# LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY UNIVERSITY

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#### Part 1

# **Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Lifelong Learning**

#### A. OVERVIEW

All purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and experience (European Commission 2000)

Lifelong learning has become big business. By the late nineties the term had become established in public policy discourse. It had moved into wide and more general use from earlier use restricted to a relatively esoteric community of academic policy discourse. This popularisation, and vulgarisation, is both exhilarating and problematic.

- In May 2001 Kluwer Academic Publishers launched an expensive built-to-last two volume *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*: 878 pages with forty contributions following a lengthy introduction and overview, 460,000 words devoted to the lifelong learning phenomenon (Aspin et al 2001). Whatever its utility and longevity, this substantial landmark volume well symbolises a coming of age of the concept and term after an uneven history of some thirty years.
- At a different level the Australian Business/Higher Education Round Table put out a position paper about the same time entitled *The Critical Importance of Lifelong Learning* (BHERT 2001).
- In June 2001 the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) called for tenders for 'a harmonised list of learning activities in the context of measuring lifelong learning' (CEDEFOP 2001). Lifelong learning has become sufficiently important for the European Union to need to measure it.
- The UK Department for Education and Skills is creating a Lifelong Learning Directorate, the Director General of which will be paid NZ\$330,000 (100,000 sterling).

Why is this happening? What is emerging? What might it mean for New Zealand in 2001, the year when the Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) and the Adult Education and Community Learning (ACE) Working Party made their reports, the year

when a major international conference sought for New Zealand to 'Catch the Knowledge Wave'. TEAC has adopted 'lifelong learning for a knowledge society' as a sub-title and a key theme. The ACE Report is called 'Towards a Learning Society'. (TEAC 2001, AECLWP 2001).

Let us be clear about the character of this paper, and the status of 'lifelong learning'. We are in contested space. Like many social science terms and policy concepts there are strong philosophical and connotations and ideological differences. No one meaning holds absolute sway. Various definitions have been attempted. None is established as especially authoritative. The EC definition cited above is as good as any and is adopted in this paper. Often confusions of description and value statement the problematic nature of the concept and its use.

We do not here attempt to 'prove' that one use of the term is more right or wrong than another. The point of the following historical excursion is to understand how embedded in social, political and economic development this (like comparable) concepts is – and therefore how contested. This paper unashamedly stakes a position. It asserts that there is a rich and strong meaning to the notion of lifelong learning which is worth promoting and expressing in policy and institutional behaviour. It resists the diminution of the concept to a more limited and ultimately less useful scope. Specifically it resists the notion that lifelong learning means vocational training for the new labour market in the service of globally oriented economic liberalism. It asserts the importance for New Zealand of sustaining the larger meaning both for its recognition of the reach and variety of learning and for the sake of the social and civic as well as the economic dimensions of policy and life. With the 'coming of age' of lifelong learning it is all the more important not to concede this more ambitious and visionary meaning.

In this spirit the paper can be described as post-post-modern, in the sense expounded by the educationist philosopher Mal Leicester. She sees lifelong learning as a new paradigm in the making and finds the current conceptual fluidity to be part of the shift from modernist to post-modernist perspectives. Setting out what she means by modernist and postmodernist epistemology she shows 'how the normative pragmatic version of the concept of lifelong learning could be seen as an example of such post post-modernism'. This paper adopts Leicester's same post-postmodern 'pragmatic theory of truth' (Leicester 2001 150-151, 152, see also Leicester 2000).

The evolution of the concept helps us to understand better the current situation, which is the main focus of this paper. There have been some partly successful efforts to trace its lineage to the Ancient World or the nineteenth century; and it was highlighted, fittingly, in a visionary and celebrated UK Ministry of Reconstruction Report in 1919.

Those antecedents apart, the modern history of the concept falls into two phases. The first ran for a decade or so from the late sixties, and remained a relatively erudite conversation limited to policy and academic circles. The second from the early nineties popularised the term.

Philosophical tensions older than the term were imported into the earlier discourse and are perpetuated through to today. Thus the current educational discourse about new ICT (information and communication technology) and the virtual in education imports and perpetuates the same divisions and dilemmas, as a recent paper entitled *The role of the 'technical fix' in UK lifelong education policy* well exemplifies (Selwyn, Gorard and Williams 2001).

Comparing these two phases, 'while there was a turning point during the 1990s, its chief feature was that lifelong learning ceased to be a slogan promoted largely through intergovernmental debating chambers, and became increasingly a tool for the reform and modernization of aspects of national education and training systems.' (Field 2001)

It is less the concept than the *context* that has changed in this time. The 1973 oil crisis marked the end of sixties growth and what now appears naïve optimism. It was succeeded by an era of contracting Welfare States, and of economic liberalism or rationalism characterised first as the selfishly individualistic eighties and then more broadly as globalisation. New Zealand adopted a distinctive leading position in that trend, from which it is now moving back to seek a more balanced 'third way' in tertiary education as elsewhere.. The 'new economy' emerging from these social, political and underpinning technological changes calls for 'new knowledge workers'. New learning for new uncertainty and continuous change becomes a way of life deemed inevitable if not to all analysts acceptable (compare Sennett 1998).

Lifelong learning is now an all but unchallengeable policy proposition - and a marketing brand for much edu-business. Not that its practical implications are therefore clear, or well heeded. Often no operational change follows its appearance in mission statements and speeches. Some reasons for this, and for the abiding tensions, are clear from the outset. Among abiding characteristics of the term and the surrounding debates are these:

- philosophical tensions imported into the new language and concepts, often expressed as familiar but misleading dichotomies (liberal-vocational, individual-collective, economic growth-social equity etc.)
- values and knowledge frequently assumed to be self-evident rather than demonstrated (competitive growth is good, benefits trickle down, people learn in one or another particular way, capitalism is bad, etc.)
- lifelong learning is nested in a bed of other taken-for-granted as self-evidently good concepts to do with the wider cultural, political, economic and social world and policy environment
- the very idea of lifelong learning breaks open the concept and monopoly of education, schooling and also accreditation at all levels; it is thus latently radical, deeply subversive, and threatening. It is (therefore?) commonly reduced and trivialised to simpler but superficial propositions that avoid disturbing established arrangements

• the focus shifts between the individual, the organisation (usually the employer and workplace) and the whole society, reflecting different notions of national interest, social values and human behaviour.

Much of the drive comes not from educators' ideas but from other political, social and economic forces. Use of 'lifelong learning' and related terms is also complicated by a contest for resources, for control, and for both the 'politically correct' and the genuinely high moral ground. A time-worn and often resurrected controversy about education, learning and training goes back at least to the time and work of J H Newman.

The evolving fortunes and uses of the concept therefore need to be seen as part of the evolution of social thought and policy-making and also as a product of changing political, social, and economic life.. This applies particularly in 2001 to globalisation and liberal economics, to changes in Welfare States and the quest for a 'third way'. We have already linked it to post-modernism. In New Zealand and elsewhere it may also connect with a persisting quest for social improvement, local self-determination and self-identity. The third part of this paper looks specifically at New Zealand's recent policy evolution, and at the meaning and use of this and related concepts within that particular story.

Other related concepts include the *learning organisation* and *learning society*, together with connected notions put forward in Unesco's visionary *Learning To Be* (Faure 1972), and more recently notions and analyses of the knowledge nation, economy or society, and of knowledge workers. Emergent salient themes have to do with learning cities, regions, suburbs etc., and learning societies. These ideas and meanings differ from the suddenly popular but seldom well-defined knowledge economy and society.

Each of these terms represents attempts to characterise and try to understand increasing complexity and uncertainty, or mess (Stacey 1998). Each is vulnerable to reductionism. My local Community College advertises itself and its courses as *The Focal Point in a Learning Community*. Over-simplified, new insight into the enormity and complexity of change is lost: the new paradigm, in Kuhn's meaning, evaporates. We rationalise the new within the familiar rather that accept the scale of the change and the new thinking which is implied. Managements try to bolt down with tighter controls and closer strategic planning, rather than fundamentally re-thinking. The 'learning organisation' is therefore intimately connected with acting out lifelong learning.

This paper maintains that these new terms and new literature share a recognition of fundamentally new circumstances and requirements. The rising proportion of *knowledge workers*, and the loss of old certainties, old jobs and whole employment sectors to new ICT-dependent employment, demand lifelong learning to remain effective and indeed employable. This pressure extends well beyond the economic arena, although that is where policy remains largely fixed. Demography (ageing populations with rising longevity and low birth-rates), the labour market, and the nature of work have each

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A fine example is provided by Sean Dorgan's pertinent paper to the 'Knowledge Wave' conference in August 2001 (Dorgan 2001).

dramatically altered between 1970 and 2000. Each has ramifications extending into social relations and individual identity as well as for employability and prosperity. For a critique of New Zealand's response via the national qualifications framework see Tobias 1999.

The learning organisation (specifically university) is an institution which adapts, learning and changing to survive. This is about more than knowledge management: managing knowledge through new ICT can be seen as almost person-free. The conditions for employing knowledge workers – the continuously adaptive lifelong learners essential to the management and use of the 'managed knowledge' - brings the learning organisation centrally into play. As we trace lifelong learning through its two generations, and the tendency to break out from formal education towards the educative or learning society, the adaptability of established institutions comes under scrutiny, often around notions of enterprise, entrepreneurialism and innovation. This also has to do with acquiring the new forms of knowledge required by new workplaces and production processes - tacit knowledge, learning through the work itself, mentoring etc. We return to these matters below because of their importance to *implementing* lifelong learning in and through the university..

Lifelong learning in its intellectual origins relates to broad and diverse purposes in a changing world. In higher education however, under pressure to expand numbers and cut costs, the main quest is for economies through mass production and distribution, and for new pedagogies and delivery systems – hence the vigorous debate about web-based and other 'virtual university possibilities' (CVCP 2000, OECD 2001b).

In second (nineties) as in first (seventies) generation lifelong learning, rhetoric and politics have run ahead of research and its analysis, for lifelong learning in general and in respect of new ICT for learning specifically. There is little firm base of knowledge as to how different kinds of people learn for different purposes with different media and methods. Within New Zealand especially, efforts to strengthen the knowledge base are dissipated, not brought to bear effectively on practice in ways well shared and multiplied.

At the beginning of this century, I suggest that lifelong learning needs to respond at least to these broad social issues

- continuously accelerating technological change
- the changing demography of advanced societies
- sustainability (and related issues of North-South relations)
- globalisation (WTO and GATS debates on from Seattle)
- ICT and the power of e-learning and e-commerce
- social exclusion, widening gulfs within and between societies, and the damage caused by social and cultural discontinuities
- differences about the extent to which social objectives (equity, sustainability) are best attained via or are in conflict with economic strategies and pathways

Problematic questions for (higher) education include

- how to redefine educational institutions in the context of learning societies and local regions, and how to network and make abiding partnership?
- how to manage the transition from elite through mass to universal higher or tertiary education and how to identify the role of the modern university in such systems?
- How to comprehend and exploit the potential use of new ICT, cost-effectively and so as to widen access and participation?
- How to identify, measure, 'capture' and exploit informal learning (compare the work of the Blair Administration and the European Community, also CEDEFOP 2001) without colonising and disabling it?
- What is the appropriate construction of tertiary education systems, and of pathways through them?
- How to enable and optimise useful forms of diversity and hierarchy within systems, and diversity within different institutions?
- How to connect knowledge management with the learning organisation and empower its members (this raises issues about management, control and participation)?

The issues and questions listed above can mostly be traced back thirty years or more, to first generation lifelong learning. What is new is the *context* of second generation lifelong learning, were they are amplified and come together, creating new levels of complexity.

An important question, furiously debated in the various reviews of tertiary education over recent years, is *who are the clients?* Is it the students, industry and employers, or the State, for example; or even a local community? With brokerage, outsourcing and subcontracting this becomes more complicated. Then there is the contested question who controls, evaluates, and pays.

An evolutionary sequence offers a rationale and an apologia for self-directed and distance IT-based forms of learning (see for example OECD 2001). It suggests that traditional school-based education was *just-in-case* education, providing information and knowledge that might prove useful one day (an explanation that would be rejected as trite within traditional pedagogy). Modern flexible learning is seen as moving through *just-in-time* (a practice and a term borrowed from industrial production and closely fitted to specific as-needed skill training) to individualised and self-chosen learning, characterised as *just-for-me*. An important policy question concerning ownership, and the paymaster may be posed as *just-for-who*? This question is at the heart of a persisting controversy over 'lifelong learning': whose interests does it serve, and who determines the curriculum? The same issues of ownership, control, and possible negative impact on individuals emerge also from the philosophical debate in which it is embedded (Field 2001, Sennett 1998).

#### B HISTORICAL SKETCH

Lifelong education and learning came to be written about in the international literature and to feature in conferences and policy studies from the end of the sixties. They were propagated in various forms by the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and by Unesco (Faure 1972, OECD 1973, Lengrand 1975). The evolution is well sketched by Field 2001 (see also Boshier 1998).

Recurrent education had the sharpest and clearest agenda and policy focus. It was developed mainly in Sweden, and taken up and disseminated through the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) of the OECD. It was tested through a series of country studies by means of a CERI project, as an approach to dispersing formal education across the lifespan alternating with employment and other activities, and as a more fitting response to changing conditions and knowledge requirements than *front-end-loaded* - or to use the later expression *just-in-case* - education.

Much of the early discourse was about lifelong *education* rather than learning. *Lifelong learning* went into relative disuse although Unesco continued to promote its wide and humanistic use. It then enjoyed a remarkable revival in the nineties, while *lifelong education* went more firmly out of fashion, although the *International Journal of Lifelong Education* has retained this title. (The terms *education* and *learning* are often used loosely and interchangeably, generally as well as in respect of *lifelong*.) A modest volume of secondary and national-level policy studies and other analyses appeared during the seventies, mainly to do with recurrent education. They included not very successful attempts to develop an economic analysis of recurrent education, mostly confined to face-value analysis of return-on-investment over the post-study span of working life.

Deliberation on lifelong learning was largely confined to sociological, philosophical and exhortatory writings among adult educators, for example Knapper and Cropley (1985). The debate can be traced through the numbers of a few educational journals. It was also kept alive by periodic sets of papers, for example Schuller and Megarry's 1979 yearbook and the international Pergamon handbook produced a decade later. The Unesco Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg published a series of studies mainly on lifelong learning and the school curriculum, which dwindled away in the late seventies. In 1976 its Director edited a substantial volume which examined the foundations of lifelong learning from the perspectives of the various social science disciplines (Dave 1976).

The relative failure to engage with the concept of lifelong learning within the institutional imperatives of school and schooling remains a conspicuous problem (see however the recent work of Chapman and Aspin 2001). Its deeper meanings were not effectively integrated with the ongoing policy-making agendas of different states, nor with most of the research agenda of adult and continuing education, much less school-based educational policy and research. Instead the swing to a highly focused competency-based vocationalism captured the policy agenda of many States and temporarily removed all but the narrowest application of the term from the discourse of action.

As the early seventies gave way to economic rationalism, more difficult economic times and the individualistic eighties in different western societies, visionary and ambitious perspectives tended to fall out of favour. Higher unemployment and micro-electronics-driven job changes shifted attention to training for literacy, training of the long-term unemployed, even training for 'reserve labour stock'. The reductionist competency movement displaced lifelong learning's holistic vision, until broader work particularly in sociology and management brought out again the more humane and more radical implications for both learning and education of technological, economic and social changes.

The concept field was always problematic, and confusion remained, as an OECD biennial conference on Lifelong Learning and the Universities showed in 1998. The OECD's view of recurrent education was however explicitly conceived as a *strategy for lifelong learning*, the subtitle of its 1973 monograph. *Education permanente*, favoured by the Council of Europe at the beginning of the seventies, was translated misleadingly as 'permanent education'. This fuelled suspicion of educational imperialism as expressed in Illich and Verne's *Imprisoned in the Global Classroom* (1976). Confusion between education and learning persists in current discourse about lifelong learning and the role of tertiary education.

In the nineties however, lifelong learning returned to the public policy agenda. It was connected with other strands of research and analysis to do with the learning organisation (Senge 1990), new forms of organisation and networking (Alter and Hage 1993) and the ever-swelling tide of debate about new technology rolling into both globalisation and more specifically internationalisation,. There was a difference this time: 'unlike the 1970s, one of the intergovernmental bodies had by the 1990s gained decision-making powers, and was in a position to make a real difference to policy'. The European Commission was a major policy actor. Secondly, following the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 'the concept was absorbed into national level policy debates, and has continued to play a part in legitimating a wider range of policy instruments', as public policy under Blair well demonstrates (Field 2001, 8-9).

Its reappearance and an increased volume of literature on lifelong learning became evident in the early to mid-nineties. Following the 1972 Unesco Faure report, the 1996 Unesco Delors report shifted priorities to education in support of lifelong learning, rather than argue the premise. Lifelong learning featured strongly in Unesco's Fifth World Conference on Adult Education in 1996, and at the first Unesco World Conference on Higher Education two years later. It also reappeared, along with the organising principle of tertiary education, in the work of the OECD, as a strong theme in the closing years of the century. OECD returned to the subject with a series of publications (see in particular OECD 1996). The Organisation is now entering a new Education Mandate period for 2002-2006, in which *securing lifelong learning competencies for all* (as distinct from speaking rhetorically about their desirability) has a very central position.

1996 was the European Year of Lifelong Learning. In Britain lifelong learning became a central policy preoccupation. The UK in the nineties broadly typified debate elsewhere

in Europe, which was drawn together through a series of European Union (EU) policy documents. In Britain it was sharpened by the change from the Thatcher-Major to the Blair Administration. The policy debate became increasingly influenced by emergent theories of social capital set against human capital theory, and by concerns about equal opportunity and social exclusion. Learning was thus located in the arena of citizenship and civic education, equity and social integration.

The EU's 1993 'Growth, Competitiveness and Employment' White Paper was followed by another on 'Education and Training towards the Learning Society', and recently by the Lisbon Lifelong Learning initiative. Running through this evolution was a shift from individually focused to socially contextualised notions of learning, in which learning is also seen as sense-making. Alongside this went the more individualistic learner-centred motivational emphasis which is also embedded in adult education traditions. Learning was no longer equated with classroom instruction; even there the notion of a managed learning environment gained support, alongside workplace pedagogic practice. The shift to workplace learning as well as the use of new IT raised questions about new inequalities of access to do with the unemployed and self-employed, and around the 'digital divide'.

Elsewhere, Taiwan nominated 1998 as its year of lifelong learning, opening its education system to scrutiny that year. In Malcolm Skilbeck's words after a bold, but in the event faltering, start several decades ago, the movement of lifelong learning for all is once again gathering momentum. In the same book today education and training, and the notion, values and ideals of lifelong learning, have come to be conceptualized and appraised in a very wide-ranging and sophisticated manner (Chapman & Aspin 1997, pp.11, 9). Suddenly lifelong learning has become de rigeur — a policy imperative but also a look-good badge for every new form of educational provision, used to justify any modest change to the status quo, disinterested or self-interested as each may be. Within the wider and more popular use of the term, values and philosophical bases continue to be disputed.

#### C. THE CHANGING CONTEXT – KEY ISSUES, NEW PERSPECTIVES

It is a mixed blessing that 'lifelong learning' has made such giant strides recently. Many forms of study including professional continuing education, off-peak radio and television broadcast of study materials, and older forms of diploma and degree study are publicised simply as lifelong learning, making it virtually a synonym for study by adults, usually post-full-time and post-experience. The continuing education and lifelong learning 'market' is described as a multi-billion dollar business. Equated thus with adult and especially with continuing professional education, lifelong learning is stripped of transformative power with respect to established educational practice. At the same time such confusion allows educational providers to colonise the wider terrain of learning.

More positively it in now accepted without hesitation that adults do go on learning. Simply to recall an earlier mindset about middle and later age brings home the magnitude of the lifelong learning revolution. This is a giant step forward, which perhaps makes up for the trivialisation of lifelong learning in the cause of course marketing.

There is now nothing remarkable about universities around the world catering for older students as well as school-leavers: people who combine diverse life-roles rather than full-time pre-mature youngsters in transition to full adult participation in society (compare Campbell 1984, Abrahamsson et al 1988, Bourgeois et al 1999). New Zealand has long been a leader in terms of participation rates. The current situation and trends for both school-leavers and older adults however merit revisiting. Acceptance of lifelong learning is a precondition for the idea that tertiary education can be for all, across society and throughout life. What this really implies for educational institutions when learning is indeed life-wide as well as lifelong and universal has yet to be grasped in any worked-through operational sense. It is properly speaking radical.

In fact, along with greater sophistication (Aspin et al 2001) there is still a conceptual morass. Learning and education remain confused. Lifelong learning is undermined: first by *trivialisation*; secondly by *reductionism*, more obviously manifest in the notion of the learning society to which we turn in a moment. Thirdly it may fall out of favour or be dismembered as contested space where old battles are conducted over the core values and purposes of education, without changing the operational paradigm. Finally scepticism persists in a deschooling tradition about the colonisation of learning by professions, educational institutions, and agents of the State.

Misleading dichotomies remain as common as in first generation lifelong learning: liberal or general versus vocational; intrinsic versus extrinsic; education versus training; accredited or non-award-bearing. The economic is polarised against 'access and equity', whereas in reality personal development, occupationally related and civic or citizenship agendas and outcomes represent a broad typology of intent to be balanced and combined.

In this disputation, the forces of good and evil are ranged along the lines of education (training or indoctrination) for domesticity (bad), and learning for liberation (good). Age-old value propositions translate into child- or student-centred teaching (learning) methods opposed to more instructional or authoritarian back-to-basics modes, especially at school. These propositions spawn a host of practical questions about the curriculum in its obvious and also in more subtle or 'hidden' senses, at all levels and in most institutional settings.

The term lifelong learning is astringently criticised on grounds such as these. New Zealand's Roger Boshier writing in Canada sees lifelong learning as *nested in a notion of the autonomous free-floating individual learner as consumer* whereas lifelong education is *committed to active citizenship and democracy* and has *lofty aspirations and a commitment to fellow citizens*. Lifelong learning he sees as *smarmy, self-assured, well staffed with handlers and analysts, an office in a smart city, and dressed in sharp business suits* (Boshier 1998).

Thus the same struggles about the good society continue; and about the part education plays in advancing or obstructing its coming. They have generated heat but obscure the light which this concept can throw on the need for a paradigm shift with changed educational assumptions, modes, roles and structures.

Instead *lifelong learning* has become popular and 'commercially viable', not just in the United States where it entered common parlance earlier but globally. It would be difficult to find a nation where educational policy is not rhetorically committed to enabling lifelong learning. Practical attainment remains a central policy dilemma, in New Zealand as elsewhere.

The late sixties when lifelong learning and related concepts were developed was a time of relative optimism, with reliable economic growth, low unemployment, an apparently stable welfare state, a sense of social amelioration, and rising prosperity. Gulfs between rich and poor within and between nations were narrowing; belief in managed progress seemed reasonable. In 1973 Martin Trow predicted a transition from 'elite' through 'mass' to 'universal' higher education, led by the United States.

With high modernity and faith in the essentially liberal 'enlightenment project' went awareness of rapid technological change and a shrinking world (Toffler 1970, McLuhan 1967). Harold Wilson had celebrated 'the white heat of technological change'. In the quarter century from the early seventies a sense of instability, runaway technology and the forces of globalisation changed the mood. More recently there have been attempts to redress the balance and regain a sense of purpose in civic and social progress (Giddens 1998, Latham 1998).

The following six factors provide explain the new context of *second generation lifelong learning*, in which its status and significance have changed.<sup>2</sup>

- Ever-accelerating technological change demands a continuous process of learning and adaptation so that people have the knowledge, skills and adaptability to keep up in a knowledge-based society.
- There is a preoccupation (in the European Union and beyond) with *social* exclusion the impact and cost to individuals, communities, and ultimately national economies of exclusion from mainstream society. The idea of social capital has also won attention. Citizenship and the 'civic agenda' has reappeared in and beyond adult education circles, along with individual general education and development, and vocational skills acquisition. The social is added to individual and economic advancement.
- New information and communication technology is applied to learning.
  Technological change implies rapid obsolescence in most occupational areas, but the IT revolution in relation to teaching and learning suggests new means of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This is written after the September terrorist attacks in New York and Washington but makes no attempt to speculate about their medium and long-term impact.

accessing and 'delivering' information. Flexible and self-directed learning, mixed and multi-mode delivery offer new kinds of lifelong learning, with implications for higher education, such as the 'virtual university' (OECD 2001b).

- Free trade and economic rationalism, the fuel of globalisation, are a regular source of conflict at meetings of the wealthy nations. The tide may have turned with the end of the twentieth century. In Australia Mark Latham, like Giddens and Blair, is seeking a *third way* between rationalism and the older welfare state (Latham 1998). The current New Zealand Administration appears to be of similar persuasion, the issues and choices clarified in the August 2001 national conference on *Catching the Knowledge Wave*..
- The new demography includes fewer young and more older people. Some societies experience population decline, with populations ageing significantly. Long years of life after retirement have put third age grey power on the map and on the university agenda. Pressure on public revenue and the economy increases. Demographic change seems to dictate a rolling back of the welfare state, reconfiguring the economics of higher education in user-pay directions.
- An age of relative confidence in the future and in enlightenment has given way to the corrosive as well as liberating relativism of post-modernism. Rationality, the nature of knowledge and science itself have been cast into doubt. The general effect, in Scott's words, *is of incoherence on the grand scale*. (Scott 1995, p.135)

#### D THE NEED FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

#### In search of a learning society

'Learning' applied to a society, region, economy or university is as elusive as lifelong learning. Reference to a *learning society* also often goes past definition and assumes meaning. It is 'suspiciously unchallengeable' (Schuller 1998). The term may be used in support of a prior philosophical or policy proposition. For example, according to the recent Australian review of higher education 'in a learning society primary responsibility for learning and choosing when to learn rests with the individual. The individual should be prepared to explore learning options and to invest time, money and effort' (West 1998, p.44).

The learning society is described in one 'classic' 1968 text cited by Jarvis as 'one that, in addition to offering part-time adult education to every man and woman at every stage of grown-up life, had succeeded in transforming its values in such a way that learning, fulfilment, becoming human, had become its aims and all its institutions were directed to this end' (Jarvis 1997, p.176). This is explicitly transformative and value-infused, recognising that a learning society implies an educative task for all institutions, not merely for those called educational.

Ranson's work is similarly value-infused: 'there is a need for the creation of a learning society as the constitutive condition of a new moral and political order. It is only when the values and processes of learning are placed at the centre of the polity that the conditions can be established for all individuals to develop their capacities, and that institutions can respond openly and imaginatively to a period of change.' He identifies as organising principles for the learning society: that its essential structure of *citizenship* should be developed through the processes of *practical reason* (Ranson 1994, p.106).

The Faure report identified a radical change in 'the very nature of the relationship between society and education'. The advent of a learning society 'can only be conceived as a process of close interweaving between education and the social, political and economic fabric, which covers the family unit and civic life'. It is seen as a utopian responsibility in which 'all sectors of society are structurally integrated' and education will be universalised and continual (Faure 1972, p.163).

In its fullest meaning, creating a learning society is truly ambitious. It implies developing in a society the capability to learn from and change positively as a result of its experience and reflection. Jarvis writes of the learning society as 'reflexive society' (Jarvis 1997). Yet the powerful metaphor is often reduced to mean more learning opportunities for individuals, which makes it redundant alongside *knowledge nation* or *knowledge society*.

The *learning organisation* is more often properly and organically understood as a learning *system*, not just an aggregation of learners; but we have far to go before the full impact of *learning society* is grasped. At intermediate levels of the learning organisation, and now the 'learning city', 'learning economy' and 'learning region', such concepts, models and metaphors go beyond merely a place where people are trained or enabled to learn. We are beginning here to grasp the notion of an open system which enhances its capacities through internal and external networking, along with the reflexive processing and use of knowledge thus gained.

Societies themselves need to discover how to learn and adapt in light of their reflected-upon experience. While de-emphasising extreme individualism, this rebalances economic liberalism with political or civic liberalism and more active civic participation. Lifelong societal learning then becomes a call for active citizenship, which has returned to the agenda of lifelong learning. It is a political, even a constitutional as well as a cultural and civic matter. Politically and culturally, societies need to develop arrangements to learn as systems. This includes better political arrangements, new modes of citizenship and public discourse, clearer evaluation and review procedures, and appropriate transparency and reflexivity.

# From education to lifelong learning – but not yet?

Facilitating the learning society in this larger sense is difficult to comprehend, let alone to achieve. It is hard enough to understand what it means to shift from education to

learning, at the level of educational institutions and their individual students. It is still harder to make the changes required to effect such a paradigm shift.

This may mean giving away control of resources as well as security of tradition: short-term instability for long-term repositioning. To be successful in this way institutions need to abandon exclusive claims over knowledge, wisdom, and the right to accredit. Control of the curriculum as well as of the conditions and places of learning give way to reciprocal, non-dominating partnerships; gate-keeping and exclusivity to the practice of ever-open 'service centres' which assist in how to learn rather than credentialing and controlling what is learned. Stature, support and resources will rise in inverse ratio to the degree of bounded exclusivity. All this runs against the instinctual grain to manage through boundary patrols and internal controls (compare Gibbons et al 1994).

Higher education systems as agents of social reproduction have enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the awarding of degrees. They are criticised for inflating and devaluing credentials. This makes the function of social and economic selection (convenient for employers and successful middle class families) harder to manage. A fully-fledged lifelong learning system would dispense with terminal badging and ranking in favour of portfolios which inform the person's *curriculum vitae* as an evolving and living document. Terminal degrees would be succeeded by transcripts.

The tendency to substitute learner and learning for education goes with a shift of attention away from the means and provider of education. This appears modern and democratic: it favours the individual rather than the provider and system. However it also creates a problem: moving the focus to learner and diverse modes of learning may depoliticise the distribution of publicly funded education. Inequitable access to education matters not if learning is an entirely private matter. What then happens to strategies for achieving social and educational equity?

The government of Tony Blair illustrates another problem. Assuming office following the European Year of Lifelong Learning, it set out to understand what lifelong learning meant, and how to strengthen and exploit it for policy purposes. If it could be understood where and why do people actually learn it should be possible to increase the quantum of learning and create a 'knowledge society' where more people could indeed participate economically, and compete internationally. The language of learning constantly flips over into making educational provision.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) of England and Wales nearly changed its name to from *Education* to *Learning*. It settled for subtitling itself *the national organisation for adult learning* and renaming its journal *Adults Learning*. A similar change occurred in New Zealand in the mid-eighties. NIACE surveys and reports often refer to learning rather than educational activity, yet leave out learning not recognised as learning, and not manifest in a course or other purposeful educational activity. This equates education, training and efforts to support learning with learning itself. Learning is seen in terms of provision. Contrast Tough's earlier notion of *adults' learning projects* (Tough 1971, 1982) and the situated, unrecognised and often

unconscious learning which Elsdon studied in his work on voluntary organisations (Elsdon 1995).

Thus the mystery of learning, lifelong and life-wide, becomes what education can reach. Even experiential learning slips into the difficulty: only that learning which is recognised and reflected upon is held to exist. Accreditation of work-based and other experiential learning can be seen as the education system colonising wider areas to retain a monopoly of accreditation.

These issues are central to lifelong learning and nurturing a learning society. They influence how we think about the evolution of school and education systems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Ultimately public policy recognises educational endeavour, not the whole world of learning. This may be desirable in the equity sense explained above, and also beneficial in the sense that the community learning enterprises most successful in addressing social exclusion may by their nature be oppositional. Official sponsorship could be the kiss of death.

More sinister is the continuous invasion and extension of mandatory updating and upskilling. This is strengthened by close IT-mediated delivery, monitoring and control of study and learning. There is also the constant disorienting and potentially destructive remaking of the individual to fit changing employment needs (compare Sennett 1998 on the resultant corrosion of character).

Tucked away here is the resilience of educational institutions. Lifelong learning has so far done little to change the core architecture and paraphernalia of the school and its curriculum. The mass production secondary school lives on despite shortcomings for managing the transition to adult life and citizenship. The school of course plays important social roles beyond the strictly educational, including complex socialisation tasks into a complex and uncertain world. Disbanding or transforming the (secondary) school to enhance lifelong learning needs a wider grasp than social policy engineers may feel ready to attempt. As tertiary education becomes a near-universal open system however the interface, and possibly the disjunction, between it and secondary schooling demands attention still more stridently. School-tertiary partnership has consequently become a leading policy issue in many systems. Sadly, it often presents itself mainly as universities seeking to capture market share.

In summary, lifelong learning in 2001 is about the whole of society and its educational renovation, not only formal institutions of education. It is far-reaching, ideologically contested and radical in its implications: not so much in a political sense as in terms of what it means for the institutions and reach, the curricula and control, of the formal institutions. For higher education to which we now turn, however, 'the challenge of lifelong learning' may represent a solution to the web of problems facing mass higher education systems (noting the 'three Ms' of marketisation, massification, and managerialism picked out by Tapper and Palfreyman 2000), rather than another strand in the problem-set.

# Part 2

# Higher Education and the Lifelong Learning Paradigm – Systemic, Policy and Institutional Responses

#### A. OVERVIEW

Part 1 concluded with the observation that the lifelong learning might represent a solution rather than a further problem for higher education. This requires comprehending and using it as a perspective and an ordering principle, a policy framework to inform lower order decisions.

Higher education's responses to lifelong learning so far may be characterised on the surface and at a conscious level as incomprehension and tokenism, for reasons set out in Part 1. A closer look at the behaviour of the system and institutions in many countries suggests something different. A great deal is happening, piecemeal and operationally, to move systems and their constituent institutions in the lifelong learning direction set out in this paper, frequently without recognising the drivers and the connections between the changes.

If lifelong learning comes to be recognised as an abiding policy direction this will facilitate managing some of the pressures and burdens which generate anxiety and talk about the crisis in higher education and of the university. They include in particular

- a strident, ever-widening and unmanageably diverse set of expectations and demands placed on institutions
- a chronic crisis over resources as demand and numbers rise ahead of publicly funded units of resource
- largely homogenising competitive pressures on institutions to excel against common standards, with client pressure for social position derived from the value of *the* degree
- sustained criticism of the system and its component institutions as being self-serving and out of touch with society's needs.

In the main, solutions have been seen in competitive terms, whether the system is planned and steered, or more free-market. Perpetuation of the established paradigm digs a deeper pit in which higher education remains trapped. Lifelong learning offers an alternative ordering principle, and a latent new paradigm.

At the <u>macro</u> or <u>system level</u>, working through the concept of lifelong learning implies diversity and complementarity between institutions in addressing the diverse needs of lifelong learners in a knowledge society.

It also implies seeing and planning higher education less as a free-standing entity, more as an integrated element in social and economic management and in a process of continuous transformation. In a changed policy context, administrative and policy silos would be weakened if not dismantled. The system would be charged with facilitating continuous change through more varied forms of research and learning support to virtually the whole population throughout life. Links, bridges and pathways between component institutions become easier to find and use, credit transparent and fully portable. TEAC is clearly seeking to move New Zealand in this direction.

At the <u>micro</u> level of teacher-student classroom interaction recognition that learning with its related certification and licences to practise is recurrent, spasmodic, renewable and lifelong implies permeative changes to curriculum and to notions of subject-matter and competences.

The discourse of deep learning, holistic learning, teaming, mentoring and other learning modes, contextualised, contingent and tacit knowledge becomes more compelling. The learning context and social dimensions of learning appear more significant than formerly. New ICT takes a place among the widening repertoire of diverse and new teaching methods to accommodate the more varied situations and needs of infinitely diverse adult, including young adult initial tertiary level learners. Instruction becomes less set-piece, less lock-step and cohort-based, the curriculum less closely prescribed, less fixed over sustained periods.

The <u>meso or institutional level</u> is of main interest here, with an eye particularly to the historic public university as in New Zealand. Of central importance is the change in clientele and mode of provision, away from the initial post-school education of the young. This stresses transition into initial employment, with social selection and grading functions, now heavily strained by mass throughput and rising age participation rates.

The market for higher education is already adult and lifelong. This makes learning needs infinitely diverse. Qualifications become more short-lived, conditional, in need of renewal, updating or supersession. Made-for-life terminal degrees which guarantee cachet, status and a lifetime of rewarding employment are a less secure hard currency. As they become contingent - first the idea of a used-by date, then in some fields a shorter-life utility before expiry - portfolios which change through life may gradually replace them, the *curriculum vitae* a living electronically stored document. The degree which marks successfully completed first-cycle initial higher education might represent an attained measure of self-direction, autonomy and capacity to continue learning, rather than an employment credential.

Resources, for universities in chronically diminishing supply, follow a similar trajectory. As the student-load-based State core grant diminishes in per-student value it also declines

as a proportion of total institutional income. Partnership with stakeholders in other sectors, private and public, economic and community, supports valued new teaching and research (knowledge-sharing and knowledge-generating). These activities are funded by a wider range of users, often in specialised niches and networks which may be local, regional or global. Distinctive competence replaces mechanistically benchmarked homogeneity. More of the university's activities (its R and T 'core business') becomes embedded in community and workplaces, in a more open networked system.

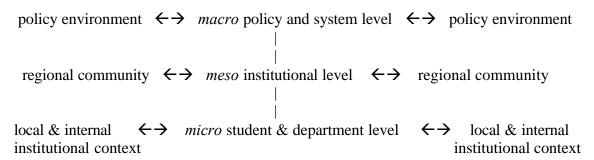
Lifelong learning understood thus is an ordering and guiding principle providing a framework to plan, understand and make sense of changes that are unavoidable. (Remember what was said in introducing this paper: that lifelong learning is a contested concept claimed and interpreted in different ways for different purposes. It can be put to other uses in other interests and belief systems) For us it points a way forward for the university through each of the four key difficulties identified above.

#### B THE NEW HIGHER EDUCATION

It helps in considering the university in 2001 to think of three inter-related level, with. connections up and down between the levels, and outwards between each of these and their respective communities and policy environments. This is represented in the simple diagram below.

This second section of the report concentrates on the institutional (meso) level of most obvious interest to university management and leadership. It is essential however to think in terms of an open interactive system, including the system-level policy and resource environment and the internal micro-level chalk-face operating environment.

### lifelong learning and higher education as an open system



#### The challenge for the university

The assumed traditional heart and essence of the modern university has been destabilised. This had to do with academic freedom, including curiosity-driven (or blue-skies) research, and above all in New Zealand a role as critic and conscience of society.

The nature of knowledge, the processes of research and inquiry, as well as the utility and contribution of science, have come under keener scrutiny. Post-modernism generates universal relativism and a form of existential doubt. The context of knowledge and its application has become more significant to scholarly inquiry – truth more contingent, grounded and specific, its practical exercise in human policy and professional practice seen to depend on particular circumstance, time and place.

The nature, creation and application of knowledge is thus less confidently and self-evidently universal. The university of 2000 is more prone than the university of 1970 to anchor itself in its context and culture, as a way of engaging with the overwhelming pace and ambiguity of the global, and of surviving.

In an increasingly unstable environment where economies, cultures, employment and the very nature of knowledge appear contingent, it becomes incumbent on whole societies, if they are to survive, to become learning organisms.<sup>3</sup> For universities survival requires that they become open systems. Usually it also means being regionally embedded..

### Higher education and tertiary systems - towards the universal in higher education

OECD has reinstated *tertiary education* as a sector of the education system in its discourse (OECD 1998). The term is well anchored in New Zealand discourse.

There is symmetry about the terms primary, secondary and tertiary. Quaternary appeared in the seventies to distinguish a level beyond initial tertiary but gave way to continuing education in a broad sense including general as well as vocational education and training. It is not clear if such terms refer just to stages or also to levels, as with quaternary. Further confusion is caused by the shift of focus from provider intentions to learner motives. Adult education offers 'recreational courses' taken for vocational intent and 'vocational training' followed for hobby interest.

With expansion higher education has become an ideological battleground. As demography and philosophy put pressure on the remnants of the welfare state, its scale and cost engender a constant sense of crisis in higher education (Scott 1984, Coaldrake and Stedman 1998, Coady 2000). Systems continues to grow while public funding per student generally falls.

Conflicts identified earlier apropos adult education and lifelong learning reappear here: 'liberal education' *versus* 'vocational training'; individual development *versus* corporate interests; social and civic values *versus* service to the economy. They are tangled with disputes about the traditional, conserving and reproducing functions of the university as distinct from its innovatory and knowledge-creating tasks. There may be tension between

of 'unlearning' here presents itself as well.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Written before the crisis engendered by the terrorist events of September 2001. The unfolding of events from that day illustrates with unusual clarity the need for whole societies to learn from new experience and to be able to adopt new and appropriate behaviours, reinterpreting what they know for new times. The idea

its older socialising and credentialing role for selected young people and newer professional updating or continuing education functions as an 'adult university'; between teaching, research and community service; and about sustaining a large social and civic mission in tough times. Analysis is hampered by passion and slogans: *more means worse; back to basics; dumbing down*. With rapid change all round, and rapid obsolescence of knowledge, standards are hard to fix. 'Literacy' is a moving target.

Today's senior professoriate grew up a world where *higher education* was the aggregation of a small number of small and diverse universities and *system* had little meaning. *Tertiary*, if it was used at all, referred in most countries to other places and purposes: junior or community colleges which might feed their best 'graduating' students on into the university; further or technical colleges ('the tech' or 'TAFE') which had very little to do with the university and was dedicated to something very different from higher education and learning – training for trades. Institutional and academic autonomy were seldom doubted. Cases where autonomy was threatened were exceptional - *causes celebres*.

Within one lifetime this professoriate feels itself bureaucratised (if not proletarianised) into a tertiary education *system* with benchmarks, performance criteria and output targets set as part of a competitive national economic effort. Institutional autonomy is greatly weakened. The meaning of academic autonomy at the least is changed. The terms higher education and university are more easily interchanged, even in so significant and well-rehearsed a study as *The Treasure Within* (Delors 1996). Little attention is paid to the shift from unique institutions to a tertiary education *system*.

Redefining Tertiary Education (OECD 1998) refers to tertiary as 'a stage or level, beyond secondary and including both university and non-university styles of institutions and programmes'. There is a high volume of demand for access at the stage leading to an initial qualification. Meanwhile 'many countries experience or envisage the phenomenon of mass participation, from which universal participation may be projected'. Universal now means not 40 per cent, the point at which Trow predicated a shift from mass to universal higher education, but 80 per cent or more of the age cohort entering the tertiary sector. There are three challenges:

how better to respond to diverse client choice? how to meet the need of those currently excluded? how should government drive large, diverse tertiary education systems comprising such varied providers?

There are implications for positioning individual institutions within a big diverse post-school system combining traditional elite universities, high status professionally focused colleges, 'multiversities' and mainly sub-degree-level tertiary, community and further education colleges. Higher education spills over into these via franchising but also through colleges' own direct provision, as demand and aspiration rise. Articulation arrangements between institutions of different standing and character allow students to move more freely within the tertiary system and may begin to give meaning to 'system'

from a student perspective. The boundaries of each institution, and of the sector and the whole 'system', are problematic - matters for deliberate management attention.

#### Why 'the university' still?

One reaction is to ask what makes higher education different and 'higher'. A more radical response, attuned to the new discourse and insights of the *knowledge society* and *knowledge workers*, is to say that the features and characteristics which distinguished higher education are now universally required. More and more workers – and citizens – need to be able to generalise, conceptualise, transfer knowledge, skills, and insights from one technical work setting or social arena to another. The qualities of *higher* need to be universalised, made continuous or lifelong.

Is there any point of adhering to the notion of the university as something special in a mass tertiary system in which most will participate at some time in their lives? Higher education can no longer be summed up in one 'totalizing idea' (Scott 1995). Arrangements between community colleges and universities in the United States, between further education (FE) and universities in the UK, and between technical and further education (TAFE) and the Australian universities, range from association and joint provision to outright dual-sector merger in the State of Victoria. Is 'the university' as an idea and ideal, Newman's 'grand theme' (Scott 1995, p.3), now buried by mass tertiary education? Should universities as a type be different (not necessarily hierarchically superior) just as each aspires to be (and needs in some respects to be) unique?

Use of the name outside the established university sector, as in 'university college' in the UK and in New Zealand by UNITEC, is contested. Winning the status and title preoccupies colleges of higher education closely resembling universities in their work. The new UK University for Industry encountered problems over its name. 'McDonald's University' epitomises scorn for private sector use of the term.

A battle about names and sectors culminated in dismantling the binary system around 1990 in Britain and Australia. Polytechnics and colleges of advanced education became 'new universities' or parts of universities, a change criticised as academic drift. Vocationally focused institutions were seen as abandoning distinctive missions of professional, sub-professional and trades education to become universities.

With the onward march through mass towards universal higher education the late nineties see a new binary debate. Should there be a firm line between further/technical and higher/university education, sustaining distinct missions in two parts of tertiary education? Should the old binary division be restored between 'research-led' and other universities? Is there more to be said for widening the use of 'university', and access to degrees across the whole tertiary sector, with more diversity *within* an enlarged sector? Analogies with primary and secondary levels of education occur as tertiary education becomes universal. Induced or imposed diversity is becoming a – if not *the* - salient

policy preoccupation in countries such as Australia, the UK, South Africa and New Zealand, which are attempting to plan and steer while still accommodating traditions of institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Distinctiveness is challenged in several ways. Something built for a privileged five per cent of the population cannot deliver exclusivity, either as a finishing school or as a provider of social status and employment, to forty per cent. Whatever we mean by and expect of a university education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it cannot bestow on half the population the relatively exclusivity (the mark of an 'educated man' [sic] and the right to govern) which went with a Harvard and Oxbridge education even a half century ago remember 'BA Oxon, failed'?

A second issue is whether educational standards, rather than social exclusivity, have declined so that more really does mean worse. Research-intensive universities are differentiated from others and a positive correlation is assumed between research intensity and standard of degrees in many countries. This, and also with institutional wealth, may have more to do with status and market standing than with teaching quality itself. Yet it is still assumed in New Zealand as elsewhere that universities must all compete on all the same performance indicators. This makes mission statements hollow and makes a mockery of diversity.

Scott refers to 'the knowledge, professional and personality models characterized respectively by Germany, France and England', and possibly now subsumed within the United States' multiversity (Scott 1995, p.40). Outside the United States, most universities seek much the same identity. Yet diversity is essential if a large tertiary system is to meet the diverse needs implied by lifelong and life-wide learning. Degradation of standards and inequity of student experience are an emerging serious social and political problem in what becomes a class- rather than functionally-divided system.

Another threat comes from the virtual. The information-rich web is seldom chosen as the best total initial university experience by those who can choose, but as part of a richer resource inventory for learning later in life. Individuation of teaching methods and learning supports to meet infinite individual diversity is one thing. Arguing that the virtual university is better than face—to-face campus and its community experience is quite another. Web-based learning for first-time undergraduates may be not a superior product but a way of trying to hide the problem of sharing scarce resources equitably.

Where does the traditional university as a community sit within diversified tertiary education? Is it a 'special place' only for the transition from school to full adult life; or also for the expanding 'continuing education market' of lifelong learning? Cities and towns may wish to be university cities and towns purely for economic reasons. They may realise the broader prestige creating economic benefit that goes with being a 'university city'? They may also realise the need as learning communities supporting clusters and networks of innovation to have their own resource-centres – universities as the hubs of learning regions. (Duke 1999).

A recent study of the way universities manage and adapt to their increasingly adult clienteles (Bourgeois et al 1999) found a continuing role for universities in contributing to social transformation; but that 'acts of purpose and will as well as shifts of perception are needed for this to occur'. This leads prospectively to a 'reaffirmed, strong and confident idea and role of the adult university of the twenty-first century' (Bourgeois et al 1999 p.177).

The changing demography (*adultification*) of the university is not new (Campbell 1984, Abrahamsson et al 1988), but challenges for leadership and issues of identity are more acute than they were a decade ago. It gets harder to behave as a productive and humane learning organisation as managerialism increases in response to new pressures. (Like lifelong learning, the learning organisation is not always benign in the way the idea is interpreted and used, compare Duke 2001b, 2002a.) Universities are more irrevocably than ever permeated by the forces that surround them – co-owned by partner stakeholders who become more directive through lay governance roles, more significant as sources of (working) students, research income and curriculum requirements. We now consider five inter-related issues: *enterprise*, *organisational learning and leadership*, *partnerships*, the changing nature of knowledge and its formation, and the geographical (and geopolitical) location of the university, to which may be added 'virtualisation'.

### Enterprise, culture and identity

Burton Clark's *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities* analyses leadership and the capacity to thrive in new circumstances, taking five European case studies as examples. Since 1998 when it was published, these five European universities have formed a wider group (centred on Twente in The Netherlands) to expound and expand the conditions of their success under the preferred term *innovative* (ECIU 2000). *Entrepreneurialism* represents one essential mode of adaptation to new expectations and demands placed on universities. Its success is one manifestation of a successful university geared to lifelong learning, although business success may be achieved, at least short-term, without significant organisational learning.

Given the instinctual resistance among many intellectuals to *enterprise(s)* and *entrepreneurialism*, seen as commercial and possibly anti-intellectual as distinct from *enterprising* and *innovative*, it is not surprising that innovative has so quickly displaced entrepreneurialism to make the notions first more acceptable and therefore secondly more comprehensible within the university. Burton Clark however makes an absolutely central (and in my language anti-managerial) proposition in this book. He distils from the study five common features (note that he is writing about Europe where many traditions are of very weak central administrations). They are: a *strengthened steering core* allowing responsiveness reconciled with academic values; an *expanded developmental periphery* enabling external networking and partnership; a *diversified funding base*; a *stimulated academic heartland* with effective – entrepreneurial or enterprising – academic units;

creating an *integrated (entrepreneurial) culture* with a benevolent cycle of shared beliefs and values.

Being innovative presents universities and their leaders with an identity challenge, especially in the humanities and social sciences, which see their mission less in business than in critical terms. The crisis in the humanities is the most exposed edge of the wider crisis of the university. If every threat is also an opportunity then this crisis may enable the humanities to redefine their role and that of the university, treating culture less as the preservation of somewhat arcane and elite knowledge and *mores* (a popular hostile view), more as a way of engaging with, interpreting and ameliorating the behaviour, experience and lifestyles of diverse modern communities. Such a task is universal; but it will discover and contribute more if well anchored in communities and cultures which are geographically local and in contact with the institution.

Burton Clark's book is a kind of management text about changing and sustaining an organisational culture, not a book about running profitable engineering and business schools. His first case study, the University of Warwick, is at least as strong by conventional criteria in the humanities, 'pure' and social sciences as in business and engineering. Its entrepreneurial culture is all-encompassing and characterises the university's behaviour in most of its dealings. It is a manifestation of 'the learning university'. It connects closely with issues which follow below (see also ECIU 2000, Marginson and Considine 2000). It sets out or at least implies some necessary conditions for engaging effectively with lifelong learning. The following short section is included because this is seen as so essential.

# Organisational learning and leadership

Clark's essential elements, especially the stress on 'integrated' and 'stimulated', offer clues as to how universities might succeed or fail in becoming responsive and lifelong learning-oriented. Staff or human resource development suffers low prestige, strategic planning much higher standing, in many places. Strategic planning preoccupies university managers, coerced by government requirements for plans with objectives, targets, outcomes and increasingly onerous cycles of reporting, audit and accountability (Anderson et al 1999). As managers get drawn into such processes and management becomes a more distinct profession within higher education, styles of leadership become in a pejorative sense *managerialist*.

At worst university managements believe that intelligent, thorough strategic planning and direction at the top simply translates into effective organisational behaviour aligned to mission (compare Stacey 1998). This takes little account of the rich underlife and relationships within and extending beyond the institution, all down the line. Without mobilising the commitment and applied intelligence of those who comprise the organisation as an institution rather than simply an organisation chart and a management system, strategic plans do not produce effective action. The university under-performs, with low commitment and morale, indifferent standards and poor client service. In this

sense managerialism overlooks support for and benefit from lifelong learning within the institution. It becomes an obstacle to open networked institutional development essential for the effective development of lifelong learning.

The nineties saw an explosion of literature on the learning organisation, the underpinning of which dates back to the wisdom of Emery and his co-workers (see for example Emery 1969), and before that to Selznick (1957) and Lewin (1947). Handy and others have developed our understanding of how people behave in organisations and how organisations can adapt to change (Handy 1989, Senge 1990, Stacey 1998). An urge to control tightly limits the potential to become a learning organisation. Communities as *institutions*, networked internally and externally, can be strong and supple, rich in memory, and tacit knowledge, fleet-footed. Economic rationalism within management inhibits the capacity for effective applied lifelong learning in a fast-changing world.

# Partnerships, strategic alliances and seamlessness

Identifying and meeting the lifelong learning needs of diverse clienteles in a knowledge society means operating effectively in the world beyond the university. It requires what Clark describes as 'a growth of units that, more readily than traditional academic departments, reach across old university boundaries to link up with outside organizations and groups' – 'the expanded developmental periphery' (Clark 1998 p.6). Crucial to the success of the modern university, emulating the behaviour of successful private sector businesses, is the capacity to create strategic alliances.

These must be genuine partnerships based in dialogue and the identification of shared values and purposes. Working together, or 'co-production', must be able to achieve what neither party alone can manage. It is a natural response to complexity and diversity, not a knee-jerk emulation of outdated management fashions, something to which education and other public-good sectors have sadly fallen victim in recent years (compare Alter and Hage 1993, Gibbons *et al* 1994). It is also a direction in which the New Zealand Government and TEAC are clearly moving.

This means cohabiting webs or networks of relationships within which the university can collaborate and co-produce (Sommerlad *et al* 1999). It is becoming impossible for single organisations to do as well, even if they can survive, as 'sole traders'). In the late nineties, as entrepreneurial became a byword for the successful university, partnering also became a recognised priority. Doing well is widely acknowledged to need partnership and network formation, though undertaken unthinkingly without clear purpose and poorly monitored it may be unproductive. It is a *sine qua non* for the lifelong learning university to be an active part of a community of stakeholders, if not a lead player. A more diverse system should allow for more variety to exploit different niches in a universal system.

Seamlessness refers to a subset of partnership and alliance-making, taking a student or client perspective rather than an organisational one. The prospective student (with

universal higher education a majority of the adult population) can look with confident comprehension to different learning/teaching institutions (schools, colleges and universities and increasingly other organised settings including the workplace), for accredited learning. Progression is eased between and in and out of them, with accumulation and recognition of learning achieved in different places.

The gulfs between institutions (including workplace and community organisations) thus become bridgeable, facilitating ongoing learning in diverse and convenient as well as relevant ways. Between school, college and university the joins should be almost invisible as the canvas of educational provision becomes seamless. The more prestigious universities will wish to differentiate themselves and profit thereby. Individualisation and customisation of services (from education to cars, clothes, meals and recreation) however press higher education in a client service culture towards an open and collaborative approach, as institutions acquire more supply chain relationships for their lifelong learning clienteles.

Curiously, some forms of cooperation and networking were much easier in New Zealand prior to the economic rationalism and neo-liberalism that gained sway in the eighties, and prior to new managerialism. Forms of co-operation were probably more limited and certainly more informal than today, but they were real and important for all that.<sup>4</sup>

#### Global and local – the changing nature of knowledge

Loss of complete autonomy in a world of partnerships, networks and alliance does not mean becoming parochial. Globalisation links the local with the global, not just for universities and finance markets but for small enterprises and local forms of government. Anchoring research (knowledge creation) in local communities and contexts does not condemn a scholarly unit (a faculty, school, department or research team) to parochialism.<sup>5</sup>

One limit of both modernity and globalisation is the failure to export some development models from one region of the world to another. Awareness of the nature and limits of scientific inquiry within the rich uncertain diversity and relativism of post-modernism leads to reassessment of the nature of knowledge and its creation. This reinforces the need for the learning university to be open, flexible, devolved and democratic. It is captured in a widely cited book by Gibbons and others (1994) on the *new production of knowledge*. This provides a rationale for the loss of any residual research monopoly on the part of universities and other specialised institutes. It indicates the gains to be made from collaborative research which is co-owned, co-produced, and has community and partner accountability. Embracing the lifelong learning paradigm radically changes the relationship between a university and its policy and operating environment. The implications for boundary-management are far-reaching.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A point brought out by Robert Tobias in responding to an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The contextualised character of professional practice for example in education and social work however locates these lower down an academic hierarchy than 'universal' subjects like mathematics and physics.

Gibbons' lessons have been widely disseminated. For example Kemp's 1999 Australian Government research policy 'green paper' began by citing the study to set a framework for a new research policy. The propositions have aroused concerns in the humanities, dividing academic communities between those who welcome the destabilisation of traditional scholarly research assumptions about the nature and ownership of knowledge, and those who fear a stalking horse for greater interference and commercialisation.

Debate about the nature of knowledge further exemplifies the need in a lifelong learning era for universities to be open, sensing and partnering institutions. External relations are too important to be left to the CEO and senior executive. All parts and levels of the modern university are penetrated by and interact with the environment. This is a source of new learning, business and resources, rather than a threat.

# Geography rediscovered – the learning region and economy

These debates illuminate the importance of a university's region as a source of learning, partnership and resources. The new enlarged higher education cannot be fully financed from a central government budget even in the more welfare-oriented countries. Institutions compete ruthlessly for the limited available public funds.

Without exception universities recognise the need to diversify their incomes - Burton Clark's third irreducible minimum element. This means entering into all kinds of partnerships and contracts, and accepting the lifelong and society-wide nature of the university student base. Resources from partnering are not just contracts for service with cash payment. Universities wish, if only for the status which retains good staff and attract good students, to be known for their research as well as their teaching.

The community service 'third leg' of the university mission is now better seen as a means of achieving the two primary missions. The local region is now a site of interest to such universities as the English Victorian era foundations. For decades these turned their backs on the great cities which created them. The *civics* may again deserve that designation. Similarly *regional* universities in Australia are coming to see the region and the identity it bestows as a source of strength, rather than a handicap. If the Gibbons *et. al.* analysis is fully absorbed regional lifelong learning partnerships will be seen as a support to international research standing. It is worth commenting that New Zealand's universities were historically strongly regional or civic in their focus, drawing most of their students from local regions, other than for specialised professional schools.

Interest in the regional university is flourishing. The university as part of a regional economy may be seen as the leading edge of an emergent learning city, region or economy (Goddard 1997, 1999, Klich 1999). The OECD through its Institutional Management of Higher Education Programme (IMHE) supported a comparative study of this phenomenon at the end of the nineties. Much of the language is vague and rhetorical,

like the language and use of lifelong learning itself. This does not change the significance of the development for higher education.

More 'communities' and regions, usually through enlightened governments at city or regional level sometimes supported by innovative business interests, recognise that propositions about the knowledge or learning society have to do directly with their responsibility for cultural and social as well as economic prosperity. It is not just that the prescient university is rediscovering geography and claiming its region. Equally, other stakeholders and brokers in the region are taking ownership of *their university*.

It may soon become very important how well this is manifest in the governance of higher education in coming years. Immediately the region is a vital focus and locale for the learning university to recreate its destiny. Allowing that regional identity and affiliation are mainly local for some institutions and disciplines, but international and global for others, there are no exceptions to this proposition.

Almost every member of the modern university can work in partnership with 'the community' in someway. Even those deep inside an essentially 'interior' operation such as a science research team or an internal administrative function are only a short step from clients and partners in the world beyond. As most become 'adult universities' geared to supporting lifelong learning in the learning communities of emergent knowledge societies, managing the boundaries also gets more important as well as less distinct. Community relations and partnership are everyone's business. Around the world extramural departments and extension services have been dismantled, or transformed and mainstreamed.

The boundary spanner is increasingly important in many forms of modern organisation (Sommerlad 1999). Universities as learning organisations must take this role seriously, understand, support and monitor it. The role evolves as the nature of partnership and the institution changes, and as enterprise and organisational learning grow stronger. Units and sub-units need to address means of working with partners and clients. Partnerships require conscious and regular monitoring. Devolved management does not imply a laissez-faire regime. Partnerships are vital and require as much attention from management as does the quality of research and teaching. Without it the shift to a lifelong learning paradigm will not occur.

### The virtual university

To recognise the growth of new technologies and their application to flexible learning and delivery is not to deny the growing nexus between universities and regional communities of interest. Partnering within the local region does not contradict the growth of distance and self-directed learning, any more than it means abandoning international stature and aspiration. More universities will be both more local and more global. The most successful universities in Australia already tend to be good at both.

Most universities will be both face-to-face and distance learning institutions. Already most universities are 'partly virtual', using a mix of distance and classroom contact modes (CVCP 2000). Learning to do and be both is part of the adult university's coming of age. A compelling and problematic issue is how much to invest how fast in what kinds of new teaching-learning technologies, to support open learning and go partly 'virtual'.

Adopting a lifelong learning philosophy and recognising such a clientele points towards more vigorously diversifying when, where and how students access the institution as a learning resource, at times and in places and ways convenient and relevant to their differing situations. The costs of full-scale 'virtualisation' are very high (for instance putting whole courses on the web in pedagogically well-informed ways). Sound research, hard data and real knowledge about what works for whom are scarce. Optimistic hyperbole substitutes for good information. Lead investors require deep pockets and a strong constitution (OECD 2001b).

On the one hand a lifelong learning perspective which acknowledges the diverse and dispersed character of the new student clientele, and the character of lifelong learning embedded in other social situations and life roles, greatly strengthens the case for investing in new ICT. At the same time more sophisticated understanding of how adults learn, of social context, meaning and connectedness, suggests that learners require face-to-face settings to help process information gained electronically, and for meaning-making.

The ICT-enhanced university is likely to be embedded in many places and settings off-campus, where its students have other ties and roles, but still to require face-to-face contact as part of the full contract for effective learning. In short, virtualisation will represent greater convenience and quality enhancement for diverse lifelong learning clienteles. For the university it requires high investment with some risk, but not necessarily significant economies of scale and big savings or profits.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The cost and complexity of higher education and its importance for building a competitive knowledge society come together around the notion of lifelong learning. In some places it is coming to be seen as central to efforts at national economic and social reconstruction. Within these efforts higher education is becoming less free-standing and separate, more planned and integrated with other policy domains. This prospect is not an entirely attractive one to many academic staff. Some may prefer honourable penury over what might be called seductive and prominent but servility to a less than perfect State. The argument here, and from this perspective on lifelong learning, is that higher education and the university need to become more central and less free-standing – to engage and win the struggle for a humane knowledge - and wisdom<sup>6</sup> - society rather than stand aside. This is a posture of purposefully optimistic post-postmodernism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> A term used by and an important distinction made by Dr John Hinchcliff, Vice-Chancellor of AUT.

This is evident in most of the societies and economies of East and South-East Asia and Europe, in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, probably also in all the other main regions of the world. The changes required of the historic institution and the national system vary from place to place. Although they are coming from different directions and situations there is loose convergence around the notion of the regionally relevant university, able to perform in a global environment by combining purposeful leadership with responsiveness to the near-universal lifelong learning policy imperative.

The nobler idea of a university is not dead, especially not in New Zealand where older values survived an era of hardline economic rationalism. Certainly the lifelong learning university is now also the *earning university*. Earned income ratios along with graduate employment statistics are ever more important. The entrepreneurial university is not however oppositional to the learning university. Its funding base and mix must become as diverse as its life- and society-wide clientele.

The adult university develops the same theme. The reinstated civic university is also compatible, not oppositional to being a world class university of international stature. The term civic also resonates with civil society as well as *civis*, a reminder of the university's wider-than-economic role.

Other characterisations are less sanguine: 'the university in ruins' (Readings 1996), also the corporate or managerialist university, its academic traditions degraded and doomed by massification (compare Tapper and Palfreyman 2000, Marginson and Considine 2000). More bullish neo-modern approaches argue to restore the meaning-making organic or collegiate university, without the conceit which made enemies for the university in the critical seventies and economic rationalist eighties (Duke 2002a).

Gidley identifies a role at least for some universities as society's meaning-makers (Inayatullah and Gidley 2000). New Zealand is unusual in statutorily prescribing a role for the university as critic and conscience of society. In the year of the ambitious, eyecatching and high-profile national *Catching the Knowledge Wave* Conference New Zealand needs at least some meaning-making universities, fully attuned to lifelong learning within an emergent more steered and planned tertiary system. As the work of TEAC leads towards the near-certain establishment in 2002 of a Tertiary Education Commission, it could not be more timely for the New Zealand university to ask itself how, in quite specific detail, to operate within the emergent lifelong learning paradigm. This means digging down into the infrastructure where fractal-like (compare Duke 2002a) there will be cultural replications of what is found at institutional level.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> A list of changes featuring the lifelong learning university is given in Longworth's contribution to the 2001 *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, p.596. It may be a useful reference point for institutional stock-taking.

New entry qualifications to widen the range of students and new approaches to teaching to allow for this An increasing number of mature students from wider backgrounds

Increasing reliance on continuing education and joint teaching and research partnerships, with industry as a source of finance

A new emphasis on quality and continuous improvement programmes for staff in teaching, research and administration

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A more innovative approach to the use of educational technology, networks and open/distance learning in teaching and research

Strategies to provide leadership in the community in which it resides

New opportunities for research into how people learn with more focus on learners

Greater internationalisation of research and teaching activities through networks etc.

More efficient internal administration and use of human resources

Strategies to learn the university into a genuine learning organisation

New ideas on accreditation, qualifications and standards – examinations as non-failure oriented learning opportunities to measure an individual's progress

Greater accountability and more effective decision-making and administration

Promotional, marketing and educational programmes that reach out into the community.

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