 2014.

Island of Ireland

Of the 28 Women's Sheds on our database, 25 were in the Republic of Ireland and three were in Northern Ireland. The Sheds were widely distributed across 18 different Irish Counties (with two each in Cork, Clare, Mayo & Galway). There is evidence that 23 were active or open at some time. Of the 16 Irish Women's Sheds with evidence of the year of commencement, all but one commenced within the past five years (2015-2020).

Mainland UK

Of the 30 recorded on our database from the mainland UK, 25 Women's Sheds were confirmed as active or open at some time. Four were in Wales, one was in Scotland but most (25) were in England. Of the 18 with evidence of the year of commencement, aside from Penge and Woolwich (both in London, opened in 2014 and 2015) and Frome (opened in 2020), the balance opened in the three years between 2017 and 2019.

New Zealand

There were only three New Zealand Women's Sheds on the database, two of which opened in 2017. Because of the low numbers, they are not included in analyses of national subsets.

Internationally

A total of 122 Women's Sheds had been open internationally: 61 in Australia, 30 in mainland UK, 25 in Ireland and two in New Zealand. More than one half (53%)of all Women's Sheds were located in Australia, around one quarter (24%) in the UK, one in five (22%) on the Island of Ireland, on the UK mainland and with two per cent in New Zealand.

Women's Shed focus and relationship with Men's Sheds

While most Women's Sheds opened internationally in the same broad time interval spanning five years between 2015 and 2019, national differences become apparent when Women's Shed data (available from the international sub-sample of 80 Sheds) about the relationship with local Men's Sheds and the main focus of the Shed are factored in. Of the 35 Australian and 20 Irish Sheds in this sub-sample, only five in Australia (14%) and one in Ireland (5%) respectively were operating in close collaboration with a Men's Shed. By contrast, of the 25 UK Sheds within the sub-sample, more than two thirds (17: 68%) were working in close collaboration with a Men's Shed, some of which were associated with the Age UK-sponsored 'Men in Sheds' initiative.

Women's Sheds were asked about their main focus. While the espoused responses from most Women's Sheds provided multiple and diverse foci, many Australian Women's Sheds organisations and programs focused on providing a safe and social place to empower women of all ages. The main focus of Irish Women's Sheds was more consistently about promoting social connection and avoiding isolation. By contrast, the UK Women's Sheds were more focused on skill sharing, often in collaboration with a Men's Shed.

What happens in a Women's Shed?

Our findings suggest that friendship, empowerment, and a variety of activities frame what happens in Women's Sheds across Australia,

Ireland and the UK. This includes empowering women through skills development, particularly hands-on skills traditionally associated with men, especially woodwork. This was exemplified in the following response about Shed aims from Albury Women's Shed (in Australia), about *"... empowering women that are learning together about renovation, repair and using tools. ... We help each other to renovate furniture, build garden benches and we contemplate our next project"*. Interestingly, for some Sheds however, the activities focussed on pursuits that are traditionally associated with women, such as knitting, crocheting, arts and crafts, yoga, tai chi and line dancing; activities which are readily available in women's groups not classified as Sheds. For others however, such as Mná Ag Gaire Ennis Women's Shed (in Ireland), the concerns were focused on broader social factors for women, such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and social exclusion.

How are Women's Sheds organised and managed?

Most Women's Sheds across Australia, Ireland and the UK have a coordinator, manager or key person identified on the Facebook page or website as responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the Shed. There are some notable differences, however, with Women's Sheds in Ireland and Australia largely managed by founding members voluntarily. By contrast, in the UK, Women's Sheds are much more likely to be managed under an umbrella body such as Age UK, with a paid coordinator responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities.

While this offers advantages in terms of raising the profile of Sheds and advocating for them, it shifts the locus of control away from the community, as this English example suggests:

> *In May 2019, Age UK decided to close Hartford Women In Sheds (WIS) project. We were only told three weeks ago with five weeks' notice, so it was a complete shock to us. It's a real shame. It's such a good community spirit we have here. A lot of women have the same issues as men, but a lot have additional carer responsibilities as well. They are isolated and the group really does make the difference.*

By 2020 Age UK had also informed local Men Sheds in Hartford that they would be removing their funding as of August 2021. This prompted

the community to take control, and a decision was made to form their own community shed. *'They applied for, and got charity status, and best of all, invited the Hartford WIS, to join them.*

Who are the targeted participants (and who participates)?

In most cases, Women's Sheds promote an inclusive environment, targeting women of all ages and diverse backgrounds. In practice, members' ages range from age 30 upwards, in some cases to 90 years. While the message is typically targeted at women, as for an increasing number of Sheds in England, a mixed model is emerging, with women and men sharing premises but attending on different days or times. Colwyn Bay Men's Shed in Wales, for example, created a parallel organisation comprised of women, the 'Colwyn Bay She Shed'. They meet in the same space in a separate time slot on Monday evenings for craft and a chat (7-9 pm) and Thursday mornings for woodworking or craft (from 9.30 am). The She Shed logo is a shed with a pink bow on top. The call for other women to join describes it as *'... a club for women of all ages or abilities, to learn new skills and to share those that they may have and enjoy with others. ... If woodturning doesn't appeal you are welcome to join us in a cuppa or two and 'do your own thing' and show others or maybe learn something new.'* Similarly, the Hills Women's Shed in Baulkham Hills, Sydney, Australia is described as being 'women focussed', man and family friendly: '... we welcome the community in general, including women from different cultural backgrounds and also some male members'. In Bega, NSW, the 'Two Shed Workshop' targets both women and children and describes its intention as 'addressing the entrenched gender gap in the building industry'.

Some women enjoy creating and participating in a place-based Shed organisation that empowers and involves them in a hands-on activity with other women in a community setting. In some ways, like Men's Sheds, a Women's Shed is fundamentally about somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk with, but in the company of other women. But our evidence suggests that women often have quite different aspirations that vary across national contexts.

Women's Sheds are essentially community places and spaces where women can come together at any life stage, engage in a variety of activities and connect with other women in an all (or mostly) female

environment. While most adopt an organisation title which puts the name of the place first, e.g. 'Port Macquarie Women's Shed', around one third put 'Women's Shed' up front, e.g. 'Women's Shed Seymour'.

Many Women's Sheds have been created as grassroots community organisations, typically led by one or a small number of passionate and well-networked women. Most make good use of social media, particularly Facebook, and some have dedicated websites. Some Women's Sheds have emerged as separate entities or been operating out of, or through, an existing Men's Shed organisation or building, particularly in the UK. Some began or are now operating in an auspice arrangement through an existing community organisation such as a community centre. Others have been set up independently as stand-alone Women's Shed organisations, though relatively few appear to have acquired or own purpose-built premises in a community setting.

A proposed Women's Shed organisational typology

Our proposed three-part typology of Women's Sheds that follows is summarised in Table 2. The organisational typology has been adapted from insights in the health and community engagement literature (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013; Harden et al., 2015) since the broad categories and associated organisational models appear to fit with trends identified within the Women's Shed data.

Table 2 A proposed Women's Shed organisational typology

Models	Characteristics	Typified in:	Relationship with Men's Sheds
Community Partnership	Community partnering with charitable organisations	England	Often close and collaborative
Peer Involvement	Local women supporting peers	Ireland & Australia	Minimal: Autonomous & independent
Cooperative	Connecting women to existing workshops & expertise	Australia & UK	Sharing resources, expertise & skills

Community Partnership model

The 'Community Partnership' organisational model is most evident in the UK (mainly England), with charitable organisations such as Age UK, Brighter Futures, and Footprints in the Community working in partnership with local community organisations to sponsor and open

Women's Sheds, including overseeing the management of programs within them. This model can be seen to be underpinned by a belief that Women's Sheds will be more effective when developed within a larger body that advocates for them nationally. It is pertinent here to add that the UK Men's Shed peak body, UKMSA, has to date been more accommodating of women within Men's Sheds in England than in Scotland (via SMSA) or Ireland (via IMSA).

Peer Involvement model

The 'Peer Involvement' organisational model is the dominant one in Ireland but also in Australia. Most Women's Sheds have originated from the efforts of a small number of highly motivated and politicised local women who have strived to raise awareness of local needs and grow support among their peers locally. Such Women's Sheds are typically autonomous and independent of Men's Sheds, although sharing many of the same principles, albeit from a feminist perspective. Activities are typically agreed upon and organised by women based on peer-based skills sharing (for example, via peer mentoring) as well as via peer support (learning together or sharing experiences) and empowerment (where needs are identified, and women are mobilised into action). In this second model, change is believed to be facilitated by the credibility, expertise or empathy of Shed members.

Cooperative model

The 'Cooperative' model, becoming increasingly popular across all countries with Women's Sheds, but less so in Ireland, has seen Women's Sheds share premises with Men's Sheds locally, but meeting on different days or at different times. This model connects women to existing resources and information, such as sharing workshop equipment and skills. Often men are allocated set time slots to teach the women how to safely use the workshop equipment such as lathes, band saws and other tools and materials.

It is relevant here to note that Men's Shed organisations tend to fall within four broad and sometimes overlapping models. One is the 'hosted model', where an agency seconds staff and other resources, including premises, to bring members together, such as via the Age UK Men in Sheds program in the UK. Another, perhaps the commonest,

is the 'bottom-up' model where a group of men come together to plan the develop an independent, community-based Shed organisation themselves. A third model involves an 'auspice' arrangement in Australia (but sponsorship in some other countries), where the Shed operates under the insurance and organisational umbrella of a separate parent organisation. A fourth arrangement is where a service is provided by a service provider for men who are not in a position to fully self-organise, for example for men with dementia or some forms of disability.

It is tempting here to look at the Women's Shed phenomenon and reflect on the growing number of Men's Sheds opening their doors to women and in some cases to Women's Sheds. We have evidence that it may at least in part be influenced by practical considerations. For example, commenting on Aberdeenshire Men's Shed opening its doors to a group of women, trustee George Pringle (Pringle, 2009) said, *"I don't see any conflict with being a Men's Shed and admitting women. … The fact is we're a Men's Shed three days a week, it's just that we have the ladies group in once a week on a fourth day. When we apply for funds, it asks on the application form whether our ethos is to serve the whole community."*

Patrick Abrahams, a UK Men's Sheds Association Ambassador has recently concluded, based on observations of quite a few Women's Shed start-ups across the UK, that:

> *… they typically follow a different development path than the Men's Sheds in the UK. Women's Sheds often gather a large number of members early on, and this quite rapidly dwindles. This was happening even before the shutdowns forced by the COVID-19 pandemic. By contrast Men's Sheds typically start slowly and then grow. The overall failure rate of Women's Sheds in the UK tends to be much higher than Men's or Community-based Sheds. I think this is caused by the greater need in Women's Sheds of training/support on DIY/woodwork and other skills (or specific planned group activities). By contrast, Men's Sheds seem to be more self-sufficient, in terms of individuals undertaking projects without the need for support, training or group activities.*

This suggestion is not borne out by the Women's Shed data pre-COVID-19 from Australia, where only one established Women's Shed had closed. In Ireland however, we have evidence that six Women's Sheds closed their

doors permanently within one or two years of opening. While lack of resources appears to have been a contributing factor in Shed closures, we also have evidence in at least one case of an unwillingness among men to share resources. Crò Na BhFear Maigh Cuilinn (Men's Shed) in Galway reported that the men did not think it was feasible to share a space with women. They were concerned that sharing a workspace would cause tensions with members and that it would have implications for Shed insurance. For these reasons, the men decided that it would be better for the women to open up their own Shed in the same building and not to share equipment. When the Men's Shed subsequently moved premises, it was reported that the Women's Shed stayed but never thrived after that, and within a short space of time had closed permanently.

While it is clear from the data in our Women's Shed blog that many were struggling pre-COVID with recognition, finding it hard to attract funding and create a permanent meeting place, this problem is shared by many Men's Sheds. In Australia, this may change post-COVID. From 1 October 2020, the ability for Women's Sheds to attract funds within Australia was boosted by the declaration by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) of DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) status of 'community sheds', defined as 'Men's Sheds and Women's Sheds'. To receive this status, the ATO (ATO, 2020) stipulated that the Australian Women's Shed organisation's dominant purposes *'... must be advancing mental health and preventing or relieving social isolation', and 'seeking to achieve those purposes principally by providing a physical location where it supports individuals to undertake activities, or work projects, in the company of others'. Further, either: '... there is no particular criteria for membership for your organisation; or the criteria for membership relate only to an individual's gender or Indigenous status (in that membership is, for cultural reasons, open only to Indigenous persons), or both'.*

Similarly, The Irish Times (11 January 2020) reported the extension of eligibility for funding to Irish Women's Sheds as well as to Men's Sheds. In announcing its availability, the Irish Minister of Rural Affairs (Michael Ring) said that: *'Since its establishment less than 10 years ago, the impact of the men's sheds movement has been phenomenal. ... I've no doubt that the emergence of women's sheds can only be a good thing for community life in Ireland'*. In January 2020, 22 Women's Sheds across Ireland as well as 339 Irish Men's Sheds were acknowledged for the first time as being eligible for a total pool of funding of a half million Euro to help purchase equipment and carry out works.

Funding difficulties associated with setting up a Shed-based organisation in community settings were common to many early Men's Sheds until evidence was available of impact and until the movement gained traction. Once Men's Sheds started to actively network, and research became available to buttress some of their claims about evidence of impact from 2007, the Men's Shed Movement took off in leaps and bounds. By September 2020 approximately 180 research articles, many peer reviewed and including several Masters and PhD theses, had been published internationally about Men's Sheds (Golding, in press, 2021). Until Women's Sheds can gain wider recognition including from researchers, it will be difficult to produce evidence of impact other than informally or by extrapolation from Men's Sheds research.

Despite their positive ideals and early successes, most Women's Sheds in the UK and Ireland were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and several had shut for a range of reasons beforehand including concerns about older women's health and safety in shared spaces. It is very likely that while the need for the types of services and support created by Women's Sheds post-COVID will have increased, the disincentives associated with opening (or reopening) safely, including for older women participating, will have increased. As researchers and community activists committed to being of assistance, we anticipate that our blog and this paper will help to identify some of the common difficulties as well as provide some common solutions and future possibilities.

Discussion

Whilst it is too early to theorise the development of Women's Sheds and the Women's Shed movement through a gender lens at this early scoping stage without data from participants, we acknowledge a body of feminist research (Taylor, 1999, p.8) which *'... demonstrates that gender is an explanatory factor in the emergence, nature, and outcomes of all social movements, even those that do not evoke the language of gender conflict or explicitly embrace gender change'.*

In broad terms, the development of spaces through Shed-based organisations, gendered or not, can be seen as a social movement. Holland, Price & Westermeyer, 2018, p.270) noted that *'By definition, social movements are potential engines of change, disruptive to interests vested in the status quo and potentially the source of new imaginaries*

to live by'. Social movements are purposeful, organised groups striving to work toward a common goal (Tuğal, 2009) to promote social change. Because social movements create social change, they have traditionally been associated with rallies, demonstrations, strikes, and street action that challenge the political elite. Dahlerup (1986) for example, suggests that social movements represent a protest against the established power structure and the dominant norms and values.

This description is however more applicable to early social movements, but by the end of the twentieth century, social movements had shifted their focus away from targeting the state towards a greater focus on society and everyday life. Tuğal (2009) shows how the concern for institutional politics gradually gave way to a concern for civil society. Thus, whereas old social movements were directed against the state, new social movements bypass the state to find original ways of linking the personal, the national, and the global. The central focus of new social movements including Men's and Women's Sheds in community settings is around the creation of identity, and as Tuğal contended, is something which is chosen and defined by the contending group themselves.

The research literature into such new social movements has previously been inclusive of these movements as adult learning sites (Welton, 1993; Walter 2007). More recently, Niesz, Korora, Walkuski and Foot (2018, p.2) have argued a case for developing a new interdisciplinary and multi-perspective research field to *'... pose and answer new and important questions related to formal, non-formal, and informal education'*. They argue that such a field of inquiry *'... would also raise the profile of this scholarship such that it could have greater influence on educational policy and practice, as well as on social movements themselves'* (p.2).

While Women's Sheds appear to be a female response to and mirroring the development of Men's Sheds, they are also distinct and tailored towards how women identify their arguably different needs and interests. There is, for example, evidence as early as 2010 of the intention to create a Women's Shed Network internationally. A Women's Shed Facebook site was founded in July 2010 as 'A place to exchange and share in the building of a Women's Shed Network across Australia and beyond!' In Ireland, Mary from the Women's Shed in Waterford (contacted in January 2021) reported that, but for COVID-19, Ireland would already have had its national Irish Women's

Shed Association (IWSA). They reportedly intend to establish an IWSA as soon as everything in Ireland opens up again post COVID-19 because their aspirations are seen to be different to Men's Sheds. According to Mary, they share values with Men's Sheds with regard to giving back to the community and addressing isolation, but nothing more, adding that 'as feminists, in the nicest possible way, we do not want to come under the IMSA [Irish Men's Sheds Association]'.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was twofold. Firstly, to explore the origin, distribution, nature and intent of Women's Sheds internationally to March 2021, and secondly, to attempt to locate Women's Sheds within a typology inclusive of Men's Sheds and other community models. Our evidence points to the gradual development of Women's Sheds over the past decade, but particularly between 2014 and 2019, in Australia (61), the UK (30), Ireland (28) and New Zealand (3).

While COVID-19 has meant Shed-based community organisations had, to a greater or lesser extent, closed their doors across Ireland and the UK, by March 2021 in Australia and New Zealand, most had reopened. Our evidence suggests that while shut, women continued to find ways to maintain contact with Women's Shed members via Facebook, Zoom and other forms of media and remained resolute that face-to-face meetings would attempt to resume when the COVID-19 restrictions ended.

In just a few years, Women's Sheds have created a range of likely benefits for women's wellbeing, social and community involvement, skills development and empowerment. Across the three main nations considered in this study, we identify three broad models of Women's Shed operation: a Community Partnership model (most evident in the UK), a Peer Involvement model (that is dominant in Ireland and Australia) and a Cooperative model involving local sharing with a Men's Shed (most evident in the UK). This final model is likely to be advantageous in some ways, also to Men's Sheds as both struggle to maintain community support, resources and members post-COVID.

While not a concept traditionally associated with women, we conclude that Women's Sheds have largely been created by women to claim the Shed as a positive, female-gendered space and an alternative community of women's hands-on practice and empowerment. As an emerging social movement,

Women's Sheds seek to promote changes in local communities and raise the consciousness of the issues and problems faced by women. These early findings suggest important directions for future research, including what this new social movement might mean for 'pedagogical praxis' of social movement learning as anticipated by Holst (2019).

We envisage our publicly available database of Women's Sheds will be used to inform and support the development of Women's Sheds internationally. As researchers, we also envisage further studies of Women's Sheds as gendered spaces inclusive of intersectionality. This might include, for example, future exploration of in what ways Women's Sheds are inclusive of participants by class, age, disability, ethnicity and Indigenous status. We also anticipate exploring how, and in what ways, gender is experienced and negotiated in women-only Sheds and in mixed Sheds and how it shapes behaviours in both.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the generosity of spirit of the Women's Sheds who agreed to share information about their sheds and allow it to be made publicly available on our Women's Shed blog https://barrygoanna.com/2020/07/13/womens-sheds/. Without access to this data, this scoping study would not have been possible. While we have made every effort to be inclusive of all Women's Sheds internationally, we acknowledge that data about some Sheds that were closed or offline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the small number of Sheds which declined to provide information beyond the information available publicly, will not have been included or captured.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Echoes of the Grand Tour: Shared international experiences in nursing education

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The pandemic-induced suspension of international study tours in 2020 permits space within which to examine the specific role of the study tour supervisor and student learning. While there is a significant body of literature on student experiences, relatively little attention has been devoted to the supervisor's role. Drawing on a first-hand account by a nurse educator on Australia's New Colombo Plan (NCP) international study tour program, this paper reveals the role's shifting complexities and uncertainties. This discussion provides the basis from which to explore the dynamics of supervisor-student relationships within unfamiliar overseas settings. The original Grand Tour, particularly the advice provided by Sir Francis Bacon in the early 17th century, serves as a frame of reference against which to evaluate the experiences shared by supervisors and students on international study tours. The frequently hazardous situations they face together required them to assume increasing responsibilities. The paper assesses the strategic and theoretical implications arising from this exercise of responsibility, which is grounded in nursing ethics and the goals of public health.

Keywords: international study tour supervisors; the Grand Tour; New Colombo Plan; nursing education; shared learning experiences; responsibility.

Introduction

In 2014, Australia's then Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, announced the New Colombo Plan (NCP) amid some fanfare. The NCP provides scholarships for Australia's 'brightest and best' – undergraduates aged mainly between 18 and 28 – to embark upon educational tours to the Asia-Pacific region. The Liberal-National government's core hope for the NCP was that its 'talented and adventurous' participants would become 'excellent student ambassadors for Australia' (Bishop, 2014). By establishing new educational, economic, cultural and policy networks, they would extend Australia's international influence.

From its inception, the NCP expanded hugely from its initial 2014 pilot scheme in four destination countries (Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong). With approximately 10,000 students participating annually by 2018, it grew to encompass a dazzling array of 40 countries in the Asia-Pacific region (from Bhutan to Fiji, Sri Lanka to Japan). In 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) projected that by the end of 2020 there would be 40,000 NCP alumni (DFAT, 2018). Of course, the onset of the coronavirus pandemic has rapidly deflated such optimistic projections of international student mobility. Not only have foreign students been unable to enter Australia since March 2020, engendering financial crises for many Australian universities; the prospects of domestic students travelling overseas in any foreseeable future have also dimmed dramatically. Yet the suspension of international travel permits a space for reflection on international study tours such as the NCP, focusing here on the tour supervisor role and student learning experiences.

Expectations and responsibilities

There is nothing especially new about international mobility as an essential element of a young person's education. As early as the opening decades of the seventeenth century, the belief in travel abroad as a necessary educational experience was firmly embedded among the

English aristocracy. This was the basis of what came to be known as the Grand Tour, from which mass tourism at least partially emanated (Brodsky-Porges, 1981; Towner, 1985). In his essay of the period, 'Of Travel', Sir Francis Bacon exhorted the (male) brightest and best of his day to seek the guidance of a more experienced, knowledgeable companion before embarking on their foreign sojourns:

> *Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant I allow well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen, in the country where they go; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises, or discipline, the place yieldeth. (Bacon, 1625/2019: 100)*

The Grand Tour went on to become, as late as the opening decades of the twentieth century, an almost obligatory finishing experience for well-to-do young ladies and gentlemen. Invariably accompanied by a chaperone or counsellor, their adventures (and frequent misadventures) became immortalised in such literary incarnations as E.M. Forster's *Room with a View* (1908/2007). Think of the 1985 film version with Dame Maggie Smith as Miss Charlotte Bartlett, the stern but ultimately – ultimately – kindly companion to the free-spirited Lucy Honeychurch (Helena Bonham Carter), on her Italian travels (Ivory, 1985).

Today this phenomenon lives on, albeit modified, with the NCP, the Colosseum and the canals of Venice replaced by Tiananmen Square and Ha Long Bay. The NCP also requires the extension of the chaperone-counsellor role, performed in large part by academic staff, to include tens of thousands of undergraduate students. International study tours have attracted considerable critical scrutiny, on issues ranging from their 'global citizenship' and social justice possibilities to their neo-colonial implications (e.g., Heron, 2019; Neilsen and Weinmann, 2020; Schulz & Agnew, 2020). Within the nursing context, this has particular relevance with respect to the application of Western medicine in NCP host nations.

The reported benefits for students accruing from international study tours have included: enhanced cultural competence; a feeling of

connectedness to others; a heightened awareness of healthcare issues in Australia and internationally; enhanced leadership skills; emotional development; and personal growth (Ferranto, 2015; Halcomb, Antoniou, Middleton & Mackay, 2018; Olave-Encina, Moni & Renshaw, 2020; Tran, Stafford, Soejatminah & Gribble, 2020). The challenges students may face on study tours include communication barriers; culture shock; and feelings of isolation (Halcomb et al, 2018; Matthew & Lough, 2016). The emerging literature on supervisor experiences has emphasised the importance of appropriate preparation of students, the provision of quality supervision and the development of good practice guidelines for the supervisor role (Abery & Agnew, 2018; Browne & Fetherston, 2018; Tan, Flavell, Jordan & Ferns, 2016; Winchester-Seeto, Rowe & Mackaway, 2016). The predominant emphasis has remained on the student experience, as in evaluations of the NCP's effectiveness commissioned by the Department of Education and Training (DET), in consultation with DFAT (e.g., ACIL Allen Consulting, 2016). To complement this literature, we focus on the role of the international study tour supervisor in relation to student learning. Therefore, the primary unit of analysis is the evolving supervisor-student relationship, within a context of unfamiliar overseas settings and experiences.

A note on method

The method we adopted to explore these issues was, in contrast to Bacon's lyrical depiction of the tutor's role, doggedly prosaic. Still, mindful of Bacon's advice to 'let diaries be brought in view' to encourage young travellers' learning (1625: 101), we drew mainly upon the first-hand diary account of a nurse supervisor, supplemented by students' diary entries and a short on-tour video in which students reflected upon their experiences.

The adoption of a first-person narrative as our primary source may suggest an autoethnographic approach, a method that has been implemented in several higher educational settings (e.g. Gale, Pelias, Russell, Spry & Wyatt, 2013; Golding & Foley, 2017; Hains-Wesson & Young, 2017; Taylor, Klein & Abrams, 2014; Warren, 2017). However, we might hesitate in presenting our approach as purely autoethnographic: the research process leading to the first-person narrative emerged from a collaborative process with other international study tour supervisors from several disciplines and institutions. We sought advice from them on the

most appropriate ways to evaluate the role's effectiveness in relation to student learning. We also subsequently sought confirmation from them that the first-person account accorded with their own experiences. In short, the primary criterion was whether or not the account 'rang true' – with the respondents affirming that it did. Hopefully, this approach should alleviate concerns about drawing general observations from a personal account (Walford, 2004: 209), while the inclusion of student reflections adds a further dimension to the analysis.

Both the international nursing study tour supervisor and students can face daunting health situations and experiences, often requiring them to assume unexpected responsibilities. These include hygiene standards; availability of equipment; workplace health and safety; the suitability of different medical procedures; and interactions with patients and hospital staff. They also extend to religious and political differences (such as, in this case, attitudes toward abortion in host locations). The list of additional, often informal duties required of the nursing supervisor comprises extended pastoral care (such as personal counselling); travel planning and administration; crisis management; cultural liaison; medical interventions; compliance assurance in overseas locations; monitoring hazards; conflict resolution; and frequently protracted negotiations on sensitive issues. Nor is this list exhaustive; readers will no doubt identify other work demands, including parallels with their own work experiences, in the following first-person narrative.

Planning and preparation: learning the hard way

I have worked at four different universities and have taken undergraduate students, predominantly nursing students, on ten field study trips over the past twelve years, most of these study trips funded with NCP grants. I have found the field study trips to be exhilarating and exciting. Yet the past year has been too much of a rush, with three field study trips in under a year – the field study trip organising and planning takes up way more than my inadequate workload allocation. It has been difficult to be organised in time to meet the spending requirements for NCP funding of up to AUD$3000 per student. The admin tasks fall to my school – I have some assistance with this. However, I must double-check everything, and I am also the person ultimately responsible when things go wrong. I have not stopped working on the study tour all year and it is exhausting.

Work commences on NCP grant applications from early March. I need to read copious information, obtain quotes for potential flights, and find a university preferred third-party provider with a contract. Third party providers are usually non-government organisations with connections in the country we plan to visit. The third-party provider arranges the schedule; if no suitable provider is available, we organise the schedule, in collaboration with a university in the destination country. A proposal needs to include components such as a budget, risk management, due diligence requirements, timetable, and benefits to the university. Next is sending out emails to all students inviting expressions of interest and then meetings with various stakeholders to discuss criteria for selecting study tour participants, followed by interviews with, and selection of, student participants. We then organise workshops for the successful students and verify their eligibility (e.g., current Working with Children Checks). I keep a list of past students and invite some to talk about their experience to the students going on the next field study trip. The list goes on.

The complexities and costs of taking students on tours have increased steadily in recent years. I have needed to 'let go' a bit – I was told I need to delegate more work to administrative staff. Yet this is difficult, as we have very few due to recent restructuring, leading to greater workloads for supervisors. I am on call 24/7 during study trips and often get contacted during the night or on weekends. There is very little, if any, time off. I also have a corporate credit card; so, if students are sick and we need to pay upfront, I need to be there and get the documentation, then when I get back home apply for a refund from the insurance company. On my first few trips I also paid for my own meals until an academic from another university advised me all costs were reimbursed; so, since then, I have been claiming back and keeping every receipt (translated from different languages). I learned the hard way.

While supervising several international study tours in recent years, I have witnessed the transformation of students into more culturally aware, future professionals. They observe poverty in villages and assist local health workers, particularly NGOs offering health care clinics and health camps. Students provide services such as taking patients' histories via an interpreter; they also learn to use basic language to ask questions, record and assess physical observations, including blood pressure, pulse, perhaps a temperature, urinalysis, height, weight. They sometimes sit in with local health practitioners who may identify a

health issue and recommend medication or possibly a hospital referral; referrals aren't always possible as they depend on availability, transport and cost. Occasionally students have donations they use to assist with referrals or other patient services; the local chief may need to be consulted about this or sometimes it may be funded by a local women's cooperative. Students learn about the value of health care and the use of non-traditional medicines, which may be the only available option. They also learn to appreciate the strengths of Western medicine.

Occasionally, students experience their own serious health problems. Several years ago, I was faced with a very unwell student with undiagnosed diabetes. The local hospital had very basic care provided in twenty-bed open wards, where there were bedpans under beds with faeces and a ventilated patient in another bed opposite, no infection control and no basic testing. Unconvinced by a diagnosis of tick-bite originating in Australia, we requested a transfer to a larger private hospital. I accompanied the student for the transfer, while my co-supervisor stayed and counselled the other distraught students. I remained with the sick student from around 7.00 am to after 10.00 pm each day for over a week. I have been with students having blood tests or intravenous therapy and, although I requested health staff use sterile gloves and wash their hands, even offering my own antibacterial gel, such requests were ignored. It is difficult to watch this happen, helpless.

On most trips I have had no difficulties with student behaviour, although I have had issues of students fighting with each other, inviting men or women back to the hotel or having wallets stolen. I have been woken up in the middle of the night to deal with students who are drunk, homesick or experiencing various other problems. On a couple of occasions, I have had to share my room – for example, once when a student revealed thoughts of self-harm to me. I always have my own room with two beds, if possible, just in case such situations arise. When there are any issues, students are all counselled, shown the code of conduct they signed and told they could be sent home if there are any further problems. Occasionally, students are sent for medical care and it is usually me who goes with them. Students are asked to disclose health issues, in confidence, to the supervisor before the trip; however, they do not always disclose issues, particularly mental health concerns, until we are on the trip. There are many benefits and some risks involved with the supervisor role.

A typical week

Heading off on another international study tour to South-East Asia with twenty undergraduate students. Two supervisors are required on each field trip: the main supervisor does all the planning, preparation and administration, while also mentoring the co-supervisor, who usually has not been on a study tour before. I have observed that supervisors new to study tours often, like students, find problems such as communication barriers, culture shock and isolation deeply confronting.

Finding another staff member to come with me is always fraught with difficulty – I usually talk someone into it, to be honest. I try to paint a positive picture about the benefits for students and staff, but it's a big ask. Interestingly, there have been no male supervisors on any trip I have been involved with – the field study supervisor role in nursing appears to be women's domain (see Britton, 2017; Gill & Donaghue, 2016); perhaps part of a pastoral role expected of women but which limits their promotion possibilities?

I am feeling confident we are organised for this trip. I requested information about how to get the train from the hotel to the destination university. I do not want the students to be concerned about this and need to at least look like I know what I am doing! We need to arrive in time for the early morning orientation session and buy transport system cards. This field study is different from most others, with no third-party provider to arrange transfers, which makes things difficult. My leadership skills are tested to the max on these trips. I can delegate some tasks to administrative staff and the co-supervisor, but a great deal still rests on me. This responsibility can be onerous, and I have to be organised.

As a consequence of having to deal with sick students in the past, I always interview students personally to discuss the reasons why they want to come, what they will bring, any health issues and travel requirements (e.g., additional insurance). I have to manage waitlists of students keen to still come if others withdraw. I have to be mindful of the possible loss of deposit money and how much the university needs to pay on top of costs of flights for staff. I sent out reminders early on the day we leave, for students to wear their university T-shirts so we can find each other. I also remind them to bring their passports and to check their ticket details are correct. One was not: a bit frustrating. Things like late check-out and early check-in have not been arranged yet. I doubt I will get much sleep.

We meet at the International Airport gate three hours before our flight. The length of tours varies but I try to keep it to 18 days as no extra workload hours are allocated for longer trips. There are usually very limited 'free' days on field study trips and even this time involves meetings with my students or colleagues and students from one of the overseas universities we're partnered with, in addition to being asked to do presentations at the last minute. It's very difficult to refuse to attend additional meetings or events and there is often politics at play behind the scenes that I am not always privy to – so my work includes being strategic.

Day 1

Our first day here. My co-supervisor and I enjoy exploring the town, checking out shops and having a couple of meals together. It is good having time to get to know other academics on these trips – we just do not get time to socialise at our home campus, given the current workloads. It is also good to get to really know the students. They're great so far, although a couple of them enjoy an alcoholic drink or three, I suspect – so I need to be mindful. Difficult to balance the approach as these students are all over eighteen and adults, yet they are here with NCP funding, so some responsibility is required. Off to bed. Early start tomorrow.

Day 2

Excited about today. Hope students didn't party or stay up too late last night – we want a good introduction with our hosts. Another Australian university's staff and students are here on the same tour with us. All wearing their nursing uniforms. We were not aware of this – difficult. Also, the University advised us to bring cards, not gifts, but the local university staff have brought gifts for us. Embarrassing! Etiquette is always challenging on the first visit to a new country. Smothering versus caring again: one of our students has a health issue but wanted to be a model for one of the lecturers to perform acupuncture. Concerned, I advised the student to let the lecturer know but the reply was 'I have had it before'. You have to be mindful of issues, while also wanting students to make well-informed autonomous decisions. A good first day, albeit busy and heat is sticky. Applying for a more senior University position – closing date while I am here, so I have to work nights and weekend to submit on time.

Day 3

All going well. The day was a bit slow – we went to a local village; ended up doing our own tour, as the local university had not organised the scheduled visit. It rained; we ended up waiting for ages to get Ubers back, as both our hosts and the other Australian university people had left. Very hot and steamy; no pool and hotel air-conditioning faulty and centrally controlled, so we cannot bring the temperature down. Walked 15,597 steps today. Feet killing me but OK!

Day 4

Lots of lectures and talks but no contact with real patients. I realise the need to protect patients, especially in this private health setting, but surely, we can have a bit more of an interesting agenda. One student became upset this afternoon after ringing home: homesick and did not want to chat; we offered support and her fellow students gathered around her on the train to provide support. One younger student who has not been overseas before was experiencing some culture shock. Chatted to her about her feelings – she is enjoying the trip but was hoping for more hands-on experience. Hot and steamy again and we all have to wear full uniform. Just stayed in my room tonight – tired!

Day 5

Excursions planned for today were cancelled. Had a beautiful day, though, as one of the students arranged an impromptu tour. Visited several local villages and a little town in the middle of a still-active railway line. Students decorated and released lanterns into the sky – but we found out releasing lanterns is illegal, although no one gets fined. Police came along and told us to stand back from the railway tracks, just before an actual train came. It was rather exciting – again balancing the safety of students against the cultural experience. One student has a headache – probably too much heat, so I encouraged the student to stay in the shade and rehydrate – encouraging self-care but also keeping an eye on any potential concerns. Got back to the hotel about 6 pm. One student crying; had received bad news about a family member with cancer. We discussed options, together with my co-supervisor (with the student's consent). The student will decide tomorrow whether there is a need to fly home early or not. Students are a great bunch so far, enthusiastic and prepared to ask

questions of hosts. Need to nip in the bud any bitching or gossiping and not take sides – being diplomatic and supportive.

Day 6

Taking students to the local Indigenous area closest to where we are staying. We will also visit the Indigenous Museum. I need to ensure students are not just sitting around but get to experience the traditional people here, which they will not get just listening to lectures. Students also want more hands-on at this clinical placement. Difficult as local hospital staff not letting our students even see any patients; just being taken through wards and then having talks – they need more. Students wearing their stethoscopes in the hope they can take some blood pressures or listen to hearts or lungs, under strict supervision and with patients' consent. Looks like not for this trip?

Day 7

Interesting day. One student went to the loo and sat on a blood clot that had been left by someone on the toilet seat – we gave her antiseptic wipes and advised her to keep an eye out for infection. I finally asked one of our host Registered Nurses – via a student interpreter – if our students could please talk to a patient (with patient consent). I thought she was going to collapse when I asked, but she did broach the issue with several of her colleagues. Eventually, students were permitted to talk to a young, English-speaking, Pacific Island patient. He said he had been in hospital for two weeks and had not talked to anyone; so, he was very happy to talk to the students. I wonder if the nurses here talk to patients much. Nurses do not appear to do many of the tasks we do in Australia, medical dominance here is big-time. Abortions are not performed here – maybe in other hospitals, although local staff did not want to discuss this. It is 11.30 pm and I just found out about a typhoon warning, with strong winds and rain headed to where we are staying tomorrow. Not wanting to alarm the students but one of them already saw the warning and posted it on social media. Just reading my info about typhoons: keep passport with you, wrapped in plastic, and follow all weather warnings. Have to think about things like water and food if the electricity goes off – and keys may not work for the hotel! Yes, an interesting day.

This field study passed quickly, as they all do, the days fly. The students have experienced a different culture and had time to discuss quite a few of the health issues they observed. We debriefed regularly and students kept field study logs to write up their final assessment on our return home. I completed all the hard copies of the clinical summary assessments with the students. Behind with my emails back in Australia – will catch up when I get home.

Home again

Feeling normal again after a few days back in Australia. It is exhausting constantly thinking about the students and wanting to make the study tour experience thought-provoking and challenging yet within their scope of practice. I want to be a mentor as well as their supervisor, counsellor and mediator. Good to stop issues from escalating, talking to both sides, while being supportive. Constantly need to think about students' safety, their learning and finally their transformation into tomorrow's nursing leaders. The field studies help shape the students' perspectives about the 'other', taking them out of their comfort zones as they see and become immersed in different cultures and health systems. Supervision is pleasant, enlightening and can be exhausting yet fun, educational – and you never stop learning. I love to watch the students become more confident in their own leadership abilities, developing into lifelong learners, and become much more culturally literate and aware of the needs of others 'different' from themselves. Hopefully, I also inspire the students to keep learning.

Postscript: A poisoned chalice?

On returning from the field studies, I am expected to be up and ready for work within a day or so. I have the usual unit coordination role as well, which includes setting and marking assessments. I also have a field study presentation session where students invite family, friends and academic staff to presentations – songs, music, reflections and also an opportunity to debrief and catch up again. I also offer students a debrief session on their return, if needed.

I was told by a male colleague when I submitted an expression of interest to take on the supervisor role the first year I arrived at the University (several years ago) that I had been given 'the poisoned chalice' and indeed sometimes

it does feel like that. I have applied on several occasions for a senior academic role and have been knocked back. It feels at times that international study tour supervision is considered neither a leadership role nor worthy of promotion. During the past eighteen months, I have attempted to recruit a colleague to share the supervisory role, for succession planning, as I do not intend to keep this role for an additional three years. No one volunteered for the role; however, after offering to mentor another academic as part of succession planning, I may be finally able to step out. It does appear there is a fear of the poisoned chalice. Staff members don't seem to be given much credit for field study supervision – I think it's viewed as a privilege. Maybe it is – but it is also so much additional work. I often feel invisible.

Adventures and misadventures, responsibility and resilience

For the supervisor, then, 'learning the hard way' emerges as an insistent mantra, the role's unanticipated demands revealed only through its performance. Students' reflections on their study tour participation should help to amplify the complexities of the role, with a particular focus on the supervisor-student relationship and learning outcomes. Despite occupying very different worlds over a century apart, both Lucy Honeychurch's fictional exploits in *A Room with a View* and these nursing students' experiences exhibit a common 'coming of age' quality. Like Lucy, the students are embarking on a journey driven by curiosity and discovery, punctuated by a series of challenging events that inspire reflection. A brief excursion into the novel's most pivotal scene (Sullivan 1976: 217) may help illustrate these shared characteristics and their significance for international study tour participation.

Having ignored the dire warnings of more seasoned Pension Bertolini residents, Lucy ventures unchaperoned into the potentially dangerous streets of Florence. On reaching the Piazza Signoria, she witnesses a harrowing scene: a fight between two young men, culminating in one being stabbed – fatally. Lucy then spots her fellow guest and emerging love interest, George Emerson (a conveniently passing plot device); he approaches, whereupon she faints into his arms. For Lucy, her first encounter with death – in a foreign land – is life-changing, inspiring 'the thought that she, as well as the dying man, had crossed some spiritual boundary.' She feels compelled to reassess her priorities and ambitions, charting a new, more adventurous future for herself, in which she assumes responsibility for the outcomes (Forster, 1908/2007: ch. 4).

Several of these student nurses experienced comparable epiphanies, also in unfamiliar territory, albeit in less romantic circumstances. This transformative sense imbued their subsequent observations, recorded in diary entries and the short on-tour video, in which students reflected on their inextricably related personal and professional development. When faced with death for the first time, they, like Lucy, were motivated towards a re-evaluation of the world and their places within it. As one said, 'I learned more about death in a different culture and gained a greater sense of respect for life.' In contrast to Lucy, though, fainting was not an option. Death assumed a rawer, protracted, less dramatic form, heralding a probable future of daily care for the sick, injured and dying.

Examination of these students' comments rendered this 'coming of age' dimension undeniable, as they explained the shifts in their previous medical, cultural and social orientations. To varying degrees, their views on Western and traditional medicines, 'developed' and 'developing' nations, gender relations, health funding and the relative status of nursing were confirmed, strengthened or undermined. Greater openness to other perspectives surfaced, as the unavoidably global nature of health issues (even before the pandemic) and the need to draw on multiple sources of public health knowledge emerged as recurrent themes. Students affirmed how their immersion within an unfamiliar setting had deepened their cultural awareness and appreciation of 'the other', accelerating their in-depth learning and their ability to assume decision-making roles. This 'coming of age' quality was also evident in the supervisor's observation that, while the students were all adults, they were still maturing personally and professionally.

Illustrative comments included: 'Seeing the world from more than just one perspective'; 'I am very privileged to have been a part of this trip. I have learned about a new culture and their health care system, met new people and created new friendships'; 'Recognising the value of our own health system'; 'The trip was something I will always remember and, though it was hard at times, I learned a lot in the communities and developed my communication skills'. On occasion, their comments are reminiscent not only of Bacon but of his celebrated predecessor, Montaigne (1575/1993: 57), who cautioned against the limitation of 'mere bookish learning'. In one student's words:

> *Being in the field gave me a quality experience and better understanding of critical issues affecting healthcare delivery in developed and developing countries that classroom learning would not have provided me.*

The multi-faceted character of the international study tour experience was captured by students' comments. They expressed intermingled sensations of excitement ('Dive in', 'Jump in'); apprehension ('prepared for the shocking'); and adventure ('pushed out of my comfort zone'); but also contemplation on a life-changing experience ('something that will stay with us forever'); assuming new responsibilities ('taking the lead'); and ensuring cultural sensitivity ('be mindful of surroundings, maintain respect in a foreign country').

Therefore, students consistently expressed their appreciation of their study tour experiences, while several emphasised the critical importance of the supervisor-student relationship to maintaining their personal safety and enhancing their learning possibilities:

> *I personally struggled with some aspects of the field study trip although the supervisor made herself available 24/7 to those who needed it.*

> *The supervisor was enthusiastic, experienced and provided hands on education and allowed us to direct the way in which we wanted to participate and learn to ensure we got the best out of our experiences.*

> *The supervisor facilitated time for reflection and debriefing with students, if they wished to, that I found vital to coping with some of the field study trip experiences.*

These nursing students experienced an intense series of events that could be extremely confronting. Their resilience was repeatedly challenged, while often being deepened; thus students, on seeing the limited facilities in their host communities, committed to becoming more resourceful and responsive to patient needs – for example, 'I'll be far more empathetic towards my patients'. Their personal and professional development was extended, occasionally in unanticipated ways, beyond the limits of campus-based learning. They assumed increasing but still supervised responsibility, with the need for

supervision diminishing commensurately. As with Lucy, managed misadventures could be not only anticipated but welcomed, as avenues for the learner to acquire knowledge and experience on 'the branching paths of Youth' (Forster, 1908/2007: 53).

Echoing the Grand Tour

Hopefully, the supervisor's first-hand narrative, coupled with the students' reflections, should illustrate both the possibilities afforded by international nursing study tours and also the problems they pose. These problems can be particularly intense in overseas medical settings. The nursing supervisor role, in particular, requires the repeated navigation of confronting situations, often involving differences in cultural, political and medical beliefs and practices. Students, too, are repeatedly venturing into unknown territory, geographically and experientially, encountering situations that may diverge hugely from their initial expectations. Their learning experiences include the increasing assumption of responsibility – but still managed by the supervisor. They are both, then, 'learning through life experiences as distinct from learning through the academy' (Golding & Foley, 2017: 384) – but also within the academy. The supervisor's comment, 'to at least look like I know what I am doing', is instructive in this regard: the appearance of experienced, knowledgeable supervision is essential to students' confidence and ability to cope with such challenges as 'culture shock'.

Evaluating student observations in conjunction with the supervisor's narrative highlights students' increasing assumption of responsibility, or responsibilisation (Gastmans, 1999; McLintock, 1995; Selznick, 2002; Shamir, 2008; Warren, 2017). Students recognised that their experiences could be confronting, arduous, demanding and fun – often simultaneously – and that their growing self-management of these complex elements was integral to their learning processes. This process of managed responsibilisation (the 'balancing act' described by the supervisor) is one to which both supervisor and students contributed. The learning possibilities afforded by international study tours were consequently inseparable from shared supervisor-student experiences, through which a sense of collective purpose and solidarity, often including host communities, was constructed. Students' progressive responsibilisation was underpinned by the practical expression of nursing ethics (for example, ensuring patient consent) and the global goals of public health.

As noted in this paper's introduction, the pandemic-enforced suspension of international travel has permitted space for reflection on international study tours, the work performed by academic tour supervisors and student learning outcomes. Following the pandemic's onset, the issues highlighted above – hygiene standards, availability of equipment, workplace health and safety, the suitability of different medical procedures, and interactions with patients and hospital staff – have assumed massively greater significance and new, potentially life-threatening dimensions. As front-line workers, nurses have had to reappraise their roles and their inherent hazards. The responsibilities of the international study tour supervisor demand commensurate reappraisal, with no return to a post-pandemic world on any foreseeable horizon.

The evolving supervisor and student roles are inextricably linked, their shared experiences contributing to the development of students' growing responsibility and resilience. Consequently, the supervisor role and students' learning experiences should be understood with respect to these interrelationships. A strategic re-design of the rule, clearly linked to career planning and development, would prioritise the supervisor-student relationship and its importance to learning outcomes, reducing the role's 'poisoned chalice' aspects. This would also increase the role's visibility and attractiveness to potential future supervisors. Previous student international study tour participants, with their unique experiences, knowledge, and insights, could make valuable contributions to the role re-design process – for example, in identifying what personal qualities should be seen as essential.

Conclusion: shared learning experiences and outcomes

Each international study tour offers a unique set of possibilities, often involving a process of self-discovery and personal re-evaluation for all concerned. This uniqueness is both attractive and intimidating, as both supervisors and students are largely alone in a foreign setting. The benefits students can gain from participation in international study tours are potentially life-changing, their experiences of other cultures enhancing their educational, career and personal development. In the specific case of undergraduate nursing students, knowledge of non-Western medicine within diverse health settings can prove especially invaluable.

The study tours can also present significant, often unforeseeable problems and challenges. Yet, suitably managed by an experienced supervisor, these can provide important learning outcomes for students, with their development of increasing responsibility and decision-making abilities. As detailed here, the international supervisor role affords the opportunity to contribute in multiple ways to educating an emerging generation of nursing professionals. The difficulties it may pose, even within a currently uncertain future, should not be allowed to obscure its intrinsic public health contribution and its value for student learning. These can be enhanced by a consistent focus on the crucial supervisor-student relationship.

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Acknowledgment: We would like to thank Jessica Pabian, Chantal Roberts and the many students, colleagues, host communities and organisations who made this paper possible.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Becoming a social entrepreneur: Individual and collective learning in communities of practice

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Abstract

This article aims to analyse how one becomes a social entrepreneur. For this purpose, we interviewed the founders of five social entrepreneurial organisations active in the field of social integration in Sweden. To analyse our data we found situated learning theory in communities of practice to be a relevant lens. The results indicate that these social entrepreneurs' previous participation in integration activities was a critical factor in generating ideas for new and innovative activities. Moreover, the network of individuals and organisations that they obtained in this period assisted them on the way to learn essential skills and develop their social entrepreneurial organisations. Becoming a social entrepreneur thus seems to be a result of both individual and collective learning processes that entail learning from concrete experiences embedded in specific organisational settings.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, communities of practice, adult learning, situated learning, experiential learning, organisational learning

Introduction

This article aims to analyse and understand the process of learning to become a social entrepreneur. We are particularly interested in how the founders of five social entrepreneurial organisations (six individuals) became successful social entrepreneurs within the field of social integration in Sweden. There is currently no consensus on how the concept and phenomenon of social entrepreneurship is to be defined (Alegre et al., 2017; Saebi et al., 2018). In this article, we define social entrepreneurship as pertaining to non-profit organisations that apply innovative practices to solve sophisticated and complex social problems (Austin et al., 2006; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Hill et al., 2010; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; Luke & Chu, 2013; Newbert, 2014; Peredo & McLean, 2006). This definition is in line with Choi and Majumdar's (2014) conceptualisation that considers social entrepreneurship as a conglomerate of several sub-concepts such as social value creation, the social entrepreneur, the social entrepreneurial organisation, market orientation, and social innovation (Choi & Majumdar, 2014, p. 364). In this context, individuals and social entrepreneurs play a crucial role because they are the source of action (Chell, 2007, 2008). Many scholars have acknowledged their importance since it is, in fact, social entrepreneurs who initiate an idea and actualise it in the form of an organisation (Bornstein, 2004; Light, 2009; Thompson, 2002). Hence, we analyse the learning processes in becoming a social entrepreneur in relation to the process of creating a social entrepreneurial organisation.

This article's focus is not, however, to examine whether learning to become an economic entrepreneur is different from learning to become a social entrepreneur. Rather, the focus is to explain in detail how the informants of this study learned to become social entrepreneurs. There are some studies on entrepreneurial learning that are primarily about economic entrepreneurship, but few in the context of social

entrepreneurship. According to Wang and Chugh (2014), most of these studies predominantly use experiential learning theories that focus on cognitive aspects of learning, emphasising the role of self-reflection.

Although the number of social entrepreneurs is increasing, the empirical works that study their learning processes are relatively limited (Barinaga, 2013; Cope, 2003, 2011; Howorth et al., 2012; Valchovska & Watts, 2016; Zhang & Swanson, 2014). Moreover, research on social entrepreneurship is primarily dominated by the business and management disciplines. Educational researchers have also not paid detailed attention to the learning processes and outcomes generated by, and inside of, social entrepreneurial organisations. Short et al. (2009) analysed a sample of 152 articles on social entrepreneurship and found that only 5 per cent of the articles were published by educational researchers and scholars working on adult and organisational learning. A closer examination also reveals that most of these articles are about social entrepreneurial organisations that work with marginalised groups' education and are not about the learning processes of becoming a social entrepreneur.

A number of empirical works from various international contexts emphasise that the driving force behind a social entrepreneur is believed to be the desire to improve life for a marginalised community or society in general (Martin & Osberg, 2007; Morris & Lewis, 1994; Seelos & Mair, 2005). In other words, social entrepreneurs start their journey by recognising a social problem that they try to solve through various activities that require intense involvement with society. This suggests that the social aspect is important in the context of social entrepreneurship. For instance, after analysing the life stories of 18 social entrepreneurs from eight different countries, Yitshaki and Kropp (2011) conclude that awareness of social injustice is the main pull factor regardless of country of origin or cultural background. Similarly, another study examined 37 social entrepreneurs in Nigeria and concluded that their passion for social issues was a critical factor in their organisations' success (Thorgren & Omorede, 2018).

Although these studies show an understanding of the importance of social context, they do not explain the learning process of becoming a social entrepreneur, which is the focal point of this study. By analysing the learning processes of social entrepreneurs, this study hopes to

contribute to a better understanding of not only social entrepreneurial learning but also social entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon.

Situated Learning in Communities of Practice

Learning processes can be understood and examined from different perspectives, including social, cognitive and emotional dimensions (Illeris, 2002). In this study, we build upon situated learning theory to deepen our understanding of social entrepreneurial learning processes (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Downplaying transfer models of learning, Lave and Wenger believe that learning cannot happen when knowledge and social practice are considered as separated from one another. As Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 50) argue:

> *learning, thinking, and knowing are relations among people in activity in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world. This world is socially constituted; objective forms and systems of activity, on the one hand, and agents' subjective and intersubjective understandings of them, on the other, mutually constitute both the world and its experienced forms.*

In addition, we use the notion of community of practice to make sense of becoming a social entrepreneur as a learning process that takes place within social situations. In other words, learning processes are a fundamental aspect of becoming (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Wherever people interact with each other in activities and share a similar repertoire, there is a community of practice (Wenger, 2018). A community of practice does not need to be a structured group in the form of an organisation; it is thus not necessarily equivalent to an organisation per se. The distinction between the concepts of organising and organisation means that any community of practice requires a certain level of organising, but not necessarily in the form of an organisation (Malm & Thunborg, 2018). Through participation in communities of practice, we learn to become a citizen or a member of society or, in the case of this study, to become a social entrepreneur. Becoming is a never-ending process; we are always in the process of becoming, and more importantly, we are never alone in this process—becoming is always a social process (Sztompka, 1991).

In situated learning theory, learning is understood to occur in social situations and in interaction with others (Sense, 2015). Learning is then located or rooted in a community of practice whereby actors constitute each other, learn to become part of a practice, and mutually develop the practice they are involved in (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Knowledge is perceived as dynamic because social practices continuously change. Thus, learning ultimately is an integral aspect of social practice in situated learning theory. In other words, knowledge is temporary, arbitrated and socially constructed within a community of practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Farnsworth et al., 2016). Lave and Wenger (1991) emphasise a trajectory process of participation and learning. This trajectory begins from an individual's legitimate peripheral participation (a novice in a community of practice) to become a full or core member of a practice. They perceive legitimate peripheral participation as a 'way to speak about the relation between newcomers, and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and community of knowledge practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). As new members gain more experience through their participation, they gradually move from peripheral positions and roles to more central roles within the community until they become full members (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As with any theory, there are some limitations with situated learning theory. For instance, according to Edwards (2005), it centres on how one moves from a novice in a community towards being a full member by learning already existing knowledge in a specific community in a specific context and does not explain how a community of practice can learn anything new (Cairns, 2011). Another critique is that its scope is focused on what is done (the process of learning) and does not pay much attention to what is learnt (the outcome of learning), and it perceives all learning as good (Edwards, 2005; Hughes et al., 2007). Despite its limitations, we chose situated learning theory as it was relevant to this article's focus—the situated experiences of a group of individuals becoming social entrepreneurs.

Method

A significant difference between the cognitivist perspective of learning and situated learning theory is that situated learning theory perceives learning as a process connected to and embedded in everyday practices in workplaces or other social contexts. These processes can either

be studied in real time by using the ethnographic method or semi-structured interviews, which focus on the learning processes of the individual to become, in our case, a social entrepreneur. In this study, we used semi-structured interviews to delineate and understand individuals' learning processes of becoming social entrepreneurs.

There are many organisations active in the field of integration in Sweden. We used our definition of social entrepreneurship as a criterion to choose social entrepreneurs to interview for this study. We thus first selected organisations that were registered as non-profit, which meant that many for-profit organisations were excluded. Also, we were interested in organisations that had an innovative solution for integration. The organisations that we chose had an approach towards integration that is called 'two-way social integration'. Two-way social integration refers to activities that involve both newly-arrived immigrants and refugees to Sweden and persons who are established in society—mostly, but not necessarily, ethnic Swedes. The activities offered by these organisations were based on a relationship of equality in the form of friendship between newly-arrived immigrants and refugees and people established in society. These organisations created various forms of activities that the participants could take part in to get to know one another. This approach is practised even though there is an established system that creates mentorship programs for immigrants and refugees, which however may not stress a relationship of equality between them and their mentors.

Since this study focuses on becoming a social entrepreneur, we were interested in social entrepreneurial organisations whose founders led the organisations from the beginning until the interview date. Moreover, we were interested in well-established organisations; we thus chose organisations active in more than one city in Sweden. After using these criteria, the founders of five organisations agreed to participate in our study. One of the organisations had two co-founders, so a total of six interviews were conducted. The social entrepreneurs will be referred to as Founder 1, Founder 2 and so on in the text. The interviewees consist of five women and one man. Their average age when establishing their organisations was 27. Five founders have university degrees within the social sciences, while the remaining founder did not pursue further education after finishing high school. On average, they had less than three years of professional work experience before starting their

organisations but had extensive experience with volunteer activities in different organisations.

One of the organisations was registered in 2008, two were registered in 2013 and two in 2014. At the time of the interviews, the number of full-time paid staff in the organisations varied from four to ten, with one or two interns. Between 20 and 50 volunteers were active in each organisation.

A semi-structured interview guide was used in the interviews. Every interview started by asking the interviewees to introduce themselves. This initial question aimed to see how they identified themselves and what they would say about their educational background, previous work experience and previous participation in volunteer activities. Next, they were asked to recount their journeys from the very early stage of initiating the idea for their organisation. This included retelling their experiences in the different phases of establishing their organisations and focusing on the challenges they encountered and how they surmounted them. In total, 6 hours and 20 minutes of audio material was recorded and fully transcribed. The shortest interview was 45 minutes, and the longest interview lasted 88 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English with non-native speakers. The excerpts below have not been edited so as to preserve the interviewees' own words.

Results

As explained in the introduction, the process of becoming a social entrepreneur is best analysed in relation to the process of creating a social entrepreneurial organisation. Thus, this study's results will be presented in two different parts: 1) the generation of the idea and 2) establishing and developing a non-profit social entrepreneurial organisation. The first part of the results will explain how the founders' lived experiences were paramount in the generation of the idea that birthed the organisation. In the second part of the results, the importance of the social entrepreneurs' experiences and their networks, which they acquired through their previous participation in establishing and developing their organisation, will be explained.

Generating the Idea

Two common themes were identified in the narratives. These two

themes are highly significant for our understanding of how they created their ideas and their learning processes to become social entrepreneurs. The first theme helped define the founders of the organisations as well-travelled citizens who had experiences of living, studying or working in different countries.

> *Founder 5: I travelled to 13 different countries. I learned so much about the world during that time. It was a very important time in my life, and it affected me as a person very much.*

> *Founder 1: I had travelled a lot abroad to experience different things. Then I realised that it is easy to go to different places but much harder to create an actual impact in terms of difficulties and understand the actual problem. Through my travels and meeting different people, I realised the importance of being a host.*

> *Founder 6: When I was a student, I went to Italy for a while, and as a part of our course, we got the opportunity to meet native speakers and talk to them. It was very helpful for me to learn the language*

According to the interviewees, the experience of being a foreigner or an outsider in another country helped them to see Sweden with new eyes. This led them to a series of realisations about how the Other (i.e., the migrants/refugees) in Sweden was discursively constructed, how the practice of integration was organised, and how immigrants/refugees were defined and constructed as a problem.

> *Founder 1: I also realised how segregated Stockholm is. In 2014 we had an election, and the issue of integration was a hot topic. And it annoyed me that people who had such strong opinions about the issue of whether to open the border or close the borders did not really know anyone who was new in Sweden. So, I think that just seeing it black or white without knowing the problems does not help. If more people really knew what the problems were, then they could help. You cannot say that there are no problems or there are only problems.*

> *Founder 3: I thought about why I should go somewhere else when we had so many different problems here in Sweden. For example,*

> *in my social network, I could see people who I knew talked about immigrants in a negative way. I think all of these things together made me stay here and try to impact Swedish society.*

> *Founder 4: It was very unfair that people could not get a job for a living because of the language, not because of lack of skills. It was also at that time that the issue was very hot in the media, so I started thinking about why it should be very difficult and what I can do to make a difference.*

In addition to the international experiences, the second theme identified in the narratives is that they had extensive experience with various volunteer activities, especially with other organisations involved with social integration in Sweden. These experiences included voluntary participation in activities such as helping immigrants and refugees with their homework, assisting them in daily matters, or teaching language courses. According to the social entrepreneurs, these previous experiences put them in a position that allowed them to tailor better responses to integration than institutions or organisations that had only an abstract understanding of refugees' and immigrants' challenges. They suggested these responses can be more innovative and effectively include refugees and immigrants in Swedish society.

> *Founder 3: I think my experience from [X] was the base. I was really tired of hearing how people just talked about the ups and downs. I do not believe that there is one solution to the whole problem. But you can at least do something. It was the core reason that I had. The evaluation that we had from [X] showed that it had some problems, therefore we built our organisation upon this idea.*

> *Founder 6: I used to work as a second language teacher in one of the most segregated areas of the country. After two years of working there, I realised that we needed something to complement our work regarding language acquisition. It was more like that I realised that there was an urgent need for some additional activities that could help people to learn better.*

These experiences demonstrate that the founders were not novice actors in working with civil society or understanding how civil society worked in

Sweden, particularly in the integration of immigrants and refugees. Their concern with integration was not solely the result of an emotional reaction to immigrants' and refugees' challenges and difficulties in Sweden. Instead, their active participation in the field equipped them with inside knowledge about how to deal with the problem and how to identify innovative ways of promoting integration compared to already existing programs. What they learned through their previous engagement in various integration activities was a critical factor in tailoring better responses to integration. Hence, their learning trajectory for becoming a social entrepreneur was preceded by a relatively long time of participating as a volunteer or employee in different organisations that were actively involved in the process of social integration in Sweden. Gaining this knowledge and domain expertise through actual experiences from the integration field was also explicit in the narratives. According to the interviewees, one can gain a theoretical understanding of social integration from, for example, reading books or watching the news, but one cannot understand what is going on without first-hand experience.

> *Founder 5: You must have great communication with the group that you want to work for. You must talk with them, not for them. It is very important and helps you a lot, especially when you are developing your idea. It is not enough to assume, expect or think. It is so much easier just to ask them what they think is the best solution for their problem. Then it is much easier to incorporate it with the solution in order to help them to be empowered. Providing aid is not a long-term solution.*

> *Founder 1: If you do not know the problem, then go and work for a while in places that help you to understand the problem. If you do not know the problems, then probably your solutions are irrelevant. So, I would say before starting something, understand the problem; otherwise, it is possible that your solutions create more problems. And after that, just do it! If you think that you have an idea that can solve the problem and create value, then do it, do not wait for others.*

> *Founder 3: Make sure you understand the challenges and talk to the people that you want to work for to understand the situation better. You do not want to end up doing something that is not really useful. Do not underestimate the importance of working at the local level.*

What all the six social entrepreneurs have in common when it comes to their decision to start their activities is that they saw and believed that the traditional ways of fostering integration in Sweden did not work. They identified a need for more innovative ways to facilitate integration. Hence, their drive to become social entrepreneurs within the integration area was not accidental but rather a consequence of their lived experience. Furthermore, a sense of frustration about how the integration process was organised, and their belief that they can do it better than other organisations and institutions, contributed to their social entrepreneurial drive. Moreover, what motivated the founders to get into the field of integration as social entrepreneurs was their critique of the discourse and practices of discursive integration. This critique is based on the experiences they gained by participating in the previously established practices of social integration for refugees and immigrants in Sweden.

Establishing and Developing a Non-Profit Social Entrepreneurial Organisation

In the narratives of the social entrepreneurs, it is clear that they had an idea about how to meet the challenges refugees and immigrants face in Swedish society. Based on their ideas, they started some limited activities to facilitate refugees' and immigrants' social integration. In the beginning, these were only voluntary activities that the founders did on the side of their primary occupation. They started their journey by operationalising their ideas as simple activities without having a clear plan to establish a formal organisation.

> *Founder 4: I started connecting people on Facebook. So, it was a person who wanted to learn Swedish, and I connected that person with a friend of mine… in the beginning, it was more like using my personal network. People that I knew or a friend of a friend. Then we grew, and after that, I had to go to SFI (language courses for immigrants) [for recruitment].*

> *Founder 6: I first started administering and coordinating volunteers that came to our school to help.*

> *Founder 5: It was first a single activity, and I had no plan then for creating an organisation.*

As mentioned earlier, according to situated learning theory, there is a difference between 'organising' and 'organisation'. This distinction is apparent here since, in the beginning, the social entrepreneurs did not aspire to start an organisation, and their activities started as part-time voluntary activities alongside their regular occupations. So, they first organised communities of practice and later established them as formal organisations. From their narratives, two main reasons can be identified for why they decided to register an organisation instead of continuing their informal activities voluntarily. The first reason is that shortly after starting the activities, they grew to a level that could no longer be driven by part-time voluntary work, even when involving the help of other volunteers. The founders realised the necessity to work full-time with the organisation.

> *Founder 5: The main challenge was that we had to put a lot of time into the activities, and it was hard to combine it with a full-time job. We needed lots of volunteers and coordinating volunteers itself takes lots of time. Volunteers also need to be taken care of. So, the more volunteers you have the more jobs you have to do for handling and coordinating them, and then less time you have to plan for the activities that volunteers want to help with. So, it was hard to make a balance about how to grow the activities.*

> *Founder 4: It grew in a way that it was necessary to be structured because otherwise, it would not work. I think we had to make this decision because, for example, when we communicated with others, how could we introduce ourselves? That we were an organisation or what!*

The second reason why the founders registered their activities as organisations is that they, at some point, either were offered some funding by other organisations or realised they needed funding in order to continue. In Sweden, it is necessary to be registered as an organisation to receive financial aid.

> *Founder 1: After a while, I was approached by an organisation, and they said this is a good idea. Why don't you register it as an organisation? Then we can maybe fund you. And I did it. I registered it as a non-profit organisation. But yeah, I did not intend to start an organisation when I started.*

As a result, the founders chose to start non-profit social entrepreneurial organisations since their intention was not to run a for-profit business. However, this process took some time. The period from starting informal voluntary activities until registering a non-profit organisation ranged from 3 months up to 4 years. According to the founders, the decision to start a non-profit social entrepreneurial organisation was also encouraged by others. In some cases, these individuals helped the founders to navigate the bureaucratic, administrative and legal aspects of registering an organisation.

> *Founder 2: The chairperson of the network that we were a part of in the beginning advised us to do so [register an organisation]. He said if you want to be successful, you need to do that.*

> *Founder 6: It was not actually my idea to register an organisation. It was a volunteer that told me that it had potential, and I needed to formulate it in a more structured way.*

Having the support of others indicates that the founders' previous participation in similar activities within the integration field was critical for the start-up and launching process. This is because the founders' activities initially started from within the network of individuals they had created before—without which the launching process would have been challenging.

> *Founder 2: The first thing that we did was to get in touch with the volunteers that we still were in contact with from before. We contacted maybe two or three of them and said we are going to start a new activity. How about brainstorming about what to do.*

> *Founder 1: What I did was that I asked my students if they were interested in going to dinner or to invite people to come over for dinner and wrote down their names and phone numbers on paper. Then I asked my friends, and some were interested and said yes, I want to do this, and that is how I matched the first dinners.*

The narratives also demonstrate that the founders consulted with other, more experienced actors to develop their organisations' practice in various critical moments. In other words, experienced actors in the

field provided them with concrete advice and ideational support to establish the organisation. This support would not have been possible if the founders were not part of a network of individuals involved in non-profit organisations within the field of integration. In most cases, it was mentioned that other people advised them to register their initiatives as an organisation and even assisted them to learn the process of establishing the organisation.

The influence of other community members could also be seen beyond suggestions to form a formal organisation. In some cases, other members within the community also had an impact on how the organisations functioned. The eventual utilisation of an IT system is one example. All the interviewees said that they used free, simple, digital tools like Facebook, Google Calendar, Excel, and sometimes even pen and paper to conduct and organise their work in the beginning. As the activities grew and more people joined, they realised that they needed more advanced tools. Other members helped them learn how to implement IT systems, and in some cases, these members even voluntarily built an IT system for them pro bono.

> *Founder 2: In the beginning, we used papers for doing our interviews and suddenly, we had a pile of papers in order to match people. We realised that this was too old-fashioned and complicated. It was not so easy to travel around with all those papers. A person who wanted to volunteer in our organisation came to us and asked us, why are you working with paper and not using more technically advanced tools. Then he set up a system that we are using now.*

> *Founder 1: A friend of mine who was a developer helped us to build the system and create a blueprint… [which] to a great extent, eliminated the role of human factors. Before, we had to send many emails or SMS ourselves, but now, we could easily do it through our system.*

Having a network does not mean that the founders always received help and support from others or that all the advice they received from others always was helpful. There is also a clear pattern that they doubted themselves and their abilities in the beginning, but as the organisations grew and they gained more experience, they found confidence in

themselves and in their organisations. The social entrepreneurs expressed that they many times learned by doing and by trial and error. This aspect of learning is what has been studied the most by researchers who investigate entrepreneurial learning, as discussed in the introduction; given that there already is substantial literature on this topic, we did not analyse the experiential aspect of the six social entrepreneurs' processes of learning in depth.

> *Founder 1: It was also many times that I learned through learning by doing when I did not know something beforehand.*

> *Founder 5: In general, we learned that we had to do everything ourselves and do things step by step.*

> *Founder 3: What I can recall now is that it was not easy. We first had to find out what we needed to do; then, we tried to learn how to do it.*

Working and interacting with others in social contexts is not always positive and does not necessarily lead to learning something useful. The founders expressed that sometimes others tried to discourage them, or in some cases, they received incorrect information. Looking back, they formulate this as part of the learning process that follows any participation in social activities and a price that they needed to pay in order to learn.

> *Founder 2: One of the mistakes that we made in the beginning was that we trusted too much in others and not ourselves. At that time, I thought that I was young and did not have any experience, so what I did was trust others. We had lots of people that helped us, of course, but a big lesson that I learned was that you have to believe in yourself.*

> *Founder 3: One thing that I can say now that I learned from it is that I listened too much to older white men when they said this is how you should do it. It was in the beginning.*

Concluding Remarks

The results indicate the presence of both situated and experiential learning within the process of learning to become a social entrepreneur.

However, the experiential learning process is heavily embedded in the situated learning process and is not merely a cognitive process. This means that without social entrepreneurs participating in various communities of practice, there would not be any possibility for them to experience and learn. The social entrepreneurs gained knowledge about the established integration practices in Sweden and subsequently used this knowledge to generate innovative ideas on how it could be done better. This participation also enabled social entrepreneurs to create a network of individuals and organisations that was crucial to both the generation of ideas and the launching and development of the organisations. Participation and membership in communities of practice in the integration field enabled the social entrepreneurs to see what was being done in different organisations, what needed to be changed, and how it could be done more effectively or innovatively. This was necessary to be able to identify innovative ways to tackle problems concerning immigrants' and refugees' integration. However, being aware of a need, or developing innovative ideas to tackle a social matter, does not necessarily mean that one becomes a social entrepreneur or starts a non-profit organisation. Having experiences from previous participation in the field and other actors' support are crucial aspects when starting up a social entrepreneurial organisation. Hence, the six social entrepreneurs did not solely rely on their experiences as cognitive learning opportunities. They also learned in social situations through interaction with other similar organisations and individuals active in the field. In this interaction, actors constitute each other and learn to become part of a practice, which mutually develops the practice they all are involved in. Learning to become a social entrepreneur is therefore both individual and collective. This collective dimension of learning is usually ignored in both entrepreneurial and social entrepreneurial learning literature.

This study also expands the boundaries of the theory of situated learning in communities of practice. In situated learning theory, successful participation in a community of practice means a gradual progression from a peripheral role (in an organisation) to becoming a full member in the very same community of practice (organisation). However, as the analysis of the data demonstrated, the process of becoming a social entrepreneur differed between the social entrepreneurs in this study. They had peripheral roles in some communities of practice working in

the field of integration, but instead of staying in those until becoming a full member, they decided to leave and create new communities of practice based on innovative ideas. This analysis is partly in line with the critiques mentioned in the theory section. The six social entrepreneurs' departure from the old community of practice indicates that not all learning in communities of practice is relevant or helpful in dealing with social issues, such as integration in our case.

By distinguishing between the concepts of organisation and organising, this study has shown that the social entrepreneurs first organised the activities and later, out of necessity, decided to register their initiatives as non-profit organisations. This result supports the assumption that communities of practice are not necessarily equivalent to an organisation, meaning a community of practice can exist without being an organisation, albeit with limited growth potential.

Figure 1 visualises the process of becoming a social entrepreneur, with participation in concrete social practices at the core. Learning to become a social entrepreneur results from this constant participation in communities of practice and happens in a dialectical relationship with the development of a social entrepreneurial organisation.

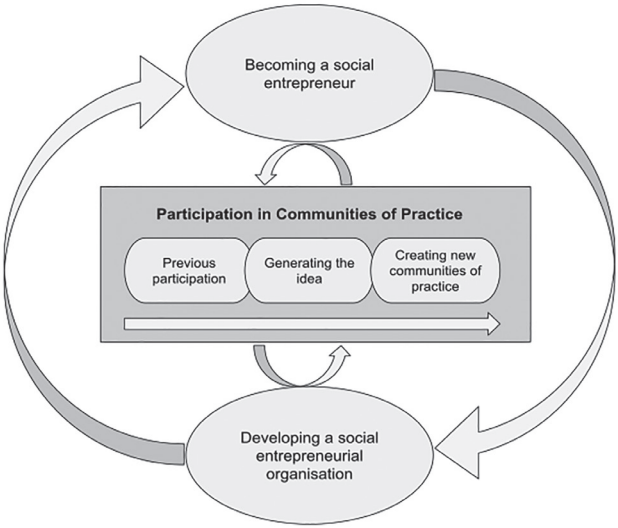

Figure 1: The process of becoming a social entrepreneur.

Source: Authors, based on Wenger, 1998.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

A deep active learning approach to exploring young adults' learning in a picture book elective

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This research investigates early childhood student teachers' learning in a picture book elective at a Chinese university. The elective was designed as an educational reform that encouraged students' choices, interests, and active explorations. Drawing on the concept of deep active learning (DAL), the research aims to identify whether and how these young adults adopted the deep active approach to learning. Data sources included student questionnaires, student interviews, and an interview with the course lecturer. The analysis identifies the tension between students' DAL capabilities and DAL experiences, illustrating the difficulty in making reforms in a single course, due to the influence of student accustomed learning style, the general learning environment, and student career plans.

Keywords: *picture book elective, adult student, deep active learning, Chinese higher education*

Introduction

In recent decades, the proportion of students enrolled in higher education programmes has dramatically increased in China (Chinese Educational Statistics, 2019). The majority are young adults who have experienced structured and teacher-directed learning approaches in their previous education. Given that the goal of higher education is shifting from learning performance to students' autonomy and independence for the development of competitive global citizens (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2019; Kim, Song, Liu, Liu & Grim, 2018), it would be interesting to know how these young adults who have experienced one approach of learning, adapted themselves to another. According to Guo, Huang, and Zhang (2019), despite the many efforts of the Chinese government to improve the learning of young adults in higher education, whether these efforts "have led to improved students' academic performance, more effective learning, cultivated multi-faceted talents, inspired their creativity, enhanced their comprehensive abilities, or increased their education returns are still under-investigated" (Guo et al., 2019, p.13).

The purpose of this study is to explore one such aspect of higher education that has received little attention, namely, early childhood students' learning in an elective. This elective was purposefully designed as a model of educational reforms in a Chinese institution that focused on the creation and use of picture books in a project-based process. Drawing on the national guidelines, the course aimed to encourage students' interests, choices, and explorations. The current research is not about the content of picture books, nor how they were created but rather, the focus is on how students were learning through picture booking making in a formal teacher education course. This research was the first that we know of to explore Chinese adult students' learning in a purposefully designed elective.

Analysis of students' learning in the current research is informed by the concept of deep active learning (DAL). Combining learning content with learning activities, DAL is a two-dimensional concept that gives insights into both what and how students learn. DAL, in particular the ideas of relational learning, meaning seeking and knowledge transfer, provides the lens for exploring how participating students experienced their learning. We are also interested to know of the constraints that students may experience with a DAL context when their interests and choices are enabled.

Deep active learning in education

Deep active learning (DLA) is a conceptual framework within the notion of deep learning. As Marton and Saljo (1976) examined the implication of deep learning for education, they concluded that as a concept of machine learning methods, deep learning was able to facilitate human learning in a way that learners built a relational system to achieve a deeper understanding of what they learned. This idea of deep learning was later elaborated by other scholars, for example, Bacon and Stewart (2006), and Warburton (2003) who all considered deep learning as the development of a networking process in which underlying meanings of the learning content are explored.

While there is a consensus about the importance of deep learning in the context of learning, one issue of absence is the role of learners and learning activities. According to Diamond et al. (2018), given that many schools still focus on transmitting knowledge at the expense of learning activities, a critical need exists for education programmes to appropriately integrate learning content and the active learners.

The concept of DAL builds on the notion of deep learning to specify the role of learners and learning activities. DAL is an approach that "focuses both on the formats and the quality and content of learning" (Matushita, 2018, p.8). Yasunaga (2018) argues that for learning deeply, learners must externalize learning. In addition, in order to gain deeper understandings of the learning content, learners need to "apply concepts required in one context to a variety of new situations" (p.118). According to Higano (2018, p.209), "learning being 'deep' means learning achievements can be utilized anytime, anywhere, without the support of the teacher". Learning transferability is an important feature of DAL.

In order to provide learners with these abilities, a range of strategies has been suggested. These strategies include but are not limited to case-focused and project-based experiences, challenging tasks and collaborative opportunities (Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Peters, 2018). In practice, the effect of the DAL approach on students' learning necessitates an environment in which students exercise choices and direct their own learning in ways that knowledge is obtained and applied both within and outside the classroom (Peters, 2018).

The Chinese context: Higher education and young adult students

In the past several decades, especially after the entry into the World Trade Organization, a series of educational reforms have surfaced in China which were underpinned by a commitment to restructure students' learning in higher education by transforming the traditional teaching practice (Guo et al., 2019). As a result, from 2000 to 2010, curriculum reforms "associated with 'learning to learn' and quality-oriented education" (Lee & Song, 2016, p.39) were developed. In a blueprint for future development, an *outline of China's national plan for medium and long-term education reform and development, 2010-2020* (Chinese Central Government, 2010), developing students' motivation and active engagement was the key component of the reform agenda, and higher education institutions were expected to drive the country's future by cultivating motivated, creative and autonomous adults (Guo et al., 2019).

Over time came a growing acknowledgement that Chinese learners are not inherently passive. While adult students might have gone through teacher-directed learning, "when provided with learning opportunities…they are able to develop sophisticated notions of learning and collaboration" (Chan, 2010, p.201). According to Kember (2010), Western-based understandings of Chinese learners were seen to be inadequate, often failing to interpret underlying meanings of learners' behaviours. Chinese learners have often been described to use a surface approach because they tend to memorize materials, "when in fact the memorization was combined with attempts to reach understanding and was therefore not a surface approach" (Kember, 2010, p.192).

Even so, a body of research has reported the continuing struggle over the achievement of students' learning in higher education (e.g., Lee & Song, 2016; Yuan & Zhang, 2017). Although the issue is attributable to students' reasons, for example, low levels of self-efficacy, a strong focus on examinations (Wong & Yuen, 2012; Yuan & Zhang, 2017), and the preference for being taught (Chan, 2010), it is largely due to the course structure and teaching styles, which include too much "attention to the subject training", "neglecting students as individual learners", and "an ineffectual lecturing model" (Lee & Song, 2016, p.46). After a comprehensive literature review, Chan and Rao (2010) made a conclusive point that research on Chinese learners illustrates divergent views and these views mirror the inconsistencies and diversities of the contexts, curricula and teaching approaches.

Picture books as a pedagogical tool

Picture books have increasingly become the focus of learning and teaching of adult students and a site of educational interests in the face of a rising investigation into appropriate multimodal pedagogical practices (Early & Yeung, 2008; Foster, 2011; Nawangsih & Prasetyo, 2019). At a surface level, picture books are understood as "purposefully illustrated books in which the illustrations are, to varying degrees, essential to the enjoyment and understanding of the story" (Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown, 2002, p. 73). Focusing on the combination of media, visual and linguistic literacies involved in making picture books, Foster (2011) argues that "the common assumption that a picture book is an easy to read, brightly illustrated work for small children…is often demonstrably incorrect" (p.74). Nawangsih and Prasetyo (2019, p.192) identified a range of integrated modes of learning in picture books, claiming that

> *"…the picture book should contain two components, namely the quality content component and the visual display component. The content component consists of themes, characters, background, plot, point of view, language style, message, and content. The visual display component consists of text, image, page, colour selection, shape, size and texture".*

According to Pitkänen-Huhta and Pietikäinen (2014), the multimodal nature of picture books offers something for every learner, young and old, and invites and strengthens authentic and meaningful participation.

In describing what learners did when they were making picture books, Early and Yeung (2008) explained it as a collaborative process that ranged from "each learner creating own plots and characters to designing their unique picture books and then, collaboratively, producing their group's innovative dramatization" (p.316). For them, the process gave a sense of freedom and ownership to everyone involved.

Drawing on these studies, it is reasonable to believe that the picture book projects, as a multiple-stage experience that involve an authentic purpose and many forms of learning have great potentials to develop deep active learners. However, no attempt has been reported in the current literature on how DAL was cultivated in young adult students via picture book projects.

The present research

Taken together, the extant literature reviewed above has provided partial evidence of how Chinese students learn in higher education and certainly suggests more research to challenge the often recycled stereotypes of passive learning. This partial profile, coupled with an absence of a purposefully designed course to address the topic, has limited our understanding of how Chinese learners might learn deeply and actively when their interests and choices are enabled.

The present research addresses this gap through the following research questions:

1. How do Chinese young adults experience the DAL approach in a purposefully designed course that encourages their choices and active explorations?
2. What are the difficulties in their implementation of DAL?

Research context and participants

This study was conducted in Changchun, the capital city of Jilin province, China. An educational institution was sampled for this study. In the participating institution, learning programs comprise compulsory and elective courses. In 2018, the institution introduced a plan of reform to develop an elective for early childhood students that encouraged students' deep active engagement in learning. The plans included: 1) open choices in the learning topic; 2) a project-based process; 3) informative learning assessments; 4) a work-shop mode of teaching that focused on play, hands-on activities and collaborations. As a result of the plan, the course of picture books commenced as part of the institutional reform.

The research team was purposefully formed for this project. Researcher one and researcher two were both involved in the development of the picture book elective. While they did not teach it, they knew the structure and content so there were insider perspectives in this research. Researcher three is a university academic in Australia who knew nothing about the course. The link between insider's real life knowledge and outsider's objectivity provides particular quality to this research. Within this context, research is viewed as a complex way of knowledge collaboration. This means that the process was constructed through the

recognition of commonalities and differences among the researchers. According to Kerstetter (2012) due to the challenges and benefits associated with either insider or outsider researchers, an insider-outsider research team contributes many positive outcomes to research.

Our participants were the course lecturer and the third year early childhood education students (3 males and 28 females) who took the course from 2018 to 2019. The lecturer is female and has been teaching in the institution for six years. Students' average age is 21.65 years.

Research ethics

Ethics approvals for the research was granted by the Research Ethics Committee at Deakin University (approval number HAE-19-233) and Changchun Normal University. A detailed information letter specific to involvement was provided to all the participants, inviting them to participate voluntarily and give consent in writing with the right to withdraw anytime. In order to maintain privacy and confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in this paper. At the commencement of each interview, the lecturer and students were clearly informed of their right to skip an answer, would they be unsure about the question or concerned about their response. The Australian researcher had implemented several projects in China and was very familiar with the Chinese research protocols and she was supportive of any choices made by the participants during the interviews, including silence, a simple smile or questioning back. All efforts were made to ensure that the participants were not in a position that they felt coerced to participate in the project.

Data collection

Data were collected in three forms: an individual interview with the course lecturer, a questionnaire survey with all 31 students in the course, and an individual interview with 6 students who volunteered to talk further about their learning in the course. Data were collected in Chinese and later translated into English by the research team. As part of the ethical procedures, course documents and student learning documents were also obtained. The use of different sources of information was considered an important practice that allowed us to obtain richer and wider information when supported by detailed analysis and questioning of the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

Before the main study, all the methods were piloted with a lecturer and two students in another course during which the researchers refined these instruments in order to ensure validity. The main study had three closely interrelated steps.

Step one (the course, teaching, and student group): a collection of course documents and a semi-structured interview with the course lecturer. The lecturer was asked about the purpose of the course, the content, teaching approaches, positioning of the lecturer and students in the course, assessment tasks and the lecturer's perspectives of students' learning outcomes and associated successes and challenges. The interview was audio recorded.

Step two (general information about students' learning): a questionnaire survey with all the 31 students. Survey questions targeted patterns of students' perspectives about their learning in the course. Students' own roles in the study, the role of their lecturer and their learning experiences, strategies and difficulties were asked. A range of question types was used. Table 1 provides a sample of questions included in the questionnaire.

Table 1

Sample items from the student survey questionnaire.

Sample items:
• Open question: e.g., what do you think is the role of your lecturer in this class? • Closed question: e.g., did you study after the class? • Rating question: e.g., how much do you agree with this statement? *What matters is not what you have learned but how you have learned*' a) strongly disagree; b) somewhat disagree; c) neither agree nor disagree; d) somewhat agree; e) strongly agree. • Multiple choice question: which of the following styles of learning do you like? a) self-reading and thinking; b) peer experience; c) small group; d) teacher instruction; e) hands-on; f) memorizing and repetitive practice.

Data in the first two steps were analysed and emerging findings guided the design of the next step (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). A classroom observation also took place before the next step in order to know what happened in the class. While observations did not generate data, they informed researchers of the class dynamic and helped shape the interview questions in step three.

Step three (detailed information and examples about students' learning): individual interviews with six students and a collection of their work samples. All the 31 students were asked to self-nominate to participate in the interview and we recruited all the six nominated participants. They were females aged 20-23. Each interview was carried out for an hour by researcher three, an external person, whom students did not know, and it was a conversation-based interview. The researcher talked to each student in order to find out what she learned, how she experienced the course, her understandings of the meaning of the concepts, how she developed the understandings, what relational system she created and whether and how she applied these understandings in other contexts. The interviews were audio recorded.

Data analysis

The notion of DAL was applied in the data analysis. Three key dimensions in DAL were used: relational learning, meaning seeking and knowledge transfer. Specifically, we looked in the data to identify what and how students brought to the course their own network of resources, how they learned the content, and examples and ways in which they transferred the experiences. We were also trying to understand how students perceived themselves as learners and the ways in which the picture book elective and their general learning environments enabled or constrained these perspectives. Data analysis was conducted separately for the interviews and questionnaires, but results were combined at the final stage to confirm emerging themes. The course documents and student learning documents were used to support our analysis of the interviews and questionnaires to help, for example, better understand the lecturer and students' descriptions.

Interview data analysis was implemented in two ways: analysing the individual data and looking across all the three sets. We used a 'bottom-up' approach by familiarizing ourselves with each set, developing an initial coding framework, and forming the categories (Johnson & Christensen, 2019). Any data in relation to relational learning, meaning seeking and knowledge transfer were defined as a code (e.g., 'searching for other picture books online' or 'learned to be more observant from this course to watch for details' were considered useful data). We then put similar codes into categories, followed by a process of grouping categories into themes. During the data analysis, each researcher did

this independently. We then shared and discussed for an agreement. An example of interview data analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Example of the interview data analysis.

Data examples	Codes (interviewee no, line no)	Categories	Themes
It's a long process of understanding how to make a picture book. I wanted mine to be very special so really worked hard. I learned all that the teacher taught in the class and then searched for readings, talked to people for help and I used internet a lot. All I wanted is how to make a good picture book.	(Long process of understanding) 2, 93 (For making a special picture book), 2, 94 (Learning class content) 1, 76 (Using readings, people and internet to help learning) 1,76 (Want to make a good picture book) 1, 77.	Learning process taken to learn everything about making unique and special picture books. Class content is the main focus of learning for making picture books.	Seeking meanings about the course in order to make good, unique or special picture books.
Making a unique picture book means knowing everything about it. In this class, we learned many concepts, including, the book covers, illustrations, themes, quality content and how to act out the play. There were lots of thinking, reading and talking with people to find out about how to make a book that is useful for children of different interests. It is a process of trial and error.	(Learning to know everything about making picture books) 4, 89. (Learning many concepts related to picture books) 4, 90. (Thinking, reading, talking to people) 4, 91. (Making a picture book useful for children) 4, 91. (Trial and error process) 4, 92	Making a unique book as the main goal of learning	

The questionnaires were analysed based on the two research questions. Summative content analysis was used that involved counting and comparisons to determine the number of responses for each question, creating a space to understand the strength of the responses (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Questionnaire results were then combined with the interview results to triangulate the interview themes and generate confirmatory findings. For example, the response of 'self-reading and thinking' was integrated with the theme of seeking meanings in the course. An example of questionnaire results is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Questionnaire data summary of students' deep active learning experiences and related constraints.

Responses	Number of responses (n=31)	% of all the responses (%=100)
DAL experiences		
Self-reading and thinking	31	100
Peer experience	30	97
Seeking teacher support in and out of class	26	87
Internet and other technical means	31	100
Practice, trial and error	20	67
Previous knowledge and skills	18	60
Making other picture books	8	27
Knowing how to create stories	9	29
Knowing how to tell stories to children	4	13
DAL constraints		
Preference to follow teacher instruction	21	68
Only study what is needed for the course	28	90
Fear of risks, difficulty avoidance	24	77
Learning results focused	31	100
Fear of failing	31	100

Findings

Results from the data revealed that students and the lecturer agreed that DAL was happening but there were constraints in practice. In the following, the views expressed by the participants are further discussed in relation to two themes: DAL as an experience and DAL as a difficulty, based on the two research questions. The names used to refer to the participants are pseudonyms in order to ensure anonymity.

DAL as an experience

Seeking meanings of the course in order to make good, unique and special picture books

DAL requires an understanding of what is learned through finding the underlying meanings of the content (Matsushita 2018). When asked to describe the meaning of the course, participants in both methods (100% interviews and 80% questionnaires) used the phrases such as "analysing quality stories", "creating stories" and "producing picture books". The study also found these phrases to be prevalent in the lecturer's description.

The picture book is a multimodal resource characterized by many forms and genres (Early and Yeung 2008, p.300). In the eyes of the lecturer,

> *... The whole meaning is to make good and unique books for the right purposes in multimodal ways. We work on every part of the books, including images, words, episodes, and digital tools to make multi-dimension reading resources that suit preschool children.*

In common with Early and Yeung's project (2008), this picture book course also featured a learning experience in which the students were encouraged to actively seek meanings of the content. Students' experience was well illustrated in the iwnterviews. The following is an example from Lumei:

Making a unique picture book means knowing everything about it. In this class, we learned many concepts, including the book covers, illustrations, themes, content and how to act out. There were lots of thinking, reading and talking with people to find out about how to make a book that is useful for children of different interests. It is a process of trial and error.

Quanquan shared with us the 4D pop-up picture book she made (Figure 1). She felt "very proud that all the efforts paid off and a special book was created". To understand how to make such a picture book, Quanquan "read lots of picture books, watched many video clips and tried and changed them in numerous ways".

Figure 1

Example of a picture book.

The answers from the student questionnaires also provided evidence about what they did to seek meanings of the course so they could create a unique picture book (Table 4):

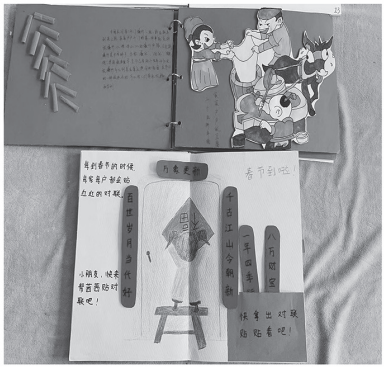

Table 4

Activities	*Percentage*
Self-reading and thinking	100%
Talking to people	85%
Trial and error	30%
Study groups	65%
Internet	80%

Building learning networks for successful completion of the course

In the original description of DAL (Marton and Saljo 1976), multi-layered neural network was referred to as the main component of the concept. The idea that learners' network of information contributes to their learning is also widely present in the educational scholarships (Stewart 2006; Warburton 2003).

A recurring theme in the students' data was the construction of learning networks. As shown in their questionnaires, through the means of "WeChat" (virtual chat group) (95%), "regular meetings after the class" (78%), "texting or phone calls" (70%), "book shops" (60%), "library" (68%) and "online resources" (65%), students built networks for their learning in the course. Participants' descriptions of learning networks frequently related to their aim to complete the course. This was evidence from Wanqiu, who said in the interview that "support from other resources was necessary for the successful completion of the course".

Among all of their learning networks both the questionnaire and interview participants demonstrated a preference for the lecturer and other students. Questionnaire participants were asked "what and who did you use to help your study?", with the highest response being "the lecturer", at 90%. This preferential average is slightly higher than the response of "classmates", which is 80%. 60% of students read books for additional information while 65% drew on technological devices, 45% used their previous knowledge and skills (e.g., drawing) to help with their learning in the course.

During her interview, Wenxuan talked about how she involved classmates as learning networks and together they built further learning networks (e.g., internet information, readings). In the following statement, Wenxuan illustrated Chan's (2010) point that "when provided with learning opportunities, they [Chinese learners] are able to develop sophisticated notions of learning and collaboration" (p.201). She continued to say:

> *Although I am not naturally a collaborative learner, I'm grateful that this course encouraged us to work with others. Collaboration with others was not simply doing the work. We had surprisingly discovered our talents. We shared readings, ideas and network information we each found. Without that, I could not have completed the course so well.*

Limited practice to transfer learning

In keeping with the existing conceptualization of DAL (Bacon & Stewart, 2006), data were analysed in terms of whether and how students applied the concepts to other situations. Notwithstanding the efforts to seek meaning and build learning networks in the course, few students reported having used the concepts beyond the class.

A total of nine students (35%) answered "yes" to the questionnaire item "have you ever tried what you learned in this class in other situations?". "Making other picture books", "creating stories", and "telling stories to children" were given as the answers.

In the student interviews, we noted that making use of the learning concepts outside the class was not what they were encouraged to do. Xinghong stated as follows, and her points were echoed by other students in the interviews:

"We paid all the attention to the course work so did not think about how the concepts, for example, designing a project could be used in other places".

The lecturer also did not consider encouraging students to transfer the course content. While the importance of students' general capabilities (e.g., analysing readings, designing projects and acting out the play) was accentuated, their learning was constructed primarily for the content and goals of the course. The only related point the lecturer made was "what we learned in this course could benefit their learning in other studies and in their work".

Constraints and difficulties

The importance of learning results

The perceived importance of the learning results in their studies was uniform across all the student groups (100%). While "the course emphasizes the learning experience" (lecturer), students still cared a lot about what mark they could eventually get. According to Lumei: "the only assessment we had in this course is the picture book. Because it was marked, we had to try very hard".

Wanqiu captured some of the reasons why results were important:

> *"Good marks help with almost everything for example getting a good job or continuing the study. My parents also tell me to get good marks. To get a good job, we must have good marks here and use them to attract future employers".*

There was a broad consensus (100% interviews and 85% questionnaires) that the scariest thing in their study was to fail a subject. Xinghong explained that "If I don't pass, I cannot graduate. I'm scared of that. All these years are wasted".

There was also a shared perspective from the interview data that obtaining good results involved some specific skills and practices, such as "keeping lecture notes" and "following the teacher". If these practices were described as surface learning (Matsushita, 2018) and the participating students applied them in their study to achieve good study results, it was possible to infer that the focus on study results made it difficult for students to use DAL approaches.

Workload and limited study time

While the picture book class did not have examinations and the experience was pretty relaxed (lecturer), what was expected of students from other courses and the related workload made an impact on their learning in the picture book elective. Students in the interviews saw this as a remarkable constraint on developing deep active approaches in their study. As Hanwei stated,

> *...we have classes every day, including weekends. On average, we take about ten subjects each term. There is no time to spend on any particular subject. All we try is to do what is asked so as to complete the work and pass the tests.*

A further shared concern was the school environment. The policies and rules, for example, that the "library is only accessible during the daytime", and the "light is turned off at 10 pm" have led to difficulty for some students to continue the study after the class (Xinghong). In an environment where the majority of students stayed in the school accommodation, time was found to be limited for the amount of work they had to complete.

In the light of these points, it is perhaps not surprising that many students chose not to approach their learning through 'deep learning' principles. This was evident from Quanquan's description: "We are very busy. Quite a lot of things were done in a rush".

In a structured system of education, it is apparent that there is a room for students' deep and active approaches to learning. Some arrangements at the participating school such as turning off the lights at 10pm might be unique. Nevertheless, the emphasis on learning results and the heavy workload in students' study is supported by other empirical work in the Chinese context (Lee & Song 2016).

Passive learning and accustomed style

The lecturer and many students (65% questionnaires and 100% interviews) mentioned points of "passive", "keeping safe", "avoiding failures", "using comfortable ways of learning", when discussing preferred learning styles of students. This can be reflected in the lecturer's statement:

> *Most students hold an attitude that 'I listen to you', so they just do what is told and are very passive.*

The interview data provided several reasons why students were passive learners. First, "we need to learn lots of subjects. It is about quantity but not quality, so we just make them through" (Wenxuan). Second, "I am used to listening to teachers. It is safe and comfortable" (Wanqiu). Third, "I don't really know what is right or wrong and what is useful. In this study, we don't have placements until in the final year. So, I just do what is provided because I do not have practical experiences" (Quanquan).

The findings that students are passive and stay in their comfort zone appear to be illustrative of a surface approach to learning (Wong & Yuen, 2012). However, a DAL experience could only be achieved by the improvement of students' learning programs, course structure and teaching practices (Yuan & Zhang, 2017). Although students were positive about the learning environment in the picture book course, they were not privy to the learning constraints in the institution.

The place of current learning in students' career plans

In contrast to the relative consensus on what students should learn in the picture book course, there was more divergence on their plans for future careers. In the interviews, students differed markedly in their talks about what to do after the study. Only one student was said to "be an early childhood teacher". The other five respectively talked about their future plan as "doing a study in order to teach adults", "government work", "running a business", "teaching in high school" and "going to study overseas".

Not surprisingly, the extent to which the current study could contribute to their future lives was also uncertain. "Busy work and low pay in preschools" (Lumei) provided the major impetus for the students' plan to shift their careers. For this reason, what seemed to be happening is that many of them, while interested in the picture book course and had the capability to learn more deeply and actively, did not do so. This was illustrated by Hanwei's words: "I am quite confused about the future. I don't think we need to spend too much time on any subject. What I do is just to complete the study".

These students did not position themselves as early childhood teacher educators therefore seeing their current learning as irrelevant to their future. Considering this finding, the limited attention that their lecturer and the course gave to raising students' awareness of the value of the study for their future could be another reason why the students did not take seriously their current learning.

Discussion and implications

Students' learning in a purposefully designed picture book elective is an important topic to explore given the current policies in China that emphasize students' choices and active engagement in learning in higher education (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2019; Lee & Song, 2016). The picture book elective was designed as a reform in the participating institution, whereby students were encouraged to make their own choices and learning directions so they could learn deeply and actively. Recent studies have shown picture books being used as a multidimensional project that strengthened meaningful learning participation (Pitkänen-Huhta & Pietikäinen, 2014). The driving force

behind this process was not only learners' capabilities but also their motivation and a strong desire for learning (Early & Yeung, 2008). In contrast to the traditional approach of content transmission, there were clear opportunities in the course to develop students' independence in line with the national and university policy guidelines (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2019).

What we found in our study is that students had some DAL capabilities. Most of them were able to seek meanings of the course content and build useful learning networks. However, it was also evident that despite their potential to be deep active learners, DAL was a difficult practice. There were issues in relation to students' personal values, career plans as well as environmental influences.

At first glance, participating students appeared to be positive about the picture book course and their associated learning. However, central to their views is the notion of study results. DAL seemed to be only applied to complete the study and produce good marks, which was considered to be able to lead to career opportunities. Students' learning experiences were bound to the way in which they had experienced their previous education, perceived the present study, and planned their future career, as well as the learning activities that were enabled or constrained by the larger social and educational environment beyond the picture book class. In the process of understanding students' experience, it was interesting to see how their learning swirled around the tensions between 1) learning results and processes, 2) students' accustomed styles and the aims of the educational reforms that encourage active learners, 3) and students' perceived value of the present study and their aspiration for the future.

A recurring theme in the data was that early childhood teaching was not a desirable career. There was strong evidence about students' intention to change the career. Early childhood teachers' shift in their career choices was also found in other countries (Wilinski, 2018). A number of variables such as students' own aspirations and future goals were considered powerful modifiers in this shift. In a comparative investigation into the career choice motives of early childhood teachers in four European countries, Weiss et al. (2018) reported three reasons why teachers left their jobs: "professional images, traditions and training structures" (p.501). Students' discussion in the current study

roughly mirrored Weiss et al's reasons. Their intention to change their careers was also attributed to their perceived image of early childhood education, students' aspirations for higher wages and the general learning structures of the programme they were studying under. The issue that early career teachers leave their profession has similarly compelled Australian researchers to consider some essential foundations upon which preservice education is based. Their studies have highlighted the fact that it is hard to keep early career teachers in their profession unless sufficient attention is given to the role of relationships in learning to teach and doing teaching in preservice education (Kelly, Cespedes, Clara & Danaher, 2019). Appropriately arranged teaching practice is also increasingly recognized as a fundamental basis for preservice education in other Asian countries, such as Indonesia (Raith, 2017).

This finding is especially important in the context of young adult students as they have the past life to draw on, present experience to consider and future goals to achieve (Baran, 2019). To some extent, we agree with Chan and Rao (2010) that Chinese students' learning is a diverse phenomenon. As shown in this research, the realities of our participants' experiences were complex. According to Baran (2019), students' motivation is crucial in adult learning. Notably absent in the findings of the current study is just the students' motivation to learn. It was the result that they focused on. Most of their attention was paid to completing the study, coping with the heavy workload and obtaining good marks. If deep active learning is a process of learning beyond teachers and classes (Peters, 2018), it is reasonable to say that the picture book course did not achieve the aim of developing deep active learners.

Where does the finding of this study leave us, and where does it point? Matsushita (2019) argues that DAL makes connections to students' previous, present and future lives. A key point from Pitkänen-Huhta and Pietikäinen's (2014) study of picture books is "the circulation of the participatory practice beyond the classroom" (p.14). The current study showed that the picture book class offered a way to incorporate learner-oriented goals in a context of heavy study load, strict organizational structures and an undervalued future profession. Issues therefore need to be resolved between what happened in the class and what happened outside.

The underlying belief among many learners in this study is that early childhood education is not a desirable career. While they were interested in the picture books, they could not sense the value of their learning. On the level of a single course, it is difficult to change students' career choices. Beyond that question, deep active practice raises issues related to a deep meaning of the class content and the transferability of what is learned (Matsushita, 2018).

The research suggests that students' experience was constrained by a range of factors, including those from themselves, the class, the institution and the profession. Making curriculum reforms in a single class is clearly insufficient. Nor is it enough to have the policy support. The institution needs to adapt curricula, structures and organizational conditions to a real student-centred educational environment. Chinese society needs to give importance to the work of early childhood teachers. The current research has revealed an unfortunate situation in which students planned to leave the profession.

Conclusion

From the perspective that DAL enabled both knowledge construction and knowledge application, the study reported in this paper involved an investigation into the learning approaches of young adults in a picture book course at a Chinese university, a course that encouraged students' deep and active explorations. The findings indicate that students' abilities to seek the meaning of the learning content and build a network of resources are among the most valuable resources that teachers could tap into for the development of deep active learners. However, students faced challenges in implementing DAL experiences. These challenges were illustrative of the tensions between study results and learning experiences, students' accustomed learning styles and educational reforms, and the value of the present study and students' career plans.

Whilst the study offers particular insights into students' experiences in an elective in a Chinese institution, it is important to acknowledge that a small sample size informs the study. There is diversity within Chinese higher education, and we hope this study will inform an ongoing discussion about how to implement educational reforms in the learning of young adult students.

Acknowledgement

The research was supported by the Chinese National Social Science Foundation Education Youth Project: 'Research on the Development and Cultivation of Children's Approach to Learning' (Project Number: CHA160213). The authors of this paper deeply appreciate the support.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Learning to change: Transformative outcomes of programmes and activities for family caregivers of people with dementia in Taiwan

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Abstract

This study explored the transformative outcomes of programmes and activities for family caregivers of people with dementia in Taiwan. Transformative learning theory was used to examine the relationship between participation and positive outcomes. A group of nonparticipants was included to provide a complete picture of the transformative learning process. In this qualitative study, 18 participants were interviewed with audio recording, and the data were transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis was performed to determine the themes and subthemes in the results. The results revealed that participation in programmes and activities was not the single factor leading to transformative outcomes; family support, self-adjustment, the ability to cope, and coordinated intervention in accordance with individual preferences and needs also facilitated transformative outcomes for nonparticipants. Further studies should focus on interventions modifying factors of perceived caregiver burden, for instance, by providing psychological support to informal caregivers, offering programmes and activities targeting the management of

neuropsychiatric symptoms in patients with dementia, and supporting quality of life.

Keywords: programmes and family support groups, transformative outcomes, family caregivers of people with dementia

Introduction

Dementia affects approximately 50 million people worldwide, and this is projected to increase to 82 million by 2030 and 152 million by 2050 (World Health Organization, 2020). Most people with dementia live at home (50%–80% in various European countries; Valzolgher, 2018). In Taiwan, the estimated population of adults aged 65 years or older is 3,607,127 (Ministry of the Interior, 2019), and 280,783 persons have dementia. Specifically, the prevalence of dementia is 8% for those aged 65 years or older (Taiwan Alzheimer's Disease Association, 2020). Official statistics from Taiwan indicate that 94% of people with dementia live at home and 6% are institutionalised; furthermore, 55% of people with dementia are cared for by family members (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2011, 2017). Confucian values may play a vital ideological role for people who care for their parents in Taiwan; such caregivers, especially sons, may consider caregiving to be their family obligation. However, these cultural values may reduce well-being when family caregivers struggle to fulfil high expectations with diminished resources (Funk, Chappell, & Liu, 2013).

In Taiwan, family caregivers may require the following types of informal and formal social support: (a) home-based care, including paid caregivers, home care nurses and physicians, residential rehabilitation, and nutritional consulting services; (b) community-based care, including day care centres, community care centres, and respite care, that provides a temporary 'vacation' for family caregivers; and (c) institutional care, including nursing homes and group homes, that provides 24-hour care for patients with physical or mental disabilities. Furthermore, numerous programmes and activities are provided for family caregivers, such as the School of Wisdom, Family of Wisdom, Family Support Group Services, and the Centre for Integrated Dementia Care. In 2017, the Taiwanese government issued the *2018–2025 Taiwan Dementia Plan*, which aims to support the needs of patients

with dementia and their families and mitigate the negative impacts of dementia and caregiving.

Challenges and benefits encountered by family caregivers of people with dementia

Family caregivers face challenges such as a lack of knowledge about the disease and appropriate care, coping with problem behaviours and comorbidities, and managing medical treatment and daily activities (Chiu et al., 2010). Unlike other diseases, dementia leads to a progressive decline in memory and other cognitive functions, which results in increasing dependence on others for daily activities (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2003; Lethin et al., 2018). Families may have limited knowledge and few skills regarding caring for family members at home, and they are often unprepared to confront the complex emotions associated with such caregiving. As the disease progresses, patients with dementia begin to exhibit behavioural and neuropsychiatric symptoms, including delusions, aggression, wandering, and agitation (Sousa, Sequeira, Ferre-Grau, Neves, & Lleixa-Fortu, 2016), which can present family caregivers with barriers to effective communication and make it difficult to manage the changing levels of care and decision-making required. A recent study revealed that among family caregivers of people with dementia, almost 60% reported high or very high emotional stress, 34% experienced depression, 43% experienced anxiety, and nearly 28% received psychotropic medications (Zimmerman et al., 2018).

However, studies have also reported positive effects of caregiving among family caregivers; for example, some caregivers perceived themselves as uplifted because they actively promoted positive aspects of care (Donovan & Corcoran, 2010). Moreover, valuing positive aspects (Farran, Keane-Hagerty, Salloway, Kupferer, & Wilken, 1991), significant gratification (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2003), and reciprocal relationships (Huang, 2009) have been reported by caregivers and care recipients. These studies have suggested that some aspects of family caregiving may yield positive individual effects.

As mentioned, the burden of caring can negatively affect the physical and mental health of the caregivers of people with dementia. Therefore, providing resources and support to such caregivers should be a high priority for governments. The need to provide quality education and support

programmes to help individuals living with dementia, family caregivers, and professionals is growing (Black et al., 2013). Studies have shown that the overall competency and preparedness, health-related quality of life (Kuo, Huang, Hsu, Wang, & Shyu, 2016), and depressive symptoms (Huang et al., 2013) of family caregivers of people with dementia improved after participation in programmes and activities that address the management of behavioural problems in patients with dementia.

Types of programmes and activities

Various types of programmes and activities were investigated in this study (Table 1). These services were mostly individually tailored and provided by private and individual associations, hospitals, day care centres, and community care centres, although some were organised and delivered by public sector institutions or the continuing education and lifelong learning centres of universities. The lengths of programmes and activities also varied, with most lasting from a few hours to one or two days. The programmes and activities were led by various professionals (e.g. social workers, clinical psychologists, neurologists, geriatricians, nurses, and therapists) depending on content. Lectures, seminars, workshops, and group activities were typical teaching methods. Because the government is aware of the challenges faced by people with dementia and has endeavoured to promote dementia education to support such patients and their caregivers, the programmes and activities in this study were mostly funded or partly funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare or the Taiwan Lottery Funds. Hence, the participants, in particular dementia patients and their family caregivers, were generally able to join the programmes and activities free of charge. A small number of programmes and activities had associated fees. Some of the programmes and activities were recognised by service providers.

The government's Long-Term Care 2.0 programme was extended in 2017 to include healthcare services for people 50 years or older diagnosed as having dementia, with these services targeted at communities and local areas. Twenty centres for integrated dementia care are presently in operation, and these are staffed with case managers and care consultants and provide clinical diagnoses and referrals. One hundred thirty-four community sites for dementia provide the following services: cognitive promotion, Family of Wisdom, family caregiver training, and support groups. Two hundred eighty-seven community service sites, including

day care centres and small multifunctional group homes, are presently in operation (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2017).

School of Wisdom was established in 2005 and has provided health promotion programmes and activities for patients with mild dementia (clinical dementia rating = 1) and their family caregivers. This organisation has provided nonpharmaceutical programmes and activities to 130,000 households to help dementia patients cope with their daily routines. According to the above report, for 80% of the participants with dementia, their speech and ability to interact with others have improved since their first participation (Public Television News Network, 2019).

Table 1 Types of programmes and activities and their providers

Programmes and Activities	Providers
Volunteer training programmes for AD8 dementia screening	Associations, community care centres, and hospitals
School of Wisdom	Associations, day care centres, and hospitals
Health-related lectures	Associations, community care centres, and hospitals
Family of Wisdom and family Support	Associations, day care centres, and hospitals
Long-term care services and resources	Public sector institutions (e.g. long-term care centres)
Music therapy	Associations, day care centres, and community care centres
Dementia care skills workshops & disease lectures	Associations, day care centres, community care centres, university continuing education and lifelong learning centres, and hospitals
Health-related fitness classes	Associations, day care centres, and community care centres

Family of Wisdom is an innovative project combining behavioural dementia therapy, family support, social therapy, and care skills training (Tang, Wu, & Lee, 2013). Family of Wisdom involves a homelike environment in which patients with dementia are encouraged to build connections with their caregivers. The purpose of Family of Wisdom is mainly to develop social activities that both patients with dementia

and their families can benefit from. Programmes and activities such as the School of Wisdom and Family of Wisdom have provided alternative types of support and information for patients with dementia and their family caregivers.

Applications of transformative learning theory

Transformative learning theory has been applied in a number of theoretical studies of adult education as well as in empirical studies of social and community transformation, participation in group experiences, personal illness, intercultural learning and lifestyle, and career change (Vaughn, 2016). In the present study, we examined transformative learning theory through findings from a group of family caregivers of people with dementia who often reported negative caring experiences. We focused on aspects of the theory that have been critiqued and have raised questions about attempts to foster transformative learning in the context of negative experiences. Specifically, we paid attention to participation in programmes and activities and questioned the levels of transformation reached when family caregivers are constrained by negative caring experiences. Although this study was primarily based on data from participants in programmes and activities, data from nonparticipants were also included to compare the extent of transformative outcomes.

Transformative learning theory

Mezirow (1978) defined the process of going through a women's college reentry programme as a perspective transformation. He considered perspectives to comprise the beliefs, values, and assumptions that are developed through life experiences and proposed that a person interprets and constructs meaning from those experiences through the developed perspective. Mezirow (2003, pp. 58–59) defined transformative learning as 'learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open, and emotionally able to change'. Learning can be understood as the process of constructing a new or modified interpretation of the meaning of experiences in order to guide further action. Mezirow (1995) introduced a series of phases that constitute the transformative process. This process begins with a 'disorienting dilemma' or an

'alienation from prescribed social roles'. During the learning process, a learner moves through the subsequent phases towards the creation of a new perspective that is integrated into the learner's life. Mezirow (1995) stated that this transformative process is not completed until the learner engages in reflective discourse. Through dialogue with others, the learner comes to understand that their transformed perspective may be shared by others. Reflective discourse is a type of content-oriented dialogue that attempts to justify beliefs by defending reasons and examining evidence of contrary views. Finally, learners adopt encountered views and integrate them into new perspectives before taking rational action. In this sense, a type of social action results from the newly developed perspectives or revised interpretation of meaning that comes from prior experience. At this point, the individual's transformative process is considered complete.

Given these issues, the aim of the present study was to examine the transformative outcomes of participating in programmes and activities for the family caregivers of people with dementia in Taiwan. A control group of caregivers who did not participate in these programmes or activities was included to reflect the effects of nonparticipation. To our knowledge, transformative learning has not been studied in the context of family caregiving for people with dementia. Studies have rarely used transformative learning theory to compare the attitudes and experiences of participants and nonparticipants in programmes and activities. Consequently, the transformative outcomes of participation in such programmes and activities should be examined for the family caregivers of people with dementia to reveal knowledge gaps in evidence-based practices in this field. Thus, the present study examined the following research questions: With respect to family caregivers, what are their negative experiences caring for people with dementia? How does participation in programmes and activities help the family caregivers of people with dementia? Do family caregivers – participants and nonparticipants in programmes and activities – develop positive experiences?

Methods

In this qualitative study, 18 eligible participants who met the inclusion criteria were recruited to attend an in-depth interview after giving their consent to participate. The details of inclusion criteria are provided in the following section. The researcher used a list of open-ended questions

to interview the participants; throughout the interviews, prompts and follow-up questions were employed to encourage responses of greater depth and breadth (Kitzinger & Willmoot, 2002).

In this study, the data analysed included answers to the following open-ended questions: (1) What types of negative experiences have you encountered when caring for a family member with dementia? (2) How has your participation in programmes and activities helped you as a primary caregiver? (3) Did any factors encourage you not to join the programmes and activities?

Interviews were conducted during February and March 2014. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. This study was approved by the Institution of Review Board (IRB) of National Cheng Kung University. In accordance with the IRB's requirements, participation was informed and voluntary, and all possible effort was made to ensure data confidentiality.

Ethical and emotional issues

We recognised that interviews were potentially emotionally fraught experiences for participants because participants were asked to relive difficult experiences in their personal and caregiving lives. The interviewer thus conducted interviews appropriately and was sensitive to the needs of participants. The interviewer has family members with similar experiences of caring for people with dementia. This familiarity helped the interviewer to adopt an appropriate countenance and manner of address, employ appropriate interviewing techniques, and respond with empathy to the experiences and views of participants. The strategy of consulting with professionals and practitioners was also used effectively prior to the interviews. For example, the interviewer met with social workers and a neurologist who is familiar with family caregivers of people living with dementia before starting the interview. In all cases, this enhanced the interviewer's confidence and enabled a more sensitive approach to interviewing, which benefited the research participants and the interviewer. Dickson-Swift et al. (2006) noted that qualitative interviews share similarities with therapy because both are based on empathy, listening skills, and giving space for participants to discuss personal issues. However, therapists aim to help their patients, whereas an interviewer merely listens and perceives. The researcher in this study,

who had conducted a similar study, was able to play the roles of listener and guide to help the interviewees obtain resources or professional advice.

Participants

Overall, 18 participants were recruited from two associations and one medical centre in central and southern Taiwan, respectively. Participant and patient characteristics are listed in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. The family caregivers met the following inclusion criteria: (a) self-identified as a primary caregiver in their residence; (b) living with the care recipient (parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, or spouse with dementia); and (c) self-identified as having experienced both negative and positive aspects of caregiving or having had a social worker or attending physician and the researcher perceive them as having had these experiences.

Table 2 Participant Demographics

The participants	Gender	Age	The relationship between caregiver/ care recipient	The length of caregiving time	Participation in programme/support group/clinical trial
A1	F	55	Daughter/Mother	6-7years	Programme/ support group
A2	F	37	Daughter-in-law/ Father-in-law	1 year	Programme/ support group
B1	M	49	Son/Mother	4-5 years	Programme/ support group
B2	M	68	Son/Mother	10 years	Programme/ support group
A3 (mother of B3)	F	71	Wife/Husband	24 years	Programme/ support group
B3 (son of A3)	M	40	Son/Mother		n/a
A4	F	65	Wife/Husband	1-2 years	Programme/ support group
A5	F	73	Wife/Husband	3-4 years	Programme/ support group(stop going later)/clinical trial
B4	M	50	Son/Mother	5-6 years	Clinical trial
B5	M	75	Husband/Wife	2-3 years	Clinical trial
B6	M	72	Husband/Wife	5-6 years	Clinical trial
A6	F	50	Daughter/Mother	7-8 years	Clinical trial
A7	F	50	Daughter/Mother	6-7 years	Clinical trial
A8	F	50	Wife/Husband	6-7 years	Clinical trial
A9	F	30	Granddaughter/ Grandmother	5-6 years	Programme/ support group
A10	F	55	Wife/Husband	5 years	Programme/ support group
A11	F	40	Daughter/Mother	2-3 years	Support group
A12	F	50	Wife/Husband	5-6 years	Programme/ support group

Table 3 Types of information of care recipients

Caregiver	Gender of care recipient	The date of confirmation of dementia diagnosis	Age of care recipient	First visit of MMSE	First visit of CDR	The most recent date of medical visit	Latest MMSE	Latest CDR	Types of dementia
A1	F	2007	75	*	*	*	*	*	Alzheimer
A2	M	2013	79	*	*	*	*	*	Alzheimer
B1	F		80	*	*	*	*	*	Alzheimer
B2	F	2009	88	*	*	*	*	*	*
A3	M	About 2002	About 80	*	*	*	*	*	Vascular Alzheimer
B3	M	About 2002	About 80	*	*	*	*	*	
A4	M	2012	*	*	*	*	*	*	Dementia/ Lewy Bodies
A5	M	2010	76	20	0.5	2014/01/14	24	0.5	Alzheimer
B4	F	2008	74	17	0.5	2014/04/21	14	1	Alzheimer
B5	F	2011	75	23	0.5	2014/04/28	19	0.5	Alzheimer
B6	F	2008	68	15	1	2014/04/28	8	1	Alzheimer
A6	F	2006	79	18	0.5	2014/04/14	17	0.5	Alzheimer
A7	F	2007	74	18	0.5	2014/04/15	15	1	Alzheimer
A8	M	2007	82	28	0.5	2014/04/14	26	0.5	Alzheimer
A9	F	2008	74	*	*	*	*	*	Alzheimer
A10	M	2009	64	*	*	*	*	*	*
A11	F	2011	74	14	1	2014/04/03	11	1	Alzheimer
A12	M	2008	57	*	*	*	*	*	*

Notes: * Due to family caregivers may not be able to acknowledge with the medical information of care recipient. Certain amounts of information are unavailable here.

Data analysis

Recorded data were transcribed in a Word file. Then, two research fellows independently conducted thematic analysis by following an inductive approach that entailed coding themes and subthemes (Kvale, 1996). Common themes were identified in the answers to the interview questions, such as negative experiences and participation in programmes and activities. Data were categorised into overarching themes and subthemes. All overarching themes and subthemes were compiled into tables to ensure the cohesiveness and distinctions of the responses; thus, the researchers were able to interpret the data in terms of transformative

outcomes. The analysis was conducted on an explicit or semantic level (Braun & Clarke, 2006); nevertheless, we considered all possible readings of the responses to explore variations and contradictions. After the initial coding, a group of themes was identified and collated into a broad thematic map. Then, the main ideas and concepts of each theme guided the creation of the overarching themes. A final version of themes and overarching themes was agreed upon through discussions and reaching a consensus between the two researchers.

This analysis aimed to acknowledge, understand and appreciate the similarities and differences of the participants' experiences. Hence, we avoided making generalisations about family caregivers, and their experiences tended to be heterogeneous. Member checking was used for quality review and verification. The participants were asked to review the transcripts for accuracy, including the preliminary analysis of their responses that emphasised the aspects that were interpreted as being part of transformative learning. The data were considered reliable and valid both descriptively and interpretatively.

Table 4 Overarching themes and subthemes

Overarching theme	Theme
(1) Negative changes after becoming a caregiver	1. Family tension.
	2. Negative emotion.
	3. Lack of professional knowledge and caring skills.
	4. Decline in health.
	5. Economic constraints.
(2) Benefits of participating in programmes and activities	6. Understanding dementia or early onset dementia.
	7. Learning care skills and knowledge.
	8. Being able to locate care resources.
	9. Peer support and patient benefit.
	10. Having time to take a break.
(3) Reasons for nonparticipation in programmes or activities	11. Information and knowledge provided by myself, other family members, or professionals.
	12. No desire to attend.
	13. Dissatisfaction with content and structure.
	14. Unavailability of public transportation and a lack of information on programmes and activities.

Results

Data were clustered around three overarching themes: (1) Negative changes after becoming a caregiver; (2) benefits of participating in programmes and activities; and (3) reasons for nonparticipation in programmes and activities (see Table 4). The first overarching theme represents the negative experiences that family caregivers experience when caring for people with dementia and includes five subthemes: family tension, negative emotion, lack of professional knowledge and caring skills, a decline in health, and economic constraints. The second overarching theme represents the important benefits of participating in programmes and activities and the changes required to face and cope with dementia. The third overarching theme represents the reasons for nonparticipation in programmes and activities, some of which may be regarded as barriers to participation for family caregivers.

Negative changes after becoming a caregiver

According to the responses, negative experiences were mainly the result of family tension, negative emotion, lack of professional knowledge and caring skills, decline in health, and economic constraints. These themes are detailed as follows.

Family tension. A8 (aged 50; wife caregiver) admitted experiencing family tension. She reported, 'I have no idea. I just feel… we had an argument not so long ago. I said to him, "You like arguing with me". We have been frequently quarrelling lately. I find I have a bad temper now. I think this change is related to my husband's condition'. B4 (aged 50; son caregiver), recalled his mother's symptoms, 'She could repeat the same complaint about my wife that treated her badly, the same complaint again and again. This is very hard for my family and I to tolerate'.

Negative emotion. A1 (aged 55; daughter caregiver) recalled experiencing emotional stress.

> *Sometimes I feel mentally tired. Mom does not need to be cared for. I told myself to understand her health condition now and not to blame her if she gave me troubles and to treat her as an old nut. Sometimes I cannot put myself in her shoes. I just wonder, 'Why do you say these words that hurt?' or 'Why do you suddenly lose your temper?' I really feel hurt from what she sometimes tells me.*

A12 (aged 50; wife caregiver) reported the following:

> *For me, the psychological burden is greater than the physical burden. He does not need me like an old man does. Before the (confirmation of diagnosis) onset of dementia, he had a bad temper. Now he has become even worse. He noticed that his memory is not as good as it used to be. He has very low self-esteem. No matter what I say to him, he replies, 'Oh, you look down on me because I cannot make money now, because my memory is not as good as it used to be'.*

A2 (aged 37; daughter-in-law caregiver) did not live with her father-in-law until he recently moved into their house. She felt very stressed and isolated as her father-in-law's primary caregiver. A6 (aged 50; daughter caregiver) mentioned that 'Mom asked me the same thing more than 20 or 30 times. I held my temper. I know she is ill, but I am a human being; I have my own emotions too'.

Lack of professional knowledge and caring skills/economic constraints. B1 (aged 49; son caregiver) mentioned that after they had moved into their current flat, his mom frequently suspected that the paid carer had stolen her personal belongings. He suspected her cognitive condition was deteriorating. A1 (aged 55; daughter caregiver) confessed that at the beginning she did not know her mom was ill. She had learned about dementia during her previous experience as a volunteer, but she did not completely understand the disease and the problem behaviours caused by dementia. Moreover, vascular dementia was rarely seen 25 years ago, and even medical doctors had difficulty confirming its diagnosis. A3 (aged 71; wife caregiver) recalled that her husband had a stroke, after which he started to manifest problem behaviours:

> *Twenty-five years ago, my husband was working too hard—I think it was the fatigue that caused his high blood pressure. He then had a stroke. At that time, none of us realised he had dementia; that he had dementia was not confirmed until 12 years later. However, by then, his dementia was already in the moderate stage.*

Decline in health

Several participants reported that their health had been detrimentally affected since becoming a primary caregiver, but this was often ascribed

to neurotic disorders. A1 (aged 55; daughter caregiver) recalled that in the early stage of caregiving, she experienced a dysfunction of her autonomic nervous system—she realised it was caused by pressure. In recent years, A3 (aged 71; wife caregiver) had developed a spinal problem because she needed to move her husband from time to time, which hurt her back. A3 advised the other caregivers, 'I would suggest family caregivers adjust themselves. This is your life, and you have to learn how to lean in and make your life progress'. However, B2 (aged 68; son caregiver) mentioned, 'although I have many health problems, they are not related to my caregiving. I used to be an athlete, and I was strong enough to carry heavy stuff without any problems'.

Economic constraints

A9 (aged 35; granddaughter caregiver) mentioned that economic constraints had arisen after she became a caregiver. She noted that 'We are not doing well financially. I rely on my husband's income. I told my father and aunt about our family's financial strain, so they give me some money every month. Grandma applied for a pension, which is NT$7,000 [equivalent to US$230] every month. That is all we have for living. '

Benefits of participating in programmes and activities

Several participants reported that participating in programmes and activities resulted in benefits, including improved dementia knowledge and caring skills, enjoyment sharing experiences with others, peer support and patient benefit, and having time to take a break. These subthemes are detailed as follows.

Improved dementia knowledge and caring skills. B2 (aged 68; son caregiver) and A3 (aged 71; wife caregiver), who had rich experiences of caregiving, reported the benefits of participating in classes and activities. They had attended various courses and activities related to dementia caregiving skills. B2 reported the following:

> *I started to participate regularly [in courses and activities] in 2000. They have been a great help. As a family caregiver, you understand the problem behaviours of dementia patients, such as delusions, depression, and agitation, but I didn't have a thorough understanding of dementia until I attended those programmes.*

A3 recalled the following:

> *These classes are useful and helpful. They help you to understand the different stages of the disease. The classes help you to become more capable as a caregiver. There are many people attending these classes and activities. There are various choices too.*

B1 (aged 49; son caregiver) learned the methods he could apply in the process of caring for his mother. He said, 'I realised the importance of physical fitness after Mom fell down and broke her bones. Attending classes is helpful to me. I can use the knowledge and skills in the process of caring for my mother'.

Enjoyment from sharing experiences with others. B2 also mentioned that he learned where to access caring resources. 'Exchanging caring experiences with other caregivers was important to me. I could exchange experiences with other caregivers in the courses and activities. I now know where to apply for assistive devices'. A1 (aged 55; daughter caregiver) enjoyed sharing her caring experiences with others:

> *I expected to gain experience from others. The more we understand ourselves, the more effective we can be in our roles as caregivers. I hope my experiences benefit other families too.*

A9 (aged 36; granddaughter caregiver) showed considerable motivation. She continued attending courses despite being discouraged by her family members. She said, 'At least I learned more about grandma's problems from the lectures and from other family caregivers. I wanted to attend the classes and activities, but my family disapproved of the idea'.

Peer support and patient benefit. A1 (aged 55; daughter caregiver) continued, 'I've gained much from the experiences of others. There are many individual cases (about caring for dementia patients). The more we understand ourselves the more we can do adjust ourselves…' A10 (aged 55; spouse caregiver) mentioned that she thought the greatest benefit came from the support she had received from others in similar situations. She reported the following:

> *I was not alone. I had support from peers. We chatted and exchanged ideas. It was good for me to get close to people in a similar situation to us. He [her husband] didn't speak much. The courses and activities we participated in were good for him, I think.*

A4 (aged 65; wife caregiver) stated the following:

> *He has been severely senile since 2012. I am suffering more from taking care of him. I am truly stressed. I cannot let go of these stressful feelings. Oh, whenever I see him like this I am upset. Friends tell me, 'Do not lock yourself in the house'. I went to learn Chi-Gong with my husband. Now we go to classes together and we even go to the open market. Without him next to me I feel anxious.*

Having time to take a break. The School of Wisdom was highly recommended by some of the participants because, unlike other programmes, it separates patients with dementia and their family caregivers. This provides the caregivers with an opportunity to take a break from caregiving. A4 continued,

> *My husband and I went to a series of programmes from the School of Wisdom. There were eight courses in total. I feel I can rest a bit when he is taken care of by the staff there. But there are limited seats for applicants.*

A12 (aged 50; wife caregiver) reported the following:

> *The School of Wisdom gave us a 2-hour break. I am glad that I went to the association and joined their programmes and activities. The staff there take care of the patients with dementia while the caregivers attend the programmes. I had no worries when I went, so I could adjust my mood during this period. If the care recipients were not separated from caregivers, it wouldn't be very helpful.*

A12 had visited numerous places in search of suitable courses and activities for her husband, who has mild dementia. She said, 'My husband is still young compared with other patients who attend dementia courses. I went to a course at the Evergreen Learning Centre, but it was not suitable for my husband. The School of Wisdom classes suit us the most'.

Reasons for nonparticipation in programs or activities

A small number of participants reported they never attend programmes and groups or have ceased participation. Their reasons were as follows.

Information and knowledge are provided by family or

healthcare professionals. B5 (aged 75; husband caregiver) said, 'I have participated in none of the classes or activities. My daughter-in-law passed on to me some materials she downloaded from websites'. A group of participants joined a clinical trial led by an attending physician in the hospital. Patients and family caregivers were cared for by a medical team from the hospital. B4 (aged 50; son caregiver) mentioned that he had joined a clinical trial in a hospital.

> *We went to a family support group once. Mom didn't show any changes, good or bad, after attending the group. As for myself, I initially felt that I had no time to go, and Mom is timid. We've been participating in a clinical trial in a hospital. We go to the hospital and meet other patients and their families regularly. We've been going for 4 years now. We exchange information and feelings with other patients and family caregivers.*

No desire to attend. A8 (aged 50; wife caregiver) reported no need to attend dementia courses or activities because her husband only has mild dementia. She said, 'No. I never thought about going to [dementia] classes or family support groups. He still only has mild dementia. There is no need for me to go right now'. A5 (aged 73; wife caregiver) attended a family support group on two occasions but ceased to go because her husband was unwilling to return. She said, 'My husband and I went to two classes. It helped somewhat; however, we stopped going because he didn't want to attend anymore. I followed his wishes'.

Dissatisfaction with content and structure. B4 (aged 50; son caregiver) explained his negative experiences and impressions from attending programmes and activities:

> *I felt like it was just an occasion to collect negative feelings and emotions. I didn't know if there were any positive approaches or resources that were more effective; the seminar was just one-way communication. Lectures might not be what I need.*

B5 (aged 75; husband caregiver) stated that he had never attended any dementia courses or activities. He considered such courses and activities useless and said they did not help him practically with caring for his wife:

> *I haven't attended any [dementia] classes and activities. I do not think that they fit my needs. It seems like there is nothing I can*

do to keep her calm. I occasionally receive course information from family support groups. I think that unless you change yourself, you cannot manage things as you wish. I am the one who faces her all the time. I try to figure out problems bit by bit when they arise. I don't think lectures or activities could help solve my problems.

Unavailability of public transportation and a lack of information on programmes and activities. B6 (aged 72; husband caregiver) and his wife live in a remote area in southern Taiwan. He said, 'I have never attended any classes or activities. We live in Fung Liao, a rural area in southern Taiwan. We need to take several forms of transport to get to the hospital in Kaohsiung. Besides, I have no idea where the courses are. What are these courses like?'

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate whether family caregivers experienced transformative outcomes through attending programmes and activities. To our knowledge, this is the first study to adopt transformative learning theory to examine the relationship of participation in programmes and activities with transformative outcomes for family caregivers of people with dementia.

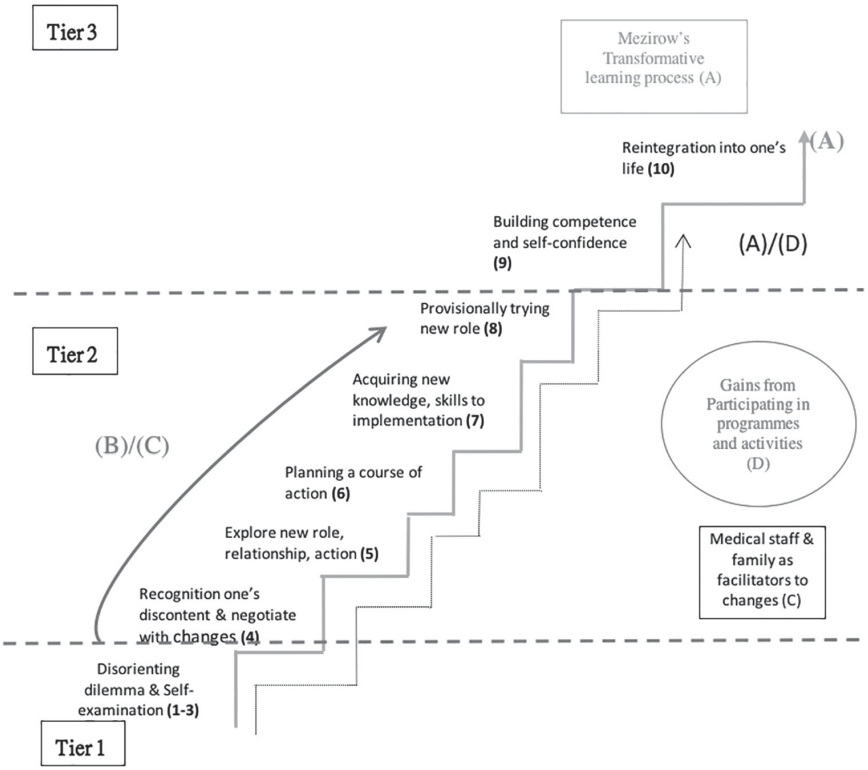
Our findings revealed that negative experiences after becoming a caregiver mainly involved family tension, psychological burden, health declines, and financial constraints. Other studies have provided similar evidence regarding psychological, mental, and emotional burdens (Pinquart & Sörensen, 2003), health decline (Corey & McCurry, 2018), and economic constraints (Wang et al., 2018). The participants in this study had been confronted by many disorienting problems, which can trigger changes in attitudes, beliefs, and values. Attitudes, beliefs, and views that had been internalised as habits were shaken, questioned, and rejected when exposed to transformative learning practices (Christie et al., 2015). For example, A1 asked, 'Why do you say these words that hurt?' and 'Why do you suddenly lose your temper?' A3, who had been a wife caregiver for more than two decades recalled, 'For about 12 years we could not confirm whether he was ill because of dementia'. Early onset dementia is dementia that first occurs at an age of <65 years. Healthcare providers generally do not monitor for the disease in younger patients,

and months or years may pass before the correct diagnosis is made and proper treatment can begin (Alzheimer's Association, 2020). In this study, A12, the spouse caregiver of a patient with early onset dementia, recalled the misery from her early stage of caregiving.

Transformation rarely occurs unless the individual is convinced that it is necessary (Christie et al., 2015). Participants who reported negative caring experiences may have interpreted their conditions as a disorienting dilemma, self-examination, and sense of alienation (Stages 1–3; Mezirow, 1995; Figure 1). Participation in programmes and activities or support from medical staff and family members may play crucial roles in changing caregivers negative experiences and allowing them to move to the subsequent transformative stages of recognition of one's discontent and negotiation with changes (Stage 4), exploring new roles, relationships, and actions (Stage 5), and planning a course of action (Stage 6).

Moreover, participants in dementia programmes and activities reported numerous positive benefits for the family caregivers. For example, participants B1, B2, and A3 reported 'my dementia knowledge and caring skills improved', participants A1, A9, and B2 described that they 'enjoyed sharing experiences with others', participants A1, A4, and A10 reported 'peer support and patient benefit from the courses', and participants A4 and A12 stated that attending programmes and activities gave them 'time to take a break'. These results are in agreement with other studies that have demonstrated positive changes including better caregiving (Donovan & Corcoran, 2010), improved health-related quality of life (Kuo et al., 2016), and mitigated depressive symptoms (Huang et al., 2013) in the family caregivers of people with dementia after participation in programmes and activities focused on the management of behavioural problems. Our findings showed the prior negative experiences of participants were mitigated through their participation in programmes and activities, which helped them to gain an understanding of the disease and caring skills (Stage 7). Some of the participants may have been able to establish new personal roles (Stage 8) and possibly move into the stage of increased happiness and self-confidence (Stage 9).

Figure 1 Phases of the transformative learning process (Mezirow, 1995), and the incentives approach to transformative outcomes in our participants.



This study also examined the reasons for nonparticipation in dementia programmes and activities. A8, B4, B5, and B6 reported they did not participate in programmes and activities for the following reasons: 'information and knowledge provided by family and professionals', 'no desire to attend', 'dissatisfaction with content and structure', and 'unavailability of transportation and information'. Although A8, B4, B5, and B6 did not participate in programmes and activities, they were attending a clinical trial, which offered leadership and support from the patient's attending physician. Thus, they received considerable support from a group of professionals who helped them to cope with

their negative caring experiences. Furthermore, A8 noted that she constantly argued with her husband; she thought her husband was ill, but he was still in a mild stage of dementia, and she considered there to be no need to join any programmes and activities. The family caregiver or patient may not yet be alert to the negative changes caused by the progression of dementia. In the case of A8, the condition of the patient could deteriorate rapidly, and caring could become more stressful for the family caregiver. Taylor (2009) claimed that individual experiences, critical reflection, dialogue, a holistic orientation, an awareness of context, and authentic relationships are the core elements of transformative learning and that the core elements and the theoretical orientation of transformative practice have interdependent and reciprocal relationships.

Conclusion and Limitations

A perspective transformation often occurs either through a cumulative series of transformed meaning schemes or from an acute personal or social crisis. This study investigated the transformative learning that occurs for the family caregivers of people with dementia as a result of negative caring experiences. The process of transformative learning can be broadly categorised into three tiers as shown in Figure 1. Both A1 and A3 had lacked knowledge on dementia and had experienced impaired health (e.g. negative emotions and back pain) since becoming caregivers. However, participating in programmes had helped them to improve their dementia knowledge and caring skills. A1 and A3 also enjoyed sharing their caring experiences with others and had gained much from hearing the experiences of others. A3 has even become a facilitator, sharing her dementia caring experiences and skills with others. A1, A3, and A12 appeared to have overcome their negative caring experiences and moved from the lower stages (Tier 1) to the upper stages (Tier 3). Although participation in programmes and activities may not be the only trigger for this change, these positive gains can be interpreted as a significant factor.

Moreover, transformative outcomes may have occurred for the nonparticipants in programmes and activities in this study. Support from medical staff and family members may have been other essential triggers contributing to transformative outcomes among nonparticipants. Therefore, the nonparticipants, who received support from family and medical staff, were considered to be in Tier 2. However,

family and medical staff may have limited time, given their other duties, and they may not be able to provide holistic information and support to family caregivers. Furthermore, moral and financial support from inside and outside of the family, information about social resources, improvement in coping skills for problem behaviours related to dementia, and a coordinated intervention may also play crucial roles. Finally, motivation is considered essential for the family caregiver of people with dementia to participate in programmes and activities. The effectiveness of the programmes for individual preferences and needs may enhance the motivation of family caregivers. Family caregivers and patients should increase their awareness of dementia and dementia care at the diagnosis stage. However, family caregivers and patients with dementia vary widely, and one-size-fits-all programmes and activities may be unsuitable for all caregivers and patients. To improve self-adjustment, coordinated dementia interventions including continual supervision and feedback with cross-disciplinary healthcare and educational professionals (e.g. attending physicians, care managers, nurses, social workers, and educators) are recommended.

Some limitations of this study could be addressed through future research. For example, the views of caregivers may differ according to age (e.g. young old or oldest old), role (e.g. spouse or child), residential location (e.g. urban or rural), and life history of the patient. In addition, the progression of dementia varies between individuals. Longitudinal studies could follow up patients/caregivers for up to 2 years to address this limitation.

Further Directions

The population of Taiwan is ageing rapidly, and the number of patients with dementia is increasing. The transformative outcomes described in this study may assist family caregivers who are stressed and pessimistic. The present results provide long-term care policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, practitioners, and family caregivers with a better understanding of the challenges faced by and the needs of people caring for patients with dementia. Future studies should focus on the effects of dementia interventions on the modifiable factors that predict perceived caregiver burdens, such as the provision of psychological support to informal caregivers, the availability of programmes and activities targeting the management of neuropsychiatric symptoms, and the provision of support for quality care.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Influential factors of university teachers' lifelong learning in professional development

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This study was designed to investigate factors that influence university teachers' lifelong learning from the perspective of professional development. This study built a framework on Jarvis' lifelong learning definition which is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, indicating that adult lifelong learning is a process constantly constructed and reconstructed along with individual experiences with external organizational conditions.

The nature of the research questions directed the research design towards a quantitative approach. Samples were full-time teachers working in seven universities located in Shandong Province, China. Significant positive relationships of variables demonstrated Organizational Learning Culture (OLC), Managerial Effectiveness (ME), Learning Content Focus (LCF), Collaborative Learning (CL) and Psychological Empowerment (PE) as influential factors. And PE acted as mediator between OLC, ME, LCF and LLL.

This study provided a new perspective in promoting university teachers' lifelong learning. Empirical evidence and practical suggestions proposed in this study would be of great significance for higher education administrators.

Keywords: *Influential factors, lifelong learning. University teachers, professional development, adult learning*

Introduction

In the context of the knowledge economy and high-skilled labour demand, employability acts as an educational process that supports the transition from university to work (ICF GHK and Cedefop, 2014). As Purdue (2003) noted, "The constant and ever-quickening pace of change in the world today dictates that practicing professionals engage in a process of lifelong learning" (p.615). The term "lifelong learning" serves to explain that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom, but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations (Fullan, 2011).

In this study, university teachers' lifelong learning was considered embedded in professional development. University teachers' lifelong learning (LLL) and professional development (PD) are kept in an interactively sustainable relationship. Given the point that adults learn more productively when they share responsibility for the learning process by actively participating in the operation of the experience (Knowles, 1975), teachers' experience is a concurrent activity along with their professional development. Teachers' learning in professional development, therefore, is typical of workplace learning, meeting the key defining criteria that participation in workplace and learning are seen as inextricably linked within the same process (Huisman, De Boer, Dill, SoutoOtero, 2015). University teachers need to be lifelong learners themselves in order to shoulder the heavy responsibilities entrusted to them and be capable of positively influencing students in their thoughts, behaviors and lifestyle (Shuming Gu, 2001). "

Kennedy (2010) pointed out the need to understand situational factors that impact teacher's practices. Combining factors influencing LLL, workplace learning and characteristics of effective PD, this study was defined to investigate the topic of contextual factors that influence

university teachers' pursuit of LLL along with their PD. Thus, the problems addressed in this study were:

1) What are the factors that were influencing university teachers' lifelong learning in professional development?
2) What are the relationships that existed between independent variables and dependent variables?

This study used an explanatory model. Factors of each dimension consist of university teachers' pursuit of LLL, psychological empowerment (PE) and organizational learning contexts, including organisation learning culture (OLC), managerial effectiveness (ME), learning content focus (LCF), and collaborative learning (CL). Based on Jarvis' lifelong learning definition that is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, the research model set pursuit of LLL as a dependent variable, OLC, ME, LCF and CL as independent ones, and PE as mediator.

This study would offer significant theoretical and practical implications. By identifying these factors, university administrators may glean more valuable information regarding the influential factors have on creating a lifelong learning culture. Knowledge gained from the study may generate interest in conducting additional studies about individual attitudes, motivation, and behaviors toward education, training, and professional growth. More empirical evidence on further understanding of university teachers' lifelong learning, psychological status and learning contexts would be provided. Results obtained in this study may help university administrators in building lifelong learning systems, planning future training and management of professional development, all of which would surely enrich the practical exploration in a related field.

Literature Review

The approach of lifelong learning (LLL), has gained currency through attempts to harness it as a means of providing people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Scholars and trend forecasters, looking towards the needs of the 21st century, have reached a nearly unanimous agreement about the importance of a constantly improving and technologically competent workforce that can compete in global markets (McCombs, 1991).

Realising the magnitude and importance of the challenge, policymakers,

politicians, and educators have made high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers a priority in modern educational reform proposals (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003). University administrators and policymakers are calling for "high quality" professional learning experiences for teachers and are making professional development "a key ingredient in the improvement of teacher instruction and student achievement" (Bassett, 2006, p.3).

Teachers are at the heart of the educational process, and teaching is viewed as a "professional" career. Professional development is essential for the continued development of teacher research, discovery, and critical thinking (China) National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 2006). Professional development enabled teachers to increase their sense of self-efficacy (Avalos, 2011) and increased their ability to teach students effectively (Vescio et al., 2008).

There are considerable gaps in the literature concerned with adult learning or lifelong learning. One such gap is the lack of tendency to focus on adult learning with professional development in specific fields. The literature revealed that researches on adult learning mainly focused on its andragogy theory, characteristics of adult learners, or evolving definitions and connotations. And similarly, in lifelong learning, characteristics of lifelong learners, its theoretical basis and objectives (mainly community learners after retirement) drew the interest of most researchers. The literature on university management, by and large, laid very little attention to managing the provision of teachers' professional development from the perspective of learning.

Characteristics of Lifelong Learning (LLL)

This study built a theoretical framework on Jarvis' (2006, 2007, 2008) constructivist perspective where learners construct meaning based on prior learning and can be classified as experiential learning. Thus, lifelong learning is defined as:

"The combination of processes whereby the whole person experiences ... social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically... and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a constantly changing (or more experienced) person" (Jarvis, 2006, p. 134).

Knowles' (1984) principles about adult learners embodied effective lifelong learners as those who "are independent learners" and "self-directed", "are ready to learn whenever required" and "interactive with learning environment", "know the why and how they learn best", "own knowledge-transfer ability in various circumstances" (Knowles, 1984, p.49).

Pursuit of Lifelong Learning (LLL)

In exploring principal components to become effective lifelong learners, Carr and Claxton (2002) shared Knowles' (1975) assumptions and asserted that lifelong learning educators should attend to two inter-related facets of learning, capabilities and dispositions. Capabilities refer to the able aspect, and dispositions point to volition. In 2004, Crick, Broadfoot, and Claxton constructed an assessment instrument called Evaluating Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) to identify the components of lifelong learning and to assess an individual's lifelong orientation. The ELLI consists of seven subscales and 72 items: "Changing and Learning", "Critical Curiosity", "Meaning Making", "Dependence and Fragility", "Creativity", "Learning Relationships" and "Strategic Awareness". Four assessment purposes of the ELLI incorporated self-reflection, self-direction, pedagogical adjustments, and learning style identification (Crick & Yu, 2008).

Characteristics of effective professional development (PD)

Recent research shows that one significant outcome of high-quality professional development has been a shift in focus from earlier conceptions of professional development as something that is done to teachers, to a new paradigm of professional development where teachers are active participants in their professional growth and learning (Huisman, De Boer, Dill, SoutoOtero, 2015). Recent research reflects a consensus about the core characteristics of effective professional development.

Learning Content Focus (LCF)

A broad meaning of the content for teachers' professional development, includes both teaching knowledge and teaching skills of subjects, which are described as "instructional content knowledge" and "pedagogical content knowledge" respectively. Given the "scholar" role of university

teachers' professionalism, university teachers' professional promotion system laid much importance on scientific research achievement (Zhang, 2006). The scientific research ability requires university teachers to have both professional academic competencies and auxiliary abilities such as computer application, foreign languages and team coordination and so on in this information era (Fang, Wu, 2017).

"The evidence accumulated over the past decade points to the strong link between activities that focus on subject matter content and how students best learn with increases in teacher knowledge, skills, improvements in practice, and student achievement" (Desimone, 2009, p. 184). Teachers with high pedagogical content knowledge "understand how to effectively match specific teaching approaches with the details of their academic discipline, understand common student misconceptions, and are able to connect the essential concepts of their discipline to the world of the learner" (Johnson & Marx, 2009).

Collaborative Learning (CL)

Coenders, 2010, Opfer & Pedder (2013) argued that teachers shape their own professional growth through active learning, reflection, and participation in practice and professional development programs. Researchers have found that professional development is the most useful and most effective when it actively engages teachers in learning and provides multiple opportunities for hands-on work that builds their understanding of academic content and how to best teach it to their students (Baniflower et al., 2005; Buczynski & Hansen, 2009; Coenders, 2010). Active learning can take at least four distinct forms: the opportunity to observe teaching, to practice new approaches, to examine and review student work (Johnson & Marx, 2009) and to develop presentations, lead discussions and produce written work (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

Research on effective professional development emphasises the importance of collaborative learning environments among teachers. Darling-Hammond et al.(2009) reported that teachers' increased collaborative activities can improve the information flow within the community of teachers, having developed a sense of community and trust among the faculty, and can also enhance teachers' job satisfaction and reduce staff turnover (Avalos, 2011; Cherkowski & Ragoonaden, 2016). Thus, university teachers' learning experiences occur both in

active learning as individual and collaborative participation as members in the learning environment.

Furthermore, active learning is a more complex and interconnected process. Professional development derives from one common-shared environment, and forms of active learning can't occur without interconnections with other coworkers, all of which falls in the range of active learning for individuals and collective participation in teaching groups.

Influential factors of workplace learning

Diverse variables in the work environment are likely to influence the learning of individuals, groups, and organisations. The environmental context may be crucial as it creates both opportunities and expectations (Badley, 2008; Heinemann et al., 2013).

Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Psychological empowerment is essentially related to learning in the workplace. It is described as "the connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain" (Spreitzer, 2007, p.725). Psychological empowerment is defined as intrinsic task motivation in which individuals feel a sense of control about their work, including meaning, competence (self-efficacy), self-determination, and impact (Spreitzer, 1995, 2007). Four dimensions of psychological empowerment are related to learning activities in the workplace (Spreitzer, 1995, p.1443): "Meaning" is closely linked with value fulfilment and satisfaction at work; "Competence (self-efficacy)" is related to intrinsic motivation; "Self-determination" enhances individuals' motivation to learn and work; and "Impact" is about the initiative to engage in behaviors to influence desired outcomes.

Furthermore, except for the theory-building of psychological empowerment, most studies focused on its mediating effects. Sunyoung Park (2011) found that psychological empowerment and workplace learning had the strongest relationship, and organizational learning culture had more impact on psychological empowerment. Psychological Empowerment relates positively to affective states including job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Cicolini, Comparcini, & Simonetti, 2014) and is linked to lower rates of turnover intention and job-related strain (Spreitzer, 2007).

Organisation Learning Culture (OLC)

A corporate culture conducive to learning is one of the contextual factors affecting the probability that learning will occur in organizations and has played a critical role in fostering inquiry, openness, and trust in the workplace (Doornbos, Bolhuis, & Denessen, 2004). Marsick and Watkins (1990, 2003) suggested a framework for organizational learning culture through seven dimensions of the learning organization: "continuous learning", "inquiry/dialogue", "team learning", "embedded system", "empowerment", "system connection", and "strategic leadership", which provided a theoretical base that integrates the seven dimensions based on their interdependent relationships, as well as the primary concepts and definitions of the learning organization culture (Egan et al., 2004).

Critical elements to create organizational cultures include access to knowledge and information for learning, opportunities to practice skills for learning, the availability of support and feedback for learning, and the availability of rewards sustaining learning within the organizational structure (Ashton, 2004a).

Managerial Effectiveness (ME)

There is little doubt that school leaders can have a significant influence on teachers' capacity to enact professional learning and it is essential that school leaders must support, encourage, and recognize teachers when they take the initiative to engage in professional learning (Park, Choi, 2016). Leaders are described as "transforming leadership" (Burns, 2012), which is a process of enhancing maturity and motivating level between leaders and subordinates. It appears that there are two key areas in which school leaders might influence the professional growth of teachers: their capacity to influence the Change Environment by providing opportunities to attend professional development and access to other professional resources; and their capacity to provide input into the external practices, for example, through engaging in professional conversations with teachers, reflecting on practice with teachers, or by teaching model lessons. At this level, Managerial Effectiveness (ME) refers to the effectiveness of managerial practices to share power through teachers' professional development, focusing on the crucial role managers play as effective learners and managers, and their leadership

in influencing teacher professional development opportunities, activities and strategies.

Summary

To sum up, Principles of Knowles' adult learning theory provide a basic theoretical foundation for understanding adult learning, regarding adults as active learners with experiences. The adult learning process could be considered as a continuous spiral learning process with pervasive experiential perceptions (Knowles, 1984). Jarvis' constructivist definition of LLL views learning as meaning a construction process between prior experience and a new environment. At this level, adult learning theory is consistent with core meanings studied in some researches that three integral elements of LLL are 1) the whole person experiences: learners do cognitive, emotive or practical transforming work and integrate it into the individual person's biography; 2) social situations, that is the external environment: the perceived content of which learners experience interaction with learning contexts; 3) resulting in a constantly changing (or more experienced) person, which indicates the outcome of LLL is positive, leading to individual development.

One shared perspective is constructivism, which is consistent with the three conceptions discussed above, and considering adult learning as a continuously constructive process between individual perception and environmental impacts. University teachers are all adults, working in institutional organisations, whose autonomous learning process in professional development is expected to occur throughout their careers. Knowles' andragogy considers adult learners as more social individuals, whose learning process is an integrated process of self-directed learning, experiential learning and organizational learning, requiring individual experiences and social environments, in interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects, and cognitive and practical ways. According to Jarvis (2001, 2006, 2007), LLL tends to be supported by modern organisations to sustain their employees' professional and personal advancement of knowledge.

Hypotheses

In Organisation Learning Culture (OLC), the relationships between seven dimensions of the learning organisation and psychological

empowerment are positively related (Yang, Watkins & Marsick, 2004). Managerial Effectiveness (ME) is positively related to subordinates' learning behaviours and information management which are a part of employees' learning (Sambrook, 2005). With regard to the relationship between Learning Content Focus (LCF) and individual workplace learning, numerous studies have shown that effective professional development is intently related to deepening teachers' professional learning content (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007; Blank & de las Alas, 2008; Buczynski & Hansen, 2009). Moreover, empirical researchers demonstrated the power of Collaborative Learning (CL) to impact teacher and student learning (Ingvarson et al., 2005; Desimone, 2009; Opfer & Pedder, 2013).

Psychological empowerment (PE) had the strongest relationship with workplace learning (Sunyoung Park, 2011). Psychological empowerment plays an important role in recognising influence channels in the workplace, increasing reliance on horizontal structures and peer networks, and improving attachment between employees and organisations (Koberg, Boss, Senjem, & Goodman, 1999; Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000; Cicolini, Comparcini, & Simonetti, 2014).

Thus, hypotheses proposed in this study to predict relationships of variables outlined in the proposed model (Figure 1) are:

1. Hypotheses of relationships between independent variables and Pursuit of LLL are:

   H1: Organization Learning Culture (OLC) has a positive impact on Pursuit of LLL.

   H2: Managerial Effectiveness (ME) has a positive impact on Pursuit of LLL.

   H3: Learning Content Focus (LCF) has a positive impact on Pursuit of LLL.

   H4: Collaborative Learning (CL) has a positive impact on Pursuit of LLL.

   H5: Psychological Empowerment (PE) has a positive impact on Pursuit of LLL.

2. Hypotheses of relationships between independent variables and psychological empowerment (PE) are:

   H6: Organization Learning Culture (OLC) has a positive impact on PE.

   H7: Managerial Effectiveness (ME) has a positive impact on PE.

   H8: Learning Content Focus (LCF) has a positive impact on PE.

   H9: Collaborative Learning (CL) has a positive impact on PE.

3. Mediating effect of Psychological Empowerment (PE) between organization factors and Pursuit of LLL are:

   H10a: PE plays a mediating effect in the impacts of OLC on Pursuit of LLL.

   H10b: PE plays a mediating effect in the impacts of ME on Pursuit of LLL.

   H10c: PE plays a mediating effect in the impacts of LCF on Pursuit of LLL.

   H10d: PE plays a mediating effect in the impacts of CL on Pursuit of LLL.

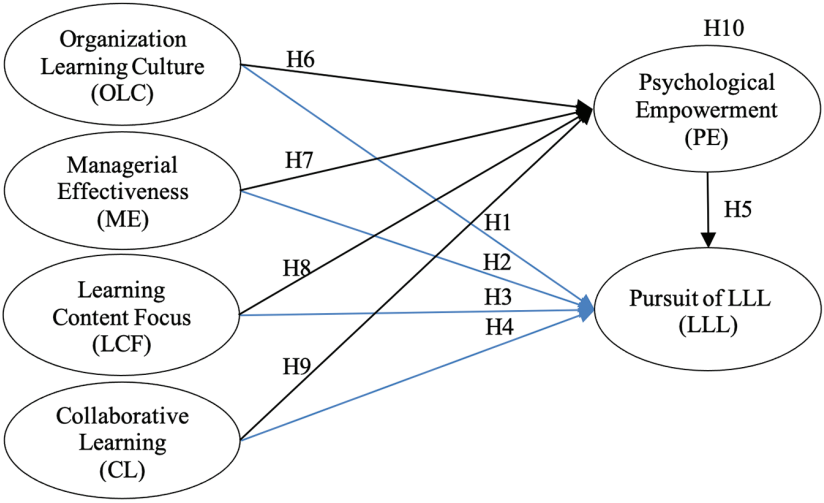

Figure 1 Framework of Research Model

Methodology

Instrument

The measurement phase of research involves the development of a researcher-generated survey instrument. The instrument designed for this study was a two-part questionnaire. Section I collected 9 items of demographic information about participants, and Section II consisted of 48 questions with a five-point Likert-type scale. The ordinal scale consisted of the following: 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree.

Items in psychological empowerment were measured by the twelve items that Spreitzer (1995) integrated into separate scales adapted from Tymon (1988), Jones's (1986) self-efficacy scale, Hackman and Oldham's (1980) autonomy scale, and Ashforth's (1989) helplessness scale. The twelve items were divided into four subscales: Meaning (3 items), Self-efficacy (3 items), Self-determination (3 items), and Impact (3 items). Coefficient alphas for the four subscales ranged from .81 to .88 (Spreitzer, 1995).

As for Pursuit of LLL, items used in Crick, Broadfoot, and Claxton's ELLI Project (2004): the Evaluating Lifelong Learning Inventory (ELLI) furnished evidence-based references. ELLI was served to identify the components of lifelong learning and to assess an individual's lifelong learning orientation. ELLI "demonstrated a significant degree of stability, reliability and internal consistency over time" (Crick & Yu, 2008), with the Cronbach alpha coefficient associated with each scale ranging from 0.75 to 0.85, and remaining reliable and stable over repeated administrations. This study selected seven items that are representative of sub-scales. Together with items in Characteristics of Lifelong Learners in the Professions (CLLP) developed by Livneh to test factors impacting professional's willingness and ability to participate in LLL, shared conceptions were selected to test explicit learning performance in LLL behaviours.

Items in organizational factors were adapted from Yang's (2004) instrument: Dimensions of Learning Organisation Questionnaire (DLOQ). Yang and his colleagues (2004) shortened version has 21 items in seven dimensions, including continuous learning, dialogue

and inquiry, team learning, empowerment, embedded system, system connection, and strategic leadership. Coefficient alphas for the seven dimensions ranged from .68 to .83 (Yang et al., 2004). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that the seven factor structure fit the data reasonably well (RMSEA < .08; CFI > .90) (Ellinger, Ellinger, Yang, & Howton, 2002). This study adopted the essential items from each of the seven sub-constructs.

Samples and data collections

The nature of research questions directed the research design towards a quantitative approach. As Creswell (2005) stated, "In non-probability sampling, the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study" (p.149). This study adopted non-probability convenience sampling, soliciting participants working in sample universities located in Shandong province, China, because of the author's physical and social convenience.

To achieve a wider range of data for interpretive analysis, sample universities in this study included three private-owned universities and four state-supported ones, embracing comprehensive universities and universities with different professional attributes (Polytechnic, Teaching and Finance). All of these are categorised into one same level, comprehensive institutions (master's level institutions). Sample participants were both professional instructors who are mainly responsible for academic curriculum teaching, and research-oriented teachers conducting scientific or educational research. Teachers with no hierarchical position (professors, associate professors or lecturers) could participate in the study to enable a wide sample and obtain rich data. The researcher focused only on full-time faculty members whose learning process is in the interest of the administrators to prioritise compared to adjunct ones.

Two-Stage Sampling was used for this study. Hair, Black, et al. (2006) claimed that the sample size should be more than 100, and the number for Confirmatory Factors Analysis (CFA) should be five to ten times the number of observed variables. In pilot testing, participants were selected randomly by Human Resource Department (HRD) in sample universities. With the assistance of HRD, 180 questionnaires were sent out, and 172 were retrieved (156 valid and 16 invalid respondents); and 448 samples

went through as post survey (with total retrieval ratio being 74.6%), to monitor its relation model and the validity of model consistency.

Measures

Based on previous research in literature reviews, a researcher-generated survey instrument was developed. Validation was done in two ways: a trial expert and a pilot test.

Content Validity

A panel of experts was invited to establish content and confirm validity for the survey instrument before the initial use for data collection. The panel consisted of seven distinguished scholars and experts, all of them having research or management experience in fields of adult education or professional development.

Question items of the instrument designed for this study were translated into Chinese by the translation and back-translation procedure to ensure conformance. Any discrepancies were addressed and modified, as necessary to assure translation accuracy. Documenting item appropriateness was ensured in response to expert comments. After interviewing with experts one by one, all seven educators provided feedback that an acceptable level of validity has been achieved.

Construct Validity

The pilot test enabled us to check the reliability of the instrument, as well as the internal consistency and construct validity. The value of Cronbach's alpha was calculated and a value of 0.803 for the categorised values was acceptable. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was also made and the factors were confirmed with those that emerged from the literature review. The correlation matrix of all questions and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) were examined to determine the factorability of the results. After appropriate modification, we arrived at the final questionnaire (Table 1), which was to be validated. The results of the survey and implementation of the proposed model were analyzed by using the SPSS program, and AMOS for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Table 1 Introduction of Study Instrument

Section	Construct	Items	Connotations
I (DV)	Pursuit of Lifelong Learning (LLL)	1-13	A dependent variable, focusing on both individual internal need for cognition and explicit learning performance.
II (Me)	Psychological Empowerment (PE)	14-25	Psychological states in which individuals feel a sense of control in relation to their work, including Meaning, Self-efficacy, Self-determination and Impact.
III (IV1)	Organization Learning Culture (OLC)	26-30	Institutional culture states, in which professional supports, political approval and learning culture are provided from organization.
IV (IV2)	Managerial Effectiveness (ME)	31-36	Managerial states in which supervisor managerial effectiveness is a crucial part that influences professional development opportunities, activities and strategies provided by department supervisors.
V (IV3)	Learning Content Focus (LCF)	37-42	Content in teachers' professional learning, including three main aspects: instructional knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and scientific research content knowledge.
VI (IV4)	Collaborative Learning (CL)	43-48	Learning spend in active learning and collaborative activities, describing learning occurs both in active learning as individual and collaborative participation as members in learning environment.

Notes: *DV=Dependable Variance; Me=Mediator; IV=Independable Variance*

Results

Reliability

Cronbach's alpha measures the internal consistency reliability, the extent to which survey items are related to one another, and is often used by researchers collecting survey data with Likert-type scales (Fowler, 1993). Alpha coefficients range in value from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating greater reliability. Researchers generally regard reliability coefficients above 0.7 to be acceptable. In this study, all of Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the minimum requirement of .70 and were acceptable (Table 2).

Table 2 Reliability of constructs

Constructs	α coefficient
1. LLL	.915
2. PE	.907
3. OLC	.880
4. ME	.951
5. LCF	.878
6. CL	.896

Notes: *LLL=Pursuit of Lifelong Learning; PE=Psychological Empowerment; OLC= Organizational Learning Culture ; ME= Managerial Effectiveness ; LCF= Learning Content Focus; CL= Collaborative Learning*

Construct validity

Besides factor loadings, results showed that composite reliability (CR) was above 0.80 (Table 3), reaching significant levels ($p<0.01$), supporting the items as indicators of the latent variables they were designed to measure. Figures of the average variances extracted (AVE) were all higher than 0.60 level (Table 4), which means that the variance observed in the items was accounted for by their hypothesized factors. And the comparison between AVE and square values of correlations among constructs indicated that the discriminate validity existed among constructs, with AVE values exceeding the squared values of inter-construct correlations.

Table 3 Factor loading of Items (N=448)

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	CR
Organizational Learning Culture (OLC)	OLC1	.75***	.891
	OLC2	.82***	
	OLC3	.77***	
	OLC4	.79***	
	OLC5	.81***	
Managerial Effectiveness (ME)	ME1	.73***	.918
	ME2	.81***	
	ME3	.81***	
	ME4	.80***	
	ME5	.79***	
	ME6	.89***	
Learning Content Focus (LCF)	LCF1	.77***	.922
	LCF2	.83***	
	LCF3	.82***	
	LCF4	.88***	
	LCF5	.75***	
	LCF6	.83***	
Collaborative Learning (CL)	CL1	.77***	.938
	CL2	.81***	
	CL3	.84***	
	CL4	.88***	
	CL5	.89***	
	CL6	.88***	
Psychological Empowerment (PE)	PE1	.83***	.957
	PE2	.82***	
	PE3	.80***	
	PE4	.87***	
	PE5	.87***	
	PE6	.74***	
	PE7	.79***	
	PE8	.72***	
	PE9	.84***	
	PE10	.80***	
	PE11	.78***	
	PE12	.79***	
Pursuit of Lifelong Learning (LLL)	LLL1	.73***	.932
	LLL2	.83***	
	LLL3	.81***	
	LLL4	.87***	
	LLL5	.82***	
	LLL6	.83***	
	LLL7	.85***	
	LLL8	.84***	
	LLL9	.83***	
	LLL10	.83***	
	LLL11	.84***	
	LLL12	.82***	
	LLL13	.79***	

****p* <.001

Measurement model

Normality Distribution

Firstly, the data were normally distributed, with an absolute value of Skew being less than 2.000 (the highest value is -1.559), Kurtosis being less than 3.000 (the highest value was 1.890) and the Mardia coefficients of Multivariate normal distribution being 61.928 (far less than the Multivariate decision value (2400).

Measurement model

The standardised estimates for the measurement model showed the factor loadings of each item ranged from .63 to .89 (Table 3). Commonly recommended model-fit indices were calculated to assess the model's overall goodness of fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010): the ratio of Chi-square (χ^2) to degrees of freedom (df), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Normalised Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The measurement model represented a good fit with the data collected: χ^2=3053.754; df =1059; χ^2/df=2.884; GFI=.926; AGFI=.907; NFI=.914; CFI=.906; SRMR=.030; RMSEA=.065.

Correlations

The correlation coefficients estimated in CFA showed that constructs kept insignificant correlations (Table 5). Four dimensions of organizational factors (OLC, ME, LCF and CL) are significantly correlated with personal PE and LLL. As for PE, the highest level of correlations existed between it and OLC (r=.671, P<.001). And in LLL, the higher level was between it and LCF, CL, with the correlation between it and LCF being r=.637 (P<.001) and CL being r=.605 (P<.001).

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Matrix (N=448)

Constructs	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. OLC	3.767	.715	-					
2. ME	3.842	.925	.658**	-				
3. LCF	3.904	.746	.604**	.547**	-			
4. CL	3.941	.719	.656**	.498**	.568**	-		
5. PE	3.840	.649	.671***	.414***	.361***	.337***	-	
6. LLL	4.024	.718	.477***	.448**	.637***	.605***	.549***	-

Notes: OLC= Organizational Learning Culture ; ME= Managerial Effectiveness ; LCF= Learning Content Focus; CL= Collaborative Learning; PE=Psychological Empowerment; LLL=Pursuit of Lifelong Learning

*** p <.01 ***p <.001*

Structure model and hypotheses testing

In structural equation modelling (SEM), path models provided an adequate fit to the data to test the proposed model. Collective associations among the exogenous and endogenous variables and standardized path coefficient estimates were considered to find out the influential effect sizes of each relation. As the standard determinant for the statistical significance of standardized path coefficients, the cut-off t-value (t-value£æ|1.96|) was used. All path coefficients illustrated in path models (Figure 2) showed results of nine hypotheses. The higher the gamma (γ), the stronger the relationship is. Thus,

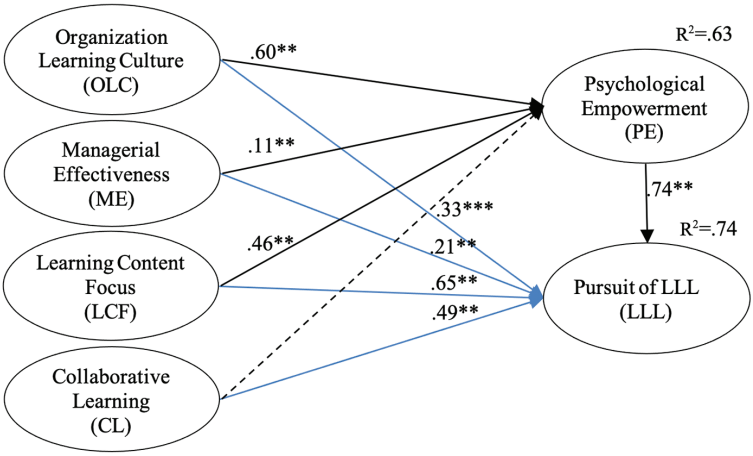

Figure 2 Hypotheses Test

Based on H1, H2, H3, H4, the hypotheses that significantly positive relationships exist between OLC, ME, LCF, CL and LLL were supported. Results from the model validated that a significant positive relationship existed between OLC (γ=.33, t=4.235), ME (γ=.21, t=3.437), LCF (γ=.65, t=3.438), CL (γ=.49, t=3.480) and LLL. In a university, higher levels of organizational factors in a learning culture, managerial effectiveness, learning content and collaborative learning activities will appeal to university teachers' higher lifelong learning.

As for the relationships between organizational factors and PE, the hypothesized positive impact of CL and PE, in H9, was not supported, with no significant relationship between them. In H6, H7 and H8, significant positive relationships existed between OLC (γ=.60, t=6.507), ME (γ=.11, t=3.415), LCF (γ=.46, t=3.953) and PE.

Within personal factors, the hypothesized significant positive relationship between PE and LLL (H5) was the strongest, with the path coefficient being β=.74 (t=6.315). Generally speaking, empowered employees will see themselves as more capable and will be able to influence their job and organisation in meaningful ways, leading to a high degree of commitment to their learning.

In addition, as for the proportion of total response variance explained by the model, squared multiple correlations (SMC) showed that the overall model accounted for 77 per cent of the in faculty members' LLL (R2=.74) and 63 per cent in PE (R2=63).

Furthermore, the mediating role of PE was tested using the Sobel (1982) test to examine the reduction of the effect of a independent variable on a dependent variable, after accounting for the mediating variables. Significant levels in Sobel test (Table 6) confirmed the effect of PE as a mediator between OLC, ME, LCF and individual LLL.

Discussions

Discussions of influential factors

The results verified significant relationships of Organizational Learning Culture (OLC), Managerial Effectiveness (ME), Learning Content Focus (LCF), Collaborative Learning (CL) and Psychological Empowerment (PE) with the pursuit of lifelong learning (LLL), which confirmed

them as influential factors in university teachers' lifelong learning in professional development.

Impacts of OLC and ME on LLL reflected their critical roles, indicating the importance of creating organizational learning cultures, and "promoting learning in the workplace through supports and commitment of practical activities", which broadened the research in exploring the relationships with organizational outcomes (Mo & Coulson, 2010; Sunyoung, 2011); PE, whose four dimensions conveyed psychological states and personal beliefs employees have on their roles in relation to their work (Spreitzer, 2007), had the strongest relationship with LLL.

Furthermore, the individual lifelong learning process showed that the general quality and learning capacity of the 21st century university teachers has been at a high level. Respondents showed their willingness to learn new things to improve capacity, and their tendency to enjoy challenges, and recognized the inner-power and collaboration with others. This included valuing "others as learning resources, actively listening to my peers' reflection and opinions", all of which highly accorded with characteristics identified by previous researchers that, "The uniqueness of lifelong learning demonstrated by lifelong learners is self-directed learning", "ability to choose and control learning and effectively organize resources to accomplish them" (Cranton, 2006), and "the need for changes" (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002).

However, items involving practical behaviour revealed the fall between ideology and actual performances, scoring relatively lower levels in working hours, learning plan, and less confidence in adjusting learning strategy, doing timely summary and reflection. This kind of fall might be caused by the "Social Expectation Effect" when respondents evaluated their capacity, leading to score towards higher levels. But university teachers' learning performance in professional development is typical workplace learning, which would also be influenced by many other factors, like life experiences (Knowles et al., 2005), desire for socialization, organizational strategic policy (Johnson and Beehr, 2014), etc.

Discussions of relationships

It was found that OLC, ME, LCF, CL and PE positively impacted LLL. In particular, PE played an important role in enhancing lifelong learning in

professional development (Linden et al., 2000). The result in this study is consistent with the findings of Sunyang (2011) that organizational learning culture, managerial effectiveness and psychological empowerment have significant and positive impacts on workplace learning of employees in for-profit organizations located in Korea. However, the relatively lower scores in Self-determination and Impact indicated university teachers' less independence and freedom in the decision on learning or working; and they did not believe individual performance means something in the department. In this way, the result may imply their hesitation to feel capable of work-related actions and being less motivated to the demands of each unique situation (Linden et al., 2000).

In OLC, its positive correlations with PE and LLL indicated that by improving the organizational learning culture, university teachers' PE and LLL levels would be enhanced. In ME, although large numbers of researchers emphasized the managers' significant influence on the teachers' capacity to enact professional learning (Park, Choi, 2016; Lachance & Confrey, 2003), ME functioned the lowest on PE and LLL. The reason for this phenomenon might be the nature of PE that is defined as "the empowerment construct at individual level" (Leung, 2009; Mo & Coulson, 2010; Schneider, Von Krogh, & Jäger, 2013), "intrinsic task motivation in which individuals feel a sense of control in relation to their work" (Spreitzer, 2007); professional development is more influenced by external factors, whereas, lifelong learning is more personal. And ME's scores on LLL showed the low effectiveness of managers in universities acting on individual lifelong learning.

In LCF, understanding of LCF matters on how to improve university teachers' LLL level. Scientific research achievement was considered the most important measurement in their professional development. However, the data showed "practical skills and pedagogical knowledge" was perceived at a relatively higher level, while "scientific research knowledge" was lower and "theoretical and academic knowledge" was the lowest. The discrepancy might partially reveal why professional development initiatives were less efficient and learning behaviours scored lower. In CL, valid collaborative learning works in improving university teachers' LLL level. Effective collaborative learning includes opportunities to engage in active learning (Desimone, 2009), in which time allotment, external partnerships, campus coworkers, discussions on both teaching strategies and scientific researching projects, and

timely feedback need to be guaranteed. Compared with suggestions that engagement with professional development outside of university is valued more than that which is available internally (Jennifer, 2014), the relatively lower scores in "opportunities for teachers to learn with external partnerships" indicated the gap between learning expectations and actual learning opportunities. The absence of diversity of collaborative learning forms and activities is discouraging university teachers' learning opportunities and quality, which could hardly meet the learning need as required in their professional development evaluation system.

However, CL in this study scored no insignificant relationship with PE, which means, for one thing, university teachers shared little changes or reflections on meaning, self-efficacy, self-determination and impact in CL activities, and on the other hand, CL activities function ineffectively in improving teachers' PE. Opfer & Pedder (2013) affirmed that teachers cannot freely engage in collaborative inquiry and professional knowledge building if they are feeling criticised or put down for not being competent within their profession. Similarly, Su (2011) noted that teachers often work in isolation for much of the day and so they are missing the evaluative process or positive feedback that can calm anxiety and stress related to work performance.

Thus, mediating role of PE between OLC, ME, LCF and university teachers' LLL were supported, which enriched the studies focused on the mediating effects of psychological empowerment between organizational context and subsequent outcomes.

Practical Implications

Results in this study suggested several implications for university administrators to form professional development interventions. University administrators could use factors influencing lifelong learning as interventions to improve professional development. For instance, Human Resource Department (HRD) could help employees pursue learning during their experience and adaption to organizational changes. The weakness of a fragmented management system warns providers of the necessity to build cohesive and systematic functions among separated units. At this point, university administrators should create a more conducive organizational learning culture and provide

support through a partnership with more diversified departments (internally or externally). What's more, university teachers are supposed to be encouraged to perceive the support (e.g., supervisory support) that fosters their efforts to learn and perform in a new organizational context, creating appropriate environments to enhance and exhibit the preferences of a learning culture.

In terms of managerial effectiveness and psychological empowerment, university administrators should lay more consideration on the roles of managers. Outstanding managers can be role models for those who are interested in preparing for future careers and conducting learning. By identifying the excellent qualities of selected managers in performance and effectiveness and exploring how to sustain their excellence in given conditions, university administrators could design and develop customized programs for professional development.

As for intrinsic motivation, university administrators could provide more learning opportunities for teachers to foster their motivation, confidence, and autonomy for conducting learning. It is important to share with teachers the belief that learning opportunities can be a vehicle for resolving both individual and organizational issues. University administrators should understand which programs and interventions, e.g., workplace blended learning and communities of practice, work for leading employees to engage in continuous learning.

Conclusions

This study emphasized the lifelong learning ideology in professional development. Findings confirmed Javis' argument that lifelong learning is a constantly reconstructed process. The model of influential factors postulated in this study supports the notion that lifelong learning could be influenced by both individual and external environment factors. The significant positive relationships of variables demonstrated Organizational Learning Culture (OLC), Managerial Effectiveness (ME), Learning Content Focus (LCF), Collaborative Learning (CL) and Psychological Empowerment (PE) as influential factors. And PE acted as mediating roles between OLC, ME, LCF and LLL.

Some problems that arose in this study exposed university teachers' hesitance in conducting learning. They felt less autonomy and did not believe many problems could be solved through their efforts.

Administrators (managers) had less impact on the teachers' mental state, and the teachers' learning seemed more personal in an organization. As for the concrete matters related to individual learning, universities provided less appropriate learning content schemes and lacked a diversity of learning opportunities, which would influence teachers' psychological empowerment physically and mentally. All the problems provided a clear picture for university administrators to bridge the gaps between individual learning processes and organizational learning supports. Discussions on the reasons for these discrepancies, and the solutions to solve these phenomena would be of great significance.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Many of the findings presented in this study would merit further investigation. This study had made an exploratory attempt to do simple measurements of learning behaviours, like learning time, motivation, mode, frequency and learning strategy. A more holistic approach that takes into account the full complexity of influential factors and the relationships between lifelong learning inner cognitive characteristics and explicit lifelong learning behaviours would make a valuable contribution to knowledge on this topic.

As for the methodology, the sampling was selected from universities located in Shandong province, China because of personal convenience, a larger scaled sample data would be preferred for its generalization. In designing the questionnaire, this study adopted a conservative way of compiling items, mainly from previous research results. The measurement instrument could be designed more advanced in time, blending factors with characteristics of the 21st century, such as learning with digital technologies, collaborative learning in an E-learning platform, and methods of more detailed data resources collected by internet tools, etc.

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Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Book Review

Educating the deliberate professional: Preparing for future practices

Franziska Trede & Celina McEwen (eds.)
Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, 2016
ISBN 978-3-319-81408-7
234 pp

Reviewed by Cheryl Ryan
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Educating the Deliberate Professional: Preparing for Future Practices edited by Franzsika Trede and Celina McEwen is Volume 17 of a Springer series on Professional and Practice-based Learning. The series explores what constitutes professional practice and how it is enacted in different contexts. This volume brings together international research that concentrates on the purposeful and 'deliberate' (p.v) application of professional practice. Trede and McEwen's motivation for this edition arose from identified challenges with the nature and practice of higher education in the 21st century in preparing job ready professional practitioners in times of uncertainty and disruption. They express this clearly: 'Chapters connect university education and the future role of students in society and provide a critique of current practices and the narrow views of university education that predominantly

emphasise graduate employability.' (p.10). This volume makes a timely and significant addition to the series and to an enhancement of our understanding of professional practice and educating for professional practice that is thoughtful, responsive, deliberate and informed.

There is an impressive global collection of authors in this edition from Norway, Sweden, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, Austria, South Africa and Australia who present a plethora of research, critical perspectives and new ideas and practices in this book that will stretch the reader's understanding of professional practice. A snapshot of the 15 chapters is warranted, with a more detailed review of two chapters.

The chapters are arranged in four parts. Chapters one to three in Part I establish the context and begin conceptualising the deliberate professional. In chapters one and two, Trede and McEwen define the deliberate professional and a pedagogy of deliberateness. They critique the current social context of university education and explore notions of professional practice. Solbrekke, Englund, Karseth and Beck's chapter involves a critique of critical thinking, and they present a model of communication for developing collective rather than individual professional judgement and practice.

Chapters four to eight in Part II focus on reconceptualising the definitions and roles of professionals with reference to examples from a range of contexts. The first chapter in this set by Jonathan Roberge provides a critique of universities and the implications of their current market-driven, business model on learning and the development of students' thinking and professional practice. He situates his discussion of the deliberate professional across and within cultural, technological, political and economic perspectives. Rick Flowers in chapter five provides insights into strategies for developing professionalism in the work of environmental activists and Andrew Vann in chapter six engages the reader with compelling critical reflections on his leadership in university management. He explores his leadership practice through the lens of Joseph Campbell's 'mythic structure of the hero's journey'. In chapter seven, David A Nicholls applies a Foucauldian lens to exploring the practices of the artisan with reference to health care workers and health care education programs in the university. The final chapter in this set by Lesley Cooper and Janice Orrell focuses on university-community partnerships and the role of professional education and

practice for university students through engagement in work experience.

Part III comprises chapters nine to 13 and explores 'course, curriculum and pedagogical designs in university education' (p.12) and through examples how these contribute to educating the deliberate professional. In chapter nine, Monika Nerland draws on examples of using inquiry-based activities to induct students into professional cultures of law, engineering and teaching in a Norwegian university. Monica McLean and Melanie Walker (chapter 10) present an 18-month research project in South Africa with three universities resulting in the development of a 'Public-Good Professional Capabilities Index'. They provide insights into the application of two elements of the index as they contribute to 'the public-good professional' and 'deliberate professional' (p.142). In Chapter 11, David Boud critiques and explores course design in universities. He proposes 'a more deliberate focus on practice' (p.12) but also for academics '… to become deliberate professionals in their own practice of teaching and learning …' (p.158). Tony Harland in chapter 12 critiques the pace of scholarly work and practice; the '[f]ast activities' (p.175) and paucity of time for academics and students. He proposes a 'slow scholarship' (p.181) to enable 'deliberative thinking and deliberate action' (p.175). The final chapter in this set (chapter 13) by Joy Higgs presents her research on 'professional practice and professional wisdom' to develop an argument for own [your] own practice model and professional practice.

Two chapters complete Part IV titled Panoptic Musings. Chapter 14 by Rainer Winter presents a compelling critique of professional practice in the digital age regarding Marcuse's (1991) One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society. Winter argues 'The "one dimensional man" of the present is not capable of imagining any other alternatives' (p.208). He explores practices that will support the deliberate professional to engage in and use media in ways that question and challenge one-dimensionality. Chapter 15 provides a summary and conclusion emphasising the need for 'embedding the pedagogy of deliberateness in university professional courses … to make a difference for morally-informed sustainable future professional practices' (p.228).

Key insights to two chapters: Trede and McEwen's chapter 2 'Carving out the territory for education the deliberate professional'; and

'Deliberately owning my practice model: Realising my professional practice' by Joy Higgs.

Trede and McEwen's (2016) opening sentence goes to the very heart of their work on professional practice and the deliberate professional as it 'builds on a long history of well-established ideas of critical pedagogy and deliberative democracy; it is foregrounded by ideas of awareness raising, critical thinking and autonomous learning that engage with social and moral contexts of professional practice' (p.15). They argue for a 'pedagogy of deliberateness' that engenders different perspectives and enables change in times of heightened uncertainty and disruption, and 2020-2021 with COVID-19 has brought this into clear focus. Their critique of the current context of university education acknowledges the competing demands and agendas in developing an education that 'produces technical experts' instead of 'an education that nurtures socially responsible thinkers' (p.17). In this chapter, Trede and McEwen explore the conceptions of professional practice with reference to Schatzki (2002, 2012), Bourdieu (1984,1994), Kemmis and Grotenboer (2008). They include an examination of power in their discussions of professional practice; how it 'shapes, contains, constrains and enables professional practices' (p.20). The final section of their chapter introduces the reader to the four key dimensions of a 'pedagogy of deliberateness':

> (1) *Deliberating on the complexity of practice and workplace cultures and environments; (2) understanding what is probable, possible and impossible in relation to existing practices, others in practice and to change practice; (3) making a deliberate stance in positioning oneself in practice as well as making technical decisions; and (4) being aware of and responsible for the consequences of actions taken or actions not taken in relation to the doing, saying, knowing and relating in practice (p.23).*

Trede and McEwen's pedagogy of deliberateness involves a shift in thinking and practice in educating professionals and equipping them to deal with contemporary society, issues, workplaces and professions.

Joy Higgs, in chapter 13, draws on the research of professional practice and practice wisdom and presents findings of her research throughout the chapter and add further texture to the challenges of owning

your own practice and being a deliberate professional. A statement that captures attention in the first paragraph of the chapter is her description of deliberate professionals' practices that are 'pursued deliberately, knowingly and informedly' (p.189). Higgs explores goals and challenges of professional practice with reference to the work of Kemmis and McTaggart (2000), Green (2009) and Schatzki (2012) and she emphasises (drawing on her previous work with Titchen in 2001), the embodied nature of professional practice involving 'doing, knowing, being and becoming' (p.191). In response to the challenges universities face in educating future professionals, Higgs shares her model of education as a social practice which she developed as an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellow. It comprises eight dimensions: 'practice and higher goals'; 'a pedagogical frame'; 'education in context'; 'understanding (the) practice'; 'socialisation'; 'engaging in relationships'; 'authenticity and relevance'; and 'reflecting standards, values and ethics' (pp.194-195). Brief descriptions of each of these dimensions are provided in the chapter. Further insights into the layered conceptions of professional practice are revealed in her discussion of expertise, artistry, practice wisdom and good practice. table 13.1 provides an interesting overview (p.199). This chapter offers much to critically reflect on and to embrace. It also offers readers an opportunity to reflect on their own practice model and to (re)consider their own professional practice.

Trede and NcEwen's (2016) edited book makes a very welcome and compelling contribution to the field of professional practice and educating the professional practitioner. Its relevance in 2016 has only continued to develop and has much to offer readers in current times of uncertainty, risk and disruption. It is ideal for academics, researchers, research students and individual practitioners wanting to understand deliberate professional practice and how to educate deliberate professional practitioners.

Australian Journal of Adult Learning
Volume 61, Number 2, July 2021

Book Review

Learning in work: A negotiation model of socio-personal learning

Raymond Smith
Springer International Publishing AG, 2018
ISBN 978-3-319-75298-3 (eBook)
295pp

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Learning in Work A Negotiation Model of Socio-personal Learning by Raymond Smith is Volume 23 of a Springer series on Professional and Practice-based Learning, a comprehensive series exploring learning through practice or work-based activities in the workplace from a wide range of perspectives, for example, agency, simulation, digitalization, and individual and social influences on professional Learning. Smith's 2018 publication is a welcome addition to the series and to an enhancement of our understanding of the processes for learning in the workplace.

The book questions:

1. What are the workers' personal work and learning practices?
2. How can these practices be understood as negotiated practices?

3. How can negotiated practice be understood as learning?

The structure of the book is in two Parts and evolves from the conceptual theoretical foundations of work, learning negotiation (Part I) to the three dimensions of negotiation framework (Part II).

Part I: Chapter 1 sets the conceptual context noting 'the emphasis is on workers, as adults, as people, unique and individual …' with 'the focus on negotiation …' (p.5), and begins developing the negotiation framework of Form, Frame and Flow (pp.22-25). Chapter 2 explores the interchanging of negotiation and learning through an exploration of the concept, models, theories, stages, practices and skills of negotiation and learning in the workplace. Expanding on this, chapter 3 examines 'the context and conditions in and by which work-learning occurs' (p.65). Chapter 4 takes the reader to the 'people as work-learners' (p.99) and their commitment to and assessment of their work.

Part II: Chapter 5 presents the first of the three dimensions of the model: Form. The content in this chapter builds on the conceptual and relational work in chapters 2 and 3. It focuses on the 'forms of negotiation' workers engage in through and for their practice (p.129). Chapter 6 expounds on the second dimension of the model – Frame – with a focus on practice as 'the sociocultural context of activity'; developing an understanding of negotiation beyond interaction to the complex situations that 'mediate activity and its enactment' (p.161). The third dimension – Flow – is addressed in chapter 7. An understanding of negotiation 'as a personal practice' with the potential to transform 'self and practice' (p.187) is developed, using three themes of Flow: person, practice and resources. The three dimensions of the model are integrated into chapter 8 with concluding summaries of key concepts and practices.

Learning is a social practice, taking part in collective activities facilitates engagement in the social world, and the interactivity is mediated by all participants. Hence, negotiation is between the person and the social environment in which they act and learn and contribute to the social world and learning.

The selection of a focus on socio–personal learning emphasises the social world's contributions to individual engagement and construction of knowledge about their occupational practice through work.

One may well ask why the focus on negotiation? Negotiation is certainly an aspect of learning in, for and through work, one not frequently brought to the fore. Examples include a learner negotiating a learning plan, or a work-based learning programme. The case studies in the book highlight the experiences of workers in a gymnasium, a suburban restaurant, an ITS support unit in a university and a large metropolitan fire station. Employing a socio–constructivist approach and an ethnographic methodology, the three workers from each workplace were interviewed five times and were observed at least three times over 18 months. The workers were of differing employment status, occupations and workplaces. Work, learning and change were the guiding themes of the interviews.

Workers were found to engage in both telic and atelic negotiations – the former highly purposeful activities that secure objectives and the latter incidental activities not realising outcomes.

The research generates a three dimensions negotiation framework. Negotiation has different forms that can be identified and considered; it can be an enactment and a context in which that enactment occurs. The three dimensions are Form: telic and atelic forms, a matrix of contingent forms and compounded and nested form, Frame: composite and contiguous, and Flow: transforming the person, practice and resources (p.119)

Smith's scholarly work makes a valuable contribution to our conceptualisation of learning and work. The workers' negotiation of their environments provides insight for readers into how they navigate their own work. The book is also a comprehensive, thorough and intelligent exploration of this model of socio-personal learning. It is ideal for researchers, research students and those wanting to reflect on what work-based and workplace learning means, particularly to the individual worker.