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CO-EDITORS' DESK

An eclectic array of interesting papers adorns this final issue for 2007. They hover around different issues in the space we might characterise as the more formal yet not necessarily the mainstream dimensions of adult learning. They stretch from post-graduation applications of doctoral learning to transformative pedagogies for building social capital, from enabling education to 'second chance' adult education, and from the potential of distance education to the potential of podcasting. They also relate to varied contexts, including Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Eritrea, the USA and various areas of Asia. What a stimulating variety!

The issue contains five refereed articles and three practice papers. **Barry Elsey** investigates the little explored area of the extent to which goals and ambitions of doctoral graduates are realised during studies and in what ways knowledge and skills from doctoral learning are applied after graduation. Through a survey of 94 doctoral graduates, he identifies five notions of applied doctoral learning that move from the concrete to the intangible and embrace both personal and professional outcomes. The findings may be of considerable value to university policy-makers, marketing and administrative staff and academics ultimately responsible for the delivery of programs and the management of the doctoral learning journey.

In contrast, the theoretical paper by **Peter Willis** focuses on ways in which pedagogy for an elaborated form of transformative learning can be a useful catalyst for the development of social capital in community and workplace groups and networks. He explores a four-dimensional approach to transformative learning as a suitable pedagogy for its development and maintenance. He then demonstrates how four educators – Desmond Tutu, Anne Sullivan, Jesus and Socrates – whose work in different ways could be said to have promoted forms of social capital, directly or indirectly, illustrate these transformative pedagogies.

Tom Stehlik and **Michael Christie** analyse the similarities and differences in the Australian and Swedish education systems. Their paper focuses in particular on opportunities for 'second chance' further education and the extent to which these opportunities contribute to the enhancement of work and family life. The authors conclude that there is value for both of these countries in investing in such education, though for different reasons and with varying outcomes, and that rather than 'second chance', this further education should more appropriately be characterised as 'continuing chance' learning.

This November issue incorporates three papers that were presented at the *Enabling Education: What Works?* conference held in July 2007 and hosted by the University of Newcastle (subsequent issues will include a few other papers). The conference provided a forum for delegates who were interested in the design and delivery of courses which could be broadly described as encouraging wider participation in tertiary education among students from non-traditional backgrounds. Papers explored issues relating to the public policy context within which enabling educators work, program design, what makes good curriculum in enabling courses, on- and off-shore delivery for international enabling students, engaging indigenous learners, the social and economic impact of enabling education and supporting students as they traverse the unknown labyrinth they

encounter as adult learners returning to study after a significant break. The purpose of the conference was to provide a mechanism for sharing theoretical and practical approaches to enabling education, and to develop a support network for practitioners as well as a forum for future enhancement of this rather neglected area of academic endeavour. The conference attracted delegates from all states of Australia, from New Zealand, the United Kingdom and South Africa, ensuring an international perspective on the major themes of the conference.

The three papers in this issue provide an overview of the conference itself, and will, it is hoped, stimulate interest in the papers which will appear in subsequent issues of this Journal, and encourage participation in the next conference to be held at the University of Southern Queensland in 2009.

The paper by **Helen Anderson** is a thoughtful and considered discussion of enabling/bridging education, primarily from the New Zealand perspective. It highlights social justice and individual opportunity as important motivators for the development of enabling education programs, and provides discussion on future directions. The enabling student perspective is presented in the paper by **Julie Willans** and **Karen Seary**. The authors underscore the power that is generated in individuals who are able, through education, to break down previously-held barriers to success and reassess their potential. In a previous paper published in this Journal in 2004, they discussed significant milestones in the emotional and learning journey that enabling students take. The Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) program at Central Queensland University has been further developed since then, providing opportunity for further analysis of student outcomes.

The Monash University Foundation program is offered both as an on-shore and off-shore pathway to undergraduate study for international students. Taking this program as a point of departure, **Silvia McCormack** examines the competing demands of flexibility

and quality assurance in her paper. She develops a quality assurance model and measures the importance of such mechanisms for public and private educational entities. The paper generated considerable interest and discussion among delegates who work with programs specifically designed for international students, and who recognise the increasing importance of such students to Australian universities and are themselves seeking ways of ensuring the quality of programs delivered by partner institutions in other countries.

Ashok Roy and **Priya Roy** analyse the applications of podcasting in higher education and its potential in adult education as an approach which they argue meets the unique needs of adult learners in web-based education environments. The article outlines what podcasting is and how much it costs, before discussing both the advantages and disadvantages in its use. The authors contend that it should be integrated into adult education programs because of such advantages as cost-effectiveness, flexibility and classroom enrichment. Similarly, **Ravinder Rena** advocates the case for using distance education, this time in the context of Eritrea, a newly independent and developing country facing diverse educational challenges. The paper discusses the many issues involved in its implementation and the potential for its further use, recognising the desperate need for required logistics, quality materials and trained staff, as well as the advantages in learning from other countries' experiences in implementing distance education institutions and programs.

The issue concludes with a brief research report and four book reviews.

As co-editors for this issue, we wish all contributors and readers the very best for a happy and safe festive season, a blessed Christmas and a productive New Year.

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Roger Harris and Keryl Kavanagh
University of South Australia and University of Newcastle
Co-editors

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Transformative pedagogy for social capital

Peter Willis
University of South Australia

This paper explores ways in which pedagogy for an elaborated form of transformative learning can be a useful catalyst for the development of social capital in community and workplace groups and networks. I begin with an example and then explore ideas of learning challenges embedded in building and maintaining social capital. I consider the usefulness of a four-dimensional approach to transformative learning as a suitable pedagogy for its development and maintenance. The paper concludes with brief profiles of four educators whose work, in different ways, could be said to have promoted forms of social capital, directly or indirectly: Desmond Tutu, Anne Sullivan, Jesus and Socrates. Each of these educators, without excluding other approaches, tended to emphasise one of the four transformative pedagogies.

Introduction: social capital at the Otherway centre

Early in the new century, Aboriginal people linked to Adelaide's Otherway centre, a Catholic meeting place and religious centre designated for Aboriginal people, discovered that a number of Afghan refugees had arrived in Australia and had been detained at the Baxter detention centre near Port Augusta. In earlier eras, many Aboriginal people had links with Afghani migrants, whose camel teams had carried supplies to outback Australia when there were few roads (*cf.* Nolan 2005).

Some of the Aboriginal people from the Otherway centre began visiting the detainees and established friendships which were maintained when the Afghanis eventually received temporary protection visas and came to stay in Adelaide with few resources and no certain future. The Aboriginal people offered the refugees the use of the Otherway centre for their religious practices – effectively designating it as a temporary Mosque on their day of worship.

From the perspective of social capital, the trust and social stability of the Otherway centre has been a useful resource to support the transition of the Afghan asylum seekers into a new life of education and employment in Australia. The source of such social capital seems to have been linked to compassion and inclusivity – values which are obliquely fostered by the educational and religious exchanges of the Otherway centre. It is this kind of learning implicit in the notion of social capital and its promotion that is the main concern of the rest of this paper.

Social capital and its learning challenges

Social capital tends to be a shorthand expression used to describe a particular kind of capability that develops in groups and networks with strong and trusting connections insofar as they have increased

and deepened their connectedness to each other and participated in what Putnam (2000: 19) called civic engagement or civic virtue:

> social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue'. The difference is that 'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations.

According to Field (2005: 2), Putnam saw active citizenship

> as an important source of social capital because it is the main way in which people – particularly those who are strangers to one another – experience reciprocity through their pursuit of shared objectives. This in turn helps to create a dense web of networks underpinned by shared values and producing high levels of social trust, which in turn foster further cooperation between people and reduce the chances of malfeasance.

What can be discerned in this and similar writing about social capital (*cf.* Bourdieu 1983 and Coleman 1988) is that if people interact in a trusting and friendly way and share ideas and information, their location becomes a catalytic place of encouragement for all kinds of cooperative activities, including of course different kinds of learning. It is the links between social capital and forms of learning that is of interest here, where social capital can be seen as having come about as a result of forms of cooperative learning and, once in position, can become the catalytic site for more and different learning.

The learning embedded in group activities is not necessarily inherently valuable or enriching, since human coming together cannot be presumed to be always for moral and useful purposes. Criminal gangs, fraudulent business associations, unscrupulous get-rich-quick assemblies, proselytising political and religious groups using questionable forms of persuasion all depend upon a degree

of social connectedness. The notion of social capital is presumed to refer to cooperative qualities of a community and to rule out anti-social forms of selective collaboration. As such, it carries with it to a greater or lesser extent a presumption of an inclusive and egalitarian morality. The social cohesion that is a feature of social capital cannot be presumed to occur easily and naturally over time among groups of people. It needs rather to be seen as a learned state achieved by people living companionably together in a region or neighbourhood who have found ways to protect and enrich the inclusive and trusting qualities that enrich their life together.

The question which rises immediately, in the light of the interests of this paper, is whether and in what ways the learning processes for social capital could be enriched by transformative pedagogies which, while concerned about matters of interest to the connected group or network, can be shaped to minimise negative processes and outcomes and promote human betterment.

Learning in community interactions

The strong sense of enrichment in the idea of social capital discussed above tends to draw, to a greater or lesser extent, on a sense of homogeneity and belonging so that people will tend to feel accepted by those they feel they can understand and like and presume that understanding and affection will flow reciprocally. The easy exchanges that characterise this homogeneity can come under challenge when circumstances change. Newcomers to the group and different internal and external circumstances – income, employment, health, community status – can also pose a challenge to the easy solidarity and warmth of the group. Groups and communities can experience considerable tensions depending on different interests, cultures and languages, or interactive style. Kushner and Sterk (2005) show how close-knit communities with apparent strong bonds can have high rates of suicide. Personal and personality differences and various clashes between group members can raise the question of

whether benefits of remaining in the group are outweighed by its costs. Attending group meetings and events may begin to be perceived as a chore rather than an enrichment; there can even be a sense of risk and discomfort, particularly if a unresolved clashes and conflicts become part of the collective 'memory' of the group.

An early classic definition by Thomas (1976: 891) highlights the significant foundation of conflict as based on clashes of interests: 'conflict is the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his [*sic*]'.

For conflict in a group to be minimised and recovered from, participants must assess the value of group coherence and friendly interactions as high enough for them to ameliorate their concerns and interests to win at all costs.

There is thus a lot riding on the quality of the groups and networks that people belong to and in which they seek to make some investment. People who feel they are enriched by their membership in a group can seek to serve it in different ways on the grounds that good relations in groups and communities are easily damaged as circumstances change. Group integrity needs to be monitored and nurtured, and that can often involve learning to make sense of change, and to work out how best to respond to it. Since this represents in many cases a serious departure from commonly held discourses of competition and individualism, the 'sharing' attitudes of people in situations of high social capital points to a significant learning process. The group may experience serious learning challenges to find ways to accept and react creatively to change or face the possibility of imminent collapse.

There is of course a very real sense that for groups, as well as for individuals, moments of risk and challenge can also become opportunities for learning and growth. As Gary (2007) expresses it in his 'managing conflict' web-site:

Conflict gives rise to expanded information exchange, surfaced rationales, more options, and better group decisions that enable change. Managed poorly, conflict destroys. The dominant motive involved is control.

This is particularly the case if such challenges can be 'named' as learning challenges by the group and if the group can find the learning resources and flexibility to make necessary changes and adapt to them. These processes are the pedagogic work of community development educators when they have access to communities and groups and some kind of mandate for their care. Their action needs to be based on comprehensive ideas of learning and its facilitation.

Three dimensions of learning

In *The three dimensions of learning*, Illeris (2002: 19) writes that 'learning simultaneously comprises a cognitive, an emotional and psychodynamic, and a social and societal dimension'. When examining the learning linked to the development of social capital, one needs to look for its cognitive, emotional and social dimensions.

The *cognitive learning* dimension of social capital can be understood as validating the rational logic underpinning social cohesion and co-operation, which of course involves perceptions of enrichment and betterment from social co-operation coupled with the deleterious effects of the breakdown of social trust and co-operation. Such a logical conclusion needs a transition to action via an emotional perception of desirability.

The *emotional and psychodynamic* part of human knowing and learning in the development and safeguarding of social capital is evoked particularly through the power of the human imagination, shaped by previous significant experiences, to create desirable and undesirable future scenarios. These scenarios, which could be called 'imaginal' following Hillman (1981), can have a powerful effect when people are lead or invited to 'dwell on' them, and for their hearts

to be moved to choose and implement appropriate action towards identified desirable goals.

These intertwined cognitive and emotional processes are further shaped by the essentially *social* dimension of human learning. Thus, the cognitive naming and emotional appraising of events in human life is socially and interactively performed and forms the foundation of personal choices for the actions which people make, individually and in groups.

It is useful to reflect on ways in which learning to protect and enhance social capital – the qualities of social connectedness, resilience and trust – can be the subject of educational action. In exploring curriculum possibilities for social capital, the desired learning needs to be located within its three dimensions.

Cognitive learning
The cognitive learning processes that are required for the continuance and development of social capital can be explained using Piaget's ideas of the learning process. Child psychologist Piaget (1896 – 1980) suggested that human learning is a process of adaptation in which learners seek equilibrium by *assimilating* new information into existing thought structures, or *accommodating* their thought structures to make a space for new information which does not fit into existing thought structures.

Extrapolating from Piaget (Inhelder & Piaget 1958, 1964), community members can be challenged to turn changes in their circumstances into learning challenges through which they come to understand and, if necessary, to change. Through processes of assimilation and/or accommodation to change, the social capital of a group can be maintained and enriched. Assimilation means that the group discovers a way to accept change without too much modification of existing thoughts and practices – integrating new members, occupying new premises, gaining access to new resources.

Accommodation is of course more explosive as group members confront and work to accept changes in themselves – composition, customs and rules. At this point, the social capital of a group can be in jeopardy but, as will be explored further in the next section, its difficult transition can be transformative and lead to better and more realistic circumstances as an alternative to social breakdown.

One of the major protagonists of accommodation learning of this kind is Mezirow (1991, 1995) with his work on *perspective transformation*. While Mezirow focuses on individuals, it is suggested here that forms of perspective transformation can occur in a group (*cf*. Illeris 2004). This was the view of Freire (1970, 1972, 1973), whose educational work with communities in South America combined literacy learning with political and social critique.

Accommodation also refers to quite radical change, aspects of which are almost always experienced as a loss. Kübler-Ross' (1969) five stages in the grief process – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance – are a useful analogy for the kinds of experiences that members can encounter around an accommodation change in their community.

Group members can talk about coming changes in their world and their reactions to them. Since many groups are composed of members who choose to belong and can just as easily choose to disaffiliate, grief and loss from an accommodation process needs to be acknowledged and different levels of grief respected.

Emotional learning
The previous paragraph pointed to the emotional dimensions of social change, particularly where accommodation is concerned. Indeed, for groups, the emotional dimension of change goes to the very heart of social capital itself, insofar as it is a strongly affective process involving a positive emotional orientation to strangers, offering friendship and inclusion, co-operation and flexibility in collaborative

projects, tolerance and even forgiveness in the case of disagreements and conflict.

Such emotional learning works with the imagination and the heart. It uses stories and symbols of co-operation to create ideals of inclusivity. Community groups tend to have implicit or explicit value statements and ideals around the service offered. Most churches, for example, stress kindness and inclusivity particularly to their members, but often more widely. Other community service groups stress practical service to community members and, at least implicitly, support inclusivity and networking. Community service clubs incorporate service and inclusivity values into their mission statements.

Social learning
Since social capital can be described as a socially embedded set of inclusive and co-operative attitudes and values developed over time and put into action to such an extent that some expectation of conviviality and welcome can become a characteristic of certain communities, the social dimensions of learning in this context are strongly relevant. The idea of communities of practice developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998), which were derived from ideas of the social dimension of learning, point to the importance of this dimension of learning in the development of social capital.

Transformative learning and social capital

So much of the learning underpinning rich social capital involves communities and groups in serious and searching challenges in order to enrich existing relationships, break down barriers, foster reconciliation and the like. It seems amost inevitable that learning that fosters social capital often needs to be transformative in one way or another. A transformative approach to learning as it relates to personal and social change has been developed by Mezirow (1991, 1995), Boyd and Myers (1988), Dirkx (2000) and

Cranton (2006). Cranton (2006: 36) sums up transformative learning in these words:

> Transformative learning is defined as the process by which people examine problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. It can be provoked by a single event – a disorientating dilemma – or it can take place gradually and cumulatively over time. Discourse is central to the process. We need to engage in conversation with others in order to better consider alternative perspectives and determine their validity.
>
> Frames of reference are made up of habits of mind (the broad predispositions we use to interpret experience) and points of view (clusters of meaning schemes, or habitual, implicit rules we use to interpret experience). A habit of mind is expressed as a point of view.

This definition tends to place the 'transformative' element of transformative learning in the rational rather than the emotional or social dimensions of learning. However in practice, learners reporting forms of transformation tend to refer to the experience as *becoming different*, which often involves emotional overtones and collaborative validation (*cf.* Karpiak 2000).

As educators, these writers and their colleagues are interested in how transformative learning can be fostered. I have sought to expand the notion of transformative learning so that it refers to four kinds of learning occurring separately or together to differing degrees, and I explore their part in fostering the reciprocal community links and respectful and friendly interactions which are considered key contributors to social capital.

The question that immediately arises is how such educational action can be pursued in the aggregations, groups and networks that make up a community. Institutions with an overt value agenda, such as churches, continue their educational program in sermons and small group meetings around specific issues and practices. Other community groups may not have structured education programs but may have educational events from time to time, plus the daily interaction between members in which the ideal and practices of the group are constantly being refined and modified in response to changing circumstances. Apart from the practicalities by which learning activities can be organised in communities, there is the question of the curriculum for such activities – ways in which desirable kinds of transformative learning can be promoted, and that is the theme of the next section.

Fostering transformative learning and its contribution to social capital

The theory of transformative learning has developed over nearly three decades into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe the meaning of experiences of radical change often in the light of a democratic and humanistic ideology. In the spirit of a working theory, what follows is an attempt to take the idea further by suggesting that transformative learning can have four recognisable dimensions which, although in real life are often blurred, contribute to a more comprehensive and true to life understanding.

Four dimensions of transformative learning and their pedagogies

The foundations of this four dimensional view are the kinds of transformation meant and the assumed stance of the people or groups thought to be engaged in such learning. One form of transformative learning in this context can refer to a *healing* process through which wounded people or groups learn to discover a way to a state of personal or community healing, peace and well-being. Another meaning of transformative learning, referred to here as *organic*, refers to the transformation of coming to fullness of capacity in personal, social and workplace arenas. This form of transformative learning is linked to the ripening and maturation commonly

encountered in the organic world. The third form of transformative learning referred to as *unitary* (Willis 2004) involves the processes by which a person or group sheds that which is perceived to be inauthentic and seeks to come to a oneness. A fourth form of transformative learning, which was largely its original meaning in adult learning literature, refers to *critical* processes through which a person or people come to an awareness of and become resistant to oppressive and unequal power relations in various life situations they encounter.

What follows is a brief exploration of ways in which an educator, seeking to promote social capital in a group, may develop a broad-based curriculum by promoting the three dimensions of learning (rational, emotional and social) in the four forms of transformative pedagogy.

Healing transformative learning and its pedagogy
Healing transformative learning refers to the learning that takes place in individual and social healing. Stories of individual healing transformation have been referred to by Frank (1995: 75ss) as 'narratives of restitution' and are similar to the paths that sick people traverse as they become transformed from illness to some kind of wellness or rehabilitation. For groups, healing transformation tends to involve processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation (du Boulay 1989).

To promote the rational, emotional and social dimensions of healing transformation, the educator may begin with a factual or historical exploration of the situation in which people and groups find themselves. Promoting this *rational* learning dimension may mean the strategic use of factual information (what does this mean exactly?) of the personal and social wounds, the benefits of healing and useful ways by which such healing could be attempted. Combined with this is the need for the educator to look for ways to evoke *emotional* learning around healing, particularly by the use of images

and stories of the pathos of wounding and illness and the benefits and infectious joy of healing. The educator can then promote the *social* dimensions of learning by prompting individuals and groups, hopefully now possessing some emotional energy towards healing, to see themselves as a healing community of practice. The informal welcome and conversations of the Aboriginal people reaching out to the Afghan asylum seekers, described at the beginning of this paper, seems to be a case where healing is a major element in their de facto transformative pedagogy.

Organic transformative learning and its pedagogy
Organic transformative learning refers to the learning people and groups can undertake to facilitate their natural ripening and growing to maturity. The *rational* dimension of organic transformative learning refers to processes by which people are assisted to become aware of their needs and capabilities and engage in active learning to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to optimise their personal, social and work life. Groups with an informed and empirical approach to their learning needs are laying one of the solid foundations for their social capital. The *emotional* dimension of organic transformative learning for social capital refers to ways in which groups and their members are encouraged to imagine their best futures and to see them as realisable. The *social* dimension of organic transformative learning involves group support and encouragement for the planned development of knowledge and skills for members, both individually and as a group. Social capital is enriched as group members hone the skills required for the continuance of the group. Learners who achieve a potential they may not have previously imagined can energize and deepen the social capital of a group significantly and joyfully.

Unitary transformative learning and its pedagogy
Unitary transformative learning refers to the 'imaginal' processes (Hillman 1981) centred on and drawing from the human powers of image making and desire (*cf*. Boyd & Myers 1988; Dirkx 2000;

Nelson 1997). These imaging processes are linked to the human need and capacity to make choices according to a chosen set of values and related generative images. Jung (1957) coined the term 'archetypes' for similar although more elaborated processes. Imaginal processes do not replace the more rational and logical parts of the human psyche but complement and enrich them. The religious and cultural historian Armstrong (2005), referring to this complementarity, speaks of an ancient nexus between *mythos* and *logos*:

> In the pre-modern world, particularly for the Greeks, it was generally understood that there were two largely complementary ways of pursuing thought in order to come to truth. These were called *mythos* and *logos*. *Logos* (reason; science) was exact, practical and essential to human life. It was validated by its so-called testable correspondence to external reality. Myth expressed the more mysterious aspects of human experience and corresponded to the human desire to make sense of a world in which humans are often out of control. (p. 43)

The generative images or 'visualised ideals' of the mythos way of thinking and feeling are seen to appear implicitly in the inchoate or elaborated 'self stories' or personal myths of individuals and groups. It is through these that a person or group works to define and enrich an authentic 'inner self', often not without struggle through choices made, rejecting as far as possible alternative, less acceptable ideals and options. It is suggested here that the social capital of groups can have a strong need for unitary transformative learning when they are invited to re-configure their foundational ideals and attitudes and dwell on them, welcoming their ideals and visions into their hearts and minds.

For social capital educators, the *rational* dimension of unitary transformative learning has a critical role to play in interrogating the ideal and generative images of the group and keeping watch against the infiltration of the group ideals by alternative ideas provided by advertising and other forms of 'spin'. When groups are under pressure from internal or external forces, the discerning function has an important role in unitary transformative learning.

Educators conscious of the *emotional* dimensions of unitary transformative learning need to be aware of the 'storied' nature of the identity of people and groups (*cf.* Day 2002) in which key foundational elements of their social capital can be contained. The largely unspoken yet accepted values and priorities of a group are often held together by key narratives and symbols underlying its informal conversations and gossip.

The educator looking to cater for the *social* dimension of unitary transformative learning needs to see in what ways the community can generate local images and stories of their history, identity and future dreams. For example, it can be suggested that one of the reasons behind the astonishing success of a Minnesota community radio program called *The Prairie Home Companion* is that its leader and raconteur, Garrison Keeler, in his weekly *News from Lake Woebegone* (Keilor 1985), gently and not a little ironically reveals, dwells on and validates the values and ideals that hold the rural northern Midwestern American communities together. More locally and in less dramatic ways, community newspapers and newsletters, local radio shows and various public addresses, sermons for the church groups, visiting speakers at meetings of sporting and service groups, can all contribute to the unitary transformation of a group and its members and significantly enrich and deepen the emotional learning underpinning its social capital. Likewise, annual community parades or festivals (*cf.* Hawkes 2005) affirm the existence, ideals and contributions of the constitutive associations and services of a community. Speaking of such celebrations, Hilbers (2007) writes:

> Celebrations and the storytelling, play, ceremony, ritual, music, dance, food and feasting they encompass, are all pathways for exploring the creative and the mythopoetic depths of our lives and communities – both in the moment and over time. (p. 84)

Community educators seeking to promote social capital through unitary transformative learning can prompt community members to engage with and draw from such festivals an enrichment and confirmation of their ideals, visions and self stories.

Critical transformative learning and its pedagogy
The fourth and final form of transformative learning is the critical dimension. Using the term 'perspective transformation', Mezirow (1991, 1995) draws on Habermas' (1972, 1984) idea of three kinds of 'knowledge-constitutive interests', each of which is linked to different kinds of learning: technical/instrumental, communicative and critical. With instrumental learning, we learn to control and manipulate the environment, while communicative learning involves learning to understand others and the social world in which we live. For Mezirow, Habermas' *critical* and *emancipatory* learning occurs when individuals reformulate their structures of meaning, making them more attuned and resistant to social injustice, particularly when these inequities are hidden or unacknowledged. The educator concerned with critical transformative learning needs to promote its rational, emotional and social dimensions.

A pedagogy to promote the *rational* dimension of critical reflection needs to avoid being complicit in undetected forms of domination. Its logical and rational pedagogy needs to be pursued obliquely without persuasive lecturing or preaching. To protect the freedom and agency of learners, the educator can prompt dialogic reflective processes by which problems and contradictions are identified, discussed and assessed. The *emotional* dimension of critical transformative learning can be seen in the telling of evocative stories and images of resistance, such as the Eureka Stockade in the Australian goldfields (*cf*. Jones 2005), Dorothy Day with her houses of hospitality in New York (Forest 1986, Day 1952) and Paulo Freire's (1970, 1972, 1973) emancipatory adult literacy programs in Brazil. Finally, the educator can promote the *social* dimensions of learning for critical

transformation by prompting individuals and groups to choose to make concerns for justice and emancipation part of the culture of their group.

Fostering social capital through critical transformative pedagogy seeks to protect a democratic community's foundational ideals and practices so that members can learn to free themselves from acts or dispositions which condone or actually promote injustice and exclusion. Educators promoting critical transformative learning can outline a reflective curriculum where community members are invited to confront challenges to the integrity and inclusivity of their community and/or group in order to safeguard its social capital under challenge from internal or external forces. One example of *internal* challenge is when oppressed minorities in a community threaten its social capital by resisting the subjugant place they have been allocated economically and socially. Examples of this have been the struggles of women for equality and later similar struggles for acceptance by Aboriginal and immigrant people. Challenges from *outside* the group can occur when people from different cultures and racial groups seek to join a community where the existing members resist such change.

The educator needs to be aware that critical awareness learning tends to be a form of accommodation in Piaget's sense rather than assimilation to changed circumstances. Deep changes to the ways in which the values and activities of groups are pursued can be risky and painful, and one of the only appropriate educational approaches is to invite critical reflection and avoid preaching or proselytising. Different forms of facilitated transformative learning of the four kinds mentioned, some quite radical and painful, can well be experienced by various groups at different times. The social capital of such groups during these learning times may well be at a major turning point – emerging renewed or diminished but hardly untouched.

Four community educators with different transformative pedagogies and their links to social capital

The final section of this paper looks at the pedagogic practices of four outstanding transformative educators whose work can be said to have contributed in different ways or with different emphases to the building of social capital. These educators have each been chosen to exemplify one of the four transformative pedagogies: the healing transformative process of Desmond Tutu, Annie Sullivan's organic pedagogy, the unitary approach of Jesus, and the critical approach of Socrates.

Desmond Tutu and the learning work of healing transformation

Tutu's transformative pedagogy is an outstanding example of healing transformation, particularly in relation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which he was appointed to chair by President Nelson Mandela in 1994. In his overview of the TRC for the British Broadcasting Commission, South African journalist Greg Barrow (1998) wrote:

> Much of the criticism of the commission stems from a basic misunderstanding about its mandate. It was never meant to punish people, just to expose their role in crimes committed under apartheid. It is in this respect that the achievements of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stand out. Only by revisiting the trauma of the past can people look to a better future – but with the truth comes pain and a reminder that reconciliation may still be a distant goal in the new South Africa.

Tutu's healing and uplifting agenda could be seen as a major contribution to the building of social capital in post-apartheid South Africa. Reporting on one of the sessions involving Winnie Mandela, Zia Jaffrey (1998) wrote:

> During the course of the hearing, which lasted twelve days, Archbishop Tutu played the role of a healer, confessor,

comedian, politician, proctor-even grammarian ... He warned listeners and participants that this hearing was not a trial, and that he did not wish to conduct a "witch hunt," arguing that abuses committed by those suffering under apartheid were not morally equivalent to those perpetrated by the apartheid government. (p. 1)

Although Tutu promoted the healing process as one inspired by Christianity, his pedagogy drew on pragmatic humanistic ideals. One commentator, Robbins, was aware that many South Africans were sceptical of the Christian language of forgiveness and reconciliation and preferred the secular term 'amnesty' with its strong pragmatic connotation. Nevertheless, he felt that some kind of amnesty was absolutely necessary and that the commission was still valuable. As he writes:

> Despite such challenges to the TRC's rhetoric of forgiveness and healing, however, there is widespread recognition amongst South Africans that amnesty was perhaps an appropriate and politically necessary compromise. (1998: 9)

Tutu's reconciliation pedagogy (1994, 1999) unashamedly claimed validation from the general Christian ideology that the vast majority of white and black South Africans espoused at least nominally. Following that rubric, he invited people who had committed human rights abuses under the apartheid regime to take the first steps on the path to reconciliation by confessing to these abuses, begging forgiveness of the families of victims with the largely unspoken suggestion that their brutality had been generated by the brutal and inhumane regime that had shaped their consciousness and excused or even demanded their abusive activities. His own charisma as the 'wounded healer' gave great weight to his invitation.

From the perspective of the three dimensions of learning, Tutu evoked the rational logical dimensions of the healing agenda by pointing out the absolute necessity of reconciliation between racial

groups as a preliminary to any kind of nation building that included them as one people under one government. He argued rationally and logically that the process of reconciliation would not be served by bringing to justice all the perpetrators of the many human rights abuses that had been committed. Many of these abuses were perpetrated through forms of exclusion from goods and services whereby the people implementing the exclusions were largely unaware of the injustices of a regime they had grown up with and accepted as a given.

Tutu invited these perpetrators of injustice by neglect as well as people involved in acts of direct brutality to confess their crimes and beg forgiveness from the victims and their families. Calling for an amnesty against prosecution, he advocated a form of general restitution, the energy of which could go into nation building. The claims of the oppressed had to be heard, and the confessing malefactors had to acknowledge their crimes perhaps with lessened culpability, and beg pardon for the sufferings they had inflicted.

The emotional dimension of the healing learning was powerful. Tutu's use of vivid stories, and his invitation to sufferers and oppressors to do the same, charged the learning environment with dread and fear and anger on the one hand, and a huge outpouring of forgiveness and pardon on the other. Covering the sittings of the TLC, Jaffrey (1998: 2) reported that when the commission came to deal with Winnie Mandela, who allegedly ordered the murder of her medical doctor to prevent him from giving evidence against her, the confessed murderer Cyril Zakhale Mbatha

> broke down and wept, begging forgiveness from the [doctor's] family. He said he deserved to remain in prison, convicted of the crime he committed, but was misled by "a very clever woman.

Winnie Mandela in her turn was to express contrition for her part in some of the atrocities that came before the commission.

The social dimension of this healing transformation is critical. Under Tutu's pedagogy, the TRC is held to its work of being a community of practice of listening, forgiveness and pardon. The healing transformative learning agenda of this senior and respected group was to create a kind of reconciliation ferment among the community which could allow some of the wounds to heal and for people to let go of their grief. Frank (2002), a scholar of transformative healing learning, suggests that forms of such learning often amount to the capacity to hear and attend to the stories that others tell, and to feel confident to share one's own. He says 'the dialogic task – and the profoundly ethical task – is for people to see themselves as characters in other's stories' (p. 21).

Ralston Saul (2002) talks of Baba Sikwepere, beaten and blinded during the apartheid regime, who said that he felt he got his sight back by being able to tell his story in this formally constituted arena and being heard. He writes that Baba

> is still blind. What is the sight he has regained? The ability to imagine himself and his experience as a public part of a society's experience; its self-declared reality. His sight is that he can now be seen by others through his story. (p. 126)

This form of democratic imagining involves people consciously listening, consciously giving space to allow the imagination of another to enter one's own, and to allow a merging of stories. This could be seen as an extension of Tutu's healing and transformative pedagogy.

Annie Sullivan and the learning work of organic transformation

Annie Sullivan, a promising partly sighted former student at the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind (HLN 2001), was nominated by its director to work with seven year old Helen Keller, who at the age of 18 months had contracted a disease that left her blind and deaf. Anne moved into the Keller's home as a tutor in 1887 and worked to discover and release the emotional power

that she could feel in the angry almost uncontrollable child. In her role as tutor, Anne had to engage Keller's learning agenda in many areas. She insisted on good table manners, courtesy and self-control while at the same time working constantly with the so-called manual alphabet in which each letter is signed on to the hand of the deaf blind person. One specific and notable moment of organic transformative learning is described in a brief biography of Keller (RNIB 2007):

> Helen had until now not yet fully understood the meaning of words. When Anne led her to the water pump on 5 April 1887, all that was about to change.
>
> As Anne pumped the water over Helen's hand, Anne spelled out the word 'water' in the girl's free hand. Something about this explained the meaning of words within Helen, and Anne could immediately see in her face that she finally understood.

In her autobiography, Keller's (1903/1951) description of that incident shows evidence of her continued development, an inner unfolding of dormant parts of her psyche and the releasing of her skill to learn:

> We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honey-suckle with which it was covered. Someone was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten, a thrill of returning thought, and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. (cited in the RNIB biography mentioned above, no page number given)

The Royal National Institute of Blind People profile of Keller mentions that having 'understood' how the signing language worked, she learnt the names of many things and people, then a little later was introduced to Braille and typing, and from them to the world of communication and higher forms of education.

The organic transformative pedagogy of Sullivan fostered Keller's transformative learning along its three dimensions. The rational logical dimension of her organic transformation is beautifully done as Sullivan holds her hand under the pump and signs the letters for water again and again waiting for the resonating spark which of course happens. The emotional dimension of the fragile beginnings of this kind of learning is provided by Sullivan's constant supportive presence. There is no doubt of the warmth and commitment in the many touches and hugs that constituted and went on constituting the learning facilitative process. The social dimension is evident in the community of practice that builds around Annie and Helen. The spark of different kinds of learning is brought to flame in the warmth of their mini community which is not totally exclusive and included other educationalists at different times.

Jesus and the learning work of unitary transformation

Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, was an itinerant prophetic figure in Israel. He was an educator whose teachings can be said to have been built around a strong, almost driven awareness that trust and inclusive friendship (which are central to ideas of social capital), generated from the interactions of people in community, was a fragile entity. Community inclusiveness and trust needed constant correctional practices to maintain and deepen the supportive relations between community members. A lot of Christian teaching from Jesus and from the apostle Paul concerned forgiveness and ways of working to regain equanimity in community. The foundational notion was 'caring love' which all members were encouraged to practice.

Although most of Jesus' education for unitary transformation put strong emphasis on the imaginal and emotional, he did not ignore the cognitive and social dimensions of learning. Jesus used rational logical learning to separate authentic from inauthentic imaginal forms. He attacked hypocrites as wolves in sheep's clothing. Many of his parables, with their strong imaginal messages, also carry rational

logical challenges to guide his learners to discriminate between false and true ideals, and to verify the validity of high ideals in the practices that should flow from these. The parable of the good Samaritan and Jesus' remarks that 'by their fruits you shall know them' (Matt 7:16) are clear examples of his ideas and ideals.

Jesus' use of imaginal pedagogy in his unitary transformative agenda is particularly linked to his ways of teaching which tended to be filled with images and stories designed to capture the imagination and move the heart. The responses that Jesus sought to his teaching were rarely concerned with logical, rational knowledge alone but with calls for repentance and conversion to a new way of life. The act of conversion can be construed as essentially letting go of inauthentic life stances and activities to adopt the new position. As such, it is particularly linked to unitary transformation. Jesus' teaching tended to be invitational and choice-laden. His teaching does not browbeat but calls strongly to choice. He reminds his followers that deeds of acceptance must follow words of conversion.

The desired learning in Jesus' unitary transformative pedagogy also had a social dimension. His disciples formed a loose community of practice characterised by a desire to please and be with 'the master' for a range of noble and less noble reasons. Most of his teaching was not done one to one but to the group, and 'the last supper' which carried the burden of his transformative teaching involved symbolic acts of community-building, such as the washing of the feet and the sharing of bread and wine.

Community educators following this model tend to be embedded in the life of a community and to teach and carry out works of mercy and forgiveness. Outstanding examples of such eductors include musician and medic Albert Schweitzer, civil rights campaigner Martin Luther King, pacifist community worker Dorothy Day, and Yami Lester, a Yangutjatjarra civil rights activist working at the Institute for Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs.

Socrates and the learning work of critical transformation

Socrates is introduced as an early adult educator who challenged the beliefs held by the citizens of Athens. Many of his students were young and grew to idolise him and his teachings, so much so that parents complained and he was charged with corrupting the youth of Athens and bringing religion into disrepute. He was condemned to death in 399 BC.

Garth Kemerling (2006), in his web text on philosophy, comments on Socrates' educational exchanges in Athens:

> Socrates devoted himself to free-wheeling discussion with the aristocratic young citizens of Athens, insistently questioning their unwarranted confidence in the truth of popular opinions, even though he often offered them no clear alternative teaching.

One of the significant contemporary practitioners of this form of community education is Paulo Freire (1970, 1972, 1973) who combined literacy education with critical reflection. Mike Newman (2006) carries Socratic ideals in his writings and practice, particularly in relation to the Trade Union movement, as does Toni Morrison, black feminist and civil rights activist and writer (*cf.* Khayati 1999).

Even though Socrates' transformative pedagogy focused particularly on the logical rational dimension of human knowledge, he had some room for the imaginal in his spirited pursuit and espousal of the ideals of critical thinking and judgment. His personal charisma that so enchanted the youth of Athens cannot immediately be linked purely to logical rational pedagogy. Socrates had style and charisma accompanying his dialectic activities. Finally, Socrates was not unlike Jesus, with a group of followers seeking to form a community of practice with him, and to amplify his teaching amongst others. Ironically, it was the group pedagogy that finally lead to Socrates' condemnation as one who 'corrupted the youth of Athens'.

Conclusion

At least to some extent, social capital has tended to be an after-the-fact idea based on the experiences of contented and enriched members of functioning, inclusive and flexible communities. The questions posed and pursued here have been whether and in what ways such social enrichment can be fostered and what underpinning human processes are embedded in its pursuit and achievement. The more one reflects on social capital, the more a kind of utopian dimension emerges and with it a significant prerequisite level of courtesy and unselfishness underpinning it. The presence of social capital seems to be a strong indicator of refined and humane social relationships generated from the ongoing learning of fairly constant reflection, critique and consequent choice for action.

What can be described as 'social capital learning' has been explored in this paper with the suggestion that it can contain four kinds of transformation: healing, organic, unitary and critical. Following this, and seeking to ground these approaches, has been a final section describing the transformative pedagogic work of four outstanding practitioners, Desmond Tutu, Annie Sullivan, Jesus and Socrates. Each of these in turn has been shown to manifest, without totally excluding other approaches, outstanding ways of fostering one of the four forms of transformative learning.

A study of this kind seeks to bring the holistic nature of human learning to the fore and highlights the more tacit elements that can be found in human learning enterprises where action and collaboration are required. It can never be enough to focus purely on the technical skills and knowledge required for the specific functions of an enterprise without attention to the way participants create, critique and maintain the values that underpin their judgements and choices for action. For that, different forms of transformative learning, with the struggle and the illumination that can involve, are always required.

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About the author

Dr Peter Willis *is senior lecturer in education, adult, vocational and workplace learning at the University of South Australia. He has been active in the adult education movement in Australia for many years. His research areas concern transformative and 'second chance' learning among adults and the relationship between religion, spirituality, aesthetic life and civil society. He pioneered the use of phenomenological approaches in arts-based adult educational research in his publications:* Inviting learning: an exhibition of risk and enrichment in adult education practice *(NIACE 2002) and* Pedagogies of the imagination: mythopoetic curriculum in educational practice *(Springer, in press).*

Contact details

School of Education, University of South Australia, Mawson Lakes Boulevard, Mawson Lakes, South Australia 5095
Tel: (08) 8302 6553   Fax: (08) 8302 6832
Email: peter.willis@unisa.edu.au

After the doctorate? Personal and professional outcomes of the doctoral learning journey

Barry Elsey
International Graduate School of Business
University of South Australia

This paper explores the post-graduation experiences of 94 doctoral graduates from the Division of Business at the University of South Australia. Data were gathered by means of an online questionnaire. The first part examines the extent to which the original goals and ambitions of the graduates were realised in successfully completing the doctoral learning journey. The second part investigates ways in which doctoral learning outcomes were applied after graduation. These two foci are of interest to university policy-makers, marketing and administrative staff and academics ultimately responsible for the delivery of programs and the management of the doctoral learning journey.

Introduction: the focus of the paper

From a policy perspective Australian university doctoral education programs are driven by the need for outcomes (Vilkinas 2005, Wright 2003). The issue is widespread throughout universities engaged in the competitive business of providing doctoral education programs, notably in the international marketplace. Successful completions enhance the reputation of program providers and help them remain competitive. Indeed, as higher education consolidates as a business-like enterprise, there is a wider concern with customer satisfaction and service quality (Gatfield 1997). Although doctoral education is firmly locked in the grip of university bureaucracy there is awareness that meeting the needs and interests of customers, especially in the international marketplace, is an important aspect of staying in business.

These concerns of business, in which the equation between product, price, marketing and service delivery appears to treat the whole process of managing doctoral programs like any other commodity, is rather inclined to overshadow learning outcomes. Doctoral degrees are essentially about continuing professional learning and the complex process of actually starting, progressing through and successfully completing the journey, aptly described as 'the long march', underpins all the concerns of business management and marketing.

Using research findings from a recent survey of 94 doctoral graduates (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) awards), from the Division of Business at the University of South Australia, attention focused on two aspects of the learning journey that are of considerable interest to university academics and management.

The research concentrated on what happens *during* the doctoral learning journey and *after* graduation. Accordingly, the paper comprises two parts. The first part briefly here examines the extent to which the original goals and ambitions of the graduates were realised in successfully completing the doctoral learning journey. The second part in more depth investigates the ways in which doctoral learning outcomes were applied after graduation. The two focal interests are of equal value to university policy-makers, marketing and administrative staff and academics ultimately responsible for the delivery of programs and the management of the doctoral learning journey.

Ideas from continuing professional learning that relate to the doctoral journey

The doctoral graduates featured in the paper are adult learners, usually doing their demanding research-based studies on a part-time basis, and continuing their professional development well into and beyond the mid-career stage as mature-age students. As will be shown shortly, many of the doctoral graduates are executive level and senior managers in the business and corporate world, hardly typical of the average full-time doctoral student of younger years and seeking a foothold on the career ladder. Their experience of the doctoral learning journey has useful knowledge and understanding to add value to executive level education.

A key concept that links adult and continuing professional learning to the doctoral journey is that of the knowledge worker. In short, many of the doctoral graduates are living examples of the international business manager and global worker. Reich (1991) projected into the future the nature of work in the information age and hypothesised the emergence of what he termed symbolic analytical workers. In identifying the characteristics of the symbolic analyst cum knowledge worker, Reich described them as those with advanced training in research and various varieties of engineering (particularly the sciences and technologies), corporate executives with strategic thinking and management competency, knowledge experts in the professions of accountancy, academe, finance and investment, real

estate and property, organisational development and so forth. Taken together, Reich could easily have been writing about the majority of those who undertake doctoral degrees featured in this paper.

The emergence of the knowledge worker was recognised by adult educators at about the same time that the idea of the post-industrial society was emerging as a widely discussed prediction of the shape of societies to come (Bell 1974, and developed by others such as Kumar 1995). An influential book on the subject coined the term 'continuing professional learning' (Houle 1980), which was intended to convey the idea that learning was the lubricant to ensure that the professions were dynamic and driven by the search for knowledge as the basis of continuous improvement. In that regard the doctorate may be considered as an advanced level response to these changes in the nature of political economy and its impact on professional life and continuing education.

The research method

The research project evolved from "What happens after doctoral graduation?" to questions about realising motivational goals and ambitions, to the outcomes of learning and experience theme, through to personal reflections on the nature of the learning journey. In short, the research followed an inductive pathway drawing on observation and experiential learning to construct the on-line survey (the questions are presented in the appendix).

Overview of the sample

From an identified population of 259 doctoral completions between 1996 and 2004, most of the graduates lived out of Australia, the majority scattered across South East Asia and a few in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and the United States of America. Solely relying on the on-line survey approach, 94 doctoral graduates responded (40% response). Of these 94 doctoral graduates, 60% had earned a PhD and 40% a DBA.

Gender and age demographics

The proportion of female doctoral graduates responding to the survey was only 15% (n=14), not enough to venture generalisations about particular aspects of the female doctoral experience. The doctoral graduates may be reasonably described as early middle age (41–50 years). Table 1 summarises the findings for the sample in terms of their main occupational or employment position during the course of their studies.

Table 1: Employment position of the doctoral graduates during their studies

Employment Position	Frequency	Percent
Business owner/Chairman	8	8.5
MD/President/VP/Senior manager	41	43.6
Middle manager	14	14.9
Self-employed consultant	5	5.3
Academic	20	21.3
Other	5	5.3
Total	93	98.9
Missing	1	1.1
Total	94	100.0

The data indicate that there are three distinct groups. The first group is business and corporate managers (44%), business owners of companies (8%) and middle managers (15%); this group will be called 'the managers', representing two-thirds (67%) of the respondents. The second group, 'the management consultants', represents only five percent and is therefore too small to carry out further meaningful analysis. The third group is 'the academics' (21%); this is a sizeable group and expected consumers of doctoral programs with a clear and

obvious need to obtain the widely recognised 'trade qualification' for the academic profession.

Generalising the doctoral graduate demographic

The sample is typical of the majority of doctoral graduates from both the PhD and DBA programs offered by the Division of Business at the University of South Australia, even though it was not possible to obtain a complete return of the on-line survey. Based on the 94 responses the majority of doctoral students and graduates are in a mid-career stage of personal and professional development and some are in the later stages of working life. There are a smaller number of doctoral graduates at an early stage of their careers, although they, like the rest, appear to have secured their futures in regular employment with definite career intentions. They are certainly not typical of younger students studying for a doctorate on a full-time basis. Indeed, it is the fact that most of the doctoral graduates did their course work and research on a part time basis, while holding down demanding jobs, that distinguishes them as adult learners undertaking a higher degree. We may generalise to the extent of portraying the doctoral graduates as career minded people with a thirst for learning and the tenacity for the demands of doing largely self-directed research. By virtue of the profile they project, it could be supposed they have a strong commitment to continuing their professional learning. They broadly mirror the characteristics of the continuing adult learner depicted by Houle many years ago.

Part 1: An overview on the nature of the doctoral learning journey

The literature on the doctoral learning journey emphasises the multiple nature of motivation to undertake 'the long march'. Most of those starting out on the doctoral learning journey had in mind personal goals and ambitions that they at least hoped would result in positive outcomes. Ideally the actual experience should tally with the expectation that all the effort and time devoted to completing

the journey produces a satisfying outcome. The relationship between goals and ambitions on the one hand and the outcomes of the doctoral learning experience on the other is underlined by the fact that 78 of the doctoral graduates (84%) affirmed positively that personal goals had been realised. One-third of the sample also summarised the doctoral learning experience as their highest intellectual experience.

This overall finding requires a little more explanation as to what it meant to them in more specific ways (paraphrased statements made by individuals):

- proud of the ability to complete a doctorate by successfully meeting the intellectual challenges
- better understanding of the meaning of lifelong learning through personal experience
- personal self-actualisation and satisfaction at the accomplishment generally
- fulfilling a long-held dream to achieve a higher academic qualification and the status that goes with it
- proved to myself that I had truly broken through a modest history of educational achievement at school by completing a PhD
- improved analytical abilities that developed through the research process in managing the production of new knowledge and its interpretation.

For those focused on starting an optional academic career the following expresses key points:

- the doctorate is a foundation for an academic career
- using the research experience to develop teaching interests in university.

For those already in an academic career the doctorate served two useful purposes:

- diversified in a new subject area by becoming an expert in a specialised knowledge field
- academic promotion.

Each of the explanations conveys an impression of strong personal ownership in which goals and ambitions are realised and self-actualisation becomes an intangible but powerful outcome. This sense of empowerment is reinforced by earning credibility and respect among peers and in the community generally.

The findings show what might reasonably be expected as outcomes. The personal dimension is fairly strong (15%) in having a sense of achievement and enriching life experience (six percent), but the instrumental outcomes are rated more highly, such as learning application (20%), career advancement and improved job prospects (combined, 34%), securing credibility, recognition and respect (15%) and knowledge and skill formation (eight percent). It can be seen that these outcomes from the doctoral journey combine the intensely personal with the instrumental and extrinsic motivation to succeed.

The satisfaction factor: Reflections of the doctoral graduates

The majority of the graduates recorded a high level of satisfaction with their experience of the doctoral learning programs. The findings show satisfaction was obtained for just over half the respondents (52%) on both the personal and professional level, with a slightly smaller proportion claiming what appears to be a predominance of personal satisfaction (43%). Examined more closely, the personal level of satisfaction overlapped with the professional outcome. But it was in a more muted form with such outcomes as obtaining a higher degree, especially the doctor title and the social status that goes with it. Professional outcomes clearly related to career advancement and the development of a widely recognised competency in research and scholarly writing. Into this frame should be included the increase in personal confidence to enhance professional credibility.

It is useful to note that another outcome is evidence of the application of learning after graduation. We may reasonably assume that there is some correspondence between the doctoral learning experience and its application into some post-graduation outcome. Taken together, we may then link the research to ideas about continuing professional learning to conclude the paper. This provides the content for the second half of this paper.

Part 2: The application of learning

Each doctoral graduation contributes to a solution to the completion problem that most concerns university policy-makers and program managers. From an educational perspective, however, there is a continuing interest in the extent and the ways and means doctoral graduates apply their learning after the research-based thesis or dissertation has completed the formal stages of academic examination. The emphasis placed by the University of South Australia on graduate qualities makes it clear that it takes seriously the idea of creating and applying knowledge and being committed to lifelong learning as indicators of serving the wider community. At the very least, it is reassuring to know that the doctoral journey produces knowledge and learning that goes further with the dissemination process, such as the peer-reviewed journal paper, the conference presentation and other such applications. This whole process is termed here the application of learning.

The research presented an application of learning model comprising five elements: (1) the application of research-based knowledge derived from the doctoral studies, (2) using the skills from the experience of conducting research to some other purpose, (3) passing on the benefits of the overall doctoral learning experience to others in some way or another, (4) being empowered in some personal and professional ways, and (5) capitalising on the journey to foster new developments, notably in 'jumpstarting' some new kind of personal, professional and/or business innovation. These five notions of applied doctoral learning move from the concrete towards the intangible and embrace both the personal and professional outcome.

Application of research-based knowledge from doctoral studies

The first aspect to note was the extent to which the doctoral students started to apply the knowledge they were acquiring *during* their research, to outputs beyond the official program requirements. Normally it is not usually a requirement to demand that students publish from works in progress, although supervisors adopt different practices on this matter and some definitely encourage it.

The findings show a respectable proportion (21%) of doctoral students did publish from their research while it was in progress. It is tangible evidence of knowledge application. This is admirable and probably indicates a particularly close and productive relationship with the supervisor and probably other qualities of personal character, as well as academic performance. However, the greater number did not publish or otherwise disseminate (51%), but it would be unfair to judge these results one way or another.

What about the evidence of the application of knowledge *after* doctoral graduation? Table 2 presents the data.

Table 2: Knowledge application after graduation

Knowledge application after graduation	Frequency	Percent
Publications	38	40.4
Conference presentations	13	13.8
Other presentations	3	3.2
Developing teaching and learning programs	12	12.8
Guest speaking	2	2.1
In progress	6	6.4
Other applications	11	11.7
Nothing at this stage	7	7.4
Total	92	97.8
Missing	2	2.1
Total	94	100.0

The findings require a little more explanation, although it is quite evident what publications (n=38) and presentations (n=16) mean. Being a guest speaker (n=2) meant explaining their research within the company or in response to invitations from others. Another small number (n=6) regarded themselves as making progress towards applying what they had learned to other forms of knowledge outcome, typically by journal publication.

Developing teaching and learning programs is a more specialised outcome, which several respondents (n=12) elaborated. For one doctoral graduate it meant applying the research by converting it into a professional development curriculum for teacher training, for another a number of modules were designed that focused on integrated learning in graduate level education, and for a third it was using the knowledge material to underpin and better focus an owner-managed consultancy in business management. Similar outcomes to these three examples included developing a business strategy course for the Open University in Hong Kong arising from the research that was undertaken for the doctorate, and designing an action learning curriculum based on Taoist principles for a university in Singapore. The rest were more vague but emphasised the idea of taking whatever opportunities that were presented to apply their doctoral research knowledge to teaching and learning materials.

As for the 'others' (n=11), responses embraced such things as using the knowledge gained to improve product delivery processes in the employing organisation, conduct 'in-house' research, setting up a small business in private investment funds, encouraging 'start up' enterprises to expand their operations into the Asia region, introducing concepts learned from the doctoral program to various consultancy clients, making specific recommendations to improve operations on the Stock Exchange in China and Hong Kong, and investing the learning by applying the knowledge to running the family business. It is clear that with all the examples given the

emphasis was on the practical application of the knowledge gained through research.

What emerges from the online survey findings is that knowledge is usually applied to the workplace (26%), which is a reasonable expectation from the doctoral graduates as they already held significant positions in their organisations and had considerable industry experience. In practical terms, knowledge application in the workplace meant such things as focusing on the enhancement of organisational development by impacting on company culture, changing human resource management policy and practice, embarking on new strategic thinking, developing a scenario analysis tool, implementing an interactive staff training program and through other means setting out to improve the competitive edge of the company.

Another sizeable group (19%) appeared to be aiming their knowledge transfer in the direction of academic life, notably through research presentation and publication. This is also evident in the number (n=9) who had already taken on academic activities such as research supervision, mentoring and examining on a part-time basis.

What is interesting to note is that only a small number (n=7) reported no activity arising from their own knowledge production. Most appeared to have quickly taken hold of the knowledge they had produced through their doctoral work to put into effect immediately their learning, apparently with confidence as well as competence. This outcome accords well with the University of South Australia's mission of educating professionals that create and apply knowledge and generally serve the business and wider community.

What follows in pursuit of a slightly deeper understanding of the knowledge application theme are the reflections the doctoral graduates offered about what it meant in a personal and professional way.

The greatest meaning was attached to the actual intellectual achievement (36%), not necessarily the application of the knowledge that sprang from the doctoral research. Others had a more applied focus as to what knowledge application entailed, such as addressing practical problems through research-based knowledge and providing critical insights into the analysis of problems. Thus the PhD, in the experience of one respondent, provided him with the cognitive tools for approaching workplace and organisational problems in a more systematic way using the research knowledge for leverage to change practices. Critical thinking took him beyond surface analysis and the research knowledge filled the gap in the understanding of a particular organisational problem.

Application of research-based skills from doctoral studies

It is evident that there is an overlap in meaning between the generation of knowledge and the development of relevant research skills, and it was to be expected that the respondents may not have been able to distinguish between the two. However, it was not considered of vital importance.

Table 3: Application of research-based skills

Application of research skills	Frequency	Percent
Publication	17	18.1
Conference presentation	7	7.4
Supervision	14	14.9
Coaching	17	18.1
Apply knowledge at work	14	14.9
In progress	12	12.8
Nothing at this stage	8	8.5
Total	89	94.7
Missing	5	5.3
Total	94	100.0

The figures in Table 3 indeed reveal some overlap between knowledge and skill application, notably in those reporting that the research-based skills that they had either acquired or extended in the doctoral program found their expression through publication and conference presentation. This overlap is understandable given that, in both modes of knowledge dissemination, it is usual to explain, justify and defend the research design and methods used, which has often entailed a good deal of new learning and skill acquisition. A case in point would be a doctoral graduate who learned for the first time both the theory and the practical application of the Delphi method, which was then applied with excellent results in the thesis research and continued into journal publication afterwards.

The two aspects of skill application reveal themselves more explicitly in the activities of research supervision (15%) and academic coaching (18%). For example, some respondents had taken up the supervision of other doctoral students (including in the same DBA program), which typically involves considerable coaching and application of research skills. Another designed a complete PhD program focused on human resource management for his university. Others were heavily involved in giving guidance on design and methods to undergraduates, most notably on action learning research.

Direct application to the workplace is also illustrated (15%). In one example, a doctoral graduate used recent research skills to change workplace practices in her company, another reported applying research skills to fine-tune an international marketing strategy and a third applied specific skills used in his thesis to improve financial analysis methods. A couple of management consultants reported using research skills to enhance presentations to clients and gaining more authority in the process.

Application of the overall doctoral learning experience

In a narrow sense the meaning of learning experience can be confined to the technical aspects of conceiving, planning, implementing,

analysing and writing up the doctoral research through to completion and examination. That is how it was defined in the survey, with the emotional and other psychological aspects placed under the broader theme of personal empowerment. The findings are presented in summary form below (Table 4).

Table 4: Application of the benefits of the overall learning experience in the doctorate

Application of learning experience	Frequency	Percent
Sharing research findings, literature review	22	23.4
Sharing research experience and dealing with the pitfalls and problems encountered	18	19.1
Advice/encouragement on studies	42	44.7
Supervision and assistance	7	7.4
Nothing at this stage	4	4.3
Total	92	97.9
Missing	2	2.1
Total	94	100.0

What the figures show is that sharing the learning experience, in one way or another, is the main way skill it is interpreted. What is passed on is personal insight, drawn from direct experience, that academic research is intellectually rigorous and demanding, with no short cut to the learning required for doctoral level studies. One graduate identified that learning to write a comprehensive literature review and linking it to the research idea and design is a demanding experience but essential to a successful outcome. The same applies to using abstract concepts as a foundation for the research as another important learning experience to pass onto others. Another stressed the importance of developing a conceptual 'road map' for the research early in the process as a key element in the learning

experience to transfer on to other learners. Yet another went back to an even earlier stage in the research process, which was to be clear about what it was the doctoral candidate wanted to know, that is, the core research problem. It was for him the most profound part of his learning experience which he felt compelled to pass on to others. A final illustration comes from one doctoral graduate who learned much about the different paradigms of research knowledge and how important it was to grasp these at the formative stage of the research process. Each in different yet complementary ways were the lessons of learning to teach or guide others into appreciating as they grappled with the research process. Together, the message from the doctoral graduates was that the lessons they had learnt should be available for others to take account and avoid some of the pitfalls and costly mistakes in the research process.

A different angle on the learning experience and applying what was understood to others reflected more on the emotional side of the doctoral journey, particularly the need for persistence, tenacity and single-minded determination over the distance of 'the long march'. It was recognised that all doctoral students needed regular encouragement and personal support, for it is not just an academic and intellectual experience but also an intensely personal journey, largely taken alone. One respondent stressed the importance of living a balanced life, with ample physical exercise and a good diet, to offset the long hours of studying. Another PhD graduate claimed that he was able to pass on the benefit of his doctoral learning experience in helping his son with his graduate research.

Personal empowerment arising from the doctoral learning journey

This outcome theme is the most elusive of the five and rests very much on personal perception and interpretation. Below are the main findings summarised to reflect the main clusters of the empowerment experience (Table 5).

Table 5: Personal empowerment arising from the doctoral learning experience

Evidence of personal growth	Frequency	Percent
Positive self-development	31	33.0
Gain credibility, respect and trust	14	14.9
Enhance skills and sharpen thoughts	5	5.3
Promotion/get a job/ better career prospect	14	14.9
Publications	8	8.5
Nothing at this stage	14	14.9
Total	86	91.5
Missing	8	8.5
Total	94	100.0

The idea of personal empowerment has several meanings. It is easy for academics to underestimate the power of getting research published, yet for some respondents (nine percent) it meant a great deal to them in terms of personal empowerment, as did the honing of analytical and critical thinking skills (five percent). Others (15%) regarded empowerment as about career enhancement, which in the context of doing a doctorate makes sound sense. The largest group (33%) interpreted empowerment in more expected terms – as self-development. Not to be overlooked is the finding that empowerment was regarded by some respondents (15%) more in terms of gaining credibility, respect and trust. This makes sense almost anywhere, but especially in the Asian context where high educational status carries considerable recognition in the wider community.

With reference to the credibility and respect theme, it was interpreted as enhancing business dealings, achieving recognition from colleagues (peers as well as senior staff) and more generally as an

acknowledgement of a demonstration of ability. For the academics it had a direct link with career advancement, including some that aspired to work in the university sector.

Not everyone felt a particular benefit in terms of empowerment. Explanations included the expected one that the benefits, beyond the personal sense of achievement, had not yet appeared as it was too soon after graduation to realise much gain. Another claimed he was too old to relate empowerment to career opportunity, so was content to treat the outcomes in purely personal terms.

Creation of professional, occupational and business opportunities arising from doctoral studies

The fifth application of learning theme captures just about everything else. Its intention was to narrow the focus to 'start-up' or 'jumpstart' business opportunities or innovation that could lead into something beyond the doctorate, with the learning acting as a catalyst for new developments.

Table 6: The 'jumpstart' provided by the doctoral journey

The jumpstart provided by the doctoral journey	Frequency	Percent
To a great extent	39	41.5
To a certain extent	23	24.5
Very limited	10	10.6
Nothing at this stage	17	18.1
Total	89	94.7
Missing	5	5.3
Total	94	100.0

From the results in Table 6, it is not demonstrated that gaining a doctorate provided a significant 'jumpstart' for new business

opportunities. Instead, respondents were more inclined to mention other things covered elsewhere that were not directly related to the business development theme. This is not to deny that, for some, new ideas and opportunities were sought and found, either deliberately or partly by happenstance. And there is always the future where a connection might be made between the outcomes of the doctoral journey and the process of innovation and new business development. This line of thought points to a future research direction with a longitudinal approach.

In spite of this somewhat muted conclusion there are three different examples, drawn from the actual experiences of a two PhDs and one DBA graduate, connecting to the 'jumpstart' and innovation idea.

The first is the case of a successful business owner who decided to use the doctorate as a catalyst for personal change. He sold his share of the business and set off in a new direction, writing a book on a completely unrelated topic to his thesis, which gained immediate newsworthy publicity and many invitations to give public presentations to a wide range of interest groups. In short, he 'reinvented' himself and found new outlets for his lateral thinking skills as well as business acumen.

The second example is a PhD student in Hong Kong whose research, using the action learning approach, began a process of product innovation and change management in a family business that quickly gained momentum and a return on investment well in excess of expectations. In other words, the actual research for the thesis was the 'jumpstart' for a fresh beginning in a business that was slowly going stale and uncompetitive in the markets of Hong Kong and China. The other illustration is of a similar kind in Hong Kong where the research stimulated new business thinking and the wholesale adoption of a continuous innovation management strategy in the company, which specialised in a popular but risky 'fad business'. In these latter two examples, the two Chinese doctoral graduates remained truly faithful

to their business and company commitments, leading and innovating from within their respective organisations. In may be argued that the doctoral programs provided the platform for such innovative business developments.

Summary of the application of learning

The findings provide, not unexpectedly given the character and active lives of the doctoral graduates, evidence of a considerable amount of application of learning in the five ways identified, although less clearly in the 'jumpstart' dimension than might have been anticipated. The findings also clearly indicate that the application of learning embraces the personal as well as the professional domain, which broadens the concept beyond a narrow form of instrumental outcome.

A fitting closure to the whole enterprise of the doctoral learning journey as an application process is well expressed by a PhD graduate who explained:

> The doctorate should act as a spring-board to future endeavours but it would largely depend on the incumbent. The PhD gives you the key. It is up to you to open the door with it. It is only the beginning of a long unending journey with no destination. Having a destination would only dampen our excitement and imagination.

This statement reveals much about the character of mind of the doctoral graduate successfully undertaking continuing professional learning.

Conclusion

What implications do these research findings have for the theory of continuing professional learning? Cyril Houle (1980), the American adult educator, was among the first to see the connections between what he termed 'the zest for continuing professional learning' and the emergence of the information age and the knowledge economy in the early 1980s.

Like most adult educators, Houle sought an understanding of the motivation to continue learning. He identified three main kinds: (1) goal-orientated learners, (2) activity-based or social learners seeking a means to engage in relationships with others, and (3) those seeking learning primarily for the intrinsic satisfaction.

Goal-orientated learning is the most obvious motivation relevant to doctoral studies. The desire to acquire vocational and professional knowledge and skills provides the main reason for undertaking the journey. However, as the evidence in this study has shown, the power of intrinsic rewards and enhanced social status cannot be ignored. Accepting that important point focuses on the concept of continuing professional learning and the link with the nature of doing business and work for the doctoral elite described in this research.

The work of Houle also identified three modes of adult learning, which have a varied relationship to doctoral education: (1) the mode of *inquiry*, (2) the mode of *instruction*, and (3) the mode of *performance*, which "is the process of internalizing an idea or using a practice habitually, so that it becomes a fundamental part of the way in which a learner thinks" (1980, p.32).

The mode of inquiry obviously marries with the doctoral research process – everything from the basic conception through all the stages to the final throes of completion, largely on a self-directed basis as the independent adult learner. The instruction mode takes in the process of learning about research methods and the difficult task of developing an acceptable research proposal. It is sometimes necessary to give instruction or direction as there is some mystery on the road to mastery of the research process. As an example, there is no short-cut to getting to grips with the literature and incorporating the received knowledge into a discourse with the research. Nor is there an easy way to learn (if required) how to use advanced statistical techniques as a first-time learner, and most candidates struggle with the writing of a thesis or dissertation. With these struggles it is perfectly normal

to seek advice and submit to instruction from those who have the 'know-how'. As for the mode of performance, doctoral studies are fundamentally about producing new knowledge and developing an academic mindset to achieve the desired outcomes, which has to pass through the rigours of peer-review and examination. It is common for candidates to have to make revisions to their research, which can be a painful experience and a test of the capacity to perform to an exacting level, sometimes after it was hoped and believed the journey was at last over.

Houle's classification, although somewhat dated in years, nevertheless still faithfully reflects the 'zest for continuing professional learning' which he identified. It is a reasonable claim that the doctoral graduates described in this paper are *goal-orientated* adult learners who continue to apply the knowledge they had diligently researched, often to their own workplace and organisational context. The *mode of inquiry* they had embraced in doing that research had created new knowledge, not just information but also insight and interpretation that could be applied to address business and management problems. Moreover, doctoral graduates are trained in the mindset and actions of the *mode of performance*. Although most would be content to define themselves as *pacesetters,* in Houle's terms, a few are true *innovators*, by using research-based knowledge to 'think outside the box' and use their new learning as a change-driver in often complex business environments. All of this is essentially about the application of learning, and doctoral graduates by continuing their professional education to this high level perfectly reflect the graduate research qualities profile of the University of South Australia.

There is a close connection between continuing professional learning and the application of learning theme explored in this research on doctoral graduates. This fit might be reasonably expected of the kind of adult learners drawn to the demanding process of generating new knowledge, acquiring research skills and more generally upgrading

their overall professional competence. Houle produced a valuable framework of ideas about the nature of continuing professional learning for which these doctoral graduates provide practical expression.

Quite often the doctoral graduates made remarks to the effect that the learning journey was their highest academic and intellectual achievement, for which there can be little doubt. More than that, quite a number treated the knowledge they produced and the skills they learned as transferable assets to be passed on to others, through academic publication as one means of dissemination to direct application to an organisational and workplace context or through interpersonal communication with others in a helping capacity.

Academic supervisors have a significant role to play in enabling doctoral students to plan actively for the application of their learning after their studies are formally completed. This encouragement may support and strengthen the motivation to complete 'the long march'. For doctoral program managers, they can more fully understand the importance of taking a long-term view of the learning journey and to lend support to the dissemination process and the values and practices of continuing professional learning. For other university staff involved in doctoral education programs, they too can and should appreciate that graduates often play an influential role, not only within their industry environment but also in the wider community. They are potentially ideal members of university alumni and the best form of positive advertisement.

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About the author

Dr. Barry Elsey *is a senior lecturer in the International Graduate School of Business, University of South Australia. He has a background in adult and continuing education and has published widely in the field. He is currently involved in doctoral research supervision in the area of business management, mainly in the Asian region. His research supervision experience has often resulted in several joint publications with former students. He has a special interest in workplace learning and change management and continues to publish in the field.*

Address for correspondence

International Graduate School of Business, University of South Australia, City West Campus, North Terrace, Adelaide, South Australia 5000
Tel: (08) 8302 0817   Fax: (08) 8302 0709
Email: Barry.Elsey@unisa.edu.au

Appendix: The research questions

Factual information:

A1. In what year did you graduate?

A2. What was your age when you graduated?

A3. Where was your doctoral program located?

A4. During the period of your doctoral studies, how would you describe your employment position?

A5. Are you male or female?

A6. What is your nationality?

Please provide some details of your research topic:

B1. In what broad knowledge area would your research most comfortably fit?

B2. If you managed to publish from your doctoral work before it was examined and passed, provide a brief summary.

B3. Did you do anything else to use your research in your professional or personal life while you were studying? What did you do?

Your original goal and ambition in relation to your doctoral studies:

C1. Have your academic/professional goals and ambitions been realised through your doctoral studies?

C2. Briefly explain what you wanted the doctoral experience to mean to you.

C3. Briefly explain what you wanted a successful outcome to do for you.

The core research themes and questions:

The following themes refer to five key features of the doctoral research process, with each having a number of related questions. What I want to understand is what kinds of **application** have taken place since completion; that is to say, from the whole process of doing doctoral research to what happens afterwards to the knowledge, skills and learning experiences you had and may have subsequently applied in your professional and personal life. What the questions that follow seek to find is whether there are self-perceived, tangible links between various aspects of your doctoral learning journey (expressed as the five themes noted above) and your subsequent professional and personal development.

Theme 1: the application of specialised knowledge from your doctoral research

D1. What have you done with the knowledge you produced for your doctoral research?

D2. What else have you done to apply your doctoral research knowledge?

D3. What insights would you like to make about the pure and applied value of the knowledge you produced in your doctoral research after graduation?

Theme 2: the application of research-based skills from your doctoral studies

E1. What have you done with the research skills and knowledge you developed for your doctoral research?

E2. What insights would you like to make about applying the research skills and knowledge you developed in your doctoral research after graduation?

Theme 3: the application of learning experience arising from your doctoral studies

F1. What aspects of the doctoral learning process as a personal experience have you been able to pass on to others?

F2. How significant was your learning experience in doing the doctorate? To what extent have you been able to continue to apply the doctoral learning experience to other situations?

Theme 4: the experience of personal empowerment arising from your doctoral studies

G1. What evidence can you produce to show that the personal growth that took place while doing the doctorate has made you feel more empowered in your professional and personal life?

G2. Apart from how others have perceived you after gaining the doctorate, what have you felt about yourself?

Theme 5: the creation of professional, occupational and business opportunities arising from your doctoral studies

H1. In your assessment, to what extent has achieving doctoral status, as well as the actual knowledge and skills you acquired, connected with any subsequent business and career opportunities, either directly or indirectly?

H2. Looking back, to what extent did you consider that doing a doctorate might provide a kind of platform or jumpstart for further opportunities in your professional and personal life?

In conclusion: looking back at the experience of 'the long march'

J1. What for you were the most memorable aspects of your doctoral journey?

J2. To what extent have your original motives for doing a doctorate been satisfied by personal and professional outcomes after graduation?

Final reflections

K1. What else could you write about the professional and personal outcomes you have experienced since gaining your doctorate?

The relative value of investment in 'second chance' educational opportunities for adults in Sweden and Australia: a comparative analysis.

Tom Stehlik
University of South Australia

Michael Christie
IT University of Göteborg
Chalmers, Sweden

The article presents a comparative analysis of educational policy and provision in Sweden and Australia, with particular emphasis on the relative investment in continuing and further education in both countries. The authors investigate the extent to which further education opportunities provide a 'second chance' at learning for adults and contribute to social and economic capital.

Introduction

Some interesting comparisons exist between the education systems of Sweden and Australia. Both countries place much importance on investing in education but from different historical, economic and social perspectives. Sweden, like Australia, is a constitutional monarchy with three layers of government: central, regional and local. The major difference is in the distribution of control, authority and funding of education at various levels, namely, school, vocational education and training, and higher education. For example, there is one law for schools in Sweden (see below) whereas in Australia each 'state' can make laws that affect compulsory schooling. In Sweden the government decides on the policy and rules for all types of education but local government has control of the financing and running of compulsory schooling. In the case of tertiary education, most universities in Sweden and Australia are regulated by the central government, although Australian universities are increasingly placed in a position of competing for diminishing pools of funding tied to various measures of performance.

Vocational education is also funded by the two central governments but the way in which this sector is organised and managed differs. The two countries also differ in terms of adult education in general. The Swedish government has legislation that controls the system but education itself is provided by over a dozen adult education organisations which offer study circle programs, long-term residential education and short-term vocational and recreational courses. In Australia the adult education system is a regional or 'state' concern.

Another major historical difference is that compulsory schooling in Australia is grounded in denominational difference. Although the colonising power introduced a state school system this was challenged by the churches who insisted on establishing their own schools. By the late 1800s there were in effect two types of schools – state schools and church-run schools. In Sweden, where a unified government was

created in the sixteenth century, Lutheranism was adopted as the state religion. Religion was an important part of schooling but over time schools have been secularised and it is only recently that some so called 'free schools' have been established.

A major difference between the two countries' systems is that all sectors of education in Sweden are free, whereas in Australia fees are charged for all types of post-compulsory education. Sweden's approach to education has been driven by the government's strong social democratic ethos and its belief in the importance of building social capital. In Australia education provided by the state has been strongly influenced by economic imperatives, with a private education sector growing steadily, and it could be argued that this has been a direct result of a more economic rationalist approach in public education policy.

The greatest similarities between the two countries exist at the elementary school level. A comparison of secondary, vocational and post-compulsory education provision shows some fundamental differences that have implications for a range of social indicators – family life, work life, career opportunities and the achievement of qualifications. Opportunities for adults to undertake further (or continuing) education (FE) also have an effect on these indicators. However, this area of education is a little more difficult to define, ranging as it does from informal liberal arts courses based on interest, to formal and accredited programs aimed at giving adults the opportunity to re-enter pathways to educational qualifications and meaningful work. The latter is sometimes referred to as 'second chance' education. Further education is also often 'hidden from view' as it can take diverse forms which make it difficult to identify, measure and evaluate. However, for the purposes of this paper, further education (hereafter FE) will refer to a range of activities associated with lifelong learning – adult education, continuing education, adult basic education, adult community education and

labour market training. Vocational training will also be discussed under the broad rubric of FE; for even though in both Australia and Sweden it is now incorporated into upper secondary curricula, the fact that it generally incorporates adult learning methodologies and is clearly focused on the adult labour market makes it relevant to the discussion.

This article maps the similarities and differences between educational provision in Sweden and Australia, investigates the opportunities for second chance further education in both countries, and analyses the extent to which such opportunities contribute to the enhancement of work and family life. In doing so, we draw on statistical and other data from both countries and locate our investigation in the current literature. Our investigation focuses on the following questions:

- What formal and informal FE opportunities are available?
- What are the similarities and differences in funding, provision and outcomes?
- What are the characteristics of adults undertaking FE in terms of age, gender, educational attainment and so on?
- What is the effect of FE for adults on vocational and life outcomes in both countries?
- To what extent does FE contribute to social capital and economic benefits in both countries?

We conclude that there is value for both countries in investing in second chance education, but for different reasons and with varying outcomes.

Education policy and provision in Sweden and Australia

The Swedish Education Act states that education shall:

> … provide the pupils with knowledge and, in co-operation with the homes, promote their harmonious development into responsible human beings and members of the community. (Skolverket 2005:1)

This act also extends the right of education to adults, which is provided at the municipal level and is known as *komvux*. By contrast, school education in Australia is a state responsibility, and consequently each of the six states and two territories have their own education acts with the result that there is no national consistency in school curriculum, secondary school certificates, registration of teachers or even compulsory years of schooling. All school students in Sweden learn English as a second language in addition to Swedish, but while many Australian schools teach a variety of languages in addition to English, the country is officially monolingual.

Despite a recently launched 'National framework for values education in Australian schools', there has historically been no national vision for the education system in Australia. Unlike the Swedish Act, the 'National framework' does not refer to the development of responsible community members in cooperation with the home. This apparent lack of a unified national vision for education has been reinforced in a contemporary political debate about Australian values, what they actually might be, and whether they can or should be taught in schools (Myers 2006). The Federal Government's official position is that Australian values are defined by a right to vote in a democratic society (Commonwealth of Australia 2005).

Sweden is not only a democratic society, but it actually invests in the maintenance of democracy in a number of tangible ways. The education campaigns before the referenda on nuclear power in the 1970s and the adoption of a European monetary system more recently are examples of this. Another example (already mentioned) is that public education is free – there is no charge to parents for teaching materials, school meals, health services or transport. Social welfare funding policies that support working parents through subsidised childcare and parenting leave arrangements also ensure equal access to meaningful careers in addition to contributing to the homelife, and by definition to social capital.

In Australia, by comparison, each state must provide subsidised public education, but there are fees for materials, no provision of meals, and variations in funding models based on socio-economic indicators. The growth of a second system of schooling most obvious in the development of the non-government sector indicates that many Australian parents are exercising choice and opting for alternatives to state educational philosophies and values. In this climate, independent or private schooling has flourished. In South Australia, for example, almost one-third of all school enrolments are in private schools and this is steadily increasing. This exodus is not only the result of parental preference but can be blamed on 'a grossly under-funded public education system and a radical shifting of government funds from public to privileged private schools' (Lygo 2004:1).

By contrast, in 2001, only four percent of Swedish school children were attending a privately-run independent school (Skolverkert 2005).

Educational attainment

One way to judge the effectiveness of a country's education system is to measure the outcomes, or the number of people who complete schooling, at least in the compulsory years. An interesting statistic on Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries is the level of educational attainment by persons aged 25–64 years for the reference year 2002, in which the following comparison can be shown (see Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of persons by level of educational attainment (OECD 2004)

	Below upper secondary education (to Year 10 in Australia, Year 9 or leaving certificate in Sweden)	Upper secondary education and post-secondary non-tertiary education (Year 12 and skilled vocational level in Australia; national learning certificate in Sweden)	Tertiary type B education (associate diploma level)	Tertiary type A education (bachelor degree or higher)	Total
Australia	39%	30%	11%	20%	100%
Sweden	18%	49%	15%	18%	100%

From the table it is apparent that in Australia a large proportion (39%) of the adult population aged over 25 in 2002 had left school before completing an upper secondary qualification or even a skilled vocational qualification such as a Certificate III in a trade area. Only 30% of this cohort completed 12 years of schooling, a proportion which has slowly increased, but not enough to stop early school leaving being a significant issue in many parts of Australia. State governments are currently addressing the problem by means of a range of integrated strategies. These strategies require agencies to work together, often at the local community level, in order to engage young people in either meaningful learning or work (Government of South Australia 2003; Smyth *et al.* 2000; Stehlik 2006).

By comparison, almost half of the adult population of Sweden had completed upper secondary education, which since 1971 has integrated both 'theoretical' and 'occupationally-oriented' course programs under the one system. This means that the academic gymnasium program and the vocational studies program both lead to a qualification with equal recognition – the 'learning certificate'. However, the rate of educational achievement in Sweden then drops

to such an extent at tertiary level that Australia is slightly ahead (20% compared to 18%) in the numbers of adults with bachelor and higher degrees. Advanced research programs are included in the latter.
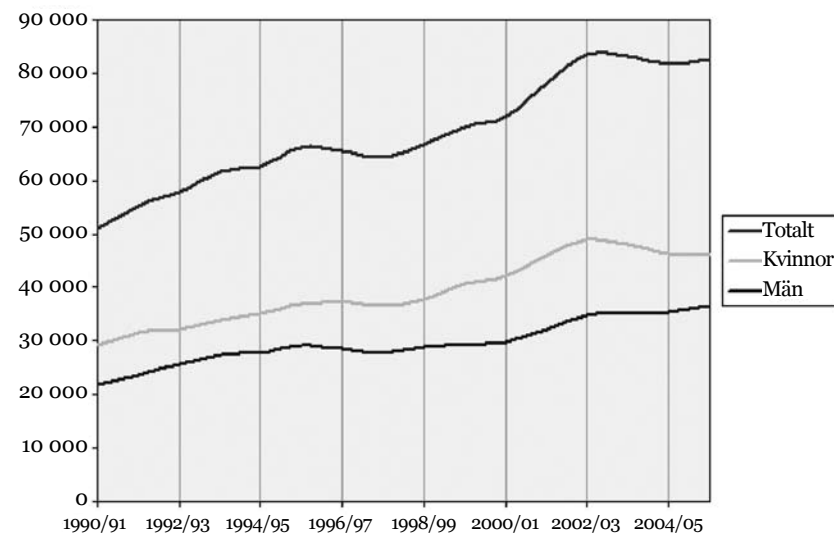
This is perhaps curious given the fact that there are no tuition fees for both local and foreign students in Swedish higher education institutions. There is a current discussion that foreign students should pay fees, but no immediate threat for Swedish citizens. One explanation for the slightly lower percentage of graduates in Sweden is that despite the lack of fees, a university education takes at least three years and during that time one tends to accumulate debt rather than earn money. In fact, there is a clear correlation with the state of the labour market – in times when the economy is slow and jobs are hard to come by, many school leavers consider university enrolment, while the opposite is true when the economy is strong. Comparing university enrolments with the state of the economy over the last decade tends to confirm this. Sweden is currently emerging from a tough economic period when many companies 'rationalised' their workforce or moved their operations to countries with lower wages, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate (see Table 2). In the same period there has been a rapid rise in university enrolments. Looking at the eleven years from 1990/1 to 2002/3, there was a jump from 50,000 to 80,000 new enrolments. In the last few years a strong Swedish economy has put a brake on this (see Figure 1).

Table 2: Labour market indicators, Sweden 1990–98

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Employment to pop. ratio	84.4	82.5	78.7	73.9	72.8	73.5	72.7	71.7	72.6
Unemployment rate	1.8	3.2	5.8	9.5	9.8	9.2	10.0	10.3	8.3
Long-term unemployment	22.2	22.8	29.0	32.8	41.8	40.8	44.5	48.1	45.6

(Source: OECD, 1998)

Figure 1: Enrolments of first year students at university, 1990/01 to 2005/06

(Table taken from Statistics Sweden 2006. *Kvinnor* = women, *Män* = men)

The exact reasons for the lower numbers of Swedes graduating are difficult to determine, but there is a clear link between the state of the economy and student enrolments. At present not all the student places on offer are filled, despite there being no tuition charges and a generous loan system for living costs. Under the Bologna Accord (European Commission 2007), Swedish students can apply to other European universities and there is a clear trend that many avail themselves of this opportunity to undertake courses such as medicine, physiotherapy, dentistry and psychology – courses that demand extremely high secondary school grades.

Australian university students by contrast do not have access to free higher education and must pay fees either directly or indirectly through the taxation system, in addition to paying union fees and living expenses. Foreign students are charged up to three times the rate of domestic students, which does not seem to deter a large yearly enrolment of overseas students, especially from South East Asia. Students from Sweden and other Nordic countries can receive some financial assistance from their government if they choose to take a degree in Australia (currently around AUD $100 a week). If they undertake a Swedish degree but pursue part of their studies in Australia, the state can cover tuition fees as well. Strangely, Australian students are not particularly interested in reciprocating by studying abroad in Scandinavia, even though they would pay no tuition fees. This is partly due to a perception that the cost of living in countries like Sweden is too high and that language would be a barrier.

Further education opportunities for adults

Sweden

> Whenever Sweden has been faced with crucial political decisions, the authorities have frequently turned to non-formal education associations in an effort to provide open, wide-ranging discussions among the citizens. (SV 2006:129)

Adult education in Sweden has a long tradition, particularly in the form of non-formal adult participatory education which has a history of more than 150 years and is summed up in the word *folkbildning*. Sweden is generally credited with introducing study circles as an approach to adult education for sharing information and knowledge, which in that country has historically contributed to democratic association and social change. Currently, adult education exists in many different forms and is organised by a range of different operators. It includes the following.

Municipal adult education (*Komvux*) which offers basic, upper secondary and continuing education programs for adults who have not completed compulsory or upper secondary schooling. As the name suggests, it is organised and funded at the municipal or local level, as the municipality has an obligation to provide basic education for adults who lack compulsory school equivalence. Upper secondary education for adults shares the same curriculum as that taught in upper secondary schools, but with adult learning methodologies including recognition of the skills and knowledge of adult students.

Continuing education takes the form of continued education in an occupation, or training for a completely new occupation, with programs being six to twelve months in duration and specialising in areas such as tourism or information technology.

Advanced vocational training has only recently (since 2002) become an alternative post-secondary education path, organised by a new national agency and run by municipalities, training companies and other institutions in cooperation with the workplace, where one third of the training period, which can vary from one to three years, is carried out.

Education for adults with learning disabilities (*Särvux*) is a form of education on its own, run by municipalities for adults with learning disabilities using a specially adapted curriculum which

can lead to an equivalent compulsory school or upper secondary vocational school certificate.

Swedish for immigrants (SFI). Municipalities also have an obligation to provide Swedish language courses to newly-arrived adult immigrants.

Adult education. Sweden has a long tradition of *folkbildning* – providing courses that are mostly free, non-accredited and non-formal. These include courses of study that can extend over one or two years in adult education colleges (many of them residential) as well as shorter courses. The latter include evening courses and study circles as well as cultural activities for all levels of society in a variety of subjects. This educational provision is organised and regulated by a National Council of Adult Education (Christie 1996 & 1998). There are eight adult education associations in Sweden today. Each has a different profile depending on its historical development and religious or political connections. The three major organisations that organise and sponsor *folkbildning* are *Arbetarnas bildningsförbund* (ABF) which is similar to the Workers' Educational Association, *Studiefrämjandet* or 'Study Promotion Association', and *Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan*. For example:

> During 2003, Studiefrämjandet arranged 38,329 study circles in a variety of different subjects. We also arranged 27,427 cultural events such as concerts, lectures, exhibitions and performances. A total of 2,215,355 people participated in our study circles and events. (*Studiefrämjandet* 2006:1)

Labour market training targeted at the unemployed, to provide basic or supplementary vocational training, funded by the National Labour Market Board and delivered at the local level by a range of training providers.

Sweden also has recently established a national **Agency for Flexible Learning** which supports municipalities, folk high schools and adult education providers to develop more flexible forms of education that will enable more adults to access education at a distance.

Australia

> Higher levels of education can contribute to social capital, including greater equity, awareness and political stability. Education also contributes to economic growth through its effect on labour productivity, technological innovation and adaptation, economic, organisational and individual flexibility, and the investment environment. (Long 2004: 6)

Adult education in Australia has been influenced more by the English tradition of Workers' Educational Associations and Mechanics Institutes which arose historically out of the efforts of workers to educate themselves either within trades or guilds or for personal development, similar to the idea of *folkbildning* but without the widespread uptake and funding support. This type of continuing education is now more often associated with lifestyle-type courses in cooking, crafts, languages and coffee for middle class people with time and money to pay the fees. Adult education associated with social change and/or second chance education is found within two separate but connected sectors – adult and community education, and vocational education and training – and to a lesser extent within the public education system.

Adult and community education (ACE) is widespread in all states and territories in Australia, but more established and organised in the larger states such as Victoria and New South Wales. There is a national association (Adult Learning Australia) which once had branches in each state but has now adopted a unitary national structure, with a relatively small membership. ACE courses are characterised by being community-based, locally organised, accessible and relevant to the local community. ACE providers compete for a limited pool of public funding and are increasingly being drawn into the provision of vocationally oriented courses for financial reasons,

as well as becoming involved in collaboration with schools to deliver courses to secondary students, who have not traditionally been the age group accessing ACE programs.

The **vocational education and training** (VET) sector is a more clearly defined education sector in Australia, with a national system of TAFE (technical and further education) colleges, funded and organised at state level. Although TAFE accounts for the majority of VET provision, there are also many large, medium and small private providers of vocational education, also competing for the same funding as TAFE; as well as VET-in-schools programs where secondary schools offer vocational courses as part of flexible curriculum offerings, sometimes on campus but often subcontracted to a TAFE college or a private registered training organisation as the actual provider.

Adult re-entry colleges provide second chance school completion for adults and early school leavers, and can either be located within a traditional secondary school or in a stand alone institution. They are generally state funded and offer the state-approved secondary curriculum.

Continuing education courses are offered by some universities and adult and community education centres on a fee-paying basis to offset income as well as offer non-formal education to a wider section of society, and concentrate more on lifestyle and interest-based courses and study tours rather than vocational programs.

Adult literacy programs make up a big part of ACE provision in Australia, and are available in communities and workplaces as well as with public and private training providers, often in an ACE/VET partnership (Gelade, Stehlik & Willis 2006). The Federal Government funds the Adult Migrant English Program for new arrivals, and administers the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program which is designed to assist job-seekers improve their employment chances.

A free online education information service, **EdNA (Education Network Australia) Online**, provides a directory of education and training in Australia as well as a database of web-based teaching and learning materials, aimed at all four sectors of education – schools, ACE, VET and higher education.

Similarities and differences in educational funding, provision and outcomes

An immediate contrast between the Swedish and Australian education systems is the way in which they are funded. All Swedes can enjoy free education from pre-school right through to higher education. Since 1994 even independent schools in Sweden have received full state funding, whereas in Australia, private independent schools must charge fees to the parents. For some families this can be the single biggest outgoing expense in the weekly budget, a fact which does not seem to deter a steady migration from the public to the private sector (Stehlik 2002).

While higher education in Sweden is also fully funded, students still have to cover living expenses and many take out the state sponsored student loan which does accrue a considerable debt. This is similar to the debt that Australian higher education students accumulate by having to defer their university fees through the taxation system, as only a minority pays them upfront. In addition however, Australian university students are increasingly working part-time to pay their living expenses, which can have an effect on study performance and course completion.

In the area of further education, Sweden has a more unified approach than Australia in terms of organisation and access. As noted earlier, Sweden considers FE and second chance education to be a democratic right available to all citizens and directly linked to the development and maintenance of a democratic society. This is clearly demonstrated in the number of *folkbildning* programs, organisations

and networks spread throughout the country and funded directly by local municipalities or *Kommun*, which is where the term *Komvux* originates – an abbreviation of *Kommunal Vuxenutbildning,* meaning adult education sponsored by the local municipalities. In 1998, 195,000 students participated in such courses, with over 80% accessing them in order to complete their upper secondary school qualification, or learning certificate (Statistics Sweden 1998). This has created pathway opportunities into higher education for many Swedes who had not completed school (OECD 1999).

Unlike Australia and European countries like England and Germany, Sweden does not have a tradition of apprenticeship schemes in collaboration with industry and commerce.

> One of the main goals in Swedish education policy since the late 1960s has been to unify vocational and general education into a single integrated education system. (Lindell & Abrahamsson 2002: 4)

Therefore, a second chance at completing the upper secondary learning certificate also means being able to take a vocational pathway as well as move into higher education. Whether this equitable pathway will remain the same, however, will be open to question, as demand for more qualified tradespeople is about to force a change in this current system in Sweden. In 2010 students will be able to take one of three paths in their final years of high school. One path will lead directly to university; another will prepare students for vocational jobs, mainly within the schools; and a third will take the form of an apprenticeship system where students will spend most of their time in the companies where they have been accepted as apprentices (*Utbildningsdepartementet* 2007).

In Australia these concepts are still quite separate, as vocational education is an industry-based rather than a school-based system, and the majority of provision is via the TAFE colleges and private providers of VET. Despite various moves to address the issue – for

example, the review of the South Australian Certificate in Education (SACE) in 2006 – upper secondary education is still seen mainly as a pathway to university and professional careers, with vocational studies consequently cast as a lower status option, and trade apprenticeships perceived as an alternative pathway for young people but not for more mature adults. Yet at the same time Australia is experiencing a 'skills deficit' in some particular trade areas and having to import skilled workers from other countries to fill the gaps.

Educational attainment in Australia is improving: in 2004, 80% of teenagers had completed secondary school or a Certificate II or higher compared with 75% in 2002. However, school leaving figures for 2004 show that 30% of Australian students had left school before completing Year 12, and in the first year after leaving school, 28% of this early leaving cohort had commenced post-secondary education and 36% were employed, though nearly 30% were not employed. In May 2004, 84,400 (29%) of teenagers who left school in 2003 were not in study and were either working part-time, unemployed, or not in the labour force (ABS 2005).

The first three years after leaving school are recognised as crucial for successful transition to further education or employment. By contrast with Australia, according to the Swedish National Agency for Education, 'almost 45% of upper secondary students continue to higher education within three years after completing their upper secondary school examination' (Lindell & Abrahamsson 2002: 5).

Characteristics of adults undertaking further education

In May 2005, 2,420,600 Australians or 18% of the population aged 15–64 years were enrolled in a course of study. Approximately 896,600 (37%) of these enrolled persons were attending a higher education institution, 695,000 (29%) were at school, 546,200 (23%) were at TAFE institutions, and 282,800 (12%) were at other educational institutions (ABS 2005). Therefore the uptake of

studies in further education was almost equivalent to that of higher education, and exceeded the number of people aged 15 and over studying at school.

Approximately 96% of the persons who were enrolled in a course of study were in a course leading to a qualification, reinforcing that in Australia, non-formal studies without accreditation account for only a very small percentage in contrast to the picture in Sweden, with its tradition of *folkbildning*.

A further breakdown of level of current study above Year 12 level and below bachelor degree level by age group in Australia shows an interesting age and gender distribution (Table 3).

Table 3: Persons enrolled in a course of study leading to a qualification, level of education of current study by age, Australia (ABS 2005)

Males

	15–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45–64	Total
Diploma	14,700	25,300	17,700	13,800	10,300	81,800
Certificates III/IV	71,000	54,700	29,500	22,400	16,800	194,300
Certificates I/II	8,000	1,600	4,900	4,000	3,600	22,100
Certificate level not defined	8,000	12,700	8,900	13,500	10,000	53,100
Total	101,700	94,300	61,000	53,700	40,700	351,300

Females

	15–19	20–24	25–34	35–44	45–64	Total
Diploma	25,100	32,000	35,200	20,400	18,700	131,300
Certificates III/IV	22,400	27,300	37,000	27,500	21,800	136,000
Certificates I/II	9,800	8,500	7,400	6,500	9,100	41,300
Certificate level not defined	8,800	9,000	11,800	18,400	8,900	57,000
Total	66,100	76,800	91,400	72,800	42,300	365,600

The figures reinforce the statistic that more females than males are enrolled in studies at all levels of education overall. Furthermore, for the levels of education which represent the further education sector, the proportion of females studying at the higher level of a Diploma qualification far exceeded males (62% compared with 38%); and is also greater at the lower Certificate I and II levels. However, qualifications at the Certificate III and IV levels, where trade certificates or full apprenticeships in industry are located, show that this is still clearly a male dominated area overall (59%) – though not at all age levels.

For example, within the age groups of 25 years and over, more females are accessing further education at all levels. It is only the large numbers of 15–19 year old males undertaking Certificate III and IV studies, at a rate more than three times that of females, which gives the large overall proportion for this level, and is consistent with the picture of young male apprentices undertaking training in trade areas.

The overall picture of post-school qualifications in Australia is that more females (30%) are qualified at bachelor degree level than males (25%), and less qualified (18%) at the trade certificate level than males (38%). This is reinforced by the figures showing the main field of education, which for around one-third of males is 'Engineering and related technologies', an area which encompasses trade areas such as manufacturing, construction, plumbing and so on. Less than two percent of females studied in this area; instead, their largest main field of education is 'Management and commerce' (31%), an area which encompasses retail sales, banking, book-keeping and clerical work (ABS 2005).

In Australia the uptake of apprenticeships by females more than doubled in the decade 1995 to 2005 from 11,200 to 24,400, in comparison with male apprenticeships which increased by about 40%. However, the overall numbers of males undertaking

apprenticeships in 2005 was still six times the number of females, though it is interesting to note that for both cohorts nearly 15% of new apprentices were in the age group 25–54 (ABS 2005).

Figures for Sweden in vocational training are buried within the statistics for general upper secondary education and not so easy to extract for comparison, and industry-based apprenticeships are limited. However, the National Agency for Education (1999) in Sweden estimates that about 150,000 pupils per year are involved in Initial Vocational Education within upper secondary schools.
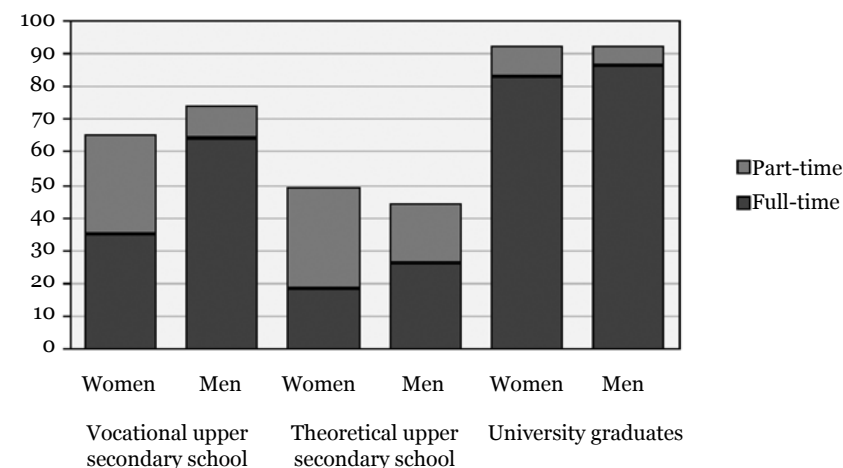
Of more interest are the figures for Swedes involved in municipal adult education, where the largest cohort is clustered around the age group 19–25 years which accounts for 54% of participation. This goes against any assumption that *komvux* is mainly for older adults and those with no other main activities in life, as the figures for 2003 also show that, for around half of all men and women participating in *komvux*, their main activity was employment, and for around one-quarter, their main activity was higher education (Statistics Sweden 2006).

The effect of further education for adults on vocational and life outcomes

If a connection can be drawn between municipal adult education and higher education in Sweden, and there is a link between higher education and labour market participation as argued above, then there is arguably a beneficial effect on employment opportunity for Swedes undertaking the range of courses offered through *komvux*.

A statistically clear connection between gainful employment and higher education in Sweden is shown in Figure 2, which also indicates an interesting distinction between the employment outcomes of upper secondary students in both the vocational and the theoretical programs, with the former apparently being a vocational pathway in the literal sense.

Figure 2: Share of gainfully employed three years after graduation in March 2004 and share of full-time and part-time employment. Percentage breakdown by educational program and sex

(Source: Statistics Sweden 2006)

Also discernible in this table is the gender distribution in type of employment, with more Swedish women working part-time than men, particularly those without university qualifications. For those who are university graduates, it is interesting to note that equal numbers of Swedish men and women are gainfully employed as a result, and even more interesting to note that this distribution is almost identical in Australia (ABS 2005).

Higher education in Australia continues to be the single biggest determinant in the labour force participation rate, and in 2002 was around 87%, however the rate for those with VET qualifications was not far behind at 84% (ABS 2002). The same figures show that early school leavers are the single biggest cohort in the unemployment rate at 10%.

While the link between education and employment can undoubtedly be made, a closer look at the figures for Australia shows that the actual *number* of people with fulltime jobs varies significantly with age cohorts. In the decade 1995 to 2005, the number of young people aged 20–24 in fulltime work had actually decreased by 10%, while the number of teenagers had remained about the same. By comparison, fulltime jobs for adults aged 25–64 increased by 18% over the same period of time (Long, 2004). However, the years 2004–05 have seen an increase in the number of fulltime jobs for the cohorts aged below 25, and an increase at a faster rate than the rest of the population, indicating that higher levels of education are only part of the bigger picture of access to employment opportunity which is also determined by fluctuations in the labour market. This is also reinforced by the increasing levels of young people aged 15–19 who are not studying and only able to access part-time employment, despite seeking more secure employment opportunities (Long 2004).

This combination of labour market unpredictability with debts accrued from the cost of education have a number of flow-on effects for society and the economy, as for example young people in Australia are less able to afford to enter the housing market, while at the same time delaying having families – since the year 2000 the average age for a woman to give birth to her first child is over 30 and increasing (ABS 2002) – and it has been suggested that there is a link between higher education and lower fertility rates (Yu 2006). Furthermore, since the late 1970s, the average hours worked by fulltime employees in Australia has increased, and this combined with 'a dramatic increase in the employment rate of mothers' is impacting on the family life of those who do have children (Weston *et al.* 2004: 2), so that juggling work, family and education commitments has become even harder.

Internationally there is also:

> … concern that the state often supports a vision of lifelong learning and adult education only in terms of its economic

ideals and that social inclusion and equality is merely rhetoric underpinned by economic intent. (Fleming 2004: 15).

This economic imperative can be seen in some European Union projects such as 'KeyNet' funded through the Leonardo da Vinci program, which addresses competence development as a means to increase employability in four countries: Germany, Greece, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The project concentrates on the development of 'key skills' with the target groups of young people (16–25) and older unemployed people (40+), to give them a second chance to start training, get a job and continue learning throughout life (Key skills project 2006).

However in this case, competence development refers to the promotion 'on a life-long basis, of creativity, flexibility, adaptability, the ability to "learn to learn" and to solve problems' (Key skills project 2006: 1). These are not so much vocational skills as lifelong skills, and the concept of lifelong learning is one that recognises the importance of all forms of learning at all levels of society in building social capital.

Conclusion: The contribution of further education to social capital and economic benefits

While this paper has been able only to skim the surface of the issue, it concludes that there is a discernible contrast between Australia and Sweden in terms of the contribution of FE to society and the economy. In Sweden with its history of *folkbildning* and central policy of state-funded education for all, FE can be said to contribute to social capital and cultural development. Examples include SV (*Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan*) and *Studiefrämjandet* which promote study circles, events and performances which encourage community capacity building as well as individual development. By comparison, Australian FE has been sidetracked (some would argue, hijacked) by vocationalist and rationalist agendas promoted by a conservative federal government, and while one can still take a course on coffee at

the Workers' Educational Association, it is geared towards individual development rather than social development and one will be charged market fees for participation.

There is also a difference in the 'front-end' of the Australian education system that is geared towards early specialisation and streaming into either university or vocational pathways, with clear status differentials and employment opportunity outcomes, in a two-tiered system of VET versus university reinforced by a static Australian Qualifications Framework. By comparison, Swedish educational policy has recognised the value of giving vocational and theoretical upper secondary studies equal status.

However, there are signs that the Swedish system is also being hijacked by a new vocationalism, as

> … there has been a conceptual transformation of recurrent education, and its early focus on equity and access in the light of second-chance policies has given way to a much stronger economic perspective. (Lindell & Abramsson 2002: 9)

This has been highlighted by very recent developments in Sweden since the 2006 change of government from social democratic to conservative values, such as policies to cut back on funding places in *komvux*, especially for those in need of a second chance (Svensson 2007). It is ironic given that Sweden had built a continuing education system in order to strengthen democracy, especially in light of its proximity to communist Russia. It was willing to pay for this and established it as a national policy. Today the new conservative government is tending more towards the economic rationalist model observable in Australia. As well as changes at the top, the consumers of recreational and second chance education have put pressure on adult education organisations to grade or at least provide some kinds of credentials for education which historically was undertaken for its own sake and for the wider benefit to society, not for individual credentialism.

In conclusion, the concept of 'second chance' learning really applies to everybody, and therefore should be subsumed under the rubric of *lifelong learning*, where it is recognised that continued learning throughout life is inevitable given the dynamic social, economic and labour market environments. Rather than second chance learning then, further education in all its forms more appropriately represents 'continuing chance' learning.

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About the authors

Dr Tom Stehlik *is a senior lecturer in the School of Education and Key Researcher with the Hawke Research Institute for Sustainable Societies at the University of South Australia. His teaching and research interests include transformative adult learning, learning communities, social inclusion, school transitions and Steiner education.*

Dr Michael Christie *is Professor of Higher Education and Director of CKK, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden. Michael is the Director of an educational development unit at Chalmers, one of Sweden's leading technical universities. He teaches courses in supervision of research and pedagogy and researches in a number of areas including education, multiculturalism and tourism training.*

Addresses for correspondence

Tom Stehlik, Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences,
University of South Australia, Magill, South Australia 5072
Tel: 618 8302 4040
Email: tom.stehlik@unisa.edu.au

Michael Christie, CKK, IT University, Chalmers, Gothenburg, 412 96
Sweden
Tel: +46317728556
Email: michael.christie@ituniv.se

'I'm not stupid after all' – changing perceptions of self as a tool for transformation

Ms Julie Willans
Central Queensland University

Ms Karen Seary
Central Queensland University

'The greatest revolution in our generation is that of human beings, who by changing the inner attitudes of their minds can change the outer aspects of their lives' (Ferguson 2006).

When adult learners return to formal education after a period of absence, coping with change is a constant and often omnipresent challenge. As they come to break down previous barriers to success in an educational arena, many adult learners are able to change the perceptions they have of themselves as learners. Previously held assumptions are often challenged and perceptions of how individuals come to hold these views undergo scrutiny. Using Cranton's (2002) phases of perspective transformation as a framework, this paper explores the notion that some learners can and do change their perspectives regarding their abilities as

learners. This occurs when they are provided with opportunities to reflect critically upon themselves as learners, and deconstruct the origins of past assumptions. Based on data collected during the thirteen week academic writing course within the Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) program at Central Queensland University, evidence suggests that upon critical reflection of previously held assumptions about their learning abilities, many students revise those assumptions and become more empowered individuals.

Introduction

Throughout the passage of life, for one reason or another, many individuals come to change some long-held assumptions about themselves and their world. Sometimes this is pre-empted by a significant event or incident that 'casts the individual into the realm of the unknown … [and which] constitutes a point of demarcation between that which was and that with which one must now contend' (Halstead 2000, p. 3). At this point, one can face confusion, despair, fear or pain, but for those who successfully meet the challenge, new knowledge of the self can be gained and a sense of liberation can occur. One significant event that can precipitate the identification and subsequent examination of long-held assumptions is the adult learner's return to the formal learning context. Such a venture can prove problematic for those who bear emotional scars from long-remembered negative schooling experiences. A negative perception of themselves as learners was, for many, cemented during this period of their life, often a powerful dictator of a self-fulfilled prophesy that directed and clouded many subsequent life choices and pursuits.

Based on research obtained during the autumn of 2003 for a doctoral thesis, this paper seeks to illustrate how members of a small group of adults enrolled in a pre-university, preparatory program known

as STEPS (Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies) came to change their perspective about themselves as learners as they progressed through the program. The research discovered that deconstruction of long-held assumptions can be a vital phase in the process of perspective transformation. Using their words as data, evidence suggests that upon scrutiny of long-held assumptions about self as learner, through critical self-reflection, some of the adult learners engaged in the pre-university preparatory program were able to perceive how these assumptions came to be. Once freed from the chains of these assumptions, the learners became liberated in a sense, and experienced personal change. These assumptions related specifically to perceptions of intelligence, the fear of being ridiculed and hurt, and a perceived inability to succeed in a formal learning context. Using an adapted version of Cranton's (2002) phases of perspective transformation as a conceptual framework, evidence of the process of personal change is presented, as articulated by the participants.

The paper is divided into three sections. First, the context is set by providing a brief background to the pre-university preparatory program known as STEPS, and information about the research project. The second section presents the theoretical framework, namely an adaptation of Cranton's (2002) phases of perspective transformation. The third section presents data as evidence to suggest that the adult learners did experience personal transformation as they first came to articulate assumptions about self as learner, and then came to change those assumptions in some way.

Setting the context

University can be an overwhelming experience, but when you enter a bridging course believing that you're an academic failure and nearly three years later find yourself with a grade point average of 6.429, you know that you were given more than adequate skills to achieve success. I am grateful that I

was accepted into the STEPS program and that I was taught by people who could see in me what I couldn't see myself. (STEPS student 2003)

Such a reflection, penned by a STEPS graduate on successful completion of two years of an undergraduate program, typifies the lack of self-belief many students have and the insecurity many students feel upon embarking on the STEPS learning journey. These words also highlight the newfound confidence that the experience of success can foster within the learner who bravely steps out of their comfort zone to participate in STEPS, a precursor to undergraduate study. There are countless more inspiring reflections that could be related about a preparatory program that not only prepares students academically for tertiary study, but whose aim is to be truly transformational. Why is it that participants who embark on STEPS as very tentative, unsure and insecure people can, in as little as thirteen weeks, convey such a changed and more positive perception of self?

History of STEPS

The STEPS program evolved as an attempt to address the needs of residents within the catchment area serviced by Central Queensland University (CQU), an area that traditionally has not had a high representation of its population involved in higher education. The precursor to STEPS, the Preliminary Studies Program for Disadvantaged Groups, was offered as a pilot program in 1986 at the then Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education in Rockhampton, Queensland. This program reflected the Commonwealth Government's commitment to social, democratic and egalitarian goals by offering people from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to participate in tertiary education. The next year saw the birth of the STEPS program, which, over the next twelve years, was subsequently offered more widely on campuses other than Rockhampton: Gladstone in 1989, Bundaberg and Mackay in 1990, and Emerald in 1998.

Presently, as an AUSTUDY approved program, STEPS is free of charge to its participants, offered face-to-face in both part-time and full-time mode, and available at Central Queensland University's regional campuses in Bundaberg, Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay and Rockhampton. An external offering was made available in 2006 and the success of this mode over two years ensures a continued future in external offering. Applicants to STEPS must be at least 18 years old, be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or a holder of a permanent resident or humanitarian visa. It is expected that applicants should have completed the equivalent of Year 10, or show that they have the necessary aptitude to succeed at the tertiary level.

STEPS has traditionally targeted people from the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) designated equity areas. It empowers students from socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds to eliminate the barriers that locate them outside the tertiary sector. Traditionally, under-represented sub-groups which include people: with a disability; from socio-economically or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds; of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent; from non-English speaking backgrounds; from rural and isolated areas; with educational disadvantage associated with gender (Department of Education, Science & Training 2007), are targeted in an effort to offer them the opportunity to reach their educational potential.

STEPS thus provides a pathway through which a diverse group of mature-aged learners can achieve a university qualification. People presently apply to STEPS for many and varied reasons. Some STEPS students are retrenched workers or long-term unemployed; others simply seek a change in life direction. For some, unsettling or traumatic life circumstances such as divorce, death of a family member, accidents resulting in disabilities and ill health are the catalyst to apply to STEPS. Characteristically, applicants seek access to higher education but find they lack the essential knowledge,

skills and confidence deemed necessary to gain entry to a tertiary institution. Many have been hindered by both their past and present educational, social or cultural circumstances and most doubt their ability to succeed in higher education. Others are merely seeking ways to improve their futures, and refocus their life towards a new goal. Most seek a changed life through education and believe that STEPS as a preparatory program will provide an avenue for this change. STEPS is seen by a many and varied audience as the vehicle through which a changed life may be achieved.

The STEPS philosophy

The STEPS program aims to provide a quality curriculum within a supportive learning environment that fosters in adult learners the personal and academic skills for progression to undergraduate study. Steeped in the principles of adult learning (Brookfield 1986, Knowles 1984), the STEPS curriculum draws on the past experience of participants, as STEPS educators acknowledge that prior learning experiences can strongly influence the view students have of themselves as learners. At the same time, strategies are employed in the quest to open minds to greater knowledge and self-discovery. Students are immersed in learning experiences that centre on their understanding of self, in particular their preferred learning style and their personality type, as these influence their view of self, others and the world.

Transformative learning, 'the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective' (Mezirow 2000, p. 7) is central to STEPS, and as such, educators within the program are committed to allowing the space and conducive environment whereby students learn to face important life challenges, and learn to overcome personal limitations through new learning. In doing so, they are encouraged to move forward with a deeper knowledge and understanding of themselves, others and the ways of the world (Halstead 2000).

On the completion of STEPS, learners are capable of challenging and changing their worldviews and can confidently embrace new opportunities after addressing personal circumstances that have held them back. This is largely due to the emphasis given to acknowledging that students will experience unsettling periods along the way and other uncertainties that characteristically accompany change. Committed STEPS staff support the needs of students in time of change, in the hope that these students will view change as a positive force in their lives. There is far greater potential for students to realise and accept that uncertainty and confusion is a natural part of growth and learning. Travelling the STEPS journey encourages self-reflection and affords students the opportunity to understand themselves more completely. This then facilitates an acceptance of themselves as capable, intelligent human beings, capable of enduring change and seizing resultant opportunities.

The STEPS curriculum

The holistic curriculum allows students not only to learn how to write an academic essay, acquire basic mathematics and computer skills, but also to discover the value of an optimistic outlook on life and learning. Students discover they can discard the sometimes negative thoughts of self that once held them back and created an obstacle to growth, change and success. The curriculum caters for the needs of all cultural and social groups and attempts to develop the ability of its students to acquire the skills that will foster a resilience to study. All four courses employ a student-centred approach and emphasise personal transformation, as well as the acquisition of skills.

Language and Learning, the academic writing component of STEPS aims to effectively develop skills such as reading, thinking and writing for academic purposes. Students become familiar with the stages of the writing process and gain practice in writing in a variety of genres. Particular attention is given to reading for, planning and writing the academic essay. Through research, writing and discussion, students

gain an understanding of both past and present social, political and economic influences on Australia as it faces social change in the 21st century. Learners are actively encouraged to critically reflect on their pre-conceived opinions and worldviews, and in doing so, transform long-held perspectives. As such, they are capable of rewriting long-held scripts that often cast them as unworthy and unfortunately often precluded them from accessing new opportunities.

Transition Mathematics aims to build both competence and confidence in using basic mathematics. The course consists of arithmetic operations, percentages and applications, elementary algebra, coordinate geometry of the straight line and financial mathematics. Although largely content driven, the confidence gained through successful completion of the course by students who, on entry to STEPS, believe they are "hopeless at maths", is quite remarkable. To be able to conquer what was once thought to be an insurmountable obstacle, students are psychologically better prepared to face further life and study challenges.

Computing for Academic Assignment Writing is a basic computer literacy course that aims to make students aware of the fundamental operations of a computer and to promote familiarity and competency with the essentials of word-processing, report writing, PowerPoint presentation, spreadsheets and the Internet. The reality of this course, however, is that as some mature-age students with limited experience related to computers gain more knowledge and skills, their confidence increases immeasurably, and they are able to consider themselves capable of so much more.

Tertiary Preparation Skills aims to introduce students to skills necessary for academic studies. Students are familiarised with the diversity of university programs, courses and procedures. Additionally, students develop oral communication techniques as well as organisational strategies and research skills necessary for academic success. The Tertiary Preparation Skills course focuses

on enabling students to identify their learning preferences and temperament types, information which provides a sound platform on which students can build their learning journeys. They are then given strategies to support their preferred learning styles, as well as encouraged to develop skills in learning in ways that they do not prefer. This course takes students on a journey of self-discovery which, although uncomfortable at times, ensures a more fully developed understanding of self and an acceptance of themselves as capable, intelligent human beings.

The research group

The research group used as a focus for this paper comprised a group of nine volunteer participants who were part of a class of twenty-five students engaged in the Language and Learning course of the STEPS pre-university preparatory program. Using data from the research conducted over the 13-week, full-time STEPS program, some significant findings related to the participants' articulation and scrutiny of assumptions emerged. Using the data collected from individual and group interviews conducted at three-weekly intervals, in addition to data from the participants' reflective writing post-program, the words of the participants were transcribed and major emerging themes allowed for categorisation. Data provided a rich account of how, for some adult learners, assumptions about self as learner came to change. Also revealed were the similarities and anomalies in the types of assumptions articulated by the learners.

Theoretical background

As well as being cognisant of the principles of adult learning, the STEPS program is underpinned by the tenets of transformative learning, conceptualised as learning that has transformation as its goal. According to Lepani (1995), learning that is transformative empowers learners to challenge and change their worldviews and prepares them to face new opportunities as they overcome their

difficulties and disadvantages. As well as providing them with the thinking and communications skills needed to succeed in a contemporary university environment, many of the activities in Language and Learning, the academic writing course of the STEPS, encourage the students to challenge and change their worldviews. In addition, learners are coaxed to reflect on many assumptions they hold about themselves and others as they take a journey of self-discovery. Through various engagements, discussions and experiences, many come to change their perspectives about various issues in numerous and varied ways. This is known as perspective transformation.

Perspective transformation

Cranton (2003) eloquently describes perspective transformation as 'an individual's revision of a meaning perspective or a worldview as a result of critical self-reflection and discourse'. According to Cranton (2002, pp. 65–66), there are seven phases in the perspective transformation process, which are by no means linear, but more progressive and spiral in pattern, and not all necessarily experienced by individuals in the transformation process. Cranton lists these phases as:

1. an activating event that typically exposes a discrepancy between what a person has always assumed to be true and what has just been experienced, heard or read
2. articulating assumptions, that is, recognising underlying assumptions that have been uncritically assimilated and are largely unconscious
3. critical self-reflection, that is, questioning and examining assumptions in terms of where they came from, the consequences of holding them, and why they are important
4. being open to alternative viewpoints
5. engaging in discourse, where evidence is weighed, arguments assessed, alternative perspectives explored, and knowledge constructed by consensus

6. revising assumptions and perspectives to make them more open and better justified
7. acting on revisions, behaving, talking, and thinking in a way that is congruent with transformed assumptions or perspectives.

Indeed, their very inclusion in the STEPS program proved to be an overarching, activating event for all the adult learners, a catalyst that allowed for the perspective transformation process to begin. As the program unfolded, many of the adult learners came to express their thoughts and feelings about prior experiences, and engaged in an atmosphere that was imbued with the tenets of adult learning principles, a brief discussion of which now follows.

Adult learning principles

The STEPS program embraces adult learning principles that espouse the celebration of the strengths and prior experiences of the learner. Educators and learners are encouraged to maintain an open and honest line of communication, each responsible for their own behaviour, commitments to learning and trust of each other. A humanistic orientation to learning is adopted, wherein respect for the adult learner's individuality is preserved and efforts are directed to help the individual realise her or his potential. In doing so, the learner is generally more responsive to learning, and whilst experiencing some degree of stress and anxiety at the outset of the program, many do come to gain confidence in their own abilities. Adult learners bring to their studies enthusiasm, ambition and life's rich experiences. The STEPS program builds on these skills, encouraging learners to gain new learning experiences and methods so they can take responsibility for their own learning. As Knowles reminds us, adults learn best when their learning reflects their immediate life needs and they are most motivated when their inner needs are met (Knowles, Holton & Swanson 1998, p. 172).

Personal experiences of change

This section of the paper uses words of the participants as evidence to suggest that some of the phases of perspective transformation entailing the articulation, examination and revision of assumptions were experienced by some of the participants. It is to be acknowledged that, as the researcher-teacher in this research, it was possible for one of the authors of this paper to become immersed in the lives of the learners, which, due to issues of subjectivities, at times proved both difficult and rewarding. The transformative nature of the Language and Learning curriculum required students to engage actively in discussions and research about contemporary social issues. In addition, activities designed to give more insight into their learning styles and temperament types, in many ways challenged previously-held assumptions that clouded various perspectives they had. Reflections and opinions on such activities were captured in the individual and group interviews and in the self-reflection, based on Vogler's (1996) twelve stages of the 'hero's journey', an adaptation of Campbell's (1993) work, completed by learners at the end of the program (examples are presented shortly).

Many assumptions emerged from the transcribed data, but of special significance were the assumptions that related more specifically to self as a learner. Data revealed that, for three individuals in particular, the unravelling of prior assumptions about their own personal learning potential changed over the period of time of their engagement in the program. These assumptions are quite simply presented as 'too stupid', 'too scared' and 'too old'.

Too stupid

In her early days of the program, B's words indicated an assumption she held with regards to her own intelligence, determined largely by the way she perceived herself within her family structure. Comparing herself with her family members' business and educational pursuits,

B assumed it was her lack of education that precluded her from the family's notion of intelligence. As she revealed*:*

> If I was with them [the family], I tended to sit back because I wasn't educated as much as them and they spoke with these big words, sometimes purposefully just to patronise me. (B1)

B alluded to feelings of exclusion and a sense of isolation from her family, but in addition, she assumed that their intellectual conversations, at times, were intended to demean or exclude her. This possibly reinforced B's assumptions about her intelligence and fuelled a self-fulfilled prophesy that her level of intelligence did not equate to others in her family.

B further exemplified an assumption she held about her own intelligence and perceived exclusion from the family, when she described herself as 'the flippety gibbet', alluding to a less than serious person. Perhaps this perception arose as she compared herself with what she persistently referred to as her 'serious' family:

> Like I come from a very serious family, mother like way before her time running her own business and also a nursing sister. My father also had a business and they were very serious people. My two sisters have very serious careers. (B1)

B's assumptions about being different from the rest of the family are further reflected in a statement she made relating to her 'fitting' into the family structure. She remarked: 'They didn't even know where I came from and I didn't know where I came from with my career in fashion.' (B1)

B made the assumption that her career choice alienated her somewhat from her family, appearing as it were from 'left field' and quite incongruous with the more 'serious' pursuits of her family. Overall, B's assumption about herself was that she was less intelligent than other family members. Her perception of intelligence is based on the

achievements and pursuits of her family and their 'seriousness', a trait obviously valued by her family.

B therefore held assumptions about her intelligence and her ability to engage in the STEPS program. She questioned her credentials and doubted herself and assumed she would not be able to succeed. However, over a period of time as B engaged in a classroom of individuals with varying types of intelligence, experiences, backgrounds and interests, she came to change her assumption about her own intelligence. More than likely this entailed a degree of critical reflection and it was mid-way through the program when B gave some indication that her assumption had been examined, and a change had occurred. She asserted:

> We are all part of something and we all need flippety gibbets just like we need really serious people like my parents were, and my sisters were; and that's the big thing that I've learnt, that's giving me confidence to go on, to realise that "No, I'm not stupid. They [her family] used to say I was stupid, but I'm not stupid after all", and I have shocked myself how I'm taking things in and achieving things. (B2)

B re-examined the assumption she held with regard to her intelligence, questioned its origin and as a result, revised the assumption she previously held about her level of intelligence. She came to hold a new perspective, one that enabled her to take the locus of control for her own intelligence. She revealed:

> The funny thing is since I've been coming here [STEPS] I can look back and see that it was them [the family] that were at fault. They were critical of me, yet I never criticised them. Maybe they were threatened by my openness and my ability to take off and just do anything. (B3)

Thus, for B, intelligence came to be defined in different terms, not by the assumption that had guided her before, but by a more inclusive assumption of intelligence that allowed for her to recognise that, even

though she had always felt she was *different* from her 'serious' family, she was none-the-less intelligent in her own right. B is typical of many of the STEPS students who come to the classroom with often skewed assumptions about their own intelligence, and how these assumptions can lead to fear of failure and uncertainty about their likelihood of success. One participant expressed such fear.

Too scared

Bt came to STEPS after a period of unemployment and consequent low self-esteem issues. From the outset of the writing course, Bt indicated that he was too afraid to open up and express his feelings for fear of ridicule or criticism by others. It was not until midway through the writing course that Bt articulated an assumption about his inability to express himself. He revealed:

> I'd never really expressed my view and probably that goes back to grade 4 and the humiliation I felt then. I never wanted to go through that again, so I never opened up and gave my views about what I thought about something.

A sense of vulnerability was expressed by Bt, apparently due to a negative incident in his past, but as he came to gain more confidence and exposure to writing activities during the Language and Learning course, as well as listen to and share the written and spoken work of his class colleagues, his confidence increased and Bt's assumption that he would experience humiliation changed. Bt confided:

> I was fearing the writing because I thought I'd be entering areas of my mind that I had blocked off for thirty years. I thought it was going to open something and I don't want to be embarrassed or ashamed or stuff like that, so that was a big step for me. But I've enjoyed it. I've felt actually nurtured all along. I'm not so self-conscious about what I write now, and when other people read it.

Bt changed his assumption that if he opened up to others he would risk being hurt, with pain and humiliation sure to follow. Instead, he

came to value the writing experiences, appreciating the supportive environment in which he felt free to 'test the waters', and as a result, his fears appeared to abate. He also recognised how past assumptions had held him back:

> Coming in and doing *Language and Learning* here to me is challenging my mind and its actually getting me out there and opening up into something I haven't been doing for many years. I know I can achieve anything now and I am only restricted by me, no one else.

Thus, Bt had allowed a negative experience from the past to guide his assumption that humiliation and embarrassment would surely follow if he opened up and expressed his thoughts and feelings to others. Bt came to change this assumption through the process of questioning and revising that assumption. His words above would seem to indicate that he acted 'on revisions, behaving, talking, and thinking in a way that is congruent with transformed assumptions or perspectives' (Cranton 2002, p. 66). In doing so, he made possible a new perspective, one that gave him a new realisation of his own potential. Again, Bt typified many of the STEPS students who for many reasons are afraid to express and expose their thoughts, feelings and opinions to others. It may be due to past failures, negative experiences or simply lack of confidence, as was the case with the next participant.

Too hard

R was a participant who for various reasons assumed she would not experience success in the STEPS program. Looking through the data, it became apparent that R did not feel optimistic and confident in her abilities in the early stages of the program. In fact, she made assumptions about her ability to cope with the difficulty level of the STEPS program right from the beginning, and she predicted, 'I really think I will struggle with all this'.

Interestingly, she articulated that if she did fail, it would cause her no great alarm, for she felt it would be inconsequential to her at that particular point in time. As she claimed, 'I didn't have anywhere to fall 'cause I was way down there anyway'.

R's assumption hinted of a self-fulfilled prophesy that perhaps may have influenced past pursuits, for in saying she was 'way down there anyway', it appeared that she had reconciled herself to failure, because that was what she half expected. A sense of futility appeared evident in R's words at this time. However, time passed and engagement in the program provided R with many opportunities to reflect critically on her abilities and, in doing so, she revised her assumption about her lack of ability, and could confidently project herself into a future that involved more study:

> I am finding that I am doing better than I thought I was capable of and STEPS isn't my goal any longer. Doing a degree and being positive – that's my goal. There's nothing that will stop what I want to do. And I am surprising myself as to how much I like it. I'm much more positive with myself, that I can do it.

By the end of the program, R's final reflection indicated that her assumption about not being able to experience success in the academic arena had indeed shifted, and she revealed some very personal insight into previous assumptions that related to her lack of confidence and self-esteem. She reflected:

> I have obtained results far better than I could ever have imagined. I never thought I would achieve what I have achieved. I have also felt different … mostly in feeling far more relaxed and happy in myself … that I can do this! I finally like me!!!

R's words indicated that her success in the course and overall program was far beyond her own expectations. It appeared that perhaps she had previously under-estimated her own abilities, yet it also appeared that there was a sense of relief for her in successfully

completing the program. It may be the case that, due to her lack of confidence or fear of setting herself up for failure, she was challenging her own assumption that she might fail, but in experiencing success, came to change that assumption and took on a new perspective about herself as a learner. R's assumption that she would not have the ability to succeed is typical of numerous STEPS students, coming as many do from work, life and other environments where they have experienced failure and/or disappointment.

Conclusion

'Never too old, never too scared and certainly never too stupid' – STEPS as a pre-university, preparatory program offers its participants the avenue for a changed life through education. The STEPS program has proven to be and will continue to be the vehicle through which a many and varied clientele move from a narrow and often distorted view of themselves as learners and people to a more mature and healthy perspective. STEPS is a metaphor for a thirteen or twenty-six week life lived in self-discovery. Students find the inner strength and self-knowledge to cast off the chains that have held them back and discard the distorted assumptions of self as learner that have stifled learning and growth. In doing so, they move forward to a position whereby they are no longer crippled by self-doubt and fear. STEPS is a transformative experience for those who choose this path; one that provides no safe haven for the confusion, fear or pain associated with change but rather provides the breeding ground for new self-knowledge and a sense of liberation achieved through the challenging by learners of long-held assumptions about self, others and the world in general.

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About the authors

Julie Willans *is a lecturer in Tertiary Preparation Skills in the STEPS (Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies) program at Central Queensland University. Research interests include study skills and transformative learning that empowers students to reach their potential. This includes enhanced self-awareness and knowledge about self as a learner.*

Karen Seary *is currently Head of Academic Learning Support at Central Queensland University. She has been involved as lecturer*

and campus coordinator with the STEPS program on the Bundaberg campus since 1994. Karen has been Head of STEPS for the past four years, a role which involves the overall management of the program across five CQU campuses. Karen's research interest is in adult learning and transition to university.

Contact details

Ms Julie Willans, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton Campus
Tel: (07) 49 309 294
Email: j.willans@cqu.edu.au

Ms Karen Seary, Central Queensland University, Bundaberg Campus
Tel: (07) 41 507 067
Email: k.seary@cqu.edu.au

Bridging to the future: What works?

Helen Anderson
Manukau Institute of Technology
The University of Auckland at Manukau Program

This paper discusses three levels of 'what works' in enabling education – namely, current and successful engagement, transition and future participation, and managing uncertainties. It points to the importance of high quality programs that get the students involved with learning, effectively preparing them for further study and providing the necessary survival skills for an essentially unknown and technology-driven future.

Tertiary education in our current world is a significant pathway into employment and its consequent societal benefits. Bridging/enabling education works to make these benefits accessible to people who are undoubtedly talented but who do not have the specific skills and credentials for entry to further study and the workforce. Frequently, those accessing enabling education are also members of minority

groups, under-represented groups and those who have experienced significant deprivation. Creating access to tertiary education through enabling programs subscribes to the goals of social justice, contributes to expanding the talent available for social and economic development as well as influencing individual life chances. These are the goals and commitments enabling educators share and the consequent responsibilities are the focus of this paper.

With the hopes and aspirations of individuals, our communities and the society raised by the provision of enabling education, ensuring that it 'works' must occupy a significant place in the design and management of programs. Analysing 'what works' operates on three levels. The first of these is the current and successful engagement in education of those who join enabling programs. The second level is the successful transition to and participation in the destination program or workplace, and the third lies in preparation for survival and better in our rapidly changing world of technology-driven change. For the first two, this paper offers frameworks for analysis; for the third, this paper can offer speculation on the essentially unknowable future and some strategies for managing the attendant uncertainties.

Current and successful engagement

The New Zealand-based literature on bridging is relatively new although its contextual value is significant. There is a larger body of work available internationally that provides studies that may assist in identifying approaches for consideration in the development of an effective bridging program in New Zealand. However, it is noted that there has been some criticism (Benseman, Sutton & Lander 2005; O'Hear & MacDonald 2001) about the quality of research in the bridging, developmental, access literature. In this study the concept of the 'student cycle' (Anderson 2002a) is used as a framework for identifying elements and issues for consideration. What follows is

a review of the cycle with reference to literature that may inform its implementation.

Recruitment

The 2002 New Zealand study into barriers to participation in tertiary education for Pasifika students identifies lack of usable information as a factor in poor recruitment. Usable information was identified as coming from peers and mentors (Anae *et al.* 2002). Community networks have contributed significantly to the success of Wananga in recruitment of students into community-based bridging programs (McKegg 2003). In the international literature, Wonacott (2001) summarises the available research to identify process elements in recruitment. He describes recruitment as a multi-step process including inexpensive but eye-catching promotional materials, prompt response to initial contacts, information sessions and prompt, personal follow up. The importance of students making a proactive choice to participate in study is noted as a factor in the retention literature (see below for a summary). This has its origin, in part, in the recruitment process where the student's decision-making process begins.

First contact and orientation

The nature of first contacts and the quality of orientation are seen as the first steps towards retention and persistence. These activities provide the student with initial experiences of the ethos and intentions of the program. If this early work is effective, the students gain some sense of connection with the program that may lead to productive participation. The body of literature found in the 'first year experience' thread (see proceedings of First Year Experience conferences in New Zealand and Australia, 2001-2006) emphasises the importance of using personal contact and friendly informative orientation to make the links for students between their personal aspirations and program effects. Tinto (2002) proposes that persistence in study has its origins in academic and social

engagement and this is crucial in the first days of contact with the program.

Diagnostic processes, program placements and design

In a major study into the elements of successful developmental programs, Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham (1997) identified prior assessment and developmentally determined placements as correlated with student success in their courses. While small programs must rely on individual programming to respond to needs identified in front-end assessments, larger programs can offer a range of levels within subjects. Thus, the student's first experiences of learning on the bridging program are calibrated to current learning needs and maximum opportunity for student success.

Teaching and learning

The single most important aspect of developing an effective teaching and learning environment for bridging students is the presence of trained people who can develop materials and practices informed by current knowledge, research findings, theory development and professional decision-making within their program context (Anderson 2002b, Benseman *et al.* 2005, Boylan 1999).

Effective bridging educators will maintain currency with new developments and adapt them to the needs of their context. Developments such as the work on situated learning described by Haggis (2003), for example, will be part of their everyday professional debates.

Given the multicultural nature of many New Zealand bridging programs (Benseman & Russ 2001), capacity to function in a diverse learning context along with ability to support the aspirations of students from various cultures is identified as an element of success (Nakhid 2003, Anae *et al.* 2002).

Smittle's (2001 & 2003) six principles of effective teaching in developmental (bridging) education exemplifies summaries of research literature, which support the development of strong practice. She lists teacher commitment, command of content, awareness of non-cognitive issues, open and responsive style, high expectations and ongoing professional development and evaluation as her key characteristics of teachers who have an impact in the classroom.

There is very little research (and almost none in the New Zealand environment) to inform debates about the teacher – student interface in tertiary education. This is problematic given the strength of the relationship identified between teaching and student success (see Smittle noted above). Volumes of research have been carried out in early childhood, primary and secondary settings and this is usefully indicative. However, the lack of attention to tertiary teaching sits alongside the absence of requirements for teaching qualifications in the New Zealand tertiary sector and particularly at the foundation level where teaching skill is crucial.

While retention is discussed below under pastoral care, it is an issue that traverses all elements of a program and is an issue across most of the student cycle (Evans 2000). It is considered here in response to the findings from research that prompt thinking about the effectiveness of a student's engagement with the program and most particularly with the teaching and learning aspects. Scott's (2003) review of retention, completion and progression in tertiary education in New Zealand identifies the extent of dropout in mainstream education and, while it does not address bridging education (or adult and community education), his review is indicative of retention as a key issue in New Zealand tertiary study. It can be inferred that this will be especially so in bridging as its students have the greatest mass of dropout predictors working against them.

Following the work of Tinto and the numerous challenges to it in the literature provides a thought-provoking progression from focusing

on attrition, to considering retention and on to more recent work on learning communities as frames for supporting student persistence in studies (Tierney 1999, Tinto 1975, 1982, 1993, 1997, 2002). This thread is firmly embedded in seeing the teaching and learning environment as the focal point of program responsibility for ensuring reasonable rates of retention.

The recent work by Yorke and Thomas (2003) in the United Kingdom supports the notion that this is at the very least a learning and teaching issue. They also include an emphasis on a positive and friendly 'climate', productive and early use of formative assessment and recognition of the social elements of the learning environment in their analysis of factors which may contribute to retention of minority and under-represented groups.

Assessment

While assessment is seen as integral to teaching and learning, it is treated separately here to give weight to the issues around integration and to acknowledge the peculiarities of assessment in the bridging context.

There is little research into the bridging context with regard to assessment, except for some work on assessment styles (Kull 1999, for example); however, reliance on the more generic literature is informative. That assessment is a critical activity for providing feedback to students and for teachers is well established, as is the importance of feedback in the learning process (Gee 2003, for example). The bridging context, however, adds two dimensions to the assessment process. Bridging students need credentials that will carry them into further study in terms of meeting entry requirements for destinations programs and these credentials must be robust for this purpose. Further, bridging programs need to offer their students practice in the styles of assessment they will meet in their destination programs as part of their academic preparation. This implies careful

program design to ensure that assessment operates to support learning, to overcome apprehension not uncommon among students who have typically failed in previous experiences of education, and to ensure that students are fully prepared for the following programs including carrying appropriate credentials (Roueche, Roueche & Ely 2001).

Pastoral care

There is a substantial amount of research into the role of pastoral care in the retention (persistence) of students in tertiary studies (see Evans 2000 for a review). Various models identify external factors, that is, matters not directly related to the classroom and usually related to social and economic issues as significant in determining student persistence. While not suggesting that the quality of the learning environment is less important, the provision of pastoral care services is identified as a determining factor. This may be the provision of formal services such as counsellors, doctors and learning specialists, or it may be in the form of personal and social networks and connections aimed to support students as they balance outside pressures with the demands of study. Recent New Zealand studies have identified the link between academic and social support reporting that personal networks linked to study groups with the purpose of integrating academic and social support are effective (Anae *et al.* 2002). Further, Rolleston and Anderson (2004) note the contradictory statements made by students about the causes of their leaving. Students identified personal crises as the reason for leaving but at the same time commented on negative aspects of the programs they were in, including lecturers who were distant, content they could not understand and peers who were adversarial. This willingness to assume personal blame for dropout may mask levels of program responsibility and at the same time skew research data so that lecturers / program leaders go unchallenged in their assumption that socio-economic factors are paramount.

Transition and future participation

Preparation for transition, and transition

The work of Gee (1998) provides an interesting approach to transitions. His work in social literacies identifies aspects of teaching and learning that may be helpful in making it possible for bridging students to transit from the more familiar 'discourses' of home, workplace and recreational activity into tertiary education. His work puts emphasis on the development of social and academic skills through close association with expert participants in the destination discourse. He sees the teaching function as drawing parallels, similarities and differences among present and future discourses as a means to provide students with the skills of participation. He identifies 'meta understandings' of the process of transition in its social and economic context as vital to student-directed management of choices.

Participation and success in the destination program, workplace/further study outcomes

New Zealand data are available at the program level to demonstrate that bridging students whose educational backgrounds do not follow traditional trajectories can succeed in further and higher study (Coltman 2003, for example). New Zealand research is limited; the 'in progress' Voices from Manukau project which has tracked students from bridging programs into degree studies in teacher education has identified that results on the degree program and subsequent employment rates are equivalent to the cohort as a whole (Anderson *et al*. 2003). Internationally, there are studies to support this contention (Mills 1989; Osborne, Leopold &Ferrie 1997; McKenzie & Schweitzer 2001). The definition of success is a key point here. While passing assessments on the bridging program is important, a full interrogation of success will include acceptance on to destination programs, graduation from the destination program and employment

in the field of choice, and this work has not been done as frequently as would be expected (Kozercki 2002).

Managing uncertainties

The third element in analysing 'what works' addresses the uncertainties around the technological future, its unpredictability and its inevitability. While we are frequently wrong in our predictions regarding the future shape of society, the workplace and our personal lives, there is enough evidence to say that much of future change will be a consequence of change in technology and multiple flow-on effects. What, therefore, must we be doing in the design and management of our programs?

We can look at existing trends in the nature of the workplace and in the ways of working, and these lead us to think about what skills our graduates will need. This might mean we consider:

- identifiable shift to interactive and cognitive skills (fewer manual skills)
- cultural skills that are valued in a diversifying workforce serving a multicultural client base
- trends towards team work, decentralisation of authority, knowledge sharing among employees, workers responsibility for outcomes, and reduction in occupational boundaries
- fractioning of the workforce – casualisation/part time/multiple shifts drive the need for skills of cooperation/negotiation/ administration/management.

The kinds of literacies around technology that might be needed are equally unpredictable with applications changing on an exponential curve. This might lead us to teach for creativity and adaptability, and digital and technological content and skills, robotics, nanotechnology as well as ethics, politics and sociology – alongside the traditional

skills of reading, writing, arithmetic, logical thinking, art, history, science and understanding the writings and ideas from the past.

So what we teach may be the skills that have served, but also the creativity, adaptability, team work, independence and self-direction to make sure our students can be responsive to the future and its attendant changes.

In summary, therefore, 'what works' is:
- high quality programs that engage students with learning
- high quality programs that act as effective pathways into further study and/or the workplace
- high quality programs that prepare students for the everyday life that will exist in a world where participation in and the management of technology-driven change is paramount.

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About the author

Dr Helen Anderson *is currently the Director Academic of Manukau Institute of Technology, Manukau City, New Zealand. She is an educator committed to equity for all people wishing to enter tertiary education as a pathway into careers that will enhance their ability to be productive contributors to families, communities and the economy. The role of the Manukau Institute of Technology is to serve its region through the provision of excellent vocational education that can be readily accessed through bridging programs, stair-casing of qualifications and the creation of an educational environment that fosters talent.*

Contact details

Manukau Institute of Technology, Private Bag 94006, Manukau City, New Zealand
Email: helen.anderson@manukau.ac.nz

Keep in mind the quality, Sir, when you go with width!

Silvia McCormack
Monash College Pty. Ltd.

Australian universities need to maintain their high reputation for quality in order to attract and retain buyers of Australian education-related products. Learners are becoming increasingly discerning in terms of what they are buying and why they should buy it. Thus, quality is a critical issue for Australian university programs in general as well as university foundation programs in particular. This paper describes the quality assurance process for the Monash University Foundation Year, a pre-tertiary pathway program for international students into Monash University Australia, Malaysia or Monash College Diploma 1 or Diploma 2 programs. The program is managed by a commercial arm of Monash University (Monash College Pty. Ltd.) and delivered by licensed providers offshore and in Australia. Quality assurance is seen as a means to improve and enhance the learning experience of students as well as a risk management strategy.

Background

Australian universities are increasingly relying on the revenue of full fee-paying international students to meet a large share of their operational costs. In 2005, for example, only 42% of the operating revenue came from Government grants (ABS 2007). A large share of the remaining revenue was contributed through student fees, including 15% through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and 23% through other fees and charges which include monies from full fee-paying overseas students (ABS 2007). ABS figures indicate that some universities rely heavily on full fee-paying overseas students; for example, Central Queensland University, Macquarie University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology received 46%, 27% and 25% respectively of their revenue from fee-paying overseas students (ABS 2007).

This heavy reliance on fee-paying international students to meet university operational costs brings with it a measure of vulnerability or risk which has been recognised by the Australian Government. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) was established in 2000 and reports on the relative standards of the higher education system and its quality assurance processes, including their international standing. AUQA audits all on and offshore operations as part of its program of regular university audits (AUQA 2006: 3). In addition, the Government has also introduced other significant measures such as the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act and regulations, a legal framework governing the responsibility of education institutions towards overseas students and a Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

Australian universities are also vulnerable from increasing competition for international student market share from countries such as USA, UK and Singapore and now also from other Asian countries, for example, Malaysia and China. The Malaysian

Government Vision for 2020 seeks to transform Malaysia into the economic, political and educational hub of South East Asia. Measures like these seem to be working. For example, the *Australian Education International Newsletter* (AEI, Ed 008/2007) reported that fewer Swedish students now opt to study in English-speaking countries while interest in educational institutions in Asia and in particular China is increasing.

To attract and keep buyers of Australian education-related products, Australian universities need to maintain their high reputation for quality. Students have become increasingly more discerning in terms of what they are buying and why they should buy it. Students and their parents invest in an expectation which universities need to manage and fulfil. Hence the comment, 'Keep in mind the quality, Sir, when you go with width', needs to be heeded by Australian university programs as well as University Foundation Programs including the Monash University Foundation Year program (MUFY).

MUFY buyers invest in an expectation. Strong quality assurance measures ensure that the expectations are fulfilled and the program continues to grow. Marketing feedback suggests that buyers invest in:

- good results to get into Monash or other universities in Australia, Malaysia or overseas in general
- a good preparation for their future studies at Monash or other Australian or overseas universities
- employment.

In this paper, the quality assurance process for MUFY is outlined. Quality assurance is seen as a means to improve and enhance the learning experience of students as well as a risk management strategy. It collects feedback that allows judgements to be made relating to the degree of compliance against standards.

Monash University Foundation Year

Key features

The Monash University Foundation Year is a pre-tertiary pathway program for international students into Monash University Australia, Malaysia or Monash College Diploma 1 or Diploma 2 programs. The program is managed by a commercial arm of Monash University (Monash College P/L) and delivered by licensed providers offshore and in Australia, which are also commercial entities. The program needs to keep abreast of new insights into teaching practices and curriculum development for international students, university entry demands, marketplace demands and be flexible to transform its current structure into a new but still academically robust format. Soon the program will also need to comply with the Commonwealth Government minimum standards for on-shore pathway programs expected to be released in 2007/8.

History

One of the first pathway programs in Australia, the Monash University Foundation Year was first delivered in 1989 in Melbourne by a licensed provider with an enrolment of 200 students. Today, there are four licensed providers in Melbourne, Malaysia, Indonesia and Laos with an annual enrolment of approximately 1,500 students. About three-quarters of these students transition to Monash University.

Competition

Since the 1990s, most Australian universities have offered a pathway program. Overseas universities and institutions have also set up pathway programs. MUFY in Malaysia, for example, competes against:
- South Australian Matriculation
- Cambridge GCE A-Levels
- Canadian Matriculation Programme

- University of New South Wales Foundation Year
- Australian Matriculation (AUSMAT)
- Diploma type programs in Business, Engineering and Information Technology from both Australian and overseas universities
- International Baccalaureate Program (IB)

Provider competition

Each licensed MUFY provider markets the course, recruits students and delivers the Monash University Foundation Year curriculum. In this sense, each provider competes against each other in terms of student share. Monash College P/L has a responsibility to ensure that student expectations are well managed at each provider location, and this is managed through the MUFY quality assurance procedures.

MUFY quality assurance

The importance of ensuring the quality of its programs is reflected in the Monash College P/L vision statement (Monash College P/L 2006, p.2), which reads as follows:

- In 2025 Monash College P/L will be a **high quality** educational institution developing and delivering educational and professional services.
- Monash College P/L will maintain its ability to **demonstrate educational quality** through high levels of success for its students in further study (for example, entry and performance at university level) and in employment and career development. **Students and clients will experience high quality education** through a range of flexible study options.
- Monash College P/L, already a Higher Education Provider (HEP) and Registered Training Organisation (RTO), will be a self-accrediting higher education provider.
- Monash College P/L will be profitable and sustainable with a structure that will allow it to meet new market demand.

- Monash College P/L educational services and activities will complement and align with those of Monash University.
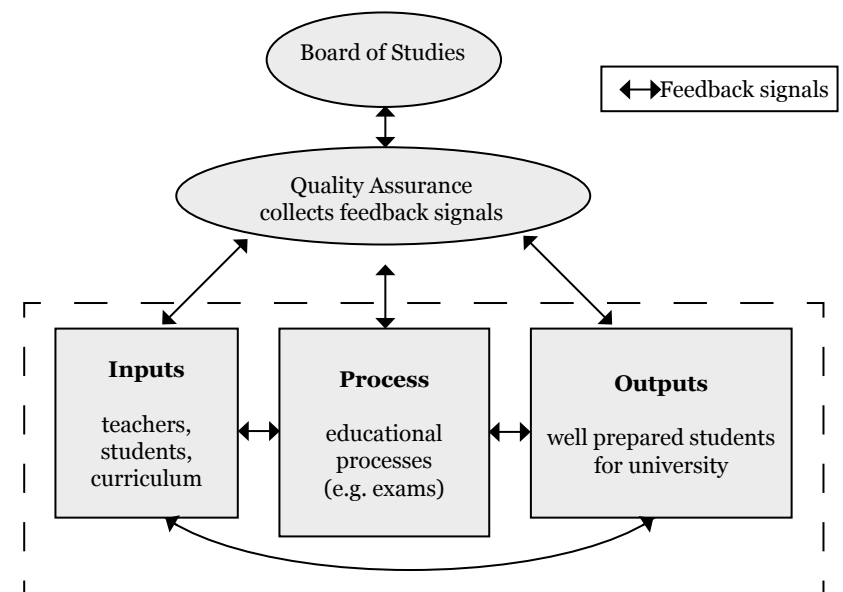
The word **quality** has been highlighted in the above statement to indicate the importance of quality to the company and in the courses it develops, delivers and manages. MUFY is one of a number of income streams for Monash College P/L and MUFY works towards this vision.

Quality assurance procedures in place for the academic quality of MUFY

MUFY Board of Studies

A MUFY Board of Studies, with a Dean of the University as Chair, is the principal academic body of the MUFY Program. The Board also oversees the MUFY examination process. Figure 1 shows, from a system perspective, how the MUFY Board manages academic quality.

Figure1: MUFY systems model of how it manages its academic quality

Essentially, the MUFY Board of Studies gathers feedback from the inputs, processes and outputs of the MUFY system through instruments such as the following:
• quality assurance audits at provider locations – annual and triennial
• Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ)
• First Year Student Experience of Graduates of MUFY
• marker reports for each subject
• examiner moderation reports for each subject
• pass rate data
• student performance at university data
• correlation coefficients between internal assessment and exam scores
• provider feedback in general.

The Board collects the information and recommends any further action necessary. These actions are implemented and monitored by the MUFY quality assurance team which reports back to the MUFY Board on the progress and results of the implementations made.

Below is a sample of the type of measures sought as feedback during the quality assurance audits.

Provider visits and quality audits

Annual provider visits double as audits. In addition, there are more formal triennial audits. The key areas audited are:
• admission requirements
• structure, content and delivery of the course
• assessment
• course evaluation
• human resources to support the course
• facilities
• marketing the course
• financial resources and contractual arrangements
(Monash College P/L 2005, p. 3)

Each of the above category areas has a set of principles, specifications and list of evidence to be collected during the audit. This evidence is referenced against prescribed standards. A report on the degree of the compliance for each standard is submitted to the company and to the provider. Actions are implemented within the specified timeframe.

Examples of input, process and output measures which are audited or implemented for continuous improvement are presented below. A description of the full MUFY quality assurance process with principles, specifications and evidence for each area is documented in the MUFY quality assurance manual.

Some examples of how INPUT measures are audited

Student input measures

MUFY students study English plus three to four other subjects from a range of 13 subjects for approximately 12 months or 40 weeks.

Audit specifications relate to the Year 11 equivalency of entry, the level of English required, compliance with course regulations and academic policies. Documentation of teaching approaches, teaching materials, resources including access to computer and library resources, class size (1:25 or better) and classroom space are some examples of evidence that are sought.

Teacher input measures

The minimum qualification of teachers is a degree in the relevant discipline and teacher qualifications. To continuously enhance and improve the MUFY course, MUFY holds an annual professional development day for on and offshore teachers of MUFY subjects in Melbourne. Input on the day is provided by the MUFY subject examiners who oversee the curriculum and set the formal exams. In addition, experts in a field of teaching and learning also provide input. In 2006, for example, the Monash Experience Questionnaire

indicated that students would like to be more engaged through greater use of Information Communication Technology (ICT). A session during the professional development day was allocated for this.

Examples of PROCESS measures

The process measures provide an indication of how well students are being prepared for their university experience. Students are also asked to provide feedback on their perception of the course through the Monash Experience Questionnaire.

Monash Experience Questionnaire

Every two years the Monash Experience Questionnaire (MEQ) is administered at MUFY provider locations. The MEQ gathers information about how the student perceives their learning experience at the campus. The items are ranked on a Likert scale from 1 to 5.

The two lowest ranked items in 2005 were:
- 'I am generally satisfied with the online classroom environment' (3.59 out of 5)
- 'My course is flexible' (3.62 out of 5)

The two most highly ranked items in 2005 were:
- 'I believe I will be able to use the skills I am learning in my future studies at Monash' (4.02 out of 5)
- 'The teaching staff motivate me to do my best work' (4.00 out of 5)

The MEQ information is used and discussed with teachers and managers at provider locations during the annual quality assurance visits and action for enhancements are identified and followed up during subsequent quality assurance visits. In response to the lowest ranked items for example, one provider has introduced a commercial on-line platform to enhance its on-line learning environment, while

a second provider has developed its own customised on-line platform with similar functionality as commercial platforms.

Exams and curriculum

The exams and curriculum are monitored for fairness and currency. Academics of Monash University are the examiners and moderators of MUFY exams and oversee the review of the curriculum once every four years. Examiners have oversight of the formal MUFY exams held twice a year and moderate ten percent of the provider marked exam papers. Moderation reports are written and tabled at the MUFY Board of Studies.

Correlation coefficients between internal and external assessment scores for each subject and for each provider for each exam period are also calculated. This provides useful data for teachers to gauge how well aligned the internal assessment tasks are to the exam outcomes.

Examples of OUTPUT measures

The output measures gauge how well the program prepared students for university. A number of statistical measures are used to track MUFY students at Monash University. These include tracking their grade point average scores and how many units graduate MUFY students have passed to the number of units they have taken. MUFY also tracks the transition into Monash University and into each faculty. These statistics are compared with local and other international students in each faculty and reported to the Dean in each faculty.

In 2007, a MUFY First Year Student Experience Questionnaire will be administered with the aim of gauging graduate MUFY student feedback about how well MUFY has prepared students for their first year university course. A trial study in 2006 gathered preliminary data. A sample of student responses of how they perceive that the

MUFY experience assisted their learning at university is presented below:

> The friendly, patient and dedicated teachers coached us to be independent, helped us to get used to the Australian teaching style and expectations, and provided extra support both personal as well as academic.

> The oral presentations we gave helped us to gain our self-confidence in speaking in front of groups.

> The learning tasks helped us to think critically, write and read critically and conduct research.

> The small groups helped us to bond and build friends, to get along with different people and to meet people who would study the same subjects at university.

> The MUFY syllabus aligns to first year university. The university topics just go into more depth. This continuity gave us a strong foundation and confidence at university.

Students also gave constructive feedback about how the course could be enhanced and a sample of responses is presented below – 'how could the MUFY course be improved to assist you further in your learning at university?'

> The MUFY experience is very much like school and this does not help us when we get to university where we have to be independent. We are too overly dependent on teachers and have compulsory classes when we should be having lectures and tutorials where we can practise the skills of listening and note-taking.

> Currently MUFY is too test focused and the university is assignment driven.

> There should be more emphasis on team-work and more exercises for research preparation and emphasis on skills for problem-solving.

The data will be useful during the next MUFY curriculum renewal process.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a sample of the quality assurance indicators used to ensure MUFY continues to be a strong product for licensed providers, the company and for the university. MUFY needs to ensure it continues to provide a source of revenue and the driver for this is a quality pathway program which prepares students well for the university learning experience.

MUFY's growing student intake (1,500 in 2006) and the students' university results indicate that both quality and width are working well together and, in this respect, MUFY 'keeps in mind quality as it goes with width, Sir', but we need to keep enhancing and improving the product to meet market demands.

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About the author

Silvia McCormack *is Manager of the Monash University Foundation Year program. She is responsible for the curriculum, assessment and quality assurance. Silvia's background and interest is in teaching and learning and she is currently half-way through completing an EdD in student assessment in higher education.*

Contact details

Email: silvia.mccormack@mcpl.monash.edu.au

Intersection of training and podcasting in adult education

Ashok K. Roy
Kennesaw State University

Priya A. Roy
Indiana University

Podcasting is becoming more and more common as a method of delivery at universities and for training purposes. The concept to set up podcasting is simple, and the costs vary. The advantages of podcasting are enormous. Podcasting is especially effective for adult education programs.

In recent years, there has been an explosion in the use of technology in virtually every walk of life. Today, almost universally, college courses use email and computing technology. Due to its rapidly changing nature, the cosmos of computing technology is often considered enigmatic. This is because, while it creates possibilities

for autonomy and empowerment, it simultaneously broadens the gulf between adult learners who have and those who do not have the technological resources necessary for coursework. The following question appears that it will remain one of the daunting challenges in adult education: along the wide spectrum of computing technology, which includes asynchronous e-learning, two-way online communication, synchronous online training, eye-to-eye contact and mobile delivery, where exactly should the intersection point of the chosen delivery mechanism, curriculum and instructional tool be?

The number of corporate training programs and universities that use MP3 players to automatically download files is mushrooming. For instance, Duke University provides all incoming first-year students with iPods, while the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri offers podcasts of lectures through its school network. Additionally, while Stanford University gives its students free access to lectures and audio broadcasts, a large number of colleges and universities (for a partial list, see the footnote below[1]) use podcasts for lectures, seminars, interviews and discussions.

In keeping with this trend towards the electronic delivery of class material in higher education, Indiana University, at the behest of Provost Michael McRobbie, has established a committee which is currently looking at broader support for podcasting. This committee is charged, *inter alia*, to make podcasting 'easy to use' by various departments and to ensure that navigation is facile with standard use of the University logo. There will not be a single podcasting solution, however, as different departments have different needs.

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1   Arizona State University, Buffalo State College, Drexel University, John Hopkins University, Georgetown University, University of California at Santa Cruz, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of Chicago, Purdue University, University of Louisville, Weber State University, Chautauqua Institution, University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Podcasting today is one of the newest trends on the Internet. According to a recent Pew/Internet study, more than 22 million American adults own iPods or MP3 players, and 29% of them have downloaded podcasts from the Web. It is an avenue to generate audio programs that can be listened to on a PC or portable music player such as an iPod. By employing podcast learning technology, an adult education program could generate savings from the consolidation of space, and learners could also find it to be an efficient use of their time as they can learn whenever and wherever they want (Duderstadt, Atkins, & Houweling 2002). This podcasting approach meets the unique needs of adult learners in web-based education environments (DuCharme-Hansen & Dupin-Bryant 2004). Learners could also benefit from reduced transportation time and costs and a work/life balance. Moreover, the audio content often adds to the experience of the adult student. Finally, it should be noted that many adult education programs now have, in addition to the traditional classroom instruction, a blend of e-learning and mobile instruction.

What is a podcast?

The term 'podcasting' is a term used for over a decade to describe a particular method of delivery for types of content that have been produced for internet consumption. It is a process in which digital audio recordings are broadcast over the Internet to learners who have signed up to receive them. A podcast is like traditional radio, only it is a cognitive medium and is available on demand for a specific topic. The term 'cognitive medium' suggests that it helps the user *know,* not *do*. With a radio, one would have to listen to a certain program, on a certain station, at a certain time. With a podcast, one can listen to whatever topic is wanted, when wanted (e.g. in the car on the way to work), without being constrained by local radio reception or other inconveniences. For example, in the global media, one could listen to an Australian podcast just as easily as an American one. Also, depending on the topic, there could be a significant amount of

material already available at one of the online podcast directories. Obviously, there are issues of what one can or cannot use and of privacy and security.

Through encoding with Really Simple Syndication (RSS), the shows to which learners subscribe are transferred to a computer or an iPod. A small file written in XML has to be created to enable a RSS feed. A podcast is basically a computer sound file in MP3 format, but what makes it a podcast and not simply a sound file is the RSS. An RSS-enabled newsreader allows learners to 'subscribe' to topics they want to read or tune into and download new material in bulk, either written or audio. So, a student can wipe everything off of his/her i-Pod or other music player and use the RSS to only download podcasts, news or blog entries that are 'new', all at one time. A student can also configure his/her reader to download new material automatically. To see how an RSS works, visit http://www.newsgator.com.

A news-feeder takes some time to set up, but after set-up, it is an incredibly easy and targeted way to get news and business intelligence. Its key strength is in providing standardised access in one place to a variety of news and business intelligence. In an organisation, ten people could 'blog' information, and everyone in the company could access all ten blog postings (current only) via a single screen in a newsreader application. There are a number of free desktop RSS newsreaders for both desktop and iPaq (pocket pc) software.

How much does it cost?

An adult education program that wants to embark in this direction to transform its training content onto podcasts would need a number of resources. This list includes an Internet connection, computers with speakers, and microphones. Currently, most adult distance education programs have these resources, and for those programs that do not have such resources, the estimated unit cost of beginning such

a venture is approximately US$4,110 (see table below for details). Among the equipment listed below, the video/audio editing software is the most vital. The estimates given are only for procuring one unit each. Obviously, the costs would increase depending on how many units the program desires to have and also whether it wants to supply the MP3 players to its students as does Duke University.

Estimated unit costs to start a program		
Equipment	Cost (in US$)	Recommended manufacturer
Adobe audition	400	
Microphones	210	Shure SM-58
Headphone	150	Sony
Sound forge	325	Sony
Video/audio editing software (uncompressed)	1,375	Apple
Digital recorders	550	Marantz
Laptop with microphone input port and line-level inputs	1,100	Dell
Total	4,110	

The learners would have to subscribe to the 'feed' using RSS technology to download new podcasts automatically when online. The advantage for an adult education program and its learners is that the learners can receive new podcasts that are part of a series on their computers without having to go to the Internet site each time and download them. Any user can then transfer the downloaded files to a MP3 player, iPod or cell phone with audio file capability.

How to set up podcasting

The basic concept is simple. There are two fundamental kinds of podcasts. One is like a radio program with professional intros and exits. The other is simply a voice recording stating the podcast

number, a brief description of what the podcast is about, and then the body of the message. Since it is a cognitive medium, the latter is potentially better. If, for example, a person listened to four or five podcasts in a row, then he/she might grow tired of hearing the same intro over and over again.

This voice recording can be done with a simple computer microphone and MP3MYMP3 recording software (found at http://www.mp3mymp3.com). This software is free, easy to use, and fairly sophisticated. It has a recording limit of about an hour, which is enough for one podcast. Moreover, it saves the recording to MP3 or WAV (waveform audio file format for storing audio on PCs). Another option for free recording software is Audacity, but it is a little more difficult to set up.

In order to get quality sound, a professional microphone and a very simple mixer that can give the person control over the recording level, tone, reverb and so on are required. Appropriate adapters for plugging the microphone into a computer microphone jack are also needed. If one were to do the 'radio program' type of podcast that requires mixing various sound files (e.g. mixing a music intro and closure with the podcast itself), then the other items mentioned in the list above would be needed.

Sound Forge, for example, is an audio editing program, while Adobe Audition is a recording and mixing program. Neither of these software programs is needed if music or an intro will not be used or if MP3MYMP3 is used to record. It is recommended that there should be only a very brief music intro or no intro at all because it can be abrasive after listening to several podcasts.

MP3MYMP3 is a digital recording software, so an external digital recorder is not needed. This could be an option for use instead of a computer rather than in addition to a computer. A digital recorder is needed if a person wants to record podcasts remotely, for example,

in the car on the way to work, but one is not needed if he/she is using the computer to record. The headphones should have the recording level set so that the peaks are just hitting the top of the grid, or there will be distortion.

What to do after a podcast is produced

A podcast is simply an MP3 file. After it is produced, the program coordinators need to figure out how the adult learners are going to listen to it.

Some options include:
- Burn the files to a music CD and listen on any CD player, including a computer CD player
- Download from an intranet website and listen with headphones on computer (need headphones to avoid disruption)
- Allow learners to transport files home with a thumb drive
- Download to a one-gigabyte SD card ($50) to use in a music player with expandable memory
- Download to a work-owned music player or iPod. Most players have their own storage memory. This ranges from 264 megabytes to 40 gigabytes. Some have expandable SD cards.

An important caveat is to work with the information technology department to avoid the risk of getting a virus. Also, the program should not economically discriminate against some adult learners, given that some learners may not have their own players. One way to get around this is by making the program a voluntary pilot and asking for participants who already have iPods, but eventually the program will have to pay to supply these.

Cost-benefits of podcasting

Podcasting is a great means to teach learners. The cost of creating a podcast varies, depending on how demanding the program wants to

be in terms of sound quality. The cost of duplicating CDs is low. The cost of enabling all learners to listen to a podcast in a non-intrusive way (using headphones instead of playing through a computer speaker) is low. The cost of providing a means to transport files (e.g. expandable cards or thumb drives) is also low. However, the cost of providing the 'portability' (purchasing iPods for all learners), which is a key strength of podcasting, can be very high. An alternative could be for the program to have a check-out system for a limited number of iPods.

Some advantages of podcasting

For many adults, learning takes place in a variety of locations. As a large number of adult education learners have to balance the competing pulls of the workplace with family and the quest for self-renewal, this broadcasting of information is very efficient and inexpensive. It facilitates self-paced learning and allows a restructuring of the use of class-time, as an adult learner can literally listen to instruction while on a lunch break at the workplace. Thus, because it is easier for the learner to be in the program than to take on-site classes, the programs may have a higher enrolment rate. The adult learner has the flexibility to turn down-time to study-time. Furthermore, with changing demographics, a greater number of adult learners are not proficient in the English language. For these adult learners, podcasting is a good technology platform as they can hear pronunciations and review the lectures as often as needed.

It appears that podcasts in an adult education program would be most effective when used to reinforce concepts or training content and to communicate. Podcasting, therefore, allows for the remediation of adults who may be slow learners, have learning disabilities or take in information aurally. At the same time, podcasting can offer additional content for those learners who are advanced. An adult learner has the flexibility to pull audio files, streaming video or animation from the education content material into his/her iPod, MP3 player or

BlackBerry, and listen to it while engaged in something else. Yet another benefit to learners is, by using an RSS 'aggregator' such as Firefox, Thunderbird or NewsGator, they are alerted to any new material that the adult education program puts out. Adult learners also have the latitude to review the audio files at their leisure before a test or for better understanding. In other words, podcasts should be used to supplement, and not replicate, classroom presentations, thereby enabling staff to expand the confines of a classroom in an adult education program. In other words, use of podcasting has the added value of improving and stretching educational activities beyond what is actualised in traditional teacher-learner interactions (Ginsburg 1998, Imel 1998).

One of the most significant advantages to an adult distance education program from the use of podcasting is the ability to use interviews (e.g. Sony's Hi-MD Walkman with MiniDisc recorder) and discussions with external or internal experts in order to teach and inform the adult learners who might not find time for face-to-face education. Podcasting gives an adult education program the flexibility to go beyond listening and may offer a greater range of creativity. Podcasting is a convenient and portable way to share knowledge. The main advantage is that a learner can listen and multi-task. The program can also combine learning with music and news. Podcasting also permits learners to organise the information for their day by reducing dependence on location-based resources. For example, one can hear a lecture by Henry Merrill of Indiana University on how to plan programs for adult learners, and then see a discussion on self-directed learning by guest speaker Sharan Merriam from the University of Georgia or some other remote location, followed by an accounting podcast by Mike Tiller at the Kelley School of Business of Indiana University. In the coming years, if educational institutions can decide to share podcasts, it would be an ideal situation for learners. It gives the individual the latitude to listen to a learning-module on the way to work or as a filler-time while making the class

content more engaging. Podcasting can be seen as a perk for adult learners and is good for morale. Obviously, it is both a marketing tool and a learning tool at the same time.

Some disadvantages of podcasting

It should be noted that an over-emphasis on such high-tech driven education could dilute the value and quality of education. Podcasting is not recommended for teaching learners 'how to' do something or for processes that require compliance with every step or that cannot vary, as learners tend not to retain every point. Experience depicts that sometimes learners have to listen to the same podcast over and over to catch everything. It is also not suggested for group sessions, as it tends to be boring. Further, it is not good when combined with jobs that are phone-heavy or that require a lot of meetings, conversations or other activities that are not conducive to multi-tasking. The adult education program has to be cognisant that it is difficult to monitor what learners are actually listening; the downloading process would have to be fully controlled.

In a business organisation, the goal is performance. At a university, the general goal is to enable learners to perform in the workplace. It should be emphasised that having a new tool is not a replacement for good performance practices. Performance is first, tools are second. (For further information regarding the business uses of podcasting, see http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=714122.)

Podcasting experience at Indiana University

At Indiana University, UITS Digital Media Network Services has been supporting podcasting in academic classes for over a year. Fifty to sixty sections use one of the 250 rooms on the eight university campuses that contain a video-conferencing system (typically Polycom). There is an automated system that connects the conference to an encoder for live streaming and/or archived downloads.

Currently, Windows Media, Real and MP3 are supported for this service.

An instructor can use a recording device such as a 4G iPod with a microphone (usually a Belkin mic adapter and Sony lavalier mic) to record his/her audio and then upload the file to a server that converts it to a low bitrate MP3. If the instructor uses other production tools (say, iMovie or GarageBand), then he or she can upload a QuickTime movie to the server as well. The server automatically creates, for each class, an RSS feed that can be used with iTunes or any other RSS-aware application (NewsGator, Safari) so that the learner only needs to subscribe one time to the feed to receive new podcasts as they are released throughout the semester.

Experience over this one year has shown that if an instructor understands how to prepare his or her lecture and content for streaming/download/podcast delivery, then podcasting can be an effective tool. This is particularly true with video content. Many instructors like to show their PC's screen but may not understand the impact of scaling down the resolution to 320x240 for display in a streaming player or on a video iPod. Even applications like PowerPoint can work very well if they are planned on low resolutions. Another lesson that has been learned is that it does not matter how good the subject-matter of the podcast may be, if the audio quality is distracting to the student-listener, he/she will not finish listening to it. Relatively inexpensive headset microphones are usually a good method for recording the audio of a single speaker. It is recommended that most clips be kept as short as possible, but it seems that factors such as the subject itself or time for content creation dictates longer files.

Conclusion

Today, information technology impacts almost all activities of an educational institution. The on-demand nature and portability of podcasting, in spite of it being in its infancy, bestows on adult

education program managers a mobile, asynchronous, learning-blended, reinforced solution in addition to the usual traditional modes of learning already available. If an adult education program can get over the learner-access hurdle, then podcasting is an extremely cost-effective way to share information. It is much easier to create a podcast than an equivalent website, and technology is inexorably moving toward a generation of automatically printed manuscript. Podcast is definitely a suitable way to leverage the delivery of course content and offers a richer learning environment in adult education classes. Therefore, as part of an overarching, coordinated technology strategy, podcasting should be integrated into adult education programs because of its great number of advantages, including cost-effectiveness, flexibility and classroom enrichment.

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About the authors

Dr. Ashok K. Roy *is Assistant Vice-President for Finance at Kennesaw State University, USA. He was educated in the USA, UK and India. Among his six university degrees and five professional certifications is a Masters in Adult Education from Indiana University. He has authored over 52 publications, and has significant management experience in academia, government and the private sector.*

Priya A. Roy *is a Kelley Scholar in the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. She is the author of seven publications.*

Contact details

Dr. Ashok K. Roy, 1000 Chastain Road, Kennesaw State University, Kenneshaw, Georgia, USA 30144
Email: aroy3@kennesaw.edu

Distance education and its potential for the Red Sea nation, Eritrea – a discourse

Ravinder Rena

Eritrean Institute of Technology – Mai Nefhi

Asmara, Eritrea

Across the world, the distance mode of education is gaining momentum. It is a system in which schools, universities and other educational agencies offer instruction wholly or partly by mail. Eritrea is a newly independent country in Africa and is facing many challenges, particularly in its education sector. It does not have many educational institutions at tertiary level. Thus, distance learning is a valuable option for this country. The distance education program could promote higher education by providing access to large numbers of urban people and disadvantaged groups in rural and remote areas, including working people, fighters, women and other adults. This paper discusses various issues related to the establishment and development of distance education. It presents the distance education programs so far undertaken in the country and explores the potential for distance education in Eritrea.

Introduction

Distance Education is a generic and buzz term. Across the world, it is now evident that the distance mode of education is gaining momentum and becoming popular. Learners in developed countries often prefer distance learning to conventional education. Distance Education is an educational phenomenon that has marked a big educational and structural change in a short duration of time (Harry 1992). It has become a vital issue in education and in strategic planning for regional, national and international development (Keegan 1996). Since school education is cheaper than tertiary education, many countries have developed policy frameworks for the development of distance education at tertiary level for promoting further education to both upgrade and update the skills and knowledge of contact students. In addition, it creates the possibility of increased and more cost-effective access to tertiary education (Evans & Juler 1991, Saint 1999).

Mass education is possible through distance learning as a result of modern technology as the world is no longer confined by boundaries. Technical developments have greatly contributed to the development of distance education (Visser 1994, Daniel & Mega 1996). The modern world has created a new and more effective form of cultural imperialism which has given added incentive to cultivate distance education capacities (Moore 1990, Marrs 1995). Further, distance education is changing with alarming speed, particularly as educational processes become increasingly globalised in terms of physical reach and the scope of courses and programs of study offered. Different viewpoints on distance education are emerging and these reflect the rapidly evolving nature of this increasingly important educational discipline (Khan 1993, Wills 1998).

Encyclopedias of education define correspondence/distance education as 'a system in which schools, universities and other

educational agencies offer instruction wholly or partly by mail'. The dictionary of education defines it in more specific terms:

> It is a method of providing for the systematic exchange between students and instructor, of materials sent by mail for the purpose of instruction in units of subject matter; a set of printed lessons or assignments based on textural materials and/or instructional media with directions for study, exercises, tests, etc., to be used as primary or supplemental aids to learning outside of a regular classroom environment (cited in Keegan 1983).

Distance education, as part of a nation's educational fabric, is being called upon to do more in more efficient and diverse ways than ever before and the people who learn through distance education are becoming increasingly diverse. Distance education encompasses many different styles, it can be anything from mass to 'boutique' (Evans & Juler 1991) while in distance learning, students and teachers find themselves playing very different roles than in traditional education (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). More than any other teaching approach, distance learning requires a collaborative effort between learner and teacher unbounded by traditional limits of time, space and single instructor effort.

The provision of distance education helps learners enhance their acquisition of knowledge and thus skills to lead a better life so governments and private sectors need to work together to lay a solid base for the implementation of the most appropriate distance education programs (Holmberg 1995).

Background literature

Although a relatively young discipline, substantial theoretical contributions were made by various researchers and theorists (Holmberg 1995). During the 1960s and early 1970s, writers such as Otto Peters, Charles Wed Meyer, Borje Holmberg, John Boarth and

Michael Moore started examining the field of distance education and their theoretical contributions have introduced us to some thoughts on distance education.

Various writers (Rumble & Oliveira 1999) describe distance education as an educative process in which a significant proportion of teaching is done by someone who is removed in space, or lives away, from the learner. But it should also be pointed out that even the learners are usually dispersed. Distance education involves the use of a varying range of media, be it print, electronic, written correspondence, audio or computer-based.

Modern electronic technology permits 'live' lessons to be delivered successfully without the teacher's direct presence. Participants can practice 'time shift' instruction at some time after the live lesson and 'place shift' instruction at the same place away from the live teacher (Moore 1990, Harry 1992).

Distance education is not solitary but relational for its concept and mode of delivery may be interwoven with other literatures. It provides a form of education where the act of teaching can take place at the same time as learning delivery or can be separated from learning in terms of time (asynchronous). It is a form of education characterised by (a) physical separation from the teacher, (b) an organised instructional program, (c) technological media, and (d) two-way communication (Moore & Kearsley 1996).

Evans and Juler (1991) have found that the world has hundreds of distance education teaching universities, each being born because of a specific social need. The universities are not easy to supply, sustain, improve, plan finance or manage, as each has unique characteristics. They experience many barriers to learning such as: (a) problems and barriers encountered by students, (b) study limitations within and outside the institutions, (c) lack of feedback or contact, (d) lack of supports and services, (e) problems of feeling alienation and

isolation, (f) problems with newer students, (g) lack of organisation – infrastructure, technology, and (h) lack of materials and competent computer staff to support Internet use. Nevertheless, a cursory look at the basic literature on the developments and trends of education throughout the world reveals that education systems in developing countries continue to make unprecedented progress, despite the fact that in many parts of the world where the need for learning is huge, good and sufficient education remains difficult to find.

Keast (1997) has claimed that, if programs of distance education are to become effective, institutions need to:

- equip their target audiences with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required from the diverse courses they pursue
- empower women so that they can actively participate and contribute in economic, social, and cultural life of the community and the nation
- deploy resources for those (for example, fighters, disabled, women, adults) who are deprived from conventional (traditional) in-campus schools for certain reasons
- provide for and upgrade teachers' professionalism and their career development at work
- promote an innovative system of university education, which is both flexible and open in methods and pace of learning
- play a role in the appropriate implementation of government policy in education, to make it available to all qualified prospective learners, and
- deploy lifelong learning that is flexible (while encouraging the learner's experience) and provide choice as to where, when, what and how they learn as well as the pace at which they learn.

The term 'distance education' covers the many forms of study which are not under the continuous, immediate supervision of tutors working with students in lecture rooms on the same premises but, which nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of

tutorial organisations (Holmberg 1995, Keegan 1996). Their teaching behaviours are often facilitated by print, electronic mechanical or other devices (Rumble & Oliveira 1999).

Objectives of the study

The basic question is why has the Government of Eritrea not been able to implement this style of educational program? Implementation efforts were made between 1996 and 1998 but were discontinued. This paper examines the status of distance education in Eritrea as an alternative education system to the existing traditional system. The insights gained will help educational policy-makers implement distance education in Eritrea. They could also open vistas for further research in distance education within the country.

The objectives for this study are:

- to advocate the creation of an environment in which distance education strategies, resources and support systems are taken as the standard system for education
- to promote the development and provision of training and the necessary information to move distance education from the periphery of education and create a separate educational structure for its effective functioning
- to encourage, support and identify opportunities for co-operation in the sharing of resources between public and private distance education providers.

Methodology and data

To meet these objectives, data were collected from different sources related to distance education from the public sector and the private sector (Baumgartner & Strong 1998). Informal discussions were held with the stakeholders of this distance program: government officials (related to this program); students and staff of the College

of Education in Eritrea Institute of Technology (EIT) – Mai Nefhi; Asmara Teacher Training Institute; elementary teachers who are learning their distance education in Asmara University; teachers working in some secondary schools of Zoba Maekel, like Red Sea, Asmara Comprehensive, Barka, Denden, Issak Teweldemedhn; and some students and employees. In total, 10 directors (including heads), 30 teachers and 60 students at all levels were contacted and in-depth interviews were conducted. Data were also collected from relevant documents. The researcher used an open-ended interview format to allow the interviewee to openly discuss issues(Kvale 1996, Merriam 1998). Interviewees were informed that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained.

The study was conducted during the period October 2005 to March 2006.

This study predominantly used a qualitative approach, which was supplemented with quantitative data where necessary (Merriam 1998). The study was conducted mainly in two localities: Asmara City (the selected secondary schools mentioned above) and the Eritrea Institute of Technology – Mai Nefhi, situated 28 kilometers southwest of Asmara. These two were selected as the relevant persons in those areas could provide the necessary data, documents and insights.

The qualitative research paradigm is suited to dealing with people's attitudes and perceptions about distance education. 'The term qualitative research is an umbrella term referring to several research traditions and strategies that share certain commonalities. There is an emphasis on process, or how things happen, and a focus on attitudes, beliefs and thoughts about how people make sense of their experiences as they interpret their world' (Merriam 1998).

There were some problems because of time constraints with dispersed full-time interviewees and time-sensitive communication services. A few of the respondents were not fully aware of and knowledgeable about distance education, it being a relatively new concept. However, the data were collected from reliable sources and from interviews with persons of high calibre in many walks of educational spheres so their views and opinions could undoubtedly help distance education program implementers in open and distance institutions.

Distance education is indeed a relatively new concept in Eritrea, although it has been practised for many years in other countries. It is with a great hope that this study will make a significant contribution to the existing educational literature in Eritrea. It is believed that the outcome would be useful to the needy and those ready to continue their further education through distance education. The researcher justifies its importance for the disadvantaged, disabled and other persons unable to pursue their studies in conventional institutions. One alternative to the traditional mode of education is distance learning, which could satisfy the need of modern education by providing advanced media where the learners are. Since it is a new area of study, there is room to conduct further research and many studies could help make all learners aware of the limitations and strengths they may encounter as distance learners. In sum, distance education implementation could undoubtedly add something to the educational development of Eritrea. Thus, this paper explores the desired implementation of distance education programs in Eritrea and deals with factors leading to the establishment of distance education programs at tertiary level and open and distance education program initiatives in Eritrea. It highlights the experience of distance education programs for elementary teachers in Eritrea, and University of South Africa (UNISA) experience of distance education programs in Eritrea.

The paper is structured in five sections. The second section provides a brief note about the educational background in Eritrea. Section three discusses the distance education programs implemented in the country. Section four delves into the potential for distance education

in Eritrea, and also analyses the perceptions of the respondents about the program. Section five presents the concluding remarks.

The educational sector in Eritrea

Eritrea is strategically located in the horn of Africa, sharing borders respectively with Sudan to the north and west, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the south east, and the Red Sea to the east. It has a human population of about 4 million. It covers an area of 124,320 sq. kms., stretching from 18.22 to 12.42 degrees longitude. Eritrea's coastlines extend about 1200 kms., flanked by coral reefs and 354 islands, including the important Dahlak Archipelago (Killion 1998:1.) The war devastated nation fought bravely for 30 years (1961–1991) to obtain its *de facto* independence on 24 May 1991 and its official independence on 24 May1993 after a United Nations supervised referendum in which 98.8% of the people voted in favour of independence (MoE 1999, Rena 2005[b]). Peoples' instability in the long war for independence and the recent border dispute with Ethiopia have severely affected the economy, political and social development of the country. Eritrea is recovering from the ruins of war, destruction, conflict, colonial rule and oppression and it is now on its way to a new era of order, stability, recovery and reconstruction (MoE 1996).

Eritrea has utilised many different types of educational systems. The history of modern Eritrean education can be divided into various periods on the basis of social and political conditions. The objectives of education were in general based on colonial requirements and a policy that placed emphasis on indoctrination and subordination (Taye 1992:25, Rena 2005[b]). Indeed, Eritrea inherited its educational system from a variety of sources and so the education system reflected the ideological interests of the colonising powers of the time. Contrary to the above, colonial educational policies in the government of Eritrea believed that education was not only a fundamental human

right but also as a vehicle for national development and poverty reduction initiatives (Rena 2005[c], MoE 2006).

It is understood that, during the armed struggle, most of the Eritrean youth were engaged in the struggle and quite a number of those remaining were forced to leave because of the repression by the Ethiopian government. As a result, in the aftermath of independence, there was an acute shortage of trained manpower in all fields of economic and education because so many Ethiopians who were working in Eritrea left home (Killion 1998, Rena 2004). At that time, more than 60% of the employees in Eritrea were Ethiopians who fled back to their homeland (Rena 2005[b]). It was a severe jolt to the whole education system of the country. Access to education is a fundamental right of all individuals in any country. To realise this fundamental right of all individuals, Eritrea committed itself to the coveted goal of 'education for all' (EFA) by 2015 but many challenges remained. Access to schools in some remote localities in the six zobas, a zonal division of the country, are difficult as the new nation inherited heavily damaged infrastructure and badly affected people in education (MOE 2006).

Low learning achievements, handling large classes, a lack of qualified teachers and poor facilities in the schools remain the cause of unsatisfactory quality in education. To bring drastic change, the Ministry of Education introduced educational reforms in 2003 and started to prepare a standardised curriculum for schools (Carrol 2004). Problems remain: the participation rate of women is very low at all levels of schools, most of the schools in the country work on a shift system. To conduct free time (all day) schools is difficult for the government, as it requires an adequate number of school buildings. Many people who are living in both urban and rural areas of the country need to learn. Some of the elementary schools are situated outside the vicinity of approximately seven kilometres in some localities (Rena 2005[a]).

To provide education to all and to make further education accessible to those who are interested in continuing their studies, to extend learning beyond the regular system and provide cost-effective education, the only alternative mode is distance learning. First, distance education programs should aim for teachers at all the three levels who are trained; this will help achieve quality education at the school level. Then, distance education must be provided for matriculation and degree courses. Taking all these issues into account, the Ministry could initiate distance education programs to alleviate the major concerns of the lack of highly skilled professional and technical manpower. To upgrade teachers' professionalism and work esteem, the government institutions in cooperation with various development partners have been sending their staff members to both short- and long-term overseas training programs, in addition to what technical, vocational and managerial education was provided at home. In line with this, curricula makers and designers in Eritrea always strive to maintain an efficient education system in schools: conventional and distance to serve as an effective means of accelerating and promoting economic, social, scientific and technological progresses (MoE 2006, Rena 2006).

Eritrea inherited a ruined infrastructure, which has tried to be healed by massive mobilisation and agitation of people under the *Warsay Yikealo Development Campaign* mobilised to ensure the economic reconstruction of the war-devastated nation.[1] After independence, the government has been trying to practise a policy regarding education that is the ultimate right of every Eritrean within and without. The motto 'education for all' means obligatory education from first to seventh grade, and free education up to secondary school. Moreover, regular students who scored high results at secondary school could gain the opportunity to enter Asmara University and/or Eritrea Institute of Technology-Mai Nefhi, and other recently established colleges in the country. The remaining mediocre students who scored less highly (Grade Point Average 1.25) are all enrolled in other

vocational schools such as Asmara Commercial College and Pavoni Technical Institute (Rena 2004, Rena 2005[a]). It is to be noted that the educational policy of Eritrea was designed to fulfil and extend educational opportunities to all Eritreans irrespective of their age, sex and geographical location in Eritrea.[2]

In Eritrea, education has become an indispensable catalyst for economic and social developments: (a) tertiary enrolments of the nation will undoubtedly expand rapidly in the years to come; (b) tertiary education as viewed by some educators in the future will be based less on academic disciplines and more on trans-disciplinary issues (Rena 2005[c]). Great emphasis is placed on ability to learn independently, to communicate effectively with others, to collaborate productively in teams or groups, to be culturally and socially sensitive, to be flexible and to accept social responsibilities (Saint 1999).

Distance education in Eritrea

At the beginning, although there were no established schools, education was carried out under trees or rocks. With the liberation of wider areas and more people, education spread fast. It is to be noted that disabled fighters who were residing in Port Sudan under the umbrella of Eri-clinic were also conducting education. These disabled had very serious injuries and were using the Eri-clinic for both treatment rehabilitation and also some basic education. They were thirsty, and later quenched their thirst through distance education learning. Had it not been for their strong yearning, they would not have learned successfully. Most of them started school in the field. No wonder they became literate. Therefore, it is believed that the revolution (freedom struggle) has been the greatest university for Eritreans.[3]

About 80% of Eritreans depend on agriculture and its allied activities. These peasants are busy the whole day with their agriculture profession and hence do not have access to school. Moreover, there

was a lack of teachers and teaching materials. Because regular classes were difficult to maintain due to such various constraints, other alternatives had to be found. All of these factors facilitated the emergence of the distance mode of education as an acceptable alternative. The first task of the committee responsible to run distance education in Port Sudan and Suakin was to undertake research in order to know levels of academic status; these were grouped as follows:

• Foundation course for students from grades 1 to 7
• Refresher course for students from grades 8 to 9
• O – level course for students from grades 10 to 12

Within these groupings, learning was conducted in two centres in Port Sudan and Suakin for many years, although it ceased after independence due to some constraints.

Distance education is an important means of helping learners to achieve more educational reform goals as well as of expediting the process of reaching the unreached and improving the quality of education and ultimately stimulating the future educational and economic development of Eritrea. In that context, upgrading teacher education both in a pre-service and in-service context is a priority concern. Staff authorities in the Ministry of Education believed distance education could add more potential in delivering precious resources of knowledge to some of the most destitute areas and people, while at the same time stimulating the growth of fledging telecom and educational infrastructures in the country (Ministry of Education, UNESCO and the Government of Italy 1996). The government of Eritrea recognises the need and importance of improving the education system in Eritrea through distance learning to enable the country to enter the modern technological world.[4]

In line with this, there is a need to accommodate an increasing number of candidates such as fighters, disadvantaged adults,

women and teachers in distance learning, an issue that will be used to extensively reinforce the formal education system (Rena 2006). Eritrea is willing to share a spectrum of varied experiences relevant to its commitment to attaining its goals. It is to be acknowledged that there are many other programs that have been organised – for example, UNISA, home or independent study in USA, external studies in Australia, *tele enseignment* in France; *Fernstudium* or *Fernunterricht* in Germany; education at a distance or *ensenanza a distance* in Spanish-speaking countries and *tele educanas* in Portugal – which have succeeded as the result of their materials, logistics, and human resources potential. It is therefore interesting to see the developing distance learning programs in Eritrea's institutions taking new initiatives to promote and expand human capital in the country. In line with this, the Ministry of Education is ready to tackle the problems mentioned above by supplementing proper distance education programs in the schools that it aims to establish during 2007 (MoE 2006).

Prior to the Open Distance Learning program, Asmara University was given the mandate, via a committee decision by the President on 21 October 1991, to study the feasibility of expanding its current program to include distance learning programs. Hence, Asmara University, given the responsibility, has had its tertiary education carefully and exhaustively given distance education offerings from the other countries like South Africa (UNISA) and UK to suit its needs. The role of Asmara University in the establishment of distance education at tertiary level has been to (a) conduct a feasible study of this project, (b) secure the necessary budget for implementation, and (c) carefully implemented the project (University of Asmara 2002). In order to extend the present limited service to all Eritreans, as indicated clearly in the educational policy, Asmara University wants to discharge this responsibility by opening a distance education tertiary level program.

The Open Distance Learning program

The Open Distance Learning (ODL) program was launched on 29 March 2006 at the Asmara University Main Building. The program is a collaborative project between the Ministry of Education and the University of Asmara, and is offered to upgrade the capacity of middle school teachers throughout the six zobas in Eritrea. During the launching ceremony, the Minister of Education, Ato Osman Saleh, said that the government, realising education is the basis for economic growth, has given priority to education and is actively working on it. He added that the Ministry of Education has been working on capacity building by organising distance learning and other forms of training.

Some 590 junior school teachers, holding certificates and wanting to upgrade them to diploma level, are participating in the Open Distance Learning program. The teachers are guided by around 150 faculty members from the University, in addition to staff from the Ministry of Education. The training of tutors, who are middle school English and Mathematics teachers from different Zobas, has been a component of the preparation ahead of the launching of the Distance Education Diploma Program.

The collaborative program is a three-year diploma course for teachers, and 26 information centers have been established around the country. Meanwhile, the University of Asmara, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has offered a week-long training of tutors' course from 17 – 23 February as a part of the preparation for the Open Distance Learning Program. It is reported that the second batch in this program is expected to start in 2007 and will target the remaining 1,400 certificate-holding junior school teachers.

Mr. Tedros Sium, Director of Human Resource Development in the Ministry of Education, stated that the rationale and objectives of the establishment of the Open Distance Learning program for middle school teachers are basically related to the ongoing transformation of the overall education system, and also to the government's plan to transform its education and training system through a comprehensive program of human resource development and revised approaches to teaching and learning. He also pointed out that a plan to establish a Distance Learning Program is one among the major measures taken to alleviate the acute shortage and constraints of qualified teachers at the middle school level:

> The Ministry [of Education] believes that the commencement of open distance learning will play a very useful part in Eritrea's Education Sector Development Program, said Tedros. It is also important to note that a good and effective system of open distance learning depends on the existence of a good system of learner support.

UNISA experience of distance education programs in Eritrea

South Africa has developed a policy framework for tertiary distance education which could possibly complement Eritrea's specific content based on its national conditions. The overarching objective has been to improve the capacity of government institutions in a sustainable fashion, and this would be done by resolving the major problem posed by the acute shortage of skilled and professional manpower.

A total of 889 trainees from 34 public sector entities were originally enrolled in 44 areas of specification in the UNISA program (see Table 1). As indicated in the table, the attrition rate was quite high. While 213 (24%) failed, another 276 (31%) had to withdraw before completing their respective training modules. The main beneficiaries of the UNISA programs were the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Defence which employ 53% of the participants, followed by the Ministry of Local Government (University of Asmara 2004).

Table: 1 Students of UNISA program

Status	Number
Passed	358
Failed	213
Withdraw	276
Others	42
Total	889

(Source: Consultancy Training and Testing Center, University of Asmara
 – Records)

For the UNISA program to operate effectively, investing in the creation and functioning of a mentoring system was required. There was initially a high level of enthusiasm among public sector employees (PSEs) to enrol in distance learning with over 2,800 applications received from almost all government institutions. Following screening conducted by the Consultancy Training and Testing Centre in Asmara University to determine eligibility, about three-quarters (BA = 170, MA = 381) of the applications were submitted to the UNISA, leading to the enrolment in 2002 of PSEs from 37 Government of Eritrea institutions in BA level degree programs. An additional 50 applications for master's programs were processed in 2003. Of the 889 PSEs enrolled in 2002, 40% passed their training modules and 60% either failed or withdrew; by the second semester academic year 2002/03, only 404 PSEs were enrolled, and of these, 46% failed.

The high attrition rate was reportedly due to the following reasons:
• students had difficulties in managing their study programs while also coping with their work pressures, and were encountering logistics and transportation problems
• some students lacked the discipline to pursue their studies independently

• lack of computer skills and communication problems with instructors and tutors
• students considered that tutorials and support systems were inadequate
• delays in dispatching materials for exams, assignments (materials come, on average, in three weeks time by courier – South Africa – via Kenya to Eritrea)
• students complained that there was less feedback given to them
• students were provided with material guides only – other books and references needed to be purchased and they faced several inconveniences.

Eri-British Institute

This organisation is a new distance learning institute established in the private sector by an Eritrean and Edexcel, a UK institution, which is closely supervised by the Ministry of Education in country and the British Council Library, Eritrea. The institute provides various courses at undergraduate to postgraduate level. It has very cost-effective study fees compared with other overseas costs for the same programs. So far, many distance learners have already enrolled.

Eri-Tutorial College

Within Eritrea, new distance education institutions are emerging. The School of Modern Consultancy Service launched the Eri-Tutorial College to nurture educational opportunities. The Modern Consultancy Service established a local school of distance learning in 2003 in order to help those students who, for whatever reason, find it inconvenient to attend the normal College courses. According to the owner of the College, the distance learning courses are written in his institution in clear and easy ways in English. The manuals are also written to the level of education of the contact learners so that they can pursue their studies successfully:

- some courses are modified and prepared in such a way as to acquire Eritrean styles to encourage the contact learners to continue their studies
- the College has employed some experienced tutors to help distance learners learn the different modules it offers
- the College is established to upgrade learners' knowledge, skill, professionalism and standard of education, which undoubtedly will contribute to the development of the learners professionally and technically. This will help to upgrade the manpower of the country.

Furthermore, the Eri-Tutorial College has already helped more than 700 citizens to complete their international correspondence studies and registered 50 local distance learners in the academic year 2005–2006.

Potential for distance education programs

Why distance education in Eritrea?

The curriculum designers, while trying to publish quality school books for all grades, had as their main pre-occupation how to increase the number and improve the quality of the 'learning force' against the daunting background of:
- the acute shortage of teachers after liberation in 1991 to staff the schools
- the limited capacity of the one teacher training institution (ATTI) and its subsidiary branch, the Eritrea Institute Technology (EIT)
- an enormous increase in elementary school enrolment and therefore the construction of many new schools
- a two-year university diploma has for long been a technical requirement for being a middle school teacher in the country
- the reluctance, because of cultural or religious reasons, of females and members of some ethnic groups to move away from their homes and families for training purposes

- the economic and domestic difficulties that prevent many teachers, particularly in remote regions, from taking up training away from their localities
- the need to educate the disadvantaged, irrespective of age, sex and place.

While spending on educational provision has increased greatly, there are limited budgetary means to cater for the financial costs that a new nation has to face when rebuilding infrastructure, expanding medical and welfare services, and advancing economic and business opportunities. No system of distance education is likely to remain efficient if it remains static. It needs to be sensitive to trends and changing needs in education, and have the flexibility to modify its programs and practices, and to expand in response to the needs of the community it is serving. The Ministry of Education has recognised the above issues and is working on the significance and importance of improving the education system in Eritrea. Its vision is ultimately to attain quality of education, access and relevance. Distance learning, a new mode of delivery, will undoubtedly help to promote educational quality and relevance in many ways.

The need for lifelong learning to enable workers to upgrade their skills and maintain competitiveness within rapidly evolving economies is becoming significant worldwide. The aspiration of learned people and staff authorities in the Ministry is to help and equip people by means of education through distance learning. Tertiary education needs to be extended beyond on-campus institutions to satisfy the educational needs of different employees, fighters and women in Eritrea. Eritrean scholars believe that distance education will be used extensively to reinforce the formal education system, which is often hampered by deficient quality and lack of capacity to accommodate the ever-growing demand for schooling in Eritrea.

The need to accommodate growing numbers of candidates in distance learning, especially for teachers, is a crucial issue in order to increase

existing manpower and develop Eritrea with adequate infrastructural facilities. Distance education, as a new mode of delivery, provides systematic exchange between student and instructor and materials sent by mail for the purpose of instruction in units of subject-matter: a set of printed lessons or assignments based on textural materials and/or instructional media with directions for study, exercises and tests. Distance education may be the latest fashion in education, but it is here to stay as a modern model of teaching and learning.

The Ministry of Education in Eritrea therefore plans to build the nation's educational level and potential using the distance education mode of delivery to the needy and the ready, and providing the required certificate, diploma, bachelor of education, master of education and MBA courses where necessary. The ultimate aim of the Ministry is to create capable employees, having a trained workforce by providing the conducive atmosphere for learning and training opportunities they ought to have at all levels of studies (MoE 2003). It has made many changes to enable implementation of a standard system of education in schools at different levels. The teachers in return are given professional training in workshops, seminars, short- and long-term refresher courses to enhance their professionalism and work esteem. Many schools are built equipped with modern teaching and learning facilities. At the same time, the Government is (a) significantly expanding integrated, low-cost and community-based early childhood programs; (b) aiming for universal access and quality primary education for all by 2015, reducing male illiteracy to about 10 percent by 2010 and achieving female literacy of at least 60 percent; and (c) expanding 'lifelong' learning to achieve a modern cultural transformation among disadvantaged groups in rural and urban areas through distance education delivery (MoE 1999, Rena 2006).

Modern training could be conducted in the existing kindergartens and elementary, middle and secondary schools, having in mind particularly the disabled, disadvantaged rural youths including girls

who have been deprived of formal education and training because of various social, religious and economic reasons. Scholars in the study propose that teachers' career development will be achieved through implementation of distance education after the background factors outlined above are worked out. The focus will be on teaching teachers who could bring about change in the development of education. Basically, it will target kindergarten teachers, uncertified elementary teachers and elementary teachers who are promoted to middle level (MoE 2003, Rena 2006).

The aim is that all teachers at all levels will pursue academic and pedagogical studies parallel through distance education lessons in addition to conventional courses. Similarly, through distance learning, directors, supervisors and even Ministry staff who are not teachers will be expected to upgrade and improve their leadership and management roles. MBA courses may also be offered to senior Ministry staff to help them become more aware of and sensitive to changes in the training and education field, as well as the benefit in investing in people with high potential to expedite the process of teaching and to improve the quality of education.

The respondents' perceptions

The main points from the respondents were as follows:
- most were not in a position to differentiate between correspondence and distance education programs
- many did not have a clear understanding of distance education and the various programs implemented by the Government of Eritrea
- almost all respondents agreed that distance education programs are essential for Eritrea, particularly to encourage mass education and coordination of education for all citizens
- some respondents believed that distance education has nothing to do with the size of the country and its geographical barriers, provided that proper transportation and communication are

developed that will lead the success of distance education programs

- respondents could differentiate between distance and regular modes of education by their methods of interaction, but were not aware other differences
- most of the respondents were not aware of programs which are not being offered by the Government of Eritrea, so unless the Government focuses on distance education, the program will not be successful
- the thirty years' freedom struggle, border dispute and lack of financial resources have forced the Government to concentrate on the provision of food and health of its citizens
- all respondents firmly agreed that good tutors should be employed on a worthy salary for the effective conduct of distance education programs
- many respondents suggested that effective postal services, e-mail, video/audio, TV, radio newspapers, ICT finance, logistics, distribution of study materials and effective organisation of study centres are essential for the effective implementation of distance education programs.
- almost all the respondents suggested that the Government should spend a huge amount of money on distance education in the beginning
- respondents agreed that the community should also contribute its share for the growth and implementation of distance education programs
- almost all the respondents agreed that negligence on the part of the relevant authority would spoil the distance education programs, so for their success, personnel with sound knowledge, skills and expertise are required
- though the Government of Eritrea is concentrating on developing the regular system of education, it has to concentrate on distance education programs.

Developed countries have succeeded with this new mode of distance education because they have had in place the necessary infrastructure to guaranteed fast, reasonably priced access to the internet. In the case of developing countries like Eritrea, service providers of the new mode of delivery need to take into account the limited access to relevant internet sites and adjust their services accordingly. For Eritrea, it is therefore important and helpful to examine other countries' experiences with implementation of distance education. In the light of the above conclusions, the Government of Eritrea should spare a considerable amount of money for the development of distance education programs at levels appropriate for its citizens. It can also encourage the private sector like the Modern Consultancy Service which has the zeal to establish distance education institutions (interview conducted with the owner of the Eri-Tutorial College).

Concluding remarks

Distance education institutions could promote, socialise and democratise higher education by providing access to large numbers of urban people and disadvantaged groups in rural and remote areas, including working people, fighters, women and other adults in Eritrea who want to upgrade their knowledge and/or skills in various fields in the country and thus complement more formal opportunities. Borderless education through the internet and other modes of education has the capacity to create a revolution in access over the next few years in Eritrea because of the huge changes in technologies like satellites, fibre optic cables and devices such as mobile phones and computers.

Distance learning has become a major issue in education and in strategic planning for regional development. It is a possible means for developing the human resources of a small and young country like Eritrea. The establishment of distance education should be simple but is complex, time-consuming and requires substantial resources. Therefore, particular attention needs to be paid to its

overall structural and administrative development and teaching material preparation. Eritrea needs to draft its own approach to the establishment of tertiary distance education programs and institutions. To do this, it can learn considerably from the worldwide experiences of distance education policy-making and planning. To understand distance education, it is necessary to have a theoretical framework that encompasses the whole area of education.

This new mode of learning has assisted in the development of education worldwide. In Eritrea, it needs to be established with the required logistics, quality material, student support and trained manpower. Therefore, constructive and effective measures have to be taken by the authorities in Ministries to enhance economic, social and educational development in Eritrea. If Eritrea was to set up a strong base for distance education, it is hoped that this study may establish a foundation for researchers as a guide for conducting future research.

Notes

[1]   The *Warsai-Yikeaalo* Development Campaign was launched in May 2002, and after just two years, assessment of what has been accomplished has been rated commendable, although much remains to be done. The Campaign has been focusing its developmental programs on the following major undertakings: infrastructure renovation and development, agricultural intensification and modernisation, raising industrial output, mining schemes, the tourism sector and human resource development.

[2]   See the Provisional Government of Eritrea (2 October 1991), Department of Education Policy Document, Asmara, Eritrea.

[3]   In the town of Nackfa, a revolutionary school that was popularly known (*Tsabra* school) was set up and provided education and training for many children and fighters in 1970s and 1980s.

[4]   It is observed that the Distance Education Programs for Elementary Teachers in Eritrea (DEPETE) program has succeeded in improving elementary teachers' work esteem and professionalism. This program was monitored by staff authorities in the Ministry of Education, the Italian government and UNESCO, and every effort was made to make it successful. However, the program was discontinued after six years due to lack of expertise, lack of experience, logistics, quality materials and student support services. For further details, see Ministry of Education (1996), *Brief description of DEPETE: tasks and achievements,* Department of National Pedagogy, Ministry of Education, Asmara, Eritrea.

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About the author

Dr Ravinder Rena is an Assistant Professor of Economics in the Department of Business and Economics, Eritrean Institute of Technology – Mai Nefhi (under the Ministry of Education), Asmara, Eritrea.

His qualifications include: MA, BEd, LLB, MPhil, PhD.

Contact details

Department of Business and Economics, Eritrean Institute of Technology – Mai Nefhi (under the Ministry of Education), Post Office Box 7956, Asmara, Eritrea.
Tel: 00291 7120361 (mobile in Eritrea)
Email: ravinder_rena@yahoo.com or ravinder_rena@rediffmail. com

RESEARCH REPORT

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A study of hospice nursing

Susan Bardy
PhD candidate
School of Education
University of South Australia

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Hospice nursing is regarded by many as both physically and emotionally demanding work. Nursing literature is rich in discussing palliative care modalities, clinical practice techniques and care for family and friends, but is less forthcoming in describing the clinician as an individual. It is clear that people working in this area do so for reasons that may be more than skin deep, and that is why there is a need for explicating the reasons and motivations of the professional who finds fulfilment in caring for patients without expecting the satisfaction of healing the wounded body.

My PhD study is using autoethnographic techniques, a relatively new research method not predominant in nursing cultures.

I focus on how/why individual personal experience and self-understanding could guide the choice of hospice nursing as a career. Autoethnography has scope to signal not only competency in a caring model but a willingness to be present with end of life suffering and pain. By using personal narrative in a scholarly fashion, this research method will discuss how the author, working with nurses on a daily basis, finds the work challenging and emotionally satisfying. I want to ask others and myself the question of why we remain devoted to end of life issues.

I anticipate that, by uncovering deeper meaning structures that I and other hospice nurses espouse, we will know more about the qualities or attributes of end of life nursing care. At the same time I hope this study will influence creative educational and management approaches to recruitment and retention of hospice workers.

BOOK REVIEW

Writing the story of your life: the ultimate guide

Carmel Bird
Sydney: Fourth Estate, 2007
ISBN: 9780732284565
Paperback, 323 pages, $24.95

How does a reader of other people's lives learn to become a writer of one's own life story? Enabling her readers to make that learning journey into becoming a memoirist is Carmel Bird's principal purpose in writing this guide. She invites the hesitant and the hopeful to experience the joy of writing a memoir.

Born in Launceston in 1940, Carmel Bird is well known as author of more than twenty works that include novels, collections of short stories, essays, guides for writers, and children's books. This is her latest work. She has also been an adult educator for writers for more than 25 years.

My intention initially was to review this text through an academic lens. During the previous decade or so, together with colleagues Sue Knights and Jane Sampson, I have been teaching 'Autobiography of lifelong learning' in the Master of Adult Education course at the University of Technology, Sydney. During 2007, I also taught 'Autobiography of transformative learning' as a course unit in the Master of Arts (Pastoral Practice) for Broken Bay Institute (Sydney College of Divinity). Within a group process, participants in these courses explored aspects of their lifelong learning through writing a memoir. From an academic perspective, I had hoped that in this book I might find an enlightening chapter on adult learning for the Course Reader next time I offer the course, and even discover some inspiration for a stimulating class exercise on autobiography.

This text does not deal with theories of adult learning, nor is it the place for outlining contemporary discussions on self and subjectivity, or the reliability of autobiographical memory. However, although the author makes little room here for deep musing on these questions, she alerts the reader who longs to be a writer to consider the intriguing complexity of writing memoirs. She invites readers to undertake exercises to discover how the writer's self may have different aspects, to give thought to how truth and fiction are expressed in memoir and autobiography, and to discover how varying the tense in verbs and the use of active / passive voice affect how a memoir is composed. The processes employed in promoting adult learning within this text are effective for practitioners who are interested in writing memoir.

Bird distinguishes memoir from autobiography. She regards autobiography as a life story that stays close to the facts that writers recover or discover in researching their life. In contrast, memoir allows more freedom for imagination to build upon whatever facts can be collected. By incorporating into memoir some degree of fiction, the writer claims greater liberty to compose the life story.

The other lens through which I viewed *Writing the story of your life* is my personal perspective as someone who wants to experience the joy that Carmel Bird has found in writing her memoirs. In engaging from this perspective, I found in her book inspiration, example and practical advice to follow. I was drawn into the accompaniment for learning that this book offers by some words from the Prelude:

> To sing a true song, the song of your own life story, is a most energizing, absorbing and delicious thing to do. … And the process of producing it is a pleasure. (2007: xi)

However, besides glimpsing the joy, I found also that as I followed and sometimes retraced my steps in Bird's *Ultimate guide* I became restless and preoccupied. The exercises drew me into being a participant in her workshop on writing. As I followed the author's process, I drifted into recollecting events that I needed more time to uncover than I had available. I am left with unsettling questions, a sense of ignorance about important moments in my own life, and some silences. I felt dissatisfied at times that I had to let some memories slip away without giving them a form that I wanted to communicate to others. To use this book fruitfully, a reader / writer would need to be prepared to set aside enough time to allow the author's processes to work. This is indeed what Carmel Bird advises.

Recollecting one's life, especially through memories of concrete events, places, people and natural environments is the first of four steps in her practical guide to writing. Then, there follows the invitation to our imagination to use metaphor to fill out and connect the gaps that often exist among the scattered small pieces of conversation, dreams, materials and photographs of our lives that we recall. In turn, this leads to constructing a story that is comprehensible to others. The final step involves finding the words to carry the memoir. At this moment, Bird addresses the writer:

> It's the best story – you just need the perfect words to tell it. And the secret here is that you have those words already

– that's the good news. The not-so-good news is that you may need courage to find and use those words. (2007: 3)

Finding one's own words, rather than words of fashion or compliance, often requires the memoirist to abandon firmly held personal or communal assumptions in order to present a truer version of the life story.

One of the hallmarks of Carmel Bird's approach to educating writers of memoir is her respect for the writer in the reader. However, there is nothing to patronise the writer or to compromise the quality of the memoir in the path to learning that the author proposes. Bird's strategy encourages and coaxes the writer to set out, then gives directions, and coaches for improved performance. At times, I detected an echo of the enthusiasm found in an instructor at boot camp. The only effective way to learn to write the memoir is through sticking to the daily routine of writing. Write something every day. The 28 exercises provide structure for the way forward that might otherwise be very daunting. The exercises possess concreteness, simplicity and even playfulness. They have a do-able quality that is likely to stretch the writer into gaining confidence and skill at writing – and finding joy.

There are plenty of helpful hints provided to support the practice of writing the memoir. The important elements of choosing a place and time to write, rituals and routines, having someone to read the work in progress, are illustrated from her own life and practice. Throughout the book, quotations from eminent writers are sprinkled like hundreds and thousands to reinforce and illustrate the message of the author. Start writing, keep on writing, and enjoy the pleasure of writing your life story.

There are other well known writing guides available. For example, in the United States, Julia Cameron has provided excellent guides to writing in *The artist's way* (1992) and *The right to write* (1998).

She also urges her readers to write daily, and has provided structured exercises such as writing the well known 'morning pages' to establish a habit of writing. Cameron's intent appears also to evoke the writer's creativity and develop their sense of spirituality.

I recommend this book to solitary writers-in-learning as well as to people who may write life story in small groups. Through example and challenge, Bird's organised path of exercises will motivate readers to gain useful and enjoyable writing skills as they research their lives and compose a memoir of lasting value.

Dr Alex Nelson
Casual academic staff
University of Technology, Sydney

BOOK REVIEW

Fancy footwork: adult educators thinking on their feet

Fancy footwork grew out of regular conversations about adult education practice among seven women over the course of nearly two years. These 'women of spirit' gatherings were followed by the participants writing a piece about what guides their educational practice. The authors identify three key themes. The first is thinking bodies in action, teaching as an embodied activity in which the contributors reflect on all aspects of their teaching, including the shadow sides. The second theme they call 'fancy work' which could be seen as opposite terms, but these authors seek to bring them together. A new perspective is found in exploring the use of 'fancy footwork' which includes artistry, whole body engagement and evolving

professional identities. The third theme is professional identity and space which looks at the 'in-between-ness of professional work'. The collection is an interaction of the private and public, which found its 'midway point' in their meeting space where 'private reflections on professional action become the trigger for communal dialogue about work and identities as adult educators'. (p. 27).

The first section, 'Teaching with spirit', explores various notions and terms for personhood, spirituality, transformation, all of which are essentially about the aspect of teaching and learning that opens us up to new perspectives and ways of thinking. Beverley Campbell writes, 'When learners take on new discourses and new ways of thinking then they must take on new ways of being' (p. 34). Spirituality is about connecting with time and place and creating a safe learning environment for Jules de Cinque. She says that 'being connected with our spirituality allows for space to grow and flourish' (p. 42). Beverley Campbell says that transformation happens unintentionally in the educational process and she continues by exploring aspects she is intentional about in her teaching, such as enabling learners to become more reflexive. She also highlights the importance of communicating respect for each learner and the importance of their contribution. Delia Bradshaw concludes this section expressing that spirituality informs every aspect of her work as an adult educator and 'is my wise guide in this work'.

In examining professional identity, the authors offer examples of how the private, public and political interact. There are stories of personal encounters, clash of cultures, groups interacting and issues that arise when diverse people share a learning project.

In the section on learning space are further stories of practice including how young people share space with others quite diverse from themselves. Jacinta Agostinelli and Delia Bradshaw offer some useful suggestions about arranging and creating a learning space. Delia includes creating a 'code of ethics' for the learning community

by asking them: 'What does respect looks like and sound like here?' (p. 88).

The transformation section offers an array of challenges and dilemmas these women have faced in their practice. Delia Bradshaw and Jacinta Agostinelli ask questions about power, identity and what we desire for our students. Beverley Campbell discusses the need to be prepared to put our own views under scrutiny, and that adult educators are often 'nomads' and learn to be eclectic. She also invites us to consider: 'How do we talk about transformation in education without making value judgements or comparisons about what a person was before?' (p. 127).

In the section on the art of pedagogy in action, Beverley Campbell boldly states that 'the ethos of adult education is informed by a belief and hope in creating a better world ... the hope is that learners might "have a heart" for some of the world's concerns' (p. 155). This section also explores trust, silence, anxiety and other matters that preoccupy the adult educator from these contributors' perspectives.

The collection concludes by noting that 'learning is an encounter between embodied beings' (p. 179) as it explores the physicality of teaching in various forms. Balance, power, boundaries, stored images of past experiences of learning are reflected upon as well as the question of 'what should we teach?'.

When I found myself bored with parts of this book, by its very nature it drew me into the questions and style of writing and I found myself asking: 'Why was I bored?'. I think it serves the purpose of being an exploration of practice. It gives much material for discussion and reflection, and provides an engaging model of shared reflection on practice.

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Kate Scholl
Adult educator, St Vincent de Paul Society
Sydney

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BOOK REVIEW

Psychology: six perspectives

L. Dodge Fernald
Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc., 2007
ISBN: 978141293867-9 (pbk.)
408 pages

The author of this engaging, soft cover psychology textbook is Dodge Fernald, senior lecturer in Psychology at Harvard University. He has written several books, has received an award for excellence in teaching in the Harvard Extension School and is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association Division 2. His particular areas of interest include instrumental methods in psychology and clinical practice.

Having read though numerous, stolid psychology textbooks in my student years, I was fascinated by the broad sweep of this appealing book. For the first time I found a text for undergraduates and new postgraduate students of psychology which gave a clear developmental overview of what Fernald describes as the six major perspectives of psychology. He discusses both the historical bases and the critiques of Wundt's biologically-based theories, Freud's and others' psychoanalytical theories, Pavlov's and Skinner's behaviourism, Maslow's and Rogers' humanistic psychology and this millennium's evolutionary psychology in chronological order. He also highlights that, within these broad and often disparately placed groupings, psychology is a pluralistic discipline. He reasons, compellingly too, that being full of subfields and controversies – as distinct from being stuck in any particular paradigmatic mobius strip – is a clear sign that the field is active and healthy.

As early in the text as page 3, Fernald explains that "modern psychology entered the 21st century with a mandate … to engage in a more intensive study of happiness, fulfilment and a sense of well being". This is not, however, to beguile the reader into thinking that this text is consigned to an Age of Aquarius, which has long since disappeared under years of greed is good, new data emerging from evolutionary psychology and DNA research, as he has psychology firmly anchored in its scientific grounding. Another pleasant surprise for me was the author's employment of two types of discourse which is rare in my experience in a psychology textbook. He utilises the rational 'scientific', analytically logical approach and combines this with a secondary, intermittent narrative. He describes this choice as being embedded in his attempt to develop a reader's conceptual understanding (connaitre) rather than to produce a text which is full of fact-based (savoir) knowledge about psychology. And he succeeds.

He first uses the story of one of Brueur's patients in the 1880s. Anno O's name has since entered the public knowledge arena through her depiction and characterisation in books, documentaries and so on, and in essence, Fernald compares Brueur's original diagnoses and treatments of this patient with the approaches that would be

undertaken today. Fernald even manages to introduce some basic concepts about research methods into the early chapter, 'Research methods', by weaving Anna into it in explaining Brueur's descriptive methods of detailing everything that Anne said and did, then correlating this information with alternative sources of information about her, in a form of triangulation of evidence. This works very effectively and is a gentle introduction to the area of statistical research methods and associated terminology. Subsequent chapters continue to interlace the stories of other patients and people who had become casebook stories in psychology in the same manner. The result is both highly accessible and rigorous.

For the undergraduate and the postgraduate who is new to the field of psychology, Fernald introduces terms such as "empiricism, peer reviewed journal, rationalism, data, psychology and psychiatry, nomothesis" and so on and explains them lucidly in concise and clear terms. These words and phrases are also **bolded** or *italicised* for ease of future reference. Each chapter ends with a summary and series of questions entitled 'Critical thinking', in which any student could become enmeshed.

Some aspects of social learning theory and Piaget's theory of cognitive development are explored. However, I was slightly surprised that Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner were not included in the penultimate chapter, 'Sociocultural foundations'. The emphasis here, however, is clearly on the more traditional approaches to social psychology. In the thoughtful final chapter, Fernald draws together the various strands of psychology that he described as six major perspectives and then examines the multiple bases of aggression behaviour. He then details what he perceives to be differences and similarities in methodological orientations in relation to the practice of research and concludes with a summary of each of the six major theory strands and their propositions about human nature. He concludes with a commentary about the future of psychology as a science.

Fernald's writing style is lucid, energetic and engaging. This book embraces a broad sweep and the author's approach is both refreshing and somewhat novel. His eclectic and thorough reference sources span works from the early twentieth century up to and including works which were published as recently as 2007. This text is stimulating and poses some excellent opportunities for critical thinking and analysis at the end of every chapter. While some social theorists may be slightly disturbed by the centring of psychology firmly into the science and cognitive aspects of psychology, this is a compelling book and an invaluable addition to the currently available range.

Lisa Davies
School of Education
University of South Australia

BOOK REVIEW

Coolhunting: chasing down the next big thing

Peter A. Gloor & Scott M. Cooper
Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2007
ISBN: 0-8144-7386-5, 236 pages, RRP: $39:95

In their book, *Coolhunting*, Gloor and Cooper explore the concept of gaining social and capital advantage by tapping into 'swarm' behaviours in an information and communications technology world. They explore the common denominators of successful swarm innovators, by making visible the techniques they use in actively 'coolhunting'. Coolhunters, in 'virtual realms', leverage their social networks to spot and implement the 'next big thing'.

It is within this frame of coolhunting that the authors take the reader into the arena of Collaborative Innovative Networks (COINs), swarms, memes, coolfarming and social networking, to examine a variety of successful coolhunting cases. Coolhunters use social digital modes of communication, for example: blogs, texts, e-mails and sites like MySpace and Spacebook to collaboratively network with people. This networking creates a swarm of people connected by like-minded interest or intended action, what Gloor and Cooper describe as 'swarm activity'. This in turn creates a virtual community of people with the potential to influence enacted behaviours of a group of people, for example, buying patterns, or trends – a community of trendsetters. The trendsetters are the barometers by which to gauge the potential cool[ness] of an idea or activity. The authors explain the 'cool' in coolhunting:

> To us, things that are cool make the world a better place, in some way. Coolhunting is about finding the trends and the trendsetters, and the trends we associate with cool make the world a better place (pp. 7–8).

The foreword to *Coolhunting* is written by Danah Boyd. Boyd has a Masters Degree in Social Media and is currently a PhD candidate at the Berkeley School of Information. She has written a number of academic pieces on on-line culture and presented papers on the subject at major conferences, for example, at the Emerging Technologies Conference (ETech) in San Diego, California. Boyd is also associated with the developers of the Friendster social networking site. She says of *Coolhunting*:

> You will learn how swarm creativity can innovate and how it can go terribly wrong. You will learn how to make sense of trendsetters and how to track coolness in social environments. Through numerous examples and case studies, this book helps elucidate the culture of cool (p. xiii).

Coolhunting comprises ten chapters. After a brief introduction to the book, Glore and Cooper use examples of many cases to illustrate their concepts from the first chapter to the last. Continental Airlines' CEO Larry Kellner is the first example of a coolhunter. This case describes how Kellner uses his social networking skills to develop a successful

frequent flyer reward scheme using direct input from the airline's customer base.

Chapters two and three introduce the reader to the beehive metaphor, which helps the authors illustrate the nature of the socially networked swarm activity that can be utilized in the hunting down of the next new trend:

> If you watch the bee swarm, you can make predictions. Bee-keepers will tell you that even if there is not a cloud in the sky, when your bees are staying in the hive or close by you can expect inclement weather. And even if the skies are overcast, and rain seems to threaten, bees flying excitedly out of the hive is a sign that the weather will soon change for the better… Coolhunters can learn a lot from how the swarm behaves (p. 46).

Chapters four, five and six outline what it is to be a networked trendsetter, in the coolfarming sense of the word – "people who are carriers of innovation" (p. 63). This section of the book describes how these trendsetters recognise each other and then gravitate together or farm for one another. There are, of course, benefits and pitfalls of becoming immersed in the swarm.

In chapter seven there is a small section of the book that presents examples of cases using a networked approach in universities in the United States of America. One of these cases describes the successful use of infrared transmitters, during the delivery phase of courses, to give real-time feedback to lecturers from students about their developing understanding of concepts. This feedback from students allows the lecturers to be increasingly accurate in gauging students' readiness for assessment. The other case uses a digitally networked approach to connect students from an international group of universities in Helsinki, Cologne and Cambridge in one virtual classroom, with mixed results.

Coolhunting 'patterns of innovation' is the theme for chapter eight. Gloor and Cooper examine a number of ways networked trendsetters link and interlink. For example, a group of high school mobile phone users are tracked to make visible one way in which network activity can be measured to locate the key communicators. This chapter also examines cases where some trendsetters 'communicating and collaborating on innovations' have gone askew (p. 177).

The recommendation of Gloor and Cooper is to 'immerse yourself in the swarm' (p. 215), and the last two chapters give us the concepts and techniques to consider tapping into the *next* big thing. The authors share their vision of coolhunting, in *Coolhunting*, with the reader and encourage the reader to consider taking a peek over the next horizon to 'create a cool and better world'. While the authors establish coolhunting as a way to associate with a construct that makes the world a better place by creatively 'gaining power while giving it away' (p. 27), most of the examples of successful coolhunting in the book are derived from business or industry sectors.

I found the book imbued the notion of successful coolhunting with an overly optimistic view. The book appears to be targeted toward a readership with a business or an entrepreneurial orientation. The cover of the book reinforces this view, as 'an invaluable tool for businesses of all sizes'. This readership might largely read along with the discourse presented in C*oolhunting*. It seems an oversight of the book not to acknowledge the capital advantage one must already have, in the form of technological capital, to access the tools to be further advantaged by coolhunting in some way. Like any other form of capital that exacerbates a have/have not divide, and in this case the capital is the ability to access or engage in digital social networking, or not, there is always the risk of alienating, delineating or disadvantaging some people[s]. This aside, the book has a lot to offer those who are interested in creating new forms of entrepreneurial networks or opportunity. Particularly if one is new to the concepts of

coolfarming and coolhunting, this book might appeal, as it offers a plain language introduction to the arena.

About the authors

Peter Gloor divides his work between the MIT School of Management, Helsinki University of Technology and the University of Cologne, where he teaches, researches and writes. Scott Cooper is a Research Affiliate at the MIT School of Management, and has written widely in the areas of new media, innovation and business economics. The authors have a blog that we can access online and contribute to at: swarmcreativity.blogspot.com

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Kerrie Mackey-Smith
Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work
University of South Australia

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